

**Statement on Afghanistan:  
In Pursuit of Security and Democracy**

**Submitted to the  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
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**by**

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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for this hearing. Thank you also for your leadership and commitment in helping Afghanistan to attain the stability, peace, security and economic revival it so desperately needs and so richly deserves.

The bipartisan Afghan Freedom Support Act (AFSA) which Senator Hagel took the lead in sponsoring in the Senate, and this Committee under the able leadership of Chairman Lugar and former Chairman Biden advanced to passage, laid out a clear and comprehensive roadmap toward success in Afghanistan. The President signed the AFSA into law in December, 2002. The bill correctly assumed that the well-executed, quick, American-led military victory over the Taliban-Al Qaeda was only the first of multiple innings. As in Iraq, securing that victory has also entailed planning and executing a successful reconstruction strategy to succeed in subsequent innings.

To this end, AFSA called on the Administration to formulate a comprehensive Afghan policy and to provide sufficient resources to fulfill America's share of the costs of Afghan reconstruction. It correctly stressed the importance of Afghan institution rebuilding, Afghan ownership of the reconstruction process and careful interagency coordination to ensure that State, DOD, USAID and the CIA would all read from the same sheet of music in rebuilding Afghanistan. The bill recommended the creation of a Coordinator in the State Department to oversee interagency cooperation. The AFSA further stressed the importance of ensuring women's rights and implementing an effective anti-narcotics policy. It set aside one billion dollars for ISAF expansion to strengthen the hand of the legitimate national government in Kabul and to weaken the power of the warlords in Afghanistan's regions.

These sensible recommendations in Congress' Afghan Freedom Support Act were not just pulled out of a hat. They were the product of a series of hearings in both Houses of Congress and a great deal of focused, hard work and well informed deliberation by Senators, members of Congress and their staffs.

Mr. Chairman, until just last month, most policy and operational elements in the AFSA had so far either not been implemented, or had been only marginally implemented. In Washington and Afghanistan, drift, policy incoherence, interagency compartmentalization and squabbling, unfulfilled promises, plus under-funded, slow and poorly managed execution of reconstruction projects continued to characterize the Administration's approach to

Afghanistan—two years after the U.S.-led coalition’s brilliant military victory over the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and nine months after passage of the AFSA.

## **A Fresh U.S. Initiative**

Mr. Chairman, there are recent indications that the Administration is attempting to reverse the drift in its Afghan policy, restore lost momentum, address the growing security threat posed by the ominous Taliban comeback, instill interagency discipline in both Washington and in Afghanistan, and give real impetus to reconstruction. We can lament that these initiatives did not immediately follow up the military victory over the Taliban almost two years ago. We can lament that Congress’ recommendations on problems of under-funding, interagency disunity and lack of a coherent umbrella strategy on Afghanistan identified in last year’s AFSA were mostly ignored.

It is, therefore, most welcome that, since early September, the Administration is finally matching concrete action with rhetoric and promises. Its request for \$1.2 billion for Afghanistan in the Emergency Supplemental, joined with the \$600 million for Afghanistan in the FY ’04 Budget, demonstrate the necessary high level of serious attention, determination, and purpose which has been lacking since the destruction of the Taliban-Al Qaeda regime.

## **Request for Senate Action**

In June, 2002, this Committee stepped up to the plate and cooperated closely with its counterparts on Chairman Henry Hyde’s Committee in the House to obtain congressional approval of the AFSA. Below are two recommendations which the Committee could now undertake to support the Emergency Supplemental. Early attention to these recommendations in the Senate or in Conference would further strengthen execution of AFSA’s key provisions.

- (a) Fortify Ambassador Taylor’s position as Coordinator of non-military assistance to Afghanistan.** Ambassador Taylor’s ability to manage reconstruction programs would be significantly strengthened by placing all non-military funds for Afghanistan in an account which he supervises. Different agencies and offices scattered around the government continue to separately manage their own budgets. This omission has added to the

bureaucratic disunity, confusion and red tape which have undermined our economic, humanitarian, democracy and security programs in Afghanistan. Ambassador Taylor brilliantly managed the U.S. assistance programs for the Newly Independent States before being asked to assume his current responsibilities on Afghanistan. He is thoroughly acquainted with the U.S. assistance bureaucracy; he is known and respected by his counterparts in the international assistance community. Centralizing the non-military assistance budget for Afghanistan under Coordinator Taylor will significantly upgrade the efficiency and quality of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan.

**(b) Senate support for increased funding for Afghanistan in priority areas.**

The House Appropriations Committee has reported out a bill which recommends more funding than the President has requested in a number of critical areas, including in education, private sector development and power generation, support for the Karzai government's infrastructure, elections, health, anti-narcotics and police. Even if both Senate and House approve these increases, the Emergency Supplemental requests for Afghanistan will still be less than 2% of the \$87 billion. I would suggest that additional funds also be provided for expansion of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The \$50 million requested by the Administration will prove severely inadequate to meet the ambitious goal of doubling the number of PRTs and ensuring that the civil affairs projects they implement are not under-funded.

## **Rising Security Threats Challenge Economic, Democratic Progress**

The Administration's initiative on Afghanistan will need to give priority attention to improving security. The Taliban have regrouped. Staging from Pakistan, Taliban attacks on U.S.-led coalition forces, local Afghan government officials and international aid workers have eroded or stopped reconstruction activity in many areas along the Afghan-Pakistan border. The Taliban, in cooperation with Al Qaeda and supported by elements in the Pakistani ISI and Pakistani radical Muslim parties, will likely next focus on provinces adjoining Kabul as well as Kabul itself. Confrontations between warlords in some regions of Afghanistan and increasing criminal activity further undermine security.

These worrisome security trends could postpone the Bonn Conference's roadmap of a constitutional Loya Jirga in December and Afghan elections in 2004. Deteriorating security will also block or delay implementation of women's programs, from school attendance to seeking employment opportunities outside the home. Unable to get their produce to market due to insecure roads, Afghan farmers will plant more opium and sell it to the sophisticated opium mafia operating from Pakistan, Central Asia and Russia. The disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) process could also be further delayed.

The Administration has wisely decided to give more attention to rebuilding Afghanistan's national police force. This emphasis will improve security throughout Afghanistan, undercut the warlords' local monopoly of power, and nicely complement the training and equipping of the Afghan army. NATO ISAF deployment outside Kabul, which the United Nations Security Council has just approved, will also buttress security in Afghanistan.

### **Some Positive Developments**

Mr. Chairman, Administration officials from today's earlier panel have described in detail the Administration's fresh initiative to regain lost momentum in Afghanistan. This effort will be bolstered by a number of positive developments in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan enjoyed a bumper wheat crop this year. Two million refugees have returned—the largest voluntary repatriation of refugees ever recorded. Sharing of revenue with the Kabul government began last year with \$80 million remitted. So far, about \$140 million has been transferred by warlords to the central government this year. There appears to be a consensus building on a division of labor between NGOs and the PRTs. Kabulis, assisted by some foreign investors, are beginning to restore small business activity which is contributing to a surge in trade, shopping, and construction in Kabul. Some long-delayed mega-projects are finally going forward. President Bush's intervention forced acceleration of work by USAID contractors on the long-delayed repair of the Kabul-Kandahar road. Millions of Afghan children are back at school. If security improves, the Bonn process can continue along its implementation path, although the 2004 elections will almost certainly choose a President, not a Parliament.

### **U.S. Must Keep Out of the Afghan Political Briar Patch**

The U.S. and the international community have a golden opportunity to support the legitimately chosen and internationally recognized moderate Afghan regime headed by President Karzai. President Karzai, Foreign Minister Abdullah and their moderate colleagues reflect the democratic aspirations and moderate outlook of most Afghans. The new American initiative's goal to strengthen the Karzai regime and its reach into Afghanistan's regions and provinces will have beneficial effects in both the short and long run. As that government revives Afghan institutions and expands its economic and security presence outside Kabul, warlord rule and radical Taliban influence will slowly weaken.

The new U.S. initiative must, however, avoid a tight U.S. embrace of President Karzai and his regime. Unfortunately, steps by senior U.S. officials in Afghanistan have already given ammunition to allegations by the Taliban and other opposition forces that President Karzai is an American puppet. Such direct U.S. involvement in Afghan internal politics is ultimately counterproductive. Afghans want their President to be following his own agenda, not that of a foreign power.

It is well to remember that no country has ever succeeded in deciding who rules in Afghanistan. The British imposed Shah Shuja—he was executed by the Afghans. The Soviets for eight years tried to forge unity between the bickering Khalqi and Parchami Afghan communist factions. Moscow appointed, removed, assassinated, and exiled numerous Afghan communist leaders during this period, but never succeeded in establishing a stable Afghan leadership. In an environment we never understood, the U.S. reaped similar negative consequences in playing musical chairs with Saigon generals in the 1960s.

Unfortunately, an Afghan perception of American interference emerged from last year's Loya Jirga. One Afghan participant in that important event whom I respect told me that, of the 1,500 Afghan Loya Jirga delegates, 1,000 went home to their villages stating that the Americans manipulated the Loya Jirga. A U.S. official recounted to me that we failed to get a Prime Minister appointed because we were "outmaneuvered" by Afghans at the Loya Jirga opposing the idea.

The bottom line is that we should not follow the examples of British, Soviet and Pakistani kingmaking in Afghanistan. We should remain aloof from Afghan politics, even while assisting the legitimate Karzai government. We must encourage cooperation and compromise, and let the Afghans themselves determine the balances in their leadership. Our diplomats, military

personnel and aid workers should not appear to be just another faction—or factions—maneuvering within the murky, emotional Afghan polity. We are far more likely to succeed in Afghanistan if we are not seen as the latest in the historic queue of foreigners trying unsuccessfully to select Afghan leaders.

## **Stop Outsourcing to Pakistan**

The new U.S. initiative should also avoid repeating the “blowback” effect created during the Afghan-Soviet war and the Taliban period. Both Clinton Administrations and the first year of the George W. Bush Administration “outsourced” U.S. Afghan policy to Pakistan. And Pakistan’s policy, managed by the Pakistan’s military’s Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI), promoted Afghan radicals supported by Pakistani extremist parties and later Al Qaeda. Today, General Musharraf and his allies in the Pakistani military are following a two-track policy administered by ISI of: (a) cooperating with the U.S. in hunting down Al Qaeda elements in Pakistan, most of them foreigners, and (b) continuing to preserve their two-decade-long investment in radical Afghans, including the Taliban, and the virulently anti-American Gulbudin Hekmatyar. In the 1980s and 1990s, Pakistan’s ISI, with Osama bin Ladin and Pakistani religious parties, constructed the extremist Muslim infrastructure straddling the Afghan-Pakistani frontier. That infrastructure continues to harbor almost all of the Taliban cabinet, Hekmatyar, and probably Osama bin Ladin himself.

Some argue that President Musharraf has been doing as much as he can since publicly siding with the U.S. in the war on terrorism. But President Musharraf can do more. He should not be permitted to dodge criticism of ISI’s continued support to the Taliban and other anti-Karzai radical Afghan militants based in Pakistan. Last year, President Musharraf, addressing a news conference, took responsibility for guiding the ISI. The September 7, 2002 edition of the Pakistani daily “News” quoted him as stating: “The government formulates policies and tells ISI what to do. They (ISI) do not do on their own. Hence, if there is anything wrong, the government is to be blamed, not the ISI.”

The U.S. should not again be drawn into Pakistan’s own maneuvering to put its favored Afghans in Kabul. In the 1980s and 1990s, the CIA coordinated with ISI in supporting the Afghan extremists, in particular Hekmatyar, while keeping Afghan moderates such as Hamid Karzai and Abdul Haq at arms length. After 9/11, moderate Afghan leaders were stunned when

Secretary of State Colin Powell at an Islamabad news conference seemed to be promoting Pakistan's agenda in calling for Taliban representation in the post-Taliban government. During CENTCOM commander Tommy Frank's November, 1991 war strategy visit to Islamabad, the CIA introduced Afghan warlord Gul Agha to him as one deserving U.S. support. Gul Agha, with CIA and U.S. Special Forces backing, was subsequently able to re-occupy the governor's headquarters in Kandahar. President Karzai recently managed to replace Gul Agha, but only after seventeen months of the warlord's corrupt, despotic rule which witnessed a resurgence of Taliban presence in the Kandahar region. This month's news reports about the release of the former Taliban Foreign Minister, Mullah Mutawakil, from an American prison in Kandahar has reignited Afghan suspicions that Islamabad and Washington are again attempting to manipulate Afghan politics.

### **Afghan Reconstruction: Regional and Global Benefits**

Success in Afghanistan is often set in the context of *negative* results, such as counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, ending violation of human and gender rights. These are all worthy goals and in U.S. interests to pursue.

But success in Afghanistan will also create *positive* results, for the region, for the U.S and for the world.

Afghanistan's turmoil, for example, has long been an *obstacle* to regional economic and democratic development. A peaceful, developing Afghanistan could instead become a *facilitator* of regional economic and democratic development.

Afghanistan is located at the center of Eurasia. Global trade, transportation and energy corridors potentially could criss-cross a stable Afghanistan, promoting economic cooperation rather than geo-political competition among the nearby Great Powers of Eurasia. As in the Silk Road era, Afghanistan could be the connecting point for trade along continental North-South and East-West axes, bringing together markets and economics, moving Caspian basin and Russian Siberian resources to resource-starved South Asia, and moving Chinese products west to the Middle East and Europe.

The resulting jump in Eurasian trade through Afghanistan would encourage the movement of ideas, including free market democracy, along the trade routes—much as

Buddhism and later Christianity spread through Asia via the maze of Silk Road trading conduits two thousand years ago. Eventual rising living standards and middle class development in the broader Eurasian region would follow, reinforcing democratic and free market currents. So would the success of Karzai government in restoring Afghanistan to the democratic track it was on before the Soviet invasion ushered in more than two decades of war.

The Administration's new approach could thus usefully include a long-term Afghan strategy which will incorporate broader regional goals to parallel Afghanistan reconstruction goals. The two sets of objectives would reinforce one another. Bold creativity and thinking *big* could produce lasting benefits. It is not far-fetched to envision a future regional ASEAN-type free trade zone in Central Asia; a U.S. government-supported track II process toward this goal; or a Helsinki-style conference in the region to assist stability, economic cooperation, human rights and open communication among the regional states surrounding Afghanistan. The Helsinki conference model could also begin the process of recognizing controversial but de facto borders, including the Durand Line between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the Line of Control separating Kashmir. Many South Asian and Western scholars believe that giving international legality to the Durand Line and the Line of Control is the only way to solve these disputes. A broadly inclusive Helsinki-style regional conference would give "cover" to leaders in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India to conclude productive boundary negotiations. Once the negotiations are underway, the International Court of Justice in The Hague could assist the parties in reaching a final resolution.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by expressing hope that Congress will approve the Administration's request for additional funds for Iraq and Afghanistan. Success in Afghanistan will encourage success in Iraq, and vice-versa. Failure is not an option in either country.