

**AFGHANISTAN ON THE BRINK:
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Lantos (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman LANTOS. The committee will come to order. I would like to ask my friend and colleague from Illinois to take his seat at the witness table.

Three weeks ago, I arrived in Kabul with Speaker Pelosi and my colleagues in the national security leadership of the House. We were moved by the dedication, courage and professionalism of United States troops fighting in Afghanistan, and we were struck by how this desolate and hard-hit land of multiple ethnicities, cultures and tribes has come together in the last few years. But I must say it was painfully clear that with the current security situation, and with indications of a new assault by the Taliban planned for this spring, things could well fall apart. Afghanistan is once again on the brink.

The situation is a far cry from the outpouring of global solidarity in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and the universal expressions of support for an assault on the Taliban back then. Who would have thought that just a few years later it would come to this: Insufficient troops to get the job done; a shortage of financial support; a handful of countries shouldering the burden and taking the risks for all members of NATO?

The United States and our allies face a pivotal decision. We cannot continue to under-commit our resources to this crucial effort in the first front in the global struggle against terrorism. We must use a different, more creative approach—one that takes a hard line against those who finance the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and who poison the world by supplying more than 90 percent of its heroin—and in this connection, I want to commend my friend from Florida, the ranking member, for an excellent article that appeared just this morning. We need an approach that involves the Afghan people in deciding their fate; one that truly encompasses the broader international community, which has a vested interest in a stable and secure Afghanistan.

For several years I have been calling on the United States and on NATO's military leadership in Afghanistan to change their policy of ignoring narcotrafficking. Right now, they will only destroy

opium stockpiles and drug laboratories if they happen to come across them during other combat operations. We have been told that the military “doesn’t do counternarcotics,” even as they admit that narcotics profits feed our battlefield enemies. After several years of record opium harvest and rampant drug corruption with no end in sight, we no longer have the luxury of indulging in this artificial and meaningless distinction.

We need to reverse this trend now. I call on our own Government and on NATO to immediately create and deploy counternarcotic interdiction combat units to go after drug kingpins, warlords and Afghan officials that process and traffic opium.

Yes, we must pursue eradication and rural development programs to create alternatives to poppy cultivation. But relying solely on long-term, incremental, multi-year campaigns of eradication and development will not do the job alone. The place is awash in opium, and we need to drain the swamp. We must target those who profit most handsomely from opium trafficking. Up to now, they have been able to operate with impunity. They even gleefully invite foreign journalists and film crews to document their operations. These criminals must be put on notice. Narcotics trafficking is part of the battlefield in Afghanistan, and we must treat it as such.

But military pressure cannot be the only instrument of war against opium in Afghanistan. If we are to expect success, the Karzai government must commit to bring these vicious criminals to justice. Incredibly some are members of Parliament. I urge this administration to work with President Karzai to make public a list of major drug traffickers. Honor is an important factor in Afghan culture and society, and what could be more dishonorable than having your name publicly listed as a trafficker of drugs—a Most-Wanted Hall of Shame.

Ultimately, the war against opium must be led by the Afghan people. I call upon President Karzai and this administration to organize a Loya Jirga, or a traditional Afghan Assembly, with tribal elders and local leaders to gain support in the counternarcotics effort. I am convinced that village leaders across the country recognize the moral and even religious calamity that the drug trade has befallen on their society. We must help empower them to institute a change in culture and attitude toward the poison that has plagued their land for so long.

Our efforts to promote a free and secure Afghanistan will not be successful unless our European allies and the Gulf nations step up. It is simply unacceptable that NATO commanders are left to beg for troops from countries like Germany, France, Italy and Spain. It is an outrage that only troops from the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom are deployed to the most hazardous spots. No longer should American taxpayers have to pay the lion’s share of the bill while the Saudis receive more than \$300 billion of windfall oil profits. No longer should our administration stand passively by while our so-called allies take advantage of American generosity and courage.

I am baffled by the short-sightedness of our European friends and oil-rich neighbors. A failed Afghanistan would be a detriment to all of us. In 2004, the world witnessed train bombs in Madrid and suicide bombers in Riyadh. A failed Afghanistan would be a

launching pad for terrorists to cause even more mayhem in cities across the globe.

Stronger counternarcotics efforts, Afghan engagement, and holding our allies accountable must be the hallmarks of our new strategy in Afghanistan. The gloves must come off if we are to prevail against the Taliban and the drug lords. This is a crucial year for Afghanistan.

I am pleased to note that as we conduct this hearing, the President has decided to send 3,000 additional American troops that were originally going to go to Iraq to Afghanistan, presumably as a "surge" to counter the expected Taliban spring offensive. I think the President should be bolder and send all of the 22,000 troops of the Iraq surge to Afghanistan, where they could actually make a difference.

I am pleased now to turn to my esteemed colleague, the ranking member, for any remarks she may choose to make.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling this hearing. I thank our colleague, Mr. Kirk, for being with us and testifying on the challenges that we are facing in Afghanistan. Our involvement in that country has brought down the fundamentalist Taliban government that murdered, mutilated and oppressed the Afghani people. It served as a training ground for al-Qaeda radicals responsible for the attacks on our country on 9/11.

Removal of the brutal Taliban regime has led to Afghanistan adopting a constitution, holding a Presidential election in 2004, and parliamentary elections in 2005. The people of Afghanistan are enjoying new freedoms that were prohibited under the Taliban, and women are now participating in political and economic life. I am proud that my daughter-in-law, Lindsey, will be deployed to Afghanistan in a matter of weeks, and will be helping the Afghani people in securing the peace that they so richly deserve.

Schools and clinics are being built, and efforts are underway to improve Afghanistan's economic development. However, these efforts are greatly compromised by the security situation. Militant extremists are becoming increasingly active, and they are seeking to reclaim Afghanistan as a safe haven for their illicit activities. These Islamic extremists pose a serious threat to the Afghani people but also to the United States and to our NATO troops. It is critical to understand that the drug trade is one of the primary factors contributing to the resurgence of the Taliban.

Billions in illicit drugs and the proceeds allow the extremists to finance sophisticated weapons used to target Afghani citizens and our coalition forces. In the spring we will once again face another massive opium harvest in Afghanistan, ultimately triggering an offensive by anti-coalition militants, including the resurgent Taliban. It is time to develop new strategies to ensure Afghanistan does not fall into a failed narco state and once again become a safe haven for terrorists.

To effectively confront the military insurgency in Afghanistan, we have got to deprive the fundamentalists of drug profits. We welcome the Bush administration's recent call for increased aid to Afghanistan of \$10.6 billion over the next 2 years. However, the problem is unlikely to be resolved only through an increase in funding.

In order to succeed, our strategy must also tackle the problems of drugs and terror simultaneously.

A failed Afghanistan controlled by these militants and narcoterrorists would bolster the extremists and endanger our U.S. strategic interest. The United States policy against the narcoterrorism threat in Afghanistan requires a reevaluation, new initiatives, and a unified, inter-agency campaign against both illicit drugs and the terror they sponsor and support.

However, to address the problem plaguing Afghanistan, we must do more than merely throw money at them. We have got to provide an alternative. Criticizing does not provide an alternative strategy. Making broad rhetorical pronouncements does not provide an alternative strategy. We have got to present concrete, specific recommendations on how to tackle the security situation at its core by countering the narcoterrorist threat.

Many of our members have long followed events in Afghanistan and have worked hard to give the administration the tools they need to do the job there. In a letter dated February 7, which I would ask, Mr. Chairman, to be made a part of the record—

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Several of our subcommittee ranking members join me in recommending a multi-pronged approach to the administration for them to consider. Some of the key items in our letter included appointment of a high level coordinator of overall Afghan narcoterrorism policy. We especially need someone at the top to lead a unified, well-coordinated campaign against both drugs and terror simultaneously, thereby putting all United States agencies, assets and assistance into this fight against drugs and terror as we have done successfully in Colombia.

Also, implementation of a new DEA ride-along policy with international security assistance force and our own Department of Defense military forces on the ground in Afghanistan as was initiated by the former chairman of our committee, Henry Hyde. We have got to do more to merge and maximize the ongoing U.S. and NATO military operations in those limited and specific cases where they overlap with the DEA's own difficult struggle in unsecured areas against illicit drugs and major drug kingpins.

We must also convince our European allies, as you said, Mr. Chairman, to whom much of the Afghan heroin is now directed to allow easy access to their markets for legitimate Afghan goods as America does for cocaine producing Andean nations, and intensifying our dialogue with the Government of Pakistan and making it clear to them that we will no longer tolerate the Pakistan/Afghanistan border area to be used as a safe haven by the Taliban and other militants where they recruit, where they train, where they operate.

We are deeply concerned by the unmistakable trends toward an increasing number and sophistication of cross-border attacks. Although we should work on building a long-term strategic plan and a partnership with Islamabad, the Congress cannot be expected to tolerate Taliban using Pakistan as a safe haven. We hope that the administration would find these points valuable and will move toward implementing these proposals. I also look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in further developing

an effective strategy to establish peace and security in Afghanistan by depriving the militant extremists of revenue and safe haven.

Without addressing the issue of security, prospects for achieving stability and economic development in Afghanistan is unlikely. I would like to once again thank our experts for testifying today, and I look forward to hearing their views and their recommendations for United States policy in Afghanistan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. Three colleagues asked to make a brief opening statement. I call on Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to offer my personal welcome to our distinguished colleague, Mr. Kirk, to testify this morning. One clear observation, Mr. Chairman, that I want to note in our committee hearing about the Afghan growing the poppy plants producing heroin is I recall one of the high officials or leaders, probably even President Karzai suggested why do we not legalize the growing of the plant, and have heroin as a legal use of this drug rather than calling it as an illegal if it is used for illegal purposes? But I just want to note I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about this issue about the use just as we are having problems with the coca. Growing the coca plant in Central and South America. But I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you. Before I call on my friend, Mr. Rohrabacher, let me just indicate that our Republican colleagues are leaving for a funeral, and I regret that they need to do so but fully respect this. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think if there was any failure of this administration it was to take this issue seriously, and hopefully the administration will begin to take this issue seriously of this massive opium crop and the threat that it has to the stability of the entire region. I would note that through my efforts and Ileana and others here we have provided \$12 million in research for microherbicides to the State Department.

Microherbicide, for those of you who do not understand, is a potential weapon against opium which could be used once and eliminate the entire problem, and would only attack the opium plant. As of yet, Mr. Chairman, that \$12 million for research has not even been touched. We have a coalition of people who would like to legalize drugs, and then whatever their motives that is fine, and they are saying we should not even look at microherbicides. We should be looking at that option if it does have the potential of eliminating this crop.

Unfortunately the administration has not provided the leadership it should, and now we are going to pay, and we are paying a horrible price for the neglect of that issue. One last thought. We do not need a change of culture, Mr. Chairman, among the Afghans. We need a change of economics. Most of these drugs are not consumed by Afghans. They just need to do it to feed their families, and of course the drug dealers come down and exploit that. We need to offer an alternative to the people of Afghanistan, and use microherbicides or whatever to get rid of the crop. Both of those together have to go hand-in-hand.

Chairman LANTOS. I thank my colleague from California for his usual valuable comments. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to call on my friend from Illinois, Congressman Mark Kirk, who I believe has spent more time on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border doing incredibly useful things than any other Member of Congress. So we will place your full statement in the record of the hearing, and I would be grateful if you would summarize your testimony.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARK STEVEN KIRK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. KIRK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to appear before your committee. You have been a great hero to me for all of your work on human rights, and I think that in this conflict we look at enormous potential for bipartisan cooperation not just between Republicans and Democrats but more importantly between authorizing and appropriators, a divide that sometimes is more severe in this Congress.

Mr. Chairman, while Iraq may becoming somewhat of a partisan war here in the Congress, Afghanistan is very much a bipartisan conflict where I think both parties up here and our NATO allies perceive an increasing danger. The dominant phenomenon that I think we should pay the most attention to in Afghanistan today is the rise of the narco Taliban. There is a strong connection now obvious to nearly everyone of terrorism supported by narcotraffickers. Until recently, this connection was denied by the Department of Defense but well accepted for years by the Drug Enforcement Agency and now the State Department.

One of the key roles for this committee is to encourage various parts of the U.S. intelligence committee to produce papers on the connection between terrorism and narcotrafficking to make sure that everyone is aware of the common threat that is emerging. There is a strong record of bipartisan action by the Congress on this problem over recent years. Through your leadership, we have dramatically enhanced the Rewards for Justice Program at the State Department that has led to dozens of contacts against key al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders in this region.

We also join together for reforms to the Patriot Act to permit the indictment of prominent drug kingpins that use drug profits for the support of international terror. Chairman Coble and Congresswoman Lowey have joined together for a dramatic increase in Afghan aid in 2004 that was not requested by the administration but led by the Congress. Congresswoman Lowey and I also teamed up to make sure that DEA had substantial new funding for a new intelligence collection platform that will come on later this year.

We also had bipartisan action to reintroduce DEA into the intelligence community, and we did that after a series of briefings I had in which I asked certain parts of the intelligence community for the financial wiring diagram of al-Qaeda. The better information actually came from DEA which at that point was not a member of the intelligence community but thanks to bipartisan action now is.

Finally, we had action from Chairman Obey and Mr. Lewis on funding an entire new air force for the Afghan police which was delivered last spring and has now come online allowing Afghan police to conduct interdiction missions and eradication missions, critical

to the success of our policy in Afghanistan. Mr. Chairman, you will note the cover of *Time Magazine* this week features Haji Bashir Noorzai, famous for being the banker to Mola Omar, the chief ally of Osama Bin Laden. He was the number one kingpin in Afghanistan, lured to the United States by DEA, and currently incarcerated in New York City.

While his defense attorney, his very high-priced defense attorney paid by I do not know who, is leading a major PR campaign for him, we should be reminded that this man is the number one financier of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the person who assembled most of the funds for the recent offensives until his incarceration, and someone whose arrest has led to a number of leads within the Pashtun cartel for further follow-up against key kingpins.

In my view, the number one problem facing the United States today in this region is the surrender of North and South Waziristan by the Pakistani military to the Taliban. We now have a de facto Taliban state, just across from the Afghan border, headquartered in Wana and Miram Shah that have led to a reported 400 percent increase in attacks against the United States/Garrison coast and other fire bases on the region.

On top of the creation of a de facto Taliban state in North and South Waziristan, we had the disastrous agreement in North Helmand province to create a de facto Taliban state there. This is the so-called Musa Qala agreement in which NATO officials agreed to leave that village, and in recent reporting we have seen a dramatic reinforcement of the Taliban Garrison there.

Despite reports that the leader of the Musa Qala Garrison was killed, we have a battle yet to come if ordered that needs to happen. If Musa Qala and its Taliban Garrison are not reduced, you have a critical weakness in ISAP's rear that enable Taliban forces to reequip, rearm and train and recruit that will lead to a very bloody spring for NATO in particular and the United States in specific.

Mr. Chairman, my view for the way forward is to abandon some of the easy policy options that have been dramatic failures. We led with a British plan following the Bonn summit to buy the crop which led to a fast expansion in opium cultivation in Afghanistan. That policy I think can now be rightly seen as a complete disaster. Modest eradication efforts also were not up to the task at 2004 and 2005, as we see the explosion of the Afghan crop.

Apparently we did get an agreement from President Karzai to begin manual spraying, a critical aspect of law enforcement in this area, but reports that I have received from inside the administration indicate that either the Dutch, the Canadian or UK militaries undermine that consensus and reversed President Karzai's decision to begin an aggressive eradication effort. I believe in a very short-sighted attempt to increase the security of their own Garrisons while allowing the greater danger to emerge.

In my view, it is time probably to let the country that is paying for most of this operation and leading most of it, the United States, to become the lead NATO partner here. While the British Government has provided enormous service to our efforts in Afghanistan, they represent less than a third of counternarcotic funding and op-

erations, and to date the policies that they have put forward have been completely ineffective in the gathering danger.

I also think that we have a new partner here coming unseen which is the Government of China that has begun to see a growing danger on their own western border from an increasing opium economy there. I was very surprised as the cochairman of the United States/China working group to see public discussion of the Chinese military overrunning a drug base in western China, and it is something that I think leads to increased potential for United States diplomacy in the region to help the legitimate Government of Afghanistan emerge.

