

**HEARING AND BRIEFING ON: U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE RESPONSE TO PAKISTAN'S HUMANI-
TARIAN CRISIS: THE SITUATION AND THE
STAKES**

HEARING AND BRIEFING

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

JUNE 16, 2009

Serial No. 111-39

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

54-878 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2009

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
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**U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RESPONSE TO
PAKISTAN'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS: THE
SITUATION AND THE STAKES**

HEARING

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 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 2:44 p.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John F. Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tierney, Van Hollen, Welch, and Flake.

Staff present: Andy Wright, staff director; Elliot Gillerman, clerk; Talia Dubovi and Scott Lindsay, counsels; Brendan Culley, Alex McKnight, and Steven Gale, fellows; Adam Hodge, deputy press secretary, full committee; Dan Blankenburg, minority director of outreach and senior advisor; Tom Alexander, minority senior counsel; Dr. Christopher Bright, minority senior professional staff member; and Glenn Sanders, minority Defense fellow.

Mr. TIERNEY. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs hearing entitled, "U.S. Contributions to the Response to Pakistan's Humanitarian Crisis: The Situation and the Stakes," 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 will be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. Without objection, so ordered.

We will proceed to the opening statements. Before I do, I want to welcome our guests who are here, Mr. Bacon, of course, and our guests who are coming quite a distance. And we really appreciate it, for your help and for your patience.

I apologize for the fact—you know, Sherry Rehman, how legislators can be and how the votes come, and they take a while. So we apologize to both you and Samina Ahmed for the period of time that took us well beyond the 2 o'clock start period. Thank you for your patience.

I am going to waive most of my opening statement in deference to the time that the witnesses have already spent and just say—and set the table a little bit here for the fact that over the past 7 weeks, the Pakistani military has, of course, been involved in an intensive offensive. The long and short of it has been, of course, that a lot of people, because of the tactics used and the artillery, the air strikes, have had a sizable effect on the civilian population and led to the displacement of many, many people. The estimates of how many vary, but I know Samina Ahmed's estimate, I think, was about 2.8 million. About 1.9 million have been registered and verified, and there are a number of others who are there. Obviously one of the issues is some are in camps, others in various other types of establishments and homes where they are receiving hospitality from family members and friends.

This is obviously a situation for those who are still in the areas where fighting rages, where curfews and land mines and other conflict issues leave those people frozen or not able to get out and avoid being caught in the middle of what is happening there. There are a number of NGO's who are working to ensure that people have food and shelter and adequate medical supplies, but obviously we need more help and more people on that.

So this is a fundamental challenge. There's a lot of work to be done in the short term dealing with people's needs, but also we would like our witnesses to address what needs to be done in the long term and who should be responsible for it and all of the aspects going forward.

This is obviously a dangerous opportunity for extremist groups to get in and help people and try to win them over to their perspective, but it is also a chance for the Pakistani Government to step in and organize a relief situation, win the trust of the people there and a long-term relationship, and gather some support back from the people in this area of Pakistan.

I want to stop at that point in time, and I will allow Mr. Flake to make an opening statement if he wishes, and then we will just go to our witnesses for testimony before we get back to the questions and answers. I know Members will want to ask some questions.

Thursday, both—all of you will want to know that we have Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, Under Secretary of Defense Michele Flournoy, who will be here discussing a number of related issues. So the things that you say here today may well help us inform some of the questioning that will go on in Thursday's hearing as well.

[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 “U.S. Contributions to the Response to Pakistan’s Humanitarian Crisis: the
Situation and the Stakes”**

As Prepared for Delivery

June 16, 2009

Good afternoon and welcome. Today the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs continues its sustained oversight of U.S. efforts in Pakistan by examining the significant humanitarian crises currently unfolding in that country.

Over the last seven weeks, the Pakistani military has maintained an intense offensive against Taliban militants in the North West Frontier Province. According to the military, they have now succeeded in clearing the militants from much of the area and have reclaimed towns and cities that had been controlled by the Taliban. Unfortunately, the Pakistani military’s offensive has been marked by conventional military tactics – heavy artillery and air strikes – that are particularly hard on the civilian population.

According to some sources, war conditions have led to the displacement of as many as three million civilians. While accurate assessments of the exact number of displaced persons is difficult to obtain, 1.9 million registered IDPs have been already been verified. This marks the largest migration of people in Pakistan since partition from India in 1947. Hundreds of thousands more civilians are still trapped in areas where the fighting continues, unable to flee due to on-going attacks, military-imposed curfews, and landmines laid by the insurgents.

The majority of those who have been able to flee are currently staying with host families, including relatives, friends, or even strangers. In some cases, hosts have taken in enough people to double or triple the size of their households. This tidal wave of humanity significantly strains host communities and further threatens the stability of the region.

A smaller number of uprooted people are living in camps, and still others are staying in schools, mosques, and hospitals. The United Nations, the International Committee for the Red Cross, and numerous NGOs are working to ensure that camp residents have food, shelter, and adequate medical supplies, but camps can only be a temporary, and most unsatisfactory, solution.

One of the fundamental challenges is Pakistan’s failure to establish the central government’s writ over many parts of the country. Pakistan lacks a basic civil governance compact between the people and the state in which the state provides physical security and establishes a system of justice in exchange for the government’s right to tax and enforce the law.

In many parts of Pakistan, including the North West Frontier Province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the central government does not collect taxes or provide for justice and has been quick to cede control at the first sign of challenge. Hence, the populace is extraordinarily suspicious of the central government now that it has finally come to the rescue. Without a baseline level of trust between the government and the people, it will be very difficult for Pakistan to succeed in its campaign.

We must recognize that this major displacement presents an opportunity for extremists to exploit. There are numerous reports that extremist groups are seeking to make political inroads with the displaced population by providing humanitarian services.

This presents Pakistan's government with a unique test: will it provide for its people at their time of need or will it cede that responsibility to its overburdened civil society or, even worse, the Taliban or other extremist groups?

The latest reports from Pakistan suggest that much of the civilian population currently supports the Pakistani military's efforts against the Taliban. Pakistan must not take that support for granted, and it must deliver effective relief to its citizens in distress.

For years now, I have been encouraging, prodding, and cajoling the executive branch to fashion the U.S.-Pakistan relationship around long-term, people-to-people connections that would help support Pakistan's democratically-elected civilian government deliver on its promises.

Therefore, the current crisis also presents the United States with a unique test: will we and our international partners assist the Pakistani government in providing relief during its time of need? The United States is working closely with the organizations on the ground in Pakistan to respond to the humanitarian crisis, and our financial contribution to these organizations has been more than four times greater than that of the European Union or any other national donor so far. We need to ensure that our funding translates into effective assistance on the ground.

Our hearing today will delve into the current conditions facing the internally displaced population as well as what can be done to bring stability to the region and allow the displaced population to return to their homes. In addition, and in advance of Thursday's opportunity to question Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and Undersecretary of Defense Michele Flournoy, we will discuss what continued role the United States can play to alleviate current suffering and to support increased security and stability in the region.

Clearing the North West Frontier Province of Taliban militants is only the first step. The current operation cannot be considered a success until the immediate needs of the displaced population are met and they can safely return to their homes and rebuild their communities. The underlying crisis of militant extremism will not be addressed, however, without sustained Pakistani military resolve, effective provision of services by the Pakistani government in concert with the international community, and improved trust between Pakistan and its people.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of time, I will just submit my statement for the record.

I want to thank the witnesses for their patience.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Let me briefly introduce the witnesses we are going to have here today. We are going to have this hearing, and then we are going to proceed to a briefing—not a hearing, but a briefing—from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a second panel.

The testimony we are about to receive will be from Dr. Samina Ahmed, who is the South Asia project director for the International Crisis Group. There she oversees the ICG's operation in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Nepal. In that capacity she analyzes the political, social, economic and military factors that increase the risks of extremism, internal conflict and war, and she makes policy recommendations to overcome those threats.

From 1999 to 2001, Dr. Ahmed served as a research fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Prior to that, from 1990 to 1997, she was a senior research analyst at the Institute of Regional Studies. Dr. Ahmed holds a Ph.D. from Australian National University.

Ms. Sherry Rehman serves as a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly of Pakistan from the Pakistan People's Party. From 2008 to 2009, she served as Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting. She currently serves as a member of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security.

Prior to joining the National Assembly, Ms. Rehman worked as a journalist, most notably as editor of the Pakistan-based Herald News Magazine. She is a long-time activist, advancing the cause of better access to health and educational resources, particularly for women and children from the lower-income sections of Pakistani society.

Ms. Rehman holds degrees from Smith College and the University of Sussex.

Mr. Kenneth Bacon serves as president of Refugees International, a position he has held since 2001. From 1994 to 2001, Mr. Bacon served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, where he was the Pentagon's chief spokesman. Prior to that, he worked as a reporter, editor and columnist for the Wall Street Journal's Washington bureau. Mr. Bacon holds a B.A. from Amherst College, as well as an M.B.A. and an M.A. from Columbia University.

So again, I want to thank all of you for sharing your expertise and your insight, and I want to thank Ambassador Patterson and her staff at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad for their assistance in facilitating this hearing. We greatly appreciate the help there.

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

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. The record will reflect that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

I assume that your phone has been taken off of mute. Samina and Sherry; is that correct?

Ms. REHMAN. That's right.

Mr. TIERNEY. Great. Thank you.
 Dr. Ahmed, would you be kind enough to start with an opening statement?

STATEMENTS OF SAMINA AHMED, SOUTH ASIA PROJECT DIRECTOR FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP; SHERRY REHMAN, FORMER FEDERAL MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, AND MEMBER, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY; AND KENNETH BACON, PRESIDENT, REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL

STATEMENT OF SAMINA AHMED

Dr. AHMED. Thank you very much, Chairman Tierney, and thank you very much for holding this important meeting on a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions in Pakistan. You have laid out quite clearly the dimensions of the problem and the reasons for it.

Let me just say this, that we in the crisis group have been greatly concerned not just about the peace deal that led to this particular crisis in the Malakand District of the Northwest Frontier Province, because clearly it was again a peace deal that allowed the Taliban to expand their control. And once there was popular discontent and, of course, U.S. pressure, the military took action, but that action, as you point out, was hasty, it was ill-thought-out and has led to this massive exodus of people.

We are as concerned as you, sir, about the threat that is posed by the jihadi extremists in this area with their links to al Qaeda and the potential that they could exploit this crisis to gain access to more recruits to try to win hearts and minds. That is why it is so important that relief, reconstruction, and rehabilitation must take place in a way that meets the needs and empowers the communities.

Let me say this, sir, that these are people who have fled a brutal Taliban rule for practical purposes. They want to see an end to the militancy, the presence of militants in their areas. They want to lead normal lives. They want to go back home.

The United States and its assistance has been greatly welcomed in Pakistan, but there is much more that can be done. It's important for the United States to understand that this is not just, and as it should be, a humanitarian operation and meeting humanitarian needs, but it also serves U.S. international security efforts. If we see the jihadis, as we are already witnessing on the ground, taking advantage of this situation, then we have a problem on our hands. We will see the militants making a comeback. We will see them expanding their control once again.

So it's equally important for us and for the Government of Pakistan to understand the importance of not allowing band organizations such as the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba's latest reincarnation, the Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation, from operating in these regions. It is equally important for the Government of Pakistan to understand that for any effective rehabilitation and reconstruction, there will be a need for civilian law enforcement and the civilian intelligence agencies that can best bring these militants to justice.

A reformed judiciary is essential, as are long overdue political reforms in Malakand Division and in FATA. These IDPs are not only

from—let me stress that—from Malakand Division. The 2.8 million or so are from Malakand, but there are 500,000 IDPs from FATA as well. Here is an opportunity for the United States and the Pakistan Government to win hearts and minds, but to do so it will be absolutely essential that the assistance that's given is urgently provided, it is appropriate, it supports a civilian-led process, and it prioritizes the needs of noncamp IDPs, since a vast majority, more than 85 percent of these IDPs, are, in fact, living outside of government-run camps. They are living in communities that are hosting them, among communities that are hosting them in shelters, in schools.

It is important that we think outside the box on how this assistance should be provided, as in our report. International Crisis Group issued a report on this, on June 3rd, that said, look, think about cash-based assistance. For income, for education, for health, for vocational training, it pays dividends.

Documentation is possible. There is less chance of pilferage and wastage, and it would put a humane face by empowering the communities concerned.

It's important that the United States also encourage the civilian government's desire to enact political and constitutional reform not just in Malakand Division, but also in FATA.

Finally, and let me end with this, sir, it is equally important that the United States warns the Pakistani military from entering into yet another appeasement deal, such as the deal that it signed with the Taliban and their supporters in Swat, that have led to this crisis, and that will only, not only undermine the security of the Pakistani state and its citizens, but also gravely harm U.S. national security interests.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Doctor. We appreciate that, and the report that you did on June 3rd, that was extremely helpful as well.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Ahmed follows:]

Testimony of Dr. Samina Ahmed, South Asia Project Director, International Crisis Group, to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Hearing on “U.S. Contributions to the Response to Pakistan’s Humanitarian Crisis: The Situation and the Stakes”

Islamabad, Pakistan, 16 June 2009

I want to thank Chairman John F. Tierney for holding this important hearing and inviting me to testify on behalf of the International Crisis Group on the challenges faced by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)-led government and its international allies, particularly the United States, to meet the needs of almost three million people displaced from their homes as a result of military action. The military operation followed a conceptually flawed peace deal that had enabled the Pakistani Taliban’s takeover of large parts of Northwest Frontier Province’s (NWFP) Malakand Division. The failure to provide effective relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction will reverse any gains made on the battlefield and boost radical Islamist groups.

The Crisis Group has been in South Asia since December 2001, and has published reports directly relevant to the issues under this committee’s review. We have repeatedly expressed concern about military-devised peace deals with violent extremists in Pakistan’s tribal belt. The latest peace deal with the Swat-based Sunni extremist Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), a militant group allied to the Taliban, helped entrench Taliban control and al-Qaeda influence in the area, undermining the gains made by the transition of democracy and the defeat of the military-supported religious rightwing parties in NWFP in the February elections.

The militants’ refusal to end their armed campaign, facing strong international pressure, particularly from the United States, the military launched a campaign to eradicate Pakistani Taliban groups from their strongholds in the Malakand region. However, the military’s resort to heavy force in the ongoing operations, failure to address the full cost to civilians and refusal to allow full civilian and humanitarian assistance to the conflict zones is counter-productive. Unless relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts are also urgently improved upon, the army’s offensive against the Taliban risks leaving the extremists the ultimate victors.

Communities displaced by a badly planned war may be especially vulnerable to jihadi indoctrination. The crisis, however, also presents an opportunity to win hearts and minds of millions of Pakistanis in NWFP, and more specifically in Malakand Division, who have suffered at the hands of the Taliban. With almost three million IDPs in camps, homes, schools and other places of shelter in NWFP, how these people are treated will determine if the insurgency-hit zones are saved or lost to the Taliban.

BACKDROP

In February 2006, NWFP's Awami National Party (ANP-led) government and the TNSM reached an agreement, devised by the military, for the imposition of Sharia in NWFP's Malakand district, which is composed of seven of NWFP's 24 districts, including Swat. According to the agreement, the government would establish religious courts to ensure adherence to Sharia; dismantle security checkpoints; and withdraw troops to the barracks. It also agreed to release militants detained in anti-terrorist operations, including those responsible for violent crimes such as public executions and rape. In return, the TNSM was to ensure that the Pakistani Taliban in Swat lay down heavy weapons, ended its armed campaign and accepted the government's writ. Crisis Group's report on the militant jihadi challenge in Pakistan, published in March 2009, had warned that this accord would only embolden the militants, and given al-Qaeda's links to Swat-based militants, also enhance al-Qaeda's presence, as did the military's previous appeasement deals with the militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

Less than a month after Pakistan's National Assembly and President Asif Ali Zardari approved a military-devised accord with the Swat-based extremists on 13 April, the tribal militants openly defied the writ of the state, and expanded their activities to Swat's neighbouring districts. Pressured by the U.S., with the Pakistani public alarmed by the Taliban's brutal rule in Swat, their domestic legitimacy and external support at stake, the military finally took action, but instead of a targeted operation, aimed at Taliban command-and-control, restored to massive force. The fighting between the military and the militants has forced an estimated 2.8 million persons fleeing Malakand since the start of the operation, adding to roughly 500,000 IDPs from FATA. Thousands are still leaving the conflict zone.

The scale of the IDP crisis is the consequence of failed military policies that have enabled militancy to spread for several years, thus expanding the theatre of war and hence the numbers of affected civilians. It is also the result of the use of excessive force, including artillery, helicopter gunships and jet fighters, which have forced millions to flee their homes. The safety and security of thousands of others, who have been unable to flee Malakand's conflict zones because of military-imposed curfews and the use of heavy force, is also gravely endangered not just from direct fire but also through illness and food shortages. The full civilian cost will not be known till the independent media and humanitarian groups have full access to the conflict zones.

RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS

The current military campaign is unlikely to end soon unless the military decides to enter into another accord with the militants, which would be unwise in the extreme. With the end of the harvest season and the approach of Malakand's bitter winter, significant numbers of IDPs might have no choice but to remain in exile until mid-2010.

The NWFP government has established a number of IDP camps; however, more than 85 per cent of IDPs, close to two million persons, are residing outside them-- with host communities, on school premises, in rented accommodation or other places of shelter.

The UN has appealed for \$543 million for IDPs up to December 2009, of which only a quarter has been committed. It has also called for \$280 million in food aid but has so far received less than half that amount. Food, clean water, health facilities and other support are all in short supply. UN agencies are working overtime but are in urgent need of support.

With the government's resources severely strained, there is urgent need for international assistance. Without assistance, the Islamist groups will fill the gap, hoping to radicalise the disaffected, particularly the youth. While the United States should respond and urgently to the Pakistan government and UN's appeals, how well these and other funds are spent, and how well the government provides security and basic services will determine the IDPs fate, including whether they become vulnerable to jihadi recruitment or constituencies for peace.

The absence of coordination between military and civilian institutions has undermined effective planning for humanitarian relief. The absence of such measures as transit camps at key exit points and government-provided transport to see people to safety has compelled non-combatants to travel as far as 100 km, often on foot.

Pakistan's fledging democracy has inherited an administrative structure that needs major restructuring if it is to meet civilian needs. The Federal Relief Commission, National Disaster Management Agency and Provincial and District Disaster Management Agencies, set up by Musharraf's military government, remain dysfunctional. At the military's behest, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani established a federal Special Support Group to assist the provincial government in logistics, health, administration and registration, headed by Lieutenant General Nadeem Ahmed, a serving corps commander. While the military's track record of working with civilians and in support of civilian efforts is poor, the distribution of relief funds through the district bureaucracy, without meaningful consultation with IDPs or local NGOs is also hampering effective delivery of relief.

The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), now run by competent dedicated civilians, is playing a pivotal role in registering the IDPs, an essential precondition to assess needs, and to guarantee a fair distribution of relief assistance and ensuring the safety of vulnerable IDPs, particularly women and children. Registration is even more essential because the vast majority of IDPs have settled outside camps. Since a National Identity Card (NIC) is required upon registration, the government has, through NADRA's efforts, been able to reach citizens it had difficulties reaching in the past.

NADRA has designed a 'smart card', with embedded biometric features for the federal government's Benazir Income Support Program, a social welfare scheme, aimed primarily at the most economically vulnerable women. This scheme has been restructured for registered IDPs, who would be provided cards with encoded data on the beneficiary and the details of entitled assistance. The creation of a similar smart card, based on NADRA's technology, would provide an incentive not just to Malakand's IDPs but also FATA IDPs to register, enable humanitarian aid organisations to channel assistance far

more effectively particularly to non-camp IDPs and give recipients control over the aid they receive.

Cash-based incentives should also cover child and adult education. Provided through cash vouchers, such assistance would help parents return their children to school in lieu of the alternative, the jihadi madrasa. Cash vouchers for vocational and skills improvement training would help displaced households become economically independent and contribute to the reconstruction of Swat and other conflict-hit zones in Malakand and FATA.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

While the assistance provided to IDPs by local communities, including shelter and material support, has been critical in preventing this massive exodus from becoming a major humanitarian disaster, many IDPs understandably question how sustainable it is. If the already limited supply of aid to off-camp IDP communities dries up, there is risk of dependence on jihadi groups that are already delivering both resources and financial aid.

Islamist groups and parties are hoping to use this crisis to win hearts and minds. The Jamaat-i-Islami, which also maintains a jihadi wing, is particularly active in providing relief to IDPs through its welfare wing, the Al-Khidmat Foundation. More overtly militant groups are also actively assisting the IDPs, most notably, the Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba's (LeT) latest reincarnation. A signatory to al-Qaeda's global jihad, the LeT, renamed Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JD) was nevertheless one of the most prominent NGOs to provide earthquake relief in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and NWFP in 2005, with the military's support. Following the Mumbai attacks, designated a terror group by the UN and banned once again by the Pakistan government, the LeT has re-emerged as the FIF, and has reportedly sent thousands of workers to provide food and other assistance to NWFP's IDPs. Reports of jihadi indoctrination in Al-Khidmat and FIF camps and schools are widespread.

While the government needs to prohibit jihadi groups, banned under the Anti-Terrorism Law, from participating in the relief effort, Malakand's IDPs, who have had first hand experience of Taliban atrocities, including public beheadings and floggings, their schools destroyed, women deprived of work and girls of education, are potentially powerful constituencies for peace.

Yet the military's intentions and the directions of its operation will ultimately determine if those who have fled Taliban-controlled areas are rescued from the militants' grip. IDP return too will depend on the displaced feeling safe enough to return home. Premature claims of victory by the military only to see action once again starting is unlikely to create a conducive environment for IDP return. The military's appeasement deals with the militants, the latest with the Swat-based Taliban, have understandably provoked doubts about its intentions. Both the PPP-led federal government and the ANP-led provincial government in NWFP must resist any pressure from the military to renew such agreements.

Instead, they should plan ahead now for the transfer of security responsibilities, once the military operation ends, to civilian law enforcement agencies. With their knowledge of the area and of the militants, the police and civilian intelligence agencies would enhance the government's ability to dismantle jihadi networks. A strengthened and reformed judiciary would also help restore peace to this troubled region. Arrests and prosecution of religious extremists and their allies in local criminal gangs is the only long-term solution to militancy.

With the costs of poor governance in NWFP and FATA now clear to Pakistan's mainstream moderate political parties, building on political and public support for an end to militancy in these regions, the government should implement political and constitutional reforms in the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) of which Malakand is a part, as well as in FATA so as to incorporate their districts and tribal agencies respectively into NWFP with full provincial rights.

WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS: THE U.S. ROLE

The Obama administration's positive response, including Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's pledge of an additional \$200 million for the IDP is a step in the right direction. Helping Pakistan's young civilian government to effectively deliver relief, and to support plans for rehabilitation and reconstruction, is certainly an appropriate response to a humanitarian crisis. U.S. assistance will also serve national security interests by depriving the jihadis of an opportunity to fill the gap in the hope of radicalising the disaffected.

The U.S must, however, recognise the importance of ensuring that such support is delivered urgently and effectively if the Pakistan government is to win not just the battle but also hearts and minds of citizens.

The U.S.

- should urge a humanitarian pause in the fighting to allow much-needed assistance to non-combatants in conflict zones, to allow them to flee and to account for civilian casualties, with the time frame dependent on assessment of needs and available logistical support and other resources and material support, as determined by the provincial government and international and local humanitarian agencies.
- ensure that relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction are civilian-led and empower displaced communities to determine their own needs and priorities.
- prioritise the relief and rehabilitation of IDPs, not just from Malakand but also from FATA, through cash transfer programs that provide income support, payment of school tuition and paid vocational training;

- support Pakistan civilian-led plans for return of IDPs to their communities with reconstruction programs that incorporate support for the provincial government and help build the capacity of civilian police and advance judicial reform with new training, equipment and mentors; and
- encourage political and constitutional reforms in PATA and FATA through support for comprehensive governance, stabilisation and rural development programs.

Mr. TIERNEY. Ms. Rehman, we will be happy to hear your testimony.

STATEMENT OF SHERRY REHMAN

Ms. REHMAN. Thank you, Chairman Tierney and members of the subcommittee, for taking notice of the magnitude and scale of this humanitarian crisis that Pakistan is facing today. It is certainly the largest transfer of refugees and human—people, rather, from one place to another in the history of this region. Pakistan has not encountered anything like this since the migration of refugees from undivided India in 1947.

So clearly a response to the IDPs' challenge is of concern to you, is more of concern to Pakistanis as well, because this challenge has become, as I said earlier, a critical test of our response and our ability, the Pakistan Government's ability, to maintain public resolve and a sustained campaign against militancy and terrorism in the name of religion.

Now, the principal challenge, Mr. Chairman, for the Pakistan Government today is twofold: to provide urgent relief for the frontier provinces' displaced millions, and also, obviously, to obtain public support for our military operation with high human costs. These two projects are inextricably linked, as noted here. Any serious lapses in coordinated relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, which will come later, will create and will endanger the fragile public coalition and consensus needed for powering the morale so vital for a sustained military operation and its successes.

Now, the stakes for us couldn't be higher, Mr. Chairman. Pakistan is at a critical juncture today. Our government has been able to use the public recoil generated by Taliban excesses in the fallout of a flawed peace deal between the Malakand militants and the provincial government to its advantage. Before this specific episode, let me say that public opinion on militancy was divided down the line, and it was muddied by religious symbolism as well as partisan public opinion.

Even today, as we speak, many religious parties and other leaders have little hesitation—these are non-mainstream, but they are very much in the public discourse—have little hesitation in condemning the campaign against terrorism as an American-sponsored strategy with little gain for Pakistan. And they do conflate the suffering of the IDPs with the failure of the state to reach a consensus through dialog with the militants.

And, as mentioned already, the peace deals that have resulted in the Taliban regrouping, jihadist forces gathering space and momentum, have been fundamentally flawed, certainly in the Pakistan experience, and have almost always generated this kind of jihadist counterbalance to the state's writ.

Now, for us this is as much a project of reclaiming lost territory, reinstalling the Pakistan flag, but also expanding the writ of constitutional rule, guaranteeing fundamental entitlements which were seriously endangered under the Taliban rule, empowering state institutions to function in a sovereign, democratic plurality.

Now, I have to state here at this point that time is as much an enemy to this project as terrorism. Why I say this is because the displacement of nearly 3 million people over a period of 3 weeks

has caused a huge overstretch on government capacity on multiple fronts. In fact, the figure I have today from government, which includes the earlier tribal area refugees referred to from Bajur, numbers to a staggering 3.9 million. Now, this is unprecedented in the history of the region, and I would think, probably, the world.

The equation is, again, very compelling and simple. If the trauma of internal migration, subhuman camp conditions, of curfews, casualties and lost family members is not mitigated and relieved soon, we will see human anguish beginning to drain public resolve for the military operation, which, I stated, is very essential for reclaiming the writ of Pakistan in many areas. So the longer this humanitarian crisis goes on, a space for the larger existential battle against terrorism shrinks, and public confidence in government also, obviously, goes down.

These camps remain hotbeds and sanctuaries for recruiting a larger mindset toward terrorism, and we have to guard against our—the states, right now, are overstretched and provide as much assistance, both from civilian support and international assistance, in terms of immediate relief and food security operations.

A concern that is emerging now is that as the theater of operations expands toward the tribal areas, which it has already, the pressure of another wave of refugees may trigger a fresh crisis. And a main issue of concern is that once terrorists are flushed out, they will be able to or may be able to escape through routes via the Iran border, especially by Waziristan. And this prospect of a return and regroup of Malakand, once they find sanctuary, perhaps in Afghanistan, will reverse all gains made at such high human costs.

So this is something to think about, and we feel that the United States can and should intervene and perhaps in the Kabul—perhaps with Kabul in the Trilateral Commission to start maximizing opportunities for border interdiction at this point, because there is very little symmetry in terms of the effort Pakistan is putting in on the border and the other side, especially from, obviously, Kabul.

Now, the other thing that is of concern is the sense that the international community has been slow to respond to the crisis. Only a small amount of \$430 million pledged has actually been translated into goods and relief. And I cannot help but reiterate the magnitude of the crisis and the ability of government to cope at such notice and with overstretched abilities.

The U.N. also has warned that its appeal of \$543 million in emergency aid is still unmet. And if by July, I would say in a week or so, the deficit in international commitments continues at 80 percent, which it is right now, food supplies to the camps will be severely compromised. And, of course, this will be—represent a fresh humanitarian disaster. Oxfam has testified to this, and so has the World Food Programme.

The Government of Pakistan has allocated 50 billion rupees in the budget for RRR efforts, but I feel these will be diverted to food provisions and urgent supplies in terms of relief, again taking away from the cash grants so badly needed for refugees and the space needed for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The international community can certainly provide the resources for the Pakistan State to emerge as a major welfare agent—and ob-

viously we are in a moment of opportunity here—to put jihadist groups that have been using welfare activities as a cover to funnel—to carry on their aid activities, to carry on their proselytizing, as well as other activities. And we must, obviously, use this opportunity in partnership with the United States and other members of the international community.

But I must state here that there is a concern again on the ground that while all governments in Pakistan have shown a below-average ability and capacity to execute budget allocations, there is no comparison to the aid reflux of U.S. money when it is re-routed back through intermediaries and earmarked contractors. Basically the sense here is that we are getting something like 40 to 50 cents to each dollar of aid money that comes through earmarked contractors, and that is something that we need to look at.

I won't overlap with what already has been said. Clearly a large-scale reform in FATA in the PATA areas, which is Malakand Division, is also the order of the day. Reconstruction of infrastructure is a critical concern. I am told that gas, water and pipelines are being re-laid very urgently. But, again, we must be very careful to ensure the security of the returning refugees, returnees. When they go back to their homes, there is an urgency, obviously, to return, because life in camps is debilitating.

We must also look toward guaranteeing their security once they return by insisting and working on and harnessing the capacity at least to return back to Malakand Division, because they had initially fled. And these civilian forces, as well as Frontier Corps, levees, should form the bulwark of any future security arrangements that are put in place for government oversight and civilian security to the area.

One, again, area of concern that is being stated is that there is little sense again of how much—what the cost Pakistan has incurred in terms of this ongoing battle. The budget recently announced \$35 billion incurred by Pakistan. And, as you know, Pakistan's society and urban centers most especially have been transferred—transformed, rather, into battle zones, particularly after the operation was launched. Peshawar itself, the capital of the Frontier Province, has witnessed 18 bomb blasts since this operation began.

So we are really concerned about enhancements of security capacity and state abilities now to carry on with what will clearly be a long-term sustained venture. I think there has to be attention paid to giving serious, not just inputs, but aid inflows not just to the refugees, because that is a clear and present crisis, but also to the next step before we send refugees back to an unprotected environment. This is essential for us to look at.

And, last, I would like to say again, to avoid overlap, there is a great deal of concern that we are paying, as I said, a high human cost in this battle. And if there is a troop surge in Afghanistan by the U.S. forces, which we know is imminent, then how are we going to protect against pressure of the Taliban coming in from Afghanistan again?

Once again, I would stress that the border must be fortified if we are also to guard against sanctuaries on both sides of the border, and this will address mutual concerns for both countries using each

other to launch attacks, to allow attacks to be launched. And this is certainly something we don't want to countenance in Pakistan. And we are hoping that the United States will be able to use its good offices and leverage in the Trilateral Commission to ensure that there is not a return of a regrouped Taliban back into our areas.

We are looking, obviously, in the short run and medium term, to enhance the Pakistan Government's capacity to deliver on the basic obligations of governance, justice and social service delivery—those are diminished as we speak because of overstress—but on security fundamentals as well.

Finally, I would like to say that we must enable our compact to renew a strong state-citizen relationship that allows the government and civilian capacity more influence over the regions that have earlier been exploited by non-state actors because of the existing constitutional and political gaps, which we feel must be filled.

I would be happy to answer questions as we proceed. I think a lot more needs to be said, but, once again, thank you for providing this opportunity for us to give our inputs.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much for your comments. Of course, your written remarks and articles that you have written have also been shared with the committee, and we will have some questions for you after Mr. Bacon's testimony.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rehman follows:]

**TESTIMONY TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL
SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, U.S. HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, “ U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESPONSE
TO PAKISTAN’S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS: THE SITUATION AND
THE STAKES”**

**Sherry Rehman, Member of National Assembly and Former Federal
Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan.**

June 16, 2009

Thank You Chairman Teirney, and members of the Subcommittee, for taking notice of the magnitude and scale of the humanitarian crisis Pakistan is facing today.

The IDP’s challenge is clearly an outcome of the military operation undertaken by the state in response to a Taliban advance from the Malakand area, but in a broader context, it has become a critical test of the national campaign against militancy and terrorism in the name of religion.

Let me briefly set the context. This is important because it is linked to crucial public buy-in for the anti-terror effort, as well as to sustained political outcomes and military successes.

Pakistan is at a critical juncture. Our government has been able to use the public recoil generated by Taliban excesses in the fallout of a flawed peace deal between the Malakand militants and the provincial government to its advantage. Before this specific episode, public opinion on militancy was divided down the centre, muddied by religious symbolism and partisan public responses to terrorism. Even as we speak, many religious political parties have little hesitation in condemning the campaign against terrorism as an American-sponsored strategy, with little gain for Pakistan.

The principal challenge for the Pakistan Government today is twofold: to maintain public support for a military operation with high human costs, and to provide urgent relief for the NWFP’s displaced millions. Any serious

lapses in coordinated relief, rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts will create dangerous fissures in the broad but fragile public consensus needed for powering the morale critical for sustained operational successes.

While the government faces an unprecedented challenge at multiple levels, the crisis has opened up opportunities to build public-private partnerships and manufacture trust with civil society groups. That space exists as much in the heat and dust of the refugee camps as in the registration and coordination process for IDPs outside camps. This is the time to replace the relief and charity pipelines of the Islamist groups that use public service as a cover for laundering terrorist activities.

THE SITUATION TODAY

The displacement of over 2.5 million people over a period of three weeks has caused a huge overstretch on government capacity. As it stands the government has announced a staggering total of 3,950, 320 IDPs in circulation. The trauma of internal migration, of curfew casualties, and lost family members has shaken both government and citizens into responses that still need channeling and coordination.

The fact that 80 per cent of refugees are not living in camps is also a crisis waiting to unfold. Most IDPs have settled with extended families, made possible by Pakhtun hospitality, but the pressure of hosting such large numbers without adequate registration or welfare support is unsustainable. Vacant school buildings accommodate thousands outside the tented camps, but these too have become clogged with the debris of human waste and an overstretch of first-aid and health care resources. Medical centers in the NWFP and Mardan are unequipped to deal with the pressure of wounded and women patients, and the International Red Crescent's operations are restricted by crucial aid deficits.

Conditions in the camps continue to be sub-human. 229, 520 are living in 22 camps. The pressure on services is high, but there is too much reliance on centralized distribution, even though 25 Humanitarian Hubs have been set by international agencies such as the World Food Program. Although government is now beginning to coordinate with civil society support-groups, the 2005 earthquake effort and transparency issues as well as delivery lags from that experience hamper higher public involvement. Food subsistence is only certain for a few more weeks, and the goal of minimum

food security requires higher nutrition, variation and involvement from the community in preparation and tent-doorstep delivery. Many go hungry for inability to stand in a dole-line.

In terms of pledges made for the IDPs, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has appealed to the international community to step up its assistance, and the President of Pakistan has noted that only a small amount of the \$ 430 million pledged has actually been translated into goods and relief. The UN has warned that its appeal for \$ 543 million in emergency aid is still unmet, and if by July, the deficit in international commitment continues at 80 per cent, food supplies to the camps will be severely compromised. Oxfam has said the same. The Government of Pakistan has allocated Rs 50 billion in the budget for RRR efforts, but it requires urgent cash, grant and capacity assistance to sustain minimum operations just at the camps. It has announced Rs 25,000 cash grants per refugee and is trying to provide urgent income-relief to as many IDPs and possible.

The biggest obstacle to mobility in the camps is the debilitating heat in a grass-free wasteland, where tradition keeps the women enclosed in sauna-like tents. Electrical power is itinerant for the fans in the sheds and school-buildings where refugees are housed and more fuel-powered stand-alone generators are needed for night safety and day survival. Semi-potable water is now available through central pumps, but pit-latrines are key vectors of disease. Women's healthcare deficits continue to mount, challenging Pakistan's healthcare system. Aid agencies should be warned about the dangers of token-ism and model schools set up for up to 30 children in make-shift tents in camps where the children number in thousands. With most displaced children minus any schooling now, we run the risk of raising a new lost generation which considers war a function of religion.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts are areas where government is being tested. Battlefield gains will have to be secured by representative community inclusion in medium-term planning and long-term justice-delivery and constitutional reform for the troubled areas, but the security of Malakand returnees and the resumption of disrupted income sources will have to be addressed before anything else. This means that recruitments for civilian levies and police rehabilitation programs will have to work in tandem with continued military supervision of key logistic and traffic arteries.

The Taliban ability to re-group and resurface must not be underestimated for the Malakand area, nor must their resolve to unnerve citizens by retaliating in high-density urban centres. This tactical ability to enlarge the scope of the battlefield to the full stretch of urban and rural Pakistan will pose a serious challenge to security planning as well as to relief workers and international agency operations. The Peshawar PC Hotel blast on June 9th 2009 was one such clear message. Since the operation began, just Peshawar has suffered 18 bomb blasts.

The commando style assaults show an increasing level of sophistication in their organization and planning. The state response will have to be much heavier in terms of upgraded security measures for hotels, police precincts, key checkpoints, schools, hospitals and government installations. All provincial governments will have to be equipped with a massive injection of scanners and technology-intensive screening devices. This is where the US Government can help, after asking for a local needs-assessment checklist

I. STAKES IN WINNING THE PEACE

For Pakistan, the stakes in winning the IDP challenge are linked inextricably to maintaining state stability and defining the identity of Pakistan. For the government, it is more than a battle for its own political survival. The project is about securing the safety and protection of Pakistan's citizens. There can be no ambiguity. If we are not able to do that then we face the dangerous prospect of losing not just territory but the public consensus against terrorism, militancy and extremism. The government's objectives have to extend far beyond providing relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, because our collective handling of the military operation and the IDPs crisis is central to the reassertion of a robust, progressive Pakistani state governed by democratic norms and the rule of law. In the broader context, the state's success in delivering on the crisis is critical for retrieving public space for its citizens to live by the rights and guarantees provided in the Constitution of Pakistan.

The heart of the crisis is that we are in the middle of a full-fledged war, and the continuing IDP trauma counters the mood that traditionally feeds morale for a war. Each time a woman dies for lack of a doctor, or a non-combatant loses life or limb in the cross-fire of curfew, the narrative of public resolve

takes a blow. This must be acknowledged and iterated for the huge challenge that it is. There should be no equivocation that the price of reinstalling the Pakistan flag continues to be perilously high. The sheer magnitude of the humanitarian tragedy should mobilize the international community and civil society to recognize the limits of government capacity to handle alone the size of the task ahead. But so far, the international community has been slow to mobilise aid in real-time assistance. Calls for transparency as well as more humane military operational tactics are productive and indeed necessary; they spur executive accountability and action. But calls that question the political will or motives of state action at this stage only endanger the federation's unity, not just the government.

At the same time, Pakhtun alienation is the most dangerous possible fallout of this military operation and subsequent humanitarian crisis. Despite government responses to set up camps in Karachi and Punjab, sub-national faultlines are dividing public discourse, with the worst-case scenario being a situation where Pakhtun identity and self-image suffers from entitlement erosion in mainstream Pakistan. The US can help by exploring options other than US- conducted aerial bombings in the tribal areas, so that Pakhtun sentiment is not further radicalized as a result of US forces stationed in Afghanistan. Reducing the US predatory footprint in Pakistan will build support for Pakistan to fight militancy, extremism and terror as its own existential battle.

II. THE WAY FORWARD

Change Will be Painful but Unavoidable

In Pakistan's current crisis, clearly, necessity has been the mother of intervention. But if the country is to survive what is left of it after 1971, invention is also a necessity. We can no longer afford the backlash of unintended consequences. The level of change required will be painful, but fairly predictable.

Refugees Cannot Return to Pre-Taliban Malakand: Firstly, the IDP catastrophe is just the beginning of a long counterinsurgency and counterterrorism transition which will not be resolved by a return to the status quo ante. This must be acknowledged by all stakeholders in power in the NWFP. If this is not explicitly understood, then there will be a massive security and social crisis in the affected areas in less than six months.

Second, there are calls for IDPs' return to some areas like Buner, but some dots still need connecting. There needs to be a clear recognition that we can't just be laissez faire about meeting a challenge that will require focused state-management of refugee-return in a local law-enforcement and infrastructure vacuum. Goals will have to be prioritized or else government machinery will not be able to process tasks amid multiple transitions at this level.

No More Peace Deals with Militants in Malakand: The first responsibility of any government, no matter how diminished its local abilities in certain areas, is to provide safety to its citizens. There should be no compromise on that again, and despite pressures from the religious right there is no appetite in government circles for any peace accord that replicates the Swat experience. Clearly, lessons have been learned from all peace deals with militants: they provide more space to the Taliban than they do to the state in Pakistan. Policy-makers in Washington should also understand that experiences that worked in Iraq or Afghanistan will not translate into common or productive outcomes in Pakistan, which still carries the burden of a proxy war it fought for the US against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

Security First

While the Taliban were terrorizing the citizens of Malakand, a huge gap in security services rose. The police fled from the area, unequipped in both numbers and weaponry to fight the Taliban onslaught. Frontier Constabulary reinforcements were later brought in, but they too needed the back-up of the army to tackle resistance. Large-scale police and FC injections have to take place, with better equipment and training in counterterrorism skills. These measures are the best guarantee against the law and order vacuum that has, over the years, facilitated the entry and re entry of non-state forces seeking to exploit the vulnerability of the local population.

In the post Taliban scenario, it is imperative that fear should not be allowed to tip local sentiment toward the Taliban. And neither should elite attrition and lack of provincial executive will to re-build state institutions. The provincial government of the NWFP will need international assistance.

Without real-time police enhancements, FC reinforcements and security sector reform, the army will end up bogged in holding areas it needs to move out from. For the foreseeable future, the military will have to patrol routes and potential choke points for the areas it has cleared, but it has serious work to do elsewhere to block and interdict critical massing of renegade Taliban leadership from Swat. The theatre of operations has to move from Malakand

to the Tribal Agencies and Frontier Regions bordering Afghanistan, and refugees are already pouring out from FR Bannu.

Post- Taliban Malakand and the FATA would need manpower for schools, hospitals, primary health-care services, offices, shops and state services to secure their mobility and ensure daily protection from future Taliban coercion. Right now the areas that the military has worked on may be clear of militants, but that is not how they will remain. The Taliban have a history of resilience, are trained to disband, melt-away and re-group. They must be put out of business.

Blocking Escape Routes through Afghanistan

If the Taliban return to any of the evacuated areas, the state will find it very difficult to answer for why it displaced so many people, which will diminish its ability to counter terrorism. What often compromises the capture of Taliban commanders is the terrain. But ultimately it is the open border with Afghanistan that operates as the largest terrorist escape route in the world. If the US cannot pressure its way in the Trilateral Commission to increase secure patrols on this border, which can work in Afghanistan's favour as well, then we have a problem of sanctuaries that cannot ever be dissolved. If Pakistan's identifiable Taliban commanders cannot be located and permanently evade capture, then we risk a real long-term slide into anarchy and warlordism in many areas of Pakistan. In response to being hit in the territory they had captured, the TTP and others have already announced and executed bomb blasts and suicide attacks in urban nerve centers.

PATA and FATA Reform

As soon as operations subside, a serious FATA reform plan has to be put into place, if reclaimed territory is not to be lost again.

It will be a massive challenge, as the army has incessantly waged battles here since 2003, but if peace deals don't hold, and experience tells us they do not, then territory has to be regained, and even slowly incorporated as mainstream Pakistan for the first time through a mixture of reform and state force. The Government of Pakistan has already prepared an amendment in the FCR in consultation with representatives of FATA, and is waiting for military operations to end to initiate executive action.

Extending the Political Parties Act to the FATA will also allow progressive forces more space in that area, enlarging the scope of opportunities for locals to articulate social and political concerns within a mainstream plurality.

There is a recognition that a larger social justice deficit lies at the root of many quests for rough and ready mongrelisations of Islamist systems. PATA justice and revenue systems can be brought into conformity with the Pakistan Penal Code if they are seen as delivering, especially if justice is dispensed within a fixed time frame, pendency is regulated, and the jurisdiction of Pakistan's superior courts be extended to the PATA. If the social pyramid leaves the poor increasingly dispossessed and the area remains without constitutional protections extended elsewhere, we may see a dangerous trend of community buy-in for future Taliban take-overs. Reconstruction of infrastructure, the accountability of rehabilitation aid flows, the creation of income opportunities and public trust will go hand-in-hand. Local bureaucrats that harboured or favoured the Taliban must also be screened out.

Interrupting the Taliban Narrative:

All the IDPs of Swat speak with a mixture of anger and awe about the ability of the militants to broadcast dogma and threats with impunity. This mobility needs to be disabled. In Swat, the Fazlullah radio frequency was not just used to spew propaganda against the military and state, it was used as a basic communication device for field commanders to recruit criminals, coordinate attacks and make surgical get-aways. These renegade FM transmissions need to be jammed if we are to interrupt this anti-state narrative.

For mainstream Pakistan, the power of strategic communications must not be underestimated. The Taliban narrative has been interrupted by the state capture of some militant leadership, but it is heard in pulpit-thumping idiom through itinerant dissent against the military operation. The discourse of dissent is important to watch for as it has the power to tip the scales against the anti-terror initiative. Young people, seeking to construct radical identities are especially vulnerable, irrespective of their access to resources and opportunities. Investments in cultural products, especially Pakistan's booming music and pop entertainment industry will go a long way in both absorbing the energy of the second-largest youth cohort in the world. It will also provide a productive counter-narrative to the extremism peddled by the non-state jihadist actor.

Building an Inclusive Peace

All local agreements to restore peace will hinge on working with the local community, but this time committees or jirgas should include non-Maliks, women leaders and the marginalized. In all Taliban take-overs women have suffered the most attacks on their images, bodies, rights and autonomy. They

need to be heard. The narrative from behind the conventions of Pakhtun purdah is mostly rooted in pragmatism and the value of peace.

III. AREAS FOR US CONTRIBUTION:

For years, the US security bargain with Pakistan was seen as a purely transactional military-centred equation. Today, US assistance for the IDPs will lay the foundation of a renewed relationship between the people of Pakistan and the US, making a major contribution to American efforts for reconnecting with the our public, a goal that President Obama's Administration has committed to pursue as it seeks to recast itself as a friend and as a supporter of Pakistan.

Urgent Relief Measures: Given the enormity of the IDP challenge, it is imperative at this stage to provide urgent international support, some in terms of financial outlays, ensuring food security, but equally importantly, in terms of enhancements of field capacity to address resource gaps in bridging critical health, sanitation and trauma-management deficits. As things stand, the needs assessment done by international aid agencies is frequently revised to accommodate changing pressures, but requires far better inter-agency coordination.

Rebuilding Infrastructure and Governance Capacity: A well-rounded assistance package incorporating support at multiple levels can be the first fundamental step towards establishing a secure, and no-return-to-Taliban order for Pakistan's troubled territories. The strategy should encompass serving the needs of the displaced population as well as supporting the state in rebuilding governance and law enforcement structures for the Malakand and the FATA citizens. Eventually, the Pakistan Government's capacity to deliver on the basic obligations of governance, justice and social service delivery as well as on security fundamentals is important. It must be enabled to renew a state-citizen relationship that allows the state more influence over the regions that had earlier been exploited by non-state actors because of existing constitutional and political gaps.

Camp- Specific Measures

- For effective camp specific measures to provide relief to the physical hardships of the local population, the US can step up its contribution

for food, tents, clothing, emergency medical aid, bedding, and schooling aid to enable displaced populations to continue livelihood activities.

- The unbearable 104° F temperature could be countered to some extent through air-conditioned tents as the government comes through on a commitment to provide unhindered power supply, but generators and fuel are a real need.
- There is also space for supporting the Benazir Bhutto Income Support initiative, monthly cash assistance, for the IDPs that was launched by the GoP recently.
- Planning and work for the July rains must be undertaken now, without which standing water and soggy ground will cause a fresh crisis.
- Despite the desperation of camp-dwellers to return to their homes, and military optimism about operations ending soon, in areas where the prospects of safe rehabilitation are not imminent, the best option may be to jointly plan for a longer haul than to encounter worse weather and further IDP anguish.
- Transportation for FATA Refugees will be required, as will Transition Camps and returning and incoming refugees;
- Major enhancements in the registration and outreach capacity of NADRA would be useful.

Rehabilitation:

Post Taliban infrastructure rebuilding will require serious attention. The USAID can fund a number of girls' schools, build teacher-training programmes in partnership with provincial NGOs.

Basic Health Units will need rebuilding, nurses and paramedics re-inducted, LHWs given protection and mobility, as well as sanitation repair and energy transmission lines.

The inclusion of Malakand in the US ROZs Programme will have some downstream effect, but urgent incentives to regenerate local employment and create public works opportunities would be more productive in an environment where crop and tourism losses will take more than a fiscal year to recoup.

The rehabilitation work could begin either in the temporary IDPs shelters or, the security situation permitting in their own villages, in partnership with local NGOs, providing support to rehabilitate normal activities even if on makeshift arrangements, including schools, health clinics, administrative units, sewerage and sanitation, water supplies, sanitation facilities, local markets and homes.

Partnership with Pakistan's Government

Despite challenges from the tribal areas, the Pakistani government has control of state power in the mainland. But as a result of the use of that power, it is traumatized by the largest refugee population since the October 2005 earthquake. This is clearly not going to be a short-haul, and expanding operations to the tribal areas will pressure both the military and federal government on many counts.

US assistance for Pakistan's Government in this backdrop will not only consolidate Pakistan's capability as a state to deliver on its obligations for protecting citizen's rights, it will also support a redefinition of the state-citizen relationship on the principles of a participatory and responsive engagement.

The US can, just for a start, take a leaf out of its own book in the 2005 earthquake trauma in Pakistan, and re-emerge as a heavy lifter in its partner's distress. Dividends will accrue to both in the medium and long-term. Special Envoy, Ambassador Holbrook's aggressive public diplomacy to raise support for the IDPs with the international community is welcome, but so far has generated little real resources in the aid-pipeline.

In the Trilateral Commission with Afghanistan and Pakistan, the US can help block Taliban sanctuaries by increasing Kabul's investment in border security and interdictions. This will prevent a negative fallout in Pakistan from the US troop surge in Afghanistan, but will also be critical in choking escape routes for escaping militants now that the military response from Pakistan is at full force. It will also help Pakistan in sanitizing the border for Taliban commanders that flow freely back and forth, compromising the state's ability to prevent attacks from Pakistan's soil.

Apart from equipping Pakistan's government to make effective interventions through law enforcement, training for civil bureaucracy to develop its delivery capacity will boost the state's position in the post Taliban order. Furthermore, strategic communication solutions, as well special scholarship opportunities will go a long way in developing a more educated and informed perspective of the local population on important issues, enabling them to make a meaningful contribution to the country's development. The US can make a major contribution towards dismantling the support structure of the Taliban by providing mobile jammers for illegal FM radio transmissions as well as equipping Pakistan's security services to launch an effective crackdown on arms and ammunitions that enable the Taliban to continue its offensive against the state

Most importantly, US (or international) assistance should incorporate a serious commitment for a sustained transformation of the existing social order along progressive lines incorporating a participatory model. Inclusion, even if it is incremental, of Pakhtun women in all post Taliban relief, rehabilitation and resettlement efforts is critical to ensuring a sustainable peace as women have a degree of domestic control, and hence, influence over family rejection or acceptance of competing ideologies. Mainstreaming women in national life should form a crucial part of the framework for any form of assistance that the US is seeking to extend to Pakistan.

The international community can provide the resources for the Pakistan state to emerge as a major welfare agent, but relief must flow through government pipelines. While all governments in Pakistan have shown a below-average ability to execute budget allocations, there is no comparison to the scandalous aid reflux of US money being re-routed back to intermediaries through earmarked contractors.

Building Partnerships with Civil Society in Pakistan

The IDPs crisis also provide the US an opportunity to strengthen the civil society of Pakistan enabling it to make a meaningful contribution to democracy consolidation as well as to fill the development vacuum that was ruthlessly abused by the Taliban. Many NWFP-based NGOs have an impressive track record of contribution to local development and an association with them could always be a useful instrument for effective interventions for Pakistani public's benefit. These NGOs include: SRSP, SUNGI, KhwendoKor, Pakistan-Based Organizations: Hum Pakistani(an

umbrella organizations of 20 NGOs) Concerned Citizens of Pakistan(CCP), Bali Memorial, Rising Pakistan, Karawan, Pakistan Medical Association, Shirkatgah, Care Schools etc.

While partnership with local civil society structure is important for effective relief delivery, the principal interlocutor should be the recently set-up Emergency Response Unit (ERU) which coordinates the working of all service-delivery by government departments to the IDPs. The NWFP Chief Secretary leads the ERU. For rehabilitation and reconstruction however, the government has set up the Special Services Group led by the Army.

IV. US-PAK THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Even before the high human cost of the IDP crisis triggered public responses that potentially erode support for military operations, the biggest challenge the government faced was managing ownership of the battle against terrorism, not because the people of Pakistan tolerate militancy, as they certainly do not, but because an international military presence in Afghanistan, whatever its merits or demerits is seen largely as a hostile occupation next door. This has fuelled a deep vein of Pakhtun resentment against the US, a dynamic that defies the logic of rational outcomes about possible endgames in Afghanistan. The Taliban that had dispersed after 2001 have re-grouped and challenge sixty percent of Kabul's writ in Afghanistan. This does not reflect policy success for the US in Afghanistan, but more importantly threatens to further de-stabilize Pakistan.

A history of Washington coddling unpopular dictatorships, and being an unreliable partner, has also led to public ambiguity about converging US' strategic goals with Pakistan's own interests. The IDP crisis has opened up another battlefield for a fragile democracy that is struggling to create a mass constituency against militancy as its own homegrown initiative. In a terrain where suicide bombings have come to Pakistan primarily after September 11, this is as tough as it gets. Things are changing after the Taliban exposed their expansionist motives post the Swat deal, but any political buy-in to mutual Pak-US strategic goals remains compromised when coercive language and difficult conditionalities are built into assistance packages passed by the US Congress.

The prospect of a troop surge in Afghanistan without US pressure on Kabul to police its border may threaten to roll back anti-Taliban military gains on

the ground in Pakistan. Public opinion in Pakistan may then tip the scales against any military offensive and hamstring the democratic government from maintaining a clear consensus against terrorism simply because the Taliban problem will once again be squarely re-branded as a heroic resistance response to self-serving US policies in the region.

In an environment of crisis, when a strategic ally is seen using Pakistan as a dumping ground for pursuing its regional goals, the entire project of running a campaign against terrorism could well be conflated with anti-US resentment which has accumulated over the years. This will compromise Pakistan's own goals of combating militancy and terrorism, but also give its government little leverage in the future to create public space for harnessing international resources for converging goals.

Broader Pak-US Aims

There has to be a sense in Washington that managing public opinion in Pakistan about a partner with an intrusive footprint on sovereignty diminishes the ability of any government in Islamabad to create an unambiguous consensus on the battle against extremism. The US-operated drone, or UAV, has become a powerful symbol of American violation of Pakistan's territorial integrity. This is reinforced on 51 news channels in vivid graphics every time there is a drone attack. It negatively impacts Islamabad's project of building a sustainable public partnership with Washington, because the most frequently asked question in Pakistan is framed in negative outlines: how can a strategic partner be targeting its ally's territory?

Two, the policy drift on key national security roadmaps and outcomes from both the US and Pakistan needs to be addressed. While terrorism is seen too often as a purely military challenge, the existential worries, whether real or imagined, of Pakistan's security establishment are ignored to mutual peril. Regional rivalries and the perilous politics of crisis-driven outcomes remain a major driver in official bilateral and multilateral discourse.

Three, it is clear that we are in a moment of opportunity as much as a period of challenges. The challenges stem from both the arenas of domestic politics as much as they do from foreign policy lag. Partisan politics and systemic creep bogs urgent action down in both countries. In Washington, the tone is

bullish on investing in democracy in Pakistan, but for a new administration the learning curve is steep. President Obama's thrust on recalibrating a damaged transactional relationship between Pakistan and the United States into a more broad-based and multi-layered project is part of a key change, and is filtered through the prism of an open commitment to a sustained engagement by powerful leadership in Congress. Yet broad gaps in grappling with the levers of a complex strategic and political dynamic remain un-addressed. While a great deal of attention and nuance has emerged in US public and academic discourse on Pakistan recently, the extent to which the instruments of American soft power have been, and can be used, remains severely underestimated.

CONCLUSION

The IDP's crisis is the fallout of a military operation against terrorists. If the international community is not responsive to the largest internal refugee migration in history, then all its claims to support Pakistan in its larger existential battle against militants that use religion to advance their hold will be seen as meaningless. The challenge for Pakistan is that the theatre of operations is not a battlefield, another state's army, nor even a mission to reclaim territory. It is a much larger project, frontloaded with the tragic baggage of civilian casualties and scorched earth. The government has done well to build political consensus through parliament, which took its own circuitous route, and for now the broad agreement is holding.

Counterinsurgency in such difficult terrain is not an experience that a conventional military is trained for. This has caused untold hardships, loss of lives, refugee recoil against the operation, and a degree of hard questioning about the viability of aerial bombardment on partially-evacuated ground. The good news is that the military's sustained encirclement of non-state actors has restored a level of public confidence in pre-Taliban governance. The loss of its own soldiers in a stand against fighters equipped with the advantage of stealth and sophisticated weaponry has bought it an image-boost on a national level. Another byproduct of battlefield successes is the re-emergence of local resistance. The local inhabitants of Lower Dir and adjoining areas are now emboldened to join the battle against indigenous and foreign fighters, and are seeking an operational partnership in policing the area.

The success rate of this enterprise will make or break the vital consensus required on a national scale to sustain the public resolve needed for a long-term political campaign against terrorism. There is no point flushing Malakand of terrorists if Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and the rest of the NWFP are forced to tolerate them.

If the state is seen as enfeebled from Taliban assaults or the political momentum against terrorism is lost, the militants will stand to gain.

Thank You.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Bacon, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH BACON

Mr. BACON. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this timely and important hearing.

The Obama administration has made clear that Pakistan is one of America's most important strategic partners, and now that partner is afflicted by one of the world's most rapidly growing humanitarian emergencies. Refugees International, an independent advocacy agency, has been surveying displacement in Pakistan for more than a decade.

Pakistan generously hosted millions of Afghan refugees during the Soviet occupation. This crisis is different because it involves the displacement of Pakistanis, and because it has arisen so quickly. Sadly, the current humanitarian challenges are likely to get worse before they get better. The Government of Pakistan is expanding its current campaign against the Taliban into South Waziristan, which could trigger additional displacement, and the monsoon rains are about to begin, complicating the provision of supplies and raising new health and sanitation challenges, such as cholera.

A Refugees International team recently returned from Pakistan, where it surveyed internal displacement. It found that, one, needs are enormous, as most have fled without anything and sought shelter in camps or with relatives.

Two, the U.N. and aid agencies are struggling to respond to the most pressing needs, but funding has been scarce. Furthermore, the funding that has been pledged has not been distributed expeditiously to meet the needs that have arisen, nor in the most effective way.

Three, relief efforts have so far been focused on camps, whereas the vast majority of the displaced, over 80 percent, are staying with host families, who are quickly running out of resources. One aid organization has reported that pockets of starvation and trauma amongst the population remains a protection priority. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable.

Four, changes in the way the United Nations and the Pakistani military are operating could reduce displacement and improve humanitarian response.

Five, all parties, the United States, the U.N. and the Government of Pakistan, must prepare for further displacement.

And, six, it is premature to expect internal refugees to go home. An independent team should assess the sustainability of returns.

To respond to this humanitarian emergency, the U.N. issued at the end of May a \$543 million humanitarian appeal. This latest appeal includes emergency relief projects by all U.N. agencies and a number of international NGO's, and calls on donors to respond generously and immediately to one of the largest displacement crises in the world.

Despite the urgency of the situation and the strategic importance of the region, the response has been insufficient, and the appeal remains severely underfunded with only 26 percent of it pledged to date. The appeal for food is less than 50 percent funded. The protection cluster of the appeal is only 1 percent funded.

To date, the United States has been by far the most generous donor with \$164 million during this fiscal year. A further \$200 million request was submitted by the Obama administration to Congress for emergency funding to aid organizations, as well as to meet traditional levels of the U.S. funding to the U.N. refugee agency and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

It is encouraging that the conference report for the pending emergency supplemental has the House and Senate agreeing to an emergency appropriation of \$225 million. Equally important, the funding should be directed toward the International Disaster Assistance Account to assure that it is distributed efficiently to meet the needs of internally displaced people.

I hope that Congress will quickly approve this request. The humanitarian community in Pakistan has praised the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance for deploying an emergency team in the field and for responding quickly to funding requests from NGO's. It is crucial that Congress support these efforts and approve the supplemental request so that it can be quickly distributed.

Despite having a donor coordination group, other donors have been noticeably absent until now or have shown limited generosity. The European Commission's Humanitarian Office just announced a 22 billion euro contribution, while the U.K. so far has provided 22 million pounds. But much more needs to be done if the international community wants to respond effectively to humanitarian needs.

Today Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein, a member of the Refugees International Board of Directors, and I are sending letters to the Office of the Islamic Conference and to foreign ministers, Ambassadors of Arabic countries urging their generous support of the humanitarian appeals. I have attached a copy of that letter for the record.

The lack of sufficient assistance to the displaced is already having serious consequences. According to the UNHCR, most of the new arrivals in the camps were previously staying with host families. They can no longer afford to do so and are, therefore, resorting to putting up with heat—the temperature rises to about 110 degrees Fahrenheit during the day—and poor living conditions in the camp.

The government started to distribute about 55,000 Pakistani rupees, roughly the equivalent of \$300, to each IDP family, but now it is backtracking, saying it might only distribute the sum of money to half of those registered, as it is unclear where we will be able to get funds. This is both a humanitarian and a security challenge.

In a development that Refugees International has witnessed elsewhere, and which my fellow witnesses have commented on, the vacuum in assistance is being filled by politically motivated actors to gain popular support and allegiance. According to international and national aid agencies, political parties active in Pakistan have set up shop in the camps and amongst host communities and provide various services from distributing fans to providing mobile phone cards to the displaced.

The majority of international aid organizations and U.N. agencies work through local partners because of their expertise and their ability to access remote areas. Many Pakistani organizations also obtain their funding from foundations and donations in parallel to the U.N. cluster system. Local organizations are a critical part of the overall relief effort because they have in-depth knowledge of the environment and sustained programs over an extended period of time. From a financial perspective, they are also much more cost-efficient than international NGO's as their overheads are much lower.

Once more, using local organizations helps to build local capacity and strengthens Pakistan's humanitarian infrastructure. I hope that the United States will work with the U.N. to encourage greater participation and greater funding by local NGO's.

In conclusion, while the displacement crisis in Pakistan is nearly a year old, its magnitude, the scope of the needs and its political implications of this crisis have not been fully grasped in foreign capitals. The international response has been far too slow. The ongoing humanitarian operation is only the start of what will have to be a prolonged and massive aid effort. Displaced families need immediate relief and in time will require renewed confidence and support to return home in safety and dignity.

The Obama administration has repeatedly stated the geostrategic importance of the region, and it is seizing this opportunity to show concern and leadership. It is not merely a question of funding, though the humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts will need robust financial commitments. The United States has clear national objectives in Pakistan, and these can be advanced by showing concern for the fate of civilians and for helping Pakistanis to meet their needs and to build a more peaceful, prosperous future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Bacon.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bacon follows:]



The U.S. Contributions to the Response to Pakistan's Humanitarian Crisis: The Situation and the Stakes

Testimony Submitted by
Kenneth H. Bacon
President, Refugees international

To the hearing before the
U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
One hundred eleventh Congress - First Session

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Presiding: John F. Tierney, Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs.

Thank you, Rep. Tierney, for holding this timely and important hearing today. President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and Ambassador Holbrooke have all made clear that Pakistan is one of America's most important strategic partners, and now that partner is afflicted by one of the world's most rapidly growing humanitarian emergencies—internal fighting that has displaced more than three million Pakistanis from their homes, villages and farms.

Refugees International, an independent advocacy agency, has been surveying displacement in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Provinces, for more than a decade. Pakistan generously hosted millions of Afghan refugees during the Soviet occupation. This crisis is different because it involves the displacement of Pakistanis and because it has arisen so quickly. Sadly, the current humanitarian challenges are likely to get worse before they get better. First, the government of Pakistan already has raised the possibility of expanding its current campaign against the Taliban into South Waziristan, which would trigger additional displacement. Second, the monsoon rains are about to begin, complicating the provision of supplies and raising new health and sanitation challenges, such as cholera.

A Refugees International team recently surveyed internal displacement in Pakistan. It found that:

- Needs are enormous, as most have fled without anything and sought shelter in camps or with relatives.

- The UN and aid agencies are struggling to respond to the most pressing needs, but funding has been scarce. Furthermore, the funding that has been pledged has not been distributed expeditiously to meet the needs that have arisen, nor in the most effective way.
- Relief efforts have so far been focused on the camps, whereas the vast majority of the displaced – over 80 percent – are staying with host families who are quickly running out of resources. One aid organization has reported “pockets of starvation,” and trauma amongst the population remains a protection priority. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable.
- Changes in the way the United Nations and the Pakistani military are operating could improve humanitarian response.
- All parties—The U.S., the UN and the government of Pakistan—must prepare for further displacement.
- It is premature to expect internal refugees to go home; an independent team should assess the sustainability of returns.

To respond to this humanitarian emergency, the United Nations issued at the end of May a \$543 million humanitarian appeal, which was a revision of an initial appeal aimed to respond to the half million displaced from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This latest appeal includes emergency relief projects by all UN agencies and a number of international NGOs, and calls on donors to respond generously and immediately to one the largest displacement crises in the world. Despite the urgency of the situation, and the strategic importance of the region, the response has been insufficient and the appeal remains severely underfunded, with only 26% of it pledged to date. The appeal for food is less than 50% funded. The protection cluster of the appeal has only received 1% of the funding requested.

To date, the U.S. has been by far the most generous donor, with \$162 million during this fiscal year. A further \$200 million request was submitted by the Obama administration to Congress for emergency funding to aid organizations, as well as to meet traditional levels of U.S. funding to the UN Refugee Agency and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It is encouraging that the conference report for the pending emergency supplemental has the House and Senate agreeing on an emergency appropriation of \$225 million. Equally importantly, the funding should be directed towards the International Disaster Assistance account to ensure it is distributed efficiently to meet the needs of the internally displaced population. I hope that Congress will quickly approve this request. The humanitarian community in Pakistan has praised the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for deploying an emergency team in the field and for responding quickly to funding requests from NGOs. It is crucial that Congress support these efforts and approve the supplemental request so it can be quickly distributed.

It remains unclear, however, how the US intends to spend some of the requested money and some fear a large part of the funding will go to reconstruction and the rehabilitation. While post-conflict planning is essential, Pakistan is still very much in the midst of a conflict and the priority remains the relief operation. The U.S. must devote resources to

the immediate aid effort, and prepare to allocate further monies to assistance and reconstruction as needed. Helping Pakistan achieve peace, stability and prosperity will require a long-term and generous U.S. commitment.

Despite having a donor coordination group, other donors have been noticeably absent until now, or shown limited generosity. The European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) just announced a 25 million Euro contribution, while the UK has so far provided 22 million pounds. But much more needs to be done if the international community wants to respond effectively to humanitarian needs.

Today, Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein, a member of the Refugees International board directors, and I are sending letters to the Office of the Islamic Conference and to foreign ministers and ambassadors of Arabic countries, urging their generous support of the humanitarian appeals. I have attached a copy of that letter for the record.

The lack of sufficient assistance to the displaced is already having serious consequences. According to the UNHCR, most of the new arrivals in the camps were previously staying with host families. They can no longer afford to do so, and are therefore resorting to putting up with the unbearable heat (the temperature rises to about 110 F during the day) and poor living conditions in the camps. The government started to distribute 25,000 Pakistani rupees – roughly the equivalent of 300 dollars – to each IDP family, but is now backtracking, saying it might only distribute this sum of money to half of those registered, as it is unclear where it will be able to get these funds. Amongst the displaced and the host communities, anger is rising, and it is increasingly targeted at aid agencies unable to provide adequate services.

This is both a humanitarian and a security challenge. In a development that Refugees International has witnessed elsewhere, most recently in Iraq, the vacuum in assistance is being filled by politically motivated actors to gain popular support and allegiance. According to international and national aid agencies, political parties active in Pakistan have “set up shop” in the camps and amongst host communities and provide various services, from distributing fans to providing mobile phone cards to the displaced. Some candidates for local elections have gone so far as to establish and run their own camps. Jihadist groups are present, leading an international agency to suspend its visits in some camps on Friday and Saturday as “these are the days the jihadists distribute their assistance”. Even corporations have stepped in the absence of a comprehensive response: a cellular phone company has been tasked with managing a camp.

The majority of international aid organizations and UN agencies work through local partners because of their expertise and their ability to access remote areas. Many Pakistani organizations also obtain their funding from foundations and donations in parallel to the UN cluster system. Local organizations are a critical part of the overall relief effort because they have in-depth knowledge of the environment and sustain programs over an extended period of time. From a financial perspective, they are also much more cost-efficient than international NGOs as their overheads are much lower.

What's more, using local organizations helps to build local capacity and strengthen Pakistan's humanitarian infrastructure.

Despite these advantages however, no Pakistani organization participated in the consolidated appeal. There is a vast discrepancy in funding between international organizations and national ones. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will need to assist these organizations to be a more cohesive unit for funding and information management purposes, possibly by encouraging the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum – a coordination group for international NGOs – to open its membership to national organizations. Moreover, OCHA should create an Emergency Response Fund (ERF) solely dedicated to Pakistani organizations so as not to create a parallel system to the UN appeal. This fund should disburse small, flexible grants with a quick turnaround.

I hope that the U.S. will work with the UN to achieve these changes, which should improve the provision of aid.

The government of Pakistan is leading the relief effort and the coordination of humanitarian actors. Since the beginning of the displacement crisis last summer, and despite the federal government's attempts to downplay the humanitarian consequences of the military offensive, the provincial government of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) has taken charge and earned praise for the work it has been doing. Islamabad eventually caught on and created a Special Support Group (SSG) to lead the central government's efforts. The SSG is under the auspices of two ministries (the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Information), and contains an operational unit, headed by General Nadeem, who previously managed relief efforts in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in 2005. According to all actors, General Nadeem is a highly capable, dedicated man who has excellent relations with the military, the government and the international community. Even though at provincial level the NWFP government is still officially in charge, in reality, General Nadeem is the main decision maker.

Despite the personal merits of General Nadeem, many humanitarian actors are concerned over the role played by the military in the organization of the relief effort and the delivery of assistance. Unlike the earthquake, the current humanitarian crisis is the direct consequence of a conflict to which the Pakistani military is a party. As such, it could be in the interest of the army to run a "hearts and minds" campaign and use assistance as a tool to win over the population. Aid organizations have also objected to the presence of the military in IDP camps, arguing that it offers an easy target for the militants, putting civilians and humanitarian groups at risk, while also being problematic given the trauma suffered by many displaced as the result of military operations.

Conflicts of interest caused by a government-led relief effort have arisen elsewhere. With a governmental agency in charge of registering internally displaced people, the government is effectively in charge of determining who is an internal refugee, based on criteria such as the location of conflict areas. This has led to disagreements between the government and the humanitarian community over the status of some displaced who fled

places deemed safe by Islamabad, such as Upper Dir, where fighting continues. Disagreements also include the status of those who left areas that are likely to become conflict areas in the near future, such as Waziristan.

The UN has come under fire from many analysts and aid agencies for “getting in bed with the government” and individual agencies have been labeled by critics as “the government’s implementing partners”. The scale of the crisis has brought to the fore a number of issues that had been simmering for a while, in particular the ability of humanitarian actors – including UN agencies – to operate independently. The lack of effective response to the displaced from FATA was in part due to the UN’s reluctance to confront the government and acknowledge the scale of the problem. The tendency to view the serious humanitarian situation as only a temporary problem was illustrated by the absence of OCHA and the nomination of a double-hatted Resident Coordinator-Humanitarian Coordinator with little humanitarian experience.

In theory, the UN should maintain itself at arm’s length from both the government and the military in responding to this crisis. In practice, it is extremely difficult to do so, and most critics have failed to offer real alternatives to the way the UN currently operates. The UN is in Pakistan at the invitation of the government, and needs to respect its leadership when it comes to providing assistance to the displaced. All actors also agree that the military is by far the most organized and well-resourced institution in the country and that General Nadeem is probably the best-suited person for the job. In the words of an aid worker, however, not facing up to the problem now is like “burying one’s head in the sand,” in the face of possible conflicts of interest, especially on the question of IDP returns.

The separation of the resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator roles earlier in June was a good first step to ensure that humanitarian concerns are raised at the highest level. The ramping up of the OCHA in Pakistan is also positive, and has led to improvements in coordination. The UN must not be shy about vocally denouncing abuses and insist on the respect of humanitarian principles by all actors. To continue advocating for respect for independent humanitarian action, the UN should also appoint a special envoy to conduct regular visits to Pakistan. This will underscore the importance of the crisis for the international community, while giving the UN the political clout required to ensure regular oversight of the management of the relief operation by the government and the military.

The UN should also see this crisis as an opportunity to strengthen civilian structures within Pakistan. While the military operation has led to much civilian suffering, there is now an opportunity for the Pakistani government to show leadership, both in the organization of the relief efforts and the post-conflict reconstruction phases. The U.S., the UN and other actors should work with the relevant ministries and provincial institutions to reduce the influence of the military and assist technocrats in leading the way towards a new Pakistan.

The government of Pakistan has been sending mixed signals on whether or not displaced Pakistanis would be forced to return home, one day talking about voluntary returns then setting fixed returns date while the conflict is ongoing. This is not just the product of a diversity of views inside the government, but a clear intent on the part of some – including in the military – to see the rapid conclusion of their operations. The army’s definition of ‘cleared zones,’ however, does not necessarily translate into ‘safe zones’ for civilians.

These concerns are borne out of a precedent. Displaced people from Bajaur agency in FATA, who had been told late last year to return to their home districts, went back to an insecure environment where military operations were still taking place. Refugees International interviewed one family which had fled to a camp, were encouraged to return home, and had to go back to the camp because their village was still in a conflict zone.

The UN and major international donors need to commission independent verification teams composed of government officials, UN staff and Pakistani civil society leaders (perhaps from the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan) to determine whether returns to conflict areas are desirable and sustainable. Internally displaced people have a right to return to their homes voluntarily, in safety and dignity, as outlined in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The conditions for returns must be set out clearly. Safety is the obvious priority. In addition, civilian government institutions must be established and basic services must be restored.

Donors indicate that they will not fund projects which encourage unsustainable returns, but foreign governments, including the U.S., have a poor track record in confronting the government of Pakistan on protection of civilians. They have remained mostly silent in the past months on the conduct of hostilities, the fate of the populations trapped in conflict zones, and the return push for displaced Bajauris.

Prepare for all Contingencies

The military has made no secret of its desire to pursue its operations in the southern FATA region of Waziristan. It is likely that this push will be coordinated with a NATO operation in neighboring Afghanistan, resulting in a large-scale displacement to Dera Ismail Khan and surrounding NWFP districts. This region is remote, and even less accessible to humanitarian agencies. The rugged landscape, prevailing insecurity and historical lack of presence of aid organizations will probably translate into thin levels of assistance and inadequate information on the humanitarian situation.

International donors, in particular the U.S., should encourage the Pakistani government to prepare for large scale displacement and share information on humanitarian conditions with the UN. Preparedness will be necessary to prevent a new humanitarian crisis. Many criticize the Pakistani government for not preparing better to deal with the humanitarian consequences of the current military operation. If it wishes to garner popular support, the government must do better next time.

In the planning of the Waziristan operation, there are indications that the government of Pakistan is looking to avoid wide-spread displacement by containing the crisis to the NWFP and keeping people from leaving the area. This is an unacceptable proposition, as civilians have a right to seek protection from conflict. The international community must reiterate that civilians should be free to move to any district or region, and ensure that civilians are not trapped in the conflict areas.

Conclusion

While the displacement crisis in Pakistan is nearly a year old, its magnitude, the scope of the needs and its political implications of this crisis have not been fully grasped in foreign capitals. The international response has been far too slow. The ongoing humanitarian operation is only the start of what will have to be a prolonged and massive aid effort. Displaced families need immediate relief, and in time will require renewed confidence and support to return home in safety and dignity. The Obama administration has repeatedly stated the geo-strategic importance of the region and it is seizing this opportunity to show its leadership. This is not merely a question of funding, though the humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts will need robust financial commitments. The United States also needs to be seen as rising above military objectives and showing genuine concern for the fate of civilians.



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June 16, 2009

Secretary General
Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
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PO Box: 178
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Your Excellency:

We are writing to you as a member of the Board of Directors and the President of Refugees International, a Washington-based humanitarian advocacy organization that advocates for lifesaving assistance and protection for displaced people and promotes solutions to displacement crises. We are approaching you as the Foreign Minister of a leading Islamic state to express concern about the humanitarian situation in Pakistan and to urge your government to support the Pakistani government and the United Nations in responding to this crisis.

Nearly three million people in the country have been displaced since the government began military operations against militant forces there two months ago, making this one of the largest and most rapid displacements ever according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. An assessment just completed by the International Committee of the Red Cross pointed to a desperate lack of medicines, clean water, and shelter for the internal refugees.

The United Nations has launched a consolidated appeal for \$550 million to respond to this crisis, but donations and pledges to date, outside of two pledges totaling \$310 million by the United States, have been lagging. There appears to be some reluctance to see this as a critical humanitarian problem, which requires a response that transcends geo-political considerations.

Our hope is that the Islamic world will show solidarity with the displaced people of Pakistan, who are suffering so much. We are appealing to you to urge your government to donate generously to allow the government of Pakistan, the various humanitarian organizations of the UN system, and the Pakistani Red Crescent Society to respond immediately to the massive needs of these vulnerable people.

A Refugees International team just returned from Pakistan, and stands ready to provide updated detailed information on the severity of the situation for displaced people.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Kenneth H. Bacon
President

Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein
Board Member

Mr. TIERNEY. We are going to go into a period of questioning here. We generally do 5 minutes for each Member and then circle through again. There is almost more material here than we can cover in one hearing, but we will do the best we can.

In the International Crisis Group report that Dr. Ahmed prepared, there are comments there about the relief organs, the state relief organs, being overly centrally localized, and an indication that the military continues to dominate key institutions, and that undermines the civilian capacity.

The question I would have is does the civilian government in Pakistan have the actual capacity to take charge of this relief prospect both in the short term and in the long term, planning for a return, and is there a willingness to try to assign to the military a different role than that of running the relief program and instead take that over on the civilian side? Either of our witnesses in Pakistan might want to address that in any order.

Dr. AHMED. One of the problems lies in the fact that the civilian institutions have, as a result of almost a decade of military rule, certainly lost some of the capacity that they originally had. This is not to say that the bureaucracy, the civil bureaucracy, and the civilian government lacks the capacity to plan, lacks the line ministries of the civilian government, lacked the capacity to implement, and certainly—and it's very important right now for us to understand—you need a civilian face even more so because of the history of this conflict and how it has unraveled.

To have the military run the show in terms of relief or plan ahead, as it seems to indicate right now, on taking charge of reconstruction is to talk about not just a centralized approach, but to an institution that has very little knowledge of and a very poor record of working with civilians and with civilian institutions, this undermines that entire process of ensuring that communities are empowered and that they are part of the process.

As my fellow witness said, local NGO's exist. They have the capacity. Local governments exist. They have the capacity. Elected governments exist, and let's hope that we can build that capacity as opposed to falling back on strengthening the military's civilian roles, which serves neither the purposes of that institution nor the interests of the IDPs.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Ms. Rehman, let me ask you this: Do you agree with Dr. Ahmed's assessment? If you do, what is the Pakistani Government, Parliament and the Prime Minister, doing in terms of asserting leadership on the relief effort?

Ms. REHMAN. Well, I think what is going on here is over the last few weeks we have seen, again, realities literally transform, and that really has been an effort of mostly local government in the Frontier Province, which is done through the emergency relief unit [ERU], and certainly there is room for expanding the civilian component of all aid and relief and rehabilitation activities. Perhaps in reconstruction activities, yes, the military might be a better partner for the heavy-lifting part.

[NOTE.—Video link signal lost to witnesses in Pakistan.]

Mr. TIERNEY. This is not good. Well, we will work on correcting that.

While that's interesting enough, this morning we had a hearing in the education field about technology in the classroom, and the mics here didn't work, but they worked fine in the classroom.

Mr. Bacon, let me ask you, while that's being corrected, do you see the United States making any concerted effort to actually focus its aid to local NGO's and more local enterprises that have, perhaps, better, more knowledgeable relationships, or are they still moving through the military and Pakistan and other centralized aspects where we might run into the danger of losing some 40 or 50 cents, as Ms. Rehman said earlier?

Mr. BACON. Well, it's my understanding from talking to Ambassador Holbrooke and his staff that they are very aware of the need to build civilian capacity. And they see this, one, as a humanitarian challenge, but, two, as a great opportunity to help build civilian infrastructure in Pakistan.

So my hope is that they would be paying attention to this. Certainly USAID is clear on the need to deal with local NGO's. And there are, as Dr. Ahmed said, many capable local NGO's in Pakistan. Many of them did very good work during the earthquake, after the earthquake in 2005. And we need to build on that capacity and bring these people into the system in a much more effective way.

Mr. TIERNEY. There's apparently a problem in Islamabad, so they are trying to call and get that back on line. We will do that as soon as we can.

Until we can, sir, you are in the hot seat. I am sure you don't mind on that.

Mr. BACON. OK.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Flake, why don't I let you ask some questions of Mr. Bacon, and then we will allow the other witnesses to come back.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

With this increase in humanitarian aid going, as an increase—I mean, a lot of local contractors are recognized, but there's going to be a greater U.S. presence, I assume. How can we assure the safety of those who are acting on our behalf without making it seem like a military effort, but with so many military there to protect them? How do we strike a proper balance, in your view?

Mr. BACON. Well, that's precisely one of the reasons we are using local NGO's, because they are Pakistanis who live in the community, they know the people there, and they know the habits and the risks that they face.

International contractors are harder to protect than local people. So the advantage of the local NGO's is that they are well-known quantities, they are seen as providing aid and help to their neighbors, and they can do this usually with much less cost than bringing in people from American contracting firms.

So security generally is easier for locals than it is for internationals; not always across the board, but generally much easier.

Mr. FLAKE. With that comes a risk that you don't know what you are getting sometimes. I mean, you can vet those that you contract with, but how do we ensure that we are not using or contracting with some who may have sympathies with the Taliban or working—I mean, that's an ongoing problem.

Mr. BACON. Well, that's a very legitimate question. That's a very legitimate question.

I think, as my fellow witnesses said, there's a great deal of antipathy to the Taliban, and what people are looking for is effective aid and help right now.

So, I think, again, we rely on local intelligence and local capacity to inform us on who is good and who is bad. It's not—it's not fool-proof, but it's a way to start.

Clearly, they know better than we know, and we just have to build trust in them and give them a little bit of operating room and some money and clear guidance, clear goals, a ways to evaluate their progress, metrics, and work with them as we do with our own contractors.

Mr. FLAKE. We obviously put restrictions and directives and mandates on the aid that we provide.

Mr. BACON. Uh-huh.

Mr. FLAKE. Is there difficulty in aligning that with the goals of other organizations that have broader, I guess, participation, be it with the UNHCR or with the Red Crescent or whomever else is operating there?

For example, with legislation that we just passed, is it going to be a problem aligning the goals that we have laid out with other aid organizations?

Mr. BACON. I don't think it should be. I think that we and UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies share the same goals. We want effective programs. We want displacement and we want poverty to end. We want to find ways to work together.

So I don't think this should be an issue at all.

Mr. FLAKE. It was mentioned that most of those who are displaced find refuge with family members and with others that aren't necessarily in camps, and it's been advocated that we put direction their way as well. But where is the most acute need, in your view? Is it in these camps, or is it somewhere else?

Mr. BACON. Well, since 80 percent of the people aren't in camps, we have to find an effective way to get aid to people who are living with a local population.

This is both good and bad. Camps aren't a great place to be, but it is easy to deliver aid, medical care, food, etc., to people in camps when they are centralized. It's much harder to do this in a dispersed population.

But through a good registration process, which the UNHCR has set up, it's possible to do that, but it's more time-consuming, it's more expensive, and it's not as easy as it is in camps. On the other hand, people are generally much more comfortable in private houses than they are in camps.

But there are reports of 25 people living in a room in some of these houses, so these are not cushy conditions for the displaced persons. It's very, very difficult for them to be absorbed by generous host families.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Flake.

As you can see, the chairman had to go take a phone call. He will be back shortly.

I welcome back our witnesses who are with us from Pakistan, Dr. Ahmed and Ms. Rehman. Are you with us? We just want to make sure it's all hooked up again.

Dr. AHMED. Yes, sir, we are back.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Very good. I apologize for actually joining the hearing a little late after some of the testimony, but I think that all of us see in recent events some positive developments, but also, obviously, some dangerous developments.

When I speak of positive, obviously I am not talking about the internally displaced persons, but I am talking about the fact that the Government of Pakistan has taken the threat of the Pakistani Taliban seriously and deployed their forces in a meaningful way to try and address the threat. The unfortunate consequence, of course, is you do have internally displaced persons, you have lots of refugees within Pakistan.

And the challenge for all of us is to make sure that these individuals, these families, get the support that they need from the Government of Pakistan and from local NGO's as appropriate. And, you know, we need to figure out the best way of deploying those resources. Among the displaced persons, of course, are many children. In fact, according to Save the Children's rapid assessment of the IDPs, 54 percent are under the age of 18, and more than 16 percent are below the age of 5.

Is there anything in particular being done to address that population? Obviously that population is, you know, mixed in with their family members, but I am interested in whether or not special efforts are being made to help the most vulnerable among them.

Mr. BACON. Well, first of all, women and children are always the most vulnerable in displaced populations, and there is—there has been some progress. I know that the Pakistani Ministry of Health has, in the midst of this crisis, been able to vaccinate 500,000 children against polio, so there is special attention being paid to the health needs of children.

They are also working on a program to improve maternal and child health care in the midst of this as well.

So the government and its partners are paying a lot of attention to meeting the health and nutritional needs of children.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. And this is a question for all of you. What's your best assessment right now as to how the Government of Pakistan, with any help they are receiving from the international community, how they are doing in terms of providing support and resources that are needed.

And juxtaposed to that, how would you assess the extent to which some of the components of the Taliban are able to take advantage of this situation to try and provide social services as well? Because as we all know, this is in some ways a race for the hearts and minds and a fight for the hearts and minds of people of these areas. And when you are hungry and displaced, you will turn to services wherever you can get them.

So how would you evaluate, as of today, the extent to which the government, through all its different mechanisms, is providing those services? And to what extent did we have information about whether or not the Taliban forces, the allied forces are providing,

are coming in to try and fill the vacuum and whether or not they are successful at filling that vacuum?

Mr. BACON. Well, it's a very comprehensive question, and probably my Pakistani colleagues could better answer.

But first I would state that I hope that the Government of Pakistan can find a less disruptive and intrusive way to launch this military campaign, one that concentrates more on reducing or limiting displacement.

Two, I think the government is doing a good job, but it is not getting the support it deserves from the rest of the world. And it needs far more resources than it has.

Three, I do believe that it is an opportunity to build local capacity, and they should concentrate more on doing that.

And, four, in terms of the Taliban, it's my assessment—and I have not been to Pakistan recently—that the government has a great opportunity to show its concern for the people and, in fact, to seizing that opportunity. And the Taliban is quite—has created a lot of antipathy on the part of the people. So this, again, is another opportunity for the government.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Dr. Ahmed and Ms. Rehman, is the Government of Pakistan—

Ms. REHMAN. Yes, the Government of Pakistan, as stated earlier, is extremely overstretched, No. 1, because of the magnitude of the crisis. It is very difficult to register and even track down families that are outside camps. The UNHCR certainly has set up a process. So has the data base, the national data base in Pakistan. It is called NADRA.

The process is difficult. Pakhtun traditions also make it a challenge for officials and a State administration, people to go inside homes. Many may be more comfortable than they are in the camps, but they are certainly not living in conditions that are anywhere near optimal or what they were used to in their homes.

They are mostly situated in homesteads and patios outside on the ground in people's homes, 25, 50-plus are coming in to be accommodated by each family. So this is a major issue, and I think that there will about an overstretch even on the question of hospitality. So we will—we may have to worry about a large influx into school buildings and camps that we see overused.

Now, as far as health interventions are concerned, I think, yes, the health ministry has been working very hard, both the provincial and the central. But here we do need a great deal of assistance. It's not just a question of vaccinations. Women are—especially Pakhtun women remain inside their tents. They are mostly not able to go out, except some girl children. And the temperatures are very high. They are not—they don't have access to lady doctors and lady health visitors, which are sorely needed in much higher densities, certainly at the camps. And the camps, you must understand, are a site also for daily anguish on 51 channels of Pakistan's television. It really does produce and refract an image of a state that is allowing its citizens to suffer, whereas that is not the case.

But the point is that whatever the government is doing at this point is not enough. And while civil society has stepped up to the plate recently—and, again, the good news is that every week you do see a change in the availability of services in each of the camps.

The pressure on the camps in terms of sanitation and health care remains very high. Yes, there is at least a week of food security guaranteed, but there is—there is a much more—there is much higher need of organized health interventions, as I said, as well as a community participation, which is now, of course, becoming more and more available.

But we do need to coordinate these efforts better, avoid duplication between international agencies and certainly not—to avoid pileup and centralization in provincial hubs such as Peshawar, where you see a lot of wasting of resources, even in the international agency offices. They are unable to cope with the numbers and the magnitude of the refugees coming in. So, you know, to repeat the case that there is still a great deal of assistance still required, and perhaps some management emphasis on the ground also to be addressed in terms of coordination.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Since I wasn't able to ask a couple of questions, let me just ask, with regard to—I will ask kind of the same question that I asked Mr. Bacon.

How do you balance the desire to use local groups and local NGO's with the fear that some that you might be contracting with might have sympathies with the Taliban? Are our partners able to discern those links, or is that something we should be concerned about?

Dr. AHMED. I would like to answer that, because I think one of the things we need to make very clear, when we look at the potential of the jihadis exploiting this situation, is that the IDPs have fled from Taliban-controlled areas where they witnessed the most brutal attacks. There were murders, public executions, women deprived of work, girl children not allowed to go to school, public property seized. This population sees the Taliban as criminals, and so they are.

What is important now for us is not whether local NGO's have sympathies to the Taliban. Other than the jihadi groups and parties that obviously have sympathies with the Taliban, you don't see that either with the mainstream parties or with mainstream local NGO's.

If anything, as Ms. Rehman stressed, there is at this point in time in Pakistan a real opportunity, because not just in the North-west Frontier Province but countrywide there is now an antipathy to the Taliban and a great desire to see the state assert its writ, to see law enforcement, to see rule of law, to see justice, and to see these criminals brought to justice.

What is important for us now is to make sure that this opportunity that exists is exploited to the fullest, because if we don't, the jihadis will.

Mr. FLAKE. On that point, if I might, are there some jihadi-related relief efforts going on in some of these areas at the moment? And I am assuming that is what we are trying to get away from. How does the local population react when we try to ban those jihadi-related relief efforts? Or is that not an issue?

Dr. AHMED. One of the jihadi groups that is operating there is a banned group. This group was allegedly responsible for the

Mumbai attacks. This jihadi group was banned once by the Musharraf government, re-emerged under a changed name, and it has resurfaced again under a changed name.

It is the responsibility of the Pakistan Government, and I think it is important for the United States to point that out to the Pakistan Government, to make sure that a group that is declared a terror organization by the U.N. Security Council, that is banned as a terror organization by Pakistan under its own laws is not allowed to operate.

But then, when we are talking about the NGO's and the local community organizations, we are not talking about an organized jihadi group such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba. It is important, though, that Islamist political parties are also there and have set up their own activities. And, you know, that is again an exercise of attempting to win hearts and minds.

Have they succeeded thus far? I don't think they have. The stories that are coming out—Ms. Rehman talked about the media showing the face of the IDPs to Pakistanis every day, the human tragedy that Pakistan is facing. But the stories that the IDPs have come out with are also being heard countrywide about what the Taliban are about and what the jihadis are about and how much of a threat they pose and how un-Islamic they are.

The government's rhetoric also helps. It has changed immensely under the civilian government, when the Taliban are now being called criminals and murderers who should be brought to justice as opposed to what we heard in the past, that they are jihadis.

Mr. FLAKE. Ms. Rehman.

Ms. REHMAN. Thank you. If I may just address this question and reinforce what Dr. Ahmed has just said, there are obviously some groups working on the ground, and most of them are also religious parties. Like all other political parties, people have set up camps. But it is nothing like the jihadist intervention in terms of aide relief that we witnessed in the earthquake of 2005. I would like to clarify that. That is not happening.

And there are fewer and fewer takers for very overt Taliban interventions or jihadist interventions in Islamic groups. Certainly, there are welfare boxes and charities and tents operating everywhere, and they sometimes take cover in religious parties' tents and offices, as well. But it is nothing like the effort you saw earlier.

This is mainly because it is swamped out by very organized state and international aid agency efforts. Also, because interventions are happening through the entry points of specific camps. And there are 22 right now, mostly in the Frontier Province, which are regulated by the ERU, which is the Emergency Response Unit. And each camp has a different complexion to it, which is, you know, dictated largely by how the local community is partnering with the government and international agencies.

But I must say that it is heartening to see the narrative of anti-Talibanism take root in public discourse. However, I would like to warn against complacency in accepting that, because this is something that can tip very quickly if successes on the battlefield are not translated into sustainable relief and rehabilitation and resettlement efforts for the refugees.

They are an anguished picture of human suffering every day. And every time we see groups and television crews arriving at the camps, we do see a blow to public consensus against Talibanization, when women are seen as destitute and children are seen running around wild-eyed in the sun without schooling.

So one does sense that there is a huge cost that the Pakistani people are paying. Yes, there may have been fewer intrusive ways to conduct military operations, and we must not get complacent at this public opinion that is building up every time.

As I said, there is public anguish over the IDPs' suffering and the humanitarian crisis. Questions, and hard questions, are asked in the public domain about the efficacy and long-term gains that we can make and hold in terms of a military operation, as well as the political gains we make from it.

So I think this is something we have to capture and maintain without public momentum of looking at how we resettle eventually and provide relief in their areas is very important for the IDPs.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Let me ask each of our three witnesses a direct question that probably doesn't require a long answer. But in the International Crisis Group report, there was a recommendation that so-called jihadi groups—that is the word Dr. Ahmed used—be prohibited or banned under the anti-terrorism law from participating in relief efforts.

Do all three witnesses believe that is a wise thing to do? And if it is, what do you see as the impact of shutting off that type of aid to people who may be now receiving it?

We will start with you, Mr. Bacon.

Mr. BACON. I do think it is a wise thing to do. I accept the recommendation.

Mr. TIERNEY. Ms. Rehman.

Ms. REHMAN. I absolutely endorse that.

Mr. TIERNEY. OK. And I know how you feel, Dr. Ahmed. You wrote it.

Dr. AHMED. I endorse that.

Mr. TIERNEY. OK. Now, can they do it? Do they have the power and will to do that?

Mr. Bacon.

Mr. BACON. I think my Pakistani colleagues could speak more about the will and the power than I could. But, yes, they should have the power to do it.

And I think it is instrumental in building local rule of law, as well. It fits in with that.

Mr. TIERNEY. Ms. Rehman.

Ms. REHMAN. Yes, I think that this is a problem that we will have to expand outside the Frontier Province. We will have to take it to other provinces as well, mainly the Punjab.

And we will have to address provincial capacity and will to do it. It is not something that we have been able to do overnight. It will involve a complex interchange of interventions in terms of legal as well as policing efforts, which, frankly, I haven't seen our ability on the ground to do.

But this would be a move that we can consider as a next step, and it is an important next step to take.

Mr. TIERNEY. And, Dr. Ahmed, I suspect that you feel it can be done; that is why you recommended that it should be done.

Dr. AHMED. Well, we absolutely believe it can be done.

The police in Pakistan, despite the fact that its capabilities do need to be built on, we did a report on police reform, and we were heartened when we talked to senior police officials to find out that they really believed the only way to go was to arrest these criminals and to prosecute them.

And that is, in fact, the only cure for militancy in Pakistan: rule of law; you have to take them to the courts. You have to actually, first of all, respect your own law because, after all, these groups are banned under Pakistani law, and they are responsible for acts of egregious violence against Pakistani citizens.

Mr. TIERNEY. I am going to read some excerpts, and then I have a question at the end—excerpts from the ICG report.

The first one is a statement that says, “The scale of the current IDP”—internally displaced person—“crisis is a function of failed military policies that have enabled militancy to spread for several years.”

The second statement is a quote by the head of the Peshawar-based NGO, and it is, “The military is trying to improve its image by controlling the relief process. There is, indeed, little reason to believe that the military will be willing to work any more closely with civilian institutions and elected representatives than it has in its counterterrorism efforts.”

And last, “The military’s longstanding links to jihadi networks and its appeasement deals with militants, the latest with the Swat-based Taliban, have also understandably provoked doubts about its intentions and the current operation. If there is a peace deal, it is conclusive evidence that nothing has changed.”

There are Members of Congress, I among them, who are concerned about giving U.S. military aid to Pakistan without conditioning that aid on the military’s ability and will to not cut another peace deal but, in fact, to continue to assert themselves against the extremist forces on that basis so that the public in Pakistan can have justifiable confidence in them; condition it upon the military’s allowing the civilian government to extend the writ of law to FATA and the Northwest Frontier Province and bring the justice system out there and the rule of law on that basis. And Members of Congress thought it was important enough to not vote for other items in the supplemental bill because those conditions had not been put in.

Now that is juxtaposed, of course, with the \$200 million that is in the bill for relief. I hear from each of our witnesses that they think both of those concepts are important.

Is there a reason to think that passing the money for relief might not be money well spent if, in fact, the military is going to cut another deal with the extremist elements and not allow the civilian government to take over the relief effort and, in fact, not do many of things that we talked about here today?

Ms. REHMAN. If I may address just one of those concerns, on the ground, frankly, if you look at relief efforts, the relief efforts are

being run by the Emergency Response Unit and the Frontier civilian government. There is a special support group that is being run by a member of the military. We don't see their operations as, at least in the field, very evident. We see everywhere the downstream workings of the local community, which is, again, going right through the ERU, as well as the Frontier government.

But I do feel that we have to address this issue of peace deals with not just banned outfits but all warlords that control territory and cutting peace deals as a result of the state's inability to maintain its executive writ in the area. These always have shown opportunities for Taliban and jihadist and non-state actors to amass, to find that they can regroup. And they have always resulted in critical reversals for the state, so I think these are experiments that we need to avoid.

And I must say at this juncture that the provincial government of the Frontier was very much involved and very forthcoming in recommending cutting a deal with the Malakand militants. And I think this is something that we need to learn from this experience, has shown the whole country that such deals don't work. And I think we need to translate that experience into other areas, as well.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Dr. Ahmed, how important do you think it is to condition military assistance on a more committed military effort to go after extremists and to allow the civilian government to extend its writ and become the primary mover in relief efforts and in the rule-of-law efforts?

Dr. AHMED. I think conditionalities on military assistance that are very clear and confined to military assistance, that do not extend to economic/development/relief assistance would be a signal sent to the Pakistani military.

You know, one of the things that we need to be clear about, it is in the military's own interest. What we have seen happen to this country in the past 8 years as a result of peace deals, as a lack of resolve—because of the lack of resolve of the military and because of its failure to then allow the civilian law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies to act.

The groundswell of opinion that we see now against the Taliban is an indicator that the Pakistani public doesn't support this approach. The military has suffered casualties.

If clear conditionalities and a clear signal are sent by the U.S. Government, I think it will benefit the Pakistani military, benefit the Pakistani people, and benefit the United States.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

I would just make note that one of the quotes in the report was from an official indicating that in Gulabad, in the Union Council in Lower Dir, there was a military check post and a half a kilometer away a Taliban check post. And the question obviously was, why doesn't the military just take a little trip down the road and eliminate that situation? And things like that continue to exist and continue on.

Let me ask one last question, at least, if Mr. Flake has some more—the nature of assistance that is going right now. We understand about the food and other commodities that have to be

brought to people immediately. But there was great emphasis in the report—and Ms. Rehman also mentioned it, and I think Mr. Bacon did, as well—about changing the nature of relief in some respects to a cash basis for certain reasons, whether job training or to start the economy or to allow people the self-respect that is needed to continue on.

Doctor, would you speak briefly to that? And if the other witnesses have a comment on it, that would be appreciated as well. And particularly about the benefits of doing it and whether or not we can have any accountability with respect to it.

Dr. AHMED. Absolutely. I think it is important that in the Pakistani context, as opposed to perhaps other such similar situations, it is possible to do it in such a way that will not only empower the communities that we would want to address, but also ensure that there is actually oversight and monitoring.

The registration process might be slow, but there is a national identity card in Pakistan. And, in fact, it brings these citizens into the mainstream because the identity card is needed for all sorts of purposes. There are biometric features that can be installed, not a problem at all.

And what can the card be used for? There are multiple purposes it can be used for. It can be used as a debit card, which is income support. Let's not forget, 85 percent of these IDPs aren't living in the camps. They are living with host communities who are, themselves, very poor. So just that ability to support the community through simple access to find the money that they need I think is one.

The children, we spoke about the children, half of the IDPs being children, and half of these IDPs being out of school. Parents don't have the money right now, but cash for education is something that actually the United States has used elsewhere. So cash vouchers for education, cash vouchers for health, cash vouchers for vocational education.

Documentation is possible. There is a banking system in these areas. It is not as though you cannot monitor this far more carefully, in fact, than transferring goods to either the camps or through civilian-military intermediaries.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Ms. REHMAN. Yes, I think cash transfers would be very useful at this point, because it would empower the actual communities, as Samina said, those especially living with host communities, as well as those in the camps. There is a great deal of anxiety about income opportunities being lost through displacement of wealth. And there is danger of mass destitution always at such crises points.

I would like to add that, yes, there is an income support program and documentation process under way right now. But that, too, needs support because we have an influx of refugees all of the way down into the south, into the city of Karachi, which has become the largest Pashtun city in the world. And this is something we need to consider all of the way downstream.

All reforms, all programs that we are looking at now must now move outside the Frontier Province, as well, and bring into their ambit refugees disbursing all over the country, particularly the

very volatile city of Karachi, which is beginning to see ethnic community unrest, which is unfortunate.

But I would like to just take the opportunity to speak to your question about conditioning aid. Yes, while the U.S. experience has been obviously difficult with all military funding and where your coalition support funds did go and there have been issues of transparency in the past, I think right now the atmosphere is politically very sensitive in Pakistan, with the IDP crisis. And while no one can ignore the merits of transparency and, obviously, better governance, I am sure some structures can be built. But conditioning aid at any level right now will be politically difficult for the government to sustain in terms of engaging strategically and suggesting that our strategic ally is conditioning aid at a very difficult time for Pakistan.

Mr. TIERNEY. And, Ms. Rehman, does that go if we separate out the civilian aid money and not put conditions on that and condition only the military money, do you still feel the same way?

Ms. REHMAN. I think that this will become a major issue in Pakistan. It will not be seen as separated, which is unfortunate. And perhaps I would recommend some type of joint monitoring system. Because this is a very sensitive political strategic moment in our history, and that may just become—there may be public recoil against any kind of conditioning. And, obviously, it will be said that, here is an old transactional relationship reasserting itself. It may be an irrational public outcome, but this is what may be expected. I would recommend some kind of monitoring mechanism that you build in with the military.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you for that.

My last question, then, would just be, is there anything that either of our witnesses would care to add, since you have been kind enough to wait as long as you did to have a chance to testify and you are coming such a long distance? Any thoughts that you want to leave us with before we close out the hearing that we might not have asked?

Ms. Rehman.

Ms. REHMAN. Yes. I think we cannot stop reinforcing the issue of the jihadists returning to these areas. I think that, yes, we will be looking at police reform and capacity building, and we can certainly go with flushing out militants in the long run. But, again, the word “flushing out” implies that we haven’t been able to either decommission their arms or reintegrate them into society. We have no programs for any such thing. And right now I think our experience of the militants has been that they are not able to decommission nor be reintegrated in any significant numbers.

So it is important to look at how communities will re-form. I think we should be very clear that, once the operations are over and citizens resettle, even the social transformations in these areas will need change. They will need institutional accommodation. We may not be able to go back to, say, pre-Taliban Malakand. We will have to integrate non-elite voices and communities that have been marginalized, including women. And the collective responsibility in the jirga system will have to become more inclusive in terms of social justice dispensation and perhaps even the PATA regulations, which is Provincially Administered Tribal Areas, under which

Malakand is operated, will have to be reformed, if not incrementally then slowly.

Also, I think we have serious concerns about border interdiction. If Pakistan is going through all this and paying such a high human cost, then there is a lot of fear about the Taliban rejoining some of their colleagues, and some old redoubts may be reinvigorated.

We feel that the escape routes through South Waziristan and North Waziristan and all across the border agencies of Pakistan and Afghanistan must really be strongly interdicted if we are not to see a return of the Taliban and, again, reversals made both on the battlefield and in the communities that we have displaced today.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much for your testimony today and for those comments.

Dr. AHMED. May I add—

Mr. TIERNEY. Dr. Ahmed.

Dr. AHMED. May I just add that I think it is really important for us to remember that what we are seeing right now is the result of a peace deal. The Taliban expanded their control not because of the allies across the border but because they were allowed to through a peace deal signed with the local authorities devised by the military.

There is some indication that there will be operations conducted in the Waziristans, but there are also indications that some of the Taliban groups might be considered more acceptable than others. I think this is a hugely dangerous trend.

It is essential that the United States makes it clear that no peace deal with any violent militant group that actually believes in the jihad, not only within Pakistan but across Pakistan's borders into Afghanistan, in India, and even beyond India in the West, is acceptable.

I think it is equally important to remember the other thing, the framework of this relief reconstruction effort. If the United States and U.S. officials stress the negative, which is, well, the civilians have capacity, then I think they will lose the opportunity of helping to build that capacity.

If, again, there is doubt in some official quarters about civilian capacity of enacting political, administrative, and legal reforms, that will bring FATA and Malakand into the mainstream, these are not helpful. It would be far more helpful if the Obama administration and the U.S. Congress supports the process of political reform that the Pakistan Government, a young, nascent democracy, would want to see in its territory because it sees it in the interest of the state and of the global community.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. Bacon, do you have any final words of wisdom?

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

I just would like to go back to one point I made, which is that we need to guard against premature returns. All refugees want to go home, and everybody wants them to go home. But we have to make sure that, when they go home, they go home to secure and sustainable communities. If they go home prematurely, this problem will not end.

So what we have recommended is an independent verification process to decide when it is safe for refugees to go home and to follow that so we don't get premature forcebacks.

I know that this is a big issue for the Pakistanis, and it is a big issue for the United States, as well. But I just think in the past we have seen high costs from premature returns, and I hope we can avoid that here.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Bacon, for your testimony today but also for the work that you do and your organization does. We are all indebted to you for that.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Dr. Ahmed, thank you for the work that you do in the International Crisis Group in various places throughout the world. It is always helpful to have insightful facts and information, and you provide that on a regular basis. And I know members of parliaments and congresses around the world rely on that work and appreciate it a great deal.

The Honorable Sherry Rehman, thank you for taking your time today. I know things are very busy over there, and you were very nice to take your time and give us your valued opinion and insight as to what is going on.

I know that I speak for all of my colleagues, I would suspect, when we say how sorry we are that you have such difficult conditions in Pakistan at the moment. And we wish you only the best in dealing with that situation, relieving the suffering of so many people.

As you know, Congress has acted and is in the process of acting again to try and add some relief to that. We know that everybody working together can make it as comfortable as possible for people in an already bad situation. And we only wish you the very best in making that happen as quickly as possible.

So, again, thank you all very, very much for your testimony. Thanks again for all of our witnesses. Thanks to the folks at the Embassy our in Islamabad for helping us with the hookup on that.

And, with that, this hearing is adjourned, and we will now proceed to our second panel, which is a related briefing.

[Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the hearing was adjourned and the briefing commenced.]

BRIEFING

Mr. TIERNEY. Good afternoon.

Mr. GABAUDAN. Good afternoon.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you for joining us. I am sorry that there was so much delay, with the votes earlier on. It pushed you back a little bit. Now I want to make sure we get started on this, because we have votes coming up in a little while and I don't want to inconvenience you and make you have to wait until after those votes.

So let me just briefly say that we are receiving a briefing from Mr. Michel Gabaudan from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

I would note that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees staff member Mr. Aleksandar Vorkapic was killed in last week's hotel bombing in Peshawar. On behalf of our colleagues, certainly Mr. Flake and I and the staff here, we want to express our condolences to his family and to his coworkers at the UNHCR. It serves as a reminder that you have many staff over there who are in dangerous conditions repeatedly and have the bravery to put themselves in that position and sacrifice of themselves and their families.

Mr. Gabaudan serves as a regional representative to the United States and the Caribbean for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. His career with UNHCR spans more than 25 years and includes service in Africa, Asia, Latin America, America, and Australia. So the frequent flier miles are building up.

He has worked in Pakistan as a field officer there and, prior to his posting in Washington, served as a regional representative for UNHCR in Beijing. He attended the University of Bordeaux in France.

I want to thank you again, sir, for making yourself available, and would appreciate it if you have a statement that you would like to make, and then we will have a little colloquy afterwards if that meets your approval.

STATEMENT OF MICHEL GABAUDAN, REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED STATES AND CARIBBEAN FOR THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Mr. GABAUDAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I am really grateful for the opportunity given by your committee for us to brief you on our activities in Pakistan on behalf of the internally displaced people.

I would, at the outset, like to say that our work would not be possible without the generous contribution we have had from the U.S. Government to our activities, but also to the very close interaction we have with Ambassador Patterson and her staff in

Islamabad and with our PRN colleagues here in Washington. It is an excellent working relationship that I think contributes to whatever success we may achieve.

We have been operating in Pakistan for almost 30 years, starting with the Afghan refugees. And through these 30 years, the success of the operation has been due, one, to the tremendous welcome that the Pakistani population and Government had given to the Afghans, but also to the very sustained effort by the international community to support that project.

And throughout these years, our main implementing partner in Pakistan was the Pakistani commissioner for Afghan refugees. So to address myself to one of the questions you asked previously, there is expertise in managing these sort of situations in Pakistan, expertise that has been tested over time.

We first got involved with IDPs in August last year, with the movements of persons taking place out of the Bajaur agency in the federally Administered Tribal Areas and, after that, from the Mohmand agency. And, by April, we had registered some 550,000 people who had already left.

Since the end of April and early May, we have witnessed in speed and size the largest population movement since the exodus from Rwanda some 15 years—not for the same conditions, I am not trying to compare the situations, but certainly in terms of speed and size.

As has been said, we have now about 240,000 people living in camps, so it is a little bit over 10 percent, out of the 2 million that have been confirmed by the verification of the registration. We do have some 100,000 who live in camp-like situations in schools or in public facilities that will have to be given back to their normal use in July when the schools resume. And we have an increasing number who are moving outside of the NWFP area and moving into Punjab. And now it is estimated that there may be up to 300,000 people moving in this direction.

Our response is part of a broader U.N. response in which we have assigned three responsibilities, which is protection, shelter, and camp management. I would like to address very quickly what we do under each of these chapters and then address myself to the challenges we face in the coming months.

Protection is essentially registration. We are supporting the government to register IDPs for those populations who are living with local people in villages and towns. It is the minister of social welfare who is doing the registration in the camps. He is the commissioner for Afghan refugees.

And here I would like to stress something very important, that for a population living in the conflict area, the government has maintained registration in the hands of civil authorities. We think this is essential. It is not especially what happens in other areas of the world, and we value very much this response by the Pakistani Government.

And we are all supporting NADRA in the verification exercise to weed out double or triple registration, as may be happening. Registrations allows us to give ID cards, to identify vulnerable groups, to start working on family reunification, particularly for children who have lost their parents in the exodus, and to make a deter-

mination of who will need what sort of assistance. So it is a very important protection tool.

We are trying to look now at other issues of protection that always happen when people flee these sort of conflicts, which is gender-based violence, which is unfortunately something that affects populations who suffer these sort of conflicts in whatever continent we are. We have experienced this in Europe, in Latin America, in Africa. And Pakistan would not be exempt from these sort of issues. But we are just at the beginning of looking into these particular delicate issues.

In terms of shelter, we have to remember that this is a mountain population, which is coming back in low-land valleys. They are not used to the heat, which actually is unbearable right now. And one of our main approaches to shelter is to try to, what we call, "summerize" the living conditions. We have to make sure that you have shade over the tents. We have to make sure that we double up electricity so they can have fans, that we have lighting in the camps for security, and that we have watercoolers. So, quite an adaptation of the conditions for these people to suffer as little as possible from a rather dramatic change of environment from the one they are used to.

We also have to develop a privacy system, which is culturally required, the *purdah* mechanism, of putting walls between the tents. But this is not just a respect for culture, it also has an important protection impact.

The camp management function is basically identifying new sites. Right now we have 21 camps. This is not enough. The camps are quite congested, and we increasingly have people moving out of the families with whom they found security in the beginning because these families are poor and they cannot help them anymore.

So we feel that, over the next weeks and months, the number of people who want to reside in camps will just increase. And we have to identify sites, prepare these sites, and also develop a community approach to running the camps whereby the communities themselves are consulted in the decisions that affect the way assistance is given in the camps.

The challenge we will face in the immediate future is to adjust very quickly to changing weather. The monsoon is coming. With the monsoon, we will have flooding. We need to make sure these places are properly drained. And with the floods will come the scourge of malaria, again, something that this mountain population are not used to and that can have a devastating effect on this population.

And then, a few months after that, we will have the beginning of winter, which will require the winterization of the camps.

So we have quite a few challenges in terms of adjusting the conditions in the camps to make life as bearable as possible for these people who are in camps and who are very crowded.

The second challenge is that we need to develop a system to distribute items to the people who stay with families. As we say, it is a majority of them. We have developed about 80 hubs so that food and nonfood items can be distributed. We are in the process of responding to those people who have been identified through the registration. We are far from reaching them all at present. But this

is certainly one of the challenges we have, to make sure that the burden they bear on the local population is as reduced as possible.

We want to register those who have left for Sindh and Punjab. The government is not very keen for them to receive assistance, I suppose because they don't want to generate the full factor, but at least we want to be able to register them so they have this ID and they further have a protection mechanism. So that is another spread-out of our operations further into Pakistan.

The next major challenge will be the preparation for returns. And I cannot subscribe more to what Ken Bacon said before: We all want people to go back. The sooner they go back, the better, because life in camps is not something which is wished for and could generate some symptoms of dependency. And life in local families bears inordinate pressure on the local population.

But returns have to follow certain series of principles. They must be voluntary. They cannot be subject to political expediency to just demonstrate that things are better. We will have to look at issues of unexploded ordnance in areas of return, questions of destruction of infrastructure, whether it is roads or bridges that are required to make sure that people can move back, and then see what support the Pakistani Government needs to reestablish services for their health and education and certainly the rule of law, as has been very clearly identified by our colleagues.

All that is not necessarily under UNHCR, but we must make sure that all of this is in place before we can really make sure people go.

One of our roles in return will be to gather information to make sure that displaced people have sufficient information on what is happening down there, eventually help them to go and see, etc., but not press and urge returns, as I said, as a matter of political expediency. We must too often suffer these sort of pressures, and this would be dramatic because it would be reverting to the cycle that we have just witnessed.

In this context, we have two great difficulties to overcome. One is funding. A lot has been said about that. The response of the international community remains rather tepid. We had initially, within the United Nations, made this appeal for a little bit over \$500 million. Our share of that was \$105 million. We got funded for about 40 percent.

Right now we have reviewed our needs in light of the recent figures of 2 million. We need, just for UNHCR, about \$140 million. I suppose that the other agencies will send increments of the same order. And that means we are funded to about 30 percent of our needs. And this is not counting on possible additional outflows from Waziristan, where we understand that an operation is just beginning, as was foreseen. So funding is a dramatic constraint.

There is in this country, I think, a proper appreciation of what is risk in Pakistan. There certainly is on the part of the Pakistanis. I am not sure on the part of the rest of the international community there is such a sense.

And in the very words of my High Commissioner this morning, response to this crisis is not just a question of moral obligation because of the dire suffering of the people, it is a question of, as he put it, enlightened self-interest, because our failure to respond car-

ries out security implications for Pakistan and the region which are quite severe.

And the second big challenge we have, you alluded to it at the beginning, Mr. Chairman, security concerns are important. And we are in the process of trying to balance how can we develop a field presence that is efficient in responding to the needs without exposing our colleagues to unnecessary risk. We have to take some risk, but we have to make sure these risks are not exaggerated. And we are right now in a review on how we should operate to reduce risk to our staff and to make sure that we can keep on working there. We are certainly not talking about pulling out.

I will stop here because I think much has been said before. And thank you very much, again, for your interest.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gabaudan follows:]



**Statement of Michel Gabaudan
Regional Representative to the United States and the Caribbean
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
Regarding**

**“US Contributions to the Response to Pakistan’s Humanitarian Crisis:
The Situation and the Stakes”**

Before the

National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee

June 16, 2009 – 2:00pm

2154 Rayburn House Office Building

Statement of Michel Gabaudan, UNHCR**Introduction:**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, on behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to appear before you today to address UNHCR's growing concern of the internally displaced people in Pakistan. My name is Michel Gabaudan, and I am the Regional Representative of the UNHCR office here in Washington. We invited one of our colleagues from Pakistan to speak before this committee; however, due to very unfortunate circumstances last week, our Pakistan operation was not able to spare their leadership at this critical time.

As many of you may know, on June 9th, we lost one of our colleagues when the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar was bombed. An aid worker from UNICEF also lost his life and four others UN workers were injured. The hotel was housing several dozen international aid workers and served as a central hub for relief efforts provided to the SWAT valley. Subsequently to the bombing, the United Nations has evacuated their staff based in Peshawar to the capitol.

At this critical moment in our relief efforts, UN agencies are reviewing their operations in the country and re-assessing security for our staff.

Operational context

Chairman Tierney, the most dire challenge we face at the moment, in responding to the IDP situation, is the question of safety of UNHCR staff. The tragic killing of our UNHCR colleague, Aleksandar Vorkapic, in Peshawar, is a grim reminder of the extremely difficult security environment in which UNHCR works in Pakistan. It must be noted that Aleksandar was the second UNHCR staff member to be killed in Pakistan in five months, in addition to the kidnapping of our American colleague John Solecki, who was held for three months before being released to safety. As a humanitarian agency we are faced, increasingly, with a terrible dilemma: on the one hand, how to meet the urgent and dire needs of millions of displaced people; and on the other hand how to ensure the safety of our dedicated staff.

In Pakistan, the problem is particularly acute. We have been grappling with the operational challenges posed by security risks for some time. There are some areas where we just do not have access such as the current restive areas of Swat, Buner and Lower Dir and the newer battle fronts of North and South Waziristan.

UNHCR's effectiveness relies heavily on our strong field presence which has always been critical to our mandate. At this moment, we are continuing our work in the region despite the challenging security environment but it has become time to re-evaluate the cost we are paying. In Pakistan, we have some 200 regular staff on the ground managing

our operations for Afghan refugees and internally displaced Pakistanis with additional staff being deployed on an emergency basis as part of the emergency response team.

At this juncture we are not deliberating pulling out; however, this latest onslaught will have major implications to our operational delivery system. We are currently assessing just how we can adjust our operations in the face of this volatile environment. We need to be responsive to humanitarian needs and flexible in how we deliver them. For this, adequate resources will be even more important.

The Pakistan internally displaced persons, IDP, operation has been plagued by a lack of resources since the start of our programs here. Before the latest influx of 2 million displaced individuals from Swat valley, the UN operational response was only 30% funded for a then caseload of 600,000 (primarily from Bajaur agency). The limited financial support from the international community for humanitarian assistance has sent a troublesome message to the Pakistani people. The international community must send a message to the people that they are engaged and care about their wellbeing.

UNHCR's response to the displacement crisis

UNHCR launched its IDP operation last year, when people from the Bajaur agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) fled in August 2008 amidst fighting between law enforcement personnel and militants. Successive waves of people moved into the safer areas of the North West Frontier Province, including people from Mohmand agency since November 2008. In January 2009, we witnessed the first influx out of Swat valley.

Camps like Jalozi and Kacha Ghari, previously housing Afghan refugees, were re-established for Pakistanis themselves. Quickly those camps were filled and additional camps were set up. Some 550,000 Pakistani people were registered between September 2008 and the end of April 2009 with the assistance of UNHCR. We have provided assistance to IDPs in 11 camps throughout the province and distributed relief items to many more registered IDPs staying in rental accommodation or with host families. As IDPs moved beyond NWFP, we began to register them in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and other urban areas of the Punjab province and even reaching into Sindh province.

In late April/early May, a new and massive exodus took place from parts of Pakistan's north and west areas. As conflict between the government forces and militants escalated on three fronts – in Lower Dir, Buner, and in Swat - we witnessed a very fast and very large influx of people to the safer areas of NWFP. While registration figures are still being verified, it is estimated that so far some 2 million people have moved out of the above named areas in search of safety. The vast majority of them were absorbed into host communities – staying with friends, relatives, or renting accommodation. A smaller number – about 200,000 – are staying in new camps hastily established or existing camps that have been expanded by authorities, UNHCR and other partners in the humanitarian community.

As part of the inter-agency response mechanism, UNHCR is leading the Camp Coordination and Management, the Emergency Shelter, and Protection clusters. Concrete examples of our response to date include:

- We have supported and funded provincial authorities to conduct a fast track registration process of IDPs.
 - More than 80 registration centers were set up in non-camp settings and registration was conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare;
 - Within camps, the responsibility to register IDPs falls under the purview of the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees (CAR) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC)
 - NADRA – the National Database Registration Authority – is carrying out a verification of the data. This process is weeding out multiple registrations and ensuring all those registered are eligible. Some 1.9 million IDPs have been verified by NADRA to date, and thousands of family forms are yet to be cross checked.
 - As you are may be aware, registration has significant protection implications not only for the purposes of providing documentation to the IDPs but also ensuring that they benefit from subsequent assistance programs such as the government financial assistance package of 25,000 rupees per family, approximately (\$300USD).
- UNHCR site planners have helped identify and assess land for new camps, and helped to develop them. Normally we would set up the camp first and then move the people in. But the speed with which this crisis has unfolded has required us to put the basics in place: the ground was leveled, tents were pitched and water and sanitation points were installed. Since then, we've been continually improving the camps:
 - We've installed *purdah*, or privacy, walls around groups of tents;
 - We've put in perimeter fencing, installed lighting, developed roads, and worked with the authorities to provide electricity;
 - We've worked to 'summerize' the camps – installing shade over individual tents and creating cool communal spaces for men and women to give some respite in the heat of the day.
 - We've established camp committees to involve the displaced people themselves in the running of the camp and to provide a structured forum to raise and resolve issues.
 - Our partners are providing schools, health facilities and cash-for-work programmes, and other services.
 - There are now 21 camps in NWFP hosting more than 200,000 people. This includes camps established to host the new influx as well existing camps that have been expanded.

- Outside of camps, where the majority of the displaced are staying, we are also providing assistance:
 - We've worked with WFP to set up 32 humanitarian hubs in Mardan and Swabi, through which food and other relief items – mats, kitchen sets, water coolers, jerry cans etc – are provided to people staying outside of camps.
 - We've distributed these 'non-food' relief items to people staying in schools and other government buildings.
 - With our partner UN-Habitat we've distributed more than 3,500 tents to some of the most vulnerable families staying to help alleviate crowding and expand the living space. As part of the same project, UN- Habitat is helping to repair and expand water and sanitation services in these host families.
 - With our partners in the Emergency Shelter Cluster, we've already developed a prototype for 'shelter kits' to be provided to people staying outside of camps. We plan to launch it in rural areas where families have more land and gardens for construction.
 - But we really need to do much more to help people staying outside of camps. As the crisis continues, host families sharing their meager resources with the displaced are coming under increasing strain.

Remaining challenges and issues in the month ahead

Chairman Tierney, Members of the Committee, the international relief agencies, in close coordination and cooperation with the Government of Pakistan, have been able to make significant achievements in our response efforts to date. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain in addressing the humanitarian needs for the displaced people of Pakistan.

The weather conditions in Pakistan are very difficult and vary drastically from season to season. Therefore, the facilities in the camps will need to be adjusted for each season. While the recent focus has been to alleviate the heat – through the provision of electricity, fans, insulation and shades- the monsoon season is approaching and will be followed by harsh Pakistan winter. We need to improve drainage to cope with the rains, and then prepare for the cold. This will require additional resources – particularly all weather tents, blankets and quilts just to cite a few of the most critical items.

We urgently need to acquire more land for more camps. Even as the influx from restive areas slows, more people currently staying with host communities are seeking shelter in the camps. As the strain on host communities mounts and resources of IDPs become depleted, we are likely to see this trend continue. People who have stayed in spontaneous settlements such as public buildings are now also seeking a place in organized camps where better assistance is provided.

Due to the rapid influx of IDPs many informal camps were created supported by individuals and private companies. There are currently some 100,000 people staying in 'camp like conditions' – in schools or other government buildings. To ensure adequate sanitation and other facilities are provided these camps need to be brought into the coordinated camp management system. In mid July, schools will need to reopen so alternative accommodation will need to be found for those staying in schools across Mardan and Swabi districts.

Likewise, we need to streamline the assistance provided by private donors to coordinated needs assessments, and ensure we harness the energy and goodwill of private donors in a strategic way. Ad hoc delivery of relief, however well meaning, can lead to disturbances and severe discrepancies in services provided.

We need to scale up our assistance to displaced people staying outside of camps. Our current distribution is hampered by lack of funds. We urgently need donations to buy more relief items to assist people while they are uprooted and then when they return, when conditions permit. Shelter assistance to host families will need to be accompanied by projects that boost water and sanitation facilities.

As conditions appear to stabilize in some areas, and fighting has come to a halt, Government authorities will ask the citizens of those areas to return to their homes. However, conditions for return must be met, such as the removal of landmines and the return of public services, water, electricity and infrastructure must be reconstructed like roads and bridges. UNHCR welcomes the government's stance to restore services in areas of return as quickly as possible and to facilitate a sustainable return process. UNHCR will continue to work with the government to ensure a voluntary return process, which will include the provision of information to displaced people about conditions at home and a return assistance package if resources are available. For those people who cannot return, UNHCR will continue to collaborate with the government and other humanitarian actors to provide assistance.

The above mentioned challenges will call for additional appeal of financial resources. The lack of funds remains one of the key challenges for our work in Pakistan. Despite a considerable relief operation launched within a short time frame, there are still thousands of people the humanitarian agencies are not able to reach.

Conclusion

Chairman Tierney, Members of the Committee, UNHCR will do everything it can to maintain a strong field presence and to improve the safety of our staff so that we can ensure our continuous assistance to the displaced Pakistani population.

To meet the current challenges, UNHCR will continue discussions with the international community to improve our assistance levels. Political and financial support from our donor governments will be needed to ensure that those Pakistanis, forcibly displaced, will

be provided with protection and humanitarian relief items. In the not too distant future, host communities, burdened by the large influx of IDPs, will need to be provided with strong support from the humanitarian community to ensure that IDPs will not face secondary displacement. We have been very fortunate to avert a humanitarian disaster in the face of such massive displacement through the enormous generosity shown by Pakistanis to their fellow citizens. We remain very grateful to the Government and People of the United States of America for the generous financial contributions towards our activities. We value the partnership, advice and support that we constantly receive from officials of your Government, through your Embassy in Islamabad but also here in Washington.

I thank you again for the opportunity to speak at this important briefing and for your ongoing interest in the humanitarian situation facing displaced Pakistanis. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Our colleagues in Pakistan and Washington also remain available to provide you and your staff with additional information.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. Flake, I would just invite you to jump in at any time, too—we will just have a conversation here—with questions, as you would like.

Do you see any evidence that the Pakistani Government has actually started the planning that will have to be involved for the return eventually of these folks? It would seem that they can't be returning this summer or this winter, it is probably likely that we are looking at next spring at the earliest, so it gives them a fair amount of time.

But do you see anybody actually doing the planning for all that will be necessary to bring people back in a safe environment and one that gives them, as you mentioned, the health care and the education and the jobs structure?

Mr. GABAUDAN. At present, I think there is more talk about returns than actual action. The government has committed itself, and this is absolutely welcome, to re-establish public services as a basic condition for return.

I think we have to realize that, in the past years, civilian administrators of the government have suffered from the insurgency tremendously—murders of doctors, professors, mayors, etc. So there is a shortage of human resources that I am not quite sure how they will address, but it will be a constraint into the re-establishment of these services.

But if experience tells us anything, the people who moved from Bajaur in August last year are still in the camps, and there has been almost no return. So I think it is going to take more time than we think, despite the talks.

Mr. FLAKE. Back on the security issue, with your colleague being killed there just recently, do you employ private security? And are they augmented by security from local police forces? Or how does that work?

Mr. GABAUDAN. Well, by definition, we want the relief effort to be de-linked from the military operations. So we cannot operate relief as part of a more militarized effort, and we want these two things to remain quite distinct. So we have usually private security guards in our office, etc. These are very good against thieves; they don't tend to be so efficient against more aggressive sorts of persons.

We have no evidence, I must say, that the bombing in the hotel was directed at U.N. staff in particular. It is just a place where international people do gather, etc., and it is visible.

Mr. FLAKE. I have been to Peshawar. That is a particularly hard place to secure, I am sure.

Mr. GABAUDAN. One way we will respond—sorry, if I may—is probably by having a lighter foot presence of international staff and starting to work much more through Pakistani staff. And thank God in Pakistan you do find competent and well-trained people. So we have to review the way we operate generally and the sort of proportion between internationals and locals.

Mr. TIERNEY. I was going to ask you about that, because we have had a lot of recommendations about the talent that is in Pakistan, the quality of the people there who are able, capable of doing this work.

So your organization is, in fact, reaching out to many more of the domestic Pakistani population to try and help with your efforts, as well?

Mr. GABAUDAN. Yes. I think this is where we are going to go. Our director for the Asian bureau, head of security, and head of emergency services are currently in Pakistan to make a review of our operation after the incident last week. And that will be ready next week, but I think it is going to be in this direction.

Mr. FLAKE. Just one other question. Talking about premature return, guarding against that, unexploded ordnance or whatever else are the issues, how do you enforce that? Or can you? I know it is a difficult balancing act there.

Mr. GABAUDAN. Well, if people want to go, of course this is their choice, and there is nothing you can do. And the risk, of course, is if assistance is not good enough and their situation becomes terrible in the places where they have found refuge right now and they go back because going back is the best alternative, then we have a recipe for catastrophe. If they go because they really feel they have their orchards to tend and they want to rebuild their homes, etc., and we are convinced that their return is voluntary, we have to help them.

What we must avoid is pressure for them to go back as a sort of symbol that things are back to normal, when all of the premises have not been ensured—security through the removal of ordnances, establishment of services, recreation of infrastructure, etc.

Mr. TIERNEY. How is the urgency going to become spread to the international community? How are they going to be impressed with the urgency of this so that they perhaps step up and fill in some of the gap between what the United States is providing and what the U.N. thinks is necessary?

Mr. GABAUDAN. Well, I'm not quite sure. Right now, as I said, the United States has been our main supporter. Europe is not showing tremendous desire to respond. We are trying our best to convince them. As I say, it is not just a question of moral obligation, but that we all have broader interest in helping Pakistan. And sometimes appealing to the self-interest of a nation can help.

The High Commissioner will personally go to the Gulf States I think in a week to try to also ask for their assistance. They should also understand that they have immediate interest in this situation not getting out of hand.

Mr. TIERNEY. But they haven't been overly responsive so far, have they?

Mr. GABAUDAN. No, they haven't.

Mr. TIERNEY. That is interesting.

You mentioned in your remarks about the reunification of families. Can you tell us a little bit about the magnitude of that issue? How many families are not just displaced but also separated? Are you finding a high proportion of people in that circumstance or not?

Mr. GABAUDAN. I don't have these figures, Mr. Chairman. And I can look into them and forward them to the committee when I have them. We are still trying to sort out information.

What we found out recently, certainly with some of the NGO's that we work with, like the International Rescue Committee, there are lots of tents, for example, where you have children only.

Whether they just guard the tents while their parents are doing something or whether they have been just left there without any indication of where the family has gone we are not sure.

And this is something that we have called the attention of the government to, and we are working with the Commissioner of Afghan Refugees to try to sort out these issues.

Mr. TIERNEY. As more and more people either leave their host family because the burden has just become too high or exit the school buildings because they are going to be put back to educational use, and the hospitals or other buildings, what is your estimate right now of how many additional camp sites will need to be constructed over and above the 21 that exist now?

Mr. GABAUDAN. I think we are looking at 10 additional sites, but we have to make sure that these sites can be drained properly, that we can bring electricity, etc.

So, again, I do not have the exact details, but I think we are planning for a fairly substantial inflow from people who have already left the conflict zones and are around Peshawar and who will have to go into camps at some point.

Mr. TIERNEY. I want to thank you, Mr. Gabaudan. The work you do is just incredible, and all your staff and the folks that work with you. It is greatly appreciated around the world, but particularly here, as well as the sacrifice and the risk that we mentioned earlier, unfortunately evidenced by what happened last week. It just brings it into too stark a relief.

Thank you for taking the time out of your day to come here and brief us on that. This is information that we need to have to share with our colleagues and make sure that we have the proper response.

So, again, thank you very, very much.

Mr. GABAUDAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. TIERNEY. The briefing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:33 p.m., the briefing was adjourned.]

