[H.A.S.C. No. 111–103]

AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ: PERSPECTIVES ON U.S. STRATEGY, PART 1

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
OCTOBER 22, 2009

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

53–449 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
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WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted post hearing.]

AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ: PERSPECTIVES ON U.S. STRATEGY, PART 1

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Thursday, October 22, 2009.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m., in room HVC–210, Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. Vic Snyder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. VIC SNYDER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARKANSAS, CHAIRMAN, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Dr. SNYDER. The hearing will come to order.

I actually have a wonderfully prepared written statement, but I think we know why we are here. We are going to talk about foreign policy and national security objectives primarily in Afghanistan, but also as it relates to Iraq.

I will defer now to Mr. Wittman.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROB WITTMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM VIRGINIA, RANKING MEMBER, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Chairman, in that spirit, I have a written statement that I will submit for the record. In the interest of time, we will go ahead and dispense with my opening statement.

I thank the panelists for joining us today. We appreciate your efforts. We know this is a very timely and important issue, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas on the current state of affairs, and where we need to go, and how we can best get there. Thanks.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wittman can be found in the Appendix on page 35.]

Dr. SNYDER. Our witnesses today are General Barry McCaffrey, Retired, U.S. Army; Lieutenant General David Barno, Retired, from the U.S. Army; Beth Ellen Cole, Senior Program Officer, Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations, United States Institute for Peace; and Mr. Matthew Waldman, Carr Center for Human Rights at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

General McCaffrey, we will begin with you.

STATEMENT OF GEN. BARRY MCCAFFREY, USA (RET.), PRESIDENT, BR MCCAFFREY ASSOCIATES, LLC

General MCCAFFREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Wittman, and members of the committee, for including me in a very distinguished panel. I know that you will enter our statements into the record.

Dr. SNYDER. Without objection, they will all be made part of the record.

General MCCAFFREY. I ran through several iterations on this. I was trying to end up with probably less a prescription than the questions that the committee and the administration has to ask themselves as they try and sort out the way ahead, and I have also given you some other material relating to the platform that I use as an adjunct professor up at West Point to try and hopefully add to the debate with informed, objective, and nonpartisan insights.

A couple of quick, brief comments, not to reiterate what I put in my statement. Number one, what is the situation in Afghanistan? It seems to me, I have known General McChrystal since he was a lieutenant colonel, Petraeus since he was a cadet. It is rare that I would make this statement: I think these two are probably the most talented, determined people we have had in uniform in many ways since World War II.

McChrystal, as you know, has run a parallel universe, Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), for 5 years. Publicly we don't talk too much about that effort, except I have characterized them as basically the most dangerous people on the face of the Earth. We picked him. He listened to the President's March strategy. He was a student of the interagency process conducted January through March. The incumbent military Joint Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Commander Dave McKiernan, was asked to step off his responsibilities. We put McChrystal on the ground, and unsurprisingly he has made what I would strongly underscore is a nonpolitical assessment of the situation.

Given the counterinsurgency strategy, and given the threat situation on the ground, he has tried to come up with options for the Commander in Chief. The only criticism I might level at his analysis and recommendations is, and I sort of go to the bottom line, it is always inappropriate to use metaphors that are one wavelength off the subject, but I frequently tell people that I learned in combat as a rifle company commander that when under fire, you have three options. Two of them are okay, and one of them is always wrong. The one that is always wrong is hunker down under fire and hope something else changes. The other two options are break contact and move back, think through it and do something new. And the third option is attack.

I think McChrystal has said, I heard your strategy formulation, I know what you are trying to achieve, and he banded his resource options to include a high end of 40,000 to 60,000 additional troops.

Personally I would argue if we were going to reinforce for success, it would obviously not just be military, but the military component of it would be more likely to be 100,000 troops than 40,000, obviously with a concomitant increase in resources for road building and repair the agricultural system and to get contractors in, probably since United States Agency for International Aid (USAID)

has not been rebuilt since Vietnam, to try to dramatically change the situation. But personally I don't think that is politically feasible. Therefore, I think his analysis is probably on the downside.

I also think, and several I am sure will make the same point, if this was an academic exercise talking theoretical options, you can make a decent argument that we shouldn't be in Afghanistan with 68,000 U.S., about to reinforce with 40,000 NATO allies, that we had other strategic options, but we don't. We are there now, and so the consequences of our actions in the coming 180 days will be immediate. They will have an impact not just on the Afghans and our Pakistani neighbors. And many of us will argue there are two vital national security issues at stake in the United States in the coming five years, and one is Saudi Arabia, and the other is Pakistan for a completely different calculus, political and economic calculus.

But the impact of a strategic option that said let us downsize, let us do over-the-horizon counterterrorism, which, I might add, from a military and an intelligence viewpoint is sort of a silly option, but if we had that option, if we weren't where we are now, it would be a reasonable thing to consider. So I don't think that we can downsize either.

The end result of all of this is to some extent this is an inside-the-Beltway political debate we are taking part in with an attentive U.S. public that is focused on the economic recession, focused on immigration, focused on Social Security reform, and not too keen about a major, decade-long effort in Afghanistan. Too bad.

Sort of a final comment. As we look at the situation on the ground, I would give great weight—I have known all of these actors. Our U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Patterson, probably one of the top three Foreign Service officers I have ever met in my life, enormously experienced, zero ego, common sense, tremendous access, a voice that will help us understand and interpret what the Pakistanis are going through. I will be in country here in another few weeks, and I will again see General Kiyani, and I will go take a look at the frontier regions, but I would sort of suggest that we give great weight to our own interpretation of what we are seeing on the ground. She is absolutely first rate, as is the agency on the ground in Pakistan.

Karl Eikenberry, now the U.S. Ambassador in Afghanistan, well known to all of you, one of the few, besides Dave Barno, military intellectuals we tolerated in the U.S. Army over the years. He has a personal sense of affection and commitment to the Afghan people, but I don't think he has ever lost his objectivity and his understanding that he is serving U.S. national foreign policy interests. Again, I think his viewpoints ought to be given special understanding and great weight.

Finally, one thing I must congratulate the Administration on. One of the most bizarre and shameful periods in U.S. foreign policy history was after the intervention in Iraq, which I personally thought was the right thing to do, was to take down Saddam at the time. I remember watching Secretary Rumsfeld on television just in disbelief where he proudly said he had never been asked about his viewpoint on military intervention in Iraq, nor had he proffered one. And others in the government said the same thing.

I think the notion that this administration of ours is deliberately walking through the options if nothing else is a very sound signal within the administration that when they reach a conclusion, they own it collectively. It is not just the political calculus of the President of the United States, but the reasoned thinking of his most senior people: Secretary Bob Gates and Secretary Hillary Clinton and others I have tremendous respect for.

On that note, let me just leave those thoughts on the table, and I look forward to responding on your own interests.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General McCaffrey. You will have to come back and see us after you get back from your next trip.

[The prepared statement of General McCaffrey can be found in the Appendix on page 41.]

Dr. SNYDER. General Barno, I should have pointed out that you are the Director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU). We appreciate your being here, and you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. DAVID BARNO, USA (RET.), DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

General BARNO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Wittman. Thanks for inviting me back again to the subcommittee on a topic near and dear to my heart, having spent 19 months out there as the overall Coalition Commander from 2003 to 2005. As many of you know, I had my youngest son out there serving in the 101st Airborne Division just back in January of this year. It is still an arena that I spend a significant amount of time on, given my job at NDU, and also one that I have a personal commitment to.

Today's views, despite my government affiliation, are my own personal views. I would like to make that point up front.

I think one of the challenges that we face today with regard to our efforts in Afghanistan is what I would characterize as a crisis of confidence in the United States and among our NATO allies at this particular juncture. In the aftermath of a very deeply flawed Afghan election which was set in the context of rising American and NATO casualties over this summer, the U.S. has some significant challenges in front of us, and I want to talk to at least four of those here today.

I believe, like General McCaffrey, that General McChrystal's recent assessment was a very sound one, very thorough, and deserves a very careful read, and in some ways, however, has fueled this debate. Perhaps in the broader scheme of things, to look at where we are and where we are going, that is appropriate.

I would start by asking the question of what, on a strategic level—and I want to take this up away from the number of troops for most of my remarks and talk about where we are going. The fundamental question we have to ask is what is the end game for the United States and the region? Where are we going? What is our ultimate objective?

Until we can clearly answer this question, I think, to ourselves, to our friends in the region, to our allies in NATO, then we have a problem with having a sound policy. If we don't have a clear definition of success and, in my judgment, worse yet, if we signal that

success equals exit and our ultimate goal is exit, I think that we have created an unsound strategy and one that undercuts our actual objectives in the region. That is a bit of a paradox because most Americans, my cousins who are farmers in northern Pennsylvania, my aunts and uncles of retirement age, don't fully understand why we are in Afghanistan, and I think we have to be clear about that.

I also think that the fundamental flaw in the American approach to both Afghanistan and Pakistan lies in the lack of confidence in the region in American staying power. When I left Afghanistan in May of 2005, the biggest concern I had was the lack of the belief among our friends there that we were in this to succeed, and we would be in it for as long as it took to win. I think this uncertainty in the region, for example, drives our friends, the Pakistanis, to judge many of their decisions based upon how will this decision look the day after America leaves; what position will it put us in for the ensuing conflict that is it certain to break out at that point in time.

I think we have to confront these fears as we think about and talk about our policy and our goals and objectives in the region.

I would cite four challenges in front of us as we now have gone through this very fractious election, and we are on the verge of some tough decisions about future troop strength.

The first challenge is to understand and defeat the Taliban strategy; not simply defeat the Taliban, not simply kill more Taliban, but to understand their strategy and have a plan that defeats their strategy.

In simple terms, their strategy is "run out the clock." If this were a football game, they believe they are in the fourth quarter, they are ahead on the scoreboard, they are controlling the football, and they are going to run out the clock. They will be the last man on the field when the game is over. We have to take that into account as we think about and we talk about our strategy on the road ahead.

Many of our efforts at home inadvertently call into question the very purpose and the strength of our resolve in Afghanistan. This feeds directly into the Taliban strategy. The more we talk about exit as our goal, the more we reinforce what the Taliban are telling the people of Afghanistan, in their terms: "the Americans have all of the wristwatches, but we have all the time. We, the Taliban, will be here when the Americans are gone." So that is challenge number one.

Number two is to rebuild the trust and help the Afghan Government; the next version of that, rebuild trust between their government and their people. That trust has been badly fractured over the last three or four years in Afghanistan. I was there during the halcyon days after the first election of President Karzai in 2004 and 2005. There was immense hope and optimism and positive feelings there. Much of that has been lost. Much of that trust has been squandered. I think we have to focus our diplomatic efforts in Kabul on helping to shape and reform this next government to be one that is viewed as noncorrupt as opposed to having corruption as its salient feature. Most of all, we have to help that work at the local level. Our legitimacy is tied to this government. We have to

be able to see this government become a better government than the one we have supported over the last three years.

Third is to achieve unity of effort. That was in some ways the bane of our existence in the last three years, and bringing NATO into Afghanistan, for all of the goodness that brought, really brought a lot of dissolution of unity of effort that we had under a more centralized command before. Much of that is being addressed on the military side, but I think we have to be careful that as we bring in new capabilities there, we bring in as many civilian capabilities to meet the need there as we do on the military side, and that that includes the effects at the local level. If we are going to bring 1,000 new civilians into Afghanistan by the end of the year, those have got to be out at the local level primarily, not simply in Kabul. And I think there has to be a fused effort between the Afghan Government, its security forces, the international military coalition, and the international civil forces all the way down to the local effort to make things work for individual Afghans.

Finally, I think we have to reframe the narrative here at home. The rationale for us staying and winning in Afghanistan has become muddled here in the United States, out in your districts and across the country. That is true in Europe as well; perhaps worse there. Our national leaders have to clearly articulate our goals, our end game, why we are in Afghanistan, and what the costs of failure in Afghanistan are, which are extraordinarily serious for us.

So the fundamental question may end up being: Do we stay or do we go? Do we invest and endure, as my friend Ashley Tellis here at Carnegie likes to talk about, or do we simply declare success and leave and then have to reengage again, reinvade the country again, as some pundits have suggested already? That, I think, is a choice fraught with great danger.

I would close by saying that I think success or failure in Afghanistan will set the terms of our involvement in that region, not just Central Asia, but South Asia, India, Pakistan, a very growing and important region for the United States, for the next generation. Will our credibility suffer a fatal blow among our friends out there? Will the NATO alliance survive a defeat and withdrawal from Afghanistan? Will we see another 9/11 because once again we have walked away from Afghanistan, as we did after the defeat of the Soviets at the end of the 1980s?

Will our adversaries, the extremists, be catalyzed both in the region and globally by our departure? And does this victory reenergize a birth of this movement of extremism that many see as waning today?

So I would say short-term gains need to be avoided here, and we have to take a long, strategic view of the cost in blood and treasure versus the downsides of failure. This may be the most important national security decision we see here in the next several years.

Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General.

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

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Cole.