In sum, this danger is not only increasing against United States armed forces in Afghanistan. The danger is increasing here in the United States as well. We have to understand that Afghan heroin is imported into the United States in a different form than the traditional heroin that we all remember. Traditional heroin as it entered the United States in the 1960s and beyond was only one-third pure, and had to be injected in order to deliver a high. Most suburban kids, which represent half of all Americans, have a strong cultural resistance to using any drug involving a needle.

Afghan heroin is now coming into the United States in 100 percent pure form and can be snorted. It allows the drug dealers to have a new gateway for the children of America because they are used to in many ways the snorting of cocaine, and now if they can snort heroin opens huge new markets for the heroin market in the United States.

I will just refer you to one case. Joanna Bowersmith from Oak Park, Illinois, a suburban teen who would never, she said, have used a drug involving needles but snorted heroin, became addicted, and ended up on what she called a descending staircase into hell. In the suburban Chicago hospitals we have now seen a 400 percent increase in heroin overdoses from suburban teens, and I will just note that the Dutch Government that had a long adventure with the legalization of drugs is now building senior housing for addicts that became addicted in the 1960s, despite the vast effort by the Dutch Government for treatment, counseling and outreach.

Over two-thirds of Dutch addicts have never left heroin and are now in senior housing being built by the government to care for their addicts. I do not think that is a direction the United States can go. I think if we end up with anything less than a hard line policy we will jeopardize the democratically elected government of President Karzai, and I commend you, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership—already now 3 years strong leadership—on this issue to make sure that we do not just pay 100 percent of our attention to Iraq, but we also focus on the growing danger of the narco Taliban in Afghanistan. Thank you. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kirk follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARK STEVEN KIRK, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

AFGHANISTAN: THE RISE OF THE NARCO-TALIBAN

Mr. Chairman, I have spent more time on the Afghan-Pakistan border than almost any Member of Congress. As a close observer of that region, I have become increasingly concerned about trends in that region, leading to the creation of a narco-state.

In the mid-1990s, the Congress took decisive action to save democracy in Colombia from narco-terrorists. In my judgment, we now face a similar crisis along the Afghan-Pakistan border. We need a change in policy to emphasize direct support of counter-narcotic operations to arrest drug kingpins, detain chemists and destroy labs to reverse a new and worsening trend in the region.

In the last few years, I worked to provide the State Department with helicopters to bolster their poppy eradication efforts, to bring the Drug Enforcement Administration back as a full member of the Intelligence Community, to provide DEA with better equipment and intelligence support, to strengthen and reform the Rewards for Justice program, and to focus the attention of senior leadership on the clear links between the drug trade in Afghanistan and terrorism. Chairman Hyde and I worked closely to bring about change in our Afghanistan policy, and I remain committed to working on the Appropriations Committee and with you on the Foreign Affairs Committee to offer support, oversight, and guidance to the administration as they evolve their counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism strategies.

Overview

The security situation in Afghanistan is rapidly weakening and President Karzai faces a growing threat from insurgents. Al Qaeda and Taliban guerillas, funded by record drug profits and operating from a safe Pakistani haven, dramatically increased their attacks on NATO soldiers and the Afghan government. Insurgents claim they have new weapons and tactics to weaken the Afghan government and inflict greater casualties on NATO personnel.

The statistics from the region support many of the Taliban and Al Qaeda's claims. While the number of terrorist attacks increased, Afghan opium production rose by 60% this last year.¹ Pakistan recently approved an agreement with militants in North Waziristan that will limit the influence and operations of the Pakistani military and its allies. Clearly, the international community's influence and objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan have suffered a set back. The time has come for a serious recommitment of U.S. and NATO resources to strengthen the Afghan government and deny the establishment of an Al Qaeda safe haven in Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency.

The British-American Counter-Narcotics Strategy Failed

Afghanistan has been a traditional producer of opium and heroin. The size of its crop made it the world's primary source of heroin. Given that most Afghan heroin is consumed in Europe, British Prime Minister Blair asked for and received the international lead on post-2001 counter-narcotics policy and operations in Afghanistan.

Under formal British lead (but with substantial U.S. support), the counter-narcotics program of the international community has failed. The opium economy is now Afghanistan's biggest source of revenue. It amounted to over half of Afghanistan's Gross Domestic Product, \$2.7 billion, in 2005.² The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that this amount will increase to more than \$3 billion for 2006. Like other narco-economies, money derived from the production of opium and heroin is destabilizing the government, corrupting public institutions and providing revenue to insurgents. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Administrator Karen Tandy told the House Armed Services Committee on June 28, 2006 that narcotics trafficking "substantially contributes to instability, violence, and lawlessness in Afghanistan." Afghan President Hamid Karzai similarly clearly identified poppy cultivation and narcotics production as "the single greatest challenge to the long-term security, development and effective governance" of the country.

In Afghanistan's southern Helmand and neighboring provinces, drug traffickers and their Taliban allies reportedly order farmers to cultivate opium poppy in areas under their control and threaten individuals who support the government's counter-narcotics policy. Taliban forces reportedly protect some narcotics traffickers and poppy farmers.

Despite the counter-narcotics program of the Afghan government and its international supporters since 2001, Afghanistan has become the source of 92% of the world's opium. UNODC estimates Afghan opium production rose from less than 1,000 tons in 2001 to over 6,000 tons for the 2005-2006 growing season. The area under opium cultivation grew by 61,000 hectares in just one year, now estimated

¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Press Conference, September 2, 2006.

² National Intelligence Council Associates Report, August 29, 2006.

to have reached a record of 165,000 hectares this year. In the “Heroin Heartland” of Helmand province, cultivation increased by a whopping 162% to 69,324 hectares.³

For the last two years, the State Department has administered U.S. assistance to Afghan counter-narcotics programs under a “five-pillar” strategy:

- (1) Eradication,
- (2) Interdiction,
- (3) Alternative livelihood development,
- (4) Judicial reform, and
- (5) Public information.

The U.S.-funded program provides the bulk of support to the Afghan counter-narcotics policy which also receives support from other NATO allies, especially the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy. Since FY2002, the Congress has appropriated over \$2 billion to specifically support this program.⁴ Unfortunately, this program has not proved effective by any significant measure.

U.S. and Afghan authorities reported that the eradication program was effective in deterring and reducing some opium poppy cultivation in 2005. However, given the record opium crop and recent fighting between Afghan police and farmers, the program has clearly failed. During the 2006 season, Poppy Elimination Program (PEP) teams operated in 19 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. PEP teams reviewed the coming crops and directed early season, locally-executed eradication.

The Afghan Eradication Force also directed eradication activities in three provinces. The State Department’s bureau of International Narcotic and Law Enforcement Affairs reports that 15,300 hectares of poppies were eradicated, less than 10% of the record crop.⁵

Afghan police and the international teams that assist their operations are poorly supported. These teams must rely on truck transport across Afghanistan’s mountainous terrain, giving drug lords and farmers ample warning of an impending operation. DEA provides Foreign Advisory Support (FAST) teams to the Afghan government to train Afghanistan’s National Interdiction Unit (NIU). Nearly all joint DEA/Afghan NIU operations have little to no NATO military support, including little support from the U.S. military Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76). Last year, CJTF-76 supported only three DEA requests for air support of interdiction operations. DEA made 23 such requests before realizing that DoD has very little interest in supporting the counter-narcotics mission in Afghanistan.⁶ To help stabilize Afghanistan and reduce the cultivation of opium, CJTF-76 should increase its helicopter lift and Combat Search & Rescue (CSAR) support for DEA/Afghan NIU missions directed against drug kingpins, heroin chemists, labs and drug convoys.

Because the Defense Department needs to focus on counter-narcotics missions, I joined Chairman Hyde in a request encouraging the development of a “ride-along” program that would allow DEA agents in Afghanistan to accompany US military mission against mutually agreeable targets to gather evidence against drug kingpins and intelligence that will help dismantle heroin trafficking organizations. DOD responded that they already had the authority to embed DEA agents when they are operating “in areas of known or suspected drug-related activity.” Mr. Chairman, if this is the case, given that Afghanistan produces 92% of the world’s heroin, it seems to me that a DEA agent should be aboard every US helicopter that flies in Afghanistan. The reports I get from soldiers on the ground indicate that there is no distinction between counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics missions. When a Taliban hideout is raided, the Kalashnikovs and RPGs are found to be stored right beside bags of raw opium. For the Defense Department to maintain that counter-narcotics is not a military mission is absurd and illustrates a major disconnect between the “boots on the ground” and their senior leadership in CJTF-76, Central Command, and the Pentagon.

There is some hope, however, for military support of DEA/Afghan NIU operations. Just last month ISAF supported a DEA FAST Team deployment in Kunduz province. ISAF support allowed the FAST Teams and the Afghan NIU to dramatically extend their range and conduct operations against drug kingpins DEA knew about, but had previously been unable to target. I believe this should be the model for ISAF and CJTF-76 support for DEA operations in Afghanistan, and that these missions should be far more frequent than they are currently.

³UNODC Press Conference, Sept. 2, 2006

⁴Congressional Research Service, September 1, 2006.

⁵State INL Correspondence, Feb. 8, 2007.

⁶Drug Enforcement Administration statistics.

Despite substantial appropriations approved by the Congress, internationally supported alternative livelihood development efforts have barely gotten off the ground. In addition, the Afghan judicial system is plagued by corruption while radio and press efforts in support of the counter-narcotics program failed to connect with any significant portion of the Afghan citizenry. According to UNODC's Director, Antonio Maria Costa, insecurity and corruption among "members of the local administration, police officials . . . and even politicians and members of parliament" are among the most important enabling factors of ongoing narcotics production and smuggling. President Karzai agreed in a recent interview and formed a new anti-corruption commission to vet national and provincial government officials for involvement in corruption and narcotics. Unless these centralized efforts actually reduce corruption among national-level leaders, Afghan government programs to reduce drug trafficking and terrorism will not be effective.

Most Communities in Afghanistan are Becoming Less Secure

Local community insecurity is growing in most towns, including Afghanistan's capital of Kabul. Because American troops primarily focus on Afghanistan's border with Al Qaeda sanctuaries in Pakistan, the Afghan government and NATO relies on tribal militias. The choice of one group's militia makes potential enemies of its rivals. Afghan militia leaders often inflate their control and direct NATO air strikes against rival groups, claiming they are actually Al Qaeda or Taliban. In many communities, NATO troops are now seen as foreign occupiers, rather than as supporters of the new democratic government.

As of 2005, U.S. commanders believed that the combat, coupled with overall political and economic reconstruction, weakened the insurgency. Over the last year, this trend has reversed, with insurgent attacks escalating substantially in 2006. Taliban insurgents now use suicide and roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), particularly in Uruzgan, Helmand, Kandahar, and Zabul provinces. These are also provinces where NATO's ISAF assumed responsibility for security in July 2006. Fighting was particularly intense during May–August 2006 as U.S.-led forces repulsed 300-man Taliban formations from villages around Kandahar, such as Panjwai district. From 2001 to 2005, there were only five suicide bombings in Afghanistan.⁷ From November 2005 through July 2006, there were 41 suicide bombings in Afghanistan.⁸ General Karl Eikenberry reported that for all of 2006 there were 139 suicide attacks. The number of remotely-triggered IED attacks jumped from 783 to 1,677. In all, the number of armed attacks against coalition and Afghan security forces nearly quadrupled from 1,558 in 2005 to 4,542 in 2006.⁹

The security situation in southern Afghanistan, particularly in Helmand, continues to deteriorate. On July 17, 2006, the Taliban captured and took control of two districts in Helmand province. They controlled the center of Garmser district for two days before NATO troops forced them out. On September 7, 2006, the Taliban recaptured Garmser district along with Arghandab in Zabul province, flying the Taliban flag over government buildings.

The Musa Qala Surrender

Perhaps the most galling failure in southern Afghanistan is the negotiated "truce" between the British Army, tribal elders, and the Taliban in Musa Qala in Helmand province. After months of intense fighting and enduring siege-like conditions, the British were concerned that the threat to their Chinook resupply helicopters was so great they would be forced to retreat to avoid losing one to enemy fire. Local tribal elders approached the British and negotiated a cease-fire that, surprisingly, held for more than a month. At this point, the elders negotiated a withdrawal of British soldiers, Afghan police, and the Taliban from the Musa Qala district. Although the British claimed this experiment brought peace to the area, American officials remained rightly skeptical. U.S. officials report that immediately after the Musa Qala agreement was reached, opium cultivation and trade flourished, and remains active there today.

The agreement completely collapsed within the last few weeks, as the Taliban has seized control of Musa Qala, running the tribal council out of town and forcing thousands of residents to flee their homes. At best, the Musa Qala experience was a failed experiment aimed at finding a novel way to empower local Afghan authorities. At worst, it represents a capitulation to the Taliban, effectively ceding control over an entire district in the heart of Afghanistan's largest poppy-growing province to drug lords and terrorists.

⁷ Congressional Research Service, compiled from wire services.

⁸ Congressional Research Service, compiled from wire services.

⁹ Washington Post, Jan. 16, 2007.

Fighting between NATO troops and the Taliban intensified in 2006. The Taliban operates in more provinces and in larger formations than it did in 2005. While funded with hundreds of millions of dollars from record opium production, the Taliban may also see NATO troops as weaker and less aggressive than exclusively American units, particularly after the withdrawal at Musa Qala. The Taliban's number of attacks, the size of their units and the numbers of casualties they suffered all are significantly larger than in the past. It is also clear that most of the Taliban's strength is focused on provinces that border Pakistan.

As part of the NATO/ISAF takeover of the south, a British/Canadian/Dutch-led 7,000 person "Regional Command South" formally took over responsibility for southern Afghanistan on July 31, 2006. In building the force, Britain is contributing 3,300 troops, Canada is deploying about 2,200, and the Netherlands is fielding about 1,700. There is U.S. participation in this force in the south, with those U.S. forces serving under NATO/ISAF command. In conjunction with the restructuring, NATO/ISAF force levels are increasing to about 18,000, from previous levels of about 12,000.

In December 2005, NATO adopted rules of engagement that allow NATO/ISAF forces to perform combat missions, although not as aggressively as the combat conducted by the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom forces.

In response to the stepped up Taliban activity in the south, U.S. and NATO forces launched "Operation Mountain Lion" and "Operation Mountain Thrust" in June 2006. These operations were intended to clear the Taliban from areas of the southern provinces in advance of the NATO assumption of responsibility. The operations formally ended on July 31, and, as evidenced by the continued high level of Taliban military activity, appear to have been tactical successes but strategic failures. This trend continued in NATO's "Operation Medusa" in southern Afghanistan, which resulted in more than 420 Taliban killed.¹⁰

Taliban Safe Haven in Pakistan

In 2001–2002, many leaders of Al Qaeda and related personnel fled to Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) province, joining with indigenous ethnic Pashtuns who maintain their independence from the Pakistani government in Islamabad.

A November 2005 follow-on report by 9/11 Commissioners warned that Pakistan "remains a sanctuary and training ground for terrorists." In a February 2006 review of global threats, Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte told a Senate panel that Pakistan "remains a major source of extremism that poses a threat to President Musharraf, to the United States, and to neighboring India and Afghanistan." In June, State Department Counterterrorism Coordinator Henry Crumpton told a Senate panel that elements of Pakistan's "local, tribal governments" work in collusion with the Taliban and Al Qaeda—but the United States has "no compelling evidence" that Pakistan's major intelligence agency is assisting militants. The Commander of the U.S. Central Command, Gen. Abizaid, reiterated this point last August, saying he believed the Pakistani military and Musharraf are fully committed to combating regional terrorism.

Two cases of actual or planned major terrorist acts—the July 2006 serial bombings in Bombay, India, and the alleged August 2006 plot to destroy passenger aircraft flying out of Britain—both had apparent links to Islamist militant groups based in Pakistan. Disturbingly, *New York Times* correspondent Carlotta Gall was assaulted by Pakistani intelligence agents at her hotel in Quetta after she uncovered "anecdotal" evidence that the Pakistani intelligence service is supporting the Taliban in the FATA. The agents broke down the door to her hotel room, punched her in the face, and seized her computer, notebooks, and cell phone. Pakistani officials are investigating the incident, but it is clear that Ms. Gall uncovered information that was of great concern to Pakistani intelligence.

Pakistan's FATA includes seven tribal agencies traditionally beyond the full writ of the Pakistani state. The mountainous FATA is home to about five million people living in an area slightly larger than the state of Maryland. To date, with some 80,000 Pakistani troops now deployed to the border areas, military operations have met with only mixed success. Pakistani press reported on hundreds of militants killed, along with 700 Pakistani soldiers and several hundred civilian casualties.

