AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

[H.A.S.C. No. 111–102]

COUNTERTERRORISM WITHIN THE AFGHANISTAN COUNTERINSURGENCY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
OCTOBER 22, 2009

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
57–054 WASHINGTON : 2010

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

ADAM SMITH, Washington, *Chairman*

MIKE McINTYRE, North Carolina
ROBERT ANDREWS, New Jersey
JAMES R. LANGEVIN, Rhode Island
JIM COOPER, Tennessee
JIM MARSHALL, Georgia
BRAD ELLSWORTH, Indiana
PATRICK J. MURPHY, Pennsylvania
BOBBY BRIGHT, Alabama
SCOTT MURPHY, New York

JEFF MILLER, Florida
FRANK A. LoBIONDO, New Jersey
JOHN KLINE, Minnesota
BILL SHUSTER, Pennsylvania
K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, Texas
THOMAS J. ROONEY, Florida
MAC THORNBERRY, Texas

TIM McCLEES, *Professional Staff Member*
ALEX KUGAJEVSKY, *Professional Staff Member*
ANDREW TABLER, *Staff Assistant*

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HEARINGS

2009

Page

HEARING:

Thursday, October 22, 2009, Counterterrorism within the Afghanistan Counterinsurgency 1

APPENDIX:

Thursday, October 22, 2009 27

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2009

COUNTERTERRORISM WITHIN THE AFGHANISTAN COUNTERINSURGENCY

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Miller, Hon. Jeff, a Representative from Florida, Ranking Member, Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee 2

Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Chairman, Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee 1

WITNESSES

Kagan, Dr. Frederick W., Resident Scholar, The American Enterprise Institute 3

Nelson, Rick "Ozzie," Senior Fellow, International Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies 9

Pape, Dr. Robert A., Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago 7

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:

Kagan, Dr. Frederick W. 34

Miller, Hon. Jeff 32

Nelson, Rick "Ozzie" 47

Pape, Dr. Robert A. 38

Smith, Hon. Adam 31

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Documents submitted.]

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted post hearing.]

COUNTERTERRORISM WITHIN THE AFGHANISTAN COUNTERINSURGENCY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Thursday, October 22, 2009.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:34 a.m., in room HVC 210, Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. SMITH. I call the meeting to order. I apologize for being late. I was still operating off the assumption that the meetings were over in the Rayburn room, and it is a much longer haul getting over here than it is to Rayburn.

But I apologize for that, and I really appreciate our witnesses joining us this morning, as well as the panel, to have this conversation. I have read all three of your works on many subjects. Very, very knowledgeable people on a very important subject for all of us right now: the path forward in Afghanistan, and also in Pakistan and that whole region.

This committee has a particular interest in the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and its role in counterterrorism. But, of course, we are also members of the full Armed Services Committee and interested in the broader picture as well.

Although we certainly look forward to hearing your testimony on all those subjects, on the best path forward, the dominant two issues for me are, number one, this is a critically important part of the region. We have heard some people talk about Afghanistan and say, well, if our concern is al Qa'ida, well, they have moved to Pakistan. Or, al Qa'ida is in 45 or 50 different countries; what makes this one special?

Well, in my view, this one is extraordinarily special. The relationship between the Taliban and al Qa'ida is unique. This is the place where al Qa'ida is strongest and most likely to launch attacks. And it is pretty much the one place on the globe that we cannot afford to turn a blind eye to, if we are truly concerned about dealing with al Qa'ida.

I know a number of you have greater knowledge about that relationship than I. I look forward to hearing about that. But just to drive home the point that we cannot comfort ourselves by saying that, well, you know, they are in a lot of different places, they are

more or less in Pakistan, do we really have to worry about it? In my view, yes, we do. But I look forward to having that discussion.

The second difficult part about it is having to worry about, it puts us in a very, very difficult place. And the central focus of that challenge, I think, is finding a reliable partner in Afghanistan, finding a government, a tribal structure, a provincial structure, somebody, some group of people who we can work with to offer the Afghan people a viable alternative to the Taliban.

We are in reasonably good shape in that the Afghan people know the Taliban and they do not like them. However, they like some form of government; they like some rule of law, some structure to their society. And if nobody else can offer that, the Taliban will fill that void.

So we are really struggling right now to find that Afghan partner. You are all familiar with the problems of corruption and ineffectiveness within the government; and now we have the challenge of an illegitimate election. I am very, very pleased that they made the decision to do the runoff, to at least give them a chance to have a more legitimate election.

But the challenges there are great in trying to find a reliable partner, so I look forward to the testimony. I will briefly introduce the witnesses now before turning it over to the ranking member on the committee, Mr. Miller, and then introduce you again when you each speak.

We are joined by Dr. Frederick Kagan, Resident Scholar at The American Enterprise Institute; Dr. Robert Pape, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago; and Rick "Ozzie" Nelson, Senior Fellow, International Security Program for the Center for Strategic and International Studies. I look forward to all of your testimony.

I do have a full written statement which, without objection, I will submit for the record. And with that, we will turn it over to any comments that Mr. Miller has.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 31.]

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM FLORIDA, RANKING MEMBER, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. MILLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Also, Mr. Chairman, I would be remiss if I did not, on behalf of the subcommittee, say we are glad to have you back functioning on both lungs today.

Mr. SMITH. Right. It is good to have it. Unfortunately, unlike kidneys, apparently you need both lungs. Just in case anybody was wondering.

Mr. MILLER. Having recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan over the Columbus Day weekend, I can say that this hearing does come at a pivotal moment. We know that two months ago General McChrystal provided the President with his assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, and as we have all read in the press, he has deemed the situation serious. While General McChrystal acknowledges the very difficult task he faces in bringing security to Af-

ghanistan and its people, he does not view the situation, however, as a lost cause.

I do have a statement that I want to go ahead and enter into the record. So I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Miller can be found in the Appendix on page 32.]

Mr. SMITH. With that, I guess we will go left to right, as I look at it, ironically. And we will start with Dr. Kagan. And there are statements in our books for the members if they wish to look through them as we go, as well.

STATEMENT OF DR. FREDERICK W. KAGAN, RESIDENT SCHOLAR, THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Dr. KAGAN. Thank you.

And also thanks for introducing me as the left side of this debate. Since I guess I am vigorously supporting the President's stated strategy, I suppose I am on the left side of this particular debate.

Thank you very much for having me in front of this committee. It is an honor, as always, and I am very grateful for the attention that you are paying to this very important topic. I am very pleased that we are having this level of national debate now, because I do think that whatever we do in Afghanistan, it is going to be a long process, it is going to be a difficult process; and it is very important that the American people understand very, very clearly why we think we need to do what we are doing, and what we think we are doing, why we think it is going to work. And I think this entire discussion and exploration of alternatives helps that.

I am not going to read my—I didn't give you a written statement. Actually, I gave you a bunch of various things to look at. I have a 60-some-odd slide show which I am going to run through—no. Actually, I am just going to make a few points, and I just look forward to engaging with you in questions which I think is probably the most useful thing to do.

Look, when we are talking about counterterrorism in this part of the world or anywhere, we really have to ask ourselves the question, What are we trying to do? Are we trying to prevent attacks against the United States? Is this a defensive mission, exclusively? And if so, are we prepared to be in a defensive posture with occasional reactive sorties against these groups, or are we trying to defeat these groups? If we are trying to defeat these groups, what does that actually mean?

We are certainly not going to defeat their ideology in any short term. And it is an ideology within Islam. It is a heretical ideology within Islam that has roots in the years immediately following the death of the Prophet Muhammad. It goes back a long way. It will always be there in some form to be used by someone.

And, of course, if you look at the history of the Cold War, did we defeat the Communist ideology? Well, we tarnished it very badly by defeating its reification in the world. And that is something that is important to keep in mind: al Qa'ida has embodied this particular vision of this heretical ideology, and its success or failure

is tied to a considerable extent to the value that other extremists are likely to put on this particular ideology.

And so I think that we do need to understand that there is a broader issue here than simply preventing this particular bunch of thugs from attacking us. There is also the question of trying to make it clear that this ideology is a loser, and it leads to defeat and it leads to calamity for the people who pursue it. And it does not lead to success or anything positive because we want to deter future generations of extremists from using this particularly noxious ideology to justify what they are doing.

And in that context, it is very important to understand that al Qa'ida does not define itself as a terrorist group. Al Qa'ida defines itself as an insurgent group. It is an insurgency within the Muslim world. Its objective is to seize power within the Muslim world and then transform the Muslim world in accord with its ideology.

And the reason why that is very important to understand is, first of all, it explains why wherever al Qa'ida goes, wherever an al Qa'ida franchise goes, it plants a flag, it establishes the Islamic Emirate of Wherever-the-Heck and it declares itself the only legitimate sovereign government of the four kilometers of land that it probably controls.

At any given moment there were probably five different capitals of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq—some of them tiny little villages out in the middle of nowhere, but it was, by God, the capital of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq.

And they set up—they tend to set up rather elaborate government structures even if they are, in some cases, fictitious. So in Iraq I was delighted to discover that al Qa'ida and Iraq had an Emir of Administration. I think if only we could get them to do their planning on PowerPoint, we would be a long way towards success in this effort.

But that kind of bureaucratization is not the sort of thing that you saw from terrorist groups that really see themselves as terrorist groups, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) fighting the British, such as Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) fighting the Spanish. They define themselves politically sort of as insurgencies, but they don't have the same elaborated political superstructure that they intend to impose.

And the reason why that matters is because terrain actually matters to these guys. Where they plant the flag, they intend to stay. And if you take it away from them, it is a blow to them. And all of their rhetoric during and after the Iraq surge demonstrated that they saw that as a defeat. They did not just see it as, Oh, well, that didn't work out; we will go somewhere else. They saw that as a defeat.

They saw what the Lebanese military did to a burgeoning al Qa'ida cell within Palestinian camps in Lebanon as a defeat. They saw the fact that the Saudi Government drove al Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula largely out of Saudi Arabia into Yemen as a defeat.

So this is not a group that will, with any joy, pick up and leave from this particular area, which makes this particular area important. And it is one of the reasons why recapturing Afghanistan is an important objective for these guys.

Now, Mr. Chairman, you raised the excellent question of how are these groups intertwined; and I think that has also been blurred in the discussion somewhat. There is no meaningful difference in the ideology that the Taliban, the Afghan Taliban pursues, the ideology that the Pakistani Taliban pursues and the ideology that al Qa'ida pursues. They all agree that temporal secular states are evidence of apostasy and, in fact, of polytheism.

They all agree on the basics of how the Muslim community should be ruled. The Afghan Taliban, the Quetta Shura Taliban sees itself as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. It is the franchise that will control that part of territory. The Tehrik-e Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) sees itself as the franchise that will control Pakistan. But all of that is under the umbrella of an al Qa'ida effort to reestablish the caliphate for the entire Islamic world.