STATEMENT OF BETH ELLEN COLE, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, CENTER FOR POST-CONFLICT PEACE AND STABILITY OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

Ms. COLE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to offer my personal views today. I am Beth Cole. I am a senior program officer in the Center for Peace and Stability Operations at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), and in that capacity over the past few years, I have been directing a multiyear effort to produce civilian doctrine for stabilization and reconstruction missions. I have been working on these missions for about 15 years before U.S. troops crossed the River Sava to stabilize Bosnia.

As you well know, the military is equipped with a very complex system, with doctrine, lessons learned, planning, training, education, and deployment. This complex system allows the President to time and time again look to the military leaders for guidance and for how to implement success on the ground.

The civil side of the United States Government has no doctrine, and the elements of this system are now just emerging. They are extremely nascent. The system starts with strategic doctrine that tells us what we are trying to achieve in these missions.

USIP, with its Army partners at the Combined Army Center at Fort Leavenworth, have just released the first strategic doctrine for civilians on reconstruction and stabilization missions. It follows on the U.S. Army Stability Operations Field Manual that was published a year ago under the leadership of Lieutenant General Bill Caldwell, who now has been nominated to go out to Afghanistan. These manuals share a common face because they are companions. The Guiding Principles fills the civilian gap. This manual offers a shared strategic framework from decades, four or five decades, of conducting these types of operations. This has been vetted by United States Government agencies, by the United Nations (U.N.), by NATO, by the European Union (EU), by nongovernmental organizations, and many others.

In every war-torn country over the past five or six decades, we have strived for five core end states: a safe and secure environment; the rule of law; stable governance; a sustainable economy; and some minimum standards for social well-being. A set of 22 necessary conditions have been identified in this manual that we should meet to achieve these end states. These are shared minimum standards, much like the humanitarian community has minimum standards for humanitarian relief and assistance. They were developed on the basis of a comprehensive review of some 500 core doctrinal documents from across the institutions that have engaged in these missions.

Of these 22 conditions, I recommend prioritizing eight for Afghanistan. The first is the primacy of politics, the need to reach political settlements, not just at the national level where the current crisis resides, but at regional and local levels as well. We must redouble our efforts to separate reconcilable insurgents from those who will not forsake violence.

Second, we cannot achieve success without security. Physical security for the population, their government centers, education,

health, economic centers will require that international forces work closely with Afghan local forces to protect the population.

Third, we must prioritize territorial security by mitigating the threats that occur along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Dealing with that border will require a higher level of engagement between the Afghanistan and Pakistan Governments, as well as elements of civil society that reside along that border.

Fourth, we must redouble our efforts to achieve a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence, something General McChrystal is very focused on. The objective is not only to train and equip police and military forces, but to enhance the organizational development and professional leadership of those forces.

Fifth, we need to continue to prioritize the identification and disruption of finance networks, as difficult as that may be, of the insurgents, organized crime and terrorist organizations fueling the fires in Afghanistan. This means shutting down foreign financing and disrupting the reliance on the narcotic trade and other illicit activities.

Six, improving access to justice for the population will require a bolstering and rebuilding the informal mechanisms for dispute resolutions that Afghanistans have long employed, that the insurgents have now largely replaced, and supporting the traditional justice system that has a justice continuum from police to prosecutors to judges to corrections.

Seven, we must build the capacity of the government to deliver essential services to the population and to be seen as the deliverer of those essential services. This is necessary to separate the population from the insurgents who delegitimize the government daily by providing those services themselves.

Eight, stewardship of state resources means that essential services must be delivered by an accountable government. Prioritizing support now for subnational institutions of government, both informal and formal, will be key to ensuring an entry point for those essential services and to boosting this lack of confidence that the population has in any form of governance.

Most of these are inherently civilian tasks. We have the skills in the United States Government to deliver that assistance, not just among our military forces. We now have a civil-military plan in Afghanistan, and we are building a civil-military structure from every level, from district up to the regional commands. So we have a chance right now to put the hard lessons that we have learned over the past eight years not only in Afghanistan but also in Iraq to work in Afghanistan.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Ms. Cole.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Cole can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Waldman.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW WALDMAN, FELLOW, CARR CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Mr. WALDMAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Wittman, and members of the committee, thank you, first of all, for this opportunity to be here today.

If I may, I will make some remarks about why I think we are in the current difficulties that we are facing today in Afghanistan, and some reflections on the approach that may deliver better results going forward.

I think that it is clear that the international approach after 2001 was manifestly insufficient, given the scale of devastation that was caused over two decades of war, and that it was founded on corruption. In other words, it compounded the authority of the warlords and local strongmen. I think it is clear international aid has been in many ways ineffective. It has been fragmented, supply-driven, inefficient, and not responding sufficiently well to Afghan needs and preferences.

I think also another problem with the international approach has been that international military forces have tended to prioritize the elimination of insurgents and winning hearts and minds through assistance-related projects.

Now, I would submit that both of these objectives are largely futile. Why is this? Well, I think, first of all, we have to consider the context, the history of external interference in Afghanistan; their proud independence, conservatism, and mistrust of foreign forces. Consider also the large population of unemployed young men with families to feed. The international military are perceived as using excessive force through airstrikes and raids, and are perceived as propping up a regime that is seen as corrupt and unjust.

If you also consider the insurgent propaganda and their systematic use of terror and intimidation against Afghans, it is clear that the Afghan people, while they may not be enthusiastic for the Taliban, are facing no credible alternative.

When we see the insurgents using sanctuary and support from inside Pakistan, and they appear to be winning, it is understandable that Afghans, for reasons of personal safety, are reluctant to oppose the insurgents.

I think the focus of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) on militarized development doesn't achieve what it is intended to achieve. It doesn't meet core development objectives.

Moreover, it is precisely the heavy involvement of the military in civilian affairs that is substantiating the Taliban campaign, which is framed as resistance to foreign forces. So thus, the military and the Afghan Government are caught in a mutually detrimental relationship in which both sides lose credibility, the military by association with a corrupt government, and the government by association with the foreign military.

Now, I think General McChrystal's report is very insightful, and I think he is right about the importance of legitimacy and the population security; however, I think we have got to realize that international military forces have a limited capability to address some of these issues. First of all, building Afghan national security forces is an extremely long-term endeavor, and we know there are major

problems with the police force. Of course, they are the most critical elements of a counterinsurgency campaign.

Also, there is danger in the integrated—the emphasis on an integrated approach in which international forces increasingly engage with Afghan civilians. I think this plays into insurgent hands. I think it attributes unrealistic capabilities to soldiers. I think it is burdening them, perhaps, with responsibilities that they cannot meet. And I think it doesn't address the key and the core issues.

I would suggest that what is required is a greater civil-military delineation, greater political efforts that lie outside of the core competency of the military. And that is the fundamental point, that this is a political problem. In fact, insurgency is not itself a disease, but the symptom of a deeper disorder; namely, a government that is perceived as illegitimate, self-serving, and that has excluded certain groups and communities based on various reasons such as tribal affiliations, ethnicity, and other factors. It demands a response that is political. It has got to be indigenous, inclusive, and address injustices and legitimate grievances.

Just some brief remarks about how we might change the strategy going forward to deliver better results, and I think there are probably five points.

Firstly, we should acknowledge the limits of outsiders in effecting change in Afghanistan, given the enormous complexity and the scale of the challenges. But what we should do is empower Afghans to address these challenges; in other words, focus on capabilities and building robust institutions, not just delivering results.

Secondly, empathize with Afghans. I think if we do effectively empathize, as I said, considering the context, the history, the culture of Afghanistan, it leads to the conclusion that we should reduce foreign military involvement in civilian affairs and prioritize interventions which reflect Afghan interests and preferences.

Thirdly, after determining what is possible, develop strategies that fit the purpose, devote sufficient resources and political will for accomplishment. Half measures, whether it is police reform, governance development, are likely to do more harm than good. We need to recognize the need for regional political strategy, too.

Fourth, address obvious flaws in aid delivery. It astonishes me that more has not been done to address very rudimentary problems in the system of aid delivery, such as the widespread use of contractors and consultants, the parallel mechanisms, and the lack of transparency.

Finally, I think, as some of the panelists here suggested early on, we should not expect swift results. This is an incremental progress. It requires realism combined with long-term commitment and a genuine political resolve.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Waldman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Waldman can be found in the Appendix on page 64.]

Dr. SNYDER. We will put ourselves on the five-minute clock here. I will ask one question, and then we will go to Mr. Wittman.

I think General Barno discussed this some in his statement, and I asked this a week or two ago in the full committee hearing on Afghanistan. When we made the commitment and gave President Bush the authorization in mid-September of 2001 for military force,

we all knew what that was going to mean with regard to Afghanistan, and some pretty strong statements were made about following through after a military operation. What is our moral responsibility to the Afghan people in all of this?

General McCaffrey, we will begin with you.

General MCCAFFREY. Well, one is always tempted to go back to former Secretary Powell's statement that if you break it, you own it. I must admit, I have never entirely bought that policy. I think there are points in time in foreign policy where we intervene for our own purpose and don't pick up the follow-on implied responsibility of turning the place into Switzerland.

Nonetheless, here we are 600 miles from the sea, 32 million Afghans, this giant, wild country, much of it rooted in the 14th century. We have made promises, explicit and implied, and something that greatly bothers me in the current debate, the notion that we are there and can't stay unless we appreciate the nature of the chief of state bothers me. We are there for U.S. national interest reasons, not because Karzai is corrupt, good, bad, or whatever.

But there is no question in my mind as we look at the situation now, we have told the region, our NATO partners and the Afghan people, we are going to try to create a situation where you won't be an international pariah, where your agricultural system and your road network and the fundamentals of health care will work, and we will then withdraw and increasingly turn this operation over to you. I think there is a moral responsibility at this point. It would be an unbelievable disaster in the short run, meaning 10 years or less, if we withdrew and left the population to the tender mercies of Taliban retribution.

General BARNO. I think one of the unique aspects of Afghanistan is that we know what failure would look like. We know what Taliban rule looks like. We know what it means for women. There are six million children going to school today. About a third of those are Afghan girls. There were zero during the time of the Taliban. We know what it means for justice. We watch people be beheaded in soccer stadiums for offenses that were modest by Western standards. We watched the Bamyan Buddhas be destroyed by the Taliban, some cultural artifacts that date back centuries.

I always felt during my time in Afghanistan that that inoculated the Afghan people against the Taliban's return. There is very little interest to no interest across Afghanistan to see the Taliban come back. We know exactly and explicitly what the outcome is going to look like should that occur.

Moreover, those who aligned with us, those who sided with us and are working with us, from Kabul all the way down to the smallest village out there, are going to pay that price. So we have a fairly clear picture in front of us of what the downsides of withdrawal and what the downsides of failure to achieve our objectives look like, and we have to keep that crystal clear in our minds.

Ms. COLE. In 2001, whether or not we were trying to fulfill a moral responsibility or a national security responsibility, today the facts on the ground suggest that people, Afghans, nongovernmental organizations, many of whom are manned by U.S. nationals, and our civilians on the ground are now at great risk. They have chosen, by aligning themselves with us in this fight against the

Taliban and others in Afghanistan, to choose a side. So we have moral responsibility now to carry out at least some minimum standards, which I have tried to lay out here today, for how the Afghan Government itself can protect its population in the future. But we have a lot of exposed people on the ground right now.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Waldman.

Mr. WALDMAN. Well, I agree with some of the remarks that have already been made. I think that at the time of the intervention, the fact that it did take place as it did and the promises that were made were quite extensive to the Afghan people, and I think there is a duty on those nations who were involved in that intervention to seek to meet those expectations. And I think it is clear that in many respects we are failing to do so, and in some very obvious ways.

I mean, it astonishes me that there is so little transparency in terms of the delivery of international aid. It is very difficult to critique it and identify what is going wrong and then put it right. It is an elementary problem that could be solved if there was sufficient political will.

I think there is a moral responsibility to try to improve the lives of Afghans to the extent that it is possible, given the widespread poverty and hardship that many Afghans face, but it doesn't seem to me that we are taking the elementary steps to do that.

On a wider level, I think it is clear that we need to address the political problems, and I think the approach of the international community has supported a system that thrives on patronage, on impunity, on nepotism and corruption, and it is our duty to try to address some of those problems. Of course, there are limits as to what we can do. We should be clear and realistic about what we can achieve, focus on those areas, and show genuine commitment to improve the situation.

Dr. SNYDER. General McCaffrey, if I understand your point, and I think I agree with it, which is we had every right to take out the Taliban and al Qaeda and then walk away militarily; but we made very strong statements that we would do a lot of rebuilding. We had every right to break al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, if I understood your point, but it was very clear to a lot of us in those early days that we went far beyond that in terms of rebuilding the country, and I think that is where the moral responsibility comes from.

General MCCAFFREY. Exactly, as well as other tiered responsibilities we have explicitly to NATO. Personally, I would argue it would probably be the end of NATO if we unilaterally and precipitously changed this strategy, never mind its impact on Pakistan.

