AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: UNDERSTANDING A COMPLEX THREAT ENVIRONMENT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 4, 2009

Serial No. 111–161

Printed for the use of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html
http://www.house.gov/reform

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

71–613 PDF WASHINGTON : 2012

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

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

EDOLPHUS TOWNS, New York, *Chairman*

PAUL E. KANJORSKI, Pennsylvania
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, New York
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, Maryland
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, Ohio
JOHN F. TIERNEY, Massachusetts
WM. LACY CLAY, Missouri
DIANE E. WATSON, California
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, Massachusetts
JIM COOPER, Tennessee
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, District of Columbia
PATRICK J. KENNEDY, Rhode Island
DANNY K. DAVIS, Illinois
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Maryland
HENRY CUELLAR, Texas
PAUL W. HODES, New Hampshire
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, Connecticut
PETER WELCH, Vermont
BILL FOSTER, Illinois
JACKIE SPEIER, California
STEVE DRIEHAUS, Ohio

DARRELL E. ISSA, California
DAN BURTON, Indiana
JOHN M. McHUGH, New York
JOHN L. MICA, Florida
MARK E. SOUDER, Indiana
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, Pennsylvania
JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr., Tennessee
MICHAEL R. TURNER, Ohio
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, Georgia
PATRICK T. McHENRY, North Carolina
BRIAN P. BILBRAY, California
JIM JORDAN, Ohio
JEFF FLAKE, Arizona
JEFF FORTENBERRY, Nebraska
JASON CHAFFETZ, Utah
AARON SCHOCK, Illinois

RON STROMAN, *Staff Director*
MICHAEL MCCARTHY, *Deputy Staff Director*
CARLA HULTBERG, *Chief Clerk*
LARRY BRADY, *Minority Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

JOHN F. TIERNEY, Massachusetts, *Chairman*

CAROLYN B. MALONEY, New York
PATRICK J. KENNEDY, Rhode Island
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Maryland
PAUL W. HODES, New Hampshire
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, Connecticut
PETER WELCH, Vermont
BILL FOSTER, Illinois
STEVE DRIEHAUS, Ohio
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, Massachusetts
HENRY CUELLAR, Texas
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, Ohio

JEFF FLAKE, Arizona
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, Pennsylvania
DAN BURTON, Indiana
JOHN L. MICA, Florida
JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr., Tennessee
MICHAEL R. TURNER, Ohio
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, Georgia
PATRICK T. McHENRY, North Carolina
JIM JORDAN, Ohio
JEFF FORTENBERRY, Nebraska

ANDREW WRIGHT, *Staff Director*

CONTENTS

	Page
Hearing held on March 4, 2009	1
Statement of:	
Bergen, Peter, Schwartz senior fellow at New America Foundation and author of the Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of aL Qaeda's Leader (2006), as Well as Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden (2001); Joshua T. White, research fellow at the Institute for Global Engagement and Ph.D candidate at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies; and Paul R. Pillar, Ph.D, visiting professor and director of studies, Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, and former National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and Asia	9
Bergen, Peter	9
Pillar, Paul R.	26
White, Joshua T.	25
Letters, statements, etc., submitted for the record by:	
Bergen, Peter, Schwartz senior fellow at New America Foundation and author of the Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of aL Qaeda's Leader (2006), as Well as Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden (2001), prepared statement of	12
Hodes, Hon. Paul W., a Representative in Congress from the State of New Hampshire, prepared statement of	57
Pillar, Paul R., Ph.D, visiting professor and director of studies, Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, and former National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and Asia, prepared statement of	30
Tierney, Hon. John F., a Representative in Congress from the State of Massachusetts, prepared statement of	4

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: UNDERSTANDING A COMPLEX THREAT ENVIRONMENT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John F. Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tierney, Van Hollen, Hodes, Murphy, Welch, Foster, Driehaus, Lynch, Cuellar, Flake, Platts, Burton, Mica, Duncan, Issa, McHenry, Jordan, and Fortenberry.

Staff present: David Turk, staff director; Andrew Wright, counsel; Alexandra McKnight, fellow, Department of State; John Cuaderes, deputy staff director; Adam Fromm, chief clerk and Member liaison; Tom Alexander, senior counsel; Christopher Bright, senior professional staff member; and Glenn Sanders, Defense fellow.

Mr. TIERNEY. Good morning. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs hearing entitled "Afghanistan and Pakistan: Understanding a Complex Threat Environment" will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that only the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee be allowed to make opening statements. Without objection, so ordered.

I ask unanimous consent that the hearing record be kept open for 5 business days so that all members of the subcommittee be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. Without objection, so ordered.

At this time, I would like to make a brief opening statement and then allow Mr. Flake to do the same. First, let me welcome and thank our witnesses for their time and their perspective on this.

Today, the National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee holds our second hearing of this 111th Congress by continuing our sustained oversight on U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As I noted at our first hearing, an overriding point a number of the subcommittee members took away from recent visits to Afghanistan and Pakistan last month, whether it was meeting with Presidents Karzai and Zardari, with our Ambassadors and General McKiernan, or with NGO's and other experts was that we are at

a unique moment to ask fundamental questions about the U.S. efforts in both countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The headlines in our newspapers continually remind us of the security challenges we face in both countries. Violence is on the rise in Afghanistan with Coalition fatalities having increased in each of the last 5 years. Control of the country, or parts of it, are contested by the Taliban, political insurgents, warlords and drug traffickers. Pakistan continues to struggle with extremist insurgents throughout its west, as well as political flare-ups in Punjab that threaten to engulf the country in flames of instability. Increased Taliban strength in Afghanistan and Pakistan is fueled by safe havens, supply stores, and recruitment centers in Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas that we all take to calling FATA.

Certain areas of the northwest frontier province in Swat Valley and western portions of Balochistan Province, with the Pan Jihadi support from networks developed in the struggle for Kashmir. In this swirling fog of combatants, agendas, ethnicities, borders and traffic, it is difficult for some policymakers and the public to discern the nature of the stakes involved and how the lines of conflict interrelate. Whether any or all of these elements constitute an imminent threat to the U.S. national interests, and, if so, what response is most appropriate are issues foremost on America's agenda at this moment in time as we decide what resources and at what cost might be brought to bear in the region and how.

This hearing aims to step behind the headlines and allow subcommittee members and the public at large to hear from top independent experts about the threats faced in these countries. The goal here is to try to bring as much clarity as possible; in other words, to try to make some sense of the swirling fog. After all, before being able to answer the question of what we should do, we first need to have a solid foundation of knowledge about what we are dealing with.

In Afghanistan, we must be able to distinguish between and identify the goals of the Afghan Taliban, the drug cartels and the various warlords. What is the relative threat, if any, of each to the U.S. national security interest and to the interest of others? It is important to determine any role player by al Qaeda in the Afghan insurgency and know who exactly is crossing the border from Pakistan to join the Afghan insurgency.

In Pakistan we must understand just who the so-called Pakistani Taliban is, who makes up the insurgencies in Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas in the Swat Valley. We need information about whether parties are giving al Qaeda hospitality and protection and any threats posed by Lashkar-e-Taibe is essential, as is an understanding of how various groups in Afghanistan may interrelate and interact with the groups in Pakistan. We will have an opportunity today to explore the myriad interrelationships, as well as ideological, religious, and political agendas of these groups.

Finally, in an overall effort to better understand the threats posed, we will assess the trends in these lines of conflict, including attack capacity, recruitment, and financing. Those of us serving also on the Intelligence Committee regularly receive threat assessments in a classified context. I would extend the offer to my colleagues that I will try to facilitate a classified briefing for the ad-

ministration to supplement the testimony we receive here today. However, wherever possible, public policy calls for public dialog.

With respect to the fundamental matters at the heart of our policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is important that we offer our members and the public at large an opportunity to hear a public-source threat assessment from a panel of esteemed experts with hands-on experience in the region.

As a candidate, President Obama stated that Afghanistan and Pakistan should be considered the central front on the war of terror. He has ordered into Afghanistan 17,000 additional brave American men and women. He has also commissioned a top-to-bottom policy review. During this time of increasing peril in Afghanistan and Pakistan, a strategic review here in the United States, we seek to help frame the discussion with a deeper understanding of the threats faced in this troubled south Asian region. That is what today's hearing is all about.

[The prepared statement of Hon. John F. Tierney follows:]

Statement of John F. Tierney
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing on "Afghanistan and Pakistan: Understanding a Complex Threat Environment"

As Prepared for Delivery

March 4, 2009

Today, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs holds our second hearing of the 111th Congress by continuing our sustained oversight of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As I noted at our first hearing, an overriding point a number of the Subcommittee members took from a recent visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan last month – whether it was meeting with Presidents Karzai and Zardari, with our U.S. Ambassadors and General McKiernan, or with NGOs and other experts – was that we are at a unique moment to ask fundamental questions about U.S. efforts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The headlines in our newspapers continually remind us of the security challenges we face in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Violence is on the rise in Afghanistan, with coalition fatalities having increased in each of the last five years. Control of the country or parts of it are contested by the Taliban, political insurgents, warlords, and drug traffickers.

Pakistan continues to struggle with extremist insurgents throughout its west as well as political flare-ups in Punjab that threaten to engulf the country in flames of instability.

Increased Taliban strength in Afghanistan and Pakistan is fueled by safe-havens, supply stores, and recruitment centers in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), certain areas of Northwest Frontier Province and Swat Valley, and western portions of Balochistan Province with pan-jihadi support from networks developed in the struggle for Kashmir.

In this swirling fog of combatants, agendas, ethnicities, borders, and traffic it is difficult for some policy makers and the public to discern the nature of the stakes involved and how the lines of conflict interrelate. Whether any or all of these elements constitute an imminent threat to U.S. national interest, and if so, what response is most

During this time of increasing peril in Afghanistan and Pakistan – and strategic review here in the U.S. – we seek to help frame the discussion with a deeper understanding of the threats faced in this troubled South Asian region. That's what today's hearing is all about.

appropriate are issues foremost on America's agenda at this moment in time as we decide what resources, and at what cost, might be brought to bear in the region, and how.

This hearing aims to step behind the headlines and allow Subcommittee members – and the public-at-large – to hear from top independent experts about the threats faced in these countries. The goal here is to try to bring as much clarity as possible; in other words, to try to make some sense of this swirling fog.

After all, before being able to answer the question of what we should do, we first need to have a solid foundation of knowledge about what we're dealing with. In Afghanistan we must be able to distinguish between, and identify the goals of, the Afghan Taliban, the drug cartels, and the various warlords. What is the relative threat, if any, of each to U.S. national security interests, and to the interests of others? It is important to determine any role played by Al Qaeda in the Afghan insurgency, and know who exactly is crossing the border from Pakistan to join the Afghan insurgency.

In Pakistan, we must understand just who the so-called Pakistani Taliban is, and who makes up the insurgencies in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Swat Valley. Information about whether parties are giving Al Qaeda hospitality and protection and any threats posed by Lashkar-e-Taiba is essential, as is an understanding of how various groups in Afghanistan may interrelate and interact with the groups in Pakistan.

We will have an opportunity today to explore the myriad interrelationships – as well as ideological, religious, or political agendas – of these groups.

Finally, in our overall effort to better understand the threats posed, we will assess the trends in these lines of conflict, including attack capacity, recruitment, and financing.

Those of us serving also on the Intelligence Committee regularly receive threat assessments in a classified context. I would extend the offer to my colleagues that I will try to facilitate a classified briefing from the Administration to supplement the testimony we receive here today.

However, wherever possible, public policy calls for public dialogue. With respect to the fundamental matters at the heart of our policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is important that we offer our Members, and the public-at-large, an opportunity to hear a public-source threat assessment from a panel of esteemed experts with hands-on experience in the region.

As a candidate, President Obama stated that Afghanistan and Pakistan should be considered <u>the</u> "central front in the war on terror." He has ordered into Afghanistan 17,000 additional brave American men and women. He has also commissioned a top-to-bottom policy review.

Mr. TIERNEY. And with that, I defer to my colleague, Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the chairman for holding this hearing. I look forward to the witnesses. I will just make a couple of remarks. This hearing provides a great opportunity to see what some nongovernmental witnesses think of the threats that we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We all know that we have spent billions in Afghanistan since 2001. We have seen some progress; however, security has declined as the Taliban and other militant groups have reorganized. As a result, there were 155 combat-related deaths, U.S. deaths in Afghanistan in 2008. This is the most since we have started operations in 2001.

Clearly, we need to reassess our strategy. In Pakistan, we continue to spend a lot of money on Coalition support funding, but this effort has yielded limited success. I think it is also incumbent on us to see if the costs of this policy outweigh the benefits, where might we better spend that money, require more, require less. It needs to be reevaluated.

Since taking office, President Obama has already shifted policy in Afghanistan. In February, on the 17th, he ordered 17,000 additional troops be sent there. This will bring our total to about 55,000. That is for U.S. troops. That is the largest number we have ever seen deployed in that country, from the United States at least. After having ordered the troops into combat, however, the President will receive the results of a high-level review. It seems a little backward. We say all right, we are going to send 17,000 more and then we will conduct a top-to-bottom review to see how they might best be deployed, or if we need to deploy them, or if we should deploy more. We should have a clear policy.

Where we have seen success in other areas—most notably in Iraq, it was after we had a clear, defined strategy and then had our troop levels match and had our policy match the strategy that we had outlined. And it seems to me that we are going a bit backward here. Notably absent from this hearing is a representative from the administration to describe where we are going, who the enemy is, in what ways do we need to reassess. It would seem that, again, this should be done before deployment of more troops rather than after. I realize that that review will be completed before most of those troops arrive in Afghanistan. But there is a lot of preparation that needs to go into it and it seems to me that we should do the assessment first.

I should note that this is not just a partisan issue, it is not just Republicans saying this. Yesterday the AP reported that John Murtha, who holds a fairly important position on the Appropriations Committee, estimated that it would take as many as 600,000 troops to fully squelch violence in that country. Quote: Murtha also said he is uncomfortable with President Barak Obama's decision to increase the number of troops in that country by 17,000 before a goal was clearly defined. It is not just Republicans saying this. It is people, across the board, saying let's define the goal, let's reassess our strategy before we make clear commitments here.

Absent a policy statement from the White House on this, I'm inclined, as much as I don't usually, to agree with Mr. Murtha here, that we are putting the cart before the horse. We should see the

strategy outlined and we ought to have the reassessment before we decide how many troops and how they should be deployed.

And with that, I thank the chairman again for calling the hearing and look forward to the witnesses.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Flake. Thank you for your unspoken acknowledgement that Members of both sides of the aisle on this committee are questioning the strategy and whether one exists, when it will exist and we will go forward. Of course, we will hear from the administration in due course, giving them an opportunity, as we gave the courtesy of previous administrations, to develop their strategy before we make them come in and testify about it. In the meantime, hopefully—we are going to have some testimony here today from a distinguished panel.

I will just introduce them before and then ask for their statements. Mr. Peter Bergen is a senior fellow at the New American Foundation. He is a national security analyst for CNN. His research focuses on the al Qaeda network, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Iraq. And he has authored two books on al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

Mr. Joshua T. White is a research fellow at the Institute for Global Engagement, is a Ph.D. Candidate at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. His research focuses on Islamic politics and political stability in south Asia, and he spent nearly a year living in the northwest frontier province of Pakistan in 2005 and 2006.

Dr. Paul R. Pillar is a visiting professor and director of studies at the Security Study Program at Georgetown University. He retired in 2005 from a distinguished 28-year career in the U.S. Intelligence Community in which his last role was National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia.

I want to thank you all for making yourselves available today and for sharing your substantial expertise both through testimony and in your written remarks. Your written remarks will be entered in entirety on the record and we ask that you keep your remarks as close to within 5 minutes as you can. Although we have an abbreviated panel here today, I'm sure we want to hear what you have to say. We will be as generous on the 5 minutes as we can.

It is the policy of the subcommittee to swear in witnesses before they testify. So I ask you to please stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. The record will please reflect that all the witnesses answered in the affirmative. And, Mr. Bergen, we will start with you if you're prepared and welcome your remarks.

STATEMENTS OF PETER BERGEN, SCHWARTZ SENIOR FELLOW AT NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION AND AUTHOR OF THE OSAMA BIN LADEN I KNOW: AN ORAL HISTORY OF AL QAEDA'S LEADER (2006), AS WELL AS INSIDE THE SECRET WORLD OF OSAMA BIN LADEN (2001); JOSHUA T. WHITE, RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AND PH.D CANDIDATE AT JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES; AND PAUL R. PILLAR, PH.D, VISITING PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF STUDIES, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, AND FORMER NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR THE NEAR EAST AND ASIA

STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you very much, Chairman Tierney, and thank you, ranking member—Congressman Flake. I wanted to respond just briefly to some of the things that Representative Flake mentioned about the deployment of the 17,000 soldiers. While it is certainly the case that the administration is still in the middle of strategic review both on the CENTCOM side and on the Holbrooke side and DOD generally, obviously the most important political event that Afghanistan faces is the election, and securing the election is the most important thing in the short term the American administration must do. Whether that election happens on August 20th, as at one point it was planned—now, of course, President Hamid Karzai is saying it might happen as early as April 21st. But whenever it happens, clearly, securing that election is a consideration that sort of trumps any other.

Without a secure election, you could imagine a situation where all the Pashtuns don't vote. Then you would have a very contested situation, not dissimilar perhaps to the election in Iraq where a lot of, you know, Sunnis essentially boycotted. And we know what that resulted in.

So securing this election is incredibly important. My comments are—basically I have three observations. One is how do the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan fit into the wider war that we are fighting; what kind of war are we fighting? The Bush administration framed this as a war on terror. I think that was a rather open-ended and ambiguous framing and we should be more specific about who we are actually fighting. We are fighting al Qaeda and its allies. This framing is very useful in Afghanistan and Pakistan because then we can ask ourselves who exactly is allied to al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Chairman Tierney raised the question to what extent is al Qaeda influencing what is going on in Afghanistan. I think this is, in a sense, one of the main things we need to answer today. In my view, the Taliban has morphed together ideologically and tactically with al Qaeda to a degree which is almost quite surprising if you think about the history of the Taliban.

The Taliban were a very provincial group of people when they were in power. Mullah Omar only visited his own capital of Kabul twice in the 5 years he ran the country. And they banned television. You know the history.

Now they have a very aggressive propaganda operation. They are talking about their global jihad. They've made a number of references saying bin Laden is issuing some sort of orders which they are responding to, which I take at face value. They adopted the al Qaeda in Iraq insurgency playbook almost to the letter, which is one of the reasons we are where we are today in Afghanistan between the suicide attacks going up exponentially, the beheadings, the use—the very effective use of information operations against us, etc. So al Qaeda and the Taliban, at least on the upper levels, have morphed together ideologically and tactically.

On the lower levels, sure, there are lots of local members of the Taliban who are influenced because they are involved with drug trafficking. Well, they have some purely local concern and these are people that definitely—the United States and the Afghan Government can do deals with, just as we have a number of different deals in Iraq where we have probably a couple of hundred separate peace negotiations for particular insurgent groups.

Yes, that is plausible in Afghanistan, but there is a huge caveat. There is a big difference between al Qaeda in Iraq, which was really a foreign group, and was seen as a foreign group, and the Taliban itself and Afghanistan. The Taliban is the guy next door that you grew up with if you lived in the Pashtun areas of the country. And also al Qaeda has been in this area for much longer than they were in Iraq. Al Qaeda, after all, was founded in Pakistan in 1988. Bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri, they spent most of their adult lives in and around Pakistan and Afghanistan. They understand the local scene much better. So it is going to be harder—obviously we want to co-opt, split or make some kind of deal where you have the Taliban moving away, reconcilable Taliban.

But my caveat today is that I think that is going to be a little harder than it was in Iraq and it wasn't easy in Iraq either.

One other broad question in the time I have left is why should we be in Afghanistan at all? I mean, al Qaeda isn't headquartered there. They are headquartered in Pakistan. By the way, do the thought experiment, where Iran was the headquarters of al Qaeda, Iran was the headquarters of the Taliban. Iranian nuclear scientists have met with bin Laden to discuss nuclear weapons before 9/11 and the Iranian nuclear establishment had been leaking technology and know-how to Libya and North Korea. Undoubtedly we would have gone to war against Iran if that was the case after 9/11. But, of course, that is not Iran, that is Pakistan.

So here is a nominal close ally which is the headquarters and has continued to be the headquarters for the last 8 years of these groups that the United States is at war with. So why don't we—why should we be in Afghanistan at all? I think there is a very simple answer to that.

First—two answers. One is we have a moral obligation to get it right there. We overthrew their government and we owe it to the Afghans to do it. This is the third poorest country in the world and we have already run a videotape where we basically washed our hands of the situation. It is very important to remember that in 1989, the United States closed its Embassy in Kabul and both the George H.W. Bush administration and the Clinton administration essentially washed their hands of Afghanistan. And we know what

happened as a result of that. Al Qaeda and the Taliban moved in to fill that vacuum.

We cannot let that happen again. So our strategy in Afghanistan is essentially to not allow the Taliban to come back and basically give al Qaeda another sanctuary, which is—would undoubtedly happen if we basically did what we did in 1989 again. I'm fairly confident that no one on this committee is advocating or thinking along those lines to do something like that. But clearly we need to get it right.

Afghanistan, as Admiral Mike Mullen pointed out, is an economy-of-force operation. It has been an economy-of-force operation. You get what you pay for and we need to get serious about making it right.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bergen follows:]

Thank you Chairman Tierney, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before you.

I will try and answer three related questions today.

1. In what kind of war is the US engaged *in general* and how do the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan play into this war?

2. Who are the United States and it allies fighting in Afghanistan? An important subset of this question is: What are the networks in Pakistan that support the Afghan insurgency?

3. Why should the US sustain its commitments in Afghanistan? After all, it is now more than seven years after 9/11 and al Qaeda is no longer headquartered there, but is instead located in Pakistan.

I will also suggest some policy proposals that flow from this analysis that are appended as an annex to this document.

1. In what kind of war is the US engaged *in general* and how do the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan play into this war?

How does American policy in Afghanistan fit into what the Bush administration framed as the 'war on terror'? President Bush declared an open-ended and ambiguous 'war on terror' and took the nation to war against a tactic, rather than a war against a specific enemy, which was obviously al Qaeda and anyone allied to it. When the United States went to war against the Nazis and the Japanese during World War II Roosevelt and his congressional supporters did not declare war against U-boats and kamikaze pilots, but on the Nazi state and Imperial Japan.

The war on terror, sometimes known as the Global War on Terror or by the clunky acronym the GWOT, became the lens through which the Bush administration judged almost all of its foreign policy decisions, which was dangerously counter-productive. The GWOT framework propelled the Bush administration into its entanglement in Iraq, which had nothing to do with 9/11 but was launched under the rubric of the war on terror and the erroneous claims that Saddam Hussein had WMDs that he might give to terrorists, including al Qaeda to whom he was supposedly allied, and that he therefore threatened American interests. None of this, of course, was true.

The Bush administration also painted the GWOT in existential terms. Nine days after 9/11 Bush addressed Congress in a speech watched live by tens of millions of Americans in which he said that al Qaeda followed in the footsteps "of the murderous ideologies of the 20th century…They follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism," implying that the fight against al Qaeda would be similar to World War II or the Cold War. But this portrayal of the war on terror was massively overwrought. The Nazis occupied and subjugated most of Europe and instigated a global conflict that

killed tens of millions. And when the U.S. fought the Nazis she spent 40% of her GDP to do so and fielded millions of soldiers. Communist regimes killed 100 million people in wars, prison camps, enforced famines and pogroms. And had the Cold War ended with a bang instead of a whimper much of the human race would have vanished. By contrast, al Qaeda might one day launch another attack on the United States, but its capacity to do so is very diminished today, and the group will never pose an existential threat to the United States.

While the Bush administration inflated the very real threat that al Qaeda and its allies pose, many Europeans have underestimated that threat. European politicians, who have lived through the bombing campaigns of various nationalist and leftist terror groups for decades, have often said that al Qaeda it just another criminal/terrorist group that can be dealt with by police action and law enforcement alone. This is not the case. A typical European terrorist organization like the Irish Republican Army would call in warnings before its attacks and its single largest massacre killed 29 people. By contrast, al Qaeda has declared war on the United States repeatedly as it did for the first time to a Western audience with Osama bin Laden's 1997 interview with CNN. Following that declaration of war the terror group attacked American Embassies, a US war ship, the Pentagon and the financial heart of the United States, killing thousands of civilians without warning; acts of war by any standard. Al Qaeda is obviously at war with United States and so to respond by simply recasting the GWOT as the GPAT, the Global Police Action against Terrorists, would be foolish and dangerous.

What then *is* the war that the US is engaged in? The United States is clearly at "War against al Qaeda and its Allies." And instead of the Bush formulation of "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" the American policy in this war should be, "Anyone who is against the terrorists is with us." After all it is only al Qaeda and its several affiliates in countries like Iraq, Lebanon and Algeria and allied groups such the Taliban that kill U.S. soldiers and civilians and attack American interests around the globe. Everyone else in the world is a potential or actual ally in the fight against al Qaeda and its affiliates because those organizations threaten almost every category of institution, government and ethnic grouping.

To what extent then is the Taliban in both Afghanistan and Pakistan allied with al Qaeda? If the Taliban isn't allied with al Qaeda then it is part of the solution, and if it is an al Qaeda ally then it is part of the problem.

There was a fair amount of tension between Osama bin Laden and many leaders of the Taliban pre-9/11 but we need to be clear that the Taliban—never a monolithic movement—is much closer to al Qaeda today than it was eight years ago. Yes, there are local groups of the Taliban operating for purely local reasons but the upper levels of the Taliban on both sides of the Afghan/Pakistan border have morphed together ideologically and tactically with al Qaeda. Some examples follow:

-Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban, sent suicide attackers to Spain in January 2008, is at war with the Pakistani state and sees himself as part of the

global jihad.

-The Haqqani family, arguably the most important component of the insurgency on the both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border, has ties with al Qaeda that date back to the 1980s.

-Mullah Dadullah, a key Afghan Taliban commander gave interviews to Al Jazeera in 2006 before he was killed, in which he made some illuminating observations about the Taliban's links to al Qaeda. Dadullah said, "We have close ties. Our cooperation is ideal," adding that Osama bin Laden is issuing orders to the Taliban. Dadullah also noted that "we have 'give and take' relations with the mujahideen in Iraq."

-Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a commander allied to the Taliban, has been close to al Qaeda since at least 1989.

-The use of suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices and the beheadings of hostages, all techniques that al Qaeda perfected in Iraq, are methods that the Taliban has increasingly adopted in Afghanistan and have grown exponentially there since 2005.

-Al Qaeda was founded in Pakistan two decades ago and bin Laden has been fighting alongside Afghan mujahideen groups since the mid-1980s. Al Qaeda Central on the Afghan/Pakistan border is much less of a 'foreign' group with far deeper and older roots in the region than Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) ever was in Iraq.

One could go on listing examples of the Taliban's ideological and tactical collaboration with al Qaeda, but the larger point is that separating al Qaeda and the Taliban is not going to be as relatively simple as splintering Iraqi insurgent groups from AQI.

While, of course, the US should be splintering, buying off and co-opting as many elements of the Taliban as possible, we also need to be realistic about how much closer Al Qaeda and the Taliban have grown together in recent years.

This is why the formulation that the United States is "At War with al Qaeda and its Allies" is a useful way to frame American policy in Afghanistan (and Pakistan and elsewhere). If militant groups are willing to reject al Qaeda, recognize the legitimacy of their government, end their attacks on international forces and stop training terrorists for missions overseas then they there are no longer allies of al Qaeda and therefore the United States is not at war with them.

If, however, al Qaeda's allies will not takes those steps then they are enemies of the United States. Today in the Pakistan/Afghanistan region, the Pakistani Taliban, the senior leadership of the Afghan Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezbi-Islami, the Haqqani network, the Islamic Jihad Union, elements of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohamed are all allies of al Qaeda who should be considered enemies of the United States unless they take the four steps necessary to prove otherwise which, to repeat, are,

reject al Qaeda, recognize the legitimacy of the government, end attacks on international forces and stop training terrorists for overseas missions.

2. Who are the United States and it allies fighting in Afghanistan?

When President Bush left office the Taliban were stronger than at any point since they had lost Kabul seven years earlier. The Taliban, which in 2002 had barely been more than a nuisance, now control large sections of Afghanistan's most important road, the 300-mile Kabul to Kandahar highway. And the south of the country is not only the source of the vast majority of the world's heroin, but it is also quite dangerous for those the Taliban deems an enemy, which, in practice, means pretty much anyone who isn't part of their movement. By mid-2008 more Americans soldiers were dying in Afghanistan every month than in Iraq. In early 2009 a US official involved in Afghan policy put the number of Taliban fighters somewhere between 12, 000 to 18,000. Whatever the exact number the Taliban today is obviously a larger force than they were in 2006 when US intelligence officials in Afghanistan estimated that they numbered *at most* 10,000.

Between the rising Taliban insurgency, the epidemic of attacks by suicide bombers and spiraling criminal activity fueled by the drug trade, by the time President Obama took office Afghanistan looked something like Iraq in the summer of 2003, when the descent into violent conflict began. As a former senior Afghan Cabinet member explained, "If international forces leave, the Taliban will take over in one hour."

When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan they were a provincial bunch; their leader, Mullah Omar, rarely visited Kabul in the five years that he ran the country and he made a point of avoiding meeting with non-Muslims and most journalists.

But this is not your father's Taliban. Where once the Taliban had banned television, now they boast an active video propaganda operation named *Ummat*, which posts regular updates to the Web. They court the press and Taliban spokesmen are now available at any time of the day or night to discuss the latest developments. The Taliban had banned poppy growing in 2000; now they kill government forces eradicating poppy fields, and they profit handsomely from the opium trade. The Taliban also offer something that you might find strange, which is rough and ready justice. The Afghan judicial system remains a joke, and so farmers and their families--the vast majority of the population-- looking to settle disputes about land, water and grazing rights can find a swift resolution of these problems in a Taliban court. As their influence extends, the Taliban has even set up their own parallel government, and appointed judges and officials in some areas.

The Taliban's rhetoric is now filled with references to Iraq and Palestine in a manner that mirrors bin Laden's public statements. They have also adopted the playbook of the Iraqi insurgency wholesale, embracing suicide bombers and IED attacks on US and NATO convoys. The Taliban only began deploying suicide attackers in large numbers after the success of such operations in Iraq had become obvious to all. For the first years after the fall of the Taliban suicide attacks were virtually unknown in Afghanistan,

jumping to 17 in 2005 and 123 a year later. Just as suicide bombings in Iraq had had an enormous strategic impact—from pushing the United Nations out of the country to helping spark a civil war—such attacks also have made much of southern Afghanistan a no-go area for both foreigners and for any reconstruction efforts.

By the time President Bush left office there were 31,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan, the most that had deployed there since the fall of the Taliban. Afghanistan is a country ideally suited to guerrilla warfare with its high mountain ranges and a land mass that is a third larger than Iraq's, while its population is some four million or so greater. Yet, by early 2009, there were four times more soldiers and policemen in Iraq than there were in Afghanistan. 560,000 members of the Iraqi security services and some 130,000 American soldiers were in Iraq, while Afghanistan had only 140,000 local soldiers and police and around 60,000 US and NATO troops. Classical counterinsurgency doctrine suggests that security forces need to be at a ratio of 25 per thousand of population to secure a country. Given its more than 30 million citizens, Afghanistan needs as many as 600,000 policemen and soldiers, yet by 2009 there were only a third of that number.

The relatively low number of soldiers means that American and NATO forces can clear the Taliban out of areas but can't hold many of those cleared areas and then rebuild them, the critical sequence in any successful counterinsurgency. One western diplomat in Kabul in 2008 described military operations in the south of the country as much like "mowing the lawn" every year. NATO forces went in and cleared out Taliban sanctuaries there and then had to go back and do it all over again in the same place the following year.

In addition to the small numbers of boots on the ground necessary to secure the country, Afghanistan's ballooning drug trade also helped to expand the Taliban's ranks. It is no coincidence that opium and heroin production, which by 2009 was equivalent to one-third of Afghanistan's licit economy--spiked at the same time that the Taliban staged a comeback. Afghanistan is the source of an astonishing 92 percent of the world's heroin supply.

The drug trade not only helped fund the Taliban it also fueled Afghanistan's pervasive corruption. By 2008, according to the watchdog group, Transparency International, Afghanistan was rated one of the most corrupt countries on the planet, alongside such completely failed states as Somalia.

What are the networks in Pakistan that support the Afghan insurgency?

A key to the resurgence of the Taliban can be summarized in one word: Pakistan. The 'Quetta shura' headed by Mullah Omar is located in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan and the 'Peshawar Shura' is based in the capital of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. In addition, Hekmatyar operates in the Pakistani tribal areas of Dir and Bajur; the Haqqani network is based in Waziristan, and al Qaeda has a presence in

Waziristan, Bajaur and Chitral. The headquarters of the Taliban and its key allies are, in short, in Pakistan.

The Taliban has deep roots in Pakistan. Many members of the movement of religious warriors grew up in refugee camps there. Not only that, but the Taliban, an almost entirely Pashtun organization, draws strength from the fact that, at some 40 million, the Pashtuns are one of the largest ethnic groupings in the world without their own state, and they straddle both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border, a line that was drawn by the British in 1893, that, in any event, many Pashtuns don't recognize. Indeed, there are almost twice as many Pashtuns in Pakistan as there are in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani government routinely denies that it provides a haven for the Taliban leadership. An explanation for the seeming dichotomy between the fact that U.S. military and intelligence officials universally hold the view that the Taliban is headquartered in Pakistan and the government denial of this, is that the Pakistani government has never completely controlled its own territory. And when civilians are at the helm, nor does it even control its own military. ISI, the Pakistani military intelligence agency, at some levels has continued to tolerate and/or maintain links with Taliban leaders throughout the 'war on terror'.

How did this happen? In part, because Pakistan's generals supplemented their decades-old policy of supporting Kashmir jihadi groups with a doctrine they termed "strategic depth," which meant they wanted to ensure that they had a pliant, pro-Pakistani Afghan state on their western border in the event that India attacked over their eastern border. In practice, the doctrine of strategic depth led Pakistan to support militant Pashtun Islamists in Afghanistan like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and later the Taliban, who the Pakistani government believed were most closely aligned with their own anti-Indian policies. Both the Kashmiri jihadi groups and the Taliban would evolve Frankenstein-like into groups that the Pakistani state could eventually no longer control, and would start to attack Pakistan's government itself.

The general backwardness of Pakistan's tribal regions, where many of the militants are located, can be gauged by the female literacy rate, which is only 3%. And an indicator of the ferocity of the tribes are the compounds in which they live, generally mud or concrete fortresses studded with gun ports ideal for fighting off raiding parties. Larger compounds are defended by artillery. In Pashtu the words for "cousin" and "enemy" are the same, which is indicative of the endemic low-level warfare that is the way of life in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where all males are armed and the blood feud is a multi-generational pursuit that the tribesmen seem to genuinely enjoy.

It was in this remote, ungovernable region that al Qaeda rebuilt its operations from 2003 forward. An American intelligence official stationed in Pakistan said that by 2008 there were more than 2,000 foreign fighters in the region, while a US intelligence official who tracks al Qaeda put the number somewhat lower, saying the foreign militants in the FATA consisted of around 100 to 150 members of the core of al Qaeda who had sworn *bayat,* a religiously-binding oath of personal allegiance to bin Laden; a couple of

hundred more 'free agent' foreigners, mostly Arabs and Uzbeks, living there who were "all but in name al Qaeda personnel", and thousands of militant Pashtun tribal members, into whose families some of the foreigners had intermarried.

The militants' training camps are relatively modest in size. "People want to see barracks. [In fact,] the camps use dry riverbeds for shooting and are housed in compounds for 20 people, where they are taught calisthenics and bomb-making," a senior American military intelligence official explained. The existence of these camps boded well for Al Qaeda, since terrorist plots have a much higher chance of success if some of the cell's members have received personal training in bomb-making and terrorist tradecraft rather than merely reading about such matters on the Internet, as many freelance terrorists have done.

To root out those militants the Pakistanis first tried the hammer approach in the FATA in 2004 with a number of military operations that were essentially defeats for the Pakistani army, which is geared for land wars with India, rather than effective counterinsurgency campaigns. The failed military operations were followed by appeasement in the form of "peace" agreements with the militants in 2005 and 2006, which were really admissions of military failure and led the Taliban and its al Qaeda allies to establish even greater sway in the FATA.

Today the militants wholly control all seven of the tribal agencies in the FATA and their writ extends into the "settled" areas of the North West Frontier Province, almost up to the gates of Peshawar, the provincial capital. They also control Swat, whose verdant valleys and towering mountains had once been one of Pakistan's premier tourist destinations, and is now firmly in the grip of the Pakistani Taliban. The Taliban conduct their own kangaroo courts publicly hanging men for infractions such as drinking, and shooting burqa-clad women for supposed promiscuity.

America handed more than $11 billion to the Pakistani military after September 11 for its help in the 'war on terror'. Yet the Taliban and al Qaeda remained headquartered in Pakistan throughout the Bush administration's two terms. By July 2007 the sixteen American intelligence agencies that collectively make up the US intelligence community all signed off on a National Intelligence Estimate that concluded that al Qaeda was not on the wane but was rather resurging, and further warned that the terror group "has protected or regenerated key elements of Homeland attack capability, including a safe haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), operational lieutenants, and its top leadership."

By early 2008 the Bush administration had tired of the Pakistani government's unwillingness or inability to take out the militants in the FATA and greatly expanded the number of strikes from Predator drones armed with missiles targeting militants in the tribal regions. In 2007 there were three Predator strikes in the tribal areas, while in 2008 there were 34. Several of those strikes killed al Qaeda leaders such as Usama al Kini, the mastermind of the 2008 bombing of the Marriott hotel in Islamabad; Abu Khabab al Masri, who had overseen al Qaeda's investigations into chemical and biological agents,

and Abu Laith al Libi, the number three man in the al Qaeda hierarchy (perhaps the most dangerous job in the world given the half dozen or so men who have occupied that position who have subsequently been captured or killed). Under President Obama the missile strike program has actually accelerated, with five strikes already since he took office.

The missile strike program is, however, deeply unpopular among Pakistanis who see it as an infringement on their sovereignty. A poll released in June 2008 found that 52% of them blamed the United States for the violence in their country, while only 8% blamed al Qaeda! American officials have to weigh the risks from allowing al Qaeda operatives continuing to build up their network in the FATA---where they had been training Europeans for attacks in the West---against the possibility that strikes that kill civilians are a recruitment tool for the Taliban and might destabilize the government.

Despite American criticisms that the Pakistanis could do more to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda, Pakistan's officer class feels strongly that their country is doing as much as it can to combat the militants, citing as evidence the 1,347 of their soldiers who had died fighting the militants between 2001 and 2008 (a number that outweighs the 1,065 NATO and US forces who died in the same period fighting the Taliban across the border in Afghanistan.)

While there is no doubt that elements of the Pakistani army had done much to combat the militants, lingering suspicions remains about the military intelligence agency ISI, which had been instrumental in the rise of the Taliban and a number of the Kashmiri militant groups. The most dramatic evidence for the continued links that some in ISI maintained with terrorists was the suicide bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul in July 7, 2008, which killed more than 50, the single worst attack in the capital since the fall of the Taliban seven years earlier. Both the US and Afghan governments said the bombing was aided by elements of the ISI, an assertion they based on intercepted phone calls between the plotters and phone numbers in Pakistan.

The new civilian government installed following the February 2008 election tried to bring ISI under its control. Just before Prime Minister Gilani traveled to Washington in July 2008 his government announced that the ISI would hence forward report to the Ministry of Interior. Within a few hours of that announcement the Army countermanded the order, which showed who is wearing the trousers in the military-civilian relationship.

The tension between army and the civilian government could also be seen in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks in late November 2008, which were carried out by militants from Pakistan. Gilani said he would send the ISI chief to India to help with the investigation, a request that the military agency simply ignored, making it clear that Pakistan had effectively two governments: a weak democratically elected one and a strong unelected body that controls almost all decisions related to Pakistan's national security and foreign policy.

The Mumbai attacks also underlined how little things had really changed inside Pakistan's jihadi culture since 9/11. The group that carried out the attacks, Lashkar-e-Taiba, (LeT) had been officially banned in January 2002, but that did not prevent it from organizing the 60-hour attack on Mumbai, much of it carried live by news channels around the world, a series of assaults that was often described as 'India's 9/11.' The Mumbai attack underlined the fact that Pakistan had lost control of its jihadists who sought to undermine the creeping rapprochement between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.

What is worrying as Pakistan heads in to 2009 is its economy is in free-fall, a plunge that preceded the global financial crisis. And the high Pakistani fertility rate puts it on track to become the fifth largest country in the world by 2015 with a population of almost 200 million. The combination of a sharply rising population with not enough jobs will likely play into the hands of the militants who often recruit young men with time on their hands. Unless Pakistan changes that equation the plague of the Taliban, al Qaeda and the Kashmiri militant groups will only grow there.

Annex: Policy proposals that the committee members might consider.

1. Press for better information about trends in Afghanistan

Congress must press for more information to be made public about Afghanistan from the US military, State Department and other US agencies. While the minutest trends in Iraq are a matter of public record, similar information is either not collected and/or not publicly disseminated about Afghanistan. If we don't know were we are coming from it's hard to know the direction we are headed in.

2. The U.S. must decouple the Taliban from the drug trade, which has been one of the principal motors of their resurgence.

'First, do no harm' is a sensible injunction in combating any insurgency, but the United States adopted a boneheaded counter-narcotics strategy in Afghanistan. Every year American taxpayers paid more for that anti-narcotics policy than Afghan farmers make from the gate price of their opium crops. Meanwhile, with almost every new growing season Afghanistan has produced ever-larger amounts of opium and its byproduct heroin. A more failed policy it was hard to imagine, yet the U.S. gamely pressed on with its main policy prescription, which was the eradication of poppy fields.

The Bush administration's counter-narcotics policy placed eradication at its center, even though it was met with growing Afghan skepticism and, in some cases, violence, and coincided with a general decline in public support for the U.S. and NATO mission in Afghanistan. Why was the policy so unpopular? Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and so many rural Afghans have very few options to make money other than to engage in poppy growing. Abruptly ending the poppy/opium trade was not an option as that would have put two million people out of work and impoverish millions more as the only really functional part of the economy was poppy and opium production. You simply can not eviscerate the livelihoods of the millions of Afghans who grew poppies and not expect a backlash.

The eradication approach has only created more enemies for the coalition as the farmers who had their crops destroyed are generally the poorer ones who couldn't pay the bribes to have their fields left alone. Needless to say those farmers prove easy recruits to the Taliban cause. The U.S. government, in short, is deeply committed to an unsuccessful drug policy that helps its enemies. The Taliban derives not only substantial financial benefits from the opium trade, but also political benefits from its supportive stance on poppy growing, masterfully exploiting situations in which U.S.-sponsored eradication forces are pitted against poor farmers.

As General David Barno, the US military commander in Afghanistan from 2003-2005, has wisely pointed out, the measure of a successful counternarcotics policy should

not be hectares of poppy destroyed every year, but hectares of other crops that are planted.

To that end:

-The United States should send more agricultural advisers to Afghanistan, an overwhelmingly agricultural country, and provide them with incentives such as fast-track promotions for working in Afghanistan.

-The United States and other NATO countries should open their markets to Afghan farm products and handicrafts.

-The international community should help Kabul set up an agency, modeled on the Canadian Wheat Board, that would purchase crops from farmers at consistent prices, and market and distribute them internationally.

-To end the culture of impunity that Afghan drug kingpins currently enjoy, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration should make public the list of the country's top drug suspects, including government officials, a practice that would likely see results in Afghanistan's shame-based culture. It appears that the list has so far not been published because it would embarrass certain officials in the Karzai government. Publication is long overdue.

-Because Afghanistan's judicial system is still too weak to handle major drug cases, Washington and Kabul should sign an extradition treaty allowing Afghan drug kingpins to be tried in the United States, as has happened in the past with Colombian drug lords.

-The United States should also endorse a pilot demonstration project to harness poppy cultivation for the production of legal medicinal opiates such as morphine for sale to countries like Brazil that are in short supply of cheap pain drugs. While there are some legitimate criticisms of this idea—principally that it would be difficult to make sure that Afghan opium was only going into the legitimate market—one low-risk approach would be to allow the legalized opiate trade to debut as a pilot project on a small scale in a province with reasonable security. Farmers engaged in legalized poppy growing would enjoy financial incentives that could be revoked, and they would face criminal penalties if they tried to divert their product to the illicit market. Congress could amend the law that requires U.S. opiate manufacturers to purchase at least 80 percent of their opiates from India and Turkey (affording them a guaranteed market) to include Afghanistan. This preferential trade agreement, which was designed to serve U.S. political and strategic interests, should be recalibrated to fit our present-day strategic interests in Afghanistan, where vital national security interests are at stake.

3. Press for security-led reconstruction.

The United States should focus on completing two high-profile projects that will have real benefits for the Afghan people. The first is to secure the important Kandahar-to-

Kabul road, which was opened as a blacktop freeway with much hoopla in 2003, but which is now a suicidal route for anyone driving it without a security detail. This would have broad economic benefits to the country and would send the same kind of signal that securing Route Irish between Baghdad city and Baghdad airport did two years ago, which is that the coalition can bring security to key roads. The second is to finish the work on the Kajaki Dam in southern Afghanistan, which will provide electricity to some 2 million Afghans, most of whom live deep in Taliban country.

American aid should be tied, in part, to an Afghan public employment program similar to the Works Progress Administration program that President Roosevelt instituted during the Great Depression. Afghanistan has a chronic 40 percent official unemployment rate. It also has a desperate need for new roads and dams, and must repair the agricultural aqueducts destroyed by years of war. Meanwhile, Kabul and other major Afghan cities are awash in debris and trash. Cleaning up that rubbish would have a salutary effect on the residents of those cities. Much of the labor required to fix Afghanistan's problems does not require great skill, and millions of Afghans could be set to work rebuilding and cleaning up their country. It is puzzling that the manual labor for major Afghan projects such as the Kabul-to-Jalalabad road has been performed by Chinese workers. This practice must end and contracts for such projects must specify that Afghans are hired for those jobs that they can perform.

4. Much of the terrorism in the region emanates from Pakistan. What can be done about this?

-The mapping of the social networks of terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan should include the identification of the clerical mentors of suicide bombers, as it seems likely that only a relatively small number have persuaded their followers of the religious necessity of martyrdom. Armed with such intelligence, the United States and NATO could ask Pakistan, where most of the suicide attackers originate, to rein in especially egregious clerics.

-The United States, together with the Pakistani and Afghan governments, should also target the production and distribution networks of *As-Sahab*, al Qaeda's video/audio production arm, as well as the Taliban's analogous *Ummat* propaganda division. Given the close connections between these networks and al Qaeda and the Taliban, such an effort would also provide important clues to the whereabouts of terrorist leaders.

-The president should take every opportunity to make it clear that America's commitment to Afghanistan is not just until the next election cycle, but for years to come. The American public, which understands that Afghanistan's reversion into a failed state would be a prelude to al Qaeda regaining a safe haven in the country, will support this approach. Elements of the Pakistan national security apparatus are not prepared to eliminate militant groups on their territory because they are a means of asserting de facto control over Afghanistan should the Americans withdraw. Only an unambiguous declaration of long-term U.S. commitment will convince Pakistan's government to end its passive tolerance for the militant groups headquartered on the country's western border.

-To help tamp down the insurgency in FATA and other areas of the NWFP, America should help the Pakistanis build up their counterinsurgency capabilities. The Pakistani army is built for a land war with India, not for fighting terrorists and insurgents. Pakistani officers should be encouraged to attend counterinsurgency courses at American war colleges, and the United States should support such courses at Pakistan's National Defense University. None of this would cost a lot of U.S. dollars and would yield potentially large results, as the new U.S. counterinsurgency strategy has done in Iraq.

-Small amounts of discrete U.S. aid in support of deradicalization programs for jailed Pakistani militants could also yield large returns. Such programs have had some success in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore, but have not been tried in Pakistan. Pakistani officials would benefit from learning about best practices in countries that have already spent years in building up their own counter-radicalization programs.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. White.

STATEMENT OF JOSHUA T. WHITE

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Flake, for the opportunity to be here today. I want to take up the chairman's challenge and try to make a little sense of the fog and particularly the fog that we see on the Pakistani side of the border. And in doing so, I'd like to make just two brief points about some of the trend lines that I've observed over the last 4 years traveling to Pakistan and particularly in the frontier areas.

On the one hand, we see a very striking trend toward consolidation of Islamist groups in Pakistan. You probably know that one of the enduring features of this part of the world is the abundance of ad hoc alliances, and particularly alliances of convenience between tribal blocs, between Islamist groups, between tribal blocs and Islamist groups. And just recently we saw the emergence of a new shura at the Mujahedin, a group of three blocs in Waziristan who have come together to oppose the United States and NATO.

It is very difficult to tease out what these alliances really mean. Often they are simply sort of branding exercises on the part of these organizations more than they are about operational mergers. But nonetheless, we need to take them seriously and we see this happening often. We see the consolidation of Islamist groups. At the same time, just beneath the surface, we are seeing a tremendous amount of fragmentation. And I really began to pay attention to this in 2006 when, as a result of the Institute for Global Engagement's interfaith efforts, I was visiting some of my Pashtun friends down at a place called Bannu, which is adjacent to the north Waziristan tribal agency, and it happened to be just around the corner from the madrassa where John Walker Lynn of the American Taliban had done his studies.

And I was talking with my friends and drinking tea there and I found that a number of them were generally very sympathetic to the Taliban, but they were also increasingly worried about the Taliban. And they were worried because, increasingly, they couldn't figure out who the Taliban were anymore. There were local tribal leaders who had started calling themselves Taliban. There were smuggling gangs who had started calling themselves Taliban. There were militants who had fought in Kashmir, Punjabi militants, who couldn't get their—they couldn't get their jihadi unemployment benefits and so they decided to go over to Bannu and become the Taliban in Bannu. And then there were, of course, the unemployed madrassa graduates from around the corner who had nothing to do, who put on a black turban and called themselves the Taliban.

So it was all very entrepreneurial, but it was also beginning in the mind of my local Pashtunian friends to get out of control. They couldn't tell who the Taliban really was. Now, if you take this trend and you multiply it across northwest Pakistan over the last 4 years, you can get a sense for why this fragmentation has been so troubling, not just to me and not just hopefully to you, but also to Pakistanis and to the Government of Pakistan.

The Taliban movement at large has really spun out of the control of the government and it is impossible at this point for the govern-

ment to deal with the quote-unquote Taliban as a unitary actor, as one organization. And this is why at the end of the day, I tend to worry more about fragmentation than I do about new groups, new umbrella groups emerging which call themselves the Taliban.

The second point very briefly follows from this, which is that my experience in the frontier is that all insurgency at the end of the day is local. And all you have to do is look at a map of the frontier, a detailed map, and you can see that the frontier of Pakistan is this bewildering patchwork of different systems of government, different tribes, different regulations, local grievances, local dynamics and, of course, local groups which call themselves the Taliban.

And to be very simple about it—and we can speak about this in the question and answer—the United States needs to be very intentional about targeting its assistance, its development assistance, its security assistance and its governance assistance in an integrated way to take account for these local dynamics.

Waziristan is very different from Peshawar, Peshawar is very different from Swat. And even though these regions are close together, they represent strikingly different environments. And our assistance needs to be cognizant of that.

We can talk about what this means specifically; but in my view, if U.S. assistance is going to be effective in meeting our core objectives, we need to ask exactly where is the money going, to which regions, and we need to ask how the money going to those specific regions is addressing local dynamics, how it is addressing root causes. Because in some areas, lack of development is arguably a very important cause of the insurgency. In other areas, it is really an unimportant effect. And we need at least, as best we can from Washington, to tease that out so that our assistance can be as effective as possible.

I look forward to taking your questions.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Dr. Pillar.

STATEMENT OF PAUL R. PILLAR

Mr. PILLAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your opening statement, you outlined a whole host of extremely important questions, and I hope you consider this hearing a success if we get to only a fraction of them. I will try to just comment on a few things that embellish on that list that you mentioned.

The current conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan are multifaceted, they are interrelated, they affect a variety of U.S. interests. There is no way to clearly categorize these conflicts or the protagonists in these conflicts into allies versus adversaries and the good guys versus bad guys. It is far more complex than that. The main reason that I think we are in Afghanistan is exactly as Peter Bergen stated.

But I would then quickly jump to the other main interests that we have here as far as U.S. interest is concerned, and that is Pakistan, less we forget the sixth most populous country in the world, the second most populous primarily Muslim country in the world. We have a strong interest in Pakistani stability and everything that implies with regard to getting the Pakistanis to try to cooper-

ate with us, not just on counterterrorism, but on any other U.S. interests that touch both of our governments.

The one other thing I would say on that score is anything that involves Pakistan also involves the Pakistani-Indian conflict and rivalry; the tendency of both of those two parties to zero sum everything, to look at anything good for one of the parties to be bad for the other one—even though that is not really the case, but that is how they perceive it—means that U.S. policy toward Pakistan inevitably is going to affect the Indo-Pakistani rivalry.

You mentioned narcotics, Mr. Chairman. We will just note for the record that Afghanistan is the largest producer of opium poppy in the world, used for heroin. And the problem of poppy cultivation is inseparable from the problem of infrastructure and economic development. The fact is, in Afghanistan it is just darn hard to make a living growing legal crops that are bulkier and heavier but do not bring as good a return as poppy. And it is also inseparable from the insurgency, the Taliban part of it in particular, which profits from the drug trade.

And one other thing I would note as far as U.S. interests are concerned is we do have already that ongoing counterinsurgency and stabilization effort in Afghanistan being augmented by those 17,000 troops. And so that necessarily entails other operational requirements and interests involving the security of our forces, their resupply and so on, that, like it or not, entail U.S. interests that are going to be with us for some time.

With regard to the insurgency in Afghanistan, which my colleagues, I think, have described the mainlines of very well, I would just further note that you have multiple lines of conflict in Afghanistan that have underlain the over three decades of civil strife and instability in that country. You have an ethnic element, which pits primarily the Pashtuns who have the majority, and the unstable south and east; and also, by the way, the majority of the other side of the Duran line in the tribal areas of Pakistan against other ethnic groups such as Tajiks and Uzbeks, and this was a major factor throughout the period of the war against the Soviets and the subsequent civil war.

You also have the traditional struggles for power between whatever is the central government in Kabul and centers of power elsewhere in the country, primarily those chieftains and militia heads we generally call warlords.

In Pakistan you also have multiple lines of conflict—it is sometimes easy to forget. The one between the radical Islamists such as the Pakistani Taliban that now basically control most of the FATA and have extended their region into other areas like the Valley of Swat is just one facet of one of those lines. We may have seen another facet of that same line just yesterday with the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team, a very well-organized operation in Lahor. But beyond that, you have the uneasy relations between the civilian establishment and the military structure in Pakistan.

We have had a history during Pakistan's six decades of existence of alternation and rule between military and civilian governments. Basically what happens is one side or the other has power for several years, until the Pakistani people get fed up and they throw

them out. And they have just done that with General Musharraf having reached the end of his rope last year.

But any new understanding between the civilian and military structures and leadership of Pakistan, particularly regarding such things as how to deal with the Taliban, has yet to be worked out. And then among the civilians themselves, the acrimony between the supporters of the accidental President, Asif Ali Zardari, and the main opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif, is as deep and strong as ever, punctuated by last week's decision by the PakistaniSupreme Court barring Sharif from running for office.

One thing that we need to remember is that the Pakistani and Afghan protagonists themselves in all these conflicts do not necessarily see the mosaic the same way you or I would see it. In particular, Pakistani leaders, especially military leaders, tend to view everything through the lens of their standoff with India. That is part of the reason most Pakistani military forces are still in the Southeast, facing India, and not in the Northwest, where the trouble that we are more concerned about is going on.

This perspective has also colored and continues to color Pakistanis' views toward Afghanistan and the Taliban. Before Pakistan, Afghanistan is part of their strategic depth as they confront India.

As was noted, the Taliban is originally a creation of Pakistan. And for some Pakistanis, particularly in the military, even if they realize their creation has kind of gotten out of control in a way that they did not foresee, the Taliban is still, in the eyes of at least some of them, a useful hedge against the considerable uncertainty in Afghanistan.

I would close my oral comments by just noting three requirements of any policy review, including the one that the administration has going or any other discussion we may have about setting a new course in this theater. One is—step one, to just determine what U.S. policy objectives ought to be. And that is not self-evident even when it comes to the counterterrorist objectives that are so important.

Second, we have to set relative priorities among what are competing objectives, and they can compete even within the counterterrorist area. For example, we have seen this with some of the U.S. missile strikes on both sides of the Duran line, which have achieved tactical gains in putting out of commission some al Qaeda operatives, but have done so at the price of incurring popular wrath that can increase sympathy and support for terrorist objectives.

And finally, policymakers have to determine not just the relative priority, but the absolute priority of U.S. objectives in the region in the sense of whether they are important enough to warrant the cost and commitment necessary to achieve them.

And I think Congressman Murtha's quoted comment about 600,000 troops—I think General McNeil, the former commander of ISAF used a figure of 400,000—but suffice it to say several hundred thousand that would probably be required according to the counterinsurgency doctrine and manuals to really pacify Afghanistan is a dose of reality that we all need to take into account when we consider any new course.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pillar follows:]

Afghanistan and Pakistan: Understanding a Complex Threat Environment

Testimony to the
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
4 March 2009

Paul R. Pillar
Georgetown University

Current conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan are multifaceted, interrelated, and affect a variety of U.S. interests. They are not reducible to any clear categorization of allies and adversaries. Although it is appropriate to consider events in Afghanistan and Pakistan together because of the ways in which operations and the concerns that drive them cross the Durand Line (the border between the two countries), many of the conflicts have their own dynamics rooted in local interests. And some of the interests at stake have dimensions that extend well beyond Pakistan and Afghanistan.

U.S. Interests

Several U.S. interests are involved in these conflicts.

One is counterterrorism, and more specifically curbing the capabilities of terrorist groups that may have the capability and intention to do major harm to Americans, including possibly in the U.S. homeland. The recent history that weighs heavily on one's thinking in this regard is Afghanistan prior to 9/11, when the Taliban, which then ruled most of Afghanistan, maintained a close alliance with Usama bin Ladin's al-Qa'ida. Preventing a recurrence of that situation probably is the objective that most Americans would believe is worth expenditure of effort in the region, if such effort can indeed preclude a recurrence. The U.S. interest in counterterrorism goes beyond preventing reinstitution of a Taliban regime in Afghanistan, however, especially given the presence within the northwest portions of Pakistan of foreign Islamists, including Arabs of bin Ladin's organization—and according to most informed speculation, bin Ladin himself and his deputy Ayman Zawahiri.

Another set of interests involves Pakistan, the sixth most populous country in the world. The specific U.S. interests here include enlisting Islamabad's cooperation in matters of immediate interest to us, including counterterrorism. It includes the stability of the Pakistani state, with all that implies regarding the inability or unwillingness of the Pakistanis to extend cooperation, or the possibility of political change in Pakistan that might mean even less willingness by Islamabad to cooperate with the United States. It also includes all other facets of the U.S.-Pakistani relationship, and all other ways that this important country could affect matters important to the United States not just now but in the future.

Closely related is U.S. interest in maintaining peace and stability in the relationship between Pakistan and India. The continued rivalry, despite easing of tensions in recent years, between these two South Asian powers that have fought several wars may still present one of the greatest risks anywhere of nuclear weapons being used

in combat. Given the preoccupation of both countries with the conflict between them, anything that involves Pakistan necessarily also involves the Indo-Pakistani rivalry.

Another interest of the United States and the West is narcotics. Afghanistan is the biggest producer in the world of opium poppy used to make heroin. The problem of poppy cultivation is inseparable from problems of infrastructure and economic development in Afghanistan, where it remains very difficult to make a living growing legal crops that may have higher volume but lower value. The drug trade also is inseparable from the Taliban insurgency, which profits from it.

This does not exhaust U.S. interests at stake in this region. The fact that the United States has an ongoing military commitment in Afghanistan, in the process of being substantially augmented with 17,000 additional troops, entails numerous immediate interests involving the security of our forces and the meeting of their operational requirements.

The ongoing stabilization and counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan leads to other secondary interests and concerns for the United States. Contributions of troops, for example, and the restrictions placed on those troops, have been issues in relations between the United States and the Europeans. Some look on the stabilization effort as a test of NATO's ability to perform. Some see the counterinsurgency as a test of the United States's ability to see a commitment through to success. But conversely, images from the conflict have damaged images of the United States elsewhere, especially in portions of the Muslim world where U.S. military operations and collateral damage and casualties resulting from them are seen as further inclination of an American inclination to inflict harm on Muslims.

And finally, to complete the list of U.S. interests involved, there are U.S. relations with other outside powers that have stakes or interests in this region. Afghanistan in the past was a focus of a Great Game between imperial powers. Today, events there, and U.S. reactions to those events, have a bearing on U.S. relations with such outside powers as India, Russia, and Iran.

Conflicts

The conflicts currently playing out in this region begin with the insurgency in Afghanistan, which is being waged chiefly in the southern and eastern portions of the country, mainly by the loosely organized radical Islamists we know as the Taliban. We, and the Afghans, could see what the Taliban's objectives entailed when the group controlled most of the country prior to late 2001. Most Afghans do not support those objectives, but the Taliban has benefitted from popular dismay with the mediocre performance and corruption of the current central government.

Underlying the insurgency are various other divisions and conflicts that have been ingredients in the more than three decades of civil war and strife through which Afghans have suffered. There is an ethnic element, which has pitted Pashtuns of the east and south against other ethnic groups such as Tajiks and Uzbeks. There are sectarian divisions, between the majority Sunnis and minority Shia, who predominantly belong to the traditionally subjugated Hazara ethnic group. And there are the struggles for power, interspersed with deal-making, between the central government and centers of power elsewhere in the country, especially those chieftains and militia heads we usually call warlords.

The insurgency and counterinsurgency in Afghanistan have spilled across the border into Pakistan. Taliban elements use territory in the tribal areas of northwest Pakistan to stage attacks against government and western forces in Afghanistan. And US forces have conducted operations across the border into Pakistan, most notably with unmanned aerial vehicles. Most of the latter operations have been aimed against al-Qa'ida operatives, but a few of the most recent ones appear directed against Taliban elements that, like those fighting in Afghanistan, are Pashtun and Islamist, but who instead are concentrating their efforts inside Pakistan.

The activities of the Pakistani Taliban constitute one of the newly salient lines of conflict within Pakistan. The protagonists include a set of loosely allied—although sometimes contentious among themselves—Islamist militia chiefs who now run most of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which stretch along the border with Afghanistan. They also have asserted themselves in some districts outside the tribal areas, especially in the Northwest Frontier Province. The last two years have seen substantial combat between the Pakistan army and the Taliban militias, interspersed—as in Afghanistan—with truces and agreements that have confirmed Taliban control over substantial swathes of territory. The most recent of these agreements, within the last month, concerned the Valley of Swat within the Northwest Frontier Province.

Instability in Pakistan, as in Afghanistan, reflects several lines of conflict that have been part of politics in Pakistan throughout its six decades as an independent nation. The fighting with the Taliban is one facet of one of those lines, between an Islamist minority and the much larger majority of Pakistanis who are either secular or practice a milder, non-militant brand of Islam. There also are continuing ethnic and sectarian divisions, including sometimes violent clashes between Shia and Sunni.

Uneasy relations between the civilian political establishment and the army have been a constant theme in Pakistani history, with each alternatively running affairs for several years until the Pakistani people get sufficiently fed up with the incumbent government to force a change. Since General Musharraf's time ran out about a year ago, Pakistani politics have been turbulent and unstable and remain so. Any new understanding between the civilian politicians and the army, particularly over such questions as dealing with the Taliban in the northwest, remains to be worked out. The acrimony between supporters of accidental president Asif Zardari and the leader of the main opposition party, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, is as strong as ever, punctuated by last week's ruling by the Pakistani Supreme Court barring Sharif from running for office. No end to the current political turmoil is in sight.

Pakistani Perspectives

It is important for us to understand that Pakistanis and Afghans do not necessarily see this mosaic of conflicts in the same way we do. In particular, Pakistani leaders, civilian and especially military, view it differently from us. Pakistanis see everything through the lens of their standoff with India. This is why, although Pakistan's security problems appear mainly in the northwest, their military forces are still oriented more toward the southeast.

This perspective also colors Pakistanis' views toward Afghanistan and the Taliban. For Pakistan, Afghanistan is its strategic depth in confronting India. The Taliban were originally a creation of Pakistan. And for some Pakistanis, even if they

realize that their creation has gotten out of control in a way that was not foreseen and that causes additional problems for Pakistan itself, the Taliban are still a useful hedge against the considerable uncertainty in Afghanistan. Although it is unclear exactly how extensive are current sympathy and support for the Taliban within the Pakistani military, Pakistani officers are not going to view the Taliban in the same frame of reference as we do. And they will see little advantage in incurring significant costs and casualties in trying to wrest control of frontier areas that the Pakistani government never controlled in the first place.

Trends and Realities

Three major trends of the last couple of years shape the policy conundrum the United States faces in this part of the world. One is the deterioration of security in Afghanistan, and along with it increased popular dissatisfaction with the Karzai government. A second is the expansion of Taliban activity in Pakistan. And a third is growing resentment and even anger, on both sides of the Durand line, over collateral casualties from U.S. military operations.

One old and continuing pattern—in addition to the aforementioned Pakistani attitudes—that also shapes the policy problem is the inability historically not only of any outside power to pacify Afghanistan but also of any central government in Kabul to control the entire country. Peace, or a semblance of it, in Afghanistan has traditionally come from deals and compromises that leave multiple centers of power. I do not see reason to expect this pattern to change.

Questions for Policy

The first step in setting any new course for U.S. strategy in this region is to determine what U.S. policy objectives ought to be. That is not simple, despite the ease of enumerating the U.S. interests I mentioned earlier. Even the most defensible objective—preventing the establishment in Afghanistan of the kind of home for a transnational terrorist group that existed there until 2001—is not self-evident, given the difficulty of demonstrating that different levels of U.S. effort in Afghanistan would make the difference between such a terrorist haven being or not being established. And that is in addition to the question of how important such a physical haven is to terrorist groups who do most of their preparations for attacking western targets elsewhere, including in the West itself.

Policymakers also must set relative priorities among the sometimes conflicting U.S. goals in the region. The goals can conflict even as far as counterterrorism alone is concerned. We have seen this with some of the U.S. missile strikes on both sides of the Durand Line, which have achieved some tactical gains in taking terrorist operatives out of combat, but also have incurred popular wrath that increases sympathy and support for terrorist objectives.

Finally, policymakers must determine the absolute priority of U.S. objectives in the region, in the sense of whether they are important enough to warrant the costs and commitment necessary to achieve them. And that requires taking the measure of the American public's willingness to sustain such costs.

Mr. TIERNEY. You know, this is probably one of the more complex issues that we will discuss in national security and foreign policy. And all three of you managed to get your comments done under 5 minutes. It is amazing. Thank you for observing that time.

We are going to go to the question-and-answer period and we are going to try to figure a better way to do this eventually than the 5-minute rule, something a little more free flowing. But Mr. Flake and I will talk about that in the future. For now we will go under the 5-minute rule and try to give as many people an opportunity to ask their questions and have a second round if necessary.

Mr. Pillar, I want to start where you left off. And at the end of your written remarks, you talk about the first step in setting any new course of U.S. strategy in the region is to determine U.S. policy objectives and what they ought to be. You say, even the most defensible objective, preventing the establishment in Afghanistan of the kind of home for transnational terrorist group that existed there until 2001, is not self-evident. Given the difficulty of demonstrating the different levels of U.S. effort in Afghanistan, it would make the difference between such a terrorist haven being or not being established. And that is in addition to the question of how important such a physical haven is to terrorist groups who do most of their preparations for attacking Western targets elsewhere, including in the West.

I phrased it differently, but I've been asking that of General McKiernan, or our ODNI, and the different people on that. If we are saying our rationale is that we don't want—that the Taliban in Afghanistan is really more of a localized problem, narcotics people and the drug warlords, but the reason we say that we have a military interest there is to stop it from becoming a safe haven, because we believe that if the Taliban takes over, they'll invite in al Qaeda, who is not there presently, and then they will be getting back to pre-2001. I think that begs the question. Al Qaeda already has a safe haven in Pakistan. I think that without too much effort, they can have a safe haven in Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Algiers and go right on down the line. In none of those places, and particularly in Pakistan, are we sending in ground troops of any magnitude to speak of, never mind 600,000. We have decided we are going to deal with that wholly different.

I think Mr. White talks about some ways of doing that, localized aid and assistance, beefing up their security forces, working on that basis. Why is it important for us ostensibly, then, to have a military answer, primarily in Afghanistan, when it is uncertain as to whether or not we can get to the level that would actually pacify the whole region, when we have decided to handle the situation other ways in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Mr. PILLAR. Excellent question. And that is why I raised it at the end of my statement that you cited. I think there are three issues here, Mr. Chairman. One is—and especially if we can assume we are not going to go to levels like 600,000 troops. I don't expect we will. Is that going to make—whatever level of effort we do decide on, is that going to make the difference between having or not having some corner of Afghanistan in which, whatever level of troops we have, it is not fully covered?

Mr. TIERNEY. Or in Pakistan still?

Mr. PILLAR. Or Pakistan for that matter, yeah. That is point number one.

But also is the further point of just—well, the second one that you mentioned. If you want safe havens, there are ample opportunities for them elsewhere. And you mentioned two or three of the most notable ones.

But the third point I would make, the last sentence that you quoted from my statement is the question of how important a physical safe haven on the other side of the world is for the kind of terrorist group we are most worried about, particularly the kind that would cause us harm in the United States.

Recall the parameters of the preparation for the 9/11 operation. Yes, al Qaeda did have a safe haven under the Taliban in Afghanistan. Where did most of the preparations take place? In Hamburg and Kuala Lumpur and in flight schools here in the United States. So I worry a lot about this continued terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland. I don't worry about it primarily in terms of save havens in countries on the other side of the world.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Bergen, would you care to react to that?

Mr. BERGEN. I'm going to take a slightly different tact.

Mr. TIERNEY. I suspected you would.

Mr. BERGEN. I think that if you look at any effective terrorist attacks, there is always a safe haven at the bottom. Somebody has had military training or involved in some sort of paramilitary. You don't learn this over the Internet. I mean, look at the Mumbai attack. The guys in the Mumbai attack had trained in a training camp in Murshidabad. That is why they could go and kill so many people so effectively. So I think save havens are important.

There are save havens and there are save havens. Pre-9/11, you had thousands of people going through the training camps. Obviously, we don't want to return to that. The training camps in Pakistan are smaller. They are perhaps 20 people. They are not amenable to overhead imagery. They are in compounds.

But look at the London attack of July 7, 2005. The two leaders of the attack both trained with al Qaeda in Pakistan at some form of training camp.

So it is important for us to reduce the number of safe havens, it goes without saying, and particularly—and obviously the kind of safe haven of the pre-9/11 safe haven in Afghanistan would be—is something that we must be very careful not to allow to come back.

But I wanted to pick up on the 600,000 figure because this is incredibly important. There are 565,000 members of the Iraqi police and Army. Iraq is a smaller country in population and it is much smaller in area and it is a desert which is very easy to control, relatively speaking. Afghanistan has a larger population. It is mountainous. So it is very amenable to guerilla warfare. Of course, the United States is never going to produce hundreds and thousands of additional soldiers to go to Afghanistan. But our exit strategy at the end of the day is the Afghan Army and the Afghan National Police. We have done a terrible job of that. The Afghan National Army in 2002 was 6,000 guys. That is the size of a small police force in an American city. So this is where we really need to focus our attention. When we send additional troops to Afghanistan, it

is the most important role that they are going to be doing, is advising, mentoring, and embedding with the Afghan Army itself and expanding that rather dramatically.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. The last point you make is interesting, that we went from 17,000 to 36,000, to having troops there just to be embedded and to train and to do—that is a whole different strategy than what we are doing now. But also, you know, the idea of safe havens being a problem, of course they are, whatever. But I think the question still goes through, do we intend to take a military engagement against every potential safe haven of whatever size, or is there another way to deal with that as we are currently looking to do another way in Pakistan.

And last, just on the Afghan Security Force, we have done some hearings on that. I don't think anybody here is very impressed with the likelihood that that force is going to get up to any particular level anytime soon, given the literacy issues, the corruption issues, and the sheer lack of numbers of qualified people on that. That is an issue.

Mr. White, do you want to comment on the general issue?

Mr. WHITE. Just very briefly, I would say it is obvious we do have a different strategy in Pakistan than Afghanistan because we have a fundamental interest in the stability of the Pakistani state. And I tried to highlight, very briefly in my testimony, the fact that it is not only the transnational al Qaeda threat that face, but we face a number of groups which vector their efforts toward Islamabad. And given the progress of Iran's role as a nuclear-armed state, as an influential state in the Muslim world, and as a geostrategic state which has importance to us, that is also a real concern. I think that explains why we do what we do.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Mr. Flake, you're recognized.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. I appreciate the testimony. Mr. Bergen, when we visited Mr. Karzai in December 2004, I believe it was, he had just been inaugurated then and he referred to the war on drugs there and the war on poppies as the mother of all battles. Notably, when I was there just a month ago or 2 months ago in December, he downplayed that war substantially and even said that there was little evidence that the Taliban was profiting from the drug trade, that those who were profiting were somewhere in Europe somewhere, but it really wasn't filtering back to the Taliban.

In your statement, Mr. Bergen, you mention that they are profiting handsomely from the drug trade. Do you want to comment on that, and the government, the Afghan Government's commitment or lack thereof to fighting the drug war?

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you very much, Congressman Flake. I think that—I mean, it is a widely accepted fact that the Taliban is profiting handsomely from the drug trade. Insurgencies cost a lot of money to run because you have to pay people to be a part of the insurgency. They don't volunteer like terrorists who you don't have to pay. An Afghan policeman is making $70 to $100 a month. The Taliban foot soldier is making $300 a month. This money is not coming out magically and suddenly appearing. This money is coming from the drug trade.

What can the United States do about it? The DEA surely knows who the leading drug lords are in Afghanistan. Think about Colombia. Pablo Escobar was a household name in the early nineties. The Cali Cartel was a household name. Why don't we know the names of the Afghan drug lords? As the committee will surely understand, because it includes a number of government officials. The time for their public embarrassment is over. Why can't we basically say to the DEA it is a matter of—there are all sorts of reasons that they are keeping this private. But I think the moment has come to make it public.

Second, there is no extradition treaty between the United States and Afghanistan. The Afghan judicial system is a joke. Congress wouldn't be presumably able to set up some kind of extradition treaty for major drug lords from Afghanistan who could be tried in the Southern District of New York or other locations.

So those are I think two specific things that we can actually do to change the situation. The Afghan Government has proven unwilling or incapable of doing so.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. White, there is talk, that 600,000 troop figure that has been thrown around, that that would be what we need to actually secure the country. Is there—obviously we need more than troops. You have to have a strategy and you have to employ that. And we have the PRTs and we are making a lot of efforts on a lot of levels.

What is the—in your view—the bottom threshold of numbers of troops that the United States will have to commit in order to give effect to any strategy that might work? Is there a minimum threshold and everybody knows we are unlikely to get to the 600- level. Is there a point at which anywhere under the threshold, why bother? Can you comment on that?

Mr. WHITE. It is a very good question. I want to comment first just briefly on your question to Mr. Bergen and just to note that I think that there is a relationship, although it is not one that is very well understood in detail, between the drug trade in Afghanistan and the entrepreneurial nature of the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan, this fragmentation that I was talking about. Because when you have a lot of money that is available, then you have a lot of options for new groups to begin and for drug smugglers to essentially label themselves the Taliban and to operate on that basis. So there is a clear linkage there.

To the point about Afghanistan, I can't answer the question about a minimum threshold, but I think that I am sympathetic with a part of your opening statement in terms of the importance of specifying what these troops are going to be doing and particularly at what level they are going to be operating. Are they going to be operating out of PRTs, are they going to be more forward-deployed at a village level, are they going to be focused on securing major urban areas in the South, are they going to be focused on rural areas? What do those objectives actually look like? And until we understand a little bit more about what that strategy looks like at a very granular level, I'm not sure that we can begin talking about minimum thresholds and the like. I think those are some of the prerequisite kind of questions.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Pillar, do you have any comments briefly?

Mr. PILLAR. Just the other prerequisite question, after talking about sufficient levels, is just what the end state is and what we hope to achieve. And is it a unified Afghanistan, is it something much more fractionated? Is it one where the central government is one that we would consider a friend and ally or just one that we would consider has achieved a modicum of stability? Those are basic questions you have to answer first.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Foster, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOSTER. A couple of questions about the possible parameters for the end state that we might get to, and particularly the economic investment that the international communities should think about making. And first, are you aware of any estimates for how much it would take to buy out the poppy farmers?

Mr. BERGEN. Yeah. The gate price of the opium that is produced is $750 million, which is about the amount of money the United States pays in its anti-narcotics policy in Afghanistan.

Mr. FOSTER. So for twice that? So if we are willing to put twice that every year, there is a reasonable chance that we could buy out the poppy farmers?

Mr. BERGEN. It would be $1.5 billion.

Mr. FOSTER. Similarly if you think about the manpower requirements for a well-trained Afghan Army and police force, do you have a seat-of-the-pants guess for how many well-trained officers you would need to actually have the central government control the country? Any of you.

Mr. BERGEN. The short answer is no. I mean, the 600,000 figure of soldiers and police is correct, and obviously most of that would be police.

Mr. FOSTER. Is there some rule of thumb for if you just look at marginally developed countries that are, in fact, stable, what fraction of their total populations are police force?

Mr. PILLAR. I would just comment, Congressman, that I'm not going to give you a percentage either. But in Afghanistan, you've got the added problem, which is appropriate for you to ask about the officer corps, of basic literacy and other skills, mainly literacy, that is required in the officer corps but not necessarily in the enlisted ranks. And that is one of the main impediments to——

Mr. FOSTER. I was talking about the end state where we put the time and effort a generation from now, so that we actually have a generation that has been trained from at least adolescents up to——

Mr. PILLAR. It is probably somewhere in General Petraeus' counterinsurgency manual, but I don't know what the figure would be.

Mr. FOSTER. Okay. Do any of you have a feeling whether the missile strikes against the Taliban, the recent ones, have been a net plus or not? It is obvious they are a mixed bag, but do you have a feeling?

Mr. PILLAR. In my judgment, no. Although it is hard to make a case either way because, as I noted in my comments, there have been important tactical successes scored, important al Qaeda operatives have been taken out of combat. But we see in the press

reporting almost every week some of the popular response with regard to the perception that the United States is heartless and careless when it comes to Muslim lives on both sides of the Duran line, and that is the sort of thing that could have a much more widespread effect even going beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan. So my sense is the net effect, when you consider that plus and minus, is a net minus.

Mr. BERGEN. I think it is a maybe. There were three missile strikes in 2007. There were 34 in 2008. There have been five under the Obama administration. So the Obama administration is actually ramping up from what the already quite ramped-up Bush administration policy on this. Eight readily senior members of al Qaeda have been killed, including al Qaeda's number three. The most dangerous job in the world is being al Qaeda's number 3, because there is a constant replenishment of number 3s. But clearly one metric to actually determine how successful this thing is, the number of al Qaeda videotape releases have dropped. This is, I think, an important indicator because to get these things out, you need couriers, you need people. In the past year, we have seen a drop from the record in 2007. So this is interfering with al Qaeda's command and control.

But as Professor Pillar has pointed out, there are enormous opportunity costs here. We have to calibrate recruiting—offering a recruiting tool to the Pakistani Taliban versus disrupting al Qaeda which is, of course, our primary interest.

Mr. FOSTER. Are you—go ahead.

Mr. WHITE. I would just say very briefly that one of the reasons this is very difficult to assess is because there is a local effect and then there is a national or bilateral effect: the local effect, which is to say do the missile strikes radicalize the local population and spur recruitment into al Qaeda or into the Taliban, that is exceptionally difficult to asses; the national effect, the effect that it has on the legitimacy of the Zawahiri government, the ability of the Zawahiri government to take action against Taliban or al Qaeda groups.

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States on a bilateral basis is much easier to asses, and that is what makes me think that this is probably a negative. But it is very difficult to tell what is actually happening in the immediate vicinity of these strikes after they occur.

Mr. FOSTER. Do they, for example, make the United States appear as though they are a more useful ally?

Mr. BERGEN. By the way, there is very good polling data on this. In a 2008 poll, Pakistanis were asked, what is the principal threat to your security? Fifty-two percent said the United States; only 8 percent said al Qaeda. Clearly in our minds that is crazy; however, that is how it is perceived in Pakistan.

Mr. FOSTER. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Foster. Mr. Mica, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Mr. Bergen, you have spent a long time as a CNN reporter. I guess you were one of the first to interview Osama bin Laden and, I guess, some time writing about him and reviewing his activities.

Sort of at the core of what we are after, I would imagine, here is what he initiated. I think one of the your books, too, details some connections between the Afghanistan or al Qaeda link and the World Trade Center in 1993. These appear to be some pretty patient people.

And, Mr. Pillar, you described how their organization was in Germany, Kuala Lumpur and even the United States. They don't seem to have a specific home other than Afghanistan, or they use Afghanistan and Pakistan to—as havens to slide between borders.

My first question would be, given what you have seen over—again, looking at this for years and their activities, they are very patient. I would tend to think that they are looking to another hit. They were very successful with both the World Trade Center the first time during the Clinton administration and then hitting us during the Bush administration and taking—actually taking the towers down.

Do you feel that their plans would include another—I chaired Aviation for 6 years—major attack in aviation, since that was such a success; or maybe get their hands on nuclear or some sort of dirty bomb to do another spectacular? What would be your opinion?

Mr. BERGEN. Certainly they are patient. I mean, Ayman Zawahiri, al Qaeda's number two, points out that it took two centuries to get the Crusaders out of the Middle East in the Middle Ages. So that is the way they think. But—and we know that they want to——

Mr. MICA. So you're saying they are patient and that they are determined?

Mr. BERGEN. Indeed. However——

Mr. MICA. What about the threats?

Mr. BERGEN. I think the threat level against the United States from al Qaeda is actually very low for three reasons. As for al Qaeda, while it has resurged, it is not at the point where it was before 9/11.

Second, the American Muslim community has rejected the al Qaeda ideology.

Third, I can't prove negatives to you, but I don't believe there are al Qaeda sleeper cells in this country. They are so asleep, if they exist, they are either comatose or dead. They've done nothing.

Mr. MICA. Do you think they've given up or just in waiting?

Mr. BERGEN. I think, you know, we have had—and also the Bush administration, the government in general, made it much harder to get into this country. When we have been attacked by Jihadi terrorists in the past, they have always come from outside. That was true on 9/11. It was true in 1993 with the Trade Center attack and it was true when Ahmed Ressam tried to blow up Los Angeles International Airport.

Mr. MICA. They had a whole history—if you go back to Clinton, we had the Khobar Towers, we had the Cole, we had the bombings and the Saudis—and other bombings in Saudi Arabia. We had the simultaneous bombing of our embassies in Africa. And so they haven't—since 2001, there have also been additional hits. To your best knowledge, you don't think they are working on a spectacular?

Mr. BERGEN. I mean, they are always working on it on a theoretical level. The question is what can they do on a practical level?

Mr. PILLAR. I would agree with everything that Peter Bergen just said. I would just add that we should not focus too narrowly on the one group, al Qaeda, the group led by bin Laden and Zawahiri. We do have——

Mr. MICA. Then it is more of a war on terror than what——

Mr. PILLAR. It doesn't have to be generalized that——

Mr. MICA [continuing]. Terrorism.

Mr. PILLAR. We can talk about radical Sunni, Salise Islamists, just that movement.

Mr. MICA. Whether you have Obama in office, Bush in office, Clinton in office, are they any more warm and fuzzy toward the West?

Mr. PILLAR. The attitudes toward the West, and toward the United States specifically, are a mixture of attitudes that would be there because we are the leader of the——

Mr. MICA. Because some are still pretty radical and extreme and hell-bent on destroying us.

Mr. PILLAR. Yes. But policy does matter as well. It is a mixture. It is not all one or the other.

Mr. MICA. My final question is, you know, what should our objective be? Is our objective to be to get bin Laden? Are we trying a political solution maybe to just get some neutrality? Or is this a military—should this be a full-fledged military campaign to take them out? Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. In Afghanistan, sir, or——

Mr. MICA. Of course, you have the situation of we have to get permission in Pakistan and we have been going across the border, I guess, in some cases without permission. But what is our objective in that area, Afghanistan, Pakistan?

Mr. BERGEN. I think it is largely a counter sanctuary strategy, which is not allowing them to have safe havens through which they can train people to attack us or our allies or Americans abroad because the threat from al Qaeda is not necessarily on the United States in general, but it is here and for Americans abroad.

Mr. PILLAR. It is primarily to prevent the recurrence of the kind of safe haven and sanctuary that existed under the Taliban prior to September 2001.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Mica. Mr. Lynch, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this very important hearing. I want to thank the witnesses for helping the committee out with its work. I returned from Afghanistan yesterday along with Mr. Driehaus and Mr. Platts from the committee and Mr. Connolly from the committee, and I know the chairman was there last week.

I had an opportunity to spend some time in Kandahar Province with Special Forces operations that are going forward in there and also some Marine units operating there and in Helmand Province. And the military has explained a new phenomenon in their daily contact with Taliban forces and actually local Afghan fighters. And what they described to me and to the other members of the Codel was that they are having daily pitch battles, they said, reminiscent of something you might see in World War II, where local Afghan fighters allied with the Taliban are actually not retreating over the

border into Pakistan, they are defending their ground. And each and every day that our units go out there, they are in daily contact with the enemy.

And I asked why this change might have occurred, and they said that part of it is the fact that our troops and Afghan national troops are conducting a more aggressive eradication process in the Helmand Valley and other areas that are producing a lot of poppy, and that we are alienating the local farmers.

Now, I know we have to—I know we have to do this for all the right reasons. But you three guys are pretty smart guys. You know the situation there. How do we—how do we manage that operation? In other words, are we going to destroy all the poppy, as much as we can, and yet continue to try to retain the loyalty and friendship and support of the local population there?

We don't want—the only way an insurgency is going to survive there is if it has the support of the population, and that seems to be where we are driving, at least some of them. Now, that same area, RC South, is where we are going to see a lot of our sons and daughters going in the coming months. It is a real hot-bed but there is a real—I don't know it is a real paradox, because what we are doing is the right thing. However, it seems to be because of the situation there and the great reliance on that economy on the poppy cultivation that we are maybe driving some people into the arms of the Taliban and the insurgency.

So could you help me with that and how we might not have that effect?

Mr. BERGEN. Imagine a group of cops from New York were to enter Iowa and started destroying people's cornfields. I mean, those groups of cops would take incoming fire. That is what we are doing in Afghanistan. I've been on one of these eradication missions. A group of Kabul cops goes down to a place like Oruzgan, destroys the poppy fields. Whose poppy fields are destroyed? Not the guy with the—who is really the drug lord. It is the poor guy who can't pay the bribe to make sure—so eradication first policy on—I mean, the committee can certainly look into it in more detail—I think is utterly crazy. It is the most counterproductive thing we are doing. A third of Afghanistan's GDP is derived from this. Millions of people derive their income from this, particularly in the areas where, as you say, American sons and daughters are going to be going and putting themselves in harm's way.

We really need to be rethinking this. General David O'Bonner, I think, has said the smartest thing about it: What is the mark of a successful drug policy in Afghanistan? It is not the number of hectares of poppy destroyed, it is the number of hectares of other crops that are planted. That is the right way to be looking at it. We need to rethink and reframe the way we are doing our drug policy.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. PILLAR. I agree absolutely with Peter. This is where the infrastructure reconstruction comes into play too, because part of the reason it is difficult for Afghan agriculturists to make a living growing pomegranates rather than poppy is the insufficiency of the roads, the transportation. Poppy has the extreme attraction of being a low weight, low volume but high profit margin crop which

simply can't be matched given the existing infrastructure and economic development by other crops.

Mr. LYNCH. Is——

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Issa.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Pillar with your background in the Agency, you had the opportunity to work obviously with the Intelligence Community somewhat with the military and somewhat with the State Department; would that be fair to say?

Mr. PILLAR. Yes.

Mr. ISSA. So just for the record, if I go to the State Department, they are going to always have a diplomatic answer that solves everything, you know, watch and engage and talk. If I go to the Intelligence Community, they are going to say watch, check and do things clandestinely. And if I go to the military, they are going to say we can fix the problem, we just need boots on the ground. Is that fair to say that in every conflict, that is predictable from each of those three pillars of our national defense?

Mr. PILLAR. Well, I think many years ago, Lord Salisbury had a quotation that was sort of a paraphrase of what you just said, Mr. Issa, but it is probably not entirely fair in that I think the professionals in each of those parts of the professional services and the executive branch know full well that they aren't the whole part of the story. Our military knows full well that there is an economic and diplomatic side, the intelligence people are there to serve the others there, so——

Mr. ISSA. Sure. I asked a rhetorical question for this reason. You mentioned just in response to a question that the image on the ground was that with our military attacks or agency attacks that we viewed their lives as cheap. In other words that—that they had a down side for every up side. We are breaking up the leadership, but at the same time, we're demonstrating that their lives are cheap and these raids come from the sky and kill without the so-called honor of standing there and being shot back at. Fair assessment or fair paraphrasing?

Mr. PILLAR. Yes. And I think that's reflected in the sorts of things as the poll result that Peter Bergen cited a couple minutes ago.

Mr. ISSA. Well, I would like to use your combined intellect of, I don't know, 600 points or so, to ask a question, a bigger question, because I think this was originally the Russians or the British war, then it was the Russians war and Soviets war, now I guess it's our war. The last time when the Soviets were in, it was the cold war and we picked the other side, but we didn't pick it because we wanted to help the Afghans we picked it because we wanted to hurt the Soviets, that's fair to say. By all of you, the head shaking tells me I'm on the right track.

Aren't we fairly in a cold war primarily with Iran with Russia as a satellite player? And if we are in a cold war with Iran, then should we view Afghanistan through who is our real enemy, who is our real friend, what do we have to defeat in order to win this long conflict. And the same could be said if you were here talking

about Hamas's activity in Gaza or Hezbollah's activity in Lebanon. I would pose almost the same question.

If all of that is true, then how do we, or do we change our direction in a way that causes us to be seen as reluctant to go to war, reluctant to kill, believers that, in fact, we engage only when we have to and only to the extent we have to. So I'm setting up that stage to say is our National interest perhaps deal with Iran and settling that, dealing with perhaps Russia's support in a cold war way and in a great—to a great extent isn't the lack of world support in dealing with Afghanistan the result that there is a side that's on one side and therefore there is a side on another side?

Mr. PILLAR. Well, I think what we have to do, Mr. Issa, is not reduce things to a strictly red and white, green and white cold war kind of thing. The lines of conflict are more complex than that. And I think your mentioning Iran, this is the first time it came into this hearing, it is very appropriate you should raise it, because Iran and the United States actually have some parallel interest in Afghanistan as was demonstrated in the wake of our ouster of the Taliban with Operation Enduring Freedom and the diplomatic work that was done lead by Ambassador Dobbins with a lot of Iranian help in the bond process back in late 2001 to start the political reconstruction process that led to the erection of the Karzai government.

Yes, we have conflicting interest, but we have a lot of parallel and conversion interest, particularly in this country we're talking about today, Afghanistan.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. I think there is one area of common interest in particular that we have with Iran which is the drug problem. Iran has the highest proportion of heroine users in the world. And you can imagine as there were baby steps taken to normalize relations with Iran that that might be one the first issues where there is some commonality where we both have the same strategic interest about the drug problem in Afghanistan.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. McHenry, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank your for your leadership on this issue. Two years ago, we traveled together to Pakistan and Afghanistan and you raised those same issues then that I think are coming to light now and I appreciate it.

We've got—obviously we are assessing the threat situation currently, but we also have an outline that's becoming more and more specific about President Obama's new direction and the policy changes in terms of our actions, in terms of troop levels and where those troops will be located in Afghanistan. And we're reading about outposts that we're going to have more forward operating basis or outposts in the east and the south. And I wanted to get your perspective, all three of you, your perspective on these outposts.

You know, Chairman Tierney was able to organize a trip to just a very similar outpost that's being described now, it's going to be quite prevalent along the border in the east and the south and so I have an idea of what that looks like. But I want to know the security ramifications for this, whether or not you think it's a good

idea, the appropriate idea, the best way in order to get ahold of this situation. We'll start with Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you very much, sir. I've been on a number of these small forward operating bases. I mean to give you an example, one in Zabul where 35 American soldiers, no electricity, no water, I mean nothing. If you're going to extend security to the population, you're going to have to do this. You are either not going to extend security to the population and secure the main cities or you're going—80 percent of Afghans don't live in the cities. So this is, I think, the only way to guarantee extending security. It is going to be very expensive in blood and treasure, I imagine.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. I agree, I think it is essential. I would go back to the question that I asked earlier, where is the emphasis going to be? Is it going to be on securing major urban areas, is it going to be on village areas? And I would also make a parallel I think a useful parallel to what we have seen the Pakistani government try to do over the past few months in the Swat Valley in northern Pakistan, where they essentially were regularly able to clear areas with their military, but then they always returned to sort of a PRT sort of location in an urban area, and the militants would just filter back into the villages. And their inability to forward deploy, to stay overnight in places and to actually gather intelligence and work on the front lines made it practically impossible for them to secure what was their own territory in an environment where there is actually quite a lot of support for the Pakistani government.

And I think that that same dynamic is in play, but even more complicated in Afghanistan whether it is Afghan national troops or U.S. troops that the forward deployment is absolutely essential if they are going to actually secure the population.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. I agree with my colleagues if we were going to do counterinsurgency and do it seriously, I think this is an essential part of it.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. White, you touched on the provincial reconstruction teams. Are we doing enough in terms of utilizing provincial reconstruction teams? And if not, what can we do to improve them and make them much more effective?

Mr. WHITE. I'm actually going to defer to my colleagues on that and their expertise. I think they have spent more time there.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. Afghanistan was the most under—underresourced post World War II reconstruction effort the United States has ever engaged in, both in terms of boots on the ground and money spent. So the more that we can do the better now.

Mr. MCHENRY. That's the shortest, best answer I've heard. Mr. Pillar, do you want to try to improve it?

Mr. PILLAR. I—I can't improve on that sir, no.

Mr. MCHENRY. And again, just in terms of our approach here, you do think that the forward operating bases more engaged in sort of sparsely populated areas, but where insurgents are active, is the model similar to Iraq? Because in many ways, there are larger population centers that we are holding in Iraq as the model for these

operating bases being engaged in the neighborhood. Is it much more complex because of how remote those areas are, Mr. Bergen?

Mr. BERGEN. The short answer is yes, I'm not a military expert, but I will say one thing that the committee is in a position to order, or at least—which is we need to secure the Kabul to Kandahar Road, this is the most important road in the country. Securing Route Irish between Baghdad's airport and Baghdad City sent a really important symbol. If we can secure this road much harder than route Irish, it is much longer at 300 miles. This is one of the things that we should really be focusing on. This is something that all Afghans will understand, hey, this road is back in business. This is the economic life line of the country. Right now, it would be suicidal for anybody in this room to take that road.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. McHenry. Mr. Welch, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a question to everyone really, I'll be brief but succinct. You have been terrific. I'm sorry I missed the early part of the hearing. Who is crossing the border from Pakistan to join the Afghan insurgency? Let's start with you, Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. In terms of who's crossing the border, you know, I've interviewed a number people, a number of failed suicide bombers, probably the best definition of failure imaginable. But you now, they are all—they are Pakistani bumpkins, Pashtune country bumpkins who have been told they are going to get the 72 virgins. I—I mean, that's the foot soldier. But then, of course, you know, the leadership of the Taliban is in Pakistan, the Quetta Shura, the Bashara shura, Gulbadan head matcher, Hakani. The list goes on and on, they are all in Pakistan so—but they are not crossing, they are sending foot soldiers across. But—so the leadership is there and they are sending thousands the people across.

And I think Mr. White raised a very good point which is a lot of this is about business. I mean, you know, they may be dressed up to some degree with the Taliban and religious justification, but they're controlling not just the drug trade but also all sorts of smuggling schemes etc., in a place with very, very high unemployment. The Pakistani Taliban, the Afghan Taliban is often the only job you can get.

Mr. WELCH. Do the other gentleman agree with that?

Mr. PILLAR. Yes.

Mr. WELCH. You know, we ran our recent trip with Chairman Tierney one of the things—in Afghanistan and Pakistan—one of the things that seemed to be the biggest threat was the corruption in Afghanistan. I don't know if you've covered this, Mr. Chairman. I came in late. But we met some folks whose job in Afghanistan was to try to get business investment if you can believe that. And the big issue was corruption. And what they describe as two incidents that were pretty compelling, one is that if you wanted to get a driver's license in Kabul, you had to get the sign off of 21 different people and make a payment at each step of the way. If you're a trucker trying to deliver a load from the Iranian border to the other side of Afghanistan you got stopped 27 times on average.

And they were excited because the average had gone down to something like 17, but these are by authorities.

I'll start with you, Mr. Bergen, but if that is so much a part of the economy in Afghanistan, I mean there is essentially no economy, drugs and corruption. And that is—it seems as though that was as big a threat to the U.S. presence and success as anything else, because we end up being seen as supporting the Karzai government which is seen as either tolerating or endorsing corruption. So it makes me skeptical about our capacity to be militarily successful. So perhaps Mr. Bergen and others down the line can respond to that.

Mr. BERGEN. No doubt the corruption is an enormous issue. Transparency International judges Afghanistan to be basically running neck and neck with Somalia in terms of corruption. So of the 175 countries it surveys, I think Afghanistan is like 172 in terms of corruption. It is an enormous issue. It—what to do about it is probably above my pay grade. I just you know—but I think the beginning is the U.S. Government does know the names of the druglords, and clearly that's a major part of the corruption going on, it is time to publish these names.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Pillar and White.

Mr. PILLAR. No question that the corruption is a major factor in the loss of popular support for the Karzai government, even though most Afghans, I venture to say, would not want a return of the harsh kind of regime that the Taliban had prior to the fall of 2001, the Taliban had managed to exploit the resentment and disaffection with the Karzai government and corruption is probably the single biggest ingredient in that.

Mr. WELCH. Before, Mr. White, maybe you can take up this one, this is the dilemma that I experienced if you have a military strategy, trying to stabilize the society so civil—civic institutions can buildup, but the civic institutions that we're, in effect, supporting are corrupt, then why is that not a dead end? And why does it not suggest that we should have a refined approach where our goal is to protect the American homeland and to rely more on intelligence and perhaps military tactical strikes where there is a high value target or an emerging base threat as opposed to an occupational force with the Nation building goal. That's the dilemma for me, anyway.

And I will start with you, Mr. White. Do we have to face that as our choice?

Mr. WHITE. To some extent, I think we will. I think there has been and is a healthy reevaluation going on about our objectives in Afghan. But I think we also need to listen to those who say it's very difficult to pursue a pure counterterrorism objective without thinking in counterinsurgency sort of—sort of framework because you cannot get the kind of local intelligence you need, you cannot regularly disrupt the kind of havens as you need to from the air or with an occasional strike. It's very, very difficult and the actual presence of safe havens on the ground is something that requires state presence, it's something that requires building institutional capacity, and over the long term, have the legitimate state and I'm sympathetic to that argument.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Welch.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Tierney.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Burton, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't take that long. I just—I got here a little bit late so I apologize if I'm being redundant with this question, but in Iraq, we had substantially more troops and it took a considerable length of time for us to stabilize that country and to train the troops so they could take care of the problem themselves. And President Obama is going to bring our troops home relatively soon because of the transition to the Iraqi troops.

And I know you don't have a crystal ball, but Afghanistan is a much larger country, it's—the terrain is much different and this guerilla war that's being fought by the Taliban and its fellow travelers appears to be a more difficult situation than we had in Iraq. So based upon this information, how many troops, I know Murtha said we need 600,000, but how many troops and how long do you anticipate we'll have to stay there and will always—will we have to have a permanent, a permanent number of troops there like we have in Korea and Japan and elsewhere to augment the Afghani forces once they're ready to take up the slack.

Mr. PILLAR. Well, Mr. Burton——

Mr. BURTON. You have to speak up.

Mr. PILLAR [continuing]. I think we did address it a little bit earlier, perhaps before you were here. But the one comment I alluded earlier was General McNeill, one of our former commanders of the International Security Assistance Force and he was speaking of several hundred thousand, I think he mentioned 400,000. And also he had a timeframe, I can't remember exactly what it was but it was in the, you know, several years. I don't—successful counterinsurgency does not have to mean, shouldn't mean a permanent presence. I mean, the kind of thing we had in Japan and Korea is because of other things having to do with you know interstate threats. But suffice it to say, it's in the hundreds of thousands and multiple years, exactly how many it would be hard to say if full successful counterinsurgency was to be undertaken in Afghanistan. Against the background of all the factors that you appropriately mentioned, size, terrain and so on.

Mr. BERGEN. Can I add to that? There is a big difference between Afghanistan and Iraq, which is, support for international forces in Afghanistan is very, very high. The idea was that Afghanistan was going to be the graveyard of Empires and we would be greeted with flowers in Iraq and it was exactly the reverse. Afghans wanted us to be there at very, very high levels. I can't think of a single Muslim nation which in 2006 had a more favorable view of the United States, 85 percent favorable. The numbers have dropped to 47 percent today in terms of favorable views of the United States. That's still half the population that's basically in favor of us being there. That's better than Iraq ever was even at the height of the early stages of the occupation. So the center of gravity in any insurgency is the population, the population is still at least half in our favor.

And one other data point which is important, when we invaded Iraq 4 million Afgh—4 million Iraqis left the—either left the country or were displaced internally. Four million Afghans have returned to Afghanistan since 9/11. People don't vote with their feet

unless think there is a future there. So, you were completely right about the problems, but there are also some significant factors in our favor suggesting a possible outcome which will—to all our liking.

Mr. PILLAR. If I may just add to that, those are all very important points that Peter Bergen made, but related to the question of greater international support is something that hasn't yet come up in this hearing and that is the role of our NATO allies. And as the Members are well aware this has been a rather big issue between us and our allies with regard to the size of their contribution and what conditions or lack of conditions are placed on their troops that are there.

Secretary Gates and others, of course, have been working hard on this. But if you are talking about a long-term counterinsurgency this is another dimension despite the—as Peter accurately points out, the greater degree of international support for the effort. That's another consideration that has to be brought to bear.

Mr. WHITE. I would say briefly that in comparison with Iraq, I think that the number of troops required to do the same amount of work in Afghanistan will, in many ways, be higher for any given territory, not only because of the development environment in Afghanistan, but because the difference in the travel structure which is very pronounced. And in Iraq and in places it was possible to get a few big men on board and to negotiate on that basis. And that is very, very difficult to do in the Pashtun areas, both the Pakistani tribal areas and in Afghan. Because a leader is only the first among equals and there are a number of shifting alliances that make it very difficult to make deals with large blocks at one time. I think that's going to be an important factor.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. White, I'm aware that you need to be out of here by 11:40 or sooner and that you are going to walk with your feet, or vote with your feet and that's fine. So whenever you feel you have to depart please go please go with our appreciation for your contributions here today and don't hesitate at all. We are very grateful that you were able to spend time with us. I think we are going to spend a few more moments here if that's fine with our witnesses on that and do another round.

Let me start by saying there is one issue I think we all think that if anything is going to be resolved in Afghanistan it requires something to be resolved in Pakistan, that's where the al Qaeda and the al Qaeda affiliate leadership is, and they are, as Mr. Bergen said, sending people over into Afghanistan, but also presumably sending people to London and Madrid and elsewhere.

In Pakistan, we seem to have a very difficult time focusing all of the players who are leaders in the Pakistani government and military on recognizing that strategically their threat at the current moment is not necessarily India but is, in fact, the existential threat of terror and Taliban and al Qaeda inwardly to them as well.

Can you envision a way that the United States aid to Pakistan be conditioned on certain benchmarks or metrics or whatever so that we can say that if certain things don't improve maybe the funding won't continue going because without continue going be-

cause without resolving that problem we can't really resolve Afghanistan. Dr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. I can envision it. It would be difficult to achieve because although we might put explicit conditions on aid so far of the sort that you're talking about Mr. Chairman. To be quite blunt, the Pakistanis have played games with us in terms of making perhaps more of a show of going after elements we are most concerned with in the northwest, which is not to say that they haven't done real operations and indeed have incurred substantial casualties. But they have then brought things to a halt and it breached these various agreements and truces, whether it is with the people in Swat or elsewhere that have fallen short of our objectives.

The Pakistanis are adept and playing these sorts of games with foreign governments, including us, in doing just enough to keep us satisfied while doing our things, that if we knew everything that was going on, with he would be dissatisfied with, this is the same thing that has taken place for years with regard to their activity in Kashmir and the cross border operations.

Mr. TIERNEY. So I guess the question is why should we continue to fund them in fairly significant amounts if we are getting double speak and avoidance back?

Mr. PILLAR. It is a legitimate question, but as I suggested in my earlier comments, we have a variety of interests in Pakistan, many of them related to the ability of Pakistani state and their cooperation and their willingness and ability to cooperate on many other things besides just going after the Taliban and northwest.

Mr. TIERNEY. You feel the same, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. Yeah, I do. I think that I know we talked about conditioning aid and I think those are very helpful discussions. But I think from the perspective of the U.S. Government what the United States can do is to more wisely target the aid that it is giving and the assistance that it is giving. That we can talk about what that looks like in development aid, but for example, in military aid, a lot our funding has either gone directly to the Pakistani government in a fairly unaccountable way or our military sales have gone through the FMF process in a way that is both rather slow and not always targeted to what our major joint objectives are.

And so I think there is a real need to look at those mechanisms and say are there mechanisms by which, for example, the relevant combatant commander could sit down with the chief of Army staff and look at a set of equipment or set training that meets counterinsurgency objectives and so forth and then have a mechanism by which that equipment can move through the system in a way that is not just the Pakistanis sort of checking things off a list that they would like to see. So there are ways to target our assistance, and I think that that could address a good part of the problem that we've been facing.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Bergen, where did most of the opium grown in Afghanistan end up?

Mr. BERGEN. In Europe, I mean 95 percent of it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Europe. And some in Iran?

Mr. BERGEN. And some to Iran and I know central Asia, but I mean terms in west, mostly Europe.

Mr. TIERNEY. And besides the United States, who else is interested in the stability of the south Asia region——

Mr. BERGEN. I mean, United Kingdom, NADAR, NATO allies.

Mr. TIERNEY. India, Iran.

Mr. BERGEN. You have multiple people trying.

Mr. TIERNEY. Is it striking to any of you that we've had so very little effort in engaging all of those parties in some sort of contact effort? We have done it at margin levels in term of money, but in terms of really working with those people and trying to come up with some strategic answer to this, is it striking at all that there seems to be a paucity of effort there?

Mr. BERGEN. Indeed, but I believe Ambassador Holbrook will be changing that.

Mr. WHITE. And that has been striking to me. I think it is particularly important to engage the gulf States because they have an enormous influence in Pakistan because of their financial position, even though it has been recently weakened somewhat. And there is a tremendous amount of transport—transit by the Pashtun population in Pakistan and Afghanistan through the gulf states. So I think that's—those are very important players to engage.

Mr. PILLAR. I think you've correctly identified a possible missed opportunity, Mr. Chairman. As it relates, for example, to the central Asian states, which have ideas about energy resources being exported through Afghan and Pakistan.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Bergen, you mentioned the necessity to ensure that the elections are—that we have sufficient security for the elections and—is reason enough, I guess, to send troops now before we have an overall plan, we at least need that. Are 17,000 sufficient to help provide the necessary security? And is that—from your knowledge, do we have that in mind in terms of deployment of a lot of those 17,000. My understanding is they are going to specific areas and are they going to need to be deployed further out or will we need additional resources to make sure that election goes off as well as it can?

Mr. BERGEN. I would make two comments. I mean, Iraq in 2005 was far more violent than Afghanistan is in 2009, and the United States was able to secure that election. So I do not doubt that for 1 day we can secure the whole country so that there is a successful election. Whether those troops are going in terms of their missions, obviously, I'm not privy to that kind of information, but the area where you need to secure is the south. The north is not an issue, and that is, of course, where these soldiers are going. So I am presuming that two birds will be killed with one stone in terms of both securing the south and also securing the election date.

Mr. FLAKE. Just further on the election, obviously we're a little less excited about another 4 years of Karzai, but is there any other viable option at this point in your view?

Mr. BERGEN. That is a good question. He has a huge incumbency advantage. You know, Karzai won the last election with 55 percent of the vote against a dozen other candidates, and I don't need to tell the politicians here that is a pretty successful outcome. It is better than Obama did against one serious challenger in the recent Presidential. So he is still a popular guy. And I think the maneu-

vers that he's been making with this election are actually rather skillful. I mean, he completely wrong-footed his opponents by saying we might do it earlier. They can't organize themselves. He—so I think, you know, we will have a second Presidential term with President Karzai who has been—you know, the idea that he is mayor of Kabul I've always been suspicious of. He's been pretty adept about maneuvering of people out of office who are potential threats. He is quite an adept politician. Of course, you've met him so you can make your own judgment.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. White, do you agree?

Mr. WHITE. I do, I do.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Yes.

Mr. FLAKE. So another 4 years, as far as our policy, or what we are doing, we really have no choice but to move ahead and hope for the best in the second term, I guess.

With regard to security in the election is that—do you also agree that that—where we face the situation here that is less volatile than it was in Iraq and we were able to succeed there. Do you foresee a successful election there?

Mr. PILLAR. I think Peter makes the basic point here that what we did in Iraq was lock down the country for a day. And I have confidence as he did that we can do it in Afghanistan too, but that's still just a day.

Mr. WHITE. I think it's probably possible, but exceptionally difficult. I recently have been an observer in elections in Bangladesh, and in Pakistan last year, and even in those environments in the rural areas it is very, very difficult to provide security. And the best bet the government can usually provide is—in many of those countries is a lone police officer with a 1950's rifle who is falling asleep by the side of the polling station. So it's possible, but I think we have to keep our expectations very low.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Pillar, at this point, there are no significant blocks of people or groups who have said that they are not going to participate.

Mr. PILLAR. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. FLAKE. In the election, in the election. Are there significant blocks that are threatened to boycott the election.

Mr. PILLAR. Not that I'm aware of. But Peter probably is better able to answer that question than I.

Mr. WHITE. I think after Karzai's posturing yesterday, Ashraf Ghani and others said they couldn't participate in an election that was held on the spring timetable, but that's still posturing at this point. And that hasn't sorted itself out.

Mr. FLAKE. And in the end you expect, Mr. Bergen, all significant blocks to participate?

Mr. BERGEN. I do. You know, the last time there was a turnout of 70 percent in the United States was in 1900. There was a 70 percent turnout in the 2004 election, it went very, very smoothly. Obviously it is not going to go quite as smoothly this time, but I anticipate high turnout and relatively successful outcome.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Welch, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to go back to the cross-border effect and I will start again with you, Mr. Bergen, is the cross-border effect coming from Afghanistan as bad as the Afghan government portrays it?

Mr. BERGEN. I think that's a very important question. Let's do the thought experiment where there was not cross-border traffic. Afghanistan would still have a lot of problems, they would have the drug problem, they would have local Taliban. So RAND did a study of the 90 insurgencies since World War II. If you have a safe haven half the time of insurgents win, I mean it is a game changer. So the problem——

Mr. WELCH. What's the game changer?

Mr. BERGEN. The game changer is continuing to have a safe haven. Clearly that operates in the insurgents' favor. But if they didn't have the safe haven, the problems of the Taliban would not completely disappear. They wouldn't have commander control from across the border, but you would still have the drug trade and you would still have local Taliban. The problem would not go away. The Afghan government, you know, tends to be very critical of Pakistan, we know that, but they have their own problems.

Mr. FLAKE. Okay. Mr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Well, I think when you hear President Karzai complaining mightily about the Pakistanis, it's—it's partly to deflect attention from the internal problems that we've been discussing, but the reality is that I agree totally with what Peter said.

Mr. WELCH. I want to talk a little bit about Lashkar-e-Taiba—am I pronouncing that right? Can you just describe who they are and what threats they pose? You know, a lot of these names just kind of run over the surface and we get a little bit confused by it. And when we are too general it means that we don't get specific on practical responses. So Mr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Lashkar-e-Taiba or LT is an Islamist Pakistani group that has gotten, certainly in the past, and there is a question about how much it still has in the present cooperation and sponsorship from elements of the Pakistani government itself, which saw it as useful tool, particularly with regard to confronting the Indians in Kashmir and keeping an insurgency in Kashmir brewing.

Since then and partly because of the pressure that our government has placed on the Pakistanis, not to do business with this group, which is, let's be quite blunt, a loathsome terrorist group that is appropriately on all of our terrorist lists, and it is appropriate for us to place such pressure on the Pakistanis. The official sponsorship is no longer there, the remaining question is to what degree there may be individuals or elements, particularly in the Pakistani military that may have some continued relationship with the group. But for any Pakistani military or civilian, they have to consider that Lashkar-e-Taiba is now doing things in Pakistan that have been as much of a problem as a resource. We have of course——

Mr. WELCH. That goes back to what Chairman Tierney was talking about earlier, where Pakistan has a threat, an existential threat from the terrorists and is starting to occur in its own boundaries.

Mr. PILLAR. It might not be an existential threat in the sense that we are going to see—we'll have a chance to see next year LT taking over the government and nuclear weapons, and that sort of thing. That's not going to happen. However, insofar as it becomes a preoccupation and a diversion for any Pakistani leader, it is an important thing for us. We have seen the Mumbai bombings and the very sophisticated attacks on Lahore yesterday and against the Sri Lankan cricket team. It is still a matter of speculation, there haven't been any claims of responsibility, but I would put LT at the top of the list of suspects as many Pakistanis are indeed doing today.

Mr. WELCH. Does their agenda, the LT agenda extend beyond its views on India-Pakistan relations in Kashmir?

Mr. PILLAR. They share the general ideology in many respects of bin Laden's al Qaeda, although operationally, they have been focused more on their region, on Kashmir and now in Pakistan itself.

Just to speculate a bit more about yesterday's attack, if it was Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the question is why did they do it, my speculation would be to discredit and destabilize the civilian government lead by Zardari. Perhaps even in the hope that a new military government might put more continued sympathizers to them and their cause back in power, as opposed to Zardari and the Pakistan people's party.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you. Mr. Bergen, who makes up the insurgency in the Swat Valley?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, it's a Pakistani Taliban. I mean that's—I'm not—I wish Mr. White was still here, he would have a much more sophisticated answer, but I mean it's essentially the Pakistani Taliban.

Mr. WELCH. And their goals are what as you see it?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, it's a Sharia law. It's a replica of what happened in Afghanistan pre 9/11, essentially.

Mr. WELCH. And President Zadari, as you know, indicated that he thought the west should have a greater sophisticated understanding of the goals with respect to the imposition of Sharia law. What's your take on that?

Mr. BERGEN. If you ask almost any Muslim are you in favor of Sharia law, most Muslims will say yes, because it's—in principle the details of what that Sharia law might look like. Is it Taliban or is it something much, much, much less onerous? So I mean, there is nothing necessarily wrong with people who want to install some form of Sharia law. It is a question of degree.

The other issue that Swat raises is—is doing these kinds of deals at all a good thing. Now obviously Pakistan makes its own judgments about this, but if we're prepared to do side deals with the Afghanistan Taliban, why can't the Pakistani government do deals with Pakistani Taliban in its own territory. That's something they need to think about.

Mr. WELCH. But they can if they want to, right?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, I mean, obviously they can. But I mean, we tend to be very critical of these fields. I think appropriately so, because often the deals basically give the breathing room for the militants to regroup. You have to understand the Pakistani government does these deals, I think, because they have no other options.

Usually when they go into these areas it is a military defeat, the much-wanted Pakistani Army has never really won any kind of significant war it has been involved in. And it is not winning a war against the insurgency on its western and northern borders. And so these peace deals are certification of failure than anything else.

Mr. PILLAR. A couple of other relevant points, with one the Pakistani military is not trained, equipped or organized to do counterinsurgency in the northwest, they are trained equipped and organized to conduct armored battles against the Indians along their border.

And second, a lot of areas we talked about, the Pakistani central government basically has never controlled it, that's certainly true of the Sharia.

Mr. WELCH. It's a very small percentage of the 170 million or so people in Pakistan, right?

Mr. PILLAR. That's correct.

Mr. WELCH. What's the population out there?

Mr. BERGEN. 3 million in FATA.

Mr. WELCH. So how in the world do we control that, it is pretty mountainous out there. There is a level of presumption in a lot of our discussions about our capacity to affect what is, I guess, extraordinarily rural, extraordinarily decentralized area of the world where there is some potential, is the potential of a threat to our country.

Mr. PILLAR. I think that's a fair observation, and on the Pakistani end, it's not a question of willingness or capability, it is a little bit of both, and a lot of capability. We like to think of it more as well, the Pakistanis ought to do more and they should do more. Well, that's probably true, but there is a large capability question as well. The one other point if I could just add Mr. Welch, to get on the table about the Pakistani Taliban and the original question to Peter is when we talk about the Pakistan Taliban we are not talking about a single unified group. We are talking about a number of elements particularly in the FATA, each of which independently control chunks of it. Masoud and others have pieces of it, and sometimes there have been conflicting and contending among themselves.

Mr. WELCH. Well, is it your view that those various elements in the FATA region have as a goal more autonomy in that region or did they want to take over the Pakistani government?

Mr. PILLAR. Oh, I think it is much more the former, to maintain and solidify their autonomy. And I think most of them are smart enough to realize they aren't close to taking over Pakistan.

Mr. WELCH. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you Mr. Welch. And I thank both our witnesses here. I am still left with the question we started with, that if we were to get some sort of government stabilized in Afghanistan and get Pakistan to deal with their situation, that there would still be some ungoverned areas in both Afghanistan and Pakistan to which elements uncharitable to our interests would reside or they could go to Yemen and whatever—and the questions are we going to keep sending in troops after troops after troops or do we have another way of dealing with this.

I thank you for your contributions and all of the information that you shared with us today, it's certainly helpful. It is assistive to us to sort of focus our attention on this and decide as this country is about to embark on an expenditure of human and financial treasure as well. So thank you very much. Thank you Mr. Flake and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:45 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[The prepared statement of Hon. Paul W. Hodes follows:]

Statement for Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs Hearing, March 3, 2009: "Afghanistan and Pakistan: Understanding a Complex Threat Environment"
Congressman Paul Hodes

Chairman Tierney, Ranking Member Flake, thank you for holding this important hearing today on U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This hearing will be critical to the Subcommittee's work on understanding the challenges we face in these two nations, how these challenges are connected, and how we can help the new administration over come them.

It has been nearly six years after then-Defense Secretary Rumsfeld announced an end to major combat in Afghanistan. However, our Coalition fatalities have increased in each of the last five years. President Obama has expressed the need to refocus our military and diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The complex landscape of political, tribal and cultural dynamics requires that the U.S. examine how best to target our resources in the region.

One of our goals in this region has been to close off the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan as a safe haven for terrorists, but this goal has not yet been met. The continued struggle we are having in Afghanistan is a symptom of the insurgent safe haven in these parts of Pakistan. In order to achieve our goals in the region, we must gain a deeper understanding of the issues at play in this part of the world, and how to stop the growth of insurgents.

I believe eliminating this safe haven is to critical to our success in Afghanistan. I hope to work with members of the Subcommittee to consider

strategies for achieving this goal. I look forward to hearing from our distinguished panelists today on these issues.

○