So there is a differentiation in the sense of the Taliban group saying, This is our front, that is your front and this is somebody else's front. But there is not a differentiation in terms of the objective. And I think it is very important to understand that, as well, because if you ask the question, is the Afghan Taliban now plotting to attack the United States here, the answer is "no." If you ask the question, is there any basis to believe that over the long term if you allowed the Taliban to persist in Afghanistan, it would not develop in the direction of pursuing global jihadism, the answer is "no." There is no reason particularly to think that, except that it hasn't had the opportunity to do that yet. But it would be fully consonant with its ideology to pursue that objective.

The Tehrik-e Taliban in Pakistan has already indicated that it had the objective of attacking the United States. Baitullah Mehsud said he would attack the White House. Now, there is not a lot of teeth behind that, but you do have the stated intention.

So when you are talking about defeating al Qa'ida, I don't believe that you can separate that from the problem of defeating its allies and its local proxies. And that is how we get to counterinsurgency. And that is why I think that a counterterrorism strategy has to be embedded within a counterinsurgency strategy, or at least has to be married to a counterinsurgency—it doesn't necessarily have to be subordinate to it—because I don't think that we can succeed with a counterterrorism strategy that actually aims at what I think we need to aim at, which is defeating these organizations without defeating the insurgent groups.

And I would like to just make a couple of quick points and then I will stop. First of all, there is a straw-man argument that is sometimes put out that some of us have been religiously converted to the ideology of counterinsurgency, and wherever there is a conflict, we see an insurgency and we want to use a counterinsurgency approach. I certainly don't feel that way. I know that General McChrystal doesn't feel that way.

It is weird to make that comment about General McChrystal. This subcommittee probably knows General McChrystal better than any collection of Congressmen that there are. This guy knows all about counterterrorism. If he is coming to tell you that you need to do counterinsurgency, it is not because he has drunk that particular Kool-Aid.

I just look at this and say, Look, you have this alliance of groups with similar objectives. We have to defeat them all. Though on our side of the border, the ones we are facing are primarily insurgents. The way that you fight insurgents is with counterinsurgency doctrine. If they weren't insurgent groups, I wouldn't be advocating that. And I think that is an important straw man.

And lastly, I will tee this up so that my colleagues can defend their propositions. I will show my cards in advance instead of ambushing them. I want, first of all, to correct what I am sure was an unintentional misstatement in Bob Pape's recent op-ed. General McChrystal's own report says—he explains that American and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces are a major cause of the deteriorating situation because they have been viewed as foreign occupiers.

The assessment does not say that. I don't believe that General McChrystal anywhere says that he believes that American forces are seen as occupiers. And, in fact, the assessment has prominently a quotation from the Afghan defense minister who says, Afghans have never seen you as occupiers, even though this has been the major focus of the enemy's propaganda campaign.

And I think it is an important point because I don't agree with the assertion that we are generating this problem by our presence in Afghanistan, and I don't believe—I think that there is also a problem with the statistical correlation of rise in violence as resulting from increased troop presence.

In fact, the increased troop presence has lagged behind the rise of violence generally. For example, in fiscal year 2005, there were about 19,000 U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. In fiscal year 2007, there were about 23,700 U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. Pretty constant. By the way, a tiny footprint. If that is an occupation, then one soldier is an occupation.

With 19,000 American troops in a country of 30-some million people, one-and-a-half times the size of Iraq, virtually no Afghan ever sees an American soldier. So what you are talking about is enemy propaganda. And I would submit to you that the minimum required number of American troops in order to be occupiers is one.

But in that period, the number of suicide attacks, as Bob points out, went from 9 to 142. Was that a response to the increase by 4,500 American soldiers? I don't think so. That is not what that was about.

What was going on was that in the period between 2002 and 2005, the insurgent—the Taliban, which had been eliminated from power in 2001 in Afghanistan was reconstituting. It was redeveloping its capability. It was reestablishing its networks within Afghanistan; it was reestablishing its leadership structure and preparing for an insurgency.

It began to launch that insurgency in 2005, which is why violence began to rise. We very slowly and cautiously—too slowly and cautiously in my view—started to increase our forces in response to that. Naturally, that created more military targets for the Taliban to go after, which is one of the reasons Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) went up.

In other words, I dispute the causal relationship between the presence of U.S. forces and the increase in violence here. This was

an insurgency that had as its objective retaking Afghanistan not because we were there, but because they had been the government. That is what they were trying to do. And they would have done that whether we were there or not.

The question we have to decide is, do we think it is okay if they do? Or do we think it is okay—do we think that we can have a counterterrorism strategy with the civil war that will ensue if we abandon the effort to establish counterinsurgency?

Now, civil war may ensue anyway. We can fail. This is war. There are no guarantees. But I am as confident as I can be that if we adopt a remote approach to counterterrorism here, not only will we have a failed—totally, completely failed—state in Afghanistan with a lot of regional consequences that are very troubling, but I also believe we will have failed on the counterterrorism mission.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kagan can be found in the Appendix on page 34.]

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Pape.

STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT A. PAPE, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Dr. PAPE. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored to be here today and pleased to discuss General Stanley McChrystal's proposal to commit an additional 40,000 troops to Afghanistan.

General McChrystal's recommendation reflects a growing consensus that our current force levels cannot win the war against the Taliban; and his proposal has been called an "ambitious new course." In truth, however, it is not new and not ambitious enough.

America will best serve its interest in Afghanistan and the region by shifting to a new strategy, offshore balancing, which relies on air and naval power from a distance while also working with local security forces on the ground. The reason becomes clear when one examines the rise of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan in recent years.

General McChrystal's own report explains that American and NATO military forces themselves are a major cause of the deteriorating situation for two reasons. First, Western forces have become increasingly viewed as foreign occupiers. You see the quote on the screen from the report itself.

Second, Western forces are viewed as supporting an illegitimate central government—again, directly from the report itself. Unfortunately, these political facts dovetail strongly with military developments in the last few years.

In 2001, the United States toppled the Taliban and kicked al Qa'ida out of Afghanistan with just a few thousand American troops and mainly with a combination of American air power and local ground forces from the Northern Alliance. Then, for the next several years, the United States and NATO modestly increased their footprint to about 20,000, mainly limiting the mission to guarding Kabul. Up until this point, 2004, there was little ter-

rorism in Afghanistan and little sense that things were deteriorating.

Then the United States and NATO began to systematically extend their military presence across Afghanistan. This is NATO's own map of their plan to extend that presence. The goals were to defeat the tiny insurgency that did exist at the time and to eradicate poppy crops. Western military forces were deployed in all major regions of Afghanistan, including the Pashtun areas in the south and the east in 2006.

Over these years, Western troop levels escalated incrementally from 20,000 in 2004 to 50,000 in 2007 to nearly 90,000 today. General McChrystal's request for another 40,000 is simply the next step in this escalation.

As Western occupation grew, the use of the two worst forms of terrorism in Afghanistan, suicide attacks and IEDs, escalated in parallel. Let me focus on suicide terrorism, the biggest killer and greatest threat to Americans and the focus of my personal research efforts funded by Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the Carnegie Corporation in New York.

There were no—as you can see from the slide, no recorded suicide attacks in Afghanistan before 2001 and only a small number in the immediate aftermath of America's conquest of the Taliban. But in 2006, suicide attacks rose ten times and have continued at that high level ever since. These attacks have been concentrated against security targets, that is, American and Western ground forces, not Afghan civilians, and nearly all the suicide attackers have been Afghans.

The picture is clear. The more Western troops have gone to Afghanistan, the more local residents have viewed themselves under foreign occupation and are using suicide and other terrorism to resist it.

I will be glad, by the way, in Q&A, sir, to respond to Dr. Kagan's specific challenges to this. If you would let me just continue with my prepared statement at the moment now, we will have plenty of time for that.

Our central purpose in Afghanistan is to prevent future 9/11s. And this, first and foremost, requires stopping the rise of a new generation of anti-American terrorists, particularly suicide terrorists, the super-predators who can kill large numbers of people.

What motivates suicide terrorists is not the existence of a terrorist sanctuary, but the presence of foreign forces on land they prize. So it is little surprise that American troops on Pashtun homelands are producing anti-American Pashtun attackers.

Second, it would be helpful to prevent a safe haven for terrorists, for them to use either as training or as safe areas for their leaders. This is not as important as our main goal, since the main training for the 9/11 hijackers occurred in American flight schools, but this goal would help disrupt terrorist ability to organize and inspire any new recruits with impunity.

Alas, adding 40,000 new troops is unlikely to achieve either of our goals. It would probably add to the sense of occupation, while not preventing Taliban areas from spreading. The reason is clear when you compare General McChrystal's request to the require-

ments for counterinsurgency (COIN) in General Petraeus' COIN manual.

The Petraeus counterinsurgency manual has two requirements, and McChrystal's recommendation falls short on both. The first is the need for a legitimate central government around which to rally local support from the population. In fact, I am quoting you directly from General Petraeus' manual that this is actually the most important of our objectives.

And, of course, the widespread fraud by Karzai in the August election raises a serious issue about whether our military forces are now engaged in supporting an illegitimate government that does not have the consent of the people.

The second requirement is a 1-to-50 ratio of troops to population. For Afghanistans, over 13 million Pashtuns in the south and the east, this comes to 265,000 troops or 175,000 troops beyond our current level, or 135,000 beyond General McChrystal's request. Hence, adding 40,000 troops for COIN would be a half-measure that does not guarantee success by its own doctrine while increasing the sense of occupation that motivates suicide terrorists.

I think we need to consider other alternatives. Overall, I believe our best strategy is offshore balancing, relying on air, naval and rapidly deployable ground forces, combined with training and equipping local groups to oppose the Taliban. This strategy is what toppled the Taliban when it controlled 90 percent of the country in 2001, and it is our best way to prevent the Taliban from seizing Kabul, establishing significant terrorist camps in Afghanistan and controlling large areas as safe havens for Taliban and al Qa'ida leaders. It is also a strategy that will prevent the rise of a new generation of anti-American suicide terrorists, and so achieve our core interests in Afghanistan.

We should transition to this strategy over the next two or three years, say, by the end of President Obama's first term.

And given the ethnic divisions in the country, the first step is to use political and economic means to empower local Pashtuns to achieve greater autonomy from all outsiders, creating a third option between the Taliban and Western domination. A similar strategy of empowering Sunni groups in Anbar reduced anti-American terrorism in Iraq and is our best way forward in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer you to my written testimony which includes background slides for a strategy of local empowerment in Pashtun areas.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Pape can be found in the Appendix on page 38.]

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Nelson.

STATEMENT OF RICK "OZZIE" NELSON, SENIOR FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. NELSON. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Miller, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important topic.

I come to you today as a recently retired Navy officer who has spent most of his last decade focused on the challenges of combating global terrorism, including assignments at the National Counterterrorism Center and the National Security Council. In April, I returned from a tour of duty in Afghanistan where I was director of a joint task force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During the next few minutes, I plan to discuss the threats posed by al Qa'ida and other terror groups and how they should figure into debates over U.S.-NATO strategy in South Asia.

