AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

TROOPS, DIPLOMATS, AND AID: ASSESSING STRATEGIC RESOURCES FOR AFGHANISTAN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 26, 2009

Serial No. 111–81

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

61–798 PDF WASHINGTON : 2010

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

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

EDOLPHUS TOWNS, New York, *Chairman*

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

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

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

JOHN F. TIERNEY, Massachusetts, *Chairman*

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

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

ANDREW WRIGHT, *Staff Director*

CONTENTS

	Page
Hearing held on March 26, 2009	1
Statement of:	
Barno, David W., Lieutenant General, retired, U.S. Army, and Director, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University; James Dobbins, director, Center for International Security and Defense Policy, RAND Corp.; Frederick W. Kagan, Ph.D., resident scholar, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research; and David Kilcullen, Ph.D., senior non-resident fellow, Center for a New American Security, and partner, Crumpton Group	5
Barno, David W.	5
Dobbins, James	38
Kagan, Frederick W.	53
Kilcullen, David	60
Letters, statements, etc., submitted for the record by:	
Barno, David W., Lieutenant General, retired, U.S. Army, and Director, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, prepared statement of	8
Dobbins, James, director, Center for International Security and Defense Policy, RAND Corp., prepared statement of	41
Kagan, Frederick W., Ph.D., resident scholar, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, prepared statement of	55
Kilcullen, David, Ph.D., senior non-resident fellow, Center for a New American Security, and partner, Crumpton Group, prepared statement of	63

TROOPS, DIPLOMATS, AND AID: ASSESSING STRATEGIC RESOURCES FOR AFGHANISTAN

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2009

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

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

Present: Representatives Tierney, Welch, Driehaus, Cuellar, Kucinich, Flake, and Jordan.

Staff present: Dave Turk, staff director; Elliot Gillerman, clerk; Andy Wright, counsel; Alex McKnight, State Department fellow; Margaret Costa, intern; John Cuaderes, minority deputy staff director; Dan Blankenburg, minority director of outreach and senior advisor; Adam Fromm, minority chief clerk and Member liaison; Tom Alexander, minority senior counsel; Dr. Christopher Bright, minority senior professional staff member; and Glenn Sanders, minority Defense fellow.

Mr. TIERNEY. Good morning. I apologize for being just a touch late. I have to say, I had my jokes all prepared on General Barno. I was going to say how he was late. With all that logistical work that he had been doing over in Afghanistan and Pakistan, he couldn't get here on time. And you ended up being on time and I ended up being late. So much for that.

I thank all of our witnesses for being here. I thank Mr. Flake as well. Before we get started, I do just want to mention that we have a particular guest with us here this morning. Representative Carolyn Maloney, who does an incredible amount of work on human rights particularly in this South Asia area of the world, has a guest in town and that is Dr. Samar. I just want to introduce her and thank her for her attendance. She is working hard to guarantee the equality for Afghan women throughout Afghanistan and doing quite a bit of work on that on the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. So thank you for your work and thank you for joining us here this morning.

We have a quorum present so we are going to begin our hearing which is entitled, "Troops, Diplomats, and Aid: Assessing Strategic Resources for Afghanistan." The meeting will come to order. And 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.

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

This morning we are continuing what has been somewhat of a sustained oversight on this committee with regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan. We all understand that the challenges that we face in South Asia are breathtakingly complex. Oversight of U.S. programs, deployments, and spending requires an appreciation of the underlying ethnic tensions, historical grievances, and regional dynamics. The lines of conflict and the aspirations of the people have unique characteristics that call for serious consideration by U.S. policymakers charged with achieving U.S. national security interests.

Problems this complex require that we use both a microscope and a telescope. As such, the subcommittee has spent significant time during this opening congressional work period to examine and investigate Afghanistan and Pakistan from a variety of different lenses. I know Mr. Kilcullen has noted that we don't have the usual 9 months that it takes for a President to transition into office and get his key people in place. Consequently, just as the President is moving quickly on this, Congress has to get itself in a position to react to whatever proposals the administration may make.

Two weeks ago we held a public hearing featuring a panel of experts explaining the nature of the threats emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last week we followed up with a classified briefing conducted by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Next Tuesday we will hold a hearing entitled Afghanistan and Pakistan: Understanding and Engaging Regional Stakeholders that will explore those countries through the lens of geopolitics and regional tensions and opportunities.

Today we turn our attention to the kind of footprint the United States should have in Afghanistan. How many troops, how many diplomats, how many aid workers do we need? These questions, all of which involve deployment of U.S. citizens to a war zone, weigh heavily on those of us with the responsibility of public service. But at their core, these questions should be preceded by one fundamental question: What are we trying to achieve in Afghanistan?

We hold this hearing as the administration prepares to release its Afghanistan and Pakistan strategic review. Ranking Member Flake and I have been in communication with the administration to ensure that the subcommittee receives a full briefing once this review is finalized.

While the particulars of the administration's strategic review are still being sorted out, we do know some things. For instance, President Obama has already authorized the deployment of an additional 17,000 troops to Afghanistan. The nature of any recommendations for increased deployments of military or civilian personnel beyond this remains a subject of great speculation and debate, although reports have leaked that President Obama is planning some kind of civilian surge as well. Other leaks indicate that the administration new plan will aim to significantly boost Afghan army and police forces and to expand covert warfare including air strikes in western Pakistan.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let us return for a moment to what is the most fundamental of questions. What do we seek to achieve in Afghanistan? One of our recent witnesses described that our effort in Afghanistan should be a counter-sanctuary objective. I know some of our witnesses here today will address that. Under that approach, we would need to prevent Al Qaeda or like-minded international terrorists from establishing a safe haven from which they can plan and execute attacks against U.S. citizens at home or abroad. Putting aside the fact that Al Qaeda appears to have established a safe haven in western Pakistan, or has or could likely do so in any number of other places in the world, and that 9/11 was largely planned in Hamburg and Miami, it strikes me that a counter-sanctuary strategy differs greatly from a counter-insurgency strategy. Eliminating sanctuaries requires a fairly small military or covert footprint that is focused on disruption and containment. Counter-insurgency would require huge amounts of personnel and resources to ensure security and to support indigenous efforts to exert police power and extend social benefits to an ambivalent or resistant population.

I have stated before that we find ourselves at an ideal moment for fundamental reevaluation of our goals in Afghanistan and our efforts to protect U.S. citizens from international terrorists. I do not seek to prejudge our witnesses or the administration's strategic review.

However, I do think that with precious blood and scarce treasure at stake, it is incumbent on the administration to come forward with a compelling case for any U.S. commitments. And it is incumbent on those of us in the Congress to conduct thorough and thoughtful oversight and to ask tough questions. In the end, we use the microscope and the telescope to ensure that we do not use a machete where a scalpel will do.

With that, I defer to my counterpart, Mr. Flake, for his opening remarks.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today's hearing is especially important and timely given what the administration is going through now with this review.

As we all know, this conflict is in its 8th year. During that time we have seen progress and we have seen regress. In the wake of the 2001 invasion, we saw significant security gains. The Taliban network was largely disrupted. Al Qaeda fled to the hills. A short time later we saw Afghans actually elect a democratic government. But in a rather swift timeframe our military and diplomatic effort, which seemed to be paying off at that time, but since 2006, progress has deteriorated. Having visited in 2004 and again this past December, I can say that the contrast was stark.

As I am sure our witnesses will describe, security has declined and the Taliban seems to be regrouping. This, of course, raises serious questions whether Al Qaeda will be resurgent as well. If the Taliban is, perhaps Al Qaeda is. With an estimated 1,400 NGO's operating in Afghanistan—and I found that number difficult to believe but I am told that is correct—some 1,400 NGO's operating, nearly 38,000 U.S. troops on the ground, and billions spent, we need to be getting it right. It is time for a fresh look.

Since taking office, President Obama seems to have shifted policy in Afghanistan. On February 17th, he ordered 17,000 additional troops. This will bring the number of U.S. troops to approximately 55,000, the largest number ever deployed in that country. After having ordered these troops into combat, however, the President will receive the results of a high level review of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan. It seems that following the decision to dispatch additional troops, the administration will determine what the policy should be. And as we mentioned in the last hearing, it seems a little backward to be planning to deploy troops before we have a strategy. But I hope that this hearing will shed some light on that.

Today I think we are hearing from what is probably the most qualified group that has addressed this issue in a while. Dr. Kagan in particular just returned from 8 days, I know, in Afghanistan on the ground. With the encouragement and support of General David Petraeus, Dr. Kagan and the other experts in his party were able to travel widely and observe many aspects of ongoing operations. He has published a lengthy review of his findings and I look forward to hearing his testimony today. And that goes for all of the witnesses as well.

As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, we have contacted those in the administration and hope to be apprised as the details emerge on this new strategy. I look forward to this hearing and thank you for convening it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Again, I want to receive testimony now from the witnesses that are here. Mr. Flake makes an excellent point that all of you spent a considerable amount of time in theater. I think that sometimes the public doesn't really get that the people that we invite in to give us advice and counsel actually take very risky assignments over there for lengthy periods of time. You go places oftentimes where Members of Congress aren't able to go or don't have the time to really focus on and spend as much concerted effort there as you have done. So we appreciate the risks that you take and the efforts that you make.

I am going to introduce the panel right across the board here, and then we will start going from my left to right.

But first with us is Lieutenant General David W. Barno of the U.S. Army, retired. He is the Director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. From 2003 to 2005, General Barno commanded over 20,000 United States and Coalition forces in the Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. General Barno holds a Bachelor of Science from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a Masters in National Security Studies from Georgetown University.

Ambassador James Dobbins joins us again here. He is the Director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corp. Ambassador Dobbins concluded his last stint of distinguished Government service as Special Envoy for Afghanistan and then as representative to the Afghan opposition following September 11, 2001. Ambassador Dobbins holds a B.S. in International Affairs from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. He has

testified previously before our subcommittee. We welcome you back.

Dr. Frederick W. Kagan is a Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He served as an Associate Professor of Military History at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Soviet and East European Studies and a Ph.D. in Russian and Soviet Military History from Yale University.

Dr. David Kilcullen is a partner at the Crumpton Group, a strategic advisory firm based in Washington, DC. He has previously served as a Senior Counter–Insurgency Advisor to the Multinational Force-Iraq under the command of General Petraeus and as a Counter-Insurgency Advisor to then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. A native of Australia, Dr. Kilcullen holds a Ph.D. in Politics from the University of New South Wales.

Again, I want to thank all of you for making yourselves available today and for sharing your substantial expertise. It is the policy of the subcommittee to swear you in before you testify so I ask you to please stand and raise your right hands. I don't think any of you have anybody else that is assisting in your testimony.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. The record will reflect that all of the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

I will just tell those of you, I think you all know that your full written statement will be put into the hearing record. Some of the statements are quite long. In fact, some have introduced a chapter in a book. I suspect we are not going to listen to the entire chapter on that. But we ask that you keep your remarks as close to 5 minutes as you can. We are as liberal as we can be on that because we want to hear what you have to say. Then we will move to questions and answers. General, if we could start with you, please?

STATEMENTS OF DAVID W. BARNO, LIEUTENANT GENERAL, RETIRED, U.S. ARMY, AND DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY; JAMES DOBBINS, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY, RAND CORP.; FREDERICK W. KAGAN, PH.D., RESIDENT SCHOLAR, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH; AND DAVID KILCULLEN, PH.D., SENIOR NON-RESIDENT FELLOW, CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN SECURITY, AND PARTNER, CRUMPTON GROUP

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID W. BARNO

General BARNO. Thank you, Chairman Tierney and Ranking Member Flake. Thank you for the invitation to offer my views today on looking at strategic options on the way ahead in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I continue to serve in the Defense Department in my current position, but my views that I will express today are my own personal outlooks. They are informed not only by my 19 months in Afghanistan from October 2003 to May 2005 as the overall U.S. commander but also from continued engagement and visits there including a 3-day trip in January of this year to Regional Command–

South, Kandahar Province, Zabul Province, and Helmand Province. More importantly, my youngest son just returned from a 1-year tour in Afghanistan where he served as an Air Calvary scout helicopter platoon leader in 101 Airborne Division with 6 months in Regional Command–East in Jalalabad and six more months in and around Kandahar. So I appreciate this not only from the perspective of a former commander there but also now as the father of a soldier, as are so many fathers and mothers out there of our troops that are serving oversees. And I anticipate he will be returning to the theater sometime in the next year and a half or so.

I will try and touch on some of my more extensive written comments in my observations up front here this morning. First and foremost, I would characterize a bit of diagnosis. I think, as I have looked at this over the last several years, in part in the aftermath of the transition to NATO which happened at the end of 2006, that the overall enterprise in Afghanistan in many ways has been drifting toward failure. I think the trajectory that we are on today—hopefully which will be changed dramatically by the President's planned announcement I believe tomorrow—the trajectory that we are on today is not a success trajectory. We have to make some substantial changes in our approach and the overall, you know, leadership, outlook, and organization perhaps in the effort to move us toward success.

I think first we need to talk a bit about what are the goals in Afghanistan and, to the chairman's question, what are we trying to achieve in Afghanistan. I generally would characterize those as five key goals that I think are unchanged for the United States in many ways from our earliest days there. The first of those and the most important is that the Taliban and Al Qaeda are defeated in the region and denied usable sanctuary in that part of the world. The purpose of that, of course, is to prevent further attacks on the United States and our allies. Second, I think Pakistan has to be stabilized as a long term partner to the United States. It must be economically viable, friendly to our interests, no longer an active base for international terrorism, and in control of its territory and its nuclear weapons. Third, I think a stable and sustainable Afghan government has to exist that is legitimate in the eyes of the Afghan people, capable of exercising effective governance, and in control of its territory. Fourth, I think NATO must succeed. We have made a commitment that is irreversible at this point that the military mission is going to be led through the NATO alliance in Afghanistan. We cannot allow that to fail. And we must ensure that our objectives there are cast such that trans-Atlantic alliance is preserved and that U.S. leadership in that alliance helps us to deliver success. Finally, I think that we have to ensure the region is confident of American staying power and commitment as a long term partner, one that is not going to leave as we have done in the past but stays there and shares the challenges in front of our many friends in the region there.

There are three basic first principles that I think we need to touch on to accomplish this as we look at perhaps some changes in our approach in the next several years. Some of these are well known but they tend to be absent in some cases when implemented. First is the Afghan people have to be the center of gravity

of this effort. We have to focus, I think, our upcoming counter-insurgency efforts on securing the population, providing them the time and space to have economic and political growth, and ensuring that their day to day lives are viable and that they have hope for their future. Second, I think we need to focus on creating true unity of effort in the overall military and civil enterprise in Afghanistan. And that is not only between the military effort and the civil effort, but also even within the military effort where we have 41 different troop contributing nations. In some cases we almost see 41 different approaches to the fight in Afghanistan. We have to meld that into a singular approach. I think U.S. leadership is key in doing that. Then finally, I think we have to take a simultaneous top-down from Kabul and bottom-up from provinces and districts approach to build success at the grassroots level. This is often led by our military units, especially in the southern half of the country which is the most dangerous portion, what I term the counter-insurgency zone. We have to build this from the bottom-up and the top-down, not simply achieve greater success in Kabul.

I think I will pause there and I will defer my comments on Pakistan until we get into the questions and answers. But Pakistan is obviously part of the problem and part of the solution. I don't accept the idea that we can't achieve progress in Afghanistan unless we achieve success in Pakistan. But the two of those nations are very clearly interrelated so we have to have an interrelated policy that addresses both, recognizing that they are individual nation-states. And I will again defer further comments until questions and answers. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Lieutenant General Barno follows:]

NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES
David W. Barno
Lt. General, USA (Ret.)
Director

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

March 26, 2009

Serious problems in Afghanistan demand a "re-set" of the international effort to reverse the decline and set a new trajectory. The central component of success required in this fragmented endeavor is the re-assertion of American leadership of our friends and allies. This discussion focuses upon understanding U.S. goals, defining our core objectives, identifying first principles for success, and depicting a phased approach to a military strategy. It also briefly speaks to issues with Pakistan and Afghanistan. This paper reflects significant collaboration and discussion with David Kilcullen, counter-insurgency expert and former Australian Army officer. However, the opinions expressed here are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect either those of Dr. Kilcullen or those of the Department of Defense.

Introduction

The international endeavor in Afghanistan at the beginning of 2009 is drifting toward failure. There is still time to turn it around, but this will take strong U.S. leadership, a change of strategic direction and a focused and substantial effort. Results will not come from continuing "business as usual" or simply adding more resources. Major change is essential.

Eight years into a broad and substantial multi-national investment and two years since NATO assumed military leadership, the Taliban have returned in growing strength, poor governance and corruption are widespread, the

Afghan people's confidence is ebbing, and the political sustainability of NATO's effort over the long term is in question. An increasingly fractured international civil effort is mirrored by a fragmented NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) military organization with 41 members – all of whom operate under differing rules and a myriad of national strategies and caveats. Fundamental questions remain for both the international and U.S. effort: Who is in charge? What is the plan? What does success look like? Today, U.S. and international goals and objectives are unclear at best. Success is possible, but only if dramatic changes are applied – and applied rapidly. 2009 will be a decisive year in Afghanistan – for the international community, for the Afghan people, and for the Taliban.

Defining our goals

Any discussion of reversing a downward trajectory in Afghanistan must start with a discussion of objectives. What is "winning?" Can we "win?" And even the most fundamental question: who is "we?" Different actors in the Afghan campaign have disparate interests and objectives, a reality often poorly appreciated. The goals of the Afghan government may not be synonymous with those of the international community. The goals of NATO members and the alliance writ large may not be identical to those of the United States. The goals of the diverse civil players in Afghanistan – Afghan and international –may not align well with those of the military forces fighting what most

would describe as a deadly counter-insurgency (COIN) fight – a full-fledged war.

While each of these groups has its own set of discrete objectives, this paper will focus on the challenges from an American perspective. **Bottom line up front: Success in Afghanistan will require a re-assertion of American leadership.** While such leadership must be exercised through close and genuine partnership with our friends and allies wherever possible, the past three years of decline have amply demonstrated that lack of full American attention and an over-reliance on other actors and international institutions as substitute for strong U.S. leadership will ultimately fall short.

Core Objectives

"Winning" for the U.S. in this context equates to achieving American policy objectives in Afghanistan and in the region. Those objectives can be outlined as follows:

• The Taliban and Al Qaeda defeated in the region and denied usable sanctuary; further attacks on the United States or allies avoided.

• Pakistan stabilized as a long term partner that is economically viable, friendly to the United States, no longer an active base for international terrorism and in control of its nuclear weapons.

• NATO success: the trans-atlantic alliance preserved with NATO's role in Afghanistan recast into a politically sustainable set of objectives.

• A stable, sustainable Afghan government that is legitimate in the eyes of the Afghan people, capable of exercising effective governance and in control of its territory.

• Regional states confident of US staying power and commitment as their partner in the multi-faceted regional struggle against violent extremism.

• The United States' regional circle of friends expanded, and the influence of enemies (e.g., violent extremists) diminished.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the U.S. must work closely with a myriad of partners – first and foremost, the Afghan government, but also the governments of allies, friends and neighbors who comprise both the international military and civil efforts. Additional stakeholders include a diverse set of actors from non-governmental organizations, private entities and international institutions such as United Nations and its many agencies.

None of this is new – what is new, however is the growing recognition that this diverse mix of sometimes fractious players cannot effectively counter an increasingly powerful enemy without strong U.S. leadership. Of the myriad of

actors involved, only the United States can provide the leadership "engine" required for the multi-faceted international to succeed in Afghanistan: it alone possesses the resources, regional influence and combat capabilities to act as lead nation -- from facing the growing military threat to the provision of "*in-conflict*" (versus "post-conflict") reconstruction and development efforts. The United States recognizes that it has vital interests at stake in Afghanistan and the region; many other nations view their vital interests in Afghanistan as simply preserving their relationship with the United States.

Success: Leadership plus Strategy plus Resources

Put as a mathematical equation, success – meeting the above U.S. policy objectives – derives from the balanced combination of leadership, strategy and resources. Our system distorts our focus toward the resource component: generating more troops, more dollars and euros, more aid workers and police mentors absorbs vast amounts of our energy. But resources cannot be a substitute for the lack of a plan -- nor can they take the place of the most central ingredient: the dynamic leadership necessary to deliver success.

Missing during the past three years of de facto NATO primacy was an effective American leadership "engine" to unify and drive the international effort in Afghanistan toward a singular set of objectives and strategy. Beginning in 2005, the U.S. largely approached the military handoff of the Afghan conflict to NATO as a "divestiture" opportunity

– NATO would take charge of Afghanistan, demonstrate the alliance's relevance in the 21st Century, and free the U.S. to focus on the immense challenges in Iraq. At the U.S. Embassy, an integrated U.S. civil-military enterprise in 2005 shifted toward a separate civil approach with the dissolution of the overall US military headquarters in Kabul and the arrival of NATO as the over-arching military command.

Unfortunately, despite a new American commander leading NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for the first time, the conflict rapidly became decentralized in application – much different from previous US-led NATO missions (such as the 1995 Balkans "IFOR" effort or 1999 Kosovo Air War). This individualistic approach with contributing nations effectively designing their own campaigns has proven proved problematic. The past two years of NATO command in Afghanistan have exposed numerous flaws in alliance inter-operability and seen a spike to unprecedented levels of insecurity and both military and civilian casualties – violence today is up 543% on 2005, according to United Nations figures, a rise of several orders of magnitude over the previous five years. 2007's high point of violent incidents became 2008's year's lowest point.

In the military dimension, 2005 levels of U.S. and coalition unity of command has largely been replaced by loosely coordinated NATO national efforts focused on the small slices of Afghanistan, semi-autonomous from any unified military strategy on the ground – and in some regions

simply providing a purely peace-keeping (and often symbolic) military presence. NATO has spoken of a "comprehensive approach" in its operations, but confusion regarding NATO's historic role as a conventional military alliance have preempted it from taking greater ownership of integration of military and civil effects in this irregular war where success requires the effective integration of both. Many NATO nations remain profoundly uncomfortable characterizing the effort in Afghanistan as a "war" at all -- despite rocket attacks, roadside bombs, ambushes and thousands of casualties on all sides. In the civil sphere, the UN mission has broadly lacked the will and until recently, the mandate to unify the civil sector, and still avoids the notion of somehow "joining up" with a military organization and strategy. In sum, the current approach has proven a recipe for deterioration and potential failure.

Resources poured into a disjointed strategy with fragmented leadership produce stalemate – the description often applied to the current situation in Afghanistan. And stalemate, in a counterinsurgency, represents a win for the insurgent.

Lack of continuity and coherence in our leadership and our strategy removes any possibility of delivering effective results without a major change of approach. Over the last eight years, our standard response to challenges in Afghanistan has always focused on more resources; at the same time we have cycled through at least six different US military commanders, seven NATO ISAF commanders, six

different US embassy leaders, and four chiefs of the UN Mission.

The number of diverse "strategies" has closely paralleled this revolving door of senior leadership. In this extraordinarily complex conflict, strategy is important (and will be explored below), but leadership is vital – leadership that includes both organizational structures (e.g., military commands) and people: the human beings who will fill critical roles in the effort, from senior NATO military commander to US ambassador.

First Principles

Achieving success in Afghanistan requires the international community – led by the United States – to focus on three "first principles" in order to create the conditions for a new approach. These principles must be the touchstones of any new strategy and provide a lens through which any set of decisions should be viewed. Absent these principles, no new strategies, no infusion of troops and money, and no increased in international support will prove effective.

First, ***the Afghan people are the center of gravity*** of all efforts. This fundamental understanding must underpin and influence every aspect of a new approach in Afghanistan. Securing the population entails more than simply protection from the Taliban: success requires the Afghan people to have confidence in their personal security, health and education, access to resources, governance and economic future – a broad "human security" portfolio. The Afghan

people, down to the local level, are the ultimate arbiters of success in Afghanistan. Progress rather than perfection is a standard they understand and will accept. On the other hand, international civil and military activities that alienate the Afghan people, offend their cultural sensibilities, or further separate them from their government are doomed to fail. Nurturing the reasonable hope and cautious optimism of the Afghan people in a better future is the *sine qua non* of our collective success in Afghanistan.