In late 2003, the Pakistani military began mounting major operations in the FATA, concentrated mainly in the South Waziristan, which abuts Afghanistan's Paktika province. After months of sometimes heavy fighting, the five most-wanted Pashtun tribesmen "surrendered" to the government authorities in April 2004. The leaders were immediately granted amnesty in return for a promise that they would

¹⁰The Guardian, London, September 11, 2006.

not provide shelter to Al Qaeda members or their supporters. This “Shakai agreement” and later agreements appeared to have largely ended overt conflict in South Waziristan by 2005.

As Pakistani officials declared victory over “unwanted foreigners,” their focus shifted to North Waziristan, where terrorists continued to operate. Sporadic fighting continued through 2005 and into mid-2006. The most dramatic insurgent attack included a March 2006 attack by hundreds of armed militants who seized control of government buildings in North Waziristan’s capital of Miram Shah before being repulsed by Pakistani troops.¹¹

Pakistan’s Waziristan has become Talibanistan

On June 25, 2006, Islamic militants in North Waziristan called a unilateral 30-day cease-fire to allow for a “jirga,” or tribal council, seeking resolution with government forces. Subsequent jirgas have been held with government authorities present and Islamabad has released hundreds of detained militants and reportedly abandoned some army checkpoints in a show of goodwill. One month later, militants extended the cease-fire for another 30 days to allow for continued dialogue. In mid-August, Pakistani officials claimed to have arrested more than two dozen Taliban fighters as they recuperated at a private hospital in Quetta.¹²

On September 5, 2006, representatives of the Pakistani government and tribal elders signed a “peace agreement” negotiated by the jirga. The agreement appears to provide government approval to nearly all of the requests of militants in the FATA. Pakistani military forces, which have suffered a series of losses, will withdraw from important checkpoints, release hundreds of imprisoned militants, and will offer compensatory payments to militants. The government will also allow foreign militants to remain in the tribal region provided they “vow to obey” the law.

This represents a major reversal from the government’s previous insistence that foreigners register with authorities or leave the country. It appears that this arrangement will free the Islamic militants to increase their attacks on U.S.-led forces across the border in Afghanistan. Immediately after the agreement was signed, a spokesman for the militants denied that any foreign fighters were present in North Waziristan, and spokesmen for the Pakistani government were forced to clarify that Osama bin Laden would still be arrested if located in Pakistan, despite the September 5 agreement.¹³

Despite a three-year campaign by the Pakistani military, there appears to be a new “Pakistan Taliban,” allied with Al Qaeda remnants and Afghan insurgents, which has consolidated control over large tracts of the border area.

What Lies Ahead?

Given that elements of the tribal governments are widely acknowledged to be in collusion with al Qaeda and the Taliban, the “peace agreement” Pakistan signed effectively cedes control over a part of the Afghanistan/Pakistan border to the Taliban. Operating from this safe haven in the FATA, the Taliban will be able to escalate its attack against NATO and Afghan government targets. It will also have a haven to process and transport weapons to and heroin from Afghanistan.

It is also clear that Pakistani agents may know more about the whereabouts of key Taliban and al Qaeda leaders, which is why I plan to reintroduce the Terrorist Rewards Enhancement Act. Under current law, the U.S. cannot pay a reward to an officer or employee of a foreign government, even if they provided key information leading to the capture of Osama bin Laden. My legislation authorizes payments from the Rewards for Justice program to employees of foreign governments if the information they provided leads to the location of a high-value target. The Secretary of State will have the discretion to determine if the circumstances dictate paying such an award.

The Rewards for Justice program has been very successful in generating information leading to the apprehension of key people including Mir Amal Kansi, a terrorist who had murdered two CIA employees and injured three others in a 1993 shooting outside CIA headquarters in Virginia. If there is anyone, anywhere, even if they work for a Pakistani government agency, who has information about the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, we should be doing all we can to elicit that information from him.

NATO’s deployment to the “Heartland of Heroin” in Helmand represents a danger to the drug economy of southern Afghanistan. The British and others deployed troops into the economic engine of the Taliban where the U.S. has had few assets

¹¹ Christian Science Monitor, June 8, 2006.

¹² New York Times, August 16, 2006.

¹³ Associated Press of Pakistan, September 6, 2006.

to support this critical mission. While these troops have explicitly rejected a direct role in counter-narcotics, well financed drug smugglers would like to see them depart and can use Taliban soldiers to attack NATO troops. Given the hundreds of millions of dollars earned in the opium trade, the new Taliban probably has an operating budget that equals the resources used to support NATO and Afghan military operations.

With the apparent capitulation of the Pakistanis to the militants in the FATA and the disaster at Musa Qala, the U.S. and Britain must develop a more effective counter-narcotics program in Afghanistan. It is clear that the Taliban and al Qaeda are encouraging farmers to grow opium poppies and offering protection to farmers in exchange for a fee. Implementing an effective eradication program is vital to reducing the world's supply of heroin and ending this source of support to the Taliban.

To do this successfully, the U.S. will have to employ CJTF-76 direct support to DEA/Afghan NIU counter-narcotics missions, rather than pay lip service to it. DoD assets will be needed to support DEA FAST teams with intelligence, transportation and, if needed, close air support. Last March, the U.S. and Britain established a joint counter-narcotics intelligence fusion center in London to focus on the heroin flowing out of Afghanistan. Although intelligence is being gathered, no direct action is being taken to apprehend major Afghan traffickers or destroy heroin labs.

The U.S. was successful in dismantling the Colombian Medellin and Cali cocaine cartels because of an aggressive eradication and interdiction program that had the full support of DoD. The steps taken by the President Alvaro Uribe to ensure democratic security have resulted in an 80 percent reduction in kidnappings in the past year. In addition, terrorist attacks have decreased by 63 percent, and homicides have been reduced by 37 percent. Colombia seized more assets of drug traffickers, and extradited more kingpins to the United States, than has any other country in the world.

The FY 2007 Department of Defense Appropriations Act contained \$100 million specifically to fund Afghan counter-narcotics efforts. Using Colombia as a model, we should mandate that all funds allocated for the counter-narcotics mission in Afghanistan be used as part of a unified campaign against both drugs and terror using all U.S. assets, including military equipment. This money should be used by DoD and DEA to support operations against high value targets, drug kingpins, heroin labs, and interdiction missions against convoys smuggling chemicals into Afghanistan and heroin out of the country.

In Colombia, we learned that drugs and terrorism must be fought simultaneously. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, we must take the lessons learned in Colombia to understand counter-terror programs will not work unless there is an effective counter-narcotic program to eliminate the Taliban's new source of funding. If we do not do this, Afghanistan will descend into its former status of becoming a failed narcostate.

Chairman LANTOS. Well, I want to thank you very much for singularly valuable testimony based on your long experience in the region and your insights. We are deeply in your debt. May I now ask our three witnesses of the next panel to take their seats? We have an extraordinary range of talent here, and it is my pleasure to introduce them.

First I am delighted to recognize and introduce General David Barno, whom I had the pleasure of meeting for the first time in my native country of Hungary where he commanded a most important NATO base at Talsar, engaged in very valuable training programs, and after that experience, he was deployed to Afghanistan in October 2003. There he commanded all U.S. and coalition forces. After 19 months of service there, his insights will be of inestimable value to this committee.

Next we will hear from Mr. Peter Bergen, a prolific journalist, best selling author, and a respected scholar who serves as the Schwartz Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation and as an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University.

Finally, we are privileged to have one of the most highly respected security experts in the United States whose written product I have had the pleasure of being a consumer of for many, many years with great benefit. Mr. Anthony Cordesman has recently

been in the region again, and we are all looking forward to what is always a penetrating analytical judgment. We will begin with General Barno. General Barno, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID BARNO, USA,
RETIRED, DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

Mr. BARNO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here to speak today. Chairman Lantos——

Chairman LANTOS. Is your——

Mr. BARNO. There we go.

Chairman LANTOS. Okay. Please begin.

Mr. BARNO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to speak to the committee. Chairman Lantos, ranking Republican Ros-Lehtinen and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, thanks for the invitation to be here today to offer some viewpoints on the current circumstances in Afghanistan.

Today I am a serving member of the Defense Department in my capacity as the Director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies here at the National Defense University. So in that capacity I do have some responsibility to represent the views of the U.S. Government, but today I understand that my invitation to speak here is a result of my 19 months of service in Afghanistan as the overall United States and coalition commander from late 2003 to mid 2005.

I have been back from Afghanistan for well over 18 months, and I have since left active military service, but I continue to follow events there closely, and I will endeavor to present my candid views on all topics we discuss today, and will note where my personal views and judgments may differ from perhaps official policy.

I begin with a few highlights of the big picture, if you will, regarding Afghanistan, and some observations on the positives in Afghanistan are important to note today because they often get overlooked here 5 years on in our effort.

Afghanistan today is on the crest of emerging from over 25 years of continuous warfare, beginning with the Soviets starting in 1979, then following a brutal civil war which wreaked devastation on the country which was only surpassed by the Soviet attacks, and then finally a battle with the Taliban with United States help eventually led to their overthrow in late 2001, and elements of that fight clearly continue today. But the aggregate of all of that I would note to the committee is that the Afghan people today are deeply tired of fighting.

Since 2001 the Afghans with broad and deep international support have approved one of the most moderate constitutions in the Islamic world. They have registered 10.5 million Afghans to vote in their first ever Presidential election against expectations of only half that number. They voted President Karzai into office with 55 percent of the vote among 18 candidates. They selected a cabinet, conducted a peaceful inauguration, elected a Parliament a year later and have continued to fight daily to resist Taliban encroachments.

During this time the Afghan people have not only tolerated but have welcomed foreign military forces for the first time in their history with the understanding that only through foreign assistance, through international support would Afghanistan be able to move forward and to prosper. I often heard the refrain from Afghans of all stripes, “You Americans are not going to abandon us again, are you?”—referring to their perceptions of United States flight following the defeat of the Soviets which was a perceived abandonment on the Afghans’ part that seared deep into their consciousness, and one that they credit with the rise of the Taliban regime.

Afghans have had the experience of living under the Taliban rule for years, and virtually none that I have ever encountered want to go back to that state. That is a powerful inoculation against the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Most importantly in my estimation, the majority of Afghans want the international community, to include the military, to be in Afghanistan and to accelerate and ensure Afghanistan’s modernization. In many ways, ladies and gentlemen, Afghanistan is ours to lose. A few comparisons with Iraq might be of interest since inevitably the two theaters are often juxtaposed. You may find these surprising.

Afghanistan boasts a population and a land mass larger than Iraq, 31 million Afghans compared with almost 27 million Iraqis, and over 647,000 square kilometers of land in Afghanistan versus only 437,000 in Iraq. Nearly 50 percent greater land mass. Afghanistan’s population is overwhelmingly rural and 80 percent agricultural which talks very much to the issue of poppy, which we will need to address in detail, in comparison with Iraq, which is heavily urbanized.

Afghanistan possesses few, if any, natural resources, although some recent energy exploration has held out the promise for untapped reserves. Its statistics for infant and maternal mortality compete for rock bottom in the world in the United Nations measurements. Literacy is about 36 percent. Road networks are primitive to nonexistent. The smaller country of Iraq has five times the paved road mileage found in Afghanistan.

Where we are working in Iraq to restore a nation’s economy, its infrastructure and standard of living, in Afghanistan by contrast we are working to create all of these things where virtually none has ever existed. Afghanistan has experienced almost none of modernity’s positive effects, and thus finds itself perhaps hundreds of years behind its neighbors in the structural trappings of both the 19th and 20th centuries.

Finally distinct from Iraq’s sectarian divides, Afghanistan is dominated by a tribal system perhaps unique to that nation. Five key tribes, the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, the Turkmen and the Hazaras dominate national politics and many elements of Afghan life. Despite numerous opportunities over the centuries to fragment into different subnations along these tribal lines, Afghanistan has always remained together as a country. As many observers have said, Afghanistan is a strong nation but a weak state. Institutions, as we understand them, are simply near nonexistent as measured against any kind of a functioning model, with only a very few exceptions.

In military terms, since the initial U.S. operations there in 2001 to depose the Taliban, United States troop strength in Afghanistan has always been dramatically less than in Iraq. Today standing at its highest point ever, with about 24,000 Americans deployed plus another 22,000 non-U.S. NATO troops in Afghanistan, the highest totals in each category since our involvement began.

By contrast when I arrived in Afghanistan in October 2003, our United States troop numbers were about 14,000 and NATO less than 6,000. This light footprint, as it has been described, in my view has been a beneficial and useful component to our overall strategy and reflected accurate concerns for the potential impact of very large numbers of foreign troops in a nation famous for its successful rejection of foreign armies. That situation and the requirements for military forces, however, may be changing today.

Our involvement in Afghanistan should be viewed in a broader context than simply the nation of Afghanistan. Our national interests should look to the neighborhood. Central Asia is a historic area of great power conflict and a quick scan of Afghanistan's neighbors should serve to reinforce why our efforts in Afghanistan today have strategic consequences for the United States.

To the south, a 1,500 border with Pakistan over some of the most rugged terrain in the world, nearly the distance from Washington, DC, to Denver, Colorado. To the northeast a border with China. Across the northern tier of Afghanistan former states of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, always choosing whether to turn north back toward Russia or to look south toward warm water ports. And then finally to the west, the nation of Iran, a growing power in the region and one which as we know is aspiring to nuclear arms. An extraordinarily important neighborhood for our presence to be felt in.

I would argue that this neighborhood defines strategic location and influence, and that the significance of our role in ensuring Afghanistan's success as a democratic Muslim state in the center of this region cannot be overestimated. Both China and Russia have clear designs on increasing their influence in this critical part of the world, and via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional six-country cooperative, have made it clear that they seek the departure of the United States' military presence.

Whether or not the Central Asia of today is emerging as the nexus of a new "Great Game," the realities are that the United States in the aftermath of 9/11 now has vital interests in this part of the world and must play a central leadership role in helping shape a positive outcome for the entire region. American actions over the next 5 years will send a clear and unambiguous message to our friends and our adversaries alike about the importance that the United States attaches to both the region and more importantly to our friends who are working hard against countervailing currents and influences.

Our physical distance, 6,000 miles away, from this key part of the world only makes our leadership more important. The geography is not going to change, and Afghanistan's neighbors will always remain their neighbors whereas the United States presence can turn out to be a fleeting one. We must actively guard against these perceptions and send an unequivocal message of American

commitment to this nation and to its people. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barno follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID BARNO, USA, RETIRED,
DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Chairman Lantos, Ranking Republican Ros-Lehtinen, and Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Thank you for the invitation to offer my views on the current security, political, and economic circumstances in Afghanistan today, to include addressing sources of instability and prescriptions for U.S. and allied actions to address those sources of instability.

As a serving member of the Defense Department in my capacity as the Director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University, I continue to have a responsibility to represent the views of the U.S. Government in some capacities. That said, I understand that the source of my invitation today is my nineteen months of service as the overall U.S. and coalition commander in Afghanistan from late 2003 to mid-2005. Although I have been back from Afghanistan for over eighteen months, and have since left active military service, I continue to follow events there closely. I will endeavor to present my candid views on all topics discussed, and will clearly note where opinions and judgments reflect my personal views, particularly where they might differ with current U.S. policy.

I would begin with a few highlights of the “big picture,” if you will, regarding Afghanistan. Some observations on the positives in Afghanistan are important to note—and often get overlooked. Afghanistan is emerging from over twenty-five years of continuous warfare—beginning with the Soviets starting in 1979, then in a brutal civil war which wreaked devastation on the country surpassed only by that of the Soviets, and then finally a battle with the Taliban, which, with U.S. help, eventually led to their overthrow in late 2001. The Afghan people today are deeply tired of fighting.

Since 2001 the Afghans—with broad and deep international support—have approved one of the most moderate constitutions in the Islamic world, registered 10.5 million Afghans to vote (against expectations of half that number), voted President Karzai into office in their first-ever presidential election with 55% of the vote among eighteen candidates, selected a cabinet and conducted a peaceful inauguration, elected a parliament a year later, and have continued to fight off Taliban encroachments. During this time the Afghan people have not only tolerated but welcomed foreign military forces for the first time in their history—with the understanding that only through foreign assistance would Afghanistan be able to move forward and prosper.