It can be difficult to assess the current state of al Qa'ida and other globally focused terrorist organizations. We are told that Afghanistan has fewer than 100 al Qa'ida operatives, but that the failure of the Afghan Government will lead to the group's inevitable return to the State.

The Director of the National Counterterrorism Center reports that al Qa'ida's haven in the federally administered tribal areas, the FATA, is shrinking. You have militants there, including al Qa'ida, that have launched a spate of attacks in Pakistan over the last weeks. And descriptions of al Qa'ida's crisis of leadership are tempered by revelations of a suspected jihadist cell in New York.

Here is what we do know: Al Qa'ida remains intent on attacking the United States and our friends and allies across the globe. The organization maintains transnational reach, but is rooted in Pakistan's semi-governed tribal areas. As Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted recently, any al Qa'ida attack on the U.S. is likely to emerge from the FATA.

On a more immediate level, al Qa'ida operatives in northwest Pakistan are believed to have teamed with other militant groups, including the TTP and recent attacks in Pakistan and India.

Al Qa'ida offshoots remain active beyond South Asia. Al Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) gained notoriety for its brutality during the early stages of the Iraq war. While its influence has subsided since the Sunni awakenings, AQI, still threatens regional stability in the Middle East.

I have increasing concern there are several al Qa'ida associated groups in North Africa, Southeast Asia, Yemen and Somalia. The case of Somalia, like Pakistan, highlights the dangers posed by collaboration among different extremist groups. In recent testimony before the Senate Homeland Security Committee, FBI Director Robert Mueller suggested that the Somalian insurgent group al-Shabaab has grown close to al Qa'ida. This development has helped propel al-Shabaab, originally a Somali-focused insurgency, into a terrorist organization with global reach, including contacts in the United States. This trend is illustrated by a recently uncovered plot to recruit Minnesota-based Somali immigrants to fight with al-Shabaab.

Along these same lines, officials in September arrested three Afghan citizens and U.S. legal residents on charges of lying in a matter involving terrorism. The key figure in these arrests, Najibullah Zazi is believed to have been planning explosive attacks in New York after receiving training at an al Qa'ida camp in Pakistan in 2008.

While these developments represent an expansion and a flattening of al Qa'ida's global scope, they should not be taken to mini-

mize the continued importance of the group's senior leadership, including Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. On a functional level, these men remain active, most likely in Pakistan's semi-governed tribal areas. On a larger, more symbolic level, they drive al Qa'ida's agenda by inspiring future jihadists and by reminding everyone, including U.S. officials, of their organization's resilience.

Successfully combating al Qa'ida ultimately will require puncturing the group's cult of personality by capturing and killing senior leaders, including bin Laden and Zawahiri.

What I have tried to do in this brief overview is to show that al Qa'ida, despite certain setbacks, remains global in scale and determined to attack the United States. The epicenter of its power lies in Pakistan's semi-governed tribal areas.

It is important to appreciate how this fact relates to Afghanistan. We should recall that the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to defeat al Qa'ida, but ask foreign policy analysts why U.S. and NATO forces remain in Afghanistan today and you are likely to see a flurry of different responses. Defeating the Taliban, stabilizing and rebuilding Afghanistan and maintaining American credibility are just a few of several reasons given in addition to counterterrorism for our continued presence in the country.

These are all laudable goals, but the White House must ensure that combating global terrorism generally and al Qa'ida specifically remains a strategic anchor in Afghanistan. Framing American interests in this fashion will lead us to ask important questions of the various strategies now being debated.

I will conclude by posing just one question: What effect would additional troops in Afghanistan have on the stability of Pakistan? After September 11th, American troops and our allies essentially pushed extremists out of Afghanistan and into Pakistan, which heightened terrorist activity in northwestern Pakistan. Over the last year in particular, we have seen a mix of al Qa'ida, TTP, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) militants strike large Pakistani cities and military facilities with increasing frequency. Meanwhile, the FATA haven serves as a primary base for al Qa'ida's global terrorist agenda. These developments are troubling not just because they endanger a nuclear armed regime, but because the U.S. is largely powerless to combat the threat without Pakistani support.

Fortunately, Pakistan's military has just become a 30,000-troop assault on al Qa'ida- and Taliban-controlled territories in South Waziristan, the type of campaign that U.S. policymakers have long sought. As Pakistan confronts extremists in its northwest, we must be careful to ensure that any U.S. troop increases do not push insurgents in Afghanistan across the border. This would effectively heighten extremist activity in the FATA and make Islamabad's mission even more difficult. Indeed, in meeting with General Petraeus and Senator Kerry earlier this week, Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Gilani asked the U.S. and NATO forces to restrict militant infiltration from Afghanistan into Pakistan.

In the end, any regional strategy which shores up Afghanistan while destabilizing Pakistan will detract from our goals of combating terrorism.

I would be happy to elaborate on this and any other issues during our questions. Thank you again for inviting me to speak today. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nelson can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you all.

I will start with—we will put everybody on the five-minute clock. I will try to get two questions in. I will just start with one basic one for Dr. Pape.

I think you have hit upon one of the great challenges of what any counterterrorism or counterinsurgency effort is. You have to defeat the terrorists without alienating the population. In some places, that is easier than others. In the Philippines we have had some success, I think in that area because it was not as violent and as out of control. And we had a local partner that we could work with.

But the one question I have off the top about your strategy of a sort of standoff approach, I mean, we are going to be creating just as many terrorists, if not more, if we are bombing them from afar than if we happen to be in their village trying to fight them that way. In fact, that is one of the things that General McChrystal has really focused on, this standoff aerial campaign approach has vastly more civilian casualties and alienates the population even to a greater extent. So what are we truly accomplishing if we say we are going to cut in half the number of troops and just launch missiles at you?

Dr. PAPE. Sir, I think your question is excellent. And I am not calling for sort of increasing numbers of drone attacks. I am not calling for let's just kind of replace ground troops with still more application of air power. In fact, I think that probably what we need to look at is actually even a reduction in our drone attacks.

Let me explain this by showing you the kind of base that bin Laden had in Afghanistan in 2001 before 9/11. I think it would be very helpful. I am not sure, you may have seen this base before, sir; but this is what we call a "terrorist camp." Notice how—this is a base, sir; this is like Maxwell Air Force base where I taught for three years.

So when we talk about a terrorist training facility before 9/11 that al Qa'ida had in Afghanistan, we don't mean three buildings. We don't mean one safe house for some suicide terrorists somewhere in——

Mr. SMITH. Got that. I am a little short in time here. How are we working back to the question?

Dr. PAPE. The question is, sir, that I believe what we need to do is focus on preventing camps, large camps, not every safe house.

And so, sir, I think that if we are going to attack safe houses, then we need to be much more judicious in attacking safe houses. And specifically, sir, we need to ask the following risk/reward question.

At the moment, the way risk/reward works when we go after safe houses, as you probably know, is we run it through Judge Advocate General (JAG) and what we do is we say, is the benefit of getting this terrorist worth the loss of X number of Afghan civilians on the side?

The real risk/reward ratio, sir, is different. Every time we go after a safe house, what that is going to do is probably produce collateral damage which will produce suicide terrorists who will want to kill Americans.

Mr. SMITH. General McChrystal quotes that all the time. I will come back to that. I have another question.

But the trap is, either we are fighting them or we are not, to a certain extent. If the strategy is, we are going to pull back and stop fighting them, I think that the benefit that you identify is there, but the detriment is there as well. There is this—there is no way no matter how you do it, to sort of half-fight them and fight them in a way that doesn't create some animosity.

So whether you are doing it standoff, whether you are being careful about what you are bombing, wherever you are at, if you are accepting as part of the strategy that there are bad guys there that we need to try to take out in some way, we are still kind of in that tension that you have.

But I want to ask Dr. Kagan. I mean, the big question here—and this is the challenge. We don't have a local partner. We certainly can't put enough troops in there to do a counterinsurgency for the full population, the 30 million population. These are both true. I mean, part of the strategy that is talked about now is going to try to secure pieces of the population within classic counterinsurgency doctrine.

We also have a major problem in terms of unity of effort. We have so many people involved there, not just militarily, but Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), various development groups. I mean, they are all sort of going past each other and wasting money in an incredibly inefficient way.

With those three great challenges, how do we go forward and implement even a more limited, more strategic counterinsurgency strategy?

Dr. KAGAN. If this were easy, you probably wouldn't be holding hearings about it, and we wouldn't be having this discussion. It is hard.

I want to make note of the fact that what—the quote from FM3–24 actually is that the primary objective of counterinsurgency is to foster the development of an effective and legitimate government. That is an output; it is not an input. You don't—it is not the case that you can't do counterinsurgency if the government is not legitimate. If the government——

Mr. SMITH. Don't get me wrong. Just for the record, I want to be clear that I don't buy into this notion that unless you can, like, build Minneapolis in Afghanistan, somehow you don't have an effective counterinsurgency strategy, that unless you can have an overwhelming force, you can't possibly succeed. I mean, we saw that wasn't true in Iraq.

I think you can have a more limited, realistic goal and still have an effective counterinsurgency strategy.

So this idea that counterinsurgency is some big, grand—presto, instantaneously build the most modern, sophisticated civilization ever is ridiculous. So I am with you on that.

But from that, there is a good deal of distance between that and where we are at in Afghanistan, and I am trying to carve out what that realistic strategy is.

Dr. KAGAN. And you have put your finger on one of the most glaring lacunae in the administration's approach to this problem. General McChrystal has put together—in my biased opinion, since I have participated in it—a very good assessment of the situation and a very good recommendation for a military plan that also goes pretty far toward recommending some of the key political changes that need to be made.

Mr. SMITH. It says a heck of a lot more than 40,000 more troops. Everyone is fixed on the 40,000 more troops. It is a 60-some-odd page report that gets into a lot of important detail.

Dr. KAGAN. The question is, where is the political strategy? Where is Ambassador Holbrooke's assessment and recommendation? Where is Ambassador Eikenberry's assessment and recommendation? Where is Secretary Clinton on this?

This is, I hope—as the Obama administration goes through this review, I believe—if you come to a second round of questions and want to spend more time on this, I can lay out what I think something like that would look like.

Mr. SMITH. I think we will do that.

I don't want to set a bad precedent here, so we will go to Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you.

And, Dr. Kagan, I agree. I think there is a weak link, and that weak link may very well be with State Department in regards to what their activities are going to be.

But I would assume that all three of you read or are aware of Max Boot's article yesterday in the New York Times. Could you comment a little bit on the statement that he made that said, basically, only by sending more personnel, military and civilian, can President Obama improve the Afghan Government's performance, reverse the Taliban's gains and prevent al Qa'ida's allies from regaining the ground they lost after 9/11? Could you?

Dr. PAPE. Yes, sir. I am glad to.

I think—I respect Max. I think that he is right that where our troops are at the moment—that is, if you take our military forces and put them down in a certain area, a neighborhood—they are able to pacify that area. I have great respect for our troops.

The problem that we have is that the COIN doctrine would require 265,000 American forces for this purpose, and we just simply don't have the troops to do that. And that is only for the south and the east, and that would be if we abandoned all of the rest of Afghanistan.