But at the people level, it still makes me wince every time I hear a rifle platoon leader, Marine Corps, U.S. Army, promising the locals we will be there for them to establish continuing security. Clearly they are not in a position to make that kind of compact, and neither is the military commander on the ground or the U.S. Ambassador. That is the job of this august body and the Administration. That is where we are: Will we honor our commitments, yes or no?

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Wittman for five minutes.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the panelists for joining us today.

Is a stable Afghanistan critical to U.S. interests, and in that context, is it also critical to Pakistan security interests? And if so, is the strategy laid out of a full counterinsurgency effort by General McChrystal the right way to go to secure stability in Afghanistan? And how does that relate to securing the future interest of Pakistan?

General MCCAFFREY. You know, I think that is the most painful question that you can pose in this debate. I think one can make a sound argument that Afghanistan is not a vital U.S. national security interest. If you start from where we are now, and you look at the secondary and tertiary effects of withdrawal, particularly Pakistan, and our credibility in much of the Muslim world, certainly to include the Saudis, you can get closer to it, but at the end of the day, I can remember being a lieutenant colonel at the U.S. Army War College that involved analysis of whether one should ever intervene in northwestern Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I reached the concluding that axiom one for the United States Army is: Don't carry out any military operations where you can't walk down to the sea and a Navy ship. We are a long way from the coast. We have to get there through a fragmented, incoherent Pakistan. At the end of the day, we are looking at 32 million of the most-suffering people on the face of the Earth who have nothing that is vital to our economy, political system, social order, nor are they a central or long-standing ally. We are where we are.

But I do believe the question you posed is the one the American people are going to ask themselves: If our current burn rate is $5 billion a month, if it will go to $10 billion a month by next summer, which assuredly it will, if we are going to start losing 1,000 killed and wounded a month—and, like General Barno, my son just came out of combat in Afghanistan a year ago—then you have asked a legitimate question which we have to address.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Barno.

General BARNO. It is a very tough question. And again, to harp back to General McCaffrey's initial comments, if we were standing on the high ground in Kabul in December 2001 before we had made commitments, we would probably look at this in different ways and have different choices and options. Those second- and third-order effects on Pakistan, on NATO, on our commitments in the region would not be there yet. We might have made different choices then, but we are where we are today.

I do think there is a growing recognition, in retrospect, that this region, Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular—and we should talk about how this plays in India, but Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular— instability in this region is going to cause some very serious trouble for the United States down the road.

Is the region's stability critical to the United States, is it a vital national interest? I think it approaches that because of the prospects for, once again, the region becoming a hotbed of Islamic terrorism potentially that has some access to nuclear weapons. That is a worst-case scenario, but it is not an impossible scenario by any stretch of the imagination.

So we are now committed. We are seen with our major military alliance, NATO, as having a commitment to see this through to

success. There is great damage that is possible there if we fail, but there is also the tremendous risk if this part of the region goes unstable, what does that mean to the national security interest of the United States. For that reason alone I think this may be a vital decision for us.

Ms. COLE. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported this month that five times as many civilians among NATO nations are being killed as the number of casualties that we have taken in Afghanistan among coalition forces. If we think about a narco-state with al Qaeda sitting over on the other side of the border in Pakistan, I think that answers the question. I don't think we can afford to have an unstable Afghanistan in a very, very bad neighborhood supplying 92 percent of the world's opium.

I also think that it is useful to take a step back and ask ourselves—because we constantly seem to forget that five decades of these missions have shown us that we can stabilize nations: Cambodia, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Rwanda—many, many places that have been completely torn apart and shattered where there have been insurgents involved and al Qaeda and other terror cells involved, we have managed to stabilize. We can do it again. It is going to take a lot of effort and time, as everyone said here, but it is not a lost cause.

Mr. WALDMAN. Congressman, I agree with the other panelists. There are questions about the extent to which Islamic terrorists may or may not operate inside Afghanistan, given the fact that they are largely operating in northwest Pakistan.

As for the stability of the region, clearly that is in America's national security interests. I think the fragility of the Pakistani regime can sometimes be overexaggerated, and they have shown in the past the ability to retain fairly sturdy state institutions and cope with insurgencies despite obvious difficulties in doing so. I don't believe that the Pakistani state is in danger of collapse.

If I may, I would just respond to a question about whether counterinsurgency is a correct response in Afghanistan. I think counterinsurgency is the correct response, but whether we have the design right and whether we have the tools for its implementation is another question. I would submit the answer to that is no. Why do I say that? Well, first of all, I think it assumes that soldiers, American soldiers, have a capability and a wide range of technical sectors beyond what they are trained for. I think it assumes if you deliver rapid material progress in rural areas in Afghanistan, then you will win the hearts and minds of local people. As I said earlier, I don't think that is the case.

I think, secondly, it assumes a vast and detailed knowledge by soldiers of Afghan society. And actually the demands placed on soldiers in the counterinsurgency manual are enormous and are rarely met even by civilian workers, who stay there for many years and speak the languages. The manual speaks about armed social work. The real question is the extent to which this is possible and the extent to which this promotes stability at the local level, and actually, you know, deals with the insurgents.

Finally, I think it also assumes that greater civil-military integration is possible and delivers results, and I think it is clear that the insurgents thrive on this overlap. This is good news for them

because the more they can portray civilian affairs being dominated by the military, the better it is for their nationalist Islamist campaign against aggressive invaders.

Dr. SNYDER. Mrs. Davis for five minutes.

I think we are going to have some votes around 3:00. We may want to try to get everybody in, which may be impossible.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you all for being here.

I would like to follow up, because this is an area I really have grappled with. It is a little bit of nation building versus national security.

I think clearly the American people right now are conflicted as well, certainly not with the kind of information that you all have expressed today, but nevertheless the fear that it would be years and years before and generations before you are able to actually turn the situation around, and the extent to which that is truly in our national interest.

But as you all speak, and certainly Mr. Waldman as well, security has to be at the forefront of all of that. I recall one of my times being in Afghanistan, remembering some of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) saying to us that our ambassadors or people from the State Department have to travel with military support, but they basically use their relationships that they build as that kind of support because clearly they are unable to do that.

Help me with this issue because we are continuing to raise the issue of the role of women and whether or not we are abandoning them in any way if we move into negotiating or how we are able to have some kind of reconciliation in Afghanistan. We want to focus on them. Where does security lie, because clearly the military has paved the way for many efforts in Afghanistan. There is no doubt about that. Yet on the other hand, I understand that it is perhaps overly ambitious for us to believe that all of those efforts with the military and civilian capacity both are not necessarily in the best—are picking up the best interests of the Afghan people or the region, assuming that Pakistan we are talking about as well.

Ms. COLE. I think, like with governance and all of these other issues, we have to enlarge our view of security. Security is not just something that military forces can bring to the communities of Afghanistan. In the United States, we think of security as school guards and bank guards and people who protect judges. It is not just a question of military or police forces, border guards, people who are looking at money laundering and bank operations. In that sense the debate about troops is a very, very important debate. But we have to think about the other assets that we have to bring to bear, including with the Afghans, including putting women as police officers in certain places, or as school guards, which we have shown we can do in Liberia.

This question of just having soldiers that are armed to the teeth engaged in combat operations has us thinking, I think, too narrowly. We have people who know how to do witness protection in the Marshals Service, and we have people in the Department of Justice who know how to train police and do police mentoring and development. We have forensic investigators who look at money laundering.

This is much more than just the military. If we think about it that way, I think we can arrive at actually producing security in a much more efficient way.

Mrs. DAVIS. General Barno.

General BARNO. Two thoughts. One, on the issue of security, I think you are correct; it is not a sequential problem of security and then reconstruction and development. It is really concurrent. These have to go on in parallel with each other. Based on the amount of security, or lack thereof, you will have a greater or lesser military presence and a greater or lesser civilian presence. But I think clearly because of the security dynamic, you will always have to have these elements working together. I disagree a bit with Mr. Waldman on that.

You also alluded to what does it mean to women if we negotiate with the Taliban. That is a paraphrase of what you were saying. I think we have to be aware, in my estimation, from a policy standpoint, having the Taliban be part of the government in Afghanistan is not where this is going. It is not the objective. Having reformed Taliban, ex-Taliban, Taliban that have rejected violence, put down their weapons and joined the political process, that is a very different outlook; the small T, if you will, the individuals, not the movement. That is where we have to be careful that we don't inadvertently send this message that we are willing to negotiate with the Taliban because we are trying to exit, as opposed to we are willing to see these former Taliban fighters lay down their arms and become part of this political process.

Our goal when I was there was not to kill the Taliban collectively in the big strategic picture, it was to make the Taliban irrelevant, make no one want to become part of the Taliban, no one aspire to the Taliban. That takes a very nuanced approach of many different elements other than just security and military forces.

Mrs. DAVIS. Mr. Waldman, quickly may I have a response from you?

Mr. WALDMAN. Sure. In terms of security, it really varies. It is a very serious situation at the moment. On average, every three days two Afghans are executed for having any association with the government or military forces. I think that underlies the concern about integration of civil military affairs. But it clearly is the critical issue. Of course, there are some obvious factors for the current situation. The complete failure to really reform the police, lack of resources and political will, I think, are largely responsible for that. That certainly contributes to the current situation. Less than 10 percent or around 10 percent of the police are capable of operating independently.

But as has been said by Ms. Cole, the national security is much broader, and, of course, really security will be achieved if there is a proper political strategy which is indigenous, which is inclusive, which addresses some of the fundamental injustices and the grievances that are driving this conflict. And as I said, I think this is essentially an Afghan political conflict, and it requires that political solution to be brought about. Of course, as I said earlier, there are some things we can do to help make that happen.

In terms of women, you are absolutely right to raise this. This is a very serious issue. When one travels the country and talks to

Afghans, it is very clear that they want their girls to go to school. With two million girls in school, it is a universal desire to see that happen, for women to be able to work and have rights and freedoms and rights that men have. It is alarming that the Shia law was passed recently, as you are probably aware of, and I certainly think one has to ask about the commitment of the current administration to women's rights.

Mrs. DAVIS. Which is doubtful.

Mr. WALDMAN. Yes, it certainly is. We have yet to see real substance behind their work to try to empower women and support their opportunities and rights.

But you are also right that there is concern about women's rights as negotiations move forward. Of course, reconciliation, truth and reconciliation is essential in Afghanistan, particularly after the decades of war that it has undergone. But on the one hand, there is reintegration. As General Barno mentioned reintegration efforts, this is low-ranking, perhaps midranking fighters, and bringing them in, requiring them to disarm and so on, and integrating them into society. There is another set of ideas and approaches which concerns political engagement and accommodation with more senior members of the Taliban, and in that respect I think a great deal of caution is required, and indeed the essential rights reflected in the Afghan Constitution should be respected.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Rogers for five minutes.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Listening to the discussion about the possibility of the Taliban becoming a dominant force again, obviously I find what that—the implications to women would be abhorrent to me.

I was listening to Mr. Waldman and Ms. Cole talk about what I consider nation building. I don't think our military is required for that.

What I am particularly interested in from the two generals is what do you see as realistic goals and objectives for our military in the short term, and by that I mean in the next two to three years? And what is unrealistic? I think some of the things that we are talking about long term here, I am not sure that our military needs to be used for that.

So General McCaffrey mentioned, and I think he is accurate, that this is a 14th century civilization, and apparently a lot of folks there want to keep it that way, and that is fine. But what can we do with our military that is realistic? That is the number one question.

And secondly, is it practical for us to shift a lot of our troop strength to the border, particularly on the Pakistan side, and let Afghanistan do whatever Afghanistan is going to do as long as it doesn't disrupt the security or stability of Pakistan?

General McCaffrey.

General MCCAFFREY. I listened to that question with a great deal of sympathy. And I don't profess—several people on this panel have enormous personal experience on the ground in Afghanistan. I am in and out of there periodically and listen very carefully, particularly to our own battalion commanders on the ground.

A couple of comments. First of all—I think General Barno said it—we have to write down and agree on what we are there to achieve. And I think you can form a pretty good argument, we are not there to fight al Qaeda. National Security Advisor talked about 100 al Qaedas being in Afghanistan. That is a nonnumber. If you want to fight al Qaeda, that is Tier 1 JSOC, that is political, that is international, that is financial management, arguably better there in Afghanistan than in Frankfurt, London, Hamburg and Indiana, which is currently where we worry about them.

I think, secondly, you can say we are not there to fight the Taliban. And indeed I would argue the Taliban are not across the border; they are also across border because there are 40 million Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line. But I don't think we are there to fight the Taliban, and had the Taliban not acted as a sanctuary for the disastrous attack on the United States, we wouldn't be in Afghanistan today. We would have left it the way it was.

I don't think we are there to free half the population that are women. The plight of women in that region is abysmal. As we went in, I asked one of our intel officers, a U.S. Army full colonel woman. She said, you know, essentially better to have been a donkey than a woman under the reign of the Taliban. And that situation, particularly in the Pashtun south, continues. And by the way, it isn't Shia restrictions. That is tribal, and that is cultural and historical.

So what are we there for? It seems to me that we are there to try to create—we haven't made this explicit—a state that is operational, has its own security forces and does allow us to withdraw.

Mr. ROGERS. Can that be done in three to five years?

General MCCAFFREY. I personally think this is a 10- to 25-year job. The first two to five years may involve a lot of combat, but essentially it is a long-term commitment. And building a police force is an example.

I think the other thing we ought to be realistic about is USAID is 3- or 4,000 people, not 15,000. They don't have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' capability to run large projects. I am still appalled that we are not in Afghanistan with an engineer two-star general, 500-person staff, and 3 or 4 U.S. Army engineer brigades hiring thousands of Afghans and mentoring and tutoring them. But I don't believe that many of these civilian agencies in the short run or the medium term can operate in Afghanistan. That is one of the perils of the U.S. Armed Forces is we can do it. We can do neighborhood councils, call-in radio shows, women's rights groups, sanitation projects in downtown Kandahar. That is what is in the short run our only option.

I do not believe—in fact, I differ from other panel members possibly on this. I do not believe in the short run that what we are talking about in Afghanistan is witness protection programs. There is no—at district capitals there is no operational police force, no court system, no jail. Nothing is there except raw power.

And I also don't even—I wouldn't characterize this as an insurgency. That implies there is a central government against which we are fighting, as opposed to seeing this more likely as an ongoing tribal ethnic war for the control of that part of the world, though

I think in the short run, it is armed power with multiple purposes and a considerable amount of U.S. resources.

Mr. ROGERS. Thanks. My time just expired.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Pingree for five minutes. And then we will do it fairly strictly on our five minutes since we are going to have votes here.

Ms. PINGREE. Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I will try to be brief here.

I appreciate everyone's testimony on this complicated issue that we are spending a lot of time trying to sort through as we think about what should happen next, and I really appreciate all of your perspectives. I will start with Mr. Waldman, and if anybody else agrees on this particular point, I would be happy to hear from anyone else's perspective.

You brought up this issue that I think is often pointed out, but very difficult for us to think about in terms of our military involvement because we like to think about a military solution, and you suggested this point that people say perhaps our very presence, the paradox of our presence is the problem. So when we think about committing to more troop strength, even further involvement of our military to deal with the chaos there, we often think about the other side, you know, maybe our presence is the problem.

So I just would like to hear you talk about that a little bit more, particularly in light of the fact that even you said on the other hand, many of the people doing civilian aid and the NGOs there are corrupt, there is not enough transparency around that. So while we can talk about philosophically, well, we will put more people in the country to rebuild the institutions there and really get back to the kind of place where perhaps there could be a major shift in this power struggle, we haven't been successful at that either.

So can you talk a little bit about something that I think for many people is a dramatically different—difficult concept to swallow, but perhaps is exactly what we should be doing?

Mr. WALDMAN. Yes. Thank you.

I think that what you have indicated, though, is correct. There is this problem that in some ways international forces are part of the difficulties that we are seeing. And, of course, on the other hand, a rapid withdrawal would—could be extremely destabilizing. So I think it needs—it needs to be dealt with very carefully.

I mean, I think, first of all, rather than treat numbers, the question is on the one hand, what are the troops doing, and how are they operating? Of course, that means minimal force. We have seen quite a significant number of casualties, and they are coming down now. And I think General McChrystal can be acknowledged to have played an important part of achieving that. But keeping casualties very low is crucial and making sure redress to Afghanistan civilians when they suffer through operations is inevitable in that sort of situation.

And then I think, as you have indicated, we have got to do better at the state building, and I would suggest that actually you find that the real problem—actually NGOs take only a limited proportion of the amount of aid going to Afghanistan, but by far a bigger

proportion of it is run through foreign government agencies, and there, I think, is a lot we could be doing better.

For a start, the Foreign Service personnel have actually got to be engaging with the local people, getting out there, not living behind fortified compounds, and there has got to be better understanding of Afghan society so that we can really respond to Afghan needs. But at the same time, make sure we don't—we can't do everything, and we have got to be clear about what is possible and focus on that. The National Solidarity Program is an example where, by focusing on communities themselves that traditionally in Afghanistan have great capability to provide for themselves, that you can really—you can start to see progress.

But I also think—I come back to this point—that ultimately the real solution here is going to be a political one, and it requires us to engage on a political level and address some of these problems and concerns. I mean, I think the excessive concentration of power in the hands of a limited number of people of dubious records, let us put it that way, is one of the major problems. I think we also need to address the imbalance of power between the center of government and local government.

But again, trying to support the development of just some basic functioning representative institutions, these are the sorts of steps that really could see—we could start to see a solution in sight.

Ms. COLE. I think the question of whether the United States troops are drawing attack and, if they were gone, that they wouldn't have a problem is maybe not the right way to look at this. I mean, if you think about post-9/11, the U.N. has been attacked, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been attacked. Humanitarian workers are constantly under attack. The Brits, all of our other allies are constantly facing attacks. So it is not a question of removal of our forces, it is a question of winning the peace. And I think that we need to shift and think about that a lot more.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Platts for five minutes.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I first thank all of the witnesses for your testimony, obviously great expertise that you bring to our committee, and we are grateful for that.

Two things. First, a quick follow-up on my colleague's question on the issue of Afghanistan being a vital national interest. And I think—I look at it in the sense of how we would have looked at this country in 1989 when we helped the Afghanis, in essence, throw the Soviets out. And if asked—in fact, I think Congress was asked in 1989 is it of national vital interest to be there, and the answer was no. And we, in essence, walked away, and we learned 12 years later, well, yeah, it was, when it came to the lives of 3,000 American citizens that were taken on 9/11, that it is going to be difficult, but just standing back and watching what happens was not in the best interests of our citizens.

So I think it goes to where we are today, unless we want to repeat that era and allow it again to become a safe haven for those who want to take American lives, it clearly is of vital interest. So it is not going to be easy how to ensure that that doesn't happen going forward from where we are today, but my specific question

actually is regarding the comment of the military presence is one of the problems for us in Afghanistan.

Having been in Afghanistan five times now, and one of the most informative visits I had was several years back in Jalalabad where our PRT team, civilian USAID officer working hand in hand with an Army lieutenant colonel and just doing amazing work. And in our time with them, we met with the local mullahs that gathered, tribal leaders that came in and we met with. And it was clear what a positive relationship that both the USAID officer had and the female Army lieutenant colonel had with those local leaders and the advancement they were achieving there.

I don't know how we do the development in the environment we are in without that partnership, hand in hand, because I wouldn't want that USAID officer out there without the military security to protect. I think it is more how we approach it. So I guess it is really, Mr. Waldman, how do you do the development in the environment today without the security that the military brings to those USAID and other officers?

Mr. WALDMAN. Thank you. I think that is an excellent question, and it poses real challenges for aid workers and civilians that are operating in development in Afghanistan.

I think we do have to at some point consider the fact that of the 26 provincial reconstruction teams that exist in Afghanistan, in the provinces in which they operate, there has not been a diminution of insurgent activity. In fact, it has increased.

Now, I am not saying there is a direct relation, but we have to, I think, ask ourselves whether the PRTs are able to achieve stability objectives, and I think the answer to that is no. And as I said, I think the reason for that is because it doesn't take into account the complex, the very complex and diverse, rich context of Afghanistan, the history of this resistance to outsiders, that culture, that conservatism and a number of other factors, including the action of insurgents.

Mr. PLATTS. Is it possible that how we have resourced them has played an important role, that we have a team there, but what we actually give them on the development side?

Mr. WALDMAN. No, I don't think that is the problem. In fact, I think the problem is that because they exist, a lot of the aid has gone to those PRTs. And, in fact, what you are doing is you are breaking the accountability of Afghan leaders to the Afghan people, because there is a parallel foreign mechanism that has been inserted into the society. So what the real focus is to build Afghan institutions——

Mr. PLATTS. If I can ask on that real quickly. In Pakistan I know USAID is doing some development work that it is in the arena of counterinsurgency, but where it is actually done under the name of the Pakistan Government or in partner with. So we are not the lead. Is that what you think is a better approach not just in Pakistan, but in Afghanistan?

Mr. WALDMAN. Well, I think really what we should be doing is the military should focus on security issues. And I think the military have some legitimacy in that area, and I think Afghans expect them and actually want them in many cases to do that, to focus on that issue.

But actually civilians need to be the primary—the central channel for civilian activities, and actually there are a number of mechanisms. I mean, first of all, you have, of course, Afghan NGOs, and many are desperate for money, for funding to actually operate. And in areas in the south and southeast, we found—who I used to work for—sorry. My apologies.

Dr. SNYDER. I don't think we have time, unfortunately, right now for an augmented answer that begins "first of all." But I apologize. We will come after a series of votes.

Mr. Spratt, I want to give you a chance before the votes, and we will come back afterwards.

Mr. SPRATT. Rather than keeping the whole group here, I will——

Dr. SNYDER. We have time.

Mr. SPRATT. Just a quick question.

General McCaffrey in particular, to pick up where you left off, if our original purpose in going to Afghanistan was to crush al Qaeda, to exact a full measure of retribution upon them and to render them ineffective, have we strayed from our original objective? Have you said we set the wrong objectives and raised the bar unnecessarily highly in Afghanistan?

General MCCAFFREY. Again, I—back to the fundamental challenge we face is we are where we are today, but I think the original notion was one of anger, retaliation, vengeance, all of it appropriate. Afghanistan deserved to be part of that target of reaction.

We essentially achieved our initial purpose to some extent. I think it was a strategic surprise of immense proportions that the U.S. Armed Forces struck at them 700 miles from the sea, 7,000 miles from the United States, something I think had enormous heuristic benefit for al Qaeda globally deployed.

By the way, we ought to take into account we have killed or captured much of the senior al Qaeda leadership. Indeed there is an argument that 10 years from now, our principal threat will be Hezbollah, not al Qaeda.

But I think we have been a force in search of a mission, and the sensible mission, in my viewpoint, if the American people and the Congress and the administration support it, it would be to build a viable state over the decade to come. And we can do that at significant cost, probably 60 billion to 80 billion a year, and another 30- to 40,000 killed and wounded. We would probably achieve that objective.

Now, one caveat, and I think Mr. Waldman and I would not be on the same side of the sheet on this one. I have over the last 30 years of public service been astonished at the courage and the creativity and the language skills of the international NGO community. They are beyond belief, to include Oxfam. But there is a handful of them.

Afghanistan is big muscle movements, it is 30 million people. Nobody moves in the south except the Marine rifle company. Nobody is out in the east except a PRT. I think these have been huge payoffs. They simply couldn't exist. They would be blown away in the wind within an hour of us extracting the military component.

We still have a choice, but I don't think there is a choice of waving a magic hand and saying, we can turn this over to civilian

agencies. We can't turn it over in State Department, Treasury, Agriculture. They can't do it. They won't do it. When I asked the agricultural guy in a PRT, what are you, an Iowa farmer, what is your background, he will invariably say, sir, I am an artillery lieutenant colonel, I retired a year ago. And he gave me a 2-week course, and I am over here teaching them how to plant rice.

I think that is worth talking about, whether that is the appropriate thing to do. But in the short run, that is reality.

Dr. SNYDER. We have no time left on the votes. We better go vote. What we are going to do is we have about a half hour of votes, and then there will be a motion to recommit. So we will come back right after that vote before the motion to recommit. We will have the time for debate, and then we will probably have another half hour of questions for anyone who wants to come back. It will be about a half hour or so for the witnesses.

[Recess.]

Dr. SNYDER. Well, that didn't quite work out like we thought it would, did it? I apologize for that. They changed the order of votes and didn't have a vote we thought we were going to have. Mr. Wittman has a conflict, and I appreciate your patience. You have all been public servants for a long, long time, and we have asked you to go further once again than we thought we were going to.

I want to ask, and I may direct this to General McCaffrey and General Barno, and the other two can feel free to join in also if you would like. General McChrystal's report, at least the unclassified version that we read publicly, he mentions the 12 months several times. I would like you, General McCaffrey and General Barno, if you would comment on, without my leading you down a road, when you saw the 12-month number, what does that mean to you in this report in terms of what we need to be thinking about as we are making our decisions looking ahead?

General MCCAFFREY. Part of it may well be that General McChrystal, having served here, understands the dynamics of Washington as well as he does of the battlefield. I personally can't imagine that 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, 180 days one way or another actually makes much of a difference, but he's also understanding it takes us normally 2 years to make a significant policy decision in this Capital, as my own rule of thumb, and it takes a year for the military to make substantial reinforcements of a war that is in a 7,000-mile away theater.

So I think his assessment on the ground, and I will probably have a better informed viewpoint by the end of November, is that the tactical situation deteriorated remarkably. You know, the currently serving unbelievably talented general officers we have got in the war zone don't like me using this language, but we are seeing battalion-size units of the Taliban, 200, 300, 400-man outfits who are doing reconnaissance for 30 to 90 days of a target and are then using rockets, indirect fire, mortar, fire maneuver. It is astonishing. Some of them are using electronic intercept. They are wearing REI camping gear. They are a remarkably dangerous force. I have warned several of them about our own tactical arrogance. We are going to lose platoon and company-size units if we don't watch our step here in the coming year.

So I think General McChrystal, who is probably the best fighter that has emerged from the Armed Forces in 25 years, was looking at that situation and said you had better get some resources to me rapidly, a conclusion with which I totally agree.

General BARNO. I think in a way this goes back to my comment about the Taliban running out the clock, and they realize the clock in Washington is moving at a more rapid place than the clock in Afghanistan or Pakistan, even among our NATO allies in some regards, and I think General McChrystal is looking at that from the standpoint that the enemy is moving very rapidly. He has the initiative right now. He is doing offensively a great deal. He is getting to choose the time and place of his actions without a lot of constraints, and I think McChrystal in a sense of wresting that initiative back from the enemy, feels he has to do that in the next year or the enemy is simply going to be too strong for us to have the capability to turn this around.

It also, I think, plays into General McChrystal's perspective that this is a strategy behind which after another year or so there may be inadequate public support to continue. So I think he sees the next 12 months as critical.

Dr. SNYDER. Now I am asking you to say what you think he meant, but let me put it this way: It would be a mistake for folks on this side of the dais to say 13, 14 months from now, well, it has been 12 months and we are still having problems. That is not the lesson we should take from the way McChrystal has phrased that language; is that a fair statement do you believe?

General MCCAFFREY. Absolutely. I cannot imagine—I must admit I think Secretary Gates is one of the most remarkable public servants we have had in office in 15 years; however, the notion that we are going to make a substantial change in a year to 18 months strikes me as the inappropriate level of expectations. I still believe this is two to five years of very hard work, including some serious fighting, followed by a decade or so of nation-building activities.

General BARNO. I would generally agree with that. I think, as General McCaffrey pointed out, it takes a good bit of time to get those additional forces into the theater. So even if the decision was made today to add, let's say, five brigades of additional combat forces, you are not going to see those brigades for at least six months, perhaps longer than that. And it takes time, as we saw in Iraq, for those units to actually get on the ground, get established, and then begin to have an influence.

In my judgment, the way I would look at this, is the next 12 months is basically the time to stabilize the patient and then after that you are going to look at basically getting, you know, the patient back into full health and go on a counteroffensive to take the momentum away from the enemy, but you are not going to see a complete turnaround in this situation in 12 months by any stretch of the imagination.

Dr. SNYDER. Because I think you probably talked the most, General Barno, in your opening statement about framing this right for the American public so they understand it, we need to make sure that people understand this is going to be some hard fighting. Now, maybe things will go better than we think. Things could go more

difficult than we think. But you are putting in a range, General McCaffrey, of two to five years. Maybe it will turn out to 18 months to 6 years. I mean we don't know. But that is part of the difficulty of fighting a war. I think it is important the American public be prepared for some uncertainty.

Again asking you both to comment, but you have probably framed it in your opening statement, General McCaffrey, when you talked about—I think you said three basic options: Hunker down, drop back and re-evaluate where you are, or go ahead.

How do you evaluate where we are at right now today?

General MCCAFFREY. Well, the good news is in the short run, you know, if you fly over Afghanistan, which all of you in the room have done, and you saw it right after we got in there and you saw it today, there has been enormous change for the better. There is a road network emerging, there are institutions, there is a military academy, there is a physics lab in Kabul, court systems have started. So tremendous progress in some ways have occurred.

The other tiny bit of good news is, and I remind military audiences, we have lost—the U.S. Armed Forces lost a brigade-size unit essentially twice in Vietnam. We had divisions dismantled twice in Korea. We lost a field army, most of it, twice in World War II, at Bataan and the Battle of the Bulge.

So there is no reason why we are magic out there in a rough world. In Afghanistan today it is hard for me to imagine a tactical disaster of any serious consequence. You can't overrun a U.S. Marine battalion with the entire Pashtun nation today. So that is the good news. The bad news is the situation is spinning out of control, and clearly the answer isn't military. It is a lot of things at the same time: legitimacy of the government, economic rebuilding, most of which ought to be agriculture.

But those—one of our panelists mentioned witness protection programs. I mean those are the kind of things that are step 10 of a 10-step process, and we are still on step one.

General BARNO. I think I would agree with that. But I would also maybe take a step a bit higher and say I think the pervasive feeling in Afghanistan today is broadly uncertainty as they look at the international effort, and I think that is a debilitating perception because it causes people to have to judge based on not knowing what the U.S. military is going to do, not knowing what the NATO force is going to do, not knowing what the United Nations are going to do, not knowing what NGOs are going to do. They don't know who is going to be standing at the end of day out there, and they are having to make tough decisions without really seeing a clear path.

So I endorse the thought that this is a deliberate decision-making process here in Washington, but there is also a need once that decision gets made to violently and aggressively and fully execute it and implement it as rapidly as possible in Afghanistan because there is a perception—every day that we go on with our process, as necessary as it is, there is a perception out there that we are wavering and we are looking for a way to get to the exits, and that I think is very dangerous to us in our overall objectives.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis for such time as she needs.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, thank you all for waiting through the votes. We certainly appreciate that. We know you have very full schedules.

I wanted to just follow up for a moment because there was the article today about the Nawa area, and there has been a lot of discussion about whether or not troop levels even of 40,000 is really what would be required. They mention the fact in this particular article—I guess this is the Post—of 1 to 50 ratio to the population, and that is basically what they tried to do in that area. They have had some success, but sometimes that is a fleeting success. It doesn't necessarily mean that it stabilized the whole area.

So could you respond to that perhaps, General McCaffrey and General Barno, whoever would like to do that? I actually hate to get into a discussion of the exact number of troops, but on the other hand isn't what is truly required if we were actually going to be trying to change the projections that you would need so many more troops than that?

General MCCAFFREY. Well, there are probably two different aspects of that very legitimate question. One is I personally don't buy algorithms that are fixed such as 1 to 50. I think some of that is nonsense. The Brits ran a lot of these places with five smart Oxford boys who studied Greek and used native levies to, you know, achieve balance among the tribes.

My own view would be, and I think McChrystal's report is focussed on this, the only center of gravity of the struggle in Afghanistan is building the Afghan security forces, along with jump-starting the economy, social institutions, political institutions. But at the end of the day it is the Afghan National Army and the police. The police is a 15-year job; the army is a 5-year job. You can't do it overnight. You have got to get officers, sergeants, equipment, training. They have got to have their own helicopter lift force. The Afghan National Security Force is the answer. I do not think the notion that we are going to embed U.S. Army and Marine rifle platoons in Pashtun villages is the way we are going to turn this around. So some of that in the short run we have got to do. I understand. But thank God we have got the Stryker Brigade in there so that at least now I am convinced that day to day the road network we can keep open.

So it is the Afghan National Army (ANA). That is the center of gravity of the war from the U.S. military's perspective in my judgment.

Mrs. DAVIS. General Barno.

General BARNO. We talked about that actually a bit at the break with Beth Cole here that this ramp-up of the Afghan security forces is going to be absolutely critical, and we have got Lieutenant General Bill Caldwell nominated to go out there and take over that mission. That is going to be the most important thing that happens in Afghanistan in the next three years. And his challenge will be to muster as much energy from Washington to help him get that done as he can because if that doesn't work, then the rest of the enterprise is not going to work for us. Those are going to eventually have to be not Marines at Nawa but Afghan forces at Nawa, both police and army.

Ms. COLE. Just to add to that, I think we also need to step back again and realize that part of the country we are trying to sta-

bilize, the other part of the country we are actually doing reconstruction. It is not all combat all the time. So whatever algorithm you want to arrive at, we need to identify the areas where there is high insurgent activity and try to stabilize those while keeping our eye on the other places where we actually—where we have stabilized and we are actually in a reconstruction mode. It is not all combat all the time.

Mr. WALDMAN. Just one or two remarks about Afghan national security forces. I think certainly there needs to be a great deal of caution not to sacrifice quality in a drive for quantity. And of course General McChrystal has suggested doubling the number of police and perhaps more than doubling the number of military serving in the Army. And they are on short time frames as well. And I think certainly with respect to the police it is arguable that some of the actions at a local level have perhaps consolidated and strengthened the insurgency. So a great deal of caution is required there, I think.

We also need to think about sustainability. The Afghan Government has a revenue of about a billion dollars. Now, the United States, as I understand it, is spending about $3.5, $3.6 billion on the Afghan national security forces this year. So it is going to be important to think about the financial sustainability of the armed forces.

I mean, the other points I would make that are really critical to this is effective political engagement at addressing some of these problems. Until some of these fundamental problems are addressed in society, then these conflicts will continue. And I mean this is an incredibly complex area. It is, I think, very difficult for outsiders to understand, but I think we can at least recognize that that is the case and to take steps to help institutions and political systems to be able to address that.

And I just want to put on the record, I did want to mention I think it is important to clarify that nongovernmental organizations can operate in insecure areas, and actually in the south and southeast there are many that do operate there today. I mean, NGOs operated under the Taliban regime right up until the intervention. There are mechanisms of doing that, and of course the priority has got to be those organizations which are going to be there into the future and that are Afghan that can respond to Afghan needs, and then you are starting to build up accountability within society for how resources are used to benefit people.

So I would stress that side of the state-building agenda.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. I appreciate that. I think what the American people are having a very difficult time understanding is whether or not we would continue an effort where we don't perceive nor do the people that we are trying to help perceive that there is a legitimate government.

In that context is there a role that you think we should be doing differently in the upcoming election and are we using whatever leverage we have, which should be great but I think we haven't necessarily used it much, in trying to really impress upon the leaders that we need to see some action, whether it is in the corruption area or what have you? What is our leverage that you see, and how

do we explain to the American people that this is an effort done really with a void in terms of the governing?

General BARNO. I was the overall military commander during the 2004 presidential election, and we made the main effort for the military that year of setting conditions for that election because we recognized it was the most important strategic event in Afghanistan in 2004. The election this year was the most important strategic event in Afghanistan. In many ways it was a serious failure. The international community, the United Nations took a very minimalist role where they had the ability to take a much greater role to prevent the outcome that we saw occur after August 20.

So now there is almost an opportunity to do this the second time. So one of the things I think that absolutely has to happen is a much deeper international and United Nations effort to ensure this election is held in a supervised manner, which the last one was not. Now, the timelines make that extraordinarily difficult to do. So I think that is an area.

On the other side of the coin I would say the fact we are going to a run-off reflects some strength in the process. There were enough safeguards in the process so that the initial election result rightfully was called into question, was challenged, was evaluated, and enough votes were thrown out to force a run-off. That is a success story, although a dusty, muddy one, I am afraid, but it is still a success story. Now the legitimacy in this next election is critical to ensure that the outcome of that has the confidence of the Afghan people.

Ms. COLE. I think we actually have an opportunity right now, as was demonstrated with Senator Kerry negotiating with President Karzai, to identify those people in the government who we know that are corrupt and we know the Afghan people don't respect and to try to deal with them at this moment and then to embrace and empower the ones that we know are legitimate and are accountable. And we have all worked with wonderful Afghan leaders, ministers and others, who are the leaders for the future, but I think we have a moment in time right now where we have to press this case, the international community, all of those nations that have invested in Afghanistan, and do it with the Afghans themselves. But I think it is time to press it.

Mr. WALDMAN. I would just add to that, I think many of the policies that we have implemented have actually compounded these problems of corruption, in fact. It was policies that forged alliances with local strongmen and warlords in Afghanistan that have I think led to this you know modus avendi of corruption, and it is not surprising that that is, you know, reflected in the current administration. And I think it really does require America and other states to usually reach to change their position with respect to those kinds of alliances of convenience and take principled stands on some of these issues.

You know, I also think that there are other things that can be done better; for example, the work on governance. If you look at the thousands of consultants that are deployed in what is an uncoordinated fashion, many have little experience. Some are you know very talented but many have little experience. They don't have familiarity with the country, of course paid enormous sums money,

and I think there really needs to be a very serious consideration, a rigorous consideration of what they are delivering. Of course they are necessary to some extent, but I think we have to accept there are deep flaws in the contracting and the consulting system that currently exists.

Dr. SNYDER. I want to ask another question, again directed primarily to the military folks but the others can join in if they would like. Would you all put yourself in the position of the Pakistani military as they are undertaking what appears to be some very difficult work on the Pakistani side of the border? How do they view this discussion that is going on? What do they want to have happen on the Afghan side of the border with regard to the NATO forces?

General MCCAFFREY. I am always fascinated—I always start off in Pakistan, spend some period of time there and listen very carefully to the Pak military and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Pakistani politicians and go to the other side of the border, to include the U.S. team. Sometimes opposite sides of the coin. It is astonishing why there is this division, why there is this deep loathing on the part of the Afghans, many of them, toward the Pakistanis that gave them some support and sanctuary for so many years in their struggle against the Soviets and, conversely, the lack of the sort of empathy on the part of the Pakistanis for the millions of Afghan refugees who are stuck in their own territory. It has been surprising to me.

The Pakistani military, and a couple of us were talking about this before, I am not an expert on Pakistan but I am sure of one thing: That is not a single monolithic state. It is four separate nations under one weak federal system. And when you look at the federal system, there has been a history of corruption and incompetence on the part of the political parties and the leadership. And the one institution that has been load bearing in Pakistan was the army, and the army is also the ISI and the army is the Frontier Corps, and the army loans their generals to run ministries.

So it has tended to be—and it is also, and this disturbs people, the most respected institution bar none in Pakistan. So we end up with a situation—by the way, neither the army nor the political system never had one bit of control over the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), never mind much of Balochistan. There are places in downtown Quetta where the ISI won't go at night. So under our urging, they have intervened in these border areas. They are a remarkably small, professional, badly equipped force. They are primarily—if you talk to the Pak military, they spend 99 percent of their time worrying about the Indians and the confrontation to the east. Gradually they have come to support us.

I personally think that without the support of the Pakistani Government and the military, our presence in Afghanistan would disappear and die of lack of oxygen within a year. So we have to be very careful of what we say in public and what we do in private. I think the initiative to provide nonmilitary aid to Pakistan is really a good one.

So we are broadening our contact with these people in the last year. That is the good news.

General BARNO. I would broadly agree with that. I spend lots of time with Pakistani officers. I have got 50 of them coming to my

center here in a week for another 2-week session, which we have done several times in the last year. They are conflicted in some ways because now they recognize they have an internal security threat with the so-called Pakistani Taliban, who are somewhat different and distinct from the Afghan Taliban across the border. They are now—their activity in the Pakistani army in fighting this Pakistani Taliban in Swat and now about to start in Waziristan is impressive. It is notable. It is a major change and it very much supports our interests and their interests.

They have a bit of a different approach, I think, with regard to the Taliban in Afghanistan. And I think it is most positive that there is ambivalence, that they—they neither support them directly or fight them directly and have had a historical connection to that group that has given them capability to influence events inside of Afghanistan. They don't want to let go of that connection entirely because they are simply uncertain about what we are going to do and whether we are going to be there three years or five years from now.

So I think they deserve full credit for what they are doing in fighting their own internal threat which they now recognize, and I think we need to continue to work with them on convincing them we are there for the long haul so they can disassociate themselves further from the Afghan Taliban that are fighting our forces now in the southern and eastern portions of Afghanistan.

Dr. SNYDER. Susan, do you have anything further?

Mrs. DAVIS. No.

Dr. SNYDER. Once again I apologize for the delay due to votes, but you have all been through that before. We appreciate your service. We appreciate your attendance here today. Feel free to send us anything written for us to look at that will also be made part of this record if you think of something that you would like to add. Thank you, again, for being here today.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:55 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

October 22, 2009

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

OCTOBER 22, 2009

Statement of Ranking Member Rob Wittman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Armed Services Committee

Hearing on Afghanistan and Iraq: Perspectives on U.S. Strategy

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October 22, 2009

Thank you, Chairman Snyder, and good afternoon to our witnesses – we appreciate your being here today.

As the Chairman noted, this session marks the beginning of a new series of hearings, similar to the subcommittee's effort a couple of years ago regarding Iraq. I applaud the initiative. The subcommittee's Iraq hearings led to excellent policy discussions, and I expect that this series of hearings will do the same. We need as much focus on the importance of our national effort in

Afghanistan as we can muster. The United States has been directly involved in Afghan affairs since we helped the Afghan people overthrow the Taliban eight years ago, and we are just now coming to grips with the strategic costs of completing the task we started.

The threshold question is, of course, does it matter to the United States what kind of government exists in Afghanistan? Would it substantially harm US interests if the Taliban reasserted their repressive regime and freely collaborated with their brethren in Pakistan? What would be the implications for Pakistan, their stability, and their nuclear weapons?

I realize that I do not pose these questions in a neutral way, but am nonetheless interested in hearing what our witnesses think. I believe there is some diversity of opinion on the panel.

We have 68,000 troops deployed in Afghanistan today, performing a variety of missions: fighting and dying on daily patrols with Afghan Army and police units; working with dedicated foreign service and US AID professionals throughout the nation, as well as NATO allies and various Non Governmental Organizations, or NGOs; and training and working with the Afghan national Army and Police, building new, unprecedented professional national institutions.

As the whole world knows, General McChrystal has proposed a new strategy and asked for more troops to help implement that strategy. Even though he made that request almost two months ago, and even though he noted that the enemy was gaining strength, the President seems to be in no rush to decide.

No President should send troops to combat without a well considered plan. At the same time, we have been committed to Afghanistan for eight years, are working with trusted NATO allies, and have substantial forces there now. The President has ruled out precipitous withdrawal. It is now time to make the hard choice that

US interests in this turbulent region require our best effort and provide the troops the commander needs.

Although there is little evidence of al Qaeda in Afghanistan, sorting out the insurgents is notoriously difficult in the Pashtun belt along the Pakistan/Afghanistan border. There is no question that insurgents hostile to US interests are flourishing there, and we should adopt a fully resourced strategy that mitigates the risk to the United States.

Without question, Afghanistan is a fiendishly tough problem with challenges we did not face in Iraq—desperate poverty with associated illiteracy and shortened

life span; no economy to speak of; flourishing drug trade; widespread corruption throughout the society; and an even more complex tribal and ethnic mix. Establishing a society based on law and a legitimate economy will take years, whatever form it may take. Should we make the effort? I think we must. Still, I would like our witnesses' views on that question. If they believe we should make the effort, then I ask that they tell us what they believe we should do. In short, what would you advise the President to do? There is no more important issue before the President and Congress than this.

I look forward to the discussion today and in the weeks to come.

Adjunct Professor of International Affairs
West Point, NY

October 22, 2009

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED BY GENERAL BARRY R. McCAFFREY (USA, Ret.)

SUBMITTED TO: **U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, SUBCOMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

SUBJECT: U.S. Strategy Options in Afghanistan

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Wittman, it is an honor to submit this statement to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for the hearing on U.S. strategy options in Afghanistan.

Our national security policy making process is relatively straightforward.

- The civilian leadership of the nation – the President, the Congress, and the appointed leaders of the Executive Branch – develop and articulate political-military strategies to attain critical national goals.

- Executive branch officials and uniformed military leaders then develop implementing operational and tactical plans, which are considered and approved by the National Command Authority in consultation with the Congress, which provides the requisite resources.

In some instances – such as the ongoing debate over how to implement the Administration's strategy in Afghanistan – this policy development process is fairly transparent. In less than a year, the new Administration conducted a review of policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan, announced a new strategy, appointed new military commanders to head operations in those countries because of their demonstrated success in addressing insurgency within Iraq, and is now considering the recommendations of its on-the-ground senior commanders about how to accomplish the goals established in President Obama's strategy. It is useful to review what was stated publicly at each of these critical junctures in order to understand the policy dilemma facing the administration today in Afghanistan.

SUMMARY OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN STRATEGY (ANNOUNCED IN MARCH 2009)

- The situation in Afghanistan: In the eight years since the removal of the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, the conflict in Afghanistan continues. The security situation in that country is worsening – insurgents control parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and attacks against U.S. and NATO forces and the Afghan government have risen steadily. We need a stronger, smarter and

comprehensive strategy. We are no longer forced to deny resources to Afghanistan because of the heavy burden of the war in Iraq.

- The U.S. purpose in Afghanistan: Our objective is to prevent the fall of the Afghan government to the Taliban and prevent al Qaeda from operating unchallenged in either Pakistan or Afghanistan. Afghanistan must not again be a base for terrorists who want to kill Americans. A return to Taliban rule in Afghanistan would probably result in a return in force of al Qaeda terrorists and leave Afghanistan in perpetual violence. The NATO force and Afghan security elements must confront a common enemy that threatens both the United States and our friends and our allies. The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have suffered the most at the hands of violent Islamic extremists.

- Key elements of the U.S. strategy to attain stated goals in Afghanistan:
  - Stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy.
  - Provide resources to Afghanistan that were previously denied because of the burden of the war in Iraq.
  - Enhance the military, governance and economic capacity of Afghanistan.
  - Comprehensive campaign that involves more than bullets or bombs -- and features resources to strengthen democracy and build critical infrastructure (schools, roads, agriculture, hospitals).
  - Reverse the Taliban's growing control of the Pashtun people and promote a more capable and accountable Afghan government.
  - Take the fight to the Taliban in the south and the east in partnership with Afghan security forces. Go after insurgents along the border.
  - Provide greater physical security to enable Afghan elections to occur peacefully.
  - Shift the emphasis of our mission to equipping training and increasing the size of Afghan security forces. Build an Afghan army of 250,000 and a police force of 100,000 by 2011.
  - Address weaknesses of Afghanistan's elected government – corruption and inability to deliver basic services.
  - Develop an agricultural economy that is not dominated by illicit drugs.
  - Facilitate reconciliation among former enemies in every province.
  - Consistently assess our efforts to train Afghan security forces and our progress in combating insurgents. Ask whether we are using the right tools and tactics to make progress towards accomplishing our goals.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM IN AFGHANISTAN

Within 60 days of articulating the President's new March 2009 strategy, the Administration correctly decided that new military leadership was required to implement that new strategy. As he announced the nominations of General Stanley McChrystal and LTG David Rodriguez to assume leadership of military operations in Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Gates indicated that he expected new thinking and

approaches from this extremely capable and experienced leadership team. Clearly, the Administration demanded that this new military team would provide rapid feedback subsequent to being confirmed by the Senate about how to operationalize the Administration's new strategy in Afghanistan.

General McChrystal is probably the most successful and courageous counter-terrorism fighter in the past 25 years. He summarized his understanding of Administration policy during his Senate confirmation process in June. In his written responses to questions from the Senate, General McChrystal:

- Restated the Administration's strategy: "The strategic goal to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan is essential to the long term security of the United States, our allies, and the region."

- General McChrystal indicated that the "strategy calls for the resources necessary for a fully-resourced counterinsurgency. It promotes a whole-of-government integrated counterinsurgency approach to address challenges in the region. As a result, significantly more resources will be devoted to the civilian efforts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan."

- He outlined the major challenges he anticipated in Afghanistan:

  - First: "secure the population and separate them from the insurgents. Only where we can prevent insurgents from controlling the population through intimidation and coercion can we provide an opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan, with our support, to establish full legitimate governance and stability."

  - Second: "we must work to improve governance at every level in order to facilitate development and other activities that will strengthen the legitimacy of, and popular support for, the Government – and reduce insurgent control or influence."

  - Third: "increase the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces (Army and Police). Ultimately, security in Afghanistan must be provided by a combination of military and police forces of sufficient strength in personnel, equipment, and training to cover security missions ranging from national defense to local policing."

- General McChrystal signaled his intent to review the current assessment and the existing tactical plan and produce an Integrated Civilian-Military Plan. He stated he intended to designate development of Afghan National Security Forces as his highest priority task. The central focus of the US command would be the effective execution of counterinsurgency operations.

Clearly, General McChrystal interpreted that the centerpiece of the President's strategy should be counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. His subsequent recommendations on how to operationalize the President's strategy were expected to feature the principal elements of a COIN campaign. This should not have been a surprise to those who understood the implications of the Administration's strategy, who understand the senior military commanders' background and experience, and who are familiar with COIN operations.

COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS "101"

In conventional warfare, the enemy's 'center of gravity' is generally considered to be his military forces and the conflict is usually between states.

In an insurgency, civil-military operations are centered on the socio-economic-political arena -- not between opposing forces. The insurgency conflict is predominantly intrastate -- although external actors/forces are frequently involved. Finally, the insurgency center of gravity is legitimacy, popular support, and political power. Success in a COIN campaign is attained by depriving the insurgency of legitimacy and its ability to destabilize and replace a government.

Shared elements of successful COIN campaigns since World War II include:

- Strategies to address socio-economic-political injustice that allowed the insurgency to grow.
- Political and economic reforms to build legitimacy.
- Military operations to protect the population and infrastructure from insurgent attack and influence.
- Intelligence operations to identify and dismantle the insurgent leadership structure.
- Elimination and isolation of the insurgents' sources of support (both domestic and international).
- Recognition that an external power may be able to prevent an insurgency from overthrowing an existing government BUT that the only long-term defense against an insurgency is an effective and popularly accepted national government.

One of the principal admonitions of the German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz was that statesmen (i.e. political leaders) and commanders (military leaders) needed to establish an up front agreement on what kind of war they were embarking in. Clearly, both the Obama Administration and its recently appointed senior military leadership team agreed that the effort in Afghanistan was primarily a counterinsurgency, as opposed to a conventional conflict or a more artificially and infeasible limited counter-terrorist operation.

GENERAL MCCHRYSTAL'S ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

It is useful to summarize the key points made by General McChrystal in his initial assessment of the situation in Afghanistan* and his recommendations on how to meet those challenges.

1. The situation in Afghanistan is serious and that the overall situation is deteriorating. Afghans are frustrated by 8 years with not a lot of progress. There is still insecurity; the Taliban are gaining strength; Afghan security forces cannot offer the required protection to the people; governance is still bad; corruption is rampant.

2. The problem is not only a resilient and growing insurgency; there is also a crisis of confidence among Afghans – in both their government and the international community which undermines Karzai's credibility and emboldens the insurgents.

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* COMISAF'S INITIAL ASSESSMENT, dated 30 August 2009. Unclassified version from *Washington Post* website - http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf?sid=ST2009092003140

3. The insurgency must be confronted and its momentum reversed within 12 months. Any perception that our resolve is uncertain understandably makes Afghans more reluctant to oppose the insurgents.

4. The center of gravity of the Taliban is the inability to provide for the needs of the population "by, with, and through the Afghan government." The insurgency can only be defeated by an Afghan solution. There must be a capable and accepted government with the requisite indigenous security forces that inspire confidence and support. There must be a system of government and a security force whose composition and organization recognizes and reflects the on-the-ground Afghan reality. Tribal, ethnic, and regional authorities and organizations can and must be the building blocks of a stable Afghan polity and state.

5. Success demands a comprehensive counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign that: results in the Afghan people's confidence in their government; builds capable and appropriate Afghan security forces; and commits resources to protect the most vulnerable populations.

6. The U.S. and NATO/UN international effort in Afghanistan has been under-resourced. The threat has increased to the point that the current level of resourcing is inadequate to address it. There needs to be an increase in total coalition military and civilian end-strength. There is currently an unacceptable level of risk.

General McChrystal's report makes it clear that he understood that the President's new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan called for an extensive counterinsurgency campaign and operations. His conclusions and recommendations in his report to CENTCOM echo the statements and declaration of intent that he made to the Senate prior to his confirmation as the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. They should not have come as a surprise to the Administration and those involved in the development of the President's strategy.

CONCLUSION

As the Administration and the Congress consider policy options in the closely linked struggles in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the strategy that was so clearly articulated by President Obama in March must now apparently be reassessed. Questions that the Congress should ask are:

- Have the conditions changed so significantly in the past six months that the strategic goals enunciated by the President are now unattainable?

- Should we conclude that a return to power in Afghanistan by the Taliban will result in the reestablishment of a safe-haven for Al Qaeda and dangerous threats to Americans?

- Can a sustained and appropriately resourced civil-military counterinsurgency campaign with strong economic and political components establish a resilient, self-sufficient Afghan polity over the long-term?

- Are the Administration and the Congress prepared to make the case to the American people that such a long-term strategy is fundamentally in the national interest?

The level of resources recommended by General McChrystal are achievable by our national security budget. Presently, we spend about three times as much in military operations in Iraq as we do in Afghanistan (the Administration's FY '09 supplemental requested $684B for Iraq and $223B for

Afghanistan). As the drawdown of military forces in Iraq does (and should) accelerate, there will be sufficient manpower and resources to support requirements in Afghanistan.

Since the signing by Egypt and Israel of the 1978 Camp David peace accords, Egypt has received approximately $60 billion in military and economic assistance from the United States -- and an international military peace-keeping force has been maintained in the Sinai. This is probably the level of international assistance that will be required by Afghanistan over the next ten years to establish a sustainable national security (military and police) capability sufficient to protect the nation against insurgents and terrorists. The economic impact of the 9/11 attacks launched by Afghanistan-based terrorists have been estimated to be more than $80B.* The level of additional resources General McChrystal proposes to avert the reestablishment of Taliban supported terrorist capabilities in Afghanistan is prudent insurance for US national security.

The questions that Congress must pose to the Administration include: what will it take to build a viable state in Afghanistan, an enormous, land-locked nation of 32 million people? Are we prepared to make the ten-year commitment required to create an operative Afghan state?

Those who are surprised by the end result of General McChrystal's analysis should understand that the lines of action described by him flow logically from the assumptions and conclusions that comprise the President's strategy. In my view, clearly the President must either support his new commander or change the Administration's strategic goals.

General McChrystal's plan outlines and justifies what it will take to operationalize the President's strategy. There are no real surprises in the commander's report. If the commander-in-chief truly intended to conduct a counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan, this is what it will take to do so.

General McCaffrey currently serves as an adjunct professor of international affairs at West Point. He previously served as U.S. drug czar from 1996 to 2001 and prior to that as Commander, United States Southern Command from 1994 to 1996. He served four combat tours and was wounded in action three times.

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* GAO-02-700R Impact of Terrorist Attacks on the World Trade Center, May 2002

NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

David W. Barno
Lt. General, USA (Ret.)
Director

House Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight

October 22, 2009

***Note – The views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Department of Defense.**

Crisis of Confidence – The United States in Afghanistan October 2009

In the aftermath of a deeply flawed Afghan election set in the context of steeply rising U.S. and NATO casualties over the summer, the United States is facing a crisis of confidence over its mission in Afghanistan. The publication of General McChrystal's commander's assessment has further fueled the debate. This short paper highlights several challenges.

What is the End Game for the U.S. in the region?

Until we can clearly answer this question -- to ourselves and to our friends in the region, we have no sound policy. We do not have a clear definition of success, and worse have signaled that "exit" is the ultimate goal. This is strategically unsound and undercuts virtually any strategy we pursue.

The fundamental flaw in any U.S. approach to Afghanistan or Pakistan remains the lack of confidence in American staying power: "You Americans are not going to abandon us again, are you?" This fundamental uncertainty drives the Pakistanis to judge all national security decisions upon the question: "What will this look like the day after the Americans leave?"

We must directly confront these fears by unequivocally asserting our intended long term presence and posture. Messaging that our long tem goal is "exit" deeply undercuts our influence on all actors and feeds directly into the Taliban's hands. We must craft a clear picture of what success looks like for our friends across the region.

Regarding Afghanistan, we have four major challenges before us:

1) ***Defeat the Taliban strategy***. Put simply, the Taliban strategy is to "run out the clock" on the international involvement in Afghanistan. They are convinced that they are winning, that they have the initiative and that they can succeed by being the "last man standing" in Afghanistan after all outsiders depart. History is on their side. Our regular efforts at home which call into question our purpose and resolve in Afghanistan – and which constantly talk about exit – reinforce the basic correctness of the Taliban strategy. We must defeat this strategy by declaring an end state that centers upon long term US presence – militarily (although limited, primarily robust security assistance), diplomatically and economically in the region.

2) ***Rebuild trust between the next government of Afghanistan and its people***. The people of Afghanistan have little trust or confidence in the current Afghan government. We must focus our diplomatic efforts in Kabul on reforming the "next" government of Afghanistan to better meet the people's

expectation, primarily in the area of anti-corruption. Locally, we must show results that people can feel. If the international community is seen by the Afghan people to be blindly supporting a next government of Afghanistan that is every bit as corrupt as the current one, our efforts will lack legitimacy in Afghanistan and at home. We must have a legitimate government to support.

3) ***Achieve Unity of Effort***. This is most important at the local level, and if effective, reinforces 2) above --- the restoration of trust between government and people. GEN McChrystal's plan as seen through his recent assessment will create this local unity of effort for the first time by fusing all players into a whole of collective ownership at district and province level. Although in many respects this may infringe upon Afghan prerogatives, this will be graded by its results among local populations. This is an imperative to turn perceptions around at grassroots level.

4) ***Reframe the Narrative at Home***. The rationale for staying and winning in Afghanistan has become muddled in the United States and among our allies abroad. National leaders must clearly articulate our end game (presence, not exit) and lay out for our peoples the downside risks of failure. Several seemingly attractive lower cost options are now on the table; the downside risk of failure attached to each is enormous, yet is rarely articulated. The moral imperative of not abandoning the Afghan people,

especially Afghan women, to the depredations of the Taliban once more must be part of this debate. The risks of a regional civil war and a deadly spread of instability in Pakistan must be clearly stated.

The End Game. "Do we stay or do we go?" This is the root question of this debate. Does the U.S. see its long term interests in South Asia – India, Pakistan and Afghanistan – worthy of long term investment, or simply as a short –term liability to be shorn as soon as possible? A positive vision of normalized relations among Afghanistan, Pakistan and India remains a far better strategic objective than a defensive objective employing minimum resources to contain spreading instability and extremism.

Success or failure in Afghanistan will set the terms of further U.S. involvement in the region for a generation. Will American credibility suffer a fatal blow among our regional friends? Are they strong enough to stand alone in the face of a resurgent extremist movement spanning the region? Will the NATO alliance survive a defeat and withdrawal from Afghanistan? Will our extremist adversaries be catalyzed -- in the region and globally – by their success in ejecting westerners from this part of the world? Does this victory over the west energize a re-birth of Islamic extremism where many see it waning today?

Short term gains in avoiding the immediate cost in blood and treasure in Afghanistan may well be paid for in longer term and more dangerous threats produced by our

departure. There are no cheap and easy solutions. There are immense downside risks in failure or withdrawal before meeting our objectives. The risks of any alternatives to the counter-insurgency approach outlined by General McChrystal must be clearly and forcefully debated and understood. These risks affect not only our role in the region among friends and adversaries, but will have a disruptive impact in our oldest alliance and upon the credibility of our relationships around the globe.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

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Testimony of

Beth Ellen Cole

Senior Program Officer

U.S. Institute of Peace*

Before the

U.S. House of Representatives

House Armed Services Committee

Subcommittee for Oversight and Investigations

"Afghanistan and Iraq: Perspectives on U.S. Strategy"

October 22, 2009

*The views expressed are my own and not those of the United States Institute of Peace

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee.

I want to thank the members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to offer my personal views today. I am Beth Cole, a senior program officer in the Center for Peace and Stability Operations at the U.S. Institute of Peace. In that capacity, I have directed a multi-year effort to produce "doctrine" for the civilian side of the U.S. government for stabilization and reconstruction missions. I have been working on these complex operations for more than fifteen years - before U.S. troops crossed the River Sava to help stabilize Bosnia.

The Military Advantage

As you know well, the military is equipped with doctrine to guide its actions, a "lessons learned" system to refresh its doctrine, a planning apparatus to turn doctrine into concrete objectives, an education and training system that prepares each soldier and a web of support that sees each member of the service through from deployment to return to home soil. This well-honed, time-tested, continually updated complex system is what gives the President the confidence to time and time again look to his military commanders for guidance on what to do in the most challenging environments known to humankind.

The Civilian Imperative

In a stabilization and reconstruction environment, we need more than this military contribution, as amazing as it may be. We need to let soldiers be soldiers and help secure the population. We need the unique skills and knowledge that civilians bring to help the host nation government and its population build rule of law, stable governance, a sustainable economy and the fundamental conditions for social well-being which are also essential to securing stability. We should be oriented toward realistic definitions of these end states rather than exit or withdrawal dates in Afghanistan if we are to create, at a minimum, a stable bulwark against forces of extremism that seek our destruction. This is mainly a civilian, not a military responsibility.

Plugging the Civilian Gap

For the past six years or more, United States Institute of Peace has been helping to build a foundation for civilian doctrine, planning, lessons learned, training, education and exercises for the multiplicity of civilian agencies trying to achieve success on the ground. The civilian contribution has become less ad hoc and more organized.

Federal departments, including Treasury, Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, Homeland Security and the U.S. Agency for International Development, have come together under an interagency coordination "cell" (known as the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (SCRS)) located at the State Department to replace ad-hocery with deliberative planning and execution. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols effort to unify the armed services was a long and rough road. Uniting civilian assets from disparate agencies with varying authorities, numerous appropriation accounts and their own agency missions is also a

herculean task. But time is not on our side and we need these assets now in Afghanistan.

Uniting civilian assets should start with strategic doctrine that lays out what we are trying to achieve. This doctrine has to be based on experience. We have at least five decades of experience in places such as El Salvador, Cambodia, the Balkans, Rwanda, Haiti and Liberia, to name a few. When we lay out what experience has shown us, we can start to unite disparate actors behind a common framework. We can then pick mission-specific priorities and elevate the game-changers that are required in Afghanistan today.

Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction

To take that broad look, we learned about doctrine from an extraordinary place that produces it on a regular basis - the U.S. Army and its Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Lt. General William Caldwell IV, commander of the Combined Arms Center, now nominated to a new assignment as Commander, NATO Training Mission, Afghanistan, worked with us for over a year to produce what is now the first civilian doctrine anywhere in the world for these missions: *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction.*[1] It follows on the revolutionary doctrine produced under his command, *FM 3-07, the U.S. Army Stability Operations Field Manual,* just a year ago. There is no accident that these documents share a common face – they are meant to be companions – with *Guiding Principles* filling the civilian gap to which the military has long called attention.

Over a period of twelve months, a USIP team gathered and then read more than five hundred "doctrinal" documents, given to us by military,

[1] http://www.usip.org/resources/guiding-principles-stabilization-and-reconstruction

diplomatic and development agencies from nations with broad experience in these missions, the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations (IGO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) with a long history of both muddy combat boots and plain old shoes on the ground and country plans from the war-torn states themselves. The list of these resources, contained in Appendix A in the manual, is among the richest for these missions at this time. We then elevated what was common and arrayed these shared goals around a set of core end states, necessary conditions and common approaches that have been utilized to achieve stability and set the foundation for development.

At the end of the day, in every society emerging from conflict, and Afghanistan is no exception, the concert of external and host nation actors has reached for five core end states: a safe and secure environment, the rule of law, stable governance, a sustainable economy and social well-being. This is not some idealistic dream born of some unrealistic vision of utopia: it is contained in every doctrinal document of every major military, diplomatic and development agency and every host country plan for stabilization and reconstruction.

Underneath the interdependent core set of goals, there are a set of necessary conditions that must be met to achieve them. In 1997, the largest humanitarian NGOs established minimum standards for water, food, health, sanitation and shelter following the disorganized delivery of aid in Rwanda in a ground-breaking document called *Sphere*. After five to six decades of conducting stabilization and reconstruction missions, it is time that all actors had a set of shared minimum standards. These minimum standards are the necessary conditions that I will speak about in the context of Afghanistan. Out of 22 conditions that have been identified for these missions in the civilian doctrine, I suggest that we focus on eight as priorities in Afghanistan.

Priorities for Afghanistan

1) Political Primacy

This is about *the need to reach political settlements.* At this very moment, we have an obvious need for a political settlement at the highest level of government on the future leadership of Afghanistan. Violent conflict occurs when nonviolent processes break down and when authority structures are no longer viewed as legitimate by some or all of the population. We risk a return to full scale violent conflict if this national problem is not solved.

We also need many additional political settlements with reconcilable insurgents and spoilers at all levels – regional, national and local – that result in the separation of them from the Taliban and others who will not forsake violence. Some settlements may result in reintegration into standing security forces while others may help transform reconcilable insurgents into productive participants in governance, economic and social life. We have done this before in equally challenging places and we can succeed again. But at this time we lack a strategic approach to fostering and sustaining these negotiations.

2) Physical Security

We cannot achieve success anywhere in Afghanistan without first establishing a safe and secure environment. *Physical security* for the population and key government, cultural, religious, and economic centers will require that international forces work closely with the Afghanistan National Security Forces to provide protection. We cannot shirk this responsibility. The light footprint we began with in Afghanistan resulted in the failure to establish a safe and secure environment and allowed the Taliban

to re-emerge – that is not a strategy we can return to. We know what that produces. The calculation of the number of forces needed to stabilize the situation has been determined by our military leaders. Knowing their planning process, I respect that determination. Ultimately, the Afghans themselves must be able to provide for their own security.

3) Territorial Security

We must prioritize the condition of *territorial security* by mitigating the threats over the long and treacherous Afghanistan-Pakistan border from which many of the greatest insurgent challenges emanate. Increasingly, insurgent leaders and other extremist Islamist groups operate from Pakistan, enjoying the support and protection of one another, as well as some elements of the Pakistani government. From its base in Pakistan, Al Qaeda continues to provide the Afghan insurgency with fighters, suicide bombers and technical assistance, along with training and financial support for their operations. The presence of these threats in the border regions also threatens major supply routes used by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Resolving the border issue will require a higher level of engagement between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ultimately Afghanistan and Pakistan will have to forge sustainable agreements for security, trade and routine travel that ensure stability.

4) Legitimate Monopoly Over the Means of Violence

We must redouble our efforts to achieve the condition of *a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence* by Afghans for Afghans. This is the mission that General Caldwell has been asked to assume. It is a mission that requires the skills of the Departments of Justice, State, and Homeland Security as well. The objective is not only the training and equipping of legions of police and

soldiers in the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) and ANSF, but providing those responsible for managing these forces with the necessary mentoring, infrastructure, personnel and administrative support needed to do their job. Supporting the managerial aspects of the security forces is just as important as boosting their operational capacity. Oversight of the forces involves managing the district, provincial and national institutions and ministries with responsibilities for budget execution, personnel decisions, professional development of the force and ultimate accountability for actions taken.

5) Control Over Illicit Economy and Economic-Based Threats to Peace

Even with professional Afghan forces and a robust ISAF presence protecting the population, if we do not disrupt, curtail and try to extinguish the sources of economic support for insurgents, violence will continue. We need to continue to prioritize the identification and disruption of finance networks of local power brokers, insurgent groups, transnational organized crime and terrorist organizations supporting violence in Afghanistan. This means shutting down foreign financing that remains a major source of funding and disrupting the reliance on a growing narcotics trade. Severing this flow of illicit resources also helps limit the culture of impunity that results from the entrenchment of criminal networks throughout the economy and within the government.

6) Access to Justice

If we have better security forces that are protecting the population by removing threats; if we have investigators that are going after financiers of the insurgents and anti-narcotics police that are destroying opium processing facilities; if we are offering the population a means to address grievances that the Taliban is now providing through their own justice system, then we must

have some form of accessible justice system. This means bolstering or rebuilding the informal mechanisms for community-level dispute resolution that the Taliban and other insurgents are now influencing or replacing and rapidly resourcing the emerging traditional justice system that provides the critical continuum from police to defense attorney to prosecutor to judge to corrections.

7) Provision of Essential Services

The first responsibility of government is to *provide essential services,* which include security, rule of law and basic human needs. We must help build the capacity of the Afghan government to deliver these services and be seen as the deliverers to move the population off the fence or away from the insurgents. In Afghanistan, improvements in the provision of basic health care, education, sanitation, food security and other core services have been made but are at risk of being compromised. This is because the Taliban and other insurgents are providing them, and in the process, delegitimizing the government of Afghanistan and curtailing services to women and other vulnerable groups in a return to discriminatory and repressive rule. Or, in some cases, pervasive insecurity is endangering the delivery of essential services. With winter approaching, there are no short cuts to meeting basic human needs. If the Afghan government does not deliver services, the insurgents will.

8) Stewardship of State Resources

Essential services need to be provided within a construct of institutions of governance. With many Afghans on the fence and a national crisis over leadership of the Afghan state, prioritizing support for sub-national institutions of governance, state and non-state, that provide the entry point

for services and boost the confidence of the population in the idea of an accountable and legitimate government is paramount. We have to enlarge our view of acceptable forms of governance and turn to traditional, informal, tribal, community and local structures. We should provide political, financial and technical assistance to help them serve their communities.

National ministries that have been the focus of attention still require support and enhanced accountability and transparency measures to win back trust of the population. Improvement of financial management, procurement and concessions practices, controls to mitigate against corruption, development of capacity within the civil service and better donor coordination to achieve all of these is a pressing requirement and overdue. Petty corruption is not the issue; it is the corruption that enables the dangerous nexus of officials, drug lords, criminal organizations and insurgents that must be halted immediately.

U.S. Civilian-Military Plan in Afghanistan

There is cause for optimism. In Afghanistan, U.S. agencies are on the right path. During the past year, the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan conducted a civilian-led process, integrated with ISAF and US Forces, to develop the Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plan[2]. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (SCRS) at the Department of State applied planning expertise forged in the past four years of bringing US federal agencies together in an organized system. The Civil-Military plan, and more importantly the ongoing process which supports it, provides an actionable way forward towards tangible stabilization progress in the next year.

[2] United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan, August 10, 2009.

The Embassy, ISAF and United States Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) have organized into teams to execute this plan and the military campaign plan which underpins Gen. McChrystal's assessment. They are putting in place the long-awaited mechanisms to measure progress quickly so corrective action can be taken.

And most importantly, we now have the civil-military structure that we have needed for years, being formed as we speak here today in Regional Command-East and Regional Command-South - the two regions of greatest insurgent activity. Appointment of senior civilian representatives as counterparts to the regional military commanders mark a significant step. This structure is the essential ingredient, with a well-focused strategy, to get civilian resources paired with the military in the Afghan communities where it really matters.

We have spent the last months getting the right foundation in place to be able to finally use our tools effectively for stabilization. By the end of the year, we will have hundreds of civilians on the ground with our troops to actually bring "all elements of national power" to the fight. They are currently being trained for this job. We have the chance to put to work the best practices that have been learned over the last 8 difficult years and can now be shaped by the *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction.*

Written Testimony to the House Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

22 October 2009

Matt Waldman, Fellow, The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

The views expressed below are those of the author and are not representative of any institution.

The overall situation in Afghanistan is serious and deteriorating. Since 2001, there has been significant progress in some areas of health, education and rural development. However, much of the government is corrupt and ineffective, and the rule of law weak or non-existent. The Taliban and associated groups, including criminal elements, have achieved considerable success, and now have varying degrees of influence in rural areas in up to half of the country.

The reasons for this are varied and complex. Although widely welcomed by Afghans, the initial international approach was manifestly insufficient, given the scale of devastation caused by over two decades of war, and, being founded on cooption, it compounded the authority warlords and local strongmen.

International aid has been fragmented, supply-driven and often inappropriate, rather than responding to Afghan needs and preferences. It has tended to focus on physical and technical outcomes rather than the crucial task of promoting Afghan capacity and ownership. It suffers from a lack of prioritization, and the neglect of small-scale, community-based projects that can have significant success. It is inefficient, being reliant on costly contractors and consultants, and is hampered by excessive risk aversion, with most expatriates ensconced in fortified compounds and armored vehicles. Even in critical areas such as police reform, international efforts have been under-resourced and poorly coordinated.

International military forces have prioritized eliminating insurgents and winning "hearts and minds" through assistance-related projects. Both are largely futile. Consider the context: the history of external interference; Afghans' proud independence, conservatism and well-justified mistrust of foreign forces; and the large numbers of illiterate, unemployed young men, with families to feed. Consider that parts of the international military are seen as using excessive force, through airstrikes and raids, as well as arbitrary detentions, while propping up a regime that is perceived as corrupt and unjust. Consider, also, insurgent propaganda and their systematic use of terror and intimidation against Afghan community leaders (two Afghans are executed by insurgents every three days).

In these circumstances, while many Afghans in the south and south-east may not be enthusiasts for the Taliban, there is no credible alternative. When the insurgents, with sanctuary and support inside Pakistan, appear to be winning, it is not surprising that

for reasons of personal safety Afghans are reluctant to oppose them. The focus of PRTs on militarized development is a contradiction in terms, rarely achieves the level of ownership necessary to meet core development objectives, and diverts funding and efforts away from local, civilian institutions and organizations. Moreover, in conflict areas it is precisely the heavy involvement of the military in civilian affairs that substantiates and energizes the Taliban's largely Islamist, nationalist campaign, framed as resistance to foreign military interference. Notably, it would appear that in none of the twenty-six provinces in which PRTs are located – some for over six years – has there been a diminution in insurgent activity.

Thus, the military and Afghan government are apparently caught in a mutually detrimental relationship, in which both sides lose credibility: the military by association with a corrupt and unjust government; the government, by association with a foreign military, portrayed as an aggressor.

General McChrystal is right that government legitimacy, and the population's security are critical. However, international forces have a limited capacity to address these issues. Building Afghan security forces is a long-term endeavor, and prioritizing quantity over quality could prove counter-productive. Moreover, his proposal for a more integrated approach, in which international forces increasingly engage with Afghan civilians, plays into insurgent hands, attributes unrealistic capabilities to soldiers, and does not address the core issues. In fact, a clearer civil-military delineation is required with more effective political efforts, which lie outside the core competency of the military.

The insurgency is essentially an Afghan political problem. It is not in itself the disease, but the symptom of a deeper disorder, namely a government that is perceived as illegitimate, self-serving and has excluded certain groups and communities based on tribal or other affiliations. Thus, it demands a political response that is indigenous, inclusive, and addresses injustices and legitimate grievances. It should involve Afghan society at large, and include longer-term efforts to promote truth and reconciliation, while ensuring respect for justice and fundamental rights.

America and international community can do better to help bring about the conditions in which positive political change can take place.

First, we should acknowledge the limits of outsiders in effecting change and focus on empowering Afghans to address their challenges. The principal goal, at national and local level, should not be to solve problems for Afghans but to use our comparative advantages to build their capacity to solve problems. In other words, we should focus on building capabilities, and robust institutions, not just delivering results.

Second, empathize with Afghans, and adapt accordingly. Reduce foreign military involvement in civilian affairs, and prioritize interventions that reflect Afghan interests and preferences, such as in security, jobs, health or rural development. Over-ambition, excessive use of force, or policies that reinforce corruption and impunity, are invariably counter-productive.

Third, after determining what is possible and appropriate, develop strategies that are fit for purpose, and devote sufficient resources and political will for their accomplishment. Half-measures, whether in police reform, governance or development, are likely to do more harm than good. Recognize the need for a regional political strategy, to achieve the constructive engagement of neighboring states.

Fourth, address obvious flaws in aid delivery: reduce reliance on international contractors and consultants, in favor of Afghan institutions and organizations; reduce the use of foreign parallel mechanisms such as PRTs that diminish the accountability of Afghan leaders to the people. Ensure cooperation, transparency, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

Fifth, don't expect swift results: progress in key areas is possible but it will be incremental. It requires realism combined with a long-term commitment and genuine political resolve.