I often heard the refrain from Afghans of all stripes: “You Americans are not going to abandon us again, are you?” referring to their perceptions of U.S. flight following the defeat of the Soviets—a perceived abandonment seared deep into Afghan consciousness, and one which they credit for the rise of the widely despised Taliban regime. Afghans have the experience of living under Taliban rule for years—and virtually none want to return to that state, a powerful inoculation against the blandishments of any insurgent appeal.

Today, over 5 million Afghan children are in school, to include over 2 million girls—prohibited during Taliban times. Hundreds of clinics and new schools are now open to serve the population as a result of international aid. The Afghan economy is growing at 8% per year, and the extensive outpouring of international support for Afghanistan has resulted in three donor conferences pledging over \$24 billion since 2002. Most importantly in my estimation: the majority of Afghans want the international community, to include the military, to be in Afghanistan to accelerate and ensure Afghanistan’s modernization. In many ways, Afghanistan is ours to lose.

A few comparisons with Iraq might be of interest since inevitably the two theaters of conflict are often juxtaposed. You may find that the differences are immense, and often, surprising. Afghanistan boasts both a population and a land mass larger than Iraq: 31 million Afghans as compared to almost 27 million Iraqis, and over 647,000 square kilometers of land vs. only 437,000 in Iraq—an over 40% greater expanse of Afghan territory. Afghanistan’s population is overwhelmingly rural and 80% agricultural, as compared with Iraq which is heavily urbanized. Afghanistan possesses few if any natural resources, although recent energy exploration has held out the promise of untapped reserves. Its statistics for infant and maternal mortality compete for rock bottom in the world in UN measurements. Literacy is about 36%, road networks are primitive to non-existent—smaller Iraq has nearly five times the

paved road mileage found in Afghanistan. Electricity remains rare throughout the country, and is still sporadic in the capital city, Kabul—similar to Baghdad.

Where we are working in Iraq to *restore* a nation's economy, infrastructure, and standard of living—in Afghanistan, by contrast, we are working to *create* capacity where virtually none has ever existed. Iraq's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is \$94.1 billion compared to Afghanistan's nearly \$8 billion. And might I add that this includes almost \$3 billion of Afghanistan's GDP that comes from the illicit drug trade. More telling, the Iraqi government's budget comes in at \$30.8 billion compared to Afghanistan's paltry \$800 million—making Afghanistan's budget substantially smaller than the budget of: Fairfax County, Virginia; San Mateo County, California; or Miami-Dade County, Florida. Afghanistan's relentless rejection of foreign armies has had the paradoxical effect of precluding the establishment of a residual civil service, agricultural system, road network, and nationwide infrastructure that are often the legacy of colonial powers—despite colonialism's other onerous effects. Afghanistan has experienced none of those positive effects, and thus finds itself perhaps hundreds of years behind its neighbors in the structural trappings of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Finally, distinct from Iraq's sectarian divides, Afghanistan is dominated by a tribal system perhaps unique to that nation. Five key tribes—Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen, and Hazaras—dominate national politics and many elements of Afghan life. While rivalries between tribes remain strong, it is worthy to note that Afghanistan throughout the centuries has put aside the often bloody competition among tribes to maintain a national identity as Afghanistan. Despite numerous opportunities to fragment into different sub-nations along tribal lines, Afghanistan has remained together. Shi'a-Sunni conflict was muted during my time there (only the Hazaras are Shi'a), and I believe it remains a relatively minor factor in Afghan politics today. As a number of knowledgeable observers on Afghanistan have said, "Afghanistan is a strong nation, but a weak state." Institutions are simply near non-existent as measured against a functioning model—with only few exceptions.

In military terms, since the initial U.S. operations there in 2001 to depose the Taliban, U.S. troop strength in Afghanistan has been dramatically less than in Iraq—today standing at its highest point with 24,000 Americans deployed, plus another 22,000 non-U.S. NATO troops—the highest totals in each category since our involvement began. By contrast, when I arrived in Afghanistan in October 2003, our U.S. troops numbers were about 14,000 and NATO less than 6,000. This "light footprint" in my view has been a beneficial and useful component of our overall strategy, and reflected the accurate concerns for the potential impacts of very large numbers of foreign troops in a land famous for its successful rejection of foreign armies. That situation may, however, be changing today.

Our involvement in Afghanistan should also be viewed in a broader context than simply the nation of Afghanistan—our national interests should look to "the neighborhood." Central Asia is a historic area of great power conflict and a quick scan of Afghanistan's neighbors should serve to reinforce why our efforts in Afghanistan today have strategic consequences.

To the south, along a 1,500 mile border, Afghanistan abuts Pakistan—the second largest Muslim nation in the world and one with a stockpile of nuclear weapons. The Pakistani-Afghan border area—poorly defined in many spots—comprises some of the most rugged terrain in the world, and roughly spans the distance between Washington, DC and Denver, Colorado—much of it covered by Rocky Mountain-like terrain. On the northeast corner of Afghanistan is China, sharing a small but extraordinarily mountainous border in the Hindu Kush range. Its northern border finds Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—former republics of the now defunct Soviet Union, but always torn between looking north to Russia or aiming south toward trade and warm water access to the Arabian Sea—through Afghanistan and Pakistan. Finally, to the west lies Iran—a growing power in the region, and one also aspiring to nuclear arms.

This neighborhood defines strategic location and influence—and the significance of our role in assuring Afghanistan's success as a democratic Muslim state in the center of this region cannot be underestimated. Both China and Russia have clear designs on increasing their influence in this critical part of the world and, via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)—a regional six-country cooperative—have made it clear that they seek the departure of the U.S. military presence.

Whether or not the Central Asia of today is emerging as the nexus of a new "Great Game," the realities are that the United States in the aftermath of 9/11 now has vital interests in this part of the world—and must play a leadership role in helping to shape a positive outcome for the region. American actions over the next five years will send a clear and unambiguous message to friends and adversaries alike about the importance the U.S. attaches to both the region and, more impor-

tantly, to our friends who seek encouragement and reinforcement against countervailing currents. Our physical distance from this key part of the world only makes our leadership more important—the geography is not going to change and Afghanistan's neighbors will always remain neighbors—whereas the U.S. presence can turn out to be a fleeting one. We must actively guard against these perceptions.

In looking at the nature of the threats inside Afghanistan, I often drew out a diagram of interlocking circles I characterized as the “Three Wars of Afghanistan.” This diagram outlined not only the activities U.S. and coalition forces were involved with daily, but also highlighted the interrelated aspects of Afghanistan's challenges. It neatly defines in graphic form many of the sources of instability in Afghanistan as well. The first circle reflects the war against the senior leadership of Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Hezbi Islami Gelbuddin (HiG)—the three primary enemy organizations, all affiliated with each other in a marriage of convenience. Senior leadership of these organizations includes Usama bin Laden, Al Zawahiri, Mullah Omar and Hekmatyar, as well as their most senior lieutenants—the brainpower of each terrorist group. The center of gravity to effect this first “war” was intelligence—timely, accurate, and actionable—crucial information that could be validated and acted upon before the target might disappear. Not surprisingly, this was the most difficult set of objectives to collect readily usable intelligence upon, but we continue to have a dedicated 24/7 capability in Afghanistan oriented toward this focus. The American people would expect no less.

The second circle represented the war against the organizations led by the culprits noted above—Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and HiG. This “war” was the primary battlefield which consumed most of our military effort on a day-to-day basis. Its center of gravity was the Afghan people—the group that formed the overarching center of gravity for our entire integrated political-military effort in Afghanistan. Ultimately, it was our view that the Afghan people would choose their future—either with their own elected government, or with the terrorists and insurgents if other hopes were extinguished. This effort was, at root, about keeping hope alive among ordinary Afghans—to insure they could always see a better day ahead for their children. We preserved this center of gravity foremost in our efforts.

Finally, the third circle depicted the war against the “centrifugal forces” that daily worked to pull Afghanistan apart—drugs, warlords, factionalism, crime, corruption, poverty, lack of education—factors that were centuries-old characteristics of the Afghan landscape, and continue to exert a powerful and debilitating influence on the nation's future even today. The center of gravity of this third “war” was “extending the reach of the central government” to project its authority and benefits into the farthest regions of the country, to assert the rule of law, to alleviate local suffering and shortfalls, and to provide the benefits of government to areas that had seen precious little presence or effects—perhaps for decades or more.

This “Three Wars of Afghanistan” construct depicts in many ways the dilemmas that face both the government and people of Afghanistan today, but also describes the nature of the challenges the U.S. faces in moving forward in the next several years.

And now I turn to my own personal views and judgments:

The Enemy

The enemy in Afghanistan today remains elusive and notably more powerful—in my estimation—than the enemy of two or three years ago. His tactics are changing and becoming more deadly. Employment of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and suicide bomber attacks have grown exponentially since 2005, perhaps reflecting a sharing of technology and tactics drawn from terrorists in Iraq. The Taliban and associated foreign fighters—to include Al Qaeda—remain the “spoilers” in Afghanistan. The Taliban cannot win—hostility from a population still scarred and embittered from years of living under Taliban rule is overwhelming. But the Taliban can force the West to quit—and thus ultimately prevail.

Of particular concern in this regard is what appears to be to be a significant growth in Taliban capabilities since 2005. By the spring of 2005, during the waning days of my tenure as U.S. and coalition overall commander, we were looking carefully at a number of staff analyses that began to suggest the Taliban was exhibiting signs of defeat. I believe in retrospect that this was not an inaccurate assessment—but I also believe that some significant change took place in 2005 that re-energized the Taliban movement and ultimately delivered this “new Taliban” which we see today—emboldened, aggressive, employing new tactics, seemingly well supplied, trained and evidently possessing plenty of new recruits. Today's Taliban—from my news account assessment—is not the Taliban force we fought in 2004 and 2005. I can speculate on the reasons, and note ruefully as well that we did not seem to have the “read” on the enemy which would have seen this developing.

Regional Perceptions of U.S. Resolve

In mid-summer 2005, shortly after my departure from Afghanistan, the U.S. announced that NATO was assuming control from the U.S.-led coalition for the entire Afghan mission—and shortly thereafter, we also announced we were withdrawing over 1,000 U.S. troops from the combat zone. This, in my personal estimation, sent a most unfortunate and misinterpreted signal to friend and foe alike—that the U.S. was leaving and turning the mission over to some largely unknown (in that part of the world) organization of 26 countries directed from Europe. Tragically, I believe that this misunderstood message caused both friends and enemies to re-calculate their options—with a view toward the U.S. no longer being a lead actor in Afghanistan. The truth, of course, is much different but many of the shifts in enemy activity and even the behavior of Afghanistan's neighbors, I believe, can be traced to this period. All of this leads us inexorably to the topic of Pakistan.

Pakistan

The Pakistani government has been one of the most aggressive and reliable supporters of the United States in our war against Al Qaeda since 9/11. The Pakistanis have made more arrests of Al Qaeda associated figures—to include Al Qaeda king-pin Khalid Sheik Mohammed—than any other nation. That said, it is my personal opinion that since mid-2005, Pakistan has also re-calculated its position vis-a-vis Afghanistan in light of concerns for a diminished and less aggressive U.S. presence in the nation that lies in Pakistan's backyard. Pakistan has had a long-standing relationship with the Taliban since its origins, and I believe maintains some degree of influence, however limited, with the insurgent group. Moreover, after courageous—and bloody—Pakistani fighting with regular army troops against Taliban and other foreign fighters in the tribal areas of South Waziristan in 2004, Pakistan has now chosen to create “truces” with groups in North Waziristan, apparently to avoid further bloody and inconclusive conflicts. This “arrangement”—citing news accounts from the area as well as from our U.S. military commanders—has resulted in a three-fold increase in insurgent activity across the border inside Afghanistan opposite the “truce” area. This is far from a welcome development, and highlights the ambiguity of Pakistan's role in this conflict—perhaps to include tipping the ultimate outcome in one way or the other.

At the end of the day, neither NATO nor Afghan forces can overcome the existence of a sanctuary for the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and various other foreign fighters. If the Taliban has a protected location in which they can rest, recruit, train, re-arm, treat their wounded, and bury their dead without any threat of military attack—no amount of effort to curb the Taliban inside Afghanistan will be successful. This requires a solution that spans both sides of this volatile border area.

Possible Prescriptions

Although I have focused primarily on the security situation, I follow the political and economic linkages as well—and all must be addressed in order to arrive at a comprehensive set of solutions that can contribute to Afghanistan's future as a regional success story. Some thoughts, strictly my own—

Unity of Effort

The assumption by NATO of military command across Afghanistan provides a unique opportunity to use NATO as a rallying point around which to build—perhaps in partnership with the very effective United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA)—a core of leaders devoted to a holistic set of solutions to the many diverse challenges inside Afghanistan. “Fragmentism” as I put it—the tendency to divide all immense challenges up into small lanes of competing interests with no unifying leadership—undercuts both the U.S. and international effort in Afghanistan as it does in other parts of the world. The closer the endeavor can get to one person (or small group) in charge, with full authority, resources, longevity, trust, and accountability for results—the sooner success will be achieved and the fewer resources wasted. This will not be easy, but there is precedent for achieving this effect in the 2003–2005 era of Ambassador Khalilzad's tenure.

Institution-building and Lack of Human Capital

I often describe the challenge of delivering results in Afghanistan as an hour-glass—at the top is the amount of foreign aid available, which is substantial. At bottom, is the breadth of the Afghan people's need for help in virtually every sector. In the middle is the bottleneck—the lack of human capital in Afghanistan today that can convert dollars, euros, yen, and pounds into effects felt in cities and towns across the country. Managerial and technical support is in short supply, only exacerbated by the difficult security situation broadly found in the southern half of the country. A serious effort must be made to grow Afghan managerial capacity, per-

haps by the creation of a robust civil service. A key component of this effort must be to incentivize foreign managerial expertise to share in this great undertaking—and to assist in training Afghans as well. This is a necessary but alone insufficient step in building Afghan institutions which are today largely defunct.

A major U.S. interagency- and internationally-supported effort should be undertaken to craft plans for wide-scale training and broad governmental mentorship programs. These efforts have potential—guided by the Afghan government’s expressed needs and a culturally respectful approach—to transform Afghanistan’s executive, judicial, and legislative arms. The Afghan government should supervise the prioritization of this “best practices” support, including, where appropriate, from Islamic countries. Elections do not ensure democracy, but solid institutions can—now the time has come to focus on building the long-term effectiveness of the Afghan government through focus on effective Afghan institutions.

Poppy

To counter the pernicious effects of illegal agriculture in Afghanistan, a fully-resourced system of legitimate agriculture must be created. Today in Afghanistan, if you want free seed for your crop, if you want advice on how to grow your crop, if you want assured transport of your crop to market, if you want a guaranteed price for your crop, you can only get all of these supports from drug lords. Legitimate farmers must have access to the same kind of farm supports if they are to have a chance at being successful—and to incentivize others to leave poppy farming and grow legal crops. As I said earlier, Afghanistan remains an agricultural economy at core, with 80% of its population being agricultural. Despite this fact, little has been done to energize and grow capacity in this central sector of the Afghan economy that impacts the livelihood of millions of Afghans annually.

Infrastructure Building

The President’s budget just submitted to Congress—on which I am not an expert witness—is an excellent and much-needed step to dramatically ramp up financial support for our long-term objectives in Afghanistan. Significantly increasing funding for Afghan security force growth as well as dollars dedicated to infrastructure improvement will pay immense dividends. These dollars must be accompanied by the management structures needed to efficiently and effectively use the money to deliver enduring results—a much more difficult proposition in a nation with limited human capital, as noted. A robust infusion of U.S. interagency management talent could help offset this indigenous shortfall, as well as serve as a civil service role model for the Afghan government.

Pakistan

A renewed effort on the diplomatic front seems to me to be in order to convince Pakistan of American staying power in the region. Recent U.S. approaches to India have also cast a new light upon Pakistani perceptions vis-à-vis the U.S., and should not be overlooked in this equation. Pakistan has been a loyal and assertive ally in the war against Al Qaeda, but now must turn its attention to ensuring that the government of its neighbor Afghanistan remains unburdened by a threat emanating, at least in part, from Pakistan. Both nations—Afghanistan and Pakistan—share a common enemy in terrorist groups, one of which has twice attempted to assassinate the Pakistani president. This common threat must form the basis for a renewed commitment by both countries to forswear any “deals” with terrorists that offer them protection inside either nation. Sanctuary—on both sides of the border—must be eliminated and must be the top security priority of both nations in this fight.

Thanks for the opportunity to share these thoughts with you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, General Barno. Mr. Bergen.