So the problem we have, sir, is, if we are going to sort of go big, then we have to be still more ambitious because this idea of the gradual drip by drip by drip that we have been going through for the last few years, I am afraid is actually producing more suicide terrorists than it is killing.

Dr. KAGAN. If I can comment, first of all, I have to take exception with the COIN math that is being laid out here. It is not a requirement of one American soldier for every 50 of the population. It is a requirement for one counterinsurgent for every 50 of the popu-

lation. And in counterinsurgents we include American soldiers, we include the NATO forces that are operating, which are a significant number of troops, and we also include any effective, indigenous forces that are operating. And in this case, there are about 100,000 troops in the Afghan National Army, and they are pretty darned effective.

The Afghan National Police I am willing not to count because they are very corrupt and inefficient and so forth, although elements of them operate.

That gets you up to about 200,000 right now. If you add 40,000 American troops, it gets you up to 240,000. We are planning to bring Afghan National Army, just army, up to 134,000 by next year. That covers the gap. So the notion that this is not doable from the standpoint of the COIN math, I respectfully disagree with that.

But the key point in your question, which I really think needs to be emphasized, is that American troops and NATO troops affect governance at the local level and they can affect governance at the national level, too. And we saw this very clearly in Iraq.

American forces engaged in counterinsurgency do not simply spend their time kicking down doors and pulling bad people out and shooting people. They also spend their time being eyes and ears on the ground, developing tremendous assets, especially for local intelligence, and in turn feeding that up the chain of command. And in Iraq, the model that I would give you for the role that the military can play in developing governance is how we curbed sectarian death squad activity, supported by senior leaders within the Iraqi Government, relying on intelligence that was developed by our soldiers on the ground; and relying on those soldiers, those officers on the ground—brigade commanders, battalion commanders, sometimes company commanders—to address malign actors within their areas and then coordinate with senior leadership to address at the highest level.

I believe that that approach can be modified to address the fact that it is not sectarian death squads in Afghanistan, it is abuse of power and corruption and so forth to identify and put pressure on key malign actors to facilitate a governance program. But the military is an essential component of that because without the military forces you don't have the access to the population that you need to understand what is going on and affect it.

Mr. MILLER. Dr. Pape, could you respond to the math?

Dr. PAPE. Yes, sir. I think the best way is to actually do it in Iraq and Anbar, because we had a similar situation. You remember in Iraq, we had this huge problem, this insurgent out-of-control problem, especially in Anbar. We also had this whole debate were we building an Iraqi Army and so forth and was it going to work and all that kind of stuff.

But let's look right at Anbar, sir. If you look at the chart about what actually changed in Anbar, between September 2006 and September 2008—I am sure you have seen charts that the attacks went down against Americans. That definitely happened; Anbar definitely quieted down. The question is why.

First, American troops and the coalition did not actually increase their aggregate number of troops. We did put more troops in Iraq,

but as others were leaving. So we essentially, in the aggregate, came down.

Second, if you look at the number of troops specifically in Anbar, they only go up a teeny, tiny amount. The real change—and we would have needed 100,000 by COIN doctrine. The real change occurred in the Sons of Iraq; that is, they went from 5,000 in September 2006 to 100,000 in September 2008.

So, sir, yes, the COIN math probably does work and, yes, locals can backfill. But we actually have to have real locals from the local area doing the heavy lifting. That is what we did in Anbar, and that actually worked quite successfully. And what my local empowerment strategy is calling for is to try to do the same thing to a large degree in the Pashtun areas of east and southern Afghanistan.

And let me also just add, sir, I was not against the idea of sending 20,000 troops to Baghdad in December 2006. I supported the idea here of what became called The Surge in Baghdad because there you had Sunnis killing Shi'a, Shi'a killing Sunnis.

That is not what we have here in Afghanistan. We do not have Tajiks killing Pashtuns. We do not have Pashtuns killing—we don't have this big rivalry that way.

What we basically have is an ideological battle occurring among the Pashtun south; and for that, it is very similar to Anbar. Anbar is our best analogy, not Baghdad. And this is what happened and what calmed down Anbar.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our panel for your very thoughtful testimony here today. And it is obviously very helpful as we are all struggling in trying to get our arms around the way forward in Afghanistan.

I guess at this point my question would be, assuming that we, instead of going with the counterinsurgency strategy, we focus more on the counterterrorism strategy, as Mr. Pape has suggested, what is the best- and worst-case scenario of that strategy?

I would like to hear from Mr. Pape and then, if I could, Mr. Kagan.

Dr. PAPE. Thank you, sir. I think that is an excellent question.

I think that the worst-case scenario is essentially a freeze of today's status quo. I think that it is the case today that, as best I can tell, the Taliban control—and what I mean, by "control" is, they are in village areas 24/7, with sharia courts, something like 10 percent of Afghanistan and about 20 percent of the southern areas in the south and in the east.

I think that my strategy is effectively calling for the containment of those areas and then the gradual shrinking of those areas over time through this local empowerment strategy. But it may not work. I think that this—the worst case, though, is that it stays the same.

And what I think is the best case is that as we shift to the offshore balancing strategy over the next two or three years, you will see the radical reduction in suicide attacks, anti-American suicide attacks, that we are now seeing in Iraq as we are building up the

local militias in Anbar Province. What that has done is, it is allowing us to actually withdraw forces.

And we are not just withdrawing forces from the country. Notice how we pulled them back from cities. Over the last year and a half, we have had a radical difference in the military occupation of Iraq and that has actually caused suicide attacks in Iraq to go down almost 85 percent.

Mr. SMITH. I am sorry. I just have to interrupt.

Obviously, the best way to prevent suicide attacks against U.S. troops is to pull the troops out. There isn't any argument with that because then they are not there to be attacked.

The argument and the issue is, what does that do to the Taliban's ability to control greater amounts of territory and not, in essence, be stopped? That is the tension.

Dr. PAPE. Sir, I would add one other point which is that our presence there is not only threatening—it is not just suicide attacks against our troops. We just arrested an Afghan national from Colorado with links to this area, clearly motivated by—or possibly, allegedly motivated anyway by our presence there—who was doing reconnaissance for attacks in the New York subway system.

So, sir, I would not think that what is happening is that the threat to Americans of suicide—anti-American suicide terrorism is limited to what is happening in Afghanistan. I am afraid that what we have seen time and again—in Madrid, what we have seen in the London bombings—what we have seen is that this motivates suicide terrorists to attack us here, or our allies.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

Mr. Kagan, best-case and worst-case scenario if we go with counterterrorism versus counterinsurgency.

Dr. KAGAN. Osama bin Laden's given reason for attacking the United States was because of the presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the Saudi Government which he defined as an occupation. If you are going to call for making decisions based on the enemy's propaganda line, then I think you are going to have a very difficult time coming up with any rational strategy.

I completely disagree with Dr. Pape's analysis of what the worst-case scenario is. The Taliban is very strong now in the south, and it has been gaining strength. This is General McChrystal's assessment, and it is the assessment of almost anyone who has looked at the situation over there.

Were we to reduce our footprint significantly and move to a counterterrorism approach, Kandahar City would fall rapidly into Taliban control. They now control and effectively govern almost all of the areas around Kandahar City. Helmand River valley would also fall back under complete Taliban control where now we are contesting areas within it. The surrounding provinces of Oruzgan, Zabol, Ghazni into Farah, Nimruz would also fall under complete Taliban control. The Government of Afghanistan does not have the military capability to prevent this from happening.

We are still—we have already begun to see the mobilization of the Tajiks and Uzbeks in response to the perception that the United States might be pulling out and abandoning them to this conflict, and I believe that there is a very high probability that you

would see a full-scale civil war reemerge as either those groups launched preemptive attacks to prevent a Taliban takeover of the sort that occurred in the mid-1990s or that the Taliban launch such a takeover attempt, which is clearly its intent.

I don't see any force in Afghanistan right now that would be capable of resisting the Taliban's pressure or deterring the reemergence of the Northern Alliance and the redevelopment of a civil war.

In that scenario, it is impossible for me to imagine that the United States will be maintaining footprints within Afghanistan from which to be conducting counterterrorism operations. I think that is a preposterous notion from a logistical standpoint, from an image standpoint, and I think it is militarily infeasible. So that is the worst case. I also think that it is the most likely case.

We can describe a best case, I suppose, in which the Northern Alliance, perhaps with our assistance, crushes the Taliban, crushes the south and then we somehow manage to support them over the years in maintaining dictatorial rule over the Pashtuns which will inflame Pashtun nationalism throughout the region. But I can hardly call that a good scenario. I do not believe there is any good scenario that can emerge from the adoption of such a strategy.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Shuster.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you.

Dr. Pape, back to your math again on the 50-to-1 ratio. In the COIN strategy it is a 50-to-1 strategy, but you make the argument when you talk about Anbar, it doesn't say, that I am aware of, that it is 50-to-1 U.S. or International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops that make up that ratio. It talks about police, military, U.S. troops, ISAF troops.

And you make the case in Anbar province that it was the Sunni awakening, that is what raised the ratio up and that is the success. And I think that is the same thing that General McChrystal is trying to accomplish in Afghanistan.

But you keep coming back to it, that it is faulty. I don't understand what your math is. And when you put the numbers together, you can achieve that if we have the right people there to train up the Afghan army and the Afghan police.

Dr. PAPE. Yes, sir. I don't think the real issue here is actually discrepancy over math per se. I think that everybody recognizes that we need local allies to help us in Afghanistan. That is what you are really hearing. So we should just go focus right on that issue.

This issue of trying to kind of hold things together—you know, bit by bit by bit with another half-measure, another half-deployment of American forces—is actually pushing off the day when we will be able to truly engage the local population; and that is really our dilemma.

And the reason we are not able to engage the local population today is not that we haven't tried. We have sort of offered money and we have offered bribes, but we have done it in a way where we are expecting the local population, the Pashtuns, to basically become employees of the central government; that is, to fall under the broad rubric of the central government, sir.

That is not what we did in Anbar. The Anbar awakening is not being run by the Shi'a. In fact, if you remember, sir, in Iraq, the Shi'a government was opposing this precisely because they were partners, not employees.

So our real——

Mr. SMITH. Sorry to do this again.

How does that get—and I am with you totally about the mistakes. And McChrystal talks a lot about those mistakes as well and how you need to change that. But how does that get easier to flip those people if we start pulling out en masse?

How do—I mean, you are looking to flip a local Taliban person. He is, like, okay, the Taliban is here and they are headed out. It just doesn't make any sense.

Dr. PAPE. Yes, sir. What is strengthening the Taliban today is not their numbers. Because, as you know probably better than I do, the assessments by the experts are that there is somewhere between 10,000 and 40,000 Taliban fighters in the country; and, of those, the experts are kind of agreeing that 10,000 are the hard core. Well, that is the number. So the Taliban clearly are not winning by numbers of hard-core fighters. What they are winning by is support from the local population, which they are getting from three sources:

Number one, opposition to America's military presence and our forces just simply being there and then also carrying out operations that lead to collateral damage which has not just happened for a year, but it has been going on nearly eight years, sir. Second is money. Third is arms, in some cases.