Second, ***creating actual unity of effort*** within the civil and military spheres is essential -- and ultimately integrating the two. Countless dollars and tens of thousands of troops have been committed to Afghanistan over the past eight years, but a sober assessment would conclude that the whole has totaled far less than the sum of the parts. The enemy seeks to disrupt our unity of effort; we have given him many of the tools to do so. Only by dramatically improving the coherence of the military effort and by connecting it to the civil reconstruction, governance and development effort will effective progress be made. A "comprehensive approach" wherein each nation designs its own national approach ensures disunity of effects.

The civil dimension of the enterprise has been even more fragmented than the disjointed military effort. Successful Afghan government programs such as the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG) and the National Solidarity Program (NSP) should form the drivers of this integrated effort – and serve as the nexus of an integrated

civil-military plan. Only the United States has the capacity to lead this integrated effort – and it should exercise its leadership by fully supporting and enabling the Afghan government, allowing allies and the international community to solidify behind an Afghan plan, with an Afghan face, built on Afghan institutions with improved capacity and effectiveness.

Third, ***simultaneous bottom-up and top-down action*** is required. The recurrent debate between strengthening the central government versus strengthening capacity at the local level must be ended. Afghanistan requires both a capable national government in Kabul and effective, legitimate local institutions at province, district and village level. Models for this relationship exist in Afghan history over the centuries, most recently in the 1960s and early 1970s. Action in this realm must be two-pronged: Kabul and the central government as the "top-down" focus of the Kabul-based international community; and province and district level "bottoms-up" action, enabled (and sometimes led) by military efforts.

Improvements in central government from the capital must become the main task for the Kabul-based international community, with institution-building efforts jointly led by the United States, key allies, and UNAMA: effective local government will be difficult if the national institutions of power remain broken. These efforts should be focused toward key ministries of the Afghan government, which directly impact the local population, as well as on support for a more effective executive system around the president.

At the same time, a renewed effort must be made to concentrate resources and direct assistance at the growth of local governance capabilities and sustainable state and societal institutions at the province and district level.

In the south and east, because of the poor security environment, much of this effort must be led by military forces with civil actors in support – a different scenario from the north, where much better security permits civil-led efforts. As security improves (akin to the north and west), the primacy of military versus civil roles can be reversed. As in Iraq, improvements in security are an essential first step that will prompt faster progress in governance and development programs, which will in turn enable greater security, leading ultimately to a virtuous cycle of improving conditions. Moreover, focused international attention in Kabul can do much to provide increased resources for provinces and districts, as well as to enforce accountability – while adhering to the "first, do no harm" commandment in influencing local matters.

With the foundation provided by these first principles, an approach for the next several years can be outlined.

Operational Sequencing

The broad outline of a new strategy in Afghanistan translates into an operational sequence of reducing the threat while securing the population, simultaneously building up the capacity and legitimacy of the Afghan government at the central and local level, then transitioning

each category of effect to sole Afghan control once a sustainable Afghan capability is achieved.

This is a classic counter-insurgency strategy for Afghanistan – but a unified strategy as opposed to the multiple disjointed approaches that exist today. Due to the protracted nature of counterinsurgency, the severe lack of development and infrastructure in the region, and the intractable nature of regional dynamics affecting the conflict (such as the India-Pakistan confrontation) this strategy is a long-term enterprise that may take 10 to 15 years of effort to deliver decisive and enduring results.

However, assuming the international community allocates adequate resources and chooses sound security objectives, enough progress might be made to allow significant reductions in coalition combat troops well before this time, based on conditions on the ground rather than a rigid timeline.

But executing a strategy focused on the long-term in Afghanistan is currently not feasible, due to the current dangers that are the result of the decay of government legitimacy and a deteriorating security situation on the ground. So before we can begin executing a long-term strategy the United States and the international community must first halt the deterioration, stabilize the situation, and regain the initiative. Only the United States can lead this effort, and only through a military-led action in its first phases.

Therefore, at the operational level, the level at which strategy is implemented through campaigns and civilian programs on the ground, the sequence of action is ***"Stabilize, Protect, Build, Transition."*** This can be summarized as follows:

2009 – Stabilize Phase (Holding Operation): Focus a surge of US and Afghan forces, and additional combat forces from other partners willing to contribute, on the central essential task of protecting the population during the August 2009 elections and on stabilizing the security situation. The election outcome will be a key test of legitimacy of the Afghan government, and indirectly, the international effort. A successful election outcome – one that meets international standards of fairness and transparency and strengthens Afghan institutions – offers the chance to hit the political re-set button, restoring the legitimacy of the Afghan government and with it the credibility of the international effort.

2010 – Protect / Regain the Initiative Phase (Counter-offensive): continue to protect the population and state institutions while persuading, enabling and mentoring the Afghan government to govern more effectively – top-down and bottom-up. This will entail substantial growth in security forces: US, allied, Afghan Army and Police.

2010-2015- Building Success Phase (Consolidation): – protect the population, build Afghan state and non-state institutions. Improved security built from the bottom up

around the country provides space for concurrent growth of key economic and governance functions. Success in the security sphere incentivizes reconciliation efforts. Begin selective transition (Afghanization) in the north and west.

2015-2025 – Transition / Movement to Afghan Control: continue selective transition -- as further geographical areas (provinces/regions) or functional aspects (e.g. agriculture, local government, customs and border protection, policing) of the state achieve sustainable stability, hand-off control over them to responsible Afghan institutions. International military presence draws down.

Continuous – Prevent (Counter-Sanctuary Operations) Throughout the operational sequence above, the "prevent" task is concurrent, continuous, and (because it disrupts other tasks) is conducted only to the limited level needed to prevent another international terrorist attack on the scale of the 9/11 attacks. Tactical opportunities which undermine broader strategic goals are avoided.

Political Strategy

Although providing a detailed political strategy is outside of the scope of this piece, a short synopsis of the complementary political approach is provided here. The underpinning political strategy is to regain the initiative through a sustained surge of international military efforts partnered with improved local civil functions while generating increased leverage over the Afghan government,

aimed at reversing its loss of legitimacy through the circuit-breaker of successful 2009 elections. This increased leverage is then used, via persuasive, enabling and coercive measures ("carrot and stick"), to create a reformed Afghan government that governs in a more effective and credible manner (building on its own improved legitimacy through the 2009-10 elections process, ideally including district elections promised in 2002 but not scheduled so far).

As part of this overall political approach, the negotiation and reconciliation strategy is aimed at identifying and co-opting reconcilable elements of the loose insurgent confederation, while simultaneously targeting and eliminating the tiny minority of irreconcilables. Strength matters in this effort: regaining the psychological initiative by creating military success accelerates the potential for breakdown of Taliban fighters and promotes reconciliation – insurgents with no hope for a future are much more likely to lay down their weapons than those who believe they are winning. Conversely, pursuing negotiations while your adversary perceives he is winning negates any prospects for success.

The Military Strategy

An effective military strategy is paramount in an environment where all agree that lack of security prevents progress across all other elements of power. Despite the role of the enemy – Taliban and affiliated networks – in creating this dangerous security environment, coalition

military forces must avoid the temptation to focus upon the enemy as the centerpiece of their actions to restore security: the population must remain the center of gravity. Focusing on the enemy risks endlessly chasing an elusive actor who has no fixed locations he must defend, and can thus melt away at will. It also creates civilian casualties, undermining popular support for the effort, as the enemy hides behind the population and deliberately provokes casualties.

North vs South: Stability and Counter-Insurgency Approaches

Geographically, Afghanistan can be broadly divided into two security zones: the relatively more secure northern part of the country (the "Stability Zone") and the dangerous and unstable south (the "Counter-Insurgency Zone"). A military strategy for Afghanistan must recognize this disparity and of necessity focus its finite resources and planning upon the south. The Stability Zone (comprising Regional Command - North based in Mazar e Sharif and Regional Command - West based in Herat) presently demands few military forces: Afghan National Army units stationed there are largely underemployed (while currently unavailable to rotate to the south). NATO forces in the north perform a traditional peace-keeping and reconstruction role – offering a useful security presence but making little direct contribution to stabilizing the much more dangerous south. That said, pockets of Taliban influence are growing in Pashtun areas across the north, and NATO military forces assigned to these areas must be prepared to counter this increasing threat.

The Counter-Insurgency (COIN) Zone – the primary area of insecurity and combat action – comprises RC-East based in Bagram and RC-South in Kandahar. Forces in the COIN Zone are engaged in near-continuous combat action and account for the bulk of casualties in both NATO ISAF and in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) -- U.S. counterterrorism forces not under NATO command. Enemy suicide attacks, ambushes, roadside bombs and popular intimidation occur predominantly in the COIN Zone.

Population Security: Military Lead

A population-centric strategy focused upon the COIN Zone should be based upon classic counter-insurgency theory, modified and tailored so that it applies to the specific circumstances of the Afghan context. Owing to the very dangerous security environment in the COIN Zone, *military commanders must take the lead in the civil-military effort.* Military civil affairs units joined by a select number of appropriately trained and equipped civilian volunteers, with adequate legal authorities, will focus on improving the accountability and performance of Afghan provincial and district governance, catalyzing economic development and improving the rule of law. Civilian volunteers will often be at the same levels of risk as the military units with whom they are partnered – which reinforces the need for military-led efforts with "combat" reconstruction and development capabilities.

As increased (mostly American) units flow into the COIN Zone – perhaps as many as 30,000 more in 2009 alone – both combat actions and casualties will increase as more contacts between Taliban and coalition forces ensue. For this reason, the level of violence involving the coalition will be a poor metric for success in 2009 – regardless of whether we are winning or losing, the level of incidents will rise sharply. Rather, the key success metrics will be control over population centers and Afghan-on-Afghan violence.

Military commanders in the south and east must position their forces to control and protect major population centers (cities, towns and larger villages) while ensuring freedom of access along key routes of communication. Areas that cannot be protected using coalition troops must be secured by the presence of special forces and advisory teams, working with local government and Afghan forces at the district level to raise and employ local security volunteers (in the nature of a neighborhood watch) and supported by quick-reaction forces in nearby major centers. This role should become the primary focus of special forces – much different from their principal "door-kicking" mission of today.

Inherent in providing security to population centers is a robust parallel effort to improve governance and extend development and reconstruction across key sectors. The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) concept has proven useful in this contested environment and should be expanded to district level through the fielding of District

Reconstruction Detachments and Governance Transition Teams. Deploying PRTs down to district level will provide an implementing reality to the "bottom-up" approach and complement "top-down' reform in Kabul. In broad terms, civil-military integration and unity of effort in Kabul argues for a *diplomatic-led, centralized approach*; civil-military integration in the contested space across the COIN Zone argues for a *military-led, decentralized effort* until security can be returned to a more normal level (e.g., northern Afghanistan: the Stability Zone).

Area Ownership: Delivering Results

Military combat units in the COIN Zone must operate within a principle of "area ownership" where unit commanders "own" the primary responsibility for entire segments of territory -- districts and even provinces -- and lead a unified civil, military and Afghan government effort to ensure coherent, mutually supportive results within these areas. "Area Ownership" is a derivative of the New York City Police precinct approach of the 1990s, where precinct captains were held fully accountable for crime in their precinct – but were given all the tools and support to change the picture; this one person owning all resources and all outcomes is absent in today's approach and contributes to both fragmentation of effort and lack of accountability for results.

The new approach should be visibly Afghan-led and connected to the Afghan National Development Strategy goals, but coalition military forces have an essential

behind-the-scenes role to play: "leadership from the rear." Only by integrating all of these civil-military efforts under one commander will synergy and effectiveness be achieved. The coalition military commander must be partnered with his Afghan National Army counterpart and the local Afghan governmental leader – be it provincial governor or district administrator. The disjointed approaches employed to date --- dividing military and civil (and even Afghan) enterprises in the face of a resurgent enemy -- have taken us to the point of failure. It is past time to make the bold shift required in order to assure success.

From Mentoring to Partnership

An essential shift in operational technique is also needed, away from today's mentoring-only approach (where small teams military personnel organized as Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams or Embedded Training Teams are responsible to advise entire Afghan units) towards an approach that complements these teams by partnering entire Afghan military and police units with coalition counterparts.

At present, because of the security situation, our often under-manned coalition advisor teams can only be in a limited number of places and find it extremely difficult to observe and monitor the activity of their dispersed Afghan unit. Police and military units tend to operate on their own, with only limited coordination with each other and with coalition forces.

By contrast, experience in Iraq and in parts of Afghanistan (such as Regional Command East) where a partnering model has been used, suggests that partnering whole units in such a way that any patrol or operation, regardless of size, always includes a coalition military, Afghan military and Afghan police component (and ideally also an Afghan civil governance component), improves the performance of all three elements.

Coalition forces' performance improves because, since they always work closely with an Afghan partner unit, their level of local knowledge, language skill and situational awareness improves dramatically. This creates fewer civilian casualties than occur during unilateral operations, and allows for a subtler and less disruptive approach to the local population.

Afghan military units' performance improves, because they have a constant example and model of correct operational technique and appropriate military behavior constantly before their eyes, and because of the indirect fire, intelligence support, transportation and other enablers available to them through coalition forces.

Afghan police effectiveness improves because they are supported by military partners in the execution of law and order functions (rather than, as now, carrying alone the burden of counterinsurgency operations for which they are ill-trained and poorly equipped) and because the level of police corruption and abuse drops dramatically when

coalition and Afghan military forces are present to independently monitor police behavior. Meanwhile the presence of police officers creates another whole category of ways to respond to security incidents, allowing arrest or questioning, instead of leaving military forces to respond with potentially lethal force.

This approach complements, but does not replace, the existing coalition advisory teams that perform an essential and irreplaceable function as "up close and personal" daily mentors to Afghan police and military leaders. It provides them with much greater scope to monitor, advise and assist their supported unit, since they are able to be in many places at once and can draw on greater coalition resources. These mentoring teams must be fully resourced immediately in order to deliver their full potential in an environment where their role becomes more vital every day.

Enhancing Command and Control: Military Unity of Effort

Military forces too must be organized in ways to optimize rather than degrade their effectiveness in a fight for which there will never be adequate resources. Unity of effort between civil and military leadership cited above is one dimension. Equally important is the need to streamline and align the NATO and US military commands to achieve maximum results. The NATO headquarters in Kabul today performs too many functions to be effective: *de facto*, it operates at the political-military, strategic, operational and

tactical levels – a span of control and responsibility which violates military doctrine and which has proved largely ineffective. Serving all tasks allows it to perform none well. Division of responsibilities is overdue: a three-star US headquarters whose commander is dual-hatted as a NATO deputy commander should be positioned at Kandahar and given the day-to-day counter-insurgency fight across the COIN Zone.

The COIN Zone 3-star HQ should have selected multi-national composition, but only with long-serving staff members of at least 12 months tour duration. Its "battlespace" or assigned territory should include all of RC-South and RC-East, and both of those two-star RC divisional-level commanders should report to the three-star Commander of the COIN Zone.

In a much-needed change from today, the COIN Zone commander should have full command and control of all military forces operating in his domain; his U.S. command authority makes that possible. This should explicitly include Special Forces of all types and all Afghan National Army Embedded Training Teams (ETT) and OMLTs. Moreover, the COIN Zone commander should create a unified headquarters that fully includes ANA command and control capabilities into this single fight across southern Afghanistan--a missing component today.

The COIN Zone commander should be assigned a multi-national senior civil staff to facilitate the integration of the civil and military efforts across his zone. This civilian staff

(and their counterparts at lower level) would not fall under the military command but would serve in what the military calls a "supporting-supported" role to the commander: he is "supported" by their efforts and they are "supporting" his. This arrangement parallels the *de facto* approach in US PRTs today. At day's end however, the military commander is held to account for the integrated outcome of this fused effort across his battlespace; the same holds true for each of his subordinate commanders, each of whom should be assigned a similar small civil staff to oversee and integrate civilian efforts across their discrete areas of operation. The Embedded PRTs (EPRTs) employed with excellent effect in Iraq during the surge could serve as a useful model here.

Of key importance, these commanders and their civil-military staffs must connect as equal partners with parallel Afghan governmental and military leaders unified by oversight – "ownership" -- of the same areas. This much different approach to unity of effort is a leap ahead from today's independent "stovepipes" of national and agency approaches; these often extend down to provinces from Kabul or even national capitols abroad with little regard for unified effect. Again, this military-led, civilian supported approach is only designed for high threat areas (i.e., the COIN Zone) and will revert to a more traditional civilian-led model once security is significantly improved.

Continuity: Building Equity in the Outcome

Finally, the new strategy for the COIN Zone (Regional Commands South and East) must be co-developed by the military commander and his civil-military staff who will implement and be held accountable for the strategy's results. Area ownership also implies buy-in by those carrying out the mission, and vests great authority in subordinate commanders to modify the strategy as facts on the ground change. Arguably, these commanders and their headquarters in a sustained counter-insurgency campaign should anchor themselves in their areas for prolonged periods – the senior-most leaders for upwards of two years between rotations – to improve continuity and develop a "long view" beyond today's short term focus.

The time is also ripe for the U.S. to re-examine its combat headquarters assignments to Afghanistan to either "plant the flag" of two divisional and one corps-level HQ to finish the fight (possibly on an individual rotation model); or to specialize perhaps three or four designated divisions with Afghanistan expertise and align them for all future rotations. To date, the U.S. Army has rotated five different 2-star divisional level HQ through Afghanistan in seven years, with yet a sixth new HQ arrival pending. Successful counter-insurgencies require relationship-building, deep cultural knowledge, and sustained focus – as commanders in Regional Command East have demonstrated, continuity is, in itself, an extremely important operational effect. Now is the time to reset this equation for the long haul.

Pakistan

Although describing a strategic approach to Pakistan is beyond the scope of this piece, ignoring the linkage between Afghanistan and Pakistan would be irresponsible.

Pakistan arguably presents the Unites States with its greatest strategic challenge in the region. The second largest Islamic country in the world armed with several dozen nuclear weapons demands our attention. That said, the conflict in Afghanistan is not simply a subset of a broader set of challenges in Pakistan. "Solving" Pakistan would not in and of itself "solve" Afghanistan. Afghan problems are as much internally driven (crime, corruption, narcotics; lack of governance, infrastructure, economics) as they are any result of the insurgents who operate from sanctuary in Pakistani border areas. Solving these internal problems requires creating the right conditions of security, but equally important requires adopting an effective development, economic and governance approach within Afghanistan itself.

Pakistan requires its own strategy and its own solutions as the U.S. assesses its requirements in the region. The U.S. must assist Pakistan in managing change – economically, militarily, perhaps even societally – as it deals with immense problems brought about by a deadly combination of both internal and external factors. The U.S. must partner with the Pakistani government to develop a vision of a

long-term strategic partnership between Pakistan and United States – not one simply based upon today's transactional relationship anchored in fighting terrorists in the tribal areas. Much like the U.S. has evolved the idea of a long-term strategic partnership with India, commensurate effort must be invested into a parallel track with Pakistan – but not as a zero sum game.

As to Pakistan's relationship to the conflict in Afghanistan, U.S. success in reversing the decline in Afghanistan and achieving success would increase our leverage with Pakistan. Arguably, much of the schizophrenic Pakistani approach to the Afghan conflict today is based upon their expectation that the U.S. and our allies lack staying power -- and will move rapidly for the exits if failure is imminent. Success in Afghanistan might reverse that perception and lend much greater credibility to U.S. statements of long-term commitment.

Conclusion

The international effort in Afghanistan is at a difficult and dangerous crossroads. A serious decline in security is mirrored by lack of good governance and a burgeoning illegal economy, fueling corruption at all levels. The population – buffeted by a series of downturns after the high hopes of mid-decade, are beginning to question both their own government and the presence of foreign forces – especially in light of civilian casualties and some offending tactics. Hope for a better future is diminishing – a clear danger signal. Without substantial and dramatic changes to

our approach – leadership, strategy and resources – the risk of failure is great.

Losing in Afghanistan after more than eight years of major international effort creates potentially horrific results: an insecure Pakistan; a return to deep sanctuary for Al Qaeda; increased regional instability across south and central Asia; a lack of confidence in American staying power and military prowess; and a fragmentation of NATO and the transatlantic alliance. Failure truly is not an option.

The arrival of the new U.S. Administration is exactly the right moment to revisit our collective objectives in Afghanistan; to re-animate NATO's involvement; to regenerate resource commitments; and to re-assert U.S. leadership -- which more than any other single external factor is vital to success.

The war in Afghanistan can be won, but only through the concentrated application of strong leadership, beginning in Washington; a new, unified civil-military strategy, which must be implemented from the bottom-up on the ground; and the right mix of resources to enable a new set of dynamic leaders to fully implement the new plan. But we must clearly acknowledge that only the United States can be the engine that powers this train, and the only nation that can lead this renewed international effort.

The next several years will demand an increased military effort – indeed, the dangerous security situation across much of the country will require a military lead to enable

the delivery of many civil effects. But ultimately, the war must be won by the Afghan people and their government. The role of the international community, while vital, simply creates the conditions – space, time, human capacity – to allow the Afghan people to prevail. But only a renewed approach which delivers focused U.S. leadership to an endeavor which is today is so clearly off-track can reverse the trend lines and set the stage for enduring success. This is eminently within our reach to achieve.

****
****

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much, General. Ambassador.

STATEMENT OF JAMES DOBBINS

Mr. DOBBINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me back. You know, it was only 2 years ago that Iraq was hopeless and Afghanistan was the good war. Today, Iraq is the success and Afghanistan is the quagmire. I think it is worth reflecting on this. What it demonstrates is that dramatic change is possible and that turnarounds are possible. I think what we have to focus on is how we can turn around the situation in Afghanistan.

Now, there are reasons to be cautious. Afghanistan is larger and more populous than Iraq. It is more isolated and inaccessible. It is far poorer and less developed. And it has been in civil war for 30 years.

Yet we still have advantages in Afghanistan that we lacked in Iraq. First of all, the American presence in Afghanistan remains more popular than it ever has been in Iraq. Second, Karzai retains more popularity as a leader in Afghanistan than any Iraqi leader has yet been able to secure. Third, we have far more international support for our efforts in Afghanistan than we ever have in Iraq. Fourth, levels of violence have remained much lower in Afghanistan than they were or indeed still are in Iraq. That is right. The levels of violence in Afghanistan are still somewhat lower than they are in Iraq. Fifth, Afghanistan's neighbors and near neighbors, with the partial exception of Pakistan, helped form the Karzai government, fully accept its legitimacy, and wish to see it succeed. Finally, sectarian animosities in Afghanistan are less intense than in Iraq.

Now, these conditions are changing and for the most part they are changing for the worse. Afghans are becoming increasingly critical of our presence. President Karzai is losing domestic and international support. Violence is increasing and civilian casualties are climbing, threatening to generate new refugee flows and exacerbate tensions among ethnic groups. Thus the shift in attention from Iraq to Afghanistan has come none too soon.

In my written testimony I have suggested eight different tacks that we should be taking, some of which I think the administration either has or is about to embrace. I will only name them here and be happy to go into greater detail in response to questions. First of all, I think we need to unify the NATO and American command chains. At the moment, General Petraeus is in command of only about half of the forces in Afghanistan. If we expect Holbrooke and Petraeus to pull off in Afghanistan what Petraeus and Crocker pulled off in Iraq, I think we have to make sure that the military side of our effort and the Allied effort is under his control. Second, I think we need to do the same on the civilian side. Congressman Flake noted that we have 1,400—or was it 14,000, I can't quite remember—NGO's. That is just symptomatic of the effort that is needed to coordinate the civilian effort. Third, we need to bolster both the civilian as well as the American military presence in Afghanistan. I do think that is underway. Fourth, we need to institute a bottom-up component to our counter-insurgency strategy to complement the top-down approach we have followed to date. This involves empowering local Afghans to help defend themselves. It

also involves trying to do what we did in Anbar with the Sunnis, that is to co-opt at least some components of the insurgency and put them on our payroll instead of the Taliban's. Fifth, we have to pay more attention to Afghan insurgent activities in the Pakistani province of Balochistan as well as the attention we are already paying to their activities in the North-West Frontier Province. Sixth, we need to support the upcoming Afghan elections while remaining scrupulously neutral among the possible candidates. That means neither supporting Karzai nor criticizing him to the point where it looks like we are actually opposing his candidacy. Seventh, we need to intensify our engagement with Afghanistan's neighbors. Eighth, we need make stabilizing and pacifying Pakistan a global priority, not just an American priority.

President Obama and other administration officials have stated that the United States should scale back its objectives in Afghanistan. If this means matching our rhetoric to our resource commitments, I am all for it. If it means allowing Afghanistan's downward spiral into civil war to continue, I am not. It is possible that a more modest statement of American objectives in Afghanistan, one focused on ensuring that the country does not again become a sanctuary for international terrorists, can help in coopting some of the insurgents who may be willing to break their ties with Al Qaeda. Such an effort has to be approached very carefully, however, let it open new fissures in the country even as others are healed. If Afghanistan's Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara populations—backed as they will be by Russia, India, and Iranian patrons—conclude that the United States is reducing its support for the national government in Kabul in order to accommodate Pakistani-backed Pashtun insurgents, then we are likely to see a resumption of the large scale civil war along a north/south divide which racked Afghanistan throughout the 1990's and led to Al Qaeda's introduction in the first place. American commanders may have local opportunities to bring insurgent elements over to our side and they should be encouraged to do so. But any effort to engage the insurgent leadership at a national level needs to be conducted by the government in Kabul with the support of the larger international community if this effort is not to tear the country apart.

How then should we describe America's purpose in Afghanistan? Our job is neither to defeat the Taliban nor to determine the future shape of Afghan society. While free elections, rule of law, capacity building, counter-narcotics, and economic development may not be our objectives, they are important components of a strategy designed to protect the population and win its support. The American purpose should be to reverse the currently negative security trends and ensure that fewer Afghans are killed next year than this year. In any counter-insurgency campaign, this is the difference between winning or losing. If more Afghans are killed in 2010 than 2009, we will be losing. If less are getting killed, we will be winning. That is how we will know. If as a result of our efforts the current rise in violence is reversed and the populous made more secure, the Afghan people will be able to determine their own future through peaceful rather than violent competition of ideas, people, and political factions. This has already begun to happen in Iraq. Our objective should be to give the Afghans the same chance.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dobbins follows:]

41

TESTIMONY

Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan

JAMES DOBBINS

CT-323

March 2009

Testimony presented before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs on March 26, 2009

This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. **RAND**® is a registered trademark.

Published 2009 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
RAND URL: http://www.rand.org/
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: order@rand.org

James Dobbins[1]
The RAND Corporation

Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan[2]

Before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives

March 26, 2009

In September of 2001 the United States was attacked from Afghanistan by a global terrorist network that is now headquartered in Pakistan. American attention is now being redirected toward this region. It is not a day too soon.

For the first several years after the collapse of the Taliban regime the Bush Administration ignored Afghanistan almost entirely. In Pakistan, its focus was almost entirely on Al Qaeda, while it largely ignored the Pakistani regime's continuing ties to the extremist groups that were organizing to reclaim control of Afghanistan. In President Bush's second term this attitude began to change. For the past several years the United States has begun to put more resources into Afghanistan, and to pressure the government in Islamabad to confront the enemy within. But these efforts have remained what the military call an economy of force exercise. As JCS Chairman Mullen acknowledged a little more than a year ago, "In Afghanistan we do what we can. In Iraq we do what we must."

Afghanistan is larger and more populous than Iraq. It is more isolated and inaccessible. It is far poorer and less developed. And it has been in civil war for the past thirty years. Yet we still have several advantages in Afghanistan that we lacked in Iraq. First of all, the American presence in Afghanistan remains more popular than it ever was in Iraq. Second, Karzai retains more popularity than any leader in Iraq has yet been able to secure. Thirdly, we have far more international support for our efforts in Afghanistan than we ever did in Iraq. Fourthly, levels of violence remain much lower in Afghanistan than they were, or indeed still are, in Iraq. Fifth, all Afghanistan's neighbors and near neighbors, with the partial exception of Pakistan, helped form the Karzai government, fully accept its legitimacy, and wish to see it succeed. Finally, sectarian animosities in Afghanistan are less intense than Iraq. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazara all compete for wealth and power but

[1] The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of RAND or any of the sponsors of its research. This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.
[2] This testimony is available for free download at http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT323/.

none challenge the identity of Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic bilingual state, none seek to secede, or to drive others out.

It is also worth noting that our opponents in Afghanistan are as disunited as they were, and are in Iraq. We speak of the Taliban as if it were a united enemy, but it represents only one of a number of insurgent groups headquartered in Pakistan. They are united in seeking to drive Western forces out of Afghanistan and topple the government in Kabul, but otherwise have little in common.

These conditions are changing, and for the most part they are changing for the worse. Afghans are becoming increasingly critical of our presence. President Karzai is losing domestic and international support. Violence is increasing and civilian casualties climbing, threatening to generate new refugee flows and exacerbate tensions among ethnic groups. Thus the shift in attention from Iraq to Afghanistan has come none too soon.

Although the Administration is still reviewing its Afghan policy, the broad outlines are apparent – an increase in American troop strength, pressure on Karzai to crack down on corruption, the appointment of Richard Holbrooke as special envoy for both Afghanistan and Pakistan and a recognition that stability in Afghanistan requires changes in Pakistan as well. There are several further steps the United States and its allies should consider.

First, unify the NATO and American military command chain.

Second, do the same the civilian effort.

Third, bolster the military and civilian staffs in Afghanistan.

Fourth, institute a bottom up component to our counterinsurgency strategy to complement the top down approach we have followed to date.

Fifth, pay more attention to Afghan insurgent activities in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan.

Sixth, support the upcoming Afghan elections, while remaining scrupulously neutral among the possible candidates.

Seventh, intensify our engagement with Afghanistan's neighbors.

Eighth, make stabilizing and pacifying Pakistan a global priority.

Unifying Military Command

Since 1942, when the U.S. and UK established a combined command for the invasion of North Africa, American and its European allies have operated together through a common military command structure, with a supreme commander responding both to the American President, and the leadership of the other allied governments. This is how we waged the Cold War, and conducted the post-Cold War interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo. Afghanistan is the first place where the American and NATO command chains have diverged.

At present the American and allied military effort in Afghanistan are divided between Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). There are American and allied troops in both command chains. Both chains report ultimately to American generals, one in Tampa Florida and the other in Mons, Belgium. ISAF is presently the larger of the two forces, operating under General Bantz Craddock, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander. OEF, the smaller force, comes under General David Petraeus, head of the U.S. Central Command.

Within Afghanistan the command chain of these two forces converge under yet another American General, David McKiernan, before diverging toward Tampa and Mons. The two forces operate in generally distinct geographic areas, but some assets are necessarily employed in support of both, and some intermingling cannot be avoided. Divided command of this sort inevitably produces unnecessary friction, and is a standing invitation to misunderstanding, failure to render prompt assistance, and at the worst, fratricide. Of course we can continue to muddle through with this complex and confusing arrangement, as we have for the past several years, but there can be no hope that Petraeus and Holbrooke can pull off in Afghanistan the sort of reversal that Petraeus and Crocker managed to produce in Iraq in 2007 as long as Petraeus has control over less than half the American and allied forces in Iraq.

There is a simple solution to this problem. NATO should relieve its European command of responsibility for Afghanistan and create a new major NATO command exclusively to manage this conflict under General Petraeus in Tampa, thus giving him undivided authority for Afghanistan. This is the only way the American and European efforts can be fully aligned.

This move would allow OEF and ISAF to be combined into a single force under a unified command chain all the way up to the American president and the NATO Council. Some allies want to do only peacekeeping but not counterinsurgency, others only counterinsurgency but not counterterrorism. They might oppose combining OEF and ISAF fearing that their own missions might change. It should be possible to accommodate these limitations within the structure of a single force with

several separable missions Yet even if the OEF and ISAF command chains cannot be fully merged, the efficacy of both will be immensely enhanced if they run in parallel from top to bottom, rather than diverge as they do at present.

Unifying Civil Reconstruction

Successful counterinsurgency or COIN requires the intense integration of civilian and military expertise and activity. This is very difficult, particularly when done on a multilateral basis. The civil COIN effort in Afghanistan is particularly fragmented due to the failure, going back to late 2001, to create a structure and appoint a single leader to pull these activities together.

Holbrooke's appointment puts a single official in charge of American non-military activities in Afghanistan, as well as Pakistan. Several European governments have recently moved to create similar positions. It would be helpful if the Europeans could be encouraged to appoint a single individual, representing the European Union, to coordinate their national efforts and work with Holbrooke on a unified Western approach to stabilization and reconstruction in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We also need to give some greater coherence to provincial reconstruction efforts. There are currently 26 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, of which the majority are run not by the United States, but by 13 other allied governments. There is no central structure overseeing these disparate efforts, setting common standards, establishing development priorities and otherwise supporting these teams. The U.S and the other governments fielding PRTs should establish a common administrative office in Kabul which would be responsible for developing a common doctrine, working with NATO, the UN, the World Bank, the Afghan government and other donors to set development goals and channel additional resources to these provincial teams.

Bolstering Staff

Throughout the sixteen month American occupation of Iraq, the Coalition Provision Authority was never more than fifty percent staffed. What is even more surprising, neither was CJTF-7, the top American military headquarters in Iraq. These staffing shortfalls go far in explaining deficiencies in American performance during that crucial period.

By 2007, these deficiencies had been largely corrected. The surge in troop strength was accompanied by a significant build up in both the quantity and quality of the civilian and military staffs in Baghdad. Crocker had half a dozen former Ambassadors working for him. Petraeus had the support not only of a very talented military staff, but of a number of civilians who came with

expertise not normally found within the armed services. The State Department and AID were also able to fully staff and run twenty two Provincial Reconstruction Teams located throughout the country.

It was this pool of talent which allowed Petraeus and Crocker to manage the immensely complex and sophisticated strategies that divided our enemies in Iraq, brought former insurgents over to our side, deterred outside meddling and turned the security situation around.

Afghanistan now requires the same sort of surge in the quantity and above all the quality of civilian and military talent, both at the headquarters level and in the field. At present the American PRTs in Afghanistan are still run by the military, in contrast to Iraq. The US will find additional troops for Afghanistan by moving them from Iraq. It may not be possible for State and AID to do likewise. Indeed the burden on out diplomats and aid officials in Iraq may grow as the military presence recedes.

The decision by Secretary Clinton to send Ambassador Frank Ricciardone, one of our most senior and experienced career diplomats, to Kabul to assume the normally more junior post of Deputy Chief of Mission is evidence that the Administration recognizes this need. Congress should therefore help State and AID generate the resources to surge in Afghanistan even as they hold steady in Iraq.

Building From the Bottom Up

Among the elements which reversed Iraq's decent into civil war were a counterinsurgency strategy which gave priority to public security, not force protection, and the decision to organize, arm, and pay large elements of the population that had previously supported the insurgency.

Replicating the first of these effects in Afghanistan will be impossible with the American, allied and Afghan forces at our disposal. The Afghan population is larger that than the Iraqi and much more dispersed. Afghan police and military forces are much smaller, as are American and allied troop numbers even after the planned U.S. reinforcement. American, allied and Afghan soldiers will be able to protect the populations in the contested areas only if elements of this population are also enlisted in the effort.

The initial American approach in Afghanistan was bottom up. The US worked with a number of warlords, militia and tribal leaders, including the Northern Alliance and Hamid Karzai, to overthrow the Taliban. More recently the United States and its allies have adopted a largely top down strategy in Afghanistan, seeking to build up the capacity of the government in Kabul to provide security,

justice, education, health, electricity and other public services to its rural population. Progress has been too slow, in part because we wasted the first several years after the fall of the Taliban, but also because, unlike Iraq, Afghanistan has never had much of a central government.

Current circumstances require that we combine the top down and bottom up approaches. A counter insurgency strategy emphasizing the delivery of security and other public services to the rural populations can only succeed if those populations are enlisted in the effort. The Afghan government has pioneered an effort to empower and resource local community initiatives through its "National Solidarity Program". This program encourages the organization local councils, who decide upon development priorities and are then given the wherewithal to carry them out. This U.S. should consider increasing its so far disproportionately small contribution to this quite successful program. It should also work with the government in Kabul to develop a parallel approach to security, empowering and resourcing locals to form the first line of defense against insurgent encroachment.

This is likely to prove quite controversial. The Afghan tribal structures are very distinct from those in Iraq, and any effort to replicate the "Sons of Iraq" will need to be adjusted considerably to suit local conditions. Many in the central government will fear that local empowerment will come at their expense. The Tajik, Uzbek and Shia leadership will fear that we are arming their enemies, the Pashtuns, just as the Shia and Kurdish leaders in Iraq looked at the Sunni Awakening skeptically. Wending our way through these minefields is precisely why our military and civilian staffs in Kabul, and the field need to be reinforced with real experts in the region, in counterinsurgency, and economic development.

Focusing on Baluchistan

Insofar as the United States has focused on the sanctuaries from which the Afghan rebels are operating, it has directed its aid, and its Predator strikes on the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) within it. This is where the insurgent groups targeting American troops in eastern Afghanistan are headquartered, and also where Al Qaeda leaders are located. But the Taliban operates dominantly in the south, not the east of Afghanistan, and does so from the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, not the NWFP. The Taliban Shura, or governing council is known to meet in the city of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan. Many American reinforcements are slated to be heading to the south of Afghanistan, where they will thus be facing an enemy controlled from Baluchistan.

The utility of targeted killings employing Predator drones over Pakistan is debatable, but to the extent it is useful, there seems no good reason to limit the activity to the NWFP. The extension of

American economic assistance and of effective Pakistani government authority over the border region might actually be somewhat easier in Baluchistan, since unlike the FATA, this border area is at least juridical covered by Pakistani law, and fully within the country's political system.

Supporting the Elections

The presidential elections scheduled for later this year could be a major turning point, either enhancing public support for the country's leadership, or moving it further toward civil war. The United States will have a major stake in the outcome, but will need to remain scrupulously neutral if that outcome is to be regarded as legitimate.

This imperative will effectively limit the amount of pressure American officials can usefully put on President Karzai. In recent weeks the Afghan President has come under increasing criticism from Washington for tolerating corruption and failing to meet the aspirations of his people for peace and economic development. No doubt these criticisms are valid, but the Administration and the Congress should resist the temptation to blame Afghanistan's leadership for our failures. It is only necessary to recall back in 2007, when the Congress was busy benchmarking the Iraqi government, implicitly threatening to abandon them if they did not achieve certain legislative goals. Well, the Iraqi leadership have begun to meet many of those goals, but only after American and Iraqi forces created the security conditions in which mutual accommodation among rival factions became feasible.

A certain level of criticism of Karzai can actually enhance our *bona fides* as a genuinely neutral party in the contest, given that he is widely, if inaccurately, seen as something of an American creation. Taken too far, however, such pressure could begin to look like Washington was trying to jettison him in favor of another candidate. This could have disastrous consequences.

Whatever we do, Karzai stands a good chance of winning this election, if not on the first ballot, as he did last time, on the second. A far worse occurrence would be an inconclusive or contested result. At present everyone outside Afghanistan and very nearly everyone inside agrees that Hamid Karzai is the legitimate, freely elected President of Afghanistan. Our overriding objective, in how we approach this year's elections, must be to ensure that whoever wins enjoys at least the same degree of acceptance and support inside and outside that country.

Engaging the Neighbors

Afghanistan is a poor, desolate, isolated and inaccessible state surrounded by more powerful neighbors. It has never been fully self sufficient. Its internal peace has always depended upon the

attitude of external parties. When its neighbors perceived a common interest in a peaceful Afghanistan, it was at peace. When they did not, it was at war.

In the aftermath of 9/11 the United States worked closely with Afghanistan's neighbors and near neighbors to overthrow the Taliban and replace it with a broadly representative, democratically based regime. This unlikely set of partners consisted of Iran, India, and Russia, long-term backers of the Northern Alliance, and Pakistan, until then the patrons of the Taliban. Reconstituting this coalition should be the current objective of American diplomacy. Holbrooke and Petraeus should be encouraged to work closely not just with our European allies, but with all these regional governments, including Iran, with which the United States collaborated very effectively in late 2001.

At some point a new international conference, with participation similar to that which met in Bonn in November of 2001 to establish the Karzai regime, might help advance this process. The product of such a conference might be an agreement

- Among all parties to declare Afghanistan a permanently neutral country;
- By Afghanistan not to permit its territory to be used to against the interests of any of its neighbors;
- By its neighbors and near neighbors not to allow their territory to be used against Afghanistan;
- By Afghanistan and Pakistan to recognize their common border;
- By all other parties to guarantee that border; and
- By the United States and its NATO allies to withdraw all forces from Afghanistan as soon as these other provisions have been implemented.

Such a package would give all the participants something of value. Pakistan would secure Afghan recognition of its border and assurances that India would not be allowed to use Afghan territory to pressure or destabilize Pakistan's own volatile border regions. Afghanistan would gain an end to cross border infiltration and attacks. Iran would get assurances that the American military presence on its eastern border would not be permanent.

The Afghan people desperately want peace. They continue to hope that their freely elected government, the United States and NATO can bring it to them. American forces continue to be welcome in Afghanistan in a way they have never been in Iraq. But public support for Karzai, his government, and the American presence is diminishing. Additional American troops and more aid dollars may be able to reverse, or at least slow these negative trends, but in the long term Afghanistan will be at peace only if its neighbors want it to be. Building such a consensus must be the main objective of American diplomacy in the region.

Stabilizing Pakistan

Pakistan has become the most dangerous place on earth, yet no one seems to be doing much about it except the United States. The rise of violent extremist movements in that country, abetted by elements of its security establishment and largely tolerated by the government as a whole, now represents a threat to all of Pakistan's neighbors, the larger international community, and to Pakistan itself.

China, India, and Europe all have a pressing interest in supporting the emergence if a moderate, civilian ruled Pakistan in control of its own territory and committed to peace with its neighbors. An American program of increased and largely unconditioned aid to the civilian sector in Pakistan, coupled with more closely conditioned military assistance should be an important part of such a global effort to address this problem. The American contribution should be accompanied by comparable efforts from other major donors, and supportive policies both by Pakistan's traditional ally, China, and its long term adversary, India.

Both Indian and American officials have become fond of arguing that U.S.-Indian relations should be divorced from consideration of their impact upon Pakistan. This is misconceived, as is a tendency on the part of some to value India primarily as a counterweight to a rising China. The Chinese threat is hypothetical and distant, and the promise of an US-Indian alliance even less concrete and immediate. The proximate threat is a radicalized and ungovernable Pakistan, and that is a threat to India, China, the United States, and the rest of the international community alike. Reversing those trends should be the main focus of American policy in the region. This does not mean downgrading relations with India to calm Pakistani fears, nor does it mean seeking to mediate a solution to the Kashmir dispute, a role India will never allow the U.S. to play. It does mean putting Pakistan at the top of the U.S.-Indian agenda, as a challenge for both countries. It does mean seeking to enlist India in a broader international effort to help Pakistan reverse the growing radicalization of its society.

Redefining Our Mission Afghanistan?

President Obama and other administration officials have stated that the United States should scale back its objectives in Afghanistan. If this means matching our rhetoric to our resource commitments, I am all for it. If it means allowing Afghanistan's downward spiral into civil war to continue, I am not.

It is possible that a more modest statement of American objectives in Afghanistan, one focused on ensuring that the country does not again become a sanctuary for international terrorists, can help in

co-opting insurgents. Such an effort has to be approached very carefully, however, lest it open new fissures in the country even as others are healed. If Afghanistan's Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara populations, backed as they will be by their Russian, Indian and Iranian and Iranian patrons, conclude, that the US is reducing its support for the national government in Kabul in order accommodate Pakistani backed Pashtun insurgents, then we are likely to see a resumption of that large scale civil war, along a north/south divide, which wracked Afghanistan throughout the 90s and led to Al Qaeda's introduction in the first place. American commanders may have local opportunities to bring insurgent elements over to our side, and should be encouraged to try, but any effort to engage the insurgent leadership at a national level will need to be conducted by the government in Kabul with the support of the larger international community if this effort is not to tear the country apart.

How then should we describe America's purpose in Afghanistan? Our job is neither to "defeat the Taliban" nor to determine the future shape of Afghan society. While free elections, rule of law, capacity building and economic development may not be our objective, however, they are important components of a strategy designed to protect the population and win its support. The American purpose should be to reverse the currently negative security trends and ensure that fewer innocent Afghans are killed next year than this year. In any counterinsurgency campaign, this is the difference between winning and losing – are you successfully protecting the population or not.

If, as a result of our efforts, the current rise in violence is reversed and the populace made more secure, the Afghan people will be able to determine their own future through the peaceful, rather than violent competition of ideas, people, and political factions. This has begun to happen in Iraq. Our objective should be to give the Afghans the same opportunity.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Ambassador. Dr. Kagan.

STATEMENT OF FREDERICK W. KAGAN

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Mr. Flake, for inviting me to participate in this hearing on this outstanding panel where I suspect we will find not a tremendous amount of disagreement.

Mr. TIERNEY. That is too bad because we really thought we were going to get a lot of disagreement. But in other words, it might not be too bad after all.

Mr. KAGAN. Well, it is a little hard because I think if you look at this problem, there are elements of it that are incredibly complicated and there are elements of it that are fairly straightforward. If the problem were simply preventing Al Qaeda from reestablishing safe havens in Afghanistan—and I don't think it is—and if it were the case that it was possible to do that with some sort of counter-terrorism approach that relied primarily on Special Forces and long range missile strikes—which I don't believe is the case—then we could actually have a discussion, I think, about alternatives. But unfortunately the problem in Afghanistan is much greater than that. It is more significant than that. Also, unfortunately, I am not really aware of a case in the last 10 years when the pure counter-terrorism approach has worked. So I don't find that to be an appealing intellectual alternative to try to pursue because it has been tried on a number of occasions and it has failed. Al Qaeda is not actually susceptible to that sort of defeat, in my view.

But stepping back from it, I think it absolutely right to ask the questions, why are we in Afghanistan and what are we trying to achieve? I would submit that the reason we are in Afghanistan is because of the extremely important geopolitical role that Afghanistan actually plays in an area that encompasses a billion and a half people with a lot of nuclear weapons. The key point here is that what you are seeing in Afghanistan, among other things, is a great game being played out between India, Pakistan, Russia, Iran, China, and now us for regional objectives.

We know well that the Pakistanis are supporting elements of the enemy groups—both the Quetta shura Taliban and the Haqqani network—which are, I think, the greatest threat to stability in Afghanistan. They are doing that for a variety of reasons but largely because it is a part of the competition with India. And I don't think that they will stop doing that unless it is made clear to them that those groups will not succeed and that there will, in fact, be a stable Afghan state backed by the West, not just the United States but backed by the West, that will make impossible the success of the proxies that the Pakistanis are preferring. And I think it is important to phrase it in that way because I think that unfortunately it is not just the case that the Pakistanis are acting defensively here out of fear that we will leave, although they are doing that. Even if we were not going to leave, even if they knew that we were not going to leave, the Pakistanis will still be concerned about the degree of Indian influence in Afghanistan, which will be significant. Indian companies invest in Afghanistan. India has an embassy there which was, not coincidentally, attacked some time ago. This

is not something that would easily go away. The Pakistanis have to be convinced not just that there will be a government that they are happy with in Kabul but that their preferred proxies will lose. This is an incredibly important thing for Pakistan. And that is one of the things that I want to emphasize here.

We have gotten into the habit because we have forces fighting and dying in Afghanistan of thinking about Pakistan as the country that we need to help us in Afghanistan. The problem is that has it reversed. The truth of the matter is that Pakistan is more important to us strategically than Afghanistan. It is a country of 173 million people and 100 nuclear weapons. And it is host to at least four major terrorist organizations, two of which are focused on destabilizing Pakistan, one of which is focused on destabilizing the entire region, and one of which is focused on destabilizing the entire world. Now the question is, how can we best influence what goes on in Pakistan? How can we best understand what these groups are trying to do? And how can we best try to address the problem?

Right now we have the advantage of being in contact with the rear areas of all four of those groups in Afghanistan. When I was east of the Kunar River a short walk—for an Afghan, not for me—away from the Pakistani border, it was very apparent that the degree of visibility that we have on groups like the TNSM, like Baitullah Mehsud's Pakistani Taliban, like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, and like Al Qaeda from Afghanistan is something that is irreplaceable. And if we were to withdraw prematurely from Afghanistan, if we were to abandon our efforts there, not only would those groups flourish but we would lose an ability to understand what they are doing, to influence their behavior, and to influence also Pakistani behavior toward them.

That is why I think it is time for us to stop focusing so much on the region as it can help us in Afghanistan. We need to understand also the upside benefits of getting it right in Afghanistan, which include helping generate leverage vis-a-vis Pakistan in a variety of ways, helping us to get the Pakistanis to focus on their own internal issues—which we have to be very concerned about—and also keeping us in close contact with enemy groups that are a real threat to global stability in a very fundamental way.

Last, I just want to say, and I know that the committee is aware of this but I am not sure that the American people are, the situation in Afghanistan right now is nowhere near as bad as the situation in Iraq was at the end of 2006. Just to put a number on the table, the height of attacks in Afghanistan is less than a quarter of the height of attacks that we saw in Iraq. I was in Iraq in May 2007 at pretty much at the peak. Dave Kilcullen was there in much more dangerous positions than I for much longer in that period. And we both know, he more than I, what that kind of violence looks like in a society. That is not going on in Afghanistan right now. And I think that if we pursue a sound policy and resource it appropriately, there is no reason why that should happen in Afghanistan. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kagan and the report from Newsweek follow:]

Newsweek

Sponsored By
Afghanistan Is Not Vietnam

The champion of the Iraq surge argues that now is no time to go soft on another front.

Frederick W. Kagan
Newsweek Web Exclusive

Just three months ago, Afghanistan was the "good" war. It was, according to all the conventional wisdom, the "real" central front in the war on terror, the war we had to win, the place to fight Al Qaeda, and the war we should have been focusing on all along. Nothing much has changed in Afghanistan since Barack Obama won the election, but conventional wisdom is swinging fast to the opposite viewpoint. Opinion makers on the left and the right are discovering that Afghanistan is hard to fix, that Al Qaeda is really in Pakistan, and that the "good war" might not be so good after all.

One thing that has not changed, apparently, is Obama's determination to succeed in Afghanistan. He's right to hold firm. Afghanistan is hard, and always was, but we can still succeed. It has not been the sanctuary for Al Qaeda since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, but it is still important. Afghanistan may have lost its luster as a stick with which to beat the Bush administration for invading Iraq, but it has not lost its importance to American national security. Obama is right to try to win, and he deserves the full support of the nation.

But once again the policy debate seems to be focusing on the philosophical problem of defining success rather than the practical problem of actually succeeding. It is essential, of course, to consider what American national security really requires in Afghanistan before committing to some arbitrary set of goals. And the challenges of making any real progress in Afghanistan are daunting, especially to a country exhausted not so much by the war in Iraq as by the bitter and emotionally draining debate about that war. The current economic crisis is naturally the emergency uppermost on the minds of Americans and their leaders, and "fixing" Afghanistan has come to seem like a very unpleasant distraction. The chorus of voices insisting that we redefine our aims in Afghanistan to something more readily attainable is therefore growing loud. Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries, racked by civil war and foreign invasions for 30 years, riven with ethnic seams and ancient tribal enmities, and utterly unsuited to the growth of modern liberal democracy, so it is said. Our real interests in Afghanistan consist of preventing Al Qaeda from re-establishing safe havens there, and we can do that, according to many, by focusing narrowly on killing terrorists rather than trying to build an Afghan state.

As in Iraq since 2006, the search is on for a middle-way strategy in Afghanistan that will achieve our minimal national-security requirements without forcing us to defeat a determined set of enemies and create a modern state. Unfortunately, as in Iraq, there is no such strategy. Attempts to use targeted attacks on key individuals to destroy a well-established terrorist network over the past decade have failed repeatedly. Limited and discriminate attacks in Afghanistan and Africa in the 1990s failed to weaken Al Qaeda seriously. "Small footprint" operations in the Horn of

Africa failed to prevent Islamist terrorists from seizing most of Somalia in 2006, from making millions of dollars out of maritime piracy, or from re-emerging recently as a renewed threat to the region. Pinpoint attacks backing local armed forces in Afghanistan in 2001 did not destroy Al Qaeda—they merely disrupted the group and forced it to flee to Pakistan, where it reformed. Ongoing targeted strikes in Pakistan continue to disrupt the network, but show no signs and offer no promise of destroying it. Even when we have had large numbers of troops in a country—as in Iraq or Afghanistan since 2002—targeted strikes have killed hundreds of key terrorist leaders, but could not on their own destroy enemy networks. In both countries, in fact, terrorist activities and reach grew in spite of the success of targeted attacks when such attacks were the focus of our efforts. There is simply no recent historical evidence to support the assertion that small-footprint targeted attacks against key nodes of a terrorist network will by themselves destroy that network or even seriously degrade it over time.

There is considerable evidence, however, that effective counterinsurgency operations can render large areas extremely inhospitable to terrorist networks, destroying some and forcing others to leave. That was the result of the surge strategy implemented in Iraq in 2007 and 2008. Targeted attacks against key terrorist leaders continued throughout the surge and played an extremely important role in its success. But we were able to inflict enormous damage on Al Qaeda in Iraq and numerous other insurgent and terrorist groups by complementing this skillful counterterrorism method with concerted efforts to provide security to the population, improve the provision of services and work toward political resolutions of disputes that had been generating support for, or at least tolerance of, the terrorists' presence. In the areas of Afghanistan where similar approaches have been used, the results have been comparable.

The task of applying counterinsurgency lessons learned in Iraq and elsewhere to Afghanistan is not straightforward. Afghanistan, particularly the Pashtun areas where the insurgency is concentrated, has its own very distinctive culture and even way of fighting. Whereas Iraqis accept the movement of fighters through cities and villages, and even fighting within settled areas, as a regrettable but normal part of warfare, many Afghans do not. From the days of the Soviet invasion, Afghan armed conflicts have been primarily rural. The Soviets occupied all of Afghanistan's major cities rapidly, and the enemy never really contested them. The mujahedin instead concentrated on attacking the roads connecting key population centers, isolated Soviet outposts and Soviet convoys. The Taliban uses similar methods against us today. "Living among the people" and "protecting the population," key elements of our success in Iraq and key tenets of successful counterinsurgency anywhere, must be appropriately adapted to the cultural environment of Afghanistan. Our skillful battalion and brigade commanders have developed an understanding of how to do this in some areas. What we must do now is build a flexible and comprehensive approach suitably tailored to the variations among Afghanistan's various regions.

Counterinsurgency also requires helping to establish adequate governmental structures that are seen as legitimate by the overwhelming majority of the population. So-called realists argue that the United States should not attempt to "impose" a "Jeffersonian democracy" on so benighted a land as Afghanistan (they said the same of Iraq as well). The reality is that no one is proposing to impose democracy on Afghans—Afghans want representative government. There is no significant movement within Afghanistan (other than by the Taliban and other extremist groups that can be collectively labeled "the enemy") to adopt any system other than representative

government. And no one imagines that Afghan democracy will look like American democracy or even like Italian or Israeli democracy. Recognition of the uniqueness of democracy in Iraq led to the neologism "Iraqracy," which perfectly encapsulates Iraqi politics today. Afghanistan's name does not lend itself to the same sort of literary legerdemain, but the idea is the same. A multiethnic, multisectarian state can be stable only if it is ruled by a strongman willing and able to use force and brutality to suppress minorities or if it has a representative government. Considering that the Soviets killed hundreds of thousands of Afghans and generated more than 5 million refugees with a deliberate campaign aimed at dehousing large sections of the population but still lost, it is difficult to imagine an Afghan strongman succeeding in such a fashion. Even the brutal but indigenous Taliban were able only to create a weak state that was quickly toppled by a handful of CIA agents with bags of cash supported by American aviation. The options before us are therefore stark: we can proceed with efforts to build a stable, multiethnic, representative state; we can simply leave and hope that Afghanistan's internal power struggles play out differently from the way they have for the past 20 years; or we can pull back to a small-footprint posture focused on whacking bad guys, knowing that we won't be able to destroy their networks but that we will have to keep hitting them forever.

The sensible approach—one might say the most realistic approach—is to continue with efforts to help the Afghans establish a stable state that rejects terrorism. The key problem we face is that the current government is neither effective nor seen as legitimate. Once hailed as Afghanistan's savior, President Hamid Karzai looks increasingly like a liability. His government is deeply corrupt and he has done very little to address the corruption. He appointed governors and district leaders (who are not elected in Afghanistan as they just were in Iraq) with an eye toward consolidating his own power rather than enfranchising the population. And now he is adopting an increasingly strident anti-American tone while turning ever more to Iran and Russia for support of all varieties to offset the waning of American backing.

What to do? Many, but by no means all, of the problems we now face in Afghanistan result from errors made by the Bush administration and NATO. President Bush consistently overpersonalized foreign policy, as is well known, focusing on his personal ties to key leaders. President Obama has an opportunity to reverse that policy by emphasizing that the United States does not back individuals in other states' political contests, but instead supports legitimate democratic processes and their outcomes.

A recently returned U.S. commander offered an anecdote that explains the overall challenge well. Having helped to clear a village of the enemy, he earned the trust of the village elders in large part by interacting productively with them and respecting their authority and traditions. When the elders came to a problem that they could not readily solve, they brought it to him and asked him to offer a solution, which they swore they would all accept. He demurred, realizing that even with their promise to accept his decision, it would still be his decision and not theirs. The elders withdrew to consider the matter, and the process iterated several times. When the American commander had finally convinced the elders that he really would not resolve the problem for them but that he would support a solution they came up with, they found a solution themselves.

This is a key element of counterinsurgency in a nutshell. American forces must play the necessary role in providing security. In Afghanistan, as in Iraq or anywhere else, the only thing that can legitimize the presence of foreign military forces is that they deliver safety to the people (something, it should be noted, that the Soviets and the imperial British before them never did or tried to do). But the United States and its allies do not impose their own solutions on local problems except in the most dire circumstances where all indigenous authority has collapsed. The results of forcing local leaders to step up and resolve their own issues often generate solutions that Americans find bemusing—we would never do things that way. But one of the most important lessons we learned the hard way in Iraq is that helping the Iraqis figure out how to find Iraqi solutions to Iraq's problems was both a key to success and something in which Americans could play an essential role as moderators, brokers, peacekeepers and a source of pressure to compromise. The same is true in Afghanistan.

Success will not be quick or easy. The enemy is not that strong; hyperventilating reports that the "Taliban" controls some huge percentage of the country completely misrepresent the reality. Afghan public support for the Taliban's policies, or for a return of the Taliban to power, remains very low. Nor is there one single "Taliban"—the term has been abused so much that it now encompasses many disparate groups with tenuous relationships and sometimes conflicting aims. But getting at the enemy and, more important, protecting the population from the enemy is in many respects harder in Afghanistan than it was in Iraq because of the terrain. Most of Iraq's threatened population was concentrated in and around a handful of cities and towns along three river valleys interwoven with relatively dense and high-quality road and highway systems. A significant portion of Afghanistan's population is also concentrated in and around a relatively small number of cities, but the enemy does not reside in the cities, roads are extremely poor and in some areas nonexistent, and the poverty of the country is such that enemy attacks on key lines of communication can lead rapidly to starvation. Protecting the population that is now harboring insurgents and terrorists—either willingly or out of fear—requires projecting both force and civilian assistance up valleys via tracks that are often not even Humvee-accessible and working village by village at altitudes sometimes above 10,000 feet.

The Afghan theater is also much sparser than Iraq in every sense. Saddam Hussein's vast armies littered the landscape with military bases and infrastructure that U.S. forces could easily fall in on. Protecting an urban population allowed U.S. troops to move straight into abandoned houses and other buildings to live with the people. Afghanistan offers neither kind of basing. If we want to put more troops in Afghanistan and get them out among the population, we will have to build camps and bases for them at every level. There is simply a limit to how fast the Afghan theater can usefully absorb more American troops at this stage.

Success will also require fixing structural problems within the U.S. and NATO headquarters. The Afghan mission was turned over to NATO in 2006 primarily for the purpose of giving NATO a purpose in the post–Cold War world. The assumption was that the task was primarily one of nation-building and peacekeeping, not counterinsurgency. As a result, the supreme headquarters in Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), now commanded by Gen. David McKiernan, is not built to plan and conduct theaterwide counterinsurgency operations. Nor is there a three-star headquarters in Afghanistan similar to the Multinational Corps-Iraq, which then–Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno used to develop the plans in 2007 that

implemented the counterinsurgency concepts of Gen. David Petraeus. These deficiencies will have to be rectified before we can reasonably hope to have a detailed and coherent military plan.

Then there is the problem of the civilian side. The internationalization of the aid effort in Afghanistan came at the expense of coordination. Many agencies operate in the country independently, reporting to their own headquarters and pursuing their own agendas. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul is infinitely weaker in its ability to coordinate these efforts than the American mission in Iraq was, and the appointment of a U.N. coordinator has not been sufficient either. But the international community cannot hope to achieve any goals in Afghanistan unless everyone's efforts are part of a coherent overall program that is integrated with the military operations against insurgents and terrorists. Resolving this conundrum may require the hardest trade-offs at all. Unless the various countries, NGOs and international bodies now working in Afghanistan can accept that enlightened self-interest requires subordinating their efforts to a larger program, the key players will have to decide at what point the broad coalition becomes a liability rather than an asset. All of these bodies, of course, can quite reasonably insist that we develop a coherent and comprehensive civil-military plan with their involvement before agreeing to be guided by it, something we have not yet done.

The bottom line is that we are almost certainly not going to win in Afghanistan in 2009 or even 2010, although we are unlikely to lose, either. A sound strategy—now being developed by General Petraeus and his team at CENTCOM, by the commands within Afghanistan and in coordination with Richard Holbrooke, the new special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan—can succeed, but it will take time, effort and patience. We can reasonably hope to set the conditions in 2009 for the beginning of a more decisive effort in 2010, with lasting success coming slowly and possibly fitfully over the following several years. The magnitude of the effort will almost certainly be smaller than what Iraq required—current plans will put a total of 6 American brigades in Afghanistan compared with the 22 that were in Iraq at the height of the surge. The pace of change, on the other hand, will likely be much slower.

Afghanistan is not Vietnam any more than Iraq was Vietnam. It is, like most insurgencies, a difficult problem, but one that we have every reason to believe we can solve. It is important to keep our expectations realistic, both in terms of what we hope to achieve and of the costs and speed of success, but we must not pursue the path of redefining success to be whatever we feel like we can accomplish with the effort we feel like putting forth. America does have vital national-security interests in Afghanistan, as it does in Iraq. President Obama is right to commit to pursuing those interests. His efforts, and those of Generals Petraeus and McKiernan, special envoy Holbrooke and U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry, deserve the support of the entire nation.

Kagan is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Dr. Kilcullen.

STATEMENT OF DAVID KILCULLEN

Mr. KILCULLEN. Thank you. We have four basic problems in Afghanistan. I thought I would just talk about them quickly and then directly address your issue about counter-sanctuary versus counter-insurgency.

I think that there are four key things. First, we failed to effectively protect the Afghan population. We haven't made them feel safe. That is especially true in the Pashtun parts of the country which is basically the bottom half, the southern half of Afghanistan. Second, we failed to deliver the rule of law and effective governance to the Afghan people. That is something that has happened across most of the country. When I say we, here, I am not just talking about the United States. I am talking about the whole international community as the Afghan government because we all have responsibility in that.

The third problem is we failed to deal effectively with the active sanctuary for the Taliban in Pakistan. I want to echo what Fred Kagan just said about those points. Finally, we failed to organize resources or structure ourselves to do any of those three things. So we are not securing the people, we are not delivering governance, we are not dealing with the Pakistan problem, and we are not structured or organized to do any of those things.

So there is a requirement to reorganize the effort and there is a requirement to resource it adequately. But we also have to look at what is our strategy? What are we trying to do here and is it effectively delivering on those three requirements that I first talked about?

You put up the dichotomy between counter-sanctuary and counter-insurgency. That is exactly the debate that I think has been happening in Washington for the last couple of weeks, so it is an accurate reflection of the issue. I would characterize what some people have called counter-terrorism plus as the idea that we just want to deny an Al Qaeda sanctuary in Afghanistan or Pakistan and that what we need to is essentially be able to strike and disrupt terrorist targets that emerge in that region. There are a couple of problems with that. I think that it is kind of a false dichotomy because you actually cannot do counter-terrorism without also doing a fairly substantial amount of counter-insurgency.

I hope you will bear with me but I used to do this stuff for a living so I want to explain to you what happens when an intelligence asset is working with a Special Forces asset to target a terrorist. Your intelligence asset has to have eyes on the terrorist target and it has to know where the target will be, not now, but in flight time plus preparation time plus approval time for the strike asset. So if I am the intelligence asset and my strike asset is a Special Forces unit, if the Special Forces unit is close by, if it is a 10 minute flight away and it takes half an hour to get ready and it takes 5 minutes to get approval, then I have to know where the terrorist target is going to be in 45 minutes time from now. That is hard but it is possible. If my strike asset is a naval ship in the Indian Ocean and my strike method is cruise missiles and it takes me eight to twelve hours to get approval out of Washington, then

I need to know not where the target is going to be in 45 minutes but where it is going to be tonight. That is almost always impossible. That is why we didn't get Osama Bin Laden during the 1990's. That was the setup. We had intelligence assets on the ground, approval from Washington, and our strike assets were in the Indian Ocean.

So that means that if you are going to do effective counter-terrorism, you have to have bases close to the target. And let us say the strike asset that you are talking about is a Special Forces unit of 50 people. That means that you have to have those guys on a base and you have to protect them effectively, which is probably going to take about a battalion—about 600 people—and you will need to have lines of communication, logistics units, and all sorts of support assets like helicopters and airfields and so on to make that work. And that means that you need to have a relationship with the local population because if you are going to have a base in someone's area, you have to have some kind of relationship with them where they are willing to give you the information to find the enemy and so you don't have to continually defend the base against attack. And that means that you have to deliver to the population some kind of quid pro quo. Most fundamentally, you have to protect them against terrorist retaliation for them tolerating your presence or helping you. But you also have to help them with governance, development, rule of law, and a certain variety of other things in order to just function in the environment.

So what all of that long-winded explanation means is that it turns out that if you are going to do counter-terrorism effectively, you need bases in Afghanistan. If you are going to have bases in Afghanistan, you have to do a certain minimum amount of counter-insurgency for those bases to be viable. And it turns out that minimum level is quite high.

The logic that I have just gone through is exactly the logic that the United States used in establishing air bases in Vietnam in 1965. We wanted to strike the North Vietnamese using aircraft. We needed to protect the aircraft. We needed to secure the areas around the bases. And we found ourselves dragged in gradually to a much larger commitment than was initially envisioned.

So the reason I am laying this out for you is to say we can pretend that we are doing counter-sanctuary. We will actually be doing counter-insurgency. And I think it is better that we don't pretend, that we think up front about what the requirements are likely to be.

The final point would be to say that the numbers of troops deployed, the numbers of diplomats that you put in the field and the aid spent—how many dollars you are spending—the overall raw number of those figures is actually less important than the effectiveness of their delivery on the ground. Right now some aid agencies that are working in Afghanistan are spending 80 percent in overhead and only 20 percent of their effort is actually reaching the Afghan population. Similarly we have some allies who are sitting on forward operating bases and extremely rarely are they getting out and dealing with the population. An Afghan provincial Governor said to me, look, you have enough troops to secure my province, you just have to get off the FOB, the forward operating base.

Another meeting that I was in was between an European ally and an Afghan provincial Governor. The Allied commander said, you know, we are not sure that you guys are ready to take control of the province if we leave. The Afghan Governor laughed in his face and said, if you left tomorrow the only difference it would make would be that we would inherit your base. You don't actually get out of your base and do anything. So it is not just how many troops we have, it is what those troops do. They have to focus on securing the population. That means close interaction with people and delivering effective governance, rule of law, human rights, all those sorts of things that we need to deliver so that we can deal with the terrorist threat.

So I will stop there and perhaps put forward to questions and answers.

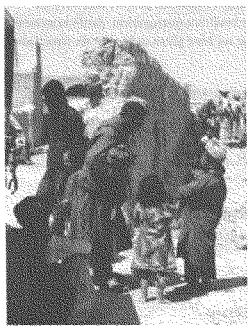
[The prepared statement of Mr. Kilcullen and the report from the New Yorker follow:]

THE NEW YORKER

- « Bo Kyi
- Main
- Military to Interpreters: Drop Dead »

November 14, 2008

Kilcullen on Afghanistan: "It's Still Winnable, But Only Just."



I wrote about David Kilcullen two years ago, in a piece called "Knowing the Enemy." Few experts understand counterinsurgency and counterterrorism better than this former Australian army officer and anthropology Ph.D, who has advised the American, British, and Australian governments, was one of General Petraeus's strategic whizzes at the start of the surge, in early 2007, and writes so well that you'd never imagine he's spent his whole career in government, the military, and academia. Kilcullen is now a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, which has provided Obama with foreign-policy advisers and advice.

This week, Kilcullen agreed to do an e-mail Q. & A. on Afghanistan and Pakistan, where he's spent a lot of time, and where the most pressing foreign crisis awaits the new Administration. Though Kilcullen is still an adviser to the State Department, he emphasized that his views are his own. And they are characteristically blunt.

The White House briefed both campaigns on Afghanistan before *the election. Apparently that's how little time we have to turn things around. So how bad is it?*

It's bad: violence is way up, Taliban influence has spread at the local level, and popular confidence in the government and the international community is waning fast. It's still winnable, but only just, and to turn this thing around will take an extremely major effort starting with local-level governance, political strategy, giving the Afghan people a well-founded feeling of security, and dealing with the active sanctuary in Pakistan. A normal U.S. government transition takes six to nine months, by the time new political appointees are confirmed, briefed, and in position. But nine months out from now will be the height of the Afghan fighting season, and less than a month out from critical Presidential elections in Afghanistan. If we do this the "normal" way, it will be too late for the Obama Administration to grip it up. I think this is shaping up to be one of the smoothest transitions on record, with the current Administration going out of its way to assist and facilitate. That said, the incoming Administration has a steep learning curve, and has inherited a dire situation—so whatever we do, it's not going to be easy.

It sounds like you're proposing classic counterinsurgency strategy: a combination of offensive and defensive military operations, political and economic development, and diplomacy. Isn't that what we've been doing these past seven years? Have we just not been doing enough of all these? Or do we need to change strategy to something fundamentally new?

Well, we need to be more effective in what we are doing, but we also need to do some different things, as well, with the focus on security and governance. The classical counterinsurgency theorist Bernard Fall wrote, in 1965, that a government which is losing to an insurgency isn't being out-fought, it's being out-governed. In our case, we are being both out-fought and out-governed for four basic reasons:

(1) We have failed to secure the Afghan people. That is, we have failed to deliver them a well-founded feeling of security. Our failing lies as much in providing human security—economic and social wellbeing, law and order, trust in institutions and hope for the future—as in protection from the Taliban, narco-traffickers, and terrorists. In particular, we have spent too much effort

chasing and attacking an elusive enemy who has nothing he needs to defend—and so can always run away to fight another day—and too little effort in securing the people where they sleep. (And doing this would not take nearly as many extra troops as some people think, but rather a different focus of operations).

(2) We have failed to deal with the Pakistani sanctuary that forms the political base and operational support system for the Taliban, and which creates a protective cocoon (abetted by the fecklessness or complicity of some elements in Pakistan) around senior al Qaeda and Taliban leaders.

(3) The Afghan government has not delivered legitimate, good governance to Afghans at the local level—with the emphasis on good governance. In some areas, we have left a vacuum that the Taliban has filled, in other areas some of the Afghan government's own representatives have been seen as inefficient, corrupt, or exploitative.

(4) Neither we nor the Afghans are organized, staffed, or resourced to do these three things (secure the people, deal with the safe haven, and govern legitimately and well at the local level)—partly because of poor coalition management, partly because of the strategic distraction and resource scarcity caused by Iraq, and partly because, to date, we have given only episodic attention to the war.

So, bottom line—we need to do better, but we also need a rethink in some key areas starting with security and governance.

Let's take these one at a time. Has there been too much emphasis on offensive operations, especially air strikes? We read a lot recently about civilian deaths and growing Afghan anger. Should we cut back on the use of air power and put in more ground troops, as Obama has said he will? Or is this not a matter of managing numbers and assets so much as changing the focus of our tactics?

It's both. There has been an emphasis on fighting the Taliban, which has led us into operations (both air and ground-based) that do a lot of damage but do not make people feel safer. Similarly, we have a lot of troops in rural areas—small outposts—positioned there because it's easier to bring firepower to bear on the enemy out in these areas. Meanwhile, the population in major towns and villages is vulnerable because we are off elsewhere chasing the enemy main-force guerrillas, allowing terrorist and insurgent cells based in the populated areas to intimidate people where they live. As an example, eighty per cent of people in the southern half of Afghanistan live in one of two places: Kandahar city, or Lashkar Gah city. If we were to focus on living amongst these people and protecting them, on an intimate basis 24/7, just in those two areas, we would not need markedly more ground troops than we have now (in fact, we could probably do it with current force levels). We could use Afghan National Army and police, with mentors and support from us, as well as Special Forces teams, to secure the other major population centers. That, rather than chasing the enemy, is the key.

Police are another main issue. We have built the Afghan police into a less well-armed, less well-trained version of the Army and launched them into operations against the insurgents. Meanwhile, nobody is doing the job of actual policing—rule of law, keeping the population safe from all comers (including friendly fire and coalition operations), providing justice and dispute resolution, and civil and criminal law enforcement. As a consequence, the Taliban have stepped into this gap; they currently run thirteen law courts across the south, and ninety-five per cent of the work of these courts is civil law, property disputes, criminal matters, water and grazing disuptes, inheritances etc.—basic governance things that the police and judiciary ought to be doing, but instead they're out in the countryside chasing bad guys. Where governance does exist, it is seen as corrupt or exploitative, in many cases, whereas the people remember the Taliban as cruel but not as corrupt. They remember they felt safer back then. The Taliban are doing the things we ought to be doing because we are off chasing them instead of keeping our eye on the prize—securing and governing the people in a way that meets their needs.

So, on the military side, three additional brigades isn't the answer? Or isn't the only answer?

That's right. The first thing we have to do is to "triage" the environment: figure out the smallest number of Afghan population centers that accounts for the greatest percentage of the population. Once we understand that lay-down (e.g., in the South, it's two towns that account for eighty per cent of the population, but the east is more rural, so it's a different calculation there), then we tailor a security plan for each major cluster of population, and for the key communications—roads, essentially—that link them together. Then we will have an idea of the extra troops we need, if any. But we can start right away with the troops we have.

Also, there are assets beyond (or, at a pinch, instead of) combat troops that would make a huge difference, without "breaking the bank" for combat troops elsewhere. These include construction engineers, aid and development personnel, aid project money, intelligence analysts, helicopters, trainers and advisers, mentors for local mayors and district officials, surveillance assets and so on—so it's not necessarily a straight zero-sum between having combat troops pull out of Iraq so we can send them to Afghanistan. (In any case, if you accept the argument that a key part of our grand-strategic problem is that we are over-committed in Iraq—and I do accept that argument—then it makes no sense to pull troops out of Iraq just so we can go and re-commit them somewhere else. We need to be reducing overall force commitment everywhere, not just moving troops from Iraq to Afghanistan. That would be tantamount to un-bogging ourselves from Iraq just so we can re-bog ourselves in Afghanistan).

On the Pakistani sanctuary, this seems to be the cancer in the bones of Afghanistan, and no one has a good answer. Both air power and special-forces incursions have drawn the wrath of the Pakistani government and people, but their efforts, as you say, have been weak at best and two-faced at worst. Our diplomats and development workers are being systematically targeted, and there's a question of how well we can spend $750 million in the northwest. Is there a way to clear out this sanctuary, that doesn't cause the problem to metastasize?

You're right. Pakistan is extremely important; indeed, Pakistan (rather than either Afghanistan *or* Iraq) is the central front of world terrorism. The problem is time frame: it takes six to nine months to plan an attack of the scale of 9/11, so we need a "counter-sanctuary" strategy that delivers over that time frame, to prevent al Qaeda from using its Pakistan safe haven to mount another attack on the West. This means that building an effective nation-state in Pakistan, though an important and noble objective, *cannot* be our sole solution—nation-building in Pakistan is a twenty to thirty year project, minimum, if indeed it proves possible at all—i.e. nation-building doesn't deliver in the time frame we need. So we need a short-term counter-sanctuary program, a long-term nation-building program to ultimately resolve the problem, and a medium-term "bridging" strategy (five to ten years)—counterinsurgency, in essence—that gets us from here to there. That middle part is the weakest link right now. All of that boils down to a policy of:

(a) encouraging and supporting Pakistan to step up and effectively govern its entire territory including the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas], and to resolve the current Baluch and Pashtun insurgency, while

(b) assisting wherever possible in the long-term process of state-building and governance, but

(c) reserving the right to strike, as a last resort, at al Qaeda-linked terrorist targets that threaten the international community, if (and only if) they are operating in areas that lie outside effective Pakistani sovereignty.

During the campaign, McCain talked about transferring the surge from Iraq to Afghanistan. We've discussed the military side. On the political side, is there any possible counterpart to the Sunni Awakening in Afghanistan—perhaps local Taliban disenchanted with foreign influences on their leadership? Should part of our political strategy be to talk to Taliban leaders who might be prepared to negotiate with us?

Well, I doubt that an Anbar-style "awakening" is likely in Afghanistan. The enemy is very different from A.Q.I. and, in any case, Pashtun tribes have a very different makeup from Arab tribes. So even if an awakening happened it would likely play out differently from Iraq. Rather than talking about negotiations (which implies offering an undefeated Taliban a seat at the table, and is totally *not* in the cards) I would prefer the term "community engagement." The local communities (tribes, districts, villages) in some parts of Afghanistan have been alienated by poor governance and feel disenfranchised through the lack of district elections. This creates a vacuum, especially in terms of rule of law, dispute resolution, and mediation at the village level, that the Taliban have filled. Rather than negotiate directly with the Taliban, a program to reconcile with local communities who are tacitly supporting the Taliban by default (because of lack of an alternative) would bear more fruit. The Taliban movement itself is disunited and fissured with mutual suspicion—local tribal leaders have told me that ninety per cent of the people we call Taliban could be reconcilable under some circumstances, but that many are terrified of what the Quetta shura and other extremists associated with the old Taliban regime might do to them if they tried to reconcile. So, while an awakening may not happen, the basic principles we applied in Iraq—co-opt the reconcilables, make peace with anyone willing to give up the armed struggle, but simultaneously kill or capture all those who prove themselves to be irreconcilable—are probably very applicable.

You spoke of Iraq's effect in draining our energy and focus away from Afghanistan. President-elect Obama has made it clear that he plans to alter the balance significantly. But, as you say, he doesn't have much time. If you had his ear, what would be your basic advice?

Well, I don't have his ear, and I don't envy the pressure he must be under. But if I did have his ear, I think I would argue for the four major points we discussed above. First, the draw-down in Iraq needs to be conditions-based and needs to recognize how fragile our gains there have been, and our moral obligation to Iraqis who have trusted us. As I said, we don't want to un-bog ourselves from Iraq only to get bogged in Afghanistan while Iraq turns bad again. Second, our priorities in Afghanistan should be security, governance, and dealing with the Pakistan safe haven—and we may not necessarily need that many more combat troops to do so. Third, the Afghan elections of September 2009 are a key milestone—we can't just muddle through, and the key problem is political: delivering effective and legitimate governance that meets Afghans' needs. And finally, most importantly, this is a wartime transition and we can't afford the normal nine-month hiatus while we put the new Administration in place: the war in Afghanistan will be won or lost in the next fighting season, i.e. by the time of the September elections.

The situation in Afghanistan is dire. But the war is winnable. We need to focus our attention on the problem, and think before acting. But we need to think fast, and our actions need to involve a major change of direction, focussing on securing the population rather than chasing the enemy, and delivering effective legitimate governance to the people, bottom-up, at the local level. Do that, do it fast, and we stand an excellent chance of turning things around.

(Photograph: Angelfire_3182, CC, BY-NC-ND)

Keywords

- Afganistan;
- David Kilcullen;
- Iraq;
- Obama;
- Pakistan;
- Petraeus;
- Taliban;
- al Qaeda

Posted by *George Packer*

In

- Interesting Times
- | Iraq

Interact:

- Print
- E-Mail

MSNBC.com

U.S. readies civilian 'surge' in Afghanistan

Officials: Aides recommend combining troop boost with increase in experts

The Associated Press

updated 8:44 p.m. ET, Wed., March. 18, 2009

WASHINGTON - Top aides to President Barack Obama are recommending that the United States combine a boost in military deployments with a steep increase in civilian experts to combat a growing insurgency in Afghanistan, senior U.S. officials said Wednesday.

Several hundred civilians from various U.S. government agencies — from agronomists to economists and legal experts — will be deployed to Afghanistan to reinforce the nonmilitary component in Kabul and the existing provincial reconstruction teams in the countryside, officials said.

A soon-to-be-concluded review of Afghanistan policy that Obama is expected to act on and announce next week builds on steps first endorsed by the Bush administration last year, the officials said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the review has not yet been completed.

Members of Obama's Principals' Committee, which is made up of the national security adviser, the secretaries of state and defense and the country's intelligence chiefs, met at the White House on Tuesday to complete their recommendations.

Top priorities in Afghanistan

Officials said counterinsurgency, reconstruction and development in Afghanistan would be top priorities.

The principals still have some work to do, according to one administration official familiar with the meeting.

"They are still trying to figure some pieces out," the official said. "(The review is) basically done but there are still elements that need to be addressed."

One part of the plan will involve naming former senior American diplomats to key posts in Afghanistan. One key official will be Francis Riccardione, a former envoy to Egypt, who will serve as deputy to the recently nominated new U.S. ambassador to Kabul, Gen. Karl Eikenberry, the official said.

Another appointment will see Peter Galbraith, a former American diplomat who has served in various hotspots, take the No. 2 U.N. job in Afghanistan, the administration official said.

The move to add hundreds of civilian aides under Eikenberry and his top staffers is similar to President George W. Bush's "surge" in Iraq but will be on a smaller scale, the officials said.

Working on an 'integrated strategy'

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Wednesday before meeting with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband that the administration was working on "an integrated strategy" to train the Afghan military and police as well as to support "governance, rule of law, judicial systems (and) economic opportunities."

Similarly, defense officials said Wednesday they expect Obama to stress the importance of the Afghanistan review's nonmilitary components.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates would not discuss details of the plan, but said "people are coming together pretty well in terms of the strategy."

Obama has committed 17,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan to break a stalemate against the Taliban and other insurgents. The president's top military advisers say the U.S. is not winning the fight there.

Many of the broad policy themes in the Afghanistan policy review already are well known, including the emphasis on nonmilitary contributions and the adaptation of successful counterinsurgency tactics used in the Iraq war.

Gates suggested that Obama's announcement will go significantly beyond that outline.

"It's a difficult problem, and trying to come up with new approaches and new initiatives that enhance our prospects for success is hard work, frankly," Gates said during a news conference.

Doubts about what to do next

He added that he has had doubts about what to do next.

"I've been very concerned about an open-ended commitment of increasing numbers of troops for a variety of reasons, including the size of our footprint in Afghanistan, and my worry that the Afghans come to see us as not their partners and allies, but as part of their problem," he said.

British Defense Minister John Hutton, also in Washington to participate in the Afghanistan discussions, told reporters that better security across Afghanistan is a minimum goal, on top of which both military and civilian advancements would build.

"The campaign in Afghanistan is not going to be won by military means alone, and that is absolutely true, but it can't be won without it," Hutton said.

Copyright 2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

URL: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29763867/

MSN Privacy | Legal
© 2009 MSNBC.com

The Washington Post

Civilians to Join Afghan Buildup

'Surge' Is Part of Larger U.S. Strategy Studied by White House

By Karen DeYoung
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, March 19, 2009; A04

Advertisement Your Ad Here

A civilian "surge" of hundreds of additional U.S. officials in Afghanistan would accompany the already approved increase in U.S. troop levels there under a new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy being completed at the White House, according to administration officials.

President Obama is expected to make final decisions next week on that strategy, proposed by his top national security advisers and based on recommendations from senior military, diplomatic and intelligence officials and intensive consultations with NATO and United Nations partners.

Officials said the proposed strategy includes a more narrowly focused concentration on security, governance and local development in Afghanistan, with continued emphasis on rule-of-law issues and combating the narcotics trade. U.S. and British troops in the southern part of the country will attempt to oust entrenched Taliban forces, with an influx of reinforcements enabling them to retain control -- and help protect enhanced civilian operations -- until greatly expanded and sufficiently trained Afghan army and police forces are able to take their place.

In Pakistan, a senior defense official said "the jury is still out" on proposals to increase covert operations and missile strikes against insurgent sanctuaries in that country's western tribal areas, and to expand them into the southern province of Baluchistan, where the Taliban leadership openly operates in the provincial capital of Quetta. With the Pakistani government teetering and anti-American sentiment rising, "we have to be realistic about how this could all play out," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"You may feel good about killing more bad guys, but the costs may just be too high," he said.

More likely in the short term, officials said, are expanded efforts to aid the Pakistani military with training, new equipment and advice to improve its counterinsurgency performance, along with a massive increase of development aid to try to stabilize the country and wean tribal leaders away from insurgent groups. One problem yet to be solved is how to supervise the distribution of aid and reconstruction funds in an environment considered unsafe for U.S. officials to work in most areas.

Some of the proposed new civilian force in Afghanistan -- diplomats, specialists from federal departments such as Agriculture and Justice, and hundreds of new "full-time, temporary" hires -- would work at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, officials said. Others would be assigned to U.S. provincial reconstruction teams, or PRTs, located primarily in eastern Afghanistan, and to other efforts to build Afghan civilian capacity around the country. Patterned on a program first established in Iraq, the PRTs assist and advise Afghans in economic and local governance development.

The United States currently operates 12 of the 26 PRTs in Afghanistan. But unlike the others, run by NATO

partners under civilian control, the U.S. teams are led and dominated by the military: Only a few of the 1,055 U.S. staffers on the teams were civilians, according to a government audit in January. A congressional oversight investigation last year said that "finding qualified individuals with applicable skills and experience poses a significant challenge to staffing."

The additional 17,000 U.S. troops scheduled for deployment this year -- bringing the total to about 55,000 -- will increase the combat imbalance between the United States and NATO, and scheduled withdrawals of Canadian and Dutch troops over the next two years will make Afghanistan even more of a U.S.-dominated war.

Obama has pledged to improve the civil-military balance in U.S. operations, and to put more of a civilian face on development and governance efforts. Although the overall civilian deployment plan for Afghanistan awaits Obama's approval, the State Department has already solicited applications for 51 new positions it expects to fill by July. Up to 300 additional civilians are anticipated under the strategy proposals.

Many are expected to be hired under a provision established by the Bush administration for special employment in Iraq. Unlimited, year-long hires were permitted, with authority to renew them for up to four years. Bush extended the provision to Afghanistan under an executive order he signed Jan. 16.

In addition to increasing its own civilian component, the administration seeks better coordination among the many other governments and international and nongovernmental agencies operating in Afghanistan, often with different rules and objectives. The strategy proposals include a strengthening of the United Nations as a clearinghouse and overall coordinator of nonmilitary efforts, including the appointment of veteran U.S. diplomat Peter W. Galbraith as deputy to Norwegian Kai Eide, the head of the U.N. mission in Afghanistan.

"This is a big deal," said a senior U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity before the appointment is announced. "The Bush administration undermined and ignored the U.N., and we minimized our influence. But imagine, with all the money we pay and American troops on the line, not to have a senior person" at the top level of the U.N. effort. A U.N. official said Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will announce Galbraith's appointment in "a matter of days."

Galbraith served in senior U.S. and U.N. positions in the Balkans, East Timor and other conflict areas. Sharply critical of Bush administration policy in Iraq, he resigned from the U.S. government in 2003 and served as an adviser to Iraq's Kurdish regional government.

Francis J. Ricciardone, one of the State Department's most senior Foreign Service officers and a former ambassador to Egypt and the Philippines, is expected to be named "deputy ambassador" to boost the diplomatic heft of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Obama last week nominated Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, the former U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, as ambassador to Kabul.

Another diplomatic veteran, Timothy M. Carney, has begun work as head of a U.S. team assisting in preparations for national elections in Afghanistan in August. Carney, a former ambassador to Sudan and Haiti, worked on the Iraq reconstruction effort in Baghdad in 2003 but eventually became a critic of that operation. He was named Iraq coordinator for economic transition in 2007 under a vastly reduced U.S. reconstruction effort.

Staff writer Colum Lynch at the United Nations and staff researcher Julie Tate in Washington contributed to this report.

View all comments that have been posted about this article.

Post a Comment

View all comments that have been posted about this article.

Comments that include profanity or personal attacks or other inappropriate comments or material will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any of our posting standards, terms of use or privacy policies or any other policies governing this site. Please review the full rules governing commentaries and discussions. You are fully responsible for the content that you post.

© 2009 The Washington Post Company

Ads by Google

Download Google Chrome
Searching is fast and easy with Google's new web browser!
www.google.com/chrome

The Washington Post

Hundreds of New Civilian Employees Proposed for Afghanistan

Advertisement · Your Ad Here

By Karen DeYoung
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, March 18, 2009; 3:43 PM

Hundreds of additional U.S. diplomats and civilian officials would be deployed to Afghanistan as part of the new civil-military regional strategy that President Obama's top national security advisers plan to present for his signature next week, according to administration officials.

Leading this proposed civilian expansion will be two veteran senior diplomats: Peter W. Galbraith, who will be the deputy to the top United Nations official on the ground; and Francis J. Ricciardone Jr., who will get the unprecedented title of "deputy ambassador" to boost the diplomatic heft of the U.S. Embassy. Obama last week nominated Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, the former U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, as the country's ambassador.

Other civilian officials are to be drawn from government departments such as Agriculture and Justice, and hundreds of new "full-time, temporary" positions are planned under a hiring program authorized by President George W. Bush four days before he left office.

The proposal for a civilian surge is part of a broad strategy review regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan that Obama ordered during its first weeks in office. The review has culminated in an intense series of high-level meetings and discussion of proposals from across the government, including from Gen. David H. Petraeus, the head of the U.S. Central Command; the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the State Department effort headed by special Afghanistan-Pakistan envoy Richard C. Holbrooke.

Obama is expected to make final decisions and issue a presidential directive on the eve of two major international gatherings -- a 73-nation Afghanistan meeting in the Netherlands on March 31, and the April 3-4 NATO summit in France where Afghanistan and Pakistan will be at the top of the agenda.

CIA-operated missile attacks by U.S. Predator aircraft against western Pakistan strongholds of the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other insurgent groups are expected to continue under the new strategy. But a senior defense official said that commanders in the region are reluctant to expand the attacks into other Taliban areas. The Pakistani military, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity, "must recognize the threat and organize themselves to deal with it." The administration is also expected to approve the shipment of enhanced counterinsurgency weaponry for the Pakistani military and a massive expansion in U.S. economic and development assistance.

In Afghanistan, the non-military components of the new strategy are designed to complement an expansion of U.S. ground combat forces authorized by Obama last month, to reach a total U.S. troop strength of 55,000 this year. An additional 30,000 NATO troops are also deployed in Afghanistan.

Obama has said that he seeks better coordination of civil and military efforts in Afghanistan -- where Taliban

attacks and U.S. and NATO casualties last year reached the highest levels of the eight-year war -- and a downgrading of the Bush administration's broad objectives for Afghan development and democracy, to a more achievable goal of preventing the country's reestablishment as a launching pad for international terrorism.

A major military pillar of the new strategy will be to increase security for Afghan civilians, especially in the Taliban strongholds in the south. The expanded U.S. troop presence is intended to supplement over-stretched British forces and to enable areas cleared of Taliban fighters to be held until the Afghan army and police can take over.

What one official called the "final exit strategy" is likely to take years while Afghan security forces are expanded and trained. In the meantime, enhanced security in former no-go areas will permit an increased U.S. civilian presence, which will concentrate on a relatively narrow basket of agricultural, rule-of-law and local-governance development.

Administration officials intend that now-disparate efforts by the many international players in Afghanistan will be better coordinated by a strengthened U.N. presence with a stronger U.S. component. A senior U.N. official said that Galbraith's appointment would be announced in a "matter of days."

"This is a big deal," said one senior U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "The Bush administration undermined and ignored the U.N., and we minimized our influence. But imagine, with all the money we pay, and American troops on the line, not to have a senior person" at the top level of the U.N. effort.

Galbraith served in senior U.S. diplomatic and U.N. positions in the Balkans, East Timor and other conflict areas. Sharply critical of Bush administration policy in Iraq, he resigned from the government in 2003 and served as an adviser to Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government.

Ricciardone is a career foreign service officer who has served as ambassador to Egypt and the Philippines, and has been repeatedly mentioned for a possible senior diplomatic appointment in the Obama administration.

The new U.S. civilian team will also include longtime senior diplomat Timothy M. Carney, who served as ambassador to Sudan and Haiti before joining the Iraqi reconstruction effort in 2003 but eventually became a critic of that operation. He was named Iraq coordinator for economic transition in 2007, after U.S. reconstruction efforts had been vastly reduced. In Afghanistan, Carney will head a special group to assist in preparations for nationwide elections in August.

Although the overall civilian deployment plan still awaits Obama's approval, the State Department has already solicited applications for 51 new positions it expects to fill at the embassy and in Afghan provincial reconstruction teams by July. Up to 300 additional civilians are anticipated under the strategy recommendations.

Although the administration hopes to detail agricultural and legal specialists from within the government, it is also recruiting under a provision established under the previous administration for special hires for Iraq. Unlimited authority for the positions, which provide full-time government employment, renewable each year for up to four years, was extended to Afghanistan in an executive order signed by Bush on Jan. 16.

Staff writer Colum Lynch at the United Nations and staff researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Post a Comment

View all comments that have been posted about this article.

The New York Times

This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers here or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit www.nytreprints.com for samples and additional information. Order a reprint of this article now.

March 19, 2009

U.S. Plans Vastly Expanded Afghan Security Force

By THOM SHANKER and ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON — President Obama and his advisers have decided to significantly expand Afghanistan's security forces in the hope that a much larger professional army and national police force could fill a void left by the central government and do more to promote stability in the country, according to senior administration and Pentagon officials.

A plan awaiting final approval by the president would set a goal of about 400,000 troops and national police officers, more than twice the forces' current size, and more than three times the size that American officials believed would be adequate for Afghanistan in 2002, when the Taliban and Al Qaeda appeared to have been routed.

The officials said Mr. Obama was expected to approve a version of the plan in coming days as part of a broader Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy. But even members of Mr. Obama's national security team appeared taken aback by the cost projections of the program, which range from $10 billion to $20 billion over the next six or seven years.

By comparison, the annual budget for the entire Afghan government, which is largely provided by the United States and other international donors, is about $1.1 billion, which means the annual price of the program would be about twice the cost of operating the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Those figures include only the cost of training and establishing the forces, and officials are still trying to determine what the cost would be to sustain the security forces over the long term.

Administration officials also express concerns that an expanded Afghan Army could rival the corruption-plagued presidency of Mr. Karzai. The American commanders who have recommended the increase argued that any risk of creating a more powerful Afghan Army was outweighed by the greater risks posed by insurgent violence that could threaten the central government if left unchecked.

At present, the army fields more than 90,000 troops, and the Afghan National Police numbers about 80,000 officers. The relatively small size of the security forces has frustrated Afghan officials and American commanders who wanted to turn security over to legitimate Afghan security forces, and not local warlords, at a faster pace.

After resisting the idea for several years, the Bush administration last summer approved an increase that authorized the army to grow to 134,000 over the next three years, in a program that would cost about $12 billion.

The resistance had been a holdover from the early months after the rout of Taliban and Qaeda fighters in

2001, when it appeared that there was little domestic or external threat that required a larger security force.

The new proposal would authorize a doubling of the army, after the increase approved last summer, to about 260,000 soldiers. In addition, it would increase the number of police officers, commandos and border guards to bring the total size of the security forces to about 400,000. The officials who described the proposal spoke on condition of anonymity because they had not been authorized to discuss it publicly in advance of final approval by Mr. Obama.

Some European countries have proposed the creation of an Afghan National Army Trust Fund, which would seek donations from oil kingdoms along the Persian Gulf and other countries to pay for Afghanistan's security forces.

Senator Carl Levin, Democrat of Michigan, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which would have to approve new American spending, endorsed the goal of expanding Afghan security forces, and urged commanders to place Afghans on the front lines to block the border with Pakistan to insurgents and terrorists.

"The cost is relatively small compared to the cost of not doing it — of having Afghanistan either disintegrate, or fall into the hands of the Taliban, or look as though we are dominating it," Mr. Levin said in an interview late on Tuesday.

Administration officials and military experts cited recent public opinion polls in Afghanistan showing that the Afghan Army had eclipsed the respect given the central government, which has had difficulty exerting legitimacy or control much beyond the capital.

"In the estimation of almost all outside observers, the Ministry of Defense and the Afghan National Army are two of the most highly functional and capable institutions in the country," said Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, who is retired and commanded American and coalition forces in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005.

General Barno, currently the director of Near East and South Asian security studies at National Defense University, dismissed concerns that the army or the Ministry of Defense would challenge the authority of elected officials in Kabul.

"They are respectful of civil governance," he said. "If the government of Afghanistan is going to effectively extend security and the rule of law, it has to have more army boots on the ground and police shoes on the ground."

Stephen Biddle, a senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, said the Obama administration now appeared "willing to accept risks and accept downsides it might not otherwise" have considered had the security situation not deteriorated.

Military analysts cite other models in the Islamic world, like Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, where the United States supports democratically elected civilian governments but raises no objection to the heavy influence wielded by military forces that remain at least as powerful as those governments.

Martin Strmecki, a member of the Defense Policy Board and a former top Pentagon adviser on Afghanistan,

told a Senate committee last month that the Afghan Army should increase to 250,000 soldiers and the national police force should add more than 100,000 officers. Mr. Strmecki said that only when Afghan security forces reached those numbers would they achieve "the level necessary for success in counterinsurgency."

Military officers also see an added benefit to expanding Afghanistan's security forces, if its growing rosters can offer jobs to unemployed young men who now take up arms for the insurgency for money, and not ideology.

"We can try and outbid the Taliban for 'day workers' who are laying I.E.D.'s and do not care about politics," Mr. Biddle said, referring to improvised explosive devices. "But if we don't control that area, the Taliban can come in and cut off the hands of anybody who is taking money from us."

C.I.A. Chief in Overseas Trip

The director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Leon E. Panetta, is traveling to India and Pakistan this week to discuss the investigation into the Mumbai terrorist attacks, improved information-sharing to combat violent extremists and other intelligence issues, an American official said Wednesday.

Making his first overseas trip as C.I.A. director, Mr. Panetta was in India on Wednesday and was expected to travel to Pakistan and possibly another country in the following days, the official said.

David E. Sanger contributed reporting.

Correction: March 19, 2009

A previous version of this article said that Martin Strmecki was a member of the Defense Science Board. He is a member of the Defense Policy Board.

Copyright 2009 The New York Times Company

The Washington Post

Getting It Right in Afghanistan

Advertisement · Your Ad Here

By Thomas A. Schweich
Tuesday, March 17, 2009; A15

Democrats and Republicans have spent the past two years sparring with each other on key aspects of the effort to rebuild Afghanistan. We have disagreed on such issues as whether to spray the poppy crop with chemicals and whether President Hamid Karzai and his friends are too corrupt. But as Afghanistan has deteriorated significantly during this time, we have also come to realize that we share some core beliefs. As the administration completes its strategic review of Afghanistan policy, I urge Democrats and Republicans, our allies abroad, and the Karzai government to come together on key points before it is too late:

-- More troops, but with the right mission. President Obama has ordered 17,000 additional troops sent to Afghanistan. While more troops are needed to train the Afghan national army (and more civilian trainers -- not troops -- are needed to train the civilian police forces), additional troops risk invigorating the insurgency by increasing the number of civilian casualties. Civilian casualties are the single greatest reason we are losing support among the Afghan people and their government. U.S. commanders need to make clear that our primary mission in Afghanistan is to provide security to the people -- and that mission trumps pursuing terrorists in cases where the latter effort interferes with the former. A secure people will help us root out terrorists.

-- Public diplomacy in Europe. Some U.S. allies have largely maintained their effort in Afghanistan as a way to cooperate with the United States despite opposing the war in Iraq. They defined whatever mission their publics would accept, and NATO accepted that incoherence as the price of cooperation. Obama needs to get Europeans to understand that the most immediate threat to peace is the globalized extremism developing in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which has already reached into Europe. Greater dialogue will result in a more unified European commitment and possibly more troops.

-- Restructured development assistance. Karzai complained late last year that NATO's provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) constitute a "parallel government." The PRTs are a lottery; how much aid a province gets depends on the budget of the country commanding the PRT -- which could be the United States or Lithuania. Meanwhile, donors complain that they cannot go through the government in Kabul because its ministries are corrupt and slow-moving. Overall, the PRT structure distorts Afghan national priorities and conflicts with the government's structure. Working through community development councils to implement national programs under the general oversight of the Kabul government would allow the international community to fund what communities need rather than what allied nations can spare. This approach would affirm the political leadership of the central government while allowing communities to take ownership of reconstruction efforts and reduce costs.

-- Limited engagement with Iran. The Obama administration has taken the right step in saying it would engage with Tehran regarding Afghanistan -- but the engagement should be narrow in focus. When the United States branded Iran a part of "an axis of evil" while relying on Pakistan, which had basically created the Taliban,

hard-liners gained the upper hand in Tehran. Iran, a nation of Shiite Muslims, derives no ideological or military benefit from supporting an extremist Sunni Muslim movement. Limited confidence-building efforts regarding Iran should begin with Afghanistan's drug trade, which funds the insurgency that is killing Americans. With over 50 percent of the Afghan opium trade transiting Iran, an estimated 3 million Iranians, mostly young people, are using heroin, morphine and opium. This common problem could be a starting point to a more productive relationship.

-- More effective engagement with Pakistan. Pakistanis believe that the United States propped up a military dictatorship to pursue its war against terrorism at the expense of their national interests. The democratically elected civilian government is trying to persuade its military and people that terrorist extremism and poverty are greater threats than India or the United States. We must financially support the new civilian government. Then we can work with it to finally end the Pakistani military and intelligence services' longtime partnership with armed militants and terrorists, and to integrate the tribal areas where these groups are based into the mainstream administration of the Pakistani state.

-- Agreement on common terms on peace negotiations with insurgents. Most of those fighting allied troops in Afghanistan pose no strategic threat to the United States. The Taliban regime, while vicious, brutal and repressive, did not plan and execute Sept. 11 -- al-Qaeda did. The Taliban continues to signal ambiguously the extent of its willingness to separate from al-Qaeda, compromise and seek a political role in Afghanistan. Until we see more credible signs of a willingness to make concessions, it is too early for real negotiations but not for exploratory talks to determine who would represent the various parties in real negotiations, and what sort of general terms Afghans and the international community could agree to. After that, how to deal with various Afghan factions is not a U.S. decision as long as those factions reliably disavow terrorism -- Afghanistan is a sovereign country.

-- Corruption. Massive corruption has eroded faith in the Afghan government and the international presence. The principal responsibility for corruption lies squarely with the Afghan government. The international presence can inadvertently feed corruption as military bases pay warlord militias to guard their perimeters and award contracts to warlords' relatives, some of whom are involved in drug trafficking and other crimes. The international community's use of contractors, some with no local knowledge or operational capacity, leads to opaque hierarchies of sub-contracting, in which some money is siphoned off in overhead by contractors and then funneled to locals who control security and construction companies. The United States and its allies must adopt a more refined assistance policy that attacks all causes of corruption.

These objectives depend on unity between the United States and its allies, and a recommitment by the Karzai government to integrity and decisiveness. Pulling this off will also require all of President Obama's diplomatic skills and patience.

Thomas A. Schweich, a visiting professor of law at Washington University in St. Louis, was a special ambassador to Afghanistan during the Bush administration.

View all comments that have been posted about this article.

Post a Comment

View all comments that have been posted about this article.

You must be logged in to leave a comment. Login | Register

Submit

or material will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any of our posting standards, terms of use or privacy policies or any other policies governing this site. Please review the full rules governing commentaries and discussions. You are fully responsible for the content that you post.

© 2009 The Washington Post Company

Ads by Google

Learn Arabic - $9.95
World-famous Pimsleur Method. Best price anywhere! Limited time.
PimsleurApproach.com

Master Greek and Hebrew
Learn Greek and Hebrew to understand the Bible better
virtual ris.edu

Kiwi Nanna Making it Big
Learn How 2 Earn a Fortune At Home Simple 3 Steps That Work! Free Info
Tools2CreateAWealthyLifestyle.com

January 6, 2009
Op-Ed Columnist

The Afghan Quagmire

By BOB HERBERT

The economy is obviously issue No. 1 as Barack Obama prepares to take over the presidency. He's charged with no less a task than pulling the country out of a brutal recession. If the worst-case scenarios materialize, his job will be to stave off a depression.

That's enough to keep any president pretty well occupied. What Mr. Obama doesn't need, and what the U.S. cannot under any circumstances afford, is any more unnecessary warfare. And yet, while we haven't even figured out how to extricate ourselves from the disaster in Iraq, Mr. Obama is planning to commit thousands of additional American troops to the war in Afghanistan, which is already more than seven years old and which long ago turned into a quagmire.

Andrew Bacevich, a retired Army colonel who is now a professor of history and international relations at Boston University, wrote an important piece for Newsweek warning against the proposed buildup. "Afghanistan will be a sinkhole," he said, "consuming resources neither the U.S. military nor the U.S. government can afford to waste."

In an analysis in The Times last month, Michael Gordon noted that "Afghanistan presents a unique set of problems: a rural-based insurgency, an enemy sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan, the chronic weakness of the Afghan government, a thriving narcotics trade, poorly developed infrastructure, and forbidding terrain."

The U.S. military is worn out from years of warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. The troops are stressed from multiple deployments. Equipment is in disrepair. Budgets are beyond strained. Sending thousands of additional men and women (some to die, some to be horribly wounded) on a fool's errand in the rural, mountainous guerrilla paradise of Afghanistan would be madness.

The time to go all out in Afghanistan was in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 terror attacks. That time has passed.

With no personal military background and a reputation as a liberal, President-elect Obama may feel he has to demonstrate his toughness, and that Afghanistan is the place to do it. What would really show toughness would be an assertion by Mr. Obama as commander in chief that the era of mindless military misadventures is over.

"I hate war," said Dwight Eisenhower, "as only a soldier who has lived it can, as only one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity."

What's the upside to the U.S., a nation in dire economic distress, of an escalation in Afghanistan? If we send 20,000, or 30,000, or however many thousand more troops in there, what will their mission be?

In his article for Newsweek, Mr. Bacevich said: "The chief effect of military operations in Afghanistan so far has been to push radical Islamists across the Pakistani border. As a result, efforts to stabilize Afghanistan are contributing to the destabilization of Pakistan, with potentially devastating implications.

"No country poses a greater potential threat to U.S. national security — today and for the foreseeable future — than Pakistan. To risk the stability of that nuclear-armed state in the vain hope of salvaging Afghanistan would be a terrible mistake."

Our interest in Afghanistan is to prevent it from becoming a haven for terrorists bent on attacking us. That does not require the scale of military operations that the incoming administration is contemplating. It does not require a wholesale occupation. It does not require the endless funneling of human treasure and countless billions of taxpayer dollars to the Afghan government at the expense of rebuilding the United States, which is falling apart before our very eyes.

The government we are supporting in Afghanistan is a fetid hothouse of corruption, a government of gangsters and weasels whose customary salute is the upturned palm. Listen to this devastating assessment by Dexter Filkins of The Times:

"Kept afloat by billions of dollars in American and other foreign aid, the government of Afghanistan is shot through with corruption and graft. From the lowliest traffic policeman to the family of President Hamid Karzai himself, the state built on the ruins of the Taliban government seven years ago now often seems to exist for little more than the enrichment of those who run it."

Think about putting your life on the line for that gang.

If Mr. Obama does send more troops to Afghanistan, he should go on television and tell the American people, in the clearest possible language, what he is trying to achieve. He should spell out the mission's goals, and lay out an exit strategy.

He will owe that to the public because he will own the conflict at that point. It will be Barack Obama's war.

Mother Jones

Unknown Afghanistan

By Pratap Chatterjee | Tue March 17, 2009 4:42 PM PST

Introduction by Tom Engelhardt

The signals coming from the Obama administration as a "strategic review" of Afghan policy is nearing completion this week are, to say the least, confusing. While much new thinking on the Afghan War has been promised, early leaks about the review's proposals for the next "three to five years" largely seem to promise more of the same: a heightened CIA-run drone war in the Pakistani borderlands, more U.S. military and economic aid for Pakistan (and more strong-arming of the Pakistanis to support U.S. policy in the region), more training of and an expansion of the Afghan army, and of course more U.S. forces—the president has already ordered 17,000 extra troops into the war.

The new policy elements, evidently involving modest invitations to (and threats toward) Iran, a belief that up to 70% of Taliban fighters might be won over via the right combination of money and "reconciliation," and a "scaling back" of hopes for Afghan democracy, hardly seem to add up to a brilliant thought exercise in the face of a disaster of a war now into its eighth year. In the meantime, of course, Americans, Afghans, and Pakistanis continue to die.

Ironically, the real X-factor in how the Afghan War will be pursued in the years to come probably lies nowhere near Afghanistan. Just how severely, and for how long and in what complex ways, the global economic collapse will affect the United States and Washington's revenues may be the true determinative factor in whether the Obama administration slowly makes its way further into, or out of, the war. Will this president, with so many giant programs and problems on his plate, really be capable of fighting an Afghan war at more intense levels and in more expensive ways for long? Certainly, the Europeans and the Canadians, who think they've seen which way the wind is blowing, doubt it. According to an unidentified "senior French official" speaking to Agence France Press, "We are lowering our ambitions... The Americans are now looking for a way out, they no longer regard Afghanistan as strategic. It'll take two to five years, but we're in a logic of disengagement."

Whatever the truth of the matter—and the Obama administration may be the last to know what that is right now—here's the saddest thing: When it's all over and we finally do leave, as Pratap Chatterjee, the author of a new must-read book, Halliburton's Army: How a Well-Connected Texas Oil Company Revolutionized the Way America Makes War, discovered on a visit in November, the Afghans of Bamiyan Province will be at least as poor as they ever were in what will remain a devastated country. It's rare for us to get a view of the areas of Afghanistan where Americans are *not* fighting. So think of today's report as a glimpse of the unknown Afghanistan that escapes American notice—and aid. (And click here to view three videos put together by cameraman Ronald Nobu Sakamoto with Afghan scenes from 2002 and 2008 that vividly capture some of the experiences Chatterjee describes.) *Tom*

One Country, Three Futures

The Afghanistan Americans Seldom Notice
By Pratap Chatterjee

Want a billion dollars in development aid? If you happen to live in Afghanistan, the two quickest ways to attract attention and so aid from the U.S. authorities are: Taliban attacks or a flourishing opium trade. For those with neither, the future could be bleak.

In November 2008, during the U.S. presidential elections, I traveled around Afghanistan asking people what they wanted from the United States. From Mazar in the north to Bamiyan in central Afghanistan to the capital city of Kabul, I came away with three very different pictures of the country.

Dragon Valley is a hauntingly beautiful place nestled high up in the heart of the Hindu Kush mountains. To get there from Kabul involves a bumpy, nine-hour drive on unpaved roads through Taliban country. In the last couple of years, a small community of ethnic Hazara people has resettled in this arid valley, as well as on other sparse adjoining lands, all near the legendary remains of a fire-breathing dragon reputedly slain by Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed.

A few miles away, hewn from the soaring sandstone cliffs of Bamiyan in central Afghanistan are the still spectacular ruins of what used to be the largest examples of standing Buddha carvings in the world. Two hollow but vast arched, man-made alcoves, which rise higher than most cathedrals, still dominate the view for miles around.

For much of the world, the iconic image of Taliban rule in Afghanistan remains the shaky video footage from March 2001 of the dynamiting of those giant Buddhas that had rested in these alcoves for almost 1,500 years. Months after they were blown up, the Taliban bombed neighboring Hazara towns and villages from the air, burning many to the ground. Tens of thousands of their inhabitants were forced to flee the country, most seeking shelter in Iran.

In the seven years since the Taliban were ousted by the United States, the Hazara villagers of Bamiyan have started to trickle back into places like Dragon Valley in hopes of resuming their former lives. Today, ironically enough, they find themselves in one of the safest, as well as most spectacularly beautiful regions, in the country. Its stark mountains and valleys, turquoise lakes and tranquil vistas might remind Americans of the Grand Canyon region.

Yet the million-dollar views and centuries of history are cold comfort to villagers who have no electricity, running water, or public sanitation systems—and little in the way of jobs in this hardscrabble area. While some of them live in simple mud homes in places like Dragon Valley, others have, for lack of other housing, moved into the ancient caves below the ruined Buddhas.

No Help Whatsover

Just outside one of the many single-room mud houses that line the floor of Dragon Valley, I met Abdul Karim, an unskilled laborer who has been looking daily for work in the fields or on construction sites since he returned from Iran a year ago. Most days, he comes home empty-handed. "We have nothing, no work, no electricity, no help from the government or aid organizations. Right now our situation is terrible, so of course I have no hope for the future. I'm not happy with my life here, I'm ready to die because we have nothing."

His only source of income is a modest carpet-weaving business he's set up inside his tiny house at which his two children, a boy aged about 10 and a girl of about 15, work. It generates about a

dollar a day.

As I went door to door in the small Hazara settlement, I heard the same story over and over. In the mud house next to Karim's, I met "Najiba" (not her real name), a woman of perhaps 70 years, who said that her family had received virtually nothing in aid. "The government hasn't done anything for us. They just say they will. They just came by once, gave us some water, some clothes, but that's it."

Traveling in Bamiyan province, I repeatedly heard the same story with slight variations. In the wheat fields outside the village of Samarra, I met Shawali, a peasant who told us that he and his son had fled south to Ghazni, a neighboring province, to escape the Taliban. "My son and I labored hard pulling big carts full of timber and heavy loads until we could raise enough money to return to Bamiyan." Here he remains a day laborer, eking out a living, and no better off than when he was in internal exile in Ghazni.

Buy the book.

The situation has so disintegrated that many say they wish they could simply return to the refugee camps in Iran. In Dragon Valley, for example, I met "Khadija." As the middle-aged woman fanned a small fire fed by wood gathered from nearby, she said, "We were happy in Iran. It was good. The weather was warm. We had a good life there, but it was still someone else's country. When the [Iranian] government told us we had to go back home, we wanted to return to start a new life. But [the Afghan government] hasn't helped us at all. They told us they were going to give us wood, supplies, and doors but they've given us nothing... no help whatsoever."

A recent report from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) offers some context for the kind of desperate poverty I encountered in Bamiyan. The agency's analysts estimate that about 42% of the country's estimated 27 million people now live on less than $1 a day.

Mazar-i-Sharif

Unlike Bamiyan which has almost no paved roads and no electricity, the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif stands out as a relative success story. Mazar was the first place the U.S. and its Afghan allies from the Northern Alliance captured in the 2001 invasion. Some 40 miles from the border of Uzbekistan, it is home to the Blue Mosque, the holiest shrine for Muslims in all of Afghanistan, where Hazrat Ali is said to be buried.

When I first traveled to Mazar in January 2002, only the mosque was lit at night, a comforting beacon of hope in the post-invasion darkness of a shattered city. The sole other source of luminosity: the headlights of the roaming Northern Alliance gunmen who policed the city in Toyota pick-ups packed with men armed with Kalashnikovs and rocket launchers.

During the day, however, the city was brimming with hope and activity, just weeks after the Taliban fled. I met folk musicians like Agha Malang Kohistani performing songs on the street to mock the Taliban and classical musicians like Rahim Takhari playing in public for the first time in years, while weddings were graced with singers like Hassebullah Takdeer who sang classics like *Beya Ka Borem Ba Mazar* ("Let's Go to Mazar").

The Fatima Balkhi Girls School was among those that were opening their doors to students for the first time in years. Amid the rubble of bombed-out buildings at the Sultan Razya School, for instance, little girls flocked to classrooms with earthen floors and no chairs. They squeezed by

the hundreds into tiny rooms, where lessons were sometimes chalked onto the backs of doors.

At Sultan Razya, I spoke to 14-year-old Alina, who bubbled with teenage excitement as she described her adventures studying secretly in teachers' houses during the Taliban era. "One day we went to class at eight o'clock, another day at ten o'clock, and another day four o'clock," she recalled.

Seven years later, I returned to find Mazar now well supplied with electricity (by the Uzbek government) and connected to the capital city of Kabul by a smooth, new, well-paved two-lane highway. Although there had been a couple of suicide bombings in the city, Mazar was almost as safe as Bamiyan. Residents who fled during Taliban rule to places like Tashkent had returned with hard currency to invest in local businesses. While it would be an overstatement to say that Mazar was flourishing, it's certainly decades ahead of Bamiyan in development terms.

I tracked down Alina—one of very few in her class to have continued her education—at Balkh University, where she was studying Islamic law. Now a little shy about talking to foreign journalists, she was still happy. "Things have completely changed in every part. All of the women and girl students are studying their lessons in computers and English, and they are happy," she told us.

I also revisited the Fatima Balkhi School, where the principal took us to meet a new generation of 14-year-olds who told us about their plans for the future. One wanted to be a banker, another dreamed of being a doctor, a third spoke of becoming an engineer. Earthen floors and makeshift chalk boards were a thing of the past. The Sultan Razya School had been completely rebuilt and the girls wore neat school uniforms, although teachers still complained of a lack of proper supplies.

Opportunities for girls were also expanding. Maramar, a 14-year-old Balkhi student, invited us to visit the local TV station where she hosted her own show. Astonished, I took her up on her offer and went to the RZU studios on the outskirts of town where I filmed her reading headlines —about the U.S. elections!—on the afternoon news.

Indeed girls' education is one of the real success stories in Afghanistan, where one-third of the six million students in elementary and high schools are now female, probably the highest percentage in Afghan history. The education system, however, starts to skew ever more away from girls the higher you get. By the time high school ends, just a quarter of the students are girls. Only one in 20 Afghan girls makes it to high school in the first place and even fewer make it through.

The Return of the Taliban

Neither rural Bamiyan in central Afghanistan nor urban Mazar in the north has had to worry greatly about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the last few years. For one thing, as Hazaras, an ethnic minority descended from the army of Genghis Khan, most residents of Bamiyan are from Islam's Shia sect, while the Taliban, largely from southern Afghanistan, are Pashtun and Sunni. Indeed, when they ruled most of the country, the Taliban went so far as to brand the Hazara as non-Muslim.

Similarly, Mazar, which has a large Tajik and Uzbek population as well as some Hazara, but relatively few Pashtuns, has also been spared the influence of the Taliban. Unlike rugged and remote Bamiyan, it is situated in a well connected part of the country, close to Russia and the Central Asian republics. (The former Soviet Union used the city as a strategic military base in

the early 1980s.)

Yet when one heads south to Kabul and toward the Pakistani border, a third Afghanistan is revealed. Twenty minutes from the center of Kabul, the Taliban control large swathes of the provinces of Logar and Wardak.

In the Pashtun-dominated southern city of Kandahar, the stories of attacks on girls' schools are already legend. In November 2008, while I was visiting Bamiyan and Mazar, three men on a motorcycle attacked a group of girls at the Mirwais School, built with funds from the Japanese government. Each carried containers of acid which they used to horrific effect, scarring 11 girls and 4 teachers. The Taliban have denied involvement, but most local residents assume the attackers were inspired by Taliban posters in local mosques that simply say: "Don't Let Your Daughters Go to School."

Last March, Taliban followers raided the Miyan Abdul Hakim School in Kandahar, which serves both boys and girls, making bonfires out of desks to burn the students' books. At another local school, a caretaker had his ears and nose cut off, and this was but one of dozens of attacks on such schools.

"Yes, there have been improvements in girls' education in Afghanistan. You can see it on the streets when the girls walk home from school in their uniforms, laughing with books in their hands. You can see it in the schools that have been built all over the country, in villages where they have never had schools before," Fariba Nawa, author of *Afghanistan, Inc.*, told us.

"However, in the south there's a different story to be told," she added. "That's the story of girls being afraid to go to school, even the story of newly built schools being burned down, or teachers being beheaded for teaching in them. So it depends on what part of Afghanistan you go to, which story you want to tell."

Seeking Answers in Kabul

Green laser beams darted from the fast-moving military convoy scanning the pedestrians and parked cars along the road from Kabul airport. As I bent over our taxi's stalled engine, the sharp, pencil-thin beams raked across us menacingly, causing me to stumble back in surprise.

Unlike in Bamiyan or Mazar, Kabul teems with vehicles: military convoys from a dozen nations, Ford Ranger pick-ups (supplied by DynCorp, a U.S. contractor), Toyota land cruisers used by United Nations personnel, and thousands of used Toyota Corollas driven by Afghans.

Our first stop was at the home of Mir Ahmed Joyenda, a member of the Afghan parliament. I wondered, I told him, why, all these years after the fall of the Taliban, entire provinces like Bamiyan had no electricity or potable water supply to speak of. As (bad) luck would have it, Joyenda could discuss the problem on a personal basis—and by the light of a kerosene lamp.

"You see," he responded, "we are in the city of Kabul. As a member of the parliament of Afghanistan I'm sitting in front of you, but I don't have any electricity in my house. What do you think of the rural areas? What about the poor areas of the Kabul city and other parts of the country?" He suggested I ask the ministry of electricity why he had none.

So I arranged to meet Wali Shairzay, the deputy minister for electricity and water. After enduring an hour-long lecture on all the new projects supposedly in the pipeline, I asked him why there was Uzbek-supplied electricity in Mazar, but no Afghan-supplied sources in most of rural

Afghanistan. I noted that many countries had emerged from decades of war to successfully provide basic services to their citizens.

Who knows why a man in his position wouldn't have expected such a question, but he looked like a deer caught in the headlights. "Most people call Afghanistan a post-conflict nation," he began hesitantly. "My terminology is a bit different, I call it post-devastation."

As a result, he suggested, battle-weary Afghans weren't able to articulate what they needed. "Like a patient speaking of the problems, where it is hurting, when it started, how bad is the pain, etcetera. Unfortunately, this patient here—Afghanistan—could not speak and you have to find out what the problem is, what is the prior diagnosis and medication."

Shairzay claimed that, over the previous seven years, his ministry had focused on the big electricity projects like the importation of power from Uzbekistan, and then he, in essence, passed the buck. When it came to provinces like Bamiyan, he said, his ministry wasn't really in charge at all. That fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, where he was going that very afternoon to discuss matters with his counterparts.

Yet, the deputy minister's words ran counter to what I had heard from the dozens of villagers around Bamiyan who knew exactly what they wanted: electricity, water, health care, a steady food supply, and jobs.

I even found very articulate and well educated Afghans in Bamiyan who were more than happy to describe simple but effective projects that might have gone a long way toward serving the population's desperate needs. For example, Dr Gulam Mohammad Nadir, the chief medical officer of Bamiyan's only hospital, told us that the needs of small rural communities were already well known. For example, he assured me, he could dramatically reduce health problems and save lives with a small grant that would allow him to demonstrate basic sanitation principles in local villages.

"I believe having clean water is the most essential aspect to human health and to prevent diseases. At the very least, we need to educate the people about how important it is to have proper sanitation, a clean water supply, and [knowledge about] how they can protect themselves from water-borne diseases."

Why, in fact, were such simple projects never implemented? The answer proved to be surprising, and it helps, in part, to explain the dismal fate of the Bush administration's version of Afghan "reconstruction." Virtually none of the $5.4 billion in taxpayer money that USAID has disbursed in this country since late 2001 has been invested in Bamiyan Province, where the total aid budget, 2002-2006, was just over $13 million.

While the Japanese government and UNESCO have dedicated some money to Bamiyan province, most of it has been spent on restoring the giant Buddhas, not on basic services for residents.

The bulk of the foreign aid has gone to big cities like Kabul and Mazar, but much has also gone into the coffers of foreign contractors and consultants like the Louis Berger Group, Bearing Point, and DynCorp International in Afghanistan. The rest of the aid money has been poured into "rural development" projects in southern provinces like Kandahar where Canadian and U.S. troops are fighting the Taliban, and into provinces like Helmand where British soldiers, alongside U.S. troops, are struggling against the opium trade.

Most American taxpayer money is actually spent on the troops, not, of course, on poor Afghans. In fact, with Pentagon expenditures in Afghanistan running at about $36 billion a year, the annual aid allocation for the 387,000 people who live in Bamiyan Province is outstripped every single hour by the money spent on 30,000-plus American troops and their weaponry.

It turns out the villagers of Dragon Valley have two problems that can't be overcome. They have neither the Taliban to fight, nor opium crops to eradicate.

Pratap Chatterjee is the author of *Halliburton's Army: How a Well-Connected Texas Oil Company Revolutionized the Way America Makes War*. He is the managing editor of *CorpWatch*. He traveled to Afghanistan with cameraman Ronald Nobu Sakamoto. To view three of Sakamoto's videos with Afghan scenes from 2002 and 2008 that vividly capture some of the experiences Chatterjee describes, click here.

Copyright 2009 Pratap Chatterjee

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Doctor. Thank all of you for your enlightening testimony. On that, we are going to go into our question period here which you are all familiar with. Unfortunately, we are still stuck in this 5 minute rule but we will try to relax it as much as we can. And I don't mind if any of my colleagues have a follow-up question they want to interrupt me with on this so we get a subject matter all the way out.

First of all, you started where we ended with the need to have cooperation amongst our allies. On these bases we visit at various times different PRTs and they are operated differently. You know, wherever you go there are some that never get off the base. I won't mention any countries but, you know, some have wine for lunch. You know, they are in there for a 5-month turnaround period, they hang around, and the locals say they never get off the base and that as soon as they came into the rotation and the other people left, the insurgents came back. Then you have other people who come in and they say this other group came in and they were very effective in protecting us.

Are we going to be able to exert the kind of leadership that the United States historically has had with NATO and other international efforts or are the relationships so poisoned that is going to interfere with our ability to do that? And if that is the case, how successful can we be?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, the short answer is that the relationships, I think, are not so poisoned that this cannot be dealt with. One of the things that I found very cheering on this last trip on my visit to RC-South was the staff down there where you have a Dutch commander and a British deputy and an American deputy and a hodgepodge staff like that. I think there is an understanding in that area that we have to coordinate our efforts better and we have to make this work. And I think that plans to bring in a British Division headquarters down there will make that easier.

We should remember that we do have allies who are willing to get off the bases and who are willing to go fight very hard, particularly in RC-South but also in RC-East. The French fight very hard without caveats in RC-East. The Poles fight very hard without any caveats in RC-East. And I think that progress can be made in RC-South where the biggest fight is. So I think the relationships are not poisoned to the extent that this is not fixable.

I think, however, that the command relationships in the theater are such that this is very difficult. I want to highlight a point that I think all of us are concerned about, that the absence of a three star American headquarters in Afghanistan parallel to the position that Lieutenant General Odierno held in Iraq under General Petraeus during the Surge is a major problem. It puts a tremendous amount of burden on General McKiernan to not only do all of the political coordination with 41 different nations and 1,400 NGO's but also to do all of the military coordination among all of the different units that are going on with an inadequate staff and with no subordinate operational commander. I think that is one of the biggest problems that we have had in coordinating this effort, frankly. And I think that is something that really needs to be addressed as a matter of priority as we think about changing our strategy and fixing this problem.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Well, to use General McNeil's favorite term—kinetic—there are a lot of populations of some of our allies who are sending a clear message politically to their leadership that they don't want their forces getting involved kinetically on this. General, what do you think about the prospects of changing that local atmosphere to enable some of these governments politically to change the relationship there?

General BARNO. I think the structure we have in Afghanistan today is basically split between north and south. The northern part of Afghanistan—and you could draw a line right across the country, an equator, if you will—north of the equator is what I would characterize as the stability zone or the peacekeeping zone. The NATO countries that have selected to go there have done so very deliberately because their populations, and in many cases their governments, are only willing to have their forces in Afghanistan to do peacekeeping.

I was at the Munich Security Conference in February and I picked up one of the Conference newspapers. There was an article written by the German Defense Minister. The title of the article, and it had a picture of German troops in Afghanistan, the title of the article was Bundeswehr: A Peacekeeping Force, Bundeswehr being the German military. But that would have been unthinkable 10, 15, 20 years ago. That was not what the Bundeswehr was. But then European militaries in many cases, not in all cases, but in a number of cases have moved into a political world where their support is only contingent on the type of missions they do and the only justification is peacekeeping in the view of their populations.

So if you are in the north, I don't think your population or your government are going to change and suddenly drop your caveats and be willing to fight in the south. If you are in the south, and as Fred points out we have a number of very capable allies down there with us in the south, they are going to continue to support that. But they are on a timeline as well. They are very concerned, from what I heard at Munich, about the popular will of their nations to continue this fight. So I think the United States is going to have to continue, and really I hope the new strategy that comes out will really highlight reasserted American leadership in Afghanistan. This will not work without us being behind the steering wheel—with our friends and allies there—but we are going to have to be behind the steering wheel. And we in some ways have not been for the last couple of years.

Mr. TIERNEY. Do you want to say anything, Doctor?

Mr. KILCULLEN. Yes, just a quick comment. I think that we have spent a lot of time in the last 2 or 3 years, certainly I did when I was working for Secretary Rice, trying to convince the Europeans to fight in Afghanistan. I think we have a better chance of doing that now that there is a much more receptive attitude to the United States in European capitals than there was even 6 months ago. But I think ultimately we are not going to get very far by asking the Europeans to do something that is politically impossible for them. We should be focusing on things that they are willing to do which would include governance assets and aid dollars, but also police. The Europeans have a very substantial, about 5,000 person organization that does stability policing, kind of gendarmarie,

carabinieri kind of capability. I expect that to be discussed in Strasbourg next week.

And more police effort would be an extremely important way of shifting the effort away from chasing the bad guys toward protecting the population and displacing the Taliban from their current de facto role of law and order in the south of the country. So I think the allies are very important. We should be focusing them on police, aid, governance. And hey, if they can give us more military assets that is great, but I don't think it is particularly likely prospect.

Mr. TIERNEY. Ambassador, with Mr. Flake's indulgence, we will let you weigh in.

Mr. DOBBINS. Just briefly, I made a couple of suggestions in my written testimony designed to address the difficulty of coordination. One would be to create a multinationally staffed office in Kabul, the function of which would be to coordinate, standardize, resource, and support the two dozen PRTs in the country, over half of which are not American. They need a coordinating mechanism. NATO can't do it because NATO doesn't do economic affairs. The U.N. isn't going to do it because it is essentially a mixed military/civilian mission. So it will have to be ad hoc, something special. We created these kinds of institutions in Bosnia. We can create one that can funnel resources and standardize their approaches to the extent that is possible.

The second, and I mentioned this in my earlier testimony, would be to create a major NATO command in Tampa to give Petraeus a major NATO command and to make him responsible to the North Atlantic Council as well as to the President of the United States. Thus McKiernan would come under one command chain rather than the two command chains that he currently comes under.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank all of you. This was very enlightening. I heard some things that I hadn't thought of before at all. The first one was Dr. Kagan mentioned the influence, or the worry from Pakistan about the influence of India in Afghanistan. How do we address that? Is there a way for the United States to address that, to mitigate fears that the Pakistanis may have about Indian influence?

Mr. KAGAN. With the caveat that I am not a South Asia specialist and certainly not an India specialist, I think the short answer is no. I think that, you know, we have to keep in mind that Pakistan as a state and the Pakistani military in particular are defined by the threat from India and opposition to India. And I think that it is a multigenerational task to wean Pakistani leadership away from that sense. I think that we can certainly make efforts and we should certainly make efforts. People have spoken about a regional security architecture, trying to find ways of having the Indians and the Pakistanis reassure each other. But I am skeptical about any short term benefit from that. So that is why I think the key is to demonstrate to the Pakistanis first and foremost that the current strategy they are using—that is, destabilizing Afghanistan against our interests—will fail, not that it is not desirable necessarily from their standpoint but, that it simply is impossible.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. Ambassador Dobbins, I liked what you said about coordination of the PRTs. I think those of us who have

visited Afghanistan and have seen and met with some of the individuals involved or have been briefed by them here recognize that there is very little coordination even among our own, let alone among the other nationalities that are there. There seems to be very little sharing of best practices among them and very little coordination. So it seems to me that we are wasting a lot of resources. So your idea of having some kind of coordinating arm seems to make a lot of sense to me.

With regard to the counter-sanctuary, Dr. Kilcullen, you mentioned that is kind of what we did or tried to do in Vietnam for a while. What other examples are there of this strategy being employed? And are there any successful examples? Anybody, General if you want to chime in or anybody else? Are there successful examples of that strategy being employed?

Mr. KILCULLEN. It depends upon how you define success. But I would characterize our approach to Somalia as one of basically counter-sanctuary, also right now and at various other times in the past, actually, in relation to the Horn of Africa. The problem with the counter-sanctuary approach is that one of two things happens. Either you end up focusing solely on killing the terrorists and forgetting about the stability of the general region where you are working, and ultimately the problem gets bigger, or you get dragged into stabilization operations as we did in Somalia in 1992 and as we did in Vietnam in 1965, that are designed to support strike or support counter-sanctuary. And they kind of drag you in which means that you don't think ahead to what the resources are likely to be that are required. So I am not aware of any successful examples long term of a pure counter-sanctuary approach. But we have tried it in various places. In fact it is a preference that most Western democratic powers have because we like to avoid commitments of heavy troop numbers on the ground. It is not exactly counter-sanctuary but one of the things that we did in Bosnia in the early part of the fighting in the Balkans was designed almost like counter-sanctuary, just to contain the problem and prevent it from spilling over and not ultimately deal with the main causes of it. Of course, that failed and we had to engage much more heavily in order to deal with the problem. You could also characterize what we did in 2005 and 2006 in Iraq as an attempt to walk back to a counter-sanctuary approach. Again, that dramatically failed and we had to get in and take control of the environment.

Mr. FLAKE. General, do you have any thoughts on that?

General BARNO. Very briefly, I think in effect what Pakistan is doing today in their tribal areas is a failing counter-sanctuary strategy. Because they are not able to or they have chosen not to have a population centered counter-insurgency strategy, they are operating simply with strike operations out there. The effect is that the terrain is still not inhospitable and the population is not inhospitable to the terrorists because, you know, the terrorists occupy that terrain far more than the Pakistani military and security forces do. So it is a very, very difficult strategy to be able to execute successfully. I think that most if not all of us would agree that there is a place within your counter-insurgency strategy for a counter-terrorism pillar or counter-sanctuary pillar, but counter-sanctuary in and of itself most of us I think would say can't be a

successful strategy, at least in the circumstances we have today out there.

Mr. KAGAN. May I comment?

Mr. FLAKE. OK, go ahead.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you. I think just to put a very fine point on this, we killed many, many senior Al Qaeda leaders in Iraq, including Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2006, and we discovered that the insurgency or the terrorist groups are able to replace their leadership faster than we can kill them in many circumstances. I have heard similar quotes from guys involved in the counter-terrorism effort in Afghanistan. They are saying, hey, we have killed 22 HVTs and, you know, they just bring new ones.

I am not aware of any case where this has worked. We have tried it at levels ranging from no U.S. troop presence including, as Dave Kilcullen pointed out, the 1990's in Afghanistan and recently in Somalia where it doesn't seem to be working—and it certainly didn't work in Afghanistan—to high U.S. troop presence surrounding bases with a lot of Special Forces guys going around and actually killing a lot of leaders as in Iraq and as the Pakistanis have done in their tribal areas. It has failed there, too. So I think that it really is time to say that we have tested this method and that there is a lot of empirical evidence to think that it will fail.

Mr. FLAKE. I will wait for the second round for some more. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Driehaus, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you gentlemen so much for coming here today. I think you have appropriately explored the complexities of the situation in Afghanistan. I had the opportunity to visit Afghanistan a few weeks ago for the first time and as a former Peace Corps volunteer who has spent many years in sub-Saharan Africa, I was profoundly impacted by the poverty that exists in Afghanistan as well as the complexity of the long term economic sustainability of the country. That is really what I would like to get at.

I believe that a surge in troops can, in fact, provide temporary security for the Afghan populations. However, I am very concerned about the long term sustainability of our efforts. I would like to approach it from two different angles, really: the economic development sustainability over the long term and also the rule of law.

I was saddened to learn of almost a complete breakdown in the rule of law. And it doesn't seem to me that our efforts are very sustainable over the long term without establishing significant rule of law. Now, that doesn't necessarily have to be centralized. It could be a decentralized structure similar to what they have in Botswana where there is a traditional structure that mirrors a centralized structure.

But when I looked at the PRTs, there didn't seem to be a lot of consistency with regard to the PRTs. And there is the ability or the temptation, perhaps, for a great deal of corruption when it comes to the PRTs dealing with the local population. When I heard stories of literally bags of cash being used in development efforts, little alarm bells were going off all over.

So I guess what I am asking is what do you suggest when you look at the PRTs and you look at the economic sustainability of some of these efforts? What steps do you think have to be taken in order to lead us down a path where the funding is being accounted for with the appropriate mix between military and NGO and AID resources? What do you believe is necessary for long term sustainability on the economic side?

Mr. KILCULLEN. I might pick up the rule of law piece if that is all right, sir.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. That is fine, we will start with that one.

Mr. KILCULLEN. Right now in Afghanistan, the Taliban are running 13 sharia law courts across the south of the country. When you hear the term sharia law court you think of women getting stoned for adultery and hands getting cutoff and so on. That does happen, but actually about 95 percent of the work that these courts are involved in is what we would call civil or commercial law. They issue i.d. cards; they issue title deeds to land; they sort out disputes relating to water, grazing rights, properties; they do divorce law. They are essentially delivering the rule of law, mediation, and dispute resolution at the local level to villages, districts, and tribal groups.

This has been a very important source of their control because in a counter-insurgency environment or in a civil war environment, the population feels lethally destabilized and it feels like it has no way to be safe. These guys are providing, you know, a normative system with rules to follow. And if you follow these rules you will be safe. That is one of the things that gives them an enormous amount of attraction to the Afghan population. If you contrast that with our approach——

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Could I ask just for a second, if I might, Mr. Chairman, the sharia law is obviously based on the traditional Islamic law. Are there more traditional judicial structures that exist in the countryside that are based upon the traditional norms versus sharia law?

Mr. KILCULLEN. There are. However, the tribal structure and the community structure in a lot of parts of Afghanistan is very heavily eroded by several decades of war and conflict at this stage. Tribal custom, in some Pashtun parts of the country a very specific code of behavior, is still valid. But what the Taliban have tended to do is come in and replace a lot of that with their own control through a sharia system.

If you contrast that to what we did, the Taliban are focused on delivering a service to the population at the local level. What we did after the Bonn Conference, the Italians were given responsibility for the justice sector and the Germans were given responsibility for the police. Both those countries started building institutions at the level of the central state. So we set up a supreme court and we trained supreme court judges; we wrote a law code; we trained prosecutors and attorneys. This is all happening at the central level. Meanwhile, the Taliban were in at the grassroots delivering something to the population.

In terms of the police, we built a police academy and structures of command and control and so on in Kabul but we didn't deliver effective police, community policing, to the population at the local

level. The Taliban also took that on. The United States got tired of the German approach in 2005 and we took it over. We actually made it worse by turning the police into a counter-insurgency force and sending them off to fight the insurgents out in the countryside instead of being in with the population in local areas delivering, you know, fairness, rule of law, and justice to the population.

So I think we need to be taking is a much more bottom-up approach that focuses on competing with the Taliban. And you have to compete with the Taliban on the basis of an agreed set of, you know, human rights, rule of law principles. The PRT officers who are doing the rule of law program are hampered by the overall structural approach that we have taken which has been top-down. We need to move to more of a bottom-up where we negotiate with local populations, come to an agreement, and enforce protection and population security at the local level.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Driehaus. Ambassador.

Mr. DOBBINS. Just on delivery of assistance and public services, one of the most effective delivery methods is called the National Solidarity Program, which is an Afghan run program to deliver small level projects to villages and towns based on what councils in those villages and towns say they want. So it is a bottom-up approach defining the projects and then the Afghan government delivers the resources. Naturally, it is being funded by international assistance and so far the United States has only put in 5 percent of the total and we are 50 percent of the total aid for Afghanistan. So that is a very low allocation. I think one of the things we ought to be doing is increasing the resources available to this Afghan run institution and then using the PRTs to support and facilitate its activity in areas that are contested.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Kucinich, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman. I would just like to make some observations and ask for members of the panel to respond.

In assessing the reports that we have received over the last year from Afghanistan, I think it is fair to say that the hoped for security that we wanted to bring to the people of Afghanistan doesn't exist. We haven't achieved security for the people. Currently there is no or limited capacity to hold the borders. There is no or limited capacity to govern. There is no real focus on Afghanistan and I would respectfully submit to the administration that just sending 17,000 troops doesn't mean that you have refocused the mission.

There are limited military resources available for the United States of America. There are finite resources with respect to our domestic economy. We have a poor track record there with awful strategic thinking. We have a war and an occupation in Iraq which wasn't necessary and a occupation in Afghanistan that has been dubious. We still haven't looked at the implications sufficiently of the fact that Pakistan seems to be core to so many of these problems to begin with.

Does it cause any of you to start to rethink the underlying assumptions about our military presence there and what is achievable, particularly if you look at it though the lens of historically the British and the Russians? I would just like to hear your response.

General BARNO. Maybe I can dispatch this briefly. I think it is important also to reflect the broader context of our participation there. Clearly we all recognize that it was initiated because of 9/11. But I think the reason that it is important for us to succeed in this area is because of the strategic neighborhood showing up on that map there that this represents. If we look at the global threats to American security today, I think I could make a pretty reasonable argument that the principal threat to American security, to the security of the American people, comes from this region. So in terms of having military forces there to prevent that threat from being realized, to roll that back and to reduce that, to help our civilian counterparts to be able to establish a stable region that is economically viable and that has a reasonable degree of governance and rule of law so that it doesn't go off the edge of the cliff and become once again a launching ground for attacks on the United States or our allies, I think that is an extraordinarily important and valuable objective. And our military forces, again in concert with the civilian dimensions of this, are, I believe, essential in order to achieve that objective. I don't see any other means by which to do that. We certainly have had some problems which I clearly recognize in the last 2 to 3 years in Afghanistan. But I have also seen what success can look like in Afghanistan. I think with a revamped effort here in the next 2 to 3 years we have great prospects to turn this around.

Mr. KUCINICH. Do you see any hazard in which a more extended occupation would fuel a more extensive insurgency?

General BARNO. I don't view this as an occupation. But more importantly, the Afghans I talk to—and I had this discussion with Afghan and Pakistani military officers yesterday here at my Center in D.C.—the Afghans violently reject the idea that this is an occupation. They want the international forces there. The polling that is done even in the population very much supports in the 50 to 60 plus percent range the presence of international forces there as the only thing that can keep Afghanistan from descending back into civil war and to chaos. So this is not viewed that way even though we see a lot of media reporting that would indicate that. The objective measures in Afghanistan say that is not how it is looked at.

Mr. KUCINICH. Does anyone else want to try to respond to that?

Mr. KILCULLEN. We often hear this graveyard and empires argument. You know, the British couldn't hold Afghanistan; the Russians couldn't hold Afghanistan; the Persians couldn't hold Afghanistan. Why should we think that we will be able to succeed in Afghanistan. The fundamental difference, which the Russians never had and the British never had, is that we have a very substantial level of support from the Afghan population.

There have been some recent polling figures that have really supported that. I am going to quote to you from the less positive one. The more positive ones are, you know, let us discount them and go to the most negative which is the ABC, BBC, and AID poll that was conducted on January 30th this year. President Karzai's approval rating in Afghanistan at the moment is 52 percent.

Mr. KUCINICH. How do they poll the tribes?

Mr. KILCULLEN. It is a poll across the whole of the country and it is based on a cluster method. So it is not tribes they are polling but villages and districts.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, I think it would be interesting to look at the methodology of some of these polls since they are being used to try to interpret public opinion.

Mr. TIERNEY. You should feel free to do so, Mr. Kucinich. I am sure there are available publically.

Mr. KILCULLEN. You can get the poll online and it has a whole section on methodology, which is worth taking a look at. There is extensive polling that happens in Afghanistan. I am quoting from the least positive. Eighty-two percent of people polled want the current government in power. Only 4 percent see any benefit in the return of the Taliban. Eighty-five percent of people think that the Taliban are the greatest threat to stability in Afghanistan. Interestingly, 63 percent of people support the presence of U.S. troops which is slightly higher than those who support the presence of other international troops. Sixty-three percent is enormous levels of support compared to anything that we have ever had in Iraq or any of the other campaigns that we have been in.

Mr. KUCINICH. Do you know what the percentage was of the American people who first supported the invasion of Afghanistan?

Mr. KILCULLEN. These numbers have gone down about 20 percent in the last 2 or 3 years so we are seeing a drop in support. But it is a drop from an extremely high level. So I think to say that the Afghans don't support the occupation is just not based on fact. The Afghans do support the presence of the international community.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would respectfully dispute the relevance of polling on these national security issues. That is on both sides.

Mr. KILCULLEN. Let me offer two other comments. I mean, polling is one of the measures we have right now. It is not the only measure. But if we are going to dispute the polling numbers we have to have something other than polling numbers to dispute them with. The other point I would make is American popular support for the presence in Afghanistan is important but America is 1 of 41 countries that are contributing to the effort. The most important player is actually the Afghan government, in my view.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Kucinich. There are so many questions we are going to ask and we have narrowed the panel down here a little bit so I think Jeff and I will have a chance to do that if you have the patience for us.

To keep Afghan support, would there be a recommendation to limit the air strikes and the raids that have been going on? I hear people talking about shifting our policy to more of one of defensive, protective ideas and—correct me if I am going too far—that we think that perhaps having the offensive, continual strike aspect of it has not been terribly effective because they keep replacing themselves over and over again.

But also we are getting the indigenous population more than a little riled up about the collateral damage that occurs. Whatever drop in those polls may have occurred may somewhat be related to the effect of the air strikes and the raids, which we heard earfuls

of when we were over there on our last several visits and that and seem to have a tremendous impact. That is understandably not a poll, but it is just various groups that we talked to.

Mr. KAGAN. I agree with you. I think that what we have been doing has been very problematic, not so much the approach of going after key leaders, but I think it has to do with very specific tactics that we have tended to use on the ground. At the end of the day, night raids on villages are just a really bad idea unless you really, really, really have to do it. You run into old Pashtun views about how, you know, when the cattle rustlers descend on the village at night, every red blooded young man with an AK has to run out and fight them. And you can explain to them all you want that cattle rustlers don't have helicopters, but the fact remains that there is that instinct to come out and do that. There are other ways of conducting those kinds of raids. I think that the command is very sensitive to this.

The issue of collateral damage is a very interesting one and I would like to just drill down on that for 1 second because this is a question of a major cultural difference between Iraq and Afghanistan that we need to understand. The amount of collateral damage that is being done in Afghanistan is absolutely trivial compared to the amount of collateral damage that was done in Iraq with infinitely less complaint from the locals about the collateral damage. We rubbled Fallujah and Ramadi and the complaint was not about the collateral damage on the whole. One JDAM goes astray in Afghanistan and you have a huge uproar about it. Now, part of that is because the enemy we are facing has a magnificent information operation campaign, the best in the world that I have ever seen. We have not been able to counter that effectively. But part of it is an Afghan tradition that is different from Iraqi tradition, Iraqis are much more comfortable fighting within their population. Afghans are very uncomfortable fighting within their population centers. That is why you see rural insurgencies in Afghanistan rather than urban insurgencies.

So I think this is an issue that can be dealt with by appropriately modifying our tactics, techniques, and procedures for these kinds of raids. And I think that you will find over time that the command has taken this onboard and that appropriate changes will be made.

Mr. TIERNEY. Now, I think it is generally agreed across this panel and the last panel that we talked to that most of Al Qaeda if not all of Al Qaeda are situated now in Pakistan and that what we see going on in Afghanistan is various insurgencies that have more localized ambitions and tensions. One of the principal arguments that we always hear for keeping troops at higher levels in Afghanistan is that we can't let Afghanistan fall to the insurgents because we are afraid they will invite Al Qaeda back in and that Al Qaeda will have a safe haven from which they will cause problems.

So I have two questions related to that and that I seek an answer on. One is, I think that assumes that the problems of 9/11 happened because of Afghanistan when, in fact, most of the planning seems to have happened in Germany and Florida. It certainly could have happened whether or not Al Qaeda was in Afghanistan.

Second, there are other ungoverned areas from which Al Qaeda is operating right now in Pakistan. It could be Somalia; it could be Sudan; it could be any number of countries out there and I have not heard anybody make the recommendation that we send enormous numbers of troops into those areas and start any of this sort of tactics and strategies we talk about here.

So if the principal threat to America, General, as you said, comes from this region, how is that so? Why is the principal threat from this region not just by nature the fact that these people that have bad intentions toward America plan in places like Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Algeria, or wherever it might be? Why don't we treat Afghanistan the same way we treat those regions in terms of what actions we take to be defensive?

General BARNO. I think that is a very good question. I would argue that the threat, to put a fine point on it, is Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda is resident in this region. They are not as physically present today in Afghanistan as they have been in the past but they are very interested in reasserting that presence. They are in Pakistan because in some ways they have been pushed out of Afghanistan, mostly as a result of our response to 9/11. But they are still alive and active. And they require a sanctuary to be effective. They require protected areas to think, to plan, to train their operatives, and to have essentially a home base. Our presence in Afghanistan is going to prevent that from recurring if we sustain it in the country of Afghanistan. It is also going to have a positive effect on Pakistan and their ability to keep pressure on Al Qaeda. In an unclassified setting we can't talk, obviously, about what the United States may be doing directly against Al Qaeda inside those tribal areas. We read about inferences in the newspaper about that regularly. But I think our presence in Afghanistan is an insurance policy against Al Qaeda resuming its full capability in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. If we are not there, the likelihood of the Pakistanis putting pressure on them and being effective with that, I think, is extremely low. So success in Afghanistan will give us a much stronger position and likelihood of success in pressuring Al Qaeda and hopefully disrupting and destroying Al Qaeda inside of Pakistan.

Mr. TIERNEY. Does somebody else want to take a stab at that? Ambassador. I mean, I still have some questions left, General, after you gave me that answer. Ambassador.

Mr. DOBBINS. I will just say that the proximate danger is not that Afghanistan is going to fall to the insurgents. That probably wouldn't happen even if we left. The Indians, the Russians, the Iranians would support the northern half of the country.

Mr. TIERNEY. That was one of my next questions.

Mr. DOBBINS. The proximate danger is that the country will descend deeper into civil war, a civil war on the scale that we saw in Iraq—which is 10 times higher than what it is today in Afghanistan—or civil war such as we saw in the 1980's and 1990's—which was probably 10 times higher than what we saw in Iraq—with five million refugees generated and a sense of disorder that will invite in extremist elements. I mean, even if the Taliban were to say, if you leave Afghanistan we will abandon Al Qaeda, and we left, that

wouldn't end it. That would simply deepen the civil war and Al Qaeda would come right back in with other extremist elements.

Mr. TIERNEY. But I guess my point is, you know, when I go back to my district, here is what a lot of people say: Al Qaeda is somewhere all the time. All right? They are either in Pakistan or they are in Somalia or they are in Yemen or they are in all these places or whatever. So if they go into Afghanistan, they are just in one more place. You still have to have a policy but the policy that you have in Afghanistan seems to be radically different than the policy you have to deal with the Al Qaeda presence in Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and Pakistan. You don't send troops in. You don't build bases. You don't do all of those things there. That is the part that I am trying to get at here. You know, you have this huge presence. You are building who knows how many forts out there of various sizes, sending in more troops, running around battling Taliban—that we admit are not Al Qaeda—all in the prospect that Al Qaeda might move back in. Meanwhile, they have set up residence in other places and nobody is saying, well, it is in the U.S. interest to go in full force with the military and the rest of the Coalition into those places. That is something I never really got a satisfactory answer to. And, you know, I think it still begs the question on this. Doctor, do you want to give it a shot?

Mr. KAGAN. I do. I want to make the point first of all that not all Al Qaeda is equal. There is an Al Qaeda global leadership cell. It is located in this vicinity. It had previously——

Mr. TIERNEY. Located in Pakistan.

Mr. KAGAN. Yes. It had originally been located in Afghanistan. Now it is located in Pakistan.

Mr. TIERNEY. And you don't recommend sending troops into Pakistan in a full force of 17,000 or 50,000 and going after them, do you?

Mr. KAGAN. I don't recommend that, Congressman. But I would say——

Mr. TIERNEY. But you recommend doing that in Afghanistan where Al Qaeda leadership is not?

Mr. KAGAN. I have never tried to sell the war in Afghanistan on the basis of that is where Al Qaeda is and that is where we have to fight them. I think it is unfortunate that a lot of rhetoric, including from candidate Obama, focused on that interpretation of the problem. I think that we have to be able to take a broader geopolitical view of this.

But to address just the Al Qaeda question, we know that Al Qaeda global senior leadership is in Pakistan. We are working in a variety of ways to cajole and assist the Pakistanis to address that problem. What I am here to tell you is that it is inconceivable that the Pakistanis will be able successfully to address that problem if we do not keep make Afghanistan functional and stable. You can't separate these two issues in that respect. So if you abandon Afghanistan, you are also abandoning the effort to get the Pakistanis to——

Mr. TIERNEY. Can you tell me why that is?

Mr. KAGAN. Absolutely.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let us suppose that Afghanistan reverts back to its historical premise of fighting each other. This seems to be their

natural state in some instances or whatever. That happens. Why is it all of a sudden Pakistan is that much worse off than they have been in years past?

Mr. KAGAN. Absolutely. First of all, I would make a serious suggestion to the committee that you hold a classified briefing and bring in as many of the intelligence analysts and experts as you can from the theater. Have them lay out for you in detail how all of the enemy groups there are——

Mr. TIERNEY. We had that last week. We did that with the DNI and other people and supporting groups were there. I am on the Intelligence Committee; I do it on a regular basis.

Mr. KAGAN. OK. The groups are heavily interconnected. There are groups on both sides of the border that are related to Al Qaeda and related to other groups. In particular, the Haqqani network is moving in the direction of playing a much greater role with Al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba and these other very radical groups than the Mullah Omar Quetta shura is. The problem is that the Haqqani network has its base in Miram Shah in the federally Administered Tribal Areas but it has a very significant support zone in Afghanistan in the Zadran Arc in Khost Province. Now, if we were to abandon Afghanistan, what you would find is that the Haqqani network, as an example, would absolutely reestablish itself in Khost Province—its traditional strength—and it would then immediately, I can promise you, provide facilitation and assistance to Lashkar-e-Taiba and Al Qaeda and provide them refuge from any Pakistani attempts to go after those groups.

If we can maintain Khost as we are now maintaining it, as an area which is highly contested but where we are going after these guys—and I frankly think we need to go after them more in that area—then we create the possibility, and it is only a possibility, but we create the possibility for Pakistani success against Al Qaeda if we can move them in that direction to actually be decisive in this area. If you don't maintain control of Afghanistan, then I can assure you that any Pakistani success on their side of the border will be absolutely ephemeral.

Mr. TIERNEY. So you are trying to stop Al Qaeda from doing in Afghanistan what they have already done in Pakistan and what they have done in Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and everywhere else they have set up base and been able to operate in somewhat ungoverned territories. You are just doing it in an entirely different way. I mean, I hear what you are saying in terms of the fears that they are all going to move in. I just still don't make the distinction of how we treat all these different areas.

The other part, Ambassador, going back to your comments, if your argument is to put the Al Qaeda situation aside for a second because there is a bigger, larger strategic need for the United States to be there and mostly it is because we don't want to see Afghanistan break down into civil war again, what is your message to the American people? The American people are absolutely beside themselves in the economic situation that is going on right now, exhausted from all the time that we have spent diddling around in Iraq which was a totally unnecessary place to be, and have now spent 6 or 7 years in Afghanistan that have turned out to be counterproductive to the point. How do you sell them on the idea that

we just don't want a civil war in Afghanistan so spend another $50 or $100 billion and send more of your children over there and maybe you can help out?

Mr. DOBBINS. Afghanistan is not a country which is predisposed to civil war. It is a weak country surrounded by powerful neighbors which is vulnerable to their manipulation. Left to its own devices, the Afghans can get along. The ethnic and religious and linguistic tensions are not as keen as they are in Iraq, for instance, or as bad as they were in the Balkans. It is a geopolitical question. Afghanistan will be at peace when the Iranians, the Indians, the Pakistanis, and the Russians agree that they have a common interest in a peaceful, nonthreatening, functioning Afghanistan.

Mr. TIERNEY. But what are we doing in that regard? I mean, I think that is a point you have made in previous testimonies also. It an excellent point. But, you know, where are all these countries that probably have a more immediate interest in this area than the United States does? I mean, it is the drugs that are going through Iran and India, up through Russian-stans and into Europe. It is the unsettled area that affects them more immediately than us. So where are they in all of this?

Mr. DOBBINS. They have to be involved. In fact, Mrs. Clinton has called a meeting of regional powers in the next week or two in order to sustain a dialog. We had a very successful engagement back in 2001 with most of these countries. But Pakistan remained ambivalent and not ready to really commit to the agenda that all the other countries were willing to commit to.

There is no short term answer. The long term objective is to create a regional balance in which all of Afghanistan's neighbors recognize that a nonthreatening Afghanistan is in their interests and don't use it to advance their interests vis-a-vis the other countries of the region. In my testimony I have a rather elaborate suggestion about how to do that in terms of an international agreement in which Afghanistan finally recognizes the border with Pakistan—which it refuses to do and has consistently refused to do—Afghanistan and Pakistan promise not to use their territory against the other, the United States and NATO promise to leave as soon as these other provisions are accepted, and Afghanistan is declared a permanently neutral state.

I think this is a viable diplomatic objective. It is not something that is going to come overnight. But sorting out those differences is, I think, a key to pacifying the area and thus reducing the sources that create these extremist groups that transit the region and in at least one case have global objectives.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. One second as I get some information on what the votes are here for us. There are going to be seven votes. It will take about an hour on that part. So do you want to do another 5 minutes and then break and ask folks to come back or just come back?

Mr. FLAKE. I think we will have a hard time getting people back. These are the last votes of the day.

Mr. TIERNEY. I am a person who will come back. I know you will come back as well. So can we break for an hour while we get these votes done? Is that something that you folks are willing to do, come back for another half hour or so?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I am not going to be able to do that. I have appointments.

Mr. FLAKE. Let me ask Dr. Kagan right now, if I can, about the war on poppies there. Is it a necessary role for our military—I know for the first time a while ago, NATO OKed the use of strike force to go at these—or is it a distraction? I noted a very different reaction from President Karzai when we saw him in December than we did 4 years ago. Four years ago he said this was the mother of all battles. This time he dismissed it, saying it was not a problem. In your view, is this a battle that we have to wage militarily now in order to succeed or is it a distraction?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, it is sort of a little more complicated than that. I think the problem with the poppy eradication effort is that it has been sold as a part of the counter-insurgency strategy. I do not believe that it plays a positive role in the counter-insurgency strategy. I recognize published reports say that something like $500 million a year go from the narco-trade to the Taliban. I expect that is true. When you look at what the poppy eradication effort can do in terms of how much money it can actually take out of their pockets a year, the range is something between $25 and $50 million a year. That is not going to make a significant dent in their capabilities over the next few years. Therefore I don't think that we should see this as part of the short term counter-insurgency effort. And of course there are negative consequences from the counter-insurgency point of view of eradicating poppies and pissing people off.

But I do think that since we are concerned with establishing a stable, legitimate government in Afghanistan and since I do think that the popular sense of pervasive corruption in that government stemming from the narco-trade is a major problem in its legitimacy, we absolutely have to take this onboard. I would say that I echo the sentiments of everyone who has lamented the absence of an effective rule of law program in Afghanistan. I too lament it and I think it should be a major focus. I think that having the Afghans convict two senior government officials—and one of them doesn't have to be Karzai's brother—of narcotics related crimes would be more effective than killing thousands of hectares of poppy in helping establish the government's legitimacy.

Mr. KILCULLEN. Could I just make a quick follow on comment? Poppy production has flatlined in the last 2 years. It hasn't actually gotten larger. And what we have seen is, in fact, a very substantial shift in geographical focus where most of the poppies are now being grown in enemy controlled areas, particularly in Helmand Province. The other big shift, though, that we have seen has been a vertical integration. Two or 3 years ago, they would take poppy and turn it into opium paste, then export the opium paste for sale. Now they are actually producing heroin in country. That actually creates an opportunity for the military to be involved in interdiction as distinct from eradication. Eradication hurts the farmers. If you take two or three fields worth of poppy and boil them down to 10 kilograms of heroin, the farmers have already been paid if you interdict the 10 kilograms of heroin later on. So there is a role for law enforcement and the military in the interdiction part of the process. And that avoids a lot of the eradication issues that we have had. The final point I want to make is that

it is a $4 billion industry. The Taliban gets about $500 million out of that. The farmers get $800 million. The biggest beneficiary of the narcotics trade is the Afghan government, corrupt officials inside the Afghan government. So until we change that, I don't think we are going to get much progress.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. I know that several of you have difficulty coming back in an hour so I am going to try to fire off some questions here. Will the Afghan elections be an appropriate measure as to whether or not our plan is working? How well they go, is that a metric that people will be able to judge whether or not what we decide to do now is actually working?

Mr. KAGAN. No, I don't think so.

Mr. TIERNEY. Doctor.

Mr. KILCULLEN. Yes, but I think we would perhaps disagree less than it might appear. I think it is not a measure of whether we are achieving security who gets elective, it is whether the elections go off in a safe and transparent manner.

Mr. TIERNEY. That is what I meant.

Mr. KILCULLEN. If that happens, I think we can say we have done well.

Mr. TIERNEY. OK. Dr. Kagan, you disagreed. Ambassador Dobbins.

Mr. DOBBINS. One of the strengths we have there is we have a legitimate government. We have a government that is recognized throughout the world and by the vast majority of Afghans as genuinely representative and legitimately elected. That is a treasure. The government may be more corrupt than we would like, it may be less competent than we would like, but it is legitimate. If we lose that, if the election results are contested or are inconclusive in a way that the result doesn't clearly represent popular expression, it will be a major setback.

General BARNO. It is a partial metric and it is an extremely important one. It is the strategic report card this year on the entire enterprise so it has huge political implications as well as military.

Mr. TIERNEY. Dr. Kilcullen quotes in his book Bernard Fall who said in 1975 that if you are losing to an insurgency, you are being out-governed, you are not being out-fought. I hear a lot of comments that made it seem to me that people agree on that. How are we going to get the Karzai government to be better Governors? I think the similar question is in Pakistan, how are we going to get that government to be a better government? It goes back to some of the things the Ambassador put in his written testimony about perhaps conditioning some of the assistance. The only leverage we have is the money that we are putting in there. And I am sure that you probably don't want to condition the civilian development and assistance types of things so much. But where the military has such a large play in Pakistan and when we have to get Karzai to move in Afghanistan, ought we to be conditioning the military aid that we give to these countries?

Mr. KILCULLEN. I think that is very true in the case of Pakistan. In the case of Afghanistan, I think we can do a lot with the partnering model where we have U.S. troops always working with Afghan troops and Afghan police. One of the things we found in Iraq and also in the parts of Afghanistan where we have done this

before is that when you do that, the performance of all three elements improves. The U.S. troops have a better understanding of the environment so they do better. The Afghan troops have a model for how to operate so they do better. And you have a police guy standing next to a military guy and the military guy is saying, why are you taking a kickback from that guy, why did you beat that old lady up, and enforcing a more equitable situation.

Mr. TIERNEY. If we can get the people on, you have about a 1,500 mentor shortfall just on the police side of that.

Mr. KILCULLEN. Yes. And so this is not instead of mentoring. You don't necessarily send mentors. You have an Afghan unit next to an American unit and the unit performs the mentoring function.

Mr. TIERNEY. Doctor, you also said that we need to be reducing overall force commitment everywhere, not just moving troops from Iraq to Afghanistan. That would be tantamount to unbogging ourselves from Iraq just so we can rebog ourselves in Afghanistan. Is everybody fairly certain that we don't need to be putting large additional amounts of troops into Afghanistan to accomplish the counter-insurgency that you have all talked about? Or are there some people that believe that we need to put in some of the numbers that we have read like 400,000 or 600,000?

General BARNO. I think you will probably find some consensus that 400,000 number, the vast majority of which will be new Afghan security forces, is probably a fairly good number of police and Afghan national army. The U.S. troop contribution, and we have seen the front end of that at least, is 17,700. It is not clear exactly what will be announced tomorrow. But I think we have to be very careful from a military standpoint—and Dave Kilcullen and I have written and talked about this—is we have to think about what we are trying to achieve this year, next year, and the following year and how much military force we are going to need to do that. Getting that additional several hundred thousand Afghan security forces together, generated, built, and trained is going to take some time. The gap filler in a lot of ways will need to be American forces.

Mr. TIERNEY. Dr. Kagan, do you want a shot at that?

Mr. KAGAN. Yes. I just want to say, you know, it is very hard for anyone to sit in Washington and make evaluations about force requirements in Afghanistan. But I think when you do go around to the theater and look at the threat problems and you look at the gaps, I can see a requirement in Afghanistan for maybe 10 American brigades starting next year and lasting for maybe 12 to 18 months.

We had at the height of the Surge 22 brigades in Iraq. I just don't see a requirement for a commitment of that size from the United States or anything like it. But I do think that there is a risk that we are going to lowball the estimate of what we need, possibly in the President's statement, we will see what he says, but certainly this year. But I also think that we should not imagine that we are getting into the slippery slope that leads us all the way up back to Iraq sort of levels.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me end with this. David Ignatius did an article called the Roadmap for Afghanistan back on March 19th. At one point he started talking about the typical Al Qaeda situation. The process begins with infection as Al Qaeda establishes a presence.

Next comes contagion as Al Qaeda uses its haven to mount attacks. Then follows intervention by the United States to destroy Al Qaeda's sanctuary and its Taliban protectors. And that produces rejection as the local population allies with Al Qaeda and the Taliban against the foreign invaders. For America it is a costly and self-defeating exercise, which is precisely what Al Qaeda intends. Dr. Kilcullen quotes a haunting 2004 statement by Osama Bin Laden. All we have to do is send two mujahideen to the furthest point east to raise a cloth on which is written Al Qaeda in order to make the U.S. generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses. So we are continuing this policy of bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy. I think, you know, a lot of people are beginning to think that is the case here. So how do we prevent the Yemens and Somalias and the Sudans from being more of that bleeding at the same time that you are recommending sort of following that pattern into Afghanistan?

General BARNO. Very briefly, I think this goes back to the geopolitical issue that Ambassador Dobbins points out. Those other locales you identified—the Yemens, the Somalias—I would call those very small franchise operations of Al Qaeda.

Mr. TIERNEY. At present.

General BARNO. Yes, correct. And I don't think they can necessarily become Al Qaeda's core, Al Qaeda central, without very obvious moves that we are going to see and detect. What in this region we have to be concerned about is the entire region becoming destabilized by a failure in Afghanistan and a return to civil war, by a great game not played by the United States but played by those regional nations in our absence. And the destabilizing country of most worry, of course, is Pakistan. Our efforts in Afghanistan are aimed and need to be aimed as much at Pakistan, maintaining stability there, as they are inside of Afghanistan.

Mr. KILCULLEN. I will just make one comment. I think that it is always a bad idea to invade a country because Al Qaeda is there. It just creates many, many more problems than you solve by going in. But we have to remember how we got to where we are in Afghanistan. On the day that Kandahar fell, which was the last major Taliban stronghold, there were 100 CIA and about 400 Special Forces in country. We didn't actually invade Afghanistan in a large scale fashion to deal with Al Qaeda. What happened was the international community got together in the Bonn Agreement and later in the 2006 Afghanistan Compact and made a commitment to the Afghan people to stabilize the country.

So I don't believe that it is a good idea to go and invade countries as you quoted because of Al Qaeda. I don't think that is what we did in Afghanistan. I think we are there honoring a commitment to the international community and to the Afghan people. And I think it is a valid activity for the U.S. Congress to say, all right, how much are we prepared to spend on that? I think what we need to do is be very careful about just escalating to success. We need to say, all right, how much are we prepared to spend and that is a sufficient amount. So I think this is a very valid activity.

Mr. TIERNEY. That is an interesting point. You know, I think it was 1,300 Marines and about 1,000 Special Operations people with some air strikes was the entire October 2001 enterprise there. A

few weeks later, Kandahar was falling. So I was interested to hear your take on why it is that we remain in such numbers, and I suspect that is probably very accurate.

I think what I take out of this, first of all, is a great appreciation for all of you for what you have done in terms of trying to put this together and contextualize it in testimony. I am personally left with the idea that there is no way out of this thing without involvement of other people. It keeps going back to Ambassador Dobbins. In previous hearings it was the same thing. I mean, we are not going to resolve this without Iran, India, China, Russia, the 'Stans, Europe, and all these others understanding that they have to pony up and get involved in this thing.

I appreciate what you said, Dr. Kilcullen about being there because of the commitment that was made but it certainly looks to a lot of us that the commitment is being paid with American lives and dollars more so than some others who have probably a more immediate problem there than we do. I am not sure how we are going to address that, but I think that is something that we have to address.

Again, thank you all very, very much. I appreciate all of the efforts that you have made and your being here today. It has been a substantial help to all of us. Meeting adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

○