STATEMENT OF MR. PETER BERGEN, JOURNALIST AND SENIOR FELLOW, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you, Chairman Lantos and the ranking member and for the invitation to speak here today. Rather than detaining you with a laundry list of Afghanistan’s problems, which I think we all know they are profound, let me suggest some opportunities. It is a classic doctrine of counterinsurgency that the center of gravity in a conflict is the people, and what is the attitude of the Afghan people? Well, on any number of questions, the Afghan

people have probably the most unpositive view of Osama bin Laden and suicide bombing than any Muslim country in the world. Ninety percent disprove of bin Laden personally, and suicide bombing they regard as anathema.

Eight out of ten are happy about the international presence there. Eight out of ten are happy the Taliban are gone. Only 5 percent have favorable views of the Taliban. That rises only to 10 percent in the south, the area where the Taliban is strongest. And of the 34 provinces that exist in Afghanistan, only eight really have security problems. Now, this sort of ignores the fact that there are massive problems, and we know what they are.

But we are in a situation where a surge militarily, diplomatically, economically and reconstruction can actually work. The people want it in Afghanistan, and of course there is international consensus behind it as well. There is one problem that I would point to that has not been identified so far which I think is important. Al-Qaeda is resurging as well as the Taliban, and they are resurging hand-in-hand.

We now understand that the London attack of July 7, 2005, was an al-Qaeda operation, and this brings me to perhaps the central proposal that we all need to get behind which is what is the central national security problem for the United States, NATO, Pakistan and Afghanistan? It is of course the tribal areas of Pakistan.

As Congressman Kirk pointed out in North and South Waziristan, al-Qaeda and the Taliban are regrouping. We have to come up with a plan. The Pakistani Government has done these two peace deals which I think were somewhat counterproductive as Congressman Kirk pointed out. Attacks from the South Waziristan went up something between 300 and 400 percent. I was actually on the receiving end of some of those attacks in September 2006, shortly after that agreement was signed.

So the question is what to do with the tribal areas. Now is not the place to rehearse British and Pakistani mistakes in the past in the tribal areas, but I think that we can say first of all the Pakistani Government has said they are going to produce significant aid in the area. The United States, in my understanding, is planning perhaps substantial aid to match that. The international community should also do that, but we should have some quid pro quos, and the quid pro quos are the following: The Pakistani Government must become serious about going after the Taliban leadership.

General Barno and General Eikenberry I think are probably better equipped to answer this question, but I think it is a general consensus that the Taliban leadership in Quarta and Peshawar, and to some degree in other parts of the tribal areas. Pakistan must become serious. I am not suggesting we pressure them necessarily because they are very resistant to pressure. I am suggesting we collaborate because of this quid pro quo with us producing substantial aid to the tribal areas.

They must also let international observers into the tribal areas. At this point, international journalists are being excluded, and also international groups like the International Crisis Group and other independent observers. We do not really know what is going on there right now.

On the drug question, from a Keynesian perspective, without drugs, there would be no Afghan economy. So let us be serious about what is happening there. Without the drugs, 50 percent of the economy would go away. Forty percent of Afghans think it is appropriate to grow poppy if there are no other alternatives, and of course there are really no other alternatives in many parts of the country. That number rises to 66 percent when you get into the southwest where these drugs are being grown.

So we have to have a serious proposal. I think the herbicide proposal is interesting, but let us say the herbicide worked. Where would the money be for Afghans to actually live? So I think there are only two serious alternatives. Eradication as the only alternative is going to drive a lot of people into the arms of the Taliban. There is a wealth of academic research that shows in other conflicts in Colombia and other countries this has been the case. We do not want the Taliban to have more recruits. They are already getting enough from this problem.

So we need to have crop substitution, but crop substitution has to be allied to some kind of subsidies for these crops. We in the United States subsidize farmers for certain things they grow. The EU does it. We need to subsidize Afghan crops like nuts, fruits, cotton, et cetera so there is some economic incentive to grow something else. Also I think there is some legitimacy to the idea of a pilot project at least in a province in Afghanistan with reasonably good security where you could have a legalized opiate pilot project.

Congress right now has a law in place where 80 percent of the legalized opiate bought by United States opium manufacturers must come from Turkey and India. That law could be amended slightly to allow some of this to come from Afghanistan, a country where we have major national security interests and a country, which as General Barno indicated, is one of the poorest countries in the world.

Some other quick ideas. I think that NATO should start publishing on a monthly basis Pakistani incursions into Afghanistan by militants as a way of sort of advertising this problem. NATO should adopt similar to the Leahy initiative on civilian casualties. NATO should compensate civilian casualties in the Afghan conflict. I think the United States should try and pressure Afghanistan—maybe this is hopeless—to recognize the Durand line because this causes conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We also have to ask NATO to reduce some of the national caveats that prevent say the Germans flying at night. As Chairman Lantos indicated, the fight is disproportionately falling to a relatively small number of groups of countries, and I think it is time for a mini-Marshall plan to Afghanistan, and it would be inexpensive. Right now we are spending about \$25 a year per Afghan on reconstruction aid. It is a paltry sum really given our national security interests.

That number goes up to \$66 per Afghan per year if you include aid to Afghan police and the army. That is why I welcome President Bush's new plan to have \$10.5 billion in aid, but this needs to be more permanent. The Afghan national development strategy indicated that \$4 billion a year for the next 5 years is what is needed to reconstruct the country. I think it is appropriate for the

United States to produce at least 50 percent of that over the next 5 years, but we should tie this to a WPA style program for Afghans. Afghans have a chronic unemployment rate, 40 percent unemployment rate.

They have a chronic need of roads, dams, electricity. They should be put to work, and tied into this WPA idea based on our mini-Marshall plan to Afghanistan. So thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bergen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. PETER BERGEN, JOURNALIST AND SENIOR FELLOW,
NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION

AFGHANISTAN 2007: PROBLEMS, OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

2007 will likely be a make or break year for Afghanistan, for the international efforts there, and, conversely, for the efforts of the Taliban and their al Qaeda allies to turn the country back into a failed state. Our efforts in Afghanistan are important because what happens there can have a large impact on our national security interests as we found to our cost on 9/11, and failure to create a viable state in Afghanistan will help empower jihadist terrorists who are planning to attack the United States and its allies.

Afghanistan today looks something like Iraq in the summer of 2003 with a growing insurgency, the exponentially rising use of IEDs and deployment of suicide bombers, the decline of reconstruction efforts because of security concerns, and a descent into chaotic violence in substantial portions of the country. Add to this the sad fact that the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan has coincided with the country becoming the world's premier source of heroin.

There are, however, some key differences between Afghanistan and Iraq: Afghans have already suffered through more than 20 years of war and they are tired of conflict; the Taliban remain deeply unpopular, and the American and NATO military presence is welcomed by the vast majority of Afghans.

And so, 2007 represents a real opportunity to put the country back on course. Afghanistan will, of course, never become Belgium, but it does have a chance to succeed, as long as success is defined realistically: Afghanistan is likely to be a fragile, poor, weak state for the foreseeable future, but one where security can be substantially improved, allowing for the emergence of a more open society and a more vibrant economy.

My testimony is divided into three sections. The first part analyses what Afghanistan's problems are, the second addresses potential opportunities that exist for the country, and the third section examines some possible solutions to Afghanistan's problems.

1. THE PROBLEMS.

a. The return of the Taliban.

The U.S. military and NATO are now battling the Taliban on a scale not witnessed since 2001 when the war against the Taliban began. When I travelled in Afghanistan in 2002 and 2003, the Taliban threat had receded into little more than a nuisance. But now the movement has regrouped and rearmed. Mullah Dadullah, a key Taliban commander, gave an interview to Al Jazeera in the past year in which he made an illuminating observation about the scale of the insurgency. Dadullah put Taliban forces at some 12,000 fighters—larger than a U.S. military official's estimate to me of between 7,000 to 10,000, but a number that could have some validity given the numerous part-time Taliban farmer/fighters. Bolstered by a compliant Pakistani government, hefty cash inflows from the drug trade, and a population disillusioned by battered infrastructure and lacklustre reconstruction efforts, the Taliban are back.

I travelled to Afghanistan four times in the past year meeting with government officials and ordinary Afghans; embedding twice with American soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division fighting the Taliban in the east and south of the country; travelling with a NATO delegation, and interviewing key American military officers to get a sense of the seriousness of the renewed Taliban insurgency. I found that while the Taliban may not yet constitute a major strategic threat to the Karzai government, it has become a serious tactical challenge for both U.S. troops and NATO soldiers.

A hundred miles to the south of Kabul, for instance, the Taliban have appeared in force in nearly half the districts of Ghazni province, which sits astride the most

important road in the country between Kabul and the southern city of Kandahar. It is today considered suicidal for non-Afghans to drive that road without security. In the south of Afghanistan, reconstruction has ground to a halt and foreigners can only move around safely if they are embedded with the military or have substantial private security. Around Kandahar itself this past summer, fierce battles raged between the Taliban and NATO forces that have encountered much stiffer resistance than they anticipated. As a former senior Afghan cabinet member told me in September, "If international forces leave, the Taliban will take over in one hour."

Why did the Taliban come back?

First, key mistakes were made by the American administration in the first years of the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan due to a variety of ideological *idées fixes* that included a dislike of "nation building," an aversion to reliance on international forces, and a preoccupation with Iraq as a supposed centre of world terrorism. That meant that Afghanistan was short changed on a number of levels. The initial deployment of international troops was the lowest per capita commitment of peacekeepers to any post-conflict environment since World War II. The Pentagon also initially blocked efforts by soldiers of the international coalition, known as ISAF, to patrol outside of Kabul and to extend a security umbrella to other parts of the country until August 2003. And aid per capita to Afghans in the first two years after the fall of the Taliban was around a tenth of that given to Bosnians following the end of the Balkan civil war in the mid-1990s. As Ambassador James Dobbins of RAND has pointed out "Afghanistan was the least resourced of any major American led nation building operation since the end of WWII." These early errors helped pave the way for the resurgence of the Taliban.

Second, Afghanistan's ballooning drug trade has succeeded in expanding the Taliban ranks. It is no coincidence that opium and heroin production, which now is equivalent to one-third (36 percent) of Afghanistan's licit economy spiked at the same time that the Taliban staged a comeback. A U.S. military official told me that charities and individual donations from the Middle East are also boosting the Taliban's coffers. These twin revenue streams—drug money and Mideast contributions—allow the Taliban to pay their fighters \$100 or more a month, which compares favorably to the \$70 salary of an Afghan policeman. Whatever the source, the Taliban can draw upon significant resources, at least by Afghan standards. One U.S. military raid on a Taliban safe house in 2006 recovered \$900,000 in cash.

A third key to the resurgence of the Taliban can be summarized in one word: Pakistan. The Pakistani government has proven unwilling or incapable (or both) of clamping down on the religious militia, despite the fact that the headquarters of the Taliban and its key allies are located in Pakistan. According to a senior U.S. military official, not a single senior Taliban leader has been arrested or killed in Pakistan since 2001—nor have any of the top leaders of the militias headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani, who are fighting U.S. forces alongside the Taliban. For example, Amir Haqqani, the leader of the Taliban in the central province of Zabul, "never comes across the border" from Pakistan into Afghanistan, a U.S. military official based in Zabul told me.

General James Jones, then the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in September 2006 said that it was "generally accepted" that the Taliban maintain their headquarters in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's Baluchistan Province. U.S. military officials say that the important Taliban "Peshawar Shura" is headquartered in Pakistan's North West Frontier province. In addition, Hekmatyar operates in the tribal areas of Dir and Bajur; Jalaluddin Haqqani is based in Waziristan; and al Qaeda has a presence both in Waziristan and Chitral—all Pakistani regions that border Afghanistan. A senior U.S. military official told me that the Pakistanis have taken "no decisive action on their border" to deal with the Taliban. Pakistan's upcoming 2007 presidential election means the Pakistani government is doing even less than in the past because the Musharraf government is aware how unpopular military action against the Taliban is in their border regions with Afghanistan.

It should be noted, however, that the Taliban has released videotapes over the past year in which they attack the Musharraf government as an "infidel" government because of its cooperation with the United States in the war on terrorism. Indeed, Pakistan has lost around 700 soldiers battling militants in the tribal areas over the past several years, and Pakistan was helpful in the overthrow of the Taliban regime in the winter of 2001. Within the past month militants in Pakistan have launched suicide attacks in Islamabad, Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan indicating that they also have the Pakistani government in their crosshairs.

The Pakistani government denies it is providing a safe haven for the Taliban leadership. An explanation for the seeming dichotomy between the fact that U.S. mili-

tary and intelligence officials universally hold the view that the Taliban is headquartered in Pakistan and the Pakistani government denial of this is that the Musharraf government does not completely control its own territory or security agencies, and that ISI, the Pakistani military intelligence agency, at some levels continues to tolerate and/or maintain links with Taliban leaders. Also, many members of the Taliban grew up in refugee camps in Pakistan and so are very familiar with the country. In addition, an alliance of Pakistani religious political parties broadly sympathetic to the Taliban known as the MMA controls both the North West Frontier Province and, to some degree, Baluchistan, the regions where the Taliban are presently headquartered.

A fourth reason for the Taliban's recent resurgence is that it has increasingly morphed tactically and ideologically with al Qaeda, which itself is experiencing a comeback along the Afghan-Pakistan border. The story of Al Qaeda's renaissance begins with its eviction from Afghanistan in late 2001. Unfortunately, the group didn't disintegrate—it merely moved across the border to the tribal regions of western Pakistan where today it operates a network of training camps. A former American intelligence official stationed in Pakistan told me that there are currently more than 2,000 “foreign fighters” in the region. The camps are relatively modest in size. “People want to see barracks. [In fact,] the camps use dry riverbeds for shooting and are housed in compounds for 20 people, where they are taught callisthenics and bomb-making,” a senior American military intelligence official told me. Taliban and al Qaeda videotapes released in 2006 on jihadist websites also demonstrate that the camps in Pakistan's tribal areas are training new recruits.

Al Qaeda's resurgence in Pakistan was noted by Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the head of Britain's domestic intelligence service MI5, who in a rare public statement in November noted that, “We are aware of numerous plots to kill people and damage our economy . . . Thirty that we know of. These plots often have linked back to al Qaeda in Pakistan and through these links al Qaeda gives guidance and training to its largely British foot soldiers here on an extensive and growing scale.” Similarly, the plot by a group of British citizens planning to blow up as many as ten American passenger jets with liquid explosives that was broken up in the U.K. last August was “directed by al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan,” according to Lt. General Michael D. Maples, the director of the Defence Intelligence Agency, in testimony he gave to the Senate Intelligence Committee last month.

The Taliban were a provincial bunch when they held power in Afghanistan, but in the past couple of years, they have increasingly identified themselves as part of the global jihadist movement, their rhetoric full of references to Iraq and Palestine in a manner that mirrors bin Laden's public statements. Mullah Dadullah, the Taliban commander, gave an interview to CBS News in December in which he outlined how the Taliban and Al Qaeda cooperate: “Osama bin Laden, thank God, is alive and in good health. We are in contact with his top aides and sharing plans and operations with each other.” Indeed, a senior American military intelligence official told me that “trying to separate Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistan serves no purpose. It's like picking grey hairs out of your head.”

Suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices, and beheadings of hostages—all techniques al Qaeda perfected in Iraq—are being employed by the Taliban to strengthen their influence in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan. Hekmat Karzai, an Afghan national security expert, points out that suicide bombings were virtually unknown in Afghanistan until 2005, when there were 21 attacks. According to the U.S. military there were 139 such attacks in 2006. This exponentially rising number of suicide attacks is mirrored by other grim statistics—IED attacks in Afghanistan more than doubled from 783 in 2005 to 1,677 in 2006, and the number of “direct” attacks by insurgents using weapons against international forces tripled from 1,558 to 4,542 during the same time period. 2006 also saw a record number of 98 U.S. military and 93 NATO deaths. At least 1,000 Afghan civilians died last year in clashes between the Taliban and the coalition; one hundred of those deaths were the result of U.S. or NATO actions, according to Human Rights Watch.

Just as suicide bombings in Iraq had an enormous strategic impact—from pushing the United Nations out of the country to helping spark a civil war—such attacks might also plunge Afghanistan into chaos. Already, suicide attacks and the Taliban resurgence have made much of southern Afghanistan a no-go area for both foreigners and for any reconstruction efforts. Luckily, for the moment, the suicide attackers in Afghanistan have not been nearly as deadly as those in Iraq. As one U.S. military official explained, almost all of the Taliban's suicide bombers are “Pashtun country guys from Pakistan,” with little effective training.

b. The drug economy.