So what I am calling for, sir, is to reverse-engineer those three reasons for that local support.

Mr. SHUSTER. What you left out was the fear factor. We were there once, and we left them, and the Taliban came back in and started to kill people. That is another reason why they are not trusting us to be there, and now I think that is what General McChrystal is reversing.

And following what the chairman has said, how do you get them to trust us when you pull in and you pull out and you let the bad guys in?

I am pretty clear on your position. I don't agree with it.

But I would like to ask—I read a recent article in Strategic Forum that talked about the most significant problem in Iraq; and turning to Mr. Nelson first, if I could, the unity of effort on our part. We have dozens of international organizations, other countries in there. How do we pull that together and make that unity of effort not only with the dozens of countries but with our own military units over there? And where do you see that improving? Or how does it improve? Mr. Nelson.

Mr. NELSON. That is a terrific question. I think that is one of the reasons why the civilian component of our policy over there is so important.

General McChrystal's strategy is the military strategy. We talk about the military surge, but we need a civilian surge as well. Those are the individuals who will help bring these different entities together.

Information-sharing among the NATO partners remains a serious issue. Obviously, we have information-sharing caveats with some of our closest allies and partners. But some of the folks that we rely on the ground every single day, we don't share those same caveats.

The good news is General McChrystal has taken that on and has said, I want to take the risk of sharing information because I think the benefits outweigh those actual risks. That is something that I think, from a Washington, D.C., perspective, that we can continue to do, is push the folks back here to curtail some of those information-sharing restrictions.

Mr. SHUSTER. I think one of the important things that I have seen him do is he appointed General Miller to take on 500 or 400 officers who are going to be committed to a three-year period. And I have asked the State Department on a number of occasions are they doing the same kind of effort, and they continue to say "yes," but I see no evidence of that.

Somebody here mentioned that General McChrystal's assessment didn't include Ambassador Eikenberry or Ambassador Holbrooke. So it seems to me like there is still a huge problem between State and DOD coming together, having a model. Petraeus and Crocker, they worked together seamlessly. So what are your thoughts on the State Department and what they are doing or not doing, Dr. Kagan?

Dr. KAGAN. Well, as I said, I think we are yet to see the development of a coherent political strategy, and I think that is a major failing on the State side.

I think we have seen a mad scramble to try to recover from a crisis that we got ourselves into through nonfeasance while it was clear we were headed toward a fraudulent election. I think what we have gotten to now is a position where we have expended a tremendous amount of political capital that has not achieved our political objectives.

So this is not an issue of interagency process or unity of effort. This is an issue of priority within the State Department and the way that it is structured and the way that its individuals are functioning, simply failing to come up with what should be their purview.

If I could beg your indulgence briefly to comment on something that has been driving me crazy in this discussion, which is the characterization of the Sons of Iraq and Anbar, which I think is being completely mischaracterized, frankly.

First of all, there were not five million people in Anbar. So the requirement for COIN is not 100,000.

Second of all there, there were either 10,000 or 20,000 Iraqi troops and police that were also in Anbar that were operating, which is one of the reasons why we got up to the COIN math at work.

Third of all, one of the key parts of the agreement that we made all of the initial Sons of Iraq sign was an agreement to recognize the legitimacy of the Iraqi government and serve it; and we always had the stated intention, which has now been realized, of having the Iraqi government pay for the Sons of Iraq. So it is indeed the

Shia who are now in control of that organization, and they have continued to pay it, and it has continued to work.

So it is not the case that this movement erupted spontaneously without us getting to any kind of proper COIN ratio. Nor is it the case that this was just our agreement with them and had nothing to do with the Iraqi government.

Mr. SMITH. We have votes coming up. I will give Mr. Bright the last set of questions. This is supposed to take, once we leave, about a half hour. Hopefully, we could be back by 12:15, 12:20 or so. Do the witnesses have another 25 minutes to take questions?

Dr. KAGAN. Sir, I have an interview at 1:30.

Mr. SMITH. Okay, we will try to wrap up fairly quickly after we return.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Chairman, I was told that they were going to hold votes for 30 minutes. The GOP has a briefing going on right now on Afghanistan, so they are going to hold the board. So we may have a little more time.

Mr. SMITH. We will go to Mr. Bright.

Mr. BRIGHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this very valuable hearing. It is very obvious from the testimony today that there is not a clear-cut plan or strategy for our efforts in Afghanistan. I will be very brief.

My question will go directly to Mr. Nelson. Mr. Nelson, can you tell me and elaborate somewhat as far as your opinion is concerned on what is the interconnection between the Afghanistan and the Pakistan Taliban? What is their relationship? How interrelated are they? How entwined are they? Do they share personnel? Do they share funds? If you would, I find your answer to that very interesting.

Mr. NELSON. Thank you, sir. It is a great question.

Personally, I think it is hard to tell at this juncture. We are not just dealing with the Afghan Taliban and the Pakistan Taliban. We have divisions in the Afghan Taliban. The Quetta shura. We have the Haqqani network and Hekmatyar as well; and, of course, on the Pakistan side, you have the TTP.

Obviously, it is possible that they are sharing funds and are sharing resources; and some have argued, like Peter Bergen and Tony Cordesman, that they are intimately connected. But there are some very important differences, and the other speakers have highlighted this.

The Taliban's goal in Afghanistan is to be in Afghanistan. It is not a global agenda. The al Qa'ida's agenda and its relationship to the Afghanistan Taliban is much more of a global agenda. That is the major difference there.

So defeating the Afghan Taliban is important for Afghanistan, but it is not important strategically in the United States in preventing attacks against the United States, ultimately.

Mr. BRIGHT. Dr. Pape, let me commend you. I am aware of your tenure at Maxwell since I am from that area and was mayor of Montgomery for awhile. Thank you for your service down there. It is great to see you back up here.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend each person for their testimony. It has been very educational and very enlightening for me as a new member. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Rooney.

Mr. ROONEY. I thank the panel for your excellent testimony. I know we have to run out of here shortly, so I will try to be brief.

I am still kind of stumped on this issue of occupation, Dr. Pape, that you spoke of.

Having read the McChrystal report—and I tried to understand what the General was asking the Commander in Chief—one thing that sort of stuck out to me right from the get-go was that the situation is deteriorating. So the request initially for a troop increase would be followed by sort of this winning hearts and minds type philosophy of integrating with the Afghani population so that the intimidation and the threats to the local populations could be minimized.

I know you didn't get into your specific plan because of time, and I tried to just skim through it very briefly, but I am kind of at a loss as to how you would go about integrating into the Afghani population.

Aside from just money or paying them, how do you give them the sense that I am going to keep the Taliban and their threats at bay, and I am going to trust the Americans and the coalition forces to provide the kind of intelligence or help to the Americans in what we are trying to accomplish there, without having the sense that there is security in my village. I feel emboldened that I don't have to worry about these threats from the Taliban. How do you do that without having those guys on the ground in those villages?

Dr. PAPE. First, I think it is helpful to be clear when I said transition over two or three years I don't mean that we cut and run and pull all our forces out in year one. What I mean is year one we do a serious local empowerment strategy. That is why I offered those slides.

Mr. ROONEY. How do you do that?

Dr. PAPE. Glad to cover that, sir.

Just so you follow the logic of what I am trying to do, this slide shows you what is happening right now is the more we occupied, we have to go through the villagers to try to get to the Taliban. The problem is that the villagers are loyal to the tribe. They are never going to be loyal to our western values, at least not in short term, and they are also not loyal to Islamic fundamentalism.

What we are doing is, by trying to get to the Taliban by going through the villagers, we are pushing them together. What my local empowerment strategy is trying to do is pull back from the occupation and then grow the size of the villager bubble so that they can contain the Taliban, not without our help at all. And the way to do that, I have actually gone through and what the slides do is they offer you a real strategy for doing that.

The key to the strategy is recognizing that, first of all, the problem we have today is part of our own creation with the constitution. We wrote or certainly helped construct the constitution which created for the first time in Afghanistan's history, sir, a top-down central government with very tight power of control in the presidency. It is President Karzai who picks the provincial governors. It would be like President Obama picking the governor of Illinois.

Mr. SMITH. Bad example.

Dr. PAPE. Well, I am trying to help you see that this is not even democracy by our own light, sir. And in this country, for hundreds of years, governance has gone bottom up from the tribal level. What we need to understand, the Taliban, we are giving them opportunities, sir. What we are doing is making it easy for them to exploit the local grievances against our occupation because of this top-down political flow, and so we need to reverse the arrow.

We have had existing programs. I am glad to go through them in great detail, or some detail, and talk about why they are a problem. But, as I already hinted at, we are trying to make Pashtuns employees, not partners. And what I would do specifically is empower local Pashtun areas but differentially, not just across the board, but by trying to empower the groups who are really our potential partners, not those we can't work with.

What I am doing on this slide is showing you there are large areas of the south and the east where the authority rests with tribal leaders and councils, many of which are now cooperating with the Taliban, but they are not doing it out of religious affiliation. There are areas controlled by the Taliban where there are not tribal leaders, or at least not independently. That is about 20 percent of the south and the east. And then there are drug lords, about 10 percent. They are not motivated by either tribe or religion; they are motivated by money.

What my strategy would do is empower, one; marginalize, two; and reconcile, three. The remaining slides, we would go through each policy in detail for those three.

Mr. SMITH. If I can follow up—and hopefully we can wrap this up before the votes—everything you say—well, not everything but most of what you say makes a great deal of sense: what we have done wrong, the centralized government, basically treating the Afghans like employees. All of that is absolutely true. General McChrystal talks at great length about all of this in his report, about how we have made the mistake—by, through and with. Classic counterinsurgency strategy has been totally ignored here. We have been dictating and directing, not doing by, through, and with.

But the part that doesn't make any sense is how we can make this transition that you are describing, to do it differently with fewer people, for two reasons. Number one—forget the security issue. That is my second one. I will get to it in a minute. Just the basics of supporting them in setting up the rule of law and construction and schools and wells and everything, less is not more in that situation. They need more help, not less. So you keep saying we are going to change the strategy and do it with less people.

Second, the other basic level here is you have got to have security. What the Taliban are doing village to village is a classic protection racket. You know, we are the only ones who can protect you. If you don't trust us to protect you, we will show you.

If you cannot provide security, they have got no place to go. I will grant you we need to provide it better. I guess the way to sort of formulate that question is what Dr. Kagan described, if we don't increase troops and if we reduce troops, how the Taliban will continue to spread.

As frustrated as I am by the situation in Afghanistan and what we have done wrong and what the Afghan government has done wrong, the lack of a reliable partner, I don't see how, if we don't increase troops, we begin to pull back in six months, whatever your timeline is, how the Taliban don't build on their successes and just take on more and more villages.

You seem to be saying, we are going to change the strategy and empower them. With what? With whom? How are the Taliban, if they are doing as well as they are doing right now, how are they suddenly, magically not going to be doing too well when there is less resistance to what they are doing?

Dr. PAPE. Sir, I am not saying that we should pull out any troops in the first year, number one.

Mr. SMITH. I thought you said the worst-case scenario would be to keep things as they are.

Dr. PAPE. No, no, no, sir. I said the worst-case scenario would be that things would stay as they are.

Mr. SMITH. I don't know how that is different than what I said.

Dr. PAPE. I think his question was after two or three years. If you implement the whole strategy, after two or three years, what is the worst-case scenario? What I am trying to explain—and maybe I was unclear, and I apologize to the committee if I am unclear on this point, but I am trying to make it clear, which is that I am not calling for withdrawing troops in the first year or on some deployment schedule. What I am saying is what we should do in the next 12 months is not increase troops. We should dedicate ourselves—which will help protect the cities, the major areas. There will still be problems in the rural areas. I am not calling for the abandonment of major cities.

Mr. SMITH. One quick question of Dr. Kagan. What is wrong with that strategy? That is one of the things that is kind of emerging, not the pullout strategy, not even sort of a standoff strategy, just—look, we don't know exactly what we are doing there right now. So to commit more forces in that situation, the stress on our troops and the stress on our force, to ask them to go and fight in a situation that is as muddled as I think we have all kind of agreed, it is irresponsible.

We simply have to do a containment strategy, hold the line, give McChrystal a chance, and hopefully get Eikenberry and Holbrooke more involved, figuring things out and moving us in a more positive direction, contain the Taliban from spreading further instead of throwing more troops into a confusing situation.

Dr. KAGAN. What is wrong with that is we can't do that with the forces we now have, and that is General McChrystal's assessment, and it is the assessment of his staff. I think it is very easily supportable by facts on the ground. So we will continue to lose ground with the current numbers because they are not adequate even with all of the in-theater readjustment that General McChrystal is undertaking to do this.

And I think it is very important to note here that we really shouldn't be pulling troop numbers out of our fourth point of contact. This is not something where we just say, well, maybe we will only send 10,000 or whatever.

Troop numbers have to come based on a very specific and careful full-up staff, troop-to-task analysis by our professional military about what is required to achieve a particular set of objectives in a particular set of circumstances. General McChrystal has done that. We don't have to necessarily accept it, but we can't beat it simply by saying, "Well, I don't like 40. How about 20?"

Somebody else would have to go through a very detailed, troop-to-task analysis for a different set of objectives within an agreed-upon framework of what the circumstances are and tell you what the number would be for a different set of objectives. But if you try to do this as a rheostat with I don't like 40, I want 20, now tell me what I can do with that, you put our troops in a very high probability of being given a mission that can't succeed.

Mr. SMITH. I think that is an excellent point to end on. I appreciate your coming and testifying. It is very, very helpful for me and the members of the committee. We will keep this dialogue up as the decision is going forward.

I will close with, re-emphasizing what Dr. Kagan said, whatever we do, it has to be a clear strategy and a clear plan so that the troops and the people that we ask to go and implement it know what they are doing. And that is the minimum that we can expect, no matter what we decide.

Thank you very much. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:52 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

October 22, 2009

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

OCTOBER 22, 2009

Statement of Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee Chairman Adam Smith Hearing on Counterterrorism within the Afghanistan Counterinsurgency

October 22, 2009

"Today, the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee will meet to discuss the challenges and implications of counterterrorism as it relates to General McChrystal's initial assessment of the situation in Afghanistan and President Obama's upcoming decision on a new war strategy. This is an important discussion, and I want to thank our witnesses for attending and lending their expert opinions. We welcome you and your thoughts and any recommendations you may have.

"Any change in strategy on the ground in Afghanistan will have a direct impact on U.S. Special Operations priorities and tactics and how they execute their counterterrorism and counterinsurgency missions. As a result, it is the responsibility of this subcommittee to explore and analyze the implications of any change in strategy and recommend thoughtful policy adjustments.

"There are a number of strategy alternatives currently being debated by the Administration and today we would be particularly interested in hearing your opinions regarding the value or drawback of adding additional troops to the region. General McChrystal's assessment also advises conducting a population-centric counter-insurgency.

"It would seem to me that focusing our efforts to win the support of the population by changing the operational culture of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and by undertaking efforts to improve Afghan security forces and Afghan governance at all levels is the right approach. In fact, Admiral Olson, Commander Special Operations Command, testified before this subcommittee earlier this year in favor of a 'populace-centric approach in lieu of a threat-centric approach to national security challenges.' I'm eager to hear your thoughts.

"Over the last few days, Afghan President Hamid Karzai's accepted a runoff election and the Pakistani military launched a ground assault into the Taliban stronghold along its border with Afghanistan. It would be interesting to hear your opinions on how these events might impact the debate over the strategy.

"Let me conclude my opening remarks by emphasizing the strategic importance of achieving success in Afghanistan and its border region with Pakistan. This region poses the most significant threats to U.S. national security. There is no other region in the world better suited to giving al-Qaida a safe haven from which to plan attacks on the Western world and we must not demonstrate a lack of commitment to our efforts to eliminate this threat. Again, I thank the witnesses and look forward to an illuminating conversation on how we can more effectively tackle this critical challenge."

Miller Opening Statement for Hearing on Counterterrorism within the Afghan Counterinsurgency

October 22, 2009

Washington, D.C.—The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities today turned its attention to the ongoing debate about the appropriate strategy to defeat the insurgency in Afghanistan. Members heard testimony from expert witnesses on the merits of utilizing counter-terrorism operations within a counterinsurgency strategy. The subcommittee's Ranking Member, U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL), released the following prepared remarks for the hearing:

"Today this subcommittee will receive testimony regarding counter-terrorism operations to help us better understand the challenges our forces face in the Afghan insurgency. Having recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan over Columbus Day weekend, I can say that today's hearing comes at a pivotal moment. Nearly two months ago, General Stanley McChrystal provided the President with his assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, and, as we have all read in the press, has deemed the situation 'serious.' While General McChrystal acknowledges the very difficult task he faces in bringing security to Afghanistan and its people, he does not view the situation, however, as a lost cause.

"The importance of Afghanistan, not only to regional security but also to the security of our homeland, is clear. From the safe haven the Taliban regime had extended it over eight years ago, Al Qaeda planned the infamous 9/11 terrorist attacks on our country. From that moment forward, we have sought to deny Al Qaeda, and other such likeminded groups, safe havens from which to operate. And Al Qaeda no longer enjoys a safe haven within Afghanistan.

"Since the release of General McChrystal's assessment, however, the future strategy for Afghanistan has been vigorously debated with pundits from all sides pushing competing views: from increased troop levels, as General McChrystal has requested of the President, to a sole focus on counterterrorism, meaning significant troop reductions and a focus on high-end special operations activities. The challenge now is to determine what is achievable and how we can make progress against an insurgency that threatens the stability of Afghanistan and that potentially could offer Al Qaeda a safe haven once again.

"The challenge is significant and complex. In Afghanistan, we have a population that longs for security and stability, as well as an effective government free of corruption. However, internal and external forces – among them, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and the Haqqani network—actively seek to undermine that vision as they each seek to realize their groups' violent goals. And while many raise questions about the Karzai government, I think we must look beyond the recent Afghan elections and upcoming presidential election runoff to ask how our strategy changes whether Karzai remains, Abdullah is voted in, or a coalition government is formed. Ultimately,

we are battling to deny operating space to Al Qaeda and other violent groups, and our strategy cannot forget that an insurgent victory or control of key areas could return Afghanistan to chaos and provide a safe haven once again if it is not contained.

"In seeking to deny a safe haven for Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, we must also turn our gaze to Pakistan, as the fate of Afghanistan is inextricably linked to that of its neighbor to the East through centuries-old tribal and familial connections. Pakistan itself has felt the sting of Al Qaeda and associated militant organizations through numerous bombings, assassinations, and the recent attack on the military's General Headquarters base in Rawalpindi. So, a discussion on a strategy for Afghanistan must include consideration of the Pakistan piece of the equation for the strategy to be comprehensive.

"General McChrystal has presented a comprehensive assessment of the situation. We have, in Stan McChrystal, a commander who is not only an expert in counterinsurgency, but also in counterterrorism. He has led our premier forces in the counterterrorism mission, yet he is the one recommending an increased troop presence, a focus on counterinsurgency, a reorientation to protecting population centers, a reorganization of the NATO ISAF structure, and strategic engagement with the Afghan population and the region. The danger now, as I see it, is that we will be tempted to pursue political expediency in lieu of actual leadership—leadership that is very much needed at this pivotal moment. The administration may seek to be a more accommodating partner, open to dialogue and consensus, but this does not equate to an abdication of responsibility for leadership. If we waiver in our approach, no one else in the international community will stand up.

"Now, counterinsurgency is not an easy mission, and counterterrorism operations certainly have an important role in an effective counterinsurgency strategy. But, we cannot put forward a cookie cutter approach, imposing the same counterinsurgency strategy used in one area to a different one. So, today's hearing will do much to put General McChrystal's assessment into context and to help the member's understand how U.S. and international resources, especially counterterrorism capabilities, can best be used in a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy to meet the challenges in Afghanistan and the region.

"These insights will prove valuable beyond our consideration of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as the globe is pockmarked with instability and unrest that could flare into violent conflict or turn governed spaces into safe havens for violent groups such as Al Qaeda. And in seeking to deny Al Qaeda a safe haven, we must not forget that a successful counterinsurgency strategy can offer a longer-lasting solution than a never-ending man hunting strategy."

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

Prepared Statement of Frederick W. Kagan,

Resident Scholar and Director of the Critical Threats Project,

American Enterprise Institute

House Armed Services Committee

"Counterterrorism within the Afghanistan Counterinsurgency"
October 22, 2009

Frederick W. Kagan /American Enterprise Institute / FKagan@aei.org

[Excerpted as published on October 12, 2009]

"To defeat an enemy that heeds no borders or laws of war, we must recognize the fundamental connection between the future of Afghanistan and Pakistan--which is why I've appointed Ambassador Richard Holbrooke . . . to serve as Special Representative for both countries." That "fundamental connection" between Afghanistan and Pakistan was one of the important principles President Obama laid out in his March 27, 2009, speech announcing his policy in South Asia. It reflected a common criticism of the Bush policy in Afghanistan, which was often castigated as insufficiently "regional." It also reflected reality: The war against al Qaeda and its affiliates is a two-front conflict that must be fought on both sides of the Durand Line.

Now, however, some of the most vocal supporters of the regional approach are considering--or even advocating--a return to its antithesis, a purely counterterrorism (CT) strategy in Afghanistan. Such a reversion, based on the erroneous assumption that a collapsing Afghanistan would not derail efforts to dismantle terrorist groups in Pakistan, is bound to fail.

Recent discussions of the "CT option" have tended to be sterile, clinical, and removed from the complexity of the region--the opposite of the coherence with which the administration had previously sought to address the problem. In reality, any "CT option" will likely have to be executed against the backdrop of state collapse and civil war in Afghanistan, spiraling extremism and loss of will in Pakistan, and floods of refugees. These conditions would benefit al Qaeda greatly by creating an expanding area of chaos, an environment in which al Qaeda thrives. They would also make the collection of intelligence and the accurate targeting of terrorists extremely difficult.

If the United States should adopt a small-footprint counterterrorism strategy, Afghanistan would descend again into civil war. The Taliban group headed by Mullah Omar and operating in southern Afghanistan (including especially Helmand, Kandahar, and Oruzgan Provinces) is well positioned to take control of that area upon the withdrawal of American and allied combat forces. The remaining Afghan security forces would be unable to resist a Taliban offensive. They would be defeated and would disintegrate. The fear of renewed Taliban assaults would mobilize the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras in northern and central Afghanistan. The Taliban itself would certainly drive on Herat and Kabul, leading to war with northern militias. This conflict would collapse the Afghan state, mobilize the Afghan population, and cause many Afghans to flee into Pakistan and Iran.

Within Pakistan, the U.S. reversion to a counterterrorism strategy (from the counterinsurgency strategy for which Obama reaffirmed his support as recently as August) would disrupt the delicate balance that has made possible recent Pakistani progress against internal foes and al Qaeda.

Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari, army chief of staff General Ashfaq Kayani, and others who have supported Pakistani operations against the Taliban are facing an entrenched resistance within the military and among retired officers. This resistance stems from the decades-long relationships nurtured between the Taliban and Pakistan,

which started during the war to expel the Soviet Army. Advocates within Pakistan of continuing to support the Taliban argue that the United States will abandon Afghanistan as it did in 1989, creating chaos that only the Taliban will be able to fill in a manner that suits Pakistan.

Zardari and Kayani have been able to overcome this internal resistance sufficiently to mount major operations against Pakistani Taliban groups, in part because the rhetoric and actions of the Obama administration to date have seemed to prove the Taliban advocates wrong. The announcement of the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces would prove them right. Pakistani operations against their own insurgents--as well as against al Qaeda, which lives among those insurgents--would probably grind to a halt as Pakistan worked to reposition itself in support of a revived Taliban government in Afghanistan. And a renewed stream of Afghan refugees would likely overwhelm the Pakistani government and military, rendering coherent operations against insurgents and terrorists difficult or impossible.

The collapse of Pakistan, or even the revival of an aggressive and successful Islamist movement there, would be a calamity for the region and for the United States. It would significantly increase the risk that al Qaeda might obtain nuclear weapons from Pakistan's stockpile, as well as the risk that an Indo-Pakistani war might break out involving the use of nuclear weapons.

Not long ago, such a collapse seemed almost imminent. Islamist groups operating under the umbrella of the Tehrik-e Taliban-e Pakistan (TTP), led by Baitullah Mehsud until his recent death, had occupied areas in the Swat River Valley and elsewhere not far from Islamabad itself. Punjabi terrorists affiliated with the same group were launching attacks in the heart of metropolitan Pakistan.

Since then, Pakistani offensives in Swat, Waziristan, and elsewhere have rocked many of these groups back on their heels while rallying political support within Pakistan against the Taliban to an unprecedented degree. But these successes remain as fragile as the Pakistani state itself. The TTP and its allies are damaged but not defeated. Al Qaeda retains safe-havens along the Afghan border.

What if the United States did not withdraw the forces now in Afghanistan, but simply kept them at current levels while emphasizing both counterterrorism and the rapid expansion of the Afghan security forces? Within Afghanistan, the situation would continue to deteriorate. Neither the United States and NATO nor Afghan forces are now capable of defeating the Taliban in the south or east. At best, the recently arrived U.S. reinforcements in the south might be able to turn steady defeat into stalemate, but even that is unlikely.

The accelerated expansion of Afghan security forces, moreover, will be seriously hindered if we fail to deploy additional combat forces. As we discovered in Iraq, the fastest way to help indigenous forces grow in numbers and competence is to partner U.S. and allied units with them side by side in combat. Trainers and mentors are helpful--but their utility is multiplied many times when indigenous soldiers and officers have the opportunity to see what right looks like rather than simply being told about it. At the current troop levels, commanders have had to disperse Afghan and allied forces widely in an effort simply to cover important ground, without regard for partnering.

As a result, it is very likely that the insurgency will grow in size and strength in 2010 faster than Afghan security forces can be developed without the addition of significant numbers of American combat troops--which will likely lead to Afghan state failure and the consequences described above in Afghanistan and the region.

The Obama administration is not making this decision in a vacuum. Obama ran on a platform that made giving Afghanistan the resources it needed an overriding American priority. President Obama has repeated that commitment many times. He appointed a new commander to execute the policy he enunciated in his March 27 speech, in which he noted: "To focus on the greatest threat to our people, America must no longer deny resources to Afghanistan because of the war in Iraq." If he now rejects the request of his new commander for forces, his decision will be seen as the abandonment of the president's own commitment to the conflict.

In that case, no amount of rhetorical flourish is likely to persuade Afghans, Pakistanis, or anyone else otherwise. A president who overrules the apparently unanimous recommendation of his senior generals and admirals that he make good the resource shortfalls he himself called unacceptable can hardly convince others he is determined to succeed in Afghanistan. And if the United States is not determined to succeed, then, in the language of the region, it is getting ready to cut and run, whatever the president and his advisers may think or say.

That is a policy that will indeed have regional effects--extremely dangerous ones.

##

Frederick W. Kagan /American Enterprise Institute / FKagan@aei.org

Afghanistan and Terrorism

Testimony by Robert A. Pape

To the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism

October 22, 2009

Robert A. Pape is a professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. Among other publications, he is the author of *Dying to Win, the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* and *Bombing to Win, Air Power and Coercion in War*. He is the director of the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism.

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am honored to be here today to discuss General Stanley McChrystal's proposal to commit an additional 40,000 US troops to Afghanistan.

General McChrystal's recommendation reflects the growing consensus that our current force levels cannot win the war against the Taliban, and his proposal has been called an ambitious new course.

In truth, however, it is not new and not ambitious enough.

America will best serve its interests in Afghanistan and the region by shifting to a new strategy, off-shore balancing – which relies on air and naval power from a distance, while also working with local security forces on the ground.

The reason becomes clear when one examines the rise of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan in recent years.

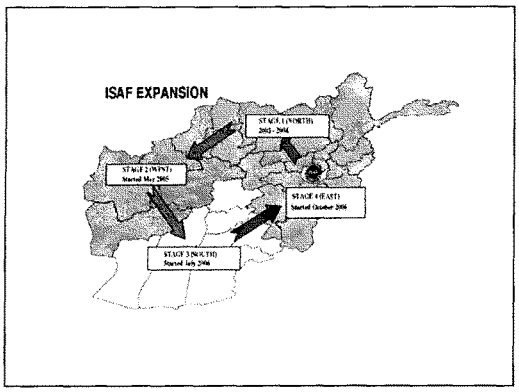
McChrystal's own report explains that American and NATO military forces themselves are a major cause of the deteriorating situation, for two reasons:

First, Western forces have become increasingly viewed as foreign occupiers: "overreliance on firepower and force protection have severely damaged the International Security Assistance Force's legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people."

Second, Western forces are viewed as supporting an illegitimate central government: "Local Afghan communities are unable to hold local officials accountable through either direct elections or judicial processes, especially when those officials are protected by senior government officials."

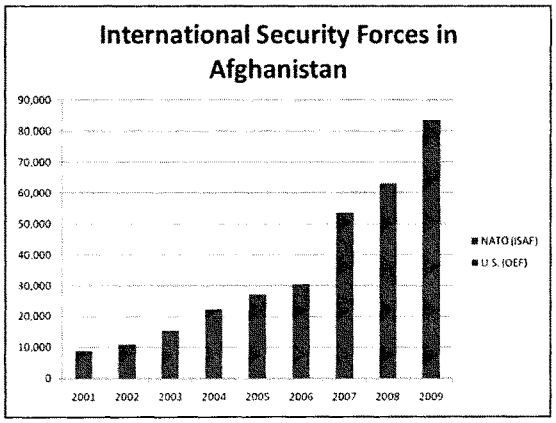
Unfortunately, these political facts dovetail strongly with the military developments in last few years. In 2001, the United States toppled the Taliban and kicked Al Qaeda out of Afghanistan with just a few thousand US troops, and mainly with the combination of US air power and local ground forces from the Northern Alliance. Then, for the next several years, the United States and NATO modestly increased their footprint to about 20,000, mainly limiting the mission to guarding Kabul, the capital.

Up until this point, 2004, there was little terrorism in Afghanistan, little sense that things were deteriorating.



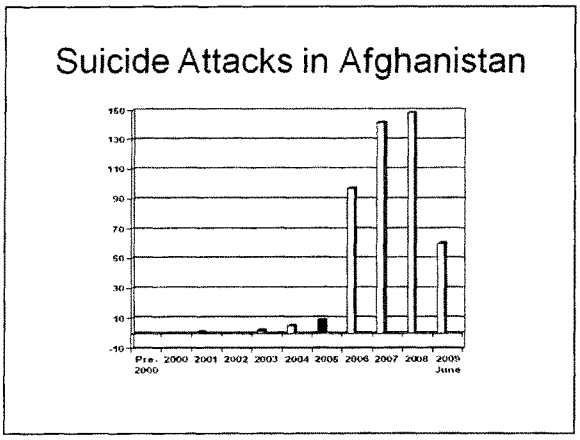
Then, the United States and NATO began to systematically extend their military presence across Afghanistan. The goals were to defeat the tiny insurgency that did exist at the time, eradicate poppy crops that were producing opium heading

to the West, and encourage local support for the central government. Western military forces were deployed in all major regions of Afghanistan, including the Pashtun areas in the south and east, in 2006.



Over these years, Western troop levels escalated incrementally, from 20,000 in 2004 to 50,000 in 2007 to nearly 100,000 now.

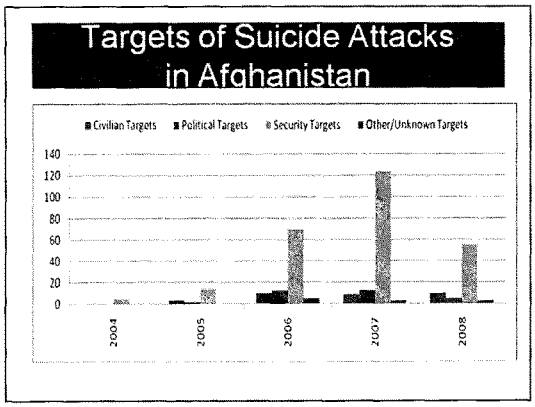
General McChrystal's request for another 40,000 is simply the next step in this escalation.



As Western occupation grew, the use of the two worst forms of terrorism in Afghanistan – suicide attacks and IEDs – escalated in parallel. Let me focus on suicide terrorism – the biggest killer and greatest threat to Americans – and about which I have been collected information with a large research team funded by DTRA and the Carnegie Corporation in New York.

There were no recorded suicide attacks in Afghanistan before 2001 and only a small number in the immediate aftermath of America's conquest of the Taliban.

But, in 2006, suicide attacks rose ten times and have continued at this high level since.



These attacks have been concentrated against security targets – ie, US and Western ground forces, not Afghan civilians.

And, nearly all of the suicide attackers have been Afghans.

The picture is clear, the more Western troops have gone to Afghanistan, the more local residents have viewed themselves as under foreign occupation – and are using suicide and other terrorism to resist it.

Our central purpose in Afghanistan is to prevent future 9/11s, and this, first and foremost, requires stopping the rise of a new generation of anti-American terrorists, particularly suicide terrorists, the super-predators who can kill large numbers of people.

As my study of suicide terrorism around the world since 1980 shows, what motivates suicide terrorists is not the existence of a terrorist sanctuary, but the presence of foreign forces on land they prize. So, it is little surprise that US troops are producing anti-American suicide attackers.

Second, it would be helpful to prevent a safe haven for terrorists to use either for training or as safe areas for leaders. This is not as important as our main goal – since the main training that the 9/11 hijackers received was in American flight schools – but would disrupt terrorist ability to organize and inspire any new recruits with impunity.

Alas, adding 40k troops is unlikely to achieve either. It would probably add to the sense of occupation, while not preventing Taliban areas from spreading.

The reason is clear when you compare McChrystal's request to the requirements for COIN in the Patraeus manual.

The Petraeus Counter-Insurgency manual has two key requirements, and the McChyrsal's recommendation falls short on both counts.

First is the need for a legitimate central government, around which to rally local population. Of course, the widespread fraud by Karzai in August election rules this out, meaning our military forces are now engaged in supporting an illegitimate government that does not have the consent of the people.

The second requirement is a 1:50 ratio of troops to population.

For Afghanistan's over 13 million Pashtuns, this comes to 265k, or 175 beyond the current 90k level, or 135k more than McChyrsal's extra 40k.

Hence, adding 40k troops for COIN would be a half-measure that does not guarantee success by its own doctrine, while increasing the sense of occupation that motivates suicide terrorists.

Overall, our best strategy is Off-shore balancing – relying on air, naval, and rapidly deployable ground forces, combined with training and equipping local groups to oppose the Taliban.

This strategy is what toppled the Taliban, when it controlled 90% of the country in 2001, and is our best way to prevent the Taliban from seizing Kabul, establishing significant terrorist camps in Afghanistan, and controlling large areas as safe havens for Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders.

It is also a strategy that will prevent the rise of a new generation of suicide terrorists, and so achieve our core interests in Afghanistan.

We should transition to this strategy over the next 2-3 years; say by the end of Obama's first term.

Given the ethnic divisions of the country, the first step is to use political and economic means to empower local Pashtuns to achieve greater autonomy from all "outsiders" -- creating a third option between Taliban and Western domination. A similar strategy of empowering Sunni groups in Anbar reduced anti-American suicide terrorism in Iraq and is our best way forward in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my written testimony for today's hearing. I have outlined below some additional recommendations for your consideration in addressing the issue of local empowerment to help achieve our strategic and security interests in the region.

A Local Empowerment Strategy for the Pashtun Areas of Afghanistan

Empowering Local Groups

- US constructed constitution (2004) privileges top-down political control with strong Presidency
- But, governance in Afghanistan has historically been decentralized, bottom up – village level
- Taliban exploit grievances resulting from occupation (collateral damage, drug eradication) and conditions of lawlessness (bandits) – co-opting village leaders or intimidating them
- Goal: Minimize policies that produce grievances, while reconciling with local communities and political leaders via financial/security support

Existing Empowerment Programs

- Small programs for village empowerment
    - 95th Civil Affairs Brigade
    - Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3)
    - Military Civilian Construction Contracting
    - "Social Outreach Program"

Little empowerment at the village level:

- Benefits too small
- Little authority to local leaders
- Tightly controlled by ISAF and government
    - "This is making Pashtuns employees, not partners"
- Need True Local Engagement Strategy, giving villages power, funding, and autonomy

Empowering Pashtun Areas

Empower groups who are potential partners, not those we cannot work with.

There are categories of village power:

1) Tribal leaders and councils – 70% (area)

2) Religious Taliban – 20%

3) Drug warlords – 10%

Tribal leaders are our strongest potential partners

Strategy: Empower 1, marginalize 2, reconcile 3

Policy for 1: Tribal Leaders and Councils

- Tribal leaders' control over villages varies:
- Complete control and Taliban cannot operate
- Partial control and contend with Taliban intimidation

In the short-term: Small arms for village-level policing and money for infrastructure projects, both through tribal leaders and councils

In the long-term: Political reform to allow give local communities a significant role in selection of district mayors and provincial governors

Policy for 2: Taliban Controlled Areas

- Taliban control involves 24 hour presence, sharia courts, and no independent tribal leaders
- Presents biggest challenge due to lack of available partners

In short term: selective force by ANA, ISAF against terrorist training camps and terrorist leaders

In long term: Economically develop surrounding areas, create disparity between Taliban and autonomous areas, encouraging dissatisfaction with Taliban control.

Policy for 3: Drug Warlords

- Warlords profit primarily from poppy growing or smuggling
- Eradication programs alienate warlords and push them to join Taliban

In short-term: Privilege Taliban containment over drug eradication. Focus on denial of camps/terrorist leaders; restrict expansion of control over local communities.

In long-term: Create farm and economic reforms that provide incentive to switch from illegal growing, including alternative crops and legal uses of poppy (medical morphine).

CSIS | CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Statement before the House Armed Services Committee Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee

"COUNTERTERRORISM WITHIN THE AFGHANISTAN COUNTERINSURGENCY"

A Statement by

Rick "Ozzie" Nelson
Senior Fellow, International Security Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

October 22, 2009
Rayburn House Office Building

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Miller, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important topic.

I come to you today as a recently retired Navy Officer who has spent most of the last decade focusing on the challenges of combating global terrorism, including assignments at the National Counterterrorism Center and National Security Council. In April, I returned from a tour of duty in Afghanistan, where I was director of a Joint Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During the next few minutes, I plan to discuss the threats posed by al Qaeda and other terrorist groups—and how they should figure in debates over U.S. and NATO strategy in South Asia.

It can be difficult to assess the current state of al Qaeda and other globally-focused terrorist organizations. We're told that Afghanistan has fewer than 100 al Qaeda operatives, but that the failure of the Afghan government will lead to the group's inevitable return to the state. The director of the National Counterterrorism Center reports that al Qaeda's haven in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is shrinking, yet militants there—including al Qaeda—have launched a spate of attacks in Pakistan over the last three weeks. And descriptions of al Qaeda's crisis of leadership are tempered by revelations of a suspected jihadist cell in New York.

Here is what we do know: al Qaeda remains intent on attacking the U.S. and our friends and allies across the globe. The organization maintains transnational reach, but is rooted in Pakistan's semi-governed tribal areas. As Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted recently, any al Qaeda attack on the U.S. is likely to emerge from the FATA. On a more immediate level, al Qaeda operatives in northwestern Pakistan are believed to have teamed with other militant groups, including Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP), in recent attacks in Pakistan and India.

Al Qaeda off-shoots remain active beyond South Asia. Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) gained notoriety for its brutality during the early years of the Iraq War. While its influence has subsided since the Sunni Awakenings, AQI still threatens regional stability in the Middle East.

Of increasing concern are several al Qaeda-associated groups in North Africa, Southeast Asia, Yemen, and Somalia. The case of Somalia, like Pakistan, highlights the dangers posed by collaboration among different extremist groups. In recent testimony before the Senate Homeland Security Committee, FBI Director Robert Mueller suggested that the Somali insurgent group al-Shabaab has grown close to al Qaeda. This development has helped propel al-Shabaab, originally a Somali-focused insurgency, into a terrorist organization with global reach—including contacts in the U.S.

This trend is illustrated by the recently uncovered plot to recruit Minnesota-based Somali immigrants to fight with al-Shabaab. Along these same lines, officials in September arrested three Afghan citizens—and U.S. legal residents—on charges of lying in a matter involving terrorism. The key figure in these arrests, Najibullah Zazi, is believed to have been planning explosives attacks in New York after receiving training at an al Qaeda camp in Pakistan in 2008.

While these developments represent an expansion and "flattening" of al Qaeda's global scope, they should not be taken to minimize the continued importance of the group's senor leadership, including Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri. On a functional level, these men remain active, most likely in Pakistan's semi-governed tribal areas. On a larger, more symbolic level, they drive al Qaeda's agenda by inspiring future jihadists and by reminding everyone—including U.S. officials—of their organization's resilience. Successfully combating al Qaeda ultimately will require puncturing the group's "cult of personality" by capturing or killing senior leaders particularly bin Laden and Zawahiri.

What I have tried to do in this brief overview is to show that al Qaeda—despite certain setbacks—remains global in scale and determined to attack the U.S. The epicenter of its power lies in Pakistan's semi-governed tribal areas. It is important to appreciate how this fact relates to our approach in Afghanistan.

We should recall that the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to defeat al Qaeda. But, ask foreign policy analysts why U.S. and NATO forces remain in Afghanistan today, and you are likely to receive a flurry of different responses. Defeating the Taliban; stabilizing and rebuilding Afghanistan; and maintaining American credibility are just a few of the several reasons given—in addition to counterterrorism—for our continued presence in the country.

These are all laudable goals, but the White House must ensure that combating global terrorism generally—and al Qaeda specifically—remains its strategic "anchor" in Afghanistan.

Framing American interests in this fashion will lead us to ask important questions of the various strategies now being debated. I will conclude by posing just one question: what effect would additional troops in Afghanistan have on the stability of Pakistan? After September 11, American troops and our allies essentially pushed extremists out of Afghanistan and into Pakistan, which heightened terrorist activity in northwestern Pakistan. Over the last year, in particular, we have seen a mix of al Qaeda, TTP, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) militants strike large Pakistani cities and military facilities with increasing frequency. Meanwhile, the FATA haven serves as the primary base for al Qaeda's global terrorist agenda. These developments are troubling not just because they endanger a nuclear-armed regime, but because the U.S. is largely powerless to combat the threat without Pakistani support.

Fortunately, Pakistan's military has just begun a 30,000-troop assault on al Qaeda- and Taliban-controlled territory in South Waziristan—the type of campaign that U.S. policymakers have long sought. As Pakistan confronts extremism in its northwest, we must be careful to ensure that any U.S. troop increases do not push insurgents in Afghanistan across the border. This would effectively heighten extremist activity in the FATA and make Islamabad's mission even more difficult. In the end, any regional strategy which shores up Afghanistan while destabilizing Pakistan will detract from our goals of combating terrorism.

I would be happy to elaborate on this and other issues during questions. Thank you, again, for inviting me to speak today, and I look forward to your questions.

○