That Afghanistan has a large drug economy is by now well known. Poppy cultivation for opium in Afghanistan grew by 59 percent last year and it is widely acknowledged that the Taliban resurgence is being fuelled by the profits of this opium trade. Afghanistan is the source of an astonishing 92 percent of the world's heroin supply.

However, four fundamental propositions must be understood about the drug economy in Afghanistan—abruptly ending it would put millions of people out of work and impoverish millions more as the only really functional part of the economy is poppy and opium production. Second, Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and many rural Afghans have very few options to make money other than to engage in poppy growing. Third, Afghan support for poppy cultivation is on the upswing—40 percent now call it acceptable if there is no other way to earn a living, with two out of three Afghans living in the Southwest saying it is acceptable, the region where much of the poppy is grown. And so, ending the drug economy is simply not going to happen any time in the foreseeable future. Fourth, and most importantly from an American and NATO national security perspective, drug policy in Afghanistan as it's presently constructed is helping the Taliban to thrive as they benefit from the trade. Bizarrely, our drug policy helps to fund our enemies. (Possible solutions to this problem can be found below).

c. Weakness of the Afghan state—a result of lacklustre reconstruction efforts, corruption, weakness of the police, and failures of Afghan governance.

The outgoing commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, has drawn a clear link between reconstruction and violence: “Wherever the roads end, that’s where the Taliban starts.” Certainly, Afghanistan needs much more reconstruction. The key road from Kabul to Kandahar—a nightmarish seventeen hour slalom course when I took it under the Taliban, and now a smoother seven-hour drive—remains the only large-scale reconstruction project completed in the country since the U.S.-led invasion. Kabul residents have access to electricity only 4–6 hours a day, if they have electricity at all. Along with endemic corruption and the common perception that the billions of dollars of promised aid has mostly lined the pockets of nongovernmental organizations, the infrastructure gap feeds resentment among ordinary Afghans, some of whom may be tempted to throw in their lot with the Taliban.

Some of the failures in Afghanistan are, of course, the responsibility of Afghans. Warlords like Gul Agha Shirzai in Kandahar were given high political office. President Hamid Karzai’s staff is viewed as weak and inexperienced, though Karzai has recently replaced his chief of staff. Highly competent ministers like foreign minister Dr. Abdullah and the finance minister Ashraf Ghani have been forced out of the government for no discernible good reason. There is little true representation of Pashtun political interests in parliament because Karzai appears to distrust political parties. And, by all accounts Afghanistan’s police forces are ill-equipped, poorly trained and sometimes corrupt and poorly led.

2. OPPORTUNITIES

There have been successes since the fall of the Taliban—as many as five million refugees have returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. Refugees don’t return to places they don’t see as having a future. Presidential and parliamentary elections occurred with high participation by Afghan voters. Millions of boys and girls are back in school and the Afghan army has developed into a somewhat functional organization. Afghanistan has also developed something of an independent press with private TV stations like Tolo TV springing up. In addition, while eight Afghan provinces mostly on the border with Pakistan have security problems that prevent reconstruction, in the 26 other Afghan provinces the security situation is reasonably good.

An ABC News/BBC poll released in December 2006 shows that despite the disappointments that Afghans have felt about inadequate reconstruction and declining security on a wide range of key issues, they maintain positive attitudes. It is classic counterinsurgency doctrine that the centre of gravity in a conflict is the people. And the Afghan people, unlike the Iraqis, have positive feelings about the U.S.-led occupation, their own government and their lives. The conclusions of the ABC/BBC poll are worth quoting in some detail:

“Sixty-eight percent approve of [President] Karzai’s work—down from 83 percent last year, but still a level most national leaders would envy. Fifty-nine percent think the parliament is working for the benefit of the Afghan people—down from 77 percent, but still far better than Americans’ ratings of the U.S. Congress. . . . Big majorities continue to call the U.S.-led invasion a good thing for their country (88 per-

cent), to express a favourable opinion of the United States (74 percent) and to prefer the current Afghan government to Taliban rule (88 percent). Indeed eight in 10 Afghans support the presence of U.S., British and other international forces on their soil; that compares with five percent support for Taliban fighters . . . Fifty-five percent of Afghans still say the country's going in the right direction, but that's down sharply from 77 percent last year. Whatever the problems, 74 percent say their living conditions today are better now than they were under the Taliban. That rating, however, is 11 points lower now than it was a year ago."

These poll results, which are very similar to another poll taken in December 2006 by the Program on International Policy Attitude's World Public Opinion.org, demonstrate that there remains strong support for the Afghan central government and U.S./NATO efforts in Afghanistan. And Afghans overwhelmingly reject violent Islamist extremism. According to both the ABC/BBC poll and that of World Public Opinion.org, no Muslim nation appears to have more negative views of Osama bin Laden. Both polls found that nine out of ten Afghans had a negative view of al Qaeda's leader. Similarly, nine out of ten Afghans say there is no justification for suicide bombings.

3. SOLUTIONS

a. On the drug trade

The current counter-narcotics strategy that favours poppy eradication is by all accounts a failure. This is the conclusion of a range of sources from Afghan experts to narco-terrorism specialists to a GAO report and a U.N. Office of Drug Control report (both published within the past three months).

Vanda Felbab-Brown, a research fellow at the Kennedy School at Harvard, has studied counter-narcotics strategies in Columbia, Peru, Lebanon, Turkey, and Afghanistan and found that that terrorists and insurgents don't simply use the drug trade as a financial resource, but also draw substantial political gains and legitimacy from drug trafficking. Consequently an "eradication first" policy is not only bound to fail—the crops will simply shift and appear elsewhere—but it will foment a backlash amongst the local population that has developed ties to the belligerents via the narco-economy. For instance, local populations could withhold human intelligence that could be critical to the campaign against the reinvigorated Taliban insurgency. Instead, the U.S. should focus on defeating the insurgents and concentrate their anti-narcotics efforts on international interdiction and money laundering.

Instead of eradication, we need to begin splitting the fragile links between farmers/local populations and the Taliban by concentrating our efforts by building up viable alternative livelihoods both in farming and other sectors. This means providing seeds for crop substitution and a build-up of roadways to transport those crops to market. In the short term, while that infrastructure is being built crop substitution will only really work if Afghans can get roughly the same income that they received from poppy production for whatever crops are substituted. This suggests that the international community should consider subsidies for Afghan crops such as cotton, fruits and nuts similar to the subsidies that the United States and the European Union pays for the products of many of their farmers. This will not come cheap, but if it could substantially reduce the drug economy, it would weaken the Taliban and make the country much more secure—that's a trade off that is worth the costs involved.

While the narco-economy is valued around \$3 billion, most of that flows out of Afghanistan and farmers only get about \$750 million of that. Meanwhile in FY2005, the U.S. allocated about \$782 million for counter-narcotics in Afghanistan yet no more than 25 percent of that was targeted towards alternative livelihoods. The U.S. is clearly spending more money per year than the farmers make off of opium and that money could be redirected towards subsidies for crop substitution.

Another additional approach is to allow Afghanistan to enter into the legalized opiate trade for morphine used for pain relief, a trade that is presently dominated by countries like India and Turkey due to preferential trade agreements. While there are some legitimate criticisms of this idea—principally how you would make sure that Afghan opium was only going into the legitimate market—one low-risk approach would be to allow the legalized opiate trade to debut as a pilot project on a small scale in a province with reasonable security and smaller scale opium production allowing greater regulatory control. Farmers engaged in legalized poppy growing would enjoy financial incentives that could be revoked and they could also face criminal penalties if they tried to divert the poppy to the illicit market. If this approach worked in one province, then it could be implemented in other provinces. And the crop substitution approach and the legalized opiate trade approach are not

either/or solutions. Both approaches could be implemented at the same time in different Afghan provinces.

Congress could then amend the law that requires U.S. opiate manufacturers to purchase at least 80 percent of their opiate from India and Turkey (affording them a guaranteed market) to include Afghanistan. This law is a preferential trade agreement designed to serve political and strategic interests and should be recalibrated to fit our present-day strategic interests in Afghanistan, which is by far the most fragile democracy and economy of the three countries, and the one where the United States has vital national security interests at stake as the Taliban and al Qaeda regroup along the Afghan/Pakistan border. It's also worth noting that according to the International Narcotics Control Board, about 80 percent of the world population living in developing countries consumes only 6 percent of the morphine distributed worldwide—a shortfall that causes massive unnecessary pain and suffering—suggesting that there is a large untapped market for legal opiates.

Iran has played something of a useful role in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban (whom Iran nearly went to war with in 1998.) Iran could have acted as a spoiler in post-Taliban Afghanistan; instead it has been something of a stabilizing influence in western Afghanistan. As Iran has a sizeable drug-using population it has a strong interest in preventing the entry of drugs across its border and this could be a fruitful topic for the international community to discuss with the Iranians in the future.

b. Rolling back the Taliban—More troops, better troops, fewer NATO caveats, a successful amnesty program, more reconstruction, transforming the tribal belt in Pakistan, and standing up the Afghan police.

By all accounts the spring of 2007 will be a bloody one. The present NATO strength of 33,250 is judged by NATO commanders to be insufficient by around 5,500 soldiers. The calls by Defence Secretary Robert Gates in January for additional American troops to be sent to Afghanistan are to be welcomed as not only will those forces help fight the Taliban, they also send a signal to regional players such as Pakistan that the United States is in Afghanistan for the long haul. Around two years ago then-Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld announced that the U.S. was planning to draw down its forces in Afghanistan. That sent precisely the wrong signal to the region. (For the moment 3,200 US troops have had their tours extended by four months to cover the NATO shortfall.)

One caveat about the call by Secretary Gates for more American troops is that it depends on what troops are eventually sent. According to Afghan officials U.S. Special Forces working with the Afghan National Army are the most effective soldiers to attack the Taliban and al Qaeda. Similarly, NATO member states must increase their troop strength and reduce the number of “national caveats” that prevent, say, the German from flying at night and other such caveats that hamper the effectiveness of NATO forces on the ground in Afghanistan. One senior NATO commander I spoke to in December 2005 said he has 14 pages of national caveats to contend with. While the British, Canadians and Dutch fought bravely over the summer in southern Afghanistan, other NATO member states that are part of the coalition must do more to match their efforts. NATO is also severely hampered by the lack of air assets it is able to draw on.

An amnesty program formally launched in 2005 by the Karzai government offers one promising approach to containing the Taliban threat. In Qalat, the provincial capital of Zabul, in the spring of 2006 I witnessed U.S. forces release Mullah Abdul Ali Akundzada, who was accused of sheltering Taliban members and had been arrested near the site of an IED detonation. In a deal brokered by the Karzai government and the U.S. military, Akundzada was handed over to a group of about thirty religious and tribal leaders, who publicly pledged that the released mullah would support the government. In an honour-based society such as Afghanistan, this program is working well. According to both Afghan and U.S. officials, only a handful of the more than one thousand Taliban fighters taking advantage of the amnesty have gone back to fighting the government and coalition forces.

Transforming Pakistan's tribal belt is a vital national security interest of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and NATO countries as that is where the Taliban has a safe haven and al Qaeda is regrouping. Pakistan deployed at least 70,000 troops to the area in 2002, but they suffered hundreds of casualties and heavy-handed Pakistani tactics further alienated the population of the tribal areas. Pakistan then abandoned its “military first” policy and started concluding peace agreements with militants in both South Waziristan and North Waziristan over the past two years. Unfortunately, after the conclusion of the peace agreement in North Waziristan in early September 2006 there was a 300 percent rise in attacks from that region into Afghanistan according to the U.S. military. And militants in

Waziristan have now set up a parallel judicial system lynching and torturing civilians for infringements such as drinking and documenting this on videotapes distributed by Ummat video, the Taliban's propaganda arm. Much of what is going on in the tribal areas is opaque as the Pakistani government has prevented international journalists from travelling anywhere near these areas, and Pakistani journalists have been detained or even killed when they report on the tribal regions.

This is not the place to rehearse the history of British and Pakistani rule in the tribal regions which has certainly contributed to their problems, but the present Pakistani policy that has wavered between the fist and appeasement of the militants has not worked well either. Pakistan has promised a significant aid package to the region while the United States may also be prepared to grant substantial aid. A quid pro quo for this American aid is that the Pakistani government should allow international journalists and other neutral observers to visit the tribal areas, (and not only on dog-and-pony shows organized by the Pakistani military). A further quid pro quo is that the Pakistani government should arrest Taliban leaders living in Pakistan, a policy that should be strongly endorsed by NATO countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and Holland, countries whose soldiers have borne the brunt of Taliban attacks in the summer of 2006.

As Ambassador James Dobbins of RAND has noted, "Pakistani citizens, residents, money and territory are playing a greater role in the Afghan civil war than are Iranian citizens, residents, money or territory are playing in the Iraqi civil war." The International Crisis Group has recently proposed the excellent idea that NATO publish monthly figures of cross-border incursions by militants into Afghanistan in order to encourage Pakistan to do more on its side of the border to prevent those incursions.

Also the US military and NATO, working in collaboration with the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, must start identifying the identities of the suicide bombers in Afghanistan by using information posted on jihadist websites, by good intelligence work, and using reports in the media. The social networks and madrassas from which these suicide bombers emerge from must be mapped for intelligence purposes, but also because it seems probable that only a handful of madrassas in Afghanistan and Pakistan are producing a disproportionate number of the suicide attackers. Armed with that information the Afghan and Pakistani governments can then close those institutions down.

The United States should also pressure Afghanistan to recognize the Durand line drawn by the British in 1893 as the border between Afghanistan and the Raj. The fact that Afghanistan does not recognize this border aggravates tensions with Pakistan and helps the militants move back and forth across the border. The Afghan government has also proposed the good idea of holding a loya jirga, a traditional tribal gathering, with tribal leaders from both sides of the border meeting to discuss problems caused by militants on either side of the border. (Suggestions by Pakistan that they will mine the 1,500 mile border to prevent militants crossing are both impractical and strongly opposed by Afghanistan, which has suffered thousands of civilian deaths and injuries from mines left over from the Soviet conflict and subsequent Afghan civil war.)

Thus far, the U.S. government has appropriated \$27 billion for Iraqi reconstruction, but only \$4 billion for civilian aid and \$6.3 billion for military/security aid to Afghanistan a country that has a larger population than Iraq, is a third larger in size and is utterly destroyed by two decades of war. That works out to a paltry \$25 dollars per year per Afghan in civilian aid and 66 dollars per year in total aid once money for the Afghan army and police is factored in.

Without greater investments in roads, power and water resources throughout Afghanistan, the Taliban will surely prosper and continue to gain adherents. For that reason, the Bush administration calls for \$10 billion in aid to Afghanistan, \$2 billion of which is to go to reconstruction and \$8 billion to build up the Afghan police and army, are to be welcomed.

One important caveat on the reconstruction aid—much of that aid should be funnelled through the Afghan government and/or Afghan organizations rather than recycled to U.S. contractors. According to Ann Jones, an American writer who has worked in Afghanistan as an aid worker, unlike countries like Sweden that incur only 4 percent of their aid costs on "technical assistance" that goes back home to Sweden, "eighty six cents of every dollar of American aid is phantom aid" that will line American pockets rather than go directly to Afghans. For their part, Afghan government ministries must be more efficient at spending reconstruction money. Last year these ministries only spent 44 percent of the aid they were given. This year they are likely to spend 60 percent.

It is also time for the United States to institute a long-term mini-Marshall plan for Afghanistan. In early 2006 the Afghan government published the Afghanistan

National Development Strategy, which estimated that \$4 billion a year in aid for the next five years was needed to reconstruct the country. For this reason the U.S. should contribute at least half that sum every year for many years to come. Given the fact that the 9/11 attacks emerged from Afghanistan and cost the American economy at least \$500 billion, aid for Afghanistan so that it does not return to a failed state is a good investment. The U.S. should commit itself to long term reconstruction efforts in part to counter the Taliban—which is likely to be a threat for several years to come—but also because having overthrown the Taliban government, the U.S. has responsibilities to Afghanistan. And a functioning, democratic Afghanistan will have a powerful demonstration effect on countries that surround Afghanistan such as Iran, Pakistan, and the Central Asian republics, none of which are truly democratic states.

American aid should be tied, in part, to an Afghan public employment program similar to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program that followed the Great Depression in the United States. Afghanistan has a chronic 40 percent unemployment rate and a desperate need for roads, dams, and the repair of agricultural aqueducts destroyed by years of war. Much of the labor required for these projects does not require great skill and millions of Afghans should be set to work rebuilding their country in exchange for a real American Marshall plan to the country.

In short, there should be a military, diplomatic and reconstruction “surge” to Afghanistan, a country where such efforts have a fighting chance of real success.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. Mr. Cordesman.

STATEMENT OF MR. ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN, ARLEIGH A. BURKE CHAIR, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. CORDESMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to thank you and the ranking member for the invitation to talk to the committee. I think that we have already heard some very good testimony this morning. I would ask that my remarks be read into the record.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I also provided a more detailed briefing, and I flagged that to the committee’s attention because among the things in it is both the map of the expansion of the threat between 2005 and 2006 and the results of more modern or up-to-date public opinion polls on Afghanistan which I think are a very clear warning that Afghan public opinion is growingly resenting the lack of progress, both by the government and by NATO and United States forces. That there is a broader support for the Taliban than is reflected in some other public opinion polls.

But let me focus briefly in my introductory remarks on what I think are the key realities here. First, we can win every tactical battle still as we did in Viet Nam. Strategically we are losing. When we see the expansion of Taliban and other influence in the territory in Afghanistan increase by four to six times in 1 year, you are not winning, and you are not standing still, and these are maps drawn from the command, the United States command in Afghanistan.

Second, what happens in the calendar year is what is critical, not what happens in the fiscal year. It is not how a plan to spend money. It is the facts on the ground that we create beginning this spring that matter. Far too often we throw money at the problem, but we have no way of measuring where it sticks, and I think a very good example of that is in the Department of Defense budget submission.

If you look at it, we are going to increase money by \$5.9 billion in the supplemental for fiscal 2007, but suddenly it drops to \$2.7 billion in 2008. Yet if you read the text to the justification, it says:

“After thoroughly analyzing the Afghan security program from January through April 2006, the commanding general for the combined security transition command Afghanistan determined that the existing program failed to develop Afghan security forces of sufficient capability or capacity to address the increased insurgent threats facing Afghanistan.”

The truth is we are almost zero basing large elements of what we are doing, particularly the police. They are not going to pay off in spite of the accelerated schedule for 2 to 3 years. And when you look at the imbalances in this, you see the actual flow of aid money: \$698 million to go into the field in 2007 and \$339 million in aid, plus \$106 million in SERP in 2007 and \$211 million.

Those figures are not going to produce results in the field. They cannot deal with a country this big. To have an operational plan that works, not only do we need to spend a lot more it has to be part of an integrated effort, and no one looking at France, Spain, Germany or Italy today can say there is anything approaching an integrated military or aid effort. In fact, a great deal of the pledged aid money simply is not showing up.

So one suggestion I would make to this committee: Far too much of the reporting is on input measures of money spent and projects started. There is no operational detail, nothing to describe the timelines in the calendar year as to what happens in the field, and there are no meaningful measures of effectiveness. And let me give the committee what I think is one example, and it exactly repeats what happens in Iraq. We have stated in our budget justifications that we have trained and equipped 31,300 Afghan army and 59,700 Afghan police as of mid January 2007.

That is 91,000 people in theory trained and equipped. Probably less than half of those policemen are actually still there. Out of the Afghan army, 20,000 of this 90,000 total are in theory in the field. In practice, the actual numbers serving are probably closer to 12,000. We simply cannot afford to live in a world of illusions about this effort or what our NATO allies do or the adequacy of our own forces.

At this point in time when you look at other sources, roughly 9,000 of the schools in Afghanistan face some kind of security threat. Rough estimates indicate about half of them have local protection forces. None of these are funded either by us or by the central government. These are realities we have to address, not slogans, not concepts and not throwing money at the problem.

Let me say one last word about drugs. No one can condone what is happening, and by every measure I would do anything possible to go to the senior traffickers, but the fact is when you go into the field in Afghanistan, particularly in the east and south, they are coming out of 3 years of drought. The traditional irrigation system is largely destroyed. There are no roads. There is no government presence. You can find an Iranian presence in some of these areas, but you will not find a government official anywhere there.

The police are hopelessly corrupt. There is no one who can run a drug substitution program in the field unless we put people there. We need maps that show who is doing what where to provide a realistic picture of what it would take to actually convert these people to a different kind of crop, what it would take over time to give them a way to live, and Mr. Chairman, let me just make one last point. It may not be apparent but for many of these people the reason they are doing drugs is they get a loan at the start of the year to fund their crop.

If that crop is eradicated, they are going to be dealing with drug lords which will still force them to try to repay it. If we go in and eradicate without any concern for the people there, there is going to be a steady growth in hostility and anger, and I would say frankly to say that the Taliban is not popular in parts of this area is ridiculous. It is depending on the tribe and the village. To say that they cannot survive without drugs and fund themselves given the amount of money it takes is equally dangerous. We have to be real if we are going to win.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cordesman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN, ARLEIGH A. BURKE CHAIR,
CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

WINNING IN AFGHANISTAN: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE

No one can return from visiting the front in Afghanistan without realizing there is a very real risk that the US and NATO could lose their war with Al Qa'ida, the Taliban, and the other Islamist movements fighting the Afghan government. We are still winning tactically, but we may well be losing strategically.

The facts on the ground are not simple. The appendix to this briefing lays out these facts in far more detail, along with evidence of critical shifts in Afghan public opinion that show the war is still winnable, but there has been a serious deterioration in the situation. It also shows there are no simple solutions that can work. Winning will take more resources, more forces, more patience, and at least 5–10 more years of persistent effort.

The key steps the US and its allies must take, however, are clear, and so is the need for urgency. They involve major changes in strategy, aid, and military levels that require the following efforts:

- Building up Afghan capabilities and fighting corruption requires slow, patient efforts on a national, provincial, and local basis
- Improving the quality of governance, security, and economic development needs priority over politics.
- Accepting the reality that development of effective government and economy will take 5–10 years; that no instant success is possible; and aid plans must be long term plans providing consistently high levels of resources.
- Increasing economic aid at levels 3–4 times the 2006 level on a sustained basis at the national, provincial, and local level.
- Ensuring that security and aid reach ordinary Afghans in rural areas, particularly in South and Northeast.
- Taking a new approach to counter narcotics that emphasizes dealing with high-level traffickers, time, incentives, anti-corruption, and counterinsurgency.
- Raising US and NATO force levels by 10–25% for at least several years.
- Restructuring allied national efforts to create a truly unified and effective NATO effort.
- Providing major additional aid and advisory resources to develop security: Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP).
- Dealing with Pakistan to end its status as “sanctuary,” and contain Iran.

At the same time, the US, its NATO Allies, and Afghans need to remember that action needs to be taken now, not just consistently over time. Action is needed to

deal with a 2007 offensive and ongoing Taliban efforts to seize political and economic control of more and more space. Providing aid and forces now is not only essential, it can vastly increase the chance of success and the effectiveness of a given level of effort. Waiting until the US, NATO, and Afghan bureaucracy moves at its normal pace, and deferring key actions into FY2008 is a good way to cut the effectiveness of every action that the US and its allies take.

The Growing Threat

The US and NATO may win tactical battles, but the Taliban and other Islamist forces seem to be starting to win the critical strategic battle for political and economic space. Declassified intelligence made available during my trip showed that major Al Qaeda, Taliban, Haqqani Network (HQN), and Hezb-e Islami Gulbiddein (HiG) sanctuaries exist in Pakistan and that the areas they operate in within Afghanistan increased by more than four times between 2005 and 2006.

Suicide attacks increase from 18 in the first 11 months of 2005 to 116 in the first 11 months of 2006. Direct fire attacks increased from 1,347 to 3,824, IEDs from 530 to 1,297, and other attacks from 269 to 479. The number of attacks on Afghan forces increased from 713 to 2,892, attacks on coalition forces increased from 919 to 2,496, and attacks on Afghan government officials increased by 2.5 times.

Only the massive use of US precision air power and intelligence assets allowed the US to win tactically in the east, and the British position in the south is so weak that Britain has had to allow a major increase in the Taliban presence to compensate for its military weakness.

The good news is that popular support for the US and NATO is still relatively strong and can be rebuilt. The US and NATO teams in country have created core programs for strengthening governance, Afghan military and police forces, and the Afghan economy that can succeed if they only get the resources required. The present aid efforts are largely sound and well managed, and can make effective use of immediate increases in funding.

The Need for a New US, Allied, and Afghan Approach

The challenges in Afghanistan are very different than those in Iraq. The threat is still weak, and the key problems are resources, patience, and time. The Afghan government will take years to become effective, reduce corruption to acceptable levels, and replace a narcotics-based economy. As one Afghan Deputy Minister put it to me during my trip, "Now we are all corrupt. Until we change and serve the people, we will fail."

Afghanistan is going to need large amounts of military and economic aid, much of it managed from the outside in ways that ensure it actually gets to Afghans throughout the country—particularly in the local areas where the threat is greatest. Our present nation building effort is badly under resourced, and does not reach more ordinary Afghans, over 70% of which live in rural areas that currently receive minimal or no aid.

The maps of actual and proposed projects that aid teams show a visitor make it all too clear that the progress to date is real, but only covers a small part of the country. Even a short visit to some of the districts in the southeast makes it clear that most local districts have not seen progress. Drought adds to the problem in many areas and much of the old irrigation system has visibly collapsed. Roads are little more than paths, the government cannot offer hope, and local officials and police cannot compete with drug loans and income.

The US has grossly underfunded such economic aid efforts and left far too much of the country without visible aid activity. Country team plans call for a \$2.3 billion program, but unless at least \$1.1 billion comes immediately as an FY 2007 supplemental, the aid program will lag far beyond need during next year. Moreover, a well-planned and funded five-year plan is needed to provide continuity and effectiveness. America's NATO allies are falling far short of providing what is needed, particularly France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Major increases in aid are needed from each NATO ally. The US is carrying far too much of the burden and cannot be everywhere. Every NATO country needs to make a major local aid effort.

This means the US needs to make major increases in its economic aid, as do our NATO allies. They need to make such increases immediately if new projects and meaningful actions are to begin in the field by the end of the winter season and as new Taliban and Islamist offensives begin in 2007.

It also means that the US and Europe need to understand that winning the war is what counts, and not drug eradication. Hollow, if not vacuous, political rhetoric and exhortations about making quick, serious cuts in drug output simply plays into the hands of the Taliban, criminals, and ex-warlords. The priority is to meet Afghan needs, not carry on with yet another fruitless war on drugs.

The good news is that even if the Congress fully funds the aid program that is an essential tool to winning, it will still be cheap by the standards of aid to Iraq. The projects needed are simple and ones Afghans can largely carry out. People need roads and water, and schools and medical services to a lesser degree. They need emergency aid to meet local needs and win hearts and minds.

The Need for More US and Allied Military Forces

There are roughly 33,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan, plus some 12,000 remaining US troops that still operate independently as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and advisors; versus a total of 162,000 Coalition troops in Iraq. Afghanistan, however, has a population of over 31 million versus some 27 million in Iraq, its territory is 50% larger, and its transportation and communications infrastructure is far more primitive. The threat in Iraq has no major sanctuary outside the country; Al Qaeda, Taliban, Haqqani Network (HQN), and Hezb-e Islami Gulbudein (HiG) all have de facto sanctuaries exist in Waziristan in eastern Pakistan.

The present level of US military forces is too weak to do the job in the areas where the US has military responsibility, and current plans to surge elements of the US 10th Mountain Division offer only a temporary solution. The US does not have economy of force, it has inadequacy of force. Competing demands in Iraq have led to a military climate where US forces plan for what they can get and not what they need.

The US needs to adopt a success-oriented strategy, not a resource-limited strategy. The 10th Mountain division has asked for one more infantry brigade. This badly understates need even if Polish forces help the US in the east. The US needs forces strong enough to hold and build as well as win. It needs at least two, and increases in Special Forces as well. These force increases are a tiny by comparison with US forces in Iraq, but they can make all of the difference.

The force contributions of our NATO allies present major resource problems as well. Allied countries need to provide stronger and better-equipped forces. Above all, provide forces that will join the fight and go where they are most needed.

The British fight well but have only 50% to 75% of the forces they need. Canada and the Netherlands are in the fight. The Danes, Estonians, and Romanians have done some fighting. The Poles are coming without adequate equipment but willing to fight. France, Spain, Turkey, Germany, and Italy are not in the fight because of political constraints and rules of engagement. Only French Special Forces have played any role and they depart in January.

The Need to Reform National Contributions to NATO

NATO needs to be able to exercise effective central command and allocate all forces according to NATO's command needs and rules of engagement. It cannot win with politically constrained forces that cannot perform the missions that a truly needed. NATO's current forces would be inadequate even if all of the NATO countries were fully in the fight.

Furthermore, only US, Canadian, British, Danes, Estonians, and Dutch forces are now really in the fight. Key NATO partners like France, Germany, Spain, Turkey and Italy are "stand aside" countries that do not provide fighting forces, except for French Special Forces. Roughly a quarter of NATO's strength uses a political rationale to seize the high moral ground and hide there in safety.

Elsewhere, British weakness in the south has forced a political compromise that has allowed allow a major increase in the Taliban presence. Britain needs substantial additional forces to hold the south, and prevent the slow growth of a Taliban presence that could end in taking Kandahar. Much of Helmand and Kandahar Provinces are already at risk. Canada, the Netherlands, and Romania play an important role in combat, and Poland is coming.

All these forces need heavier equipment and weapons. In fact, Canada is already in the process of being the first country to introduce main battle tanks. US commanders recognize that US troop strength is too weak in the east.

Studies by the International Security Force (ISAF) the NATO command in Afghanistan, indicate that the total NATO force needs 6 more battalions—especially another battalion in the south; a rapid expansion of military trainers for the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police; and additional troops and specialists in other areas of what NATO calls the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR).

NATO needs integrated operations with common rules of engagement. It needs a true integrated command with suitable continuity of service, and adequate tour lengths. Countries need to provide to provide adequate member country armor, artillery, tactical mobility, and air. More efforts are needed to integrate US advanced IS&R assets into common NATO and Afghan operations. NATO also needs an inte-

grated structure for using advanced US air and IS&R assets in the Combined Air Operation Center (CAOC) in Qatar, and to develop a comprehensive, workable strategy for dealing with battlefield detainees

Dealing with Pakistan

NATO needs to put collective pressure on Pakistan to end the sanctuary it gives to the enemy. It did not address the weakness of the Afghan government and the scale of the problems created by a near to mid term dependence on a narco-economy. It will be years before the central government in Kabul can create an effective presence and services in most local area, particularly those under threat.

The Need to Restructure Efforts to Develop the Afghan Army and Police

The US and NATO have repeated many of the same mistakes in developing effective Afghan army and police forces made in Iraq. The force development effort has rushed unready forces into combat. The manning of key Afghan army battalions is sometimes below 25% and the police units are often unpaid and hollow forces. Corruption and pay problems are still endemic. Equipment and facilities are inadequate. Overall funding has been about 20% of the real-world requirement, and talks with Afghan and NATO officials made it brutally clear that German effort to create a police force was a disaster that wasted years NATO did not have to waste on trying to create a conventional police force rather than the mix of paramilitary and local police forces Afghanistan really needs.

All NATO countries need to make a commitment to provide sustained military and economic aid at the required levels. NATO must also unite to make stronger efforts to create effective military and police forces. The present Afghan army is just beginning to be effective and has major pay, equipment, and morale problems. Some key battalions have less than 25% of authorized strength, and retention is low. Germany wasted years training the wrong kind of police at inadequate levels. Effective police now have to be created virtually from the ground up, and NATO/ISAF aid is needed to build the capacity of the Ministry of Interior and in training, equipping and basing the Afghan National Police.

The good news is that there is no new realism in the US and NATO effort. The planning, training effort, and much of the necessary base has been built up during the last year. Effective plans exist and NATO staffs and US now exist to help implement them.

The bad news is the same crippling lack of resources that affect every part of the US and NATO efforts affect the development of the Army and police. In one visit to an older Army battalion, it was all too clear that it had less than a quarter of its authorized manpower, and only one man in five was expected to reenlist when their time came up this fall. A visit to a police unit revealed its men were supposed to be paid on a quarterly basis, but sometimes were not paid at all. Such police have no choice other than to extort a living. In one case, ethnic tension had led the officer in charge of pay to not even fill out forms because he had been passed over for promotion. Both Afghans and their advisors make it clear that many good leaders and good units are being used up by being rushed into combat and excessive duties without adequate equipment, facilities, and support.

The Narcotics Issue

At the same time, NATO needs to restructure counter narcotics effort to focus on near term economic development, anti-corruption, and high pay-off law enforcement; eradication phased over time. It needs to broaden its aid efforts to support the government, and help provide education, clinics, and other local services.

Persistence, Patience, and Time

Patience and persistence, will be as critical as more troops, resources, and advisors. No matter what the outside world does, political, military, and economic progress will take time. The present central government will be weak and partly ineffective for at least two to three years, and be incapable of providing the presence and services in the field that Afghanistan desperately need and demand.

The past focus on democracy and the political process in Kabul, rather than on the quality of governance, and services, has left many areas angry and open to Taliban and hostile influence and control. Creating new efforts that really work at the national scale, and especially in troubled areas, will take more than a year to begin, much less accomplish.

Paying for victory now, however, will be far cheaper than waiting until a crisis occurs, and far, far cheaper than defeat. Other US and allied failures to honestly address the problems in the field, to be realistic about resource needs, to create effective long term aid and force development plans, and to emphasize governance

over services may well have brought defeat in Iraq. The US and its allies cannot afford to lose two wars. If they do not act now, they will.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Mr. Cordesman. I want to thank all three of our witnesses for extraordinarily insightful and valuable testimony. I would like to begin by raising a couple of fundamental issues. I have argued for years in writing that Afghanistan is not a United States problem, but it is a NATO problem, and nominally NATO has now accepted responsibility for much of the tasks we have before us in Afghanistan. Yet as is obvious from your testimony and from my comments, some of the NATO countries, some of the most important NATO countries like Germany, France, Spain and Italy, do not allow their soldiers to be in the dangerous parts of Afghanistan.

When I gave a talk in Europe not long ago, I pointed out that mothers in Iowa, New Hampshire and California are no more anxious to have their sons in the dangerous areas than mothers from Florence or Madrid or Berlin. In terms of what are called provincial teams, these small units of civilians protected by military all over the place, are very useful undertakings, but they are minimal in size and in outreach.

Since all of you in different ways have experience with our European friends and allies and with NATO, the first question I would like to ask each of you, beginning with General Barno, what can we do with NATO to galvanize them? The United States spent two generations protecting European NATO nations from being overrun by the Soviet Union, and what we get now in urging them to step up to the plate and give us a hand in Afghanistan is to a very large extent excuses with the exception of the Dutch, the Danes, the Brits and the Canadians. Nobody is really doing a serious job.

General Barno, what would be your recommendation if you would be in full charge of this task? How to galvanize NATO to do the job in Afghanistan because surely NATO is capable of doing it?

Mr. BARNO. Mr. Chairman, that is a difficult question, and I recall wrestling with the NATO challenges in generating forces when I was in Afghanistan, and watching how much energy and effort it took over months and months of wrangling to replace a handful of helicopters in Kabul in the air force. So I am well conversant with some of the challenges internal to it.

I think perhaps two thoughts. One is that there has to be a better understanding among the NATO nations—and the United States plays a role in this as well—of the threat. I do not believe that the threat that emanates from Afghanistan toward Europe is clearly understood well enough among the populations there. One of the great mobilizing factors in the cold war was a clear understanding of the threat. When you looked across the wire into eastern Europe and into the Soviet Union, you could see tank divisions and ICBM fields and Soviet submarines and bombers sitting on airfields, and it created a tremendous energy to be able to respond to that threat.

When you look into Afghanistan and you look in other parts of this regional world, the threat is covered in a dust cloud. It is not clear exactly what it is, how dangerous it is, and it is difficult to mobilize popular opinion against this very unclear threat. So I think from the aspect of drugs, the vast majority of which come

from Afghanistan into Europe and what threat that raises for their populations, I think that is one arena that has to be made more clear, and then perhaps the terrorist threat.

Europe has dealt with terrorism for a number of years, and some of the countries that have limits on their forces in Afghanistan actually have suffered terrorist attacks in their homeland that are associated at least with al-Qaeda. So I think that there is a requirement to get that threat better understood, but I would summarize by saying the most important thing that can happen is American leadership.

I think that we have some great examples of American leadership of NATO efforts during the undertaking in Bosnia in the mid 1990s, during the NATO effort against Serbia in the Kosovo war in late 1990s and 1999. Each of those undertakings, one of which involved active combat, one of which did not, both had very strong, very central, very powerful American leadership and American participation. I think we have to recommit ourselves to being the leadership of NATO in this Afghanistan endeavor now, and again we are moving in that direction.

We have made some steps. It is great to see General McNeill is the commander there, but I think that intellectually we have to commit ourselves to the leadership of this effort, and that leadership can help generate some of that support.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. Mr. Chairman, I think this is existential for NATO, and NATO understands that. I was just in Brussels and London for two conferences in the last 2 days about Afghanistan, and I think something that is going to help us is the fact that there is tremendous resentment against the Germans by the Canadians for instance and by the British, and I think that the allies who are contributing are going to start putting a lot of pressure on the allies who are not.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Mr. Chairman, I spent 4 years of my life at one point in the NATO international staff, and the caution I would give you is the NATO you have is the NATO you will get. We can exhort, we can push, and we will get something. We will not get enough to solve the problem, and we have to win in Afghanistan. Waiting for our allies is not a way to do it.

One real world problem is you have got some 37 countries involved. Six have a contribution and manpower large enough to offset the cost of protecting. That is a warning right there. Out of that six, three are not in the fight. We have to get the ones that have 1,000 or more people doing something. Spain is about 550. Poland will build up. But these are realities.

The other problem is this is not just military. If we are going to have effective efforts, there have to be coordinated aid programs, and they have to move into the field. You mentioned the PRTs. These are comforting slogans, symbols of what might be done, but in most cases, they do not reach anything like the number of people that matters, and there is an almost inverse correlation between PRT activity and anybody who is a threat or who is in a drug area. We are effectively repeating the drunkard and the lamppost.

We send people where the light is, not where we lost our keys. We have to, I think, have a different standard. If we are going to put pressure on these people, we have to have clear operational goals of what we want them to do. We have to measure what they are doing in meaningful terms, and not meet several times a year to tell everybody how nice it is we are all cooperating and exhort ourselves to do better next time.

Chairman LANTOS. I could not agree with you more. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership, and I thank the panelists for great testimony. There is little doubt that the problems that face Afghanistan are so complex with the security issues, with the resurgence of the Taliban, al-Qaeda's ongoing influence, the major drug cultivation, but it is interesting to read the testimony of each of our witnesses, and each one of you has made reference to the importance of infrastructure, the impact that that can have, and the transformation of a country.

And even though the complex problems of Afghanistan are indeed that, each one of you has mentioned what a productive strategy we could have in Afghanistan if we were to be more helpful in the build-up of their infrastructure. And I will just quote from each one of you have said that: "Roads are little more than paths." In another part, "Road networks are primitive to nonexistent. The projects needed are simple and ones that Afghans can largely carry out. People need roads. Without greater investment in roads, et cetera, the Taliban will surely prosper and continue to gain adherence. This means a build-up of roadways to transport those crops to market."

So I am really taken with what the United States can do, what NATO can do, what our coalition partners can do that we have not done up to now with the build-up of the infrastructure, specifically transportation and roads. Having been there, as the chairman has, the rough terrain in Afghanistan. What impact can the build-up of roads and a transportation system have that would allow the drug trade to diminish in its importance if the farmers are able to take their goods into the market rather than have the drug dealers come and pick up the poppy seeds thereby eliminating that need for transportation of the goods to market?

Mr. BARNO. I will start briefly. I think I would caution, ma'am, the thought that more roads will have a negative effect on the narcotics economy. Roads benefit all players. They benefit the Taliban. They benefit the coalition. They benefit the Afghan army. They benefit illicit traffickers in merchandise and legal traffickers in merchandise. So it is something we have to be thoughtful about.

I would take it to a different level which is that roads help enable the economy, and building an economy that works in Afghanistan, particularly that gets Afghans employed and gives them hope for their future, is probably the most—in my judgment—the most significant counter to any of the attraction of the Taliban that could possibly exist out there.

If the Afghan people retain a hope that their children's lives and their grandchildren's lives will be better than theirs are—and most of that hope is focused on economics—then that is going to be a significant inoculation against any kind of a return of the Taliban,

and the road networks, particularly the large ring road going around the country, has the potential to provide north/south linkages between the northern tier of former Soviet Republics on the northern border of Afghanistan and the sea via Pakistan in the south.

So there is a prospect for a major increase in trade with goods and services coming from the north through Afghanistan to reach ports in Gwadar and Karachi in Pakistan. So I think that it is all to the good if you look at it from an economic standpoint.

Mr. BERGEN. The largest construction project we have undertaken is a Kabul to Kandahar road which was 17 hours when I drove down it under the Taliban. It is now 7 hours, but if anybody took it today, it would be a suicide operation to go down there unless you are with U.S. military or have very strong security. So just a comment the security has to precede the reconstruction.

But there is a great deal to be done on the reconstruction front, and the President I think is today going to announce the \$2 billion toward reconstruction, and obviously roads, electricity, Kabul only has 4 to 6 hours of electricity, if at all, still today. The clearing of agriculture aqueducts destroyed by war is incredibly important. Mr. Cordesman mentioned the drought which is very significant. If we can restore the aqueducts, that would be a very good thing, but my note of caution would be there are figures suggesting that as much as 85 percent of American aid simply gets recycled back to American contractors.

So in order to build up the Afghan Government and also other Afghan NGOs, we must find some method to make sure more of this money is going to the Afghan Government or Afghan organizations. But then the caution there of course is that only 44 percent of the aid we devoted last year to the Afghan Government was actually spent. The estimate is that it is going to go up to 60 percent. So there is a question of absorptive capacity on their end, but I think the larger idea of trying to make sure that more of it does go in the Afghan direction rather than just coming back toward the United States.

Mr. CORDESMAN. The last time I heard, we had less than six agricultural experts providing aid in Afghanistan for a country which is 80 percent agricultural, but when you go out there, you discover there is no Afghan Government presence in agricultural areas. The real problem we face I think is you are right about roads, but water is even more critical. Local generators and moving the aid out into the areas where there is crime and the Taliban and the other groups present is also equally critical.

If we keep putting money into secure areas and they grow smaller and smaller, we do not accomplish anything. How do you do this? I think in reality talking to the aid people there the real question is can you get aid people protected by the military to work with tribal groupings and ensure that if the money goes to the tribal groupings it actually gets to people who do things? You cannot put it through the Afghan Government. You cannot put it through the central groups. You cannot do it through NGOs. They cannot survive in the areas where we need to operate, and this is a very difficult operation, and it requires a different approach as to civil military efforts.

In effect, you have to do reconstruction while you are fighting, and that means you also need to have enough people to be able to go out into these villages, get to the tribal areas. We probably do in the east. The British do not in the south. Neither do the Canadians. So all of these things link together, and we really either have an operational plan to make this work or we do not. At this point, we are simply throwing money at the problem.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, and Mr. Chairman, if I could ask an additional question?

Chairman LANTOS. Please.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. In testimony one of the sub-headings is the need for a new United States, allied and Afghan approach, and I wanted to ask our panelists how we can expect to win in Afghanistan if we do not have a uniform counternarcotics policy that we, the British, NATO and the Karzai government can all agree upon? What is that? How do we go about getting that uniform counternarcotics policy?

And my last question if I can abuse the privilege, Mr. Chairman, is about the Pakistan northwest frontier province. Does Afghanistan have any chance of defeating the insurgency as long as that province serves as a safe haven for the Taliban and al-Qaeda as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence.

Chairman LANTOS. Sure.

Mr. BARNO. If I could start on that. On the counternarcotics policy, I think I would argue that the counternarcotics policy for Afghanistan has to be a pillar within a broader counterinsurgency policy and strategy, an overarching strategy for Afghanistan that is focused on defeating the Taliban, and a pillar of that strategy would have to be the counternarcotics part of it.

I think if we get the two of those inverted, that somehow defeating the Taliban becomes a subset of counternarcotics, we will go down the wrong path, and that the real risk here is that the Taliban is using that capability to grow additional recruits to maintain funding and to grow its capacity. So I think holistically we have to have a single overarching approach within which counternarcotics is a segment, and sometimes the two of those in my experience in Afghanistan at least got out of kilter where counternarcotics got in front of counterinsurgency.

And I think again you can only have one broad strategy, and you have to have all of the parts of that strategy complement the other parts. If we get segmented into our different lanes too closely, then each of the different lanes in toto will not add up to a strategy. So I would argue the overarching strategy should be counterinsurgency.

Regarding Pakistan I think that the issue there is at the core, and I think both of our other speakers today have mentioned that Pakistan's efforts in the tribal areas have got to accelerate in order to undercut the growth and the effectiveness of the Taliban inside of Afghanistan. The treaty that was made in North Waziristan I think most observers would agree has been very counterproductive.

Certainly the results inside of Afghanistan with regard to more enemy attacks is very disturbing, and so what I observed during my time there is that the most effective effort that the Pakistanis undertook which disrupted greatly the Taliban's operations was an

offensive that the Pakistanis launched in the spring and summer of 2004 in South Waziristan. That offensive clearly on our side of the border created havoc for the Taliban and al-Qaeda elements there. It disrupted their command and control. It caused casualties.

Most importantly it caused uncertainty in their view of whether they could have bases in those areas or not, and the Pakistanis received and inflicted hundreds of casualties. They took a number of casualties, but at the end of that campaign, they stopped, and then they consolidated, and they really have not had that level of an offensive operation in the tribal area since 2004. I think I would argue personally that getting them back on the offensive on their side of the border in a way much like the great effort they did in 2004 would be very, very helpful to help undercut the staging and the confidence that the Taliban have in those base areas.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Bergen?

Mr. BERGEN. I will just take the Pakistan dimension. There is a great deal of academic literature to demonstrate that insurgencies go on for much longer if they have a safe haven, and clearly there is some element of safe haven in the Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan, but I want to caution that if I was a Pakistani Government official I would say the following things: We have had 700 of our guys been killed in attacks. It is very sensitive politically for us. You have got an election coming up in 2007. This was not very popular. We went in with a fist, and now we have done this peace agreement. Of course that did not quite work out either.

So I do think the Pakistanis are sort of groping toward some kind of solution: I think by some of the things that we are doing in Afghanistan, which is the reconstruction, the aid, real counterinsurgency strategy, that is I think what they are groping towards, but we need to help them with that, and they are getting the blow back from the tribal areas themselves. There have been four or five suicide attacks in Pakistan in the last month in Islamabad and Peshawar, Derra Ismail Khan.

Because this is really the right moment for them to say instead of maybe using the word pressuring the Pakistanis let us collaborate with the Pakistanis to make this thing go away because it is in their interest, really even stronger. At the end of the day the blow back from this area is worse for them than for us, and it clearly is bad for us already both in Afghanistan and potentially in the future.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I have to agree with what the General said in one critical area. I do not think you are ever going to have an effective counternarcotics program until you have an effective security program and you can get aid out into the field and deal with the people in the field, and if you do not have an integrated NATO strategy to provide security and provide aid, counternarcotics simply becomes a way of alienating people and pushing them toward the Taliban or local warlords.

As for Pakistan, I would bet members of the committee well \$5 each that if we hold this meeting again in calendar—well I have to keep it under a certain amount because of conflict of interest.

Chairman LANTOS. Yes.

Mr. CORDESMAN. But, quite seriously, if we had this meeting again in 2 years, the same hearing, there is still going to be a major problem in this area. You are not going to see Pakistan capable of even starting an aid program in the region during the coming calendar year. If anything begins to happen, it is probably in calendar 2009. It is possible that a government could be pushed into starting a counteroffensive, but my own feeling is that underlying what Pakistan says is a leader who is increasingly dependent on his own Islamist army which does not want to fight in this region and an ISS and elements of the army so tied to the Pashtun issue that they are willing to tolerate and play with the Taliban as a political tool in influencing Afghanistan, and we can change that a little, but substantively we are going to have to win in Afghanistan. We are not going to win in Pakistan.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read with interest your testimony, and after some reflection I have to acknowledge that I am somewhat depressed. It is almost 5 years. We are heading into 5 years now in terms of our presence in Afghanistan, and the conclusion that I reach is that we are slipping backwards, and particularly, Mr. Cordesman, you speak in your written testimony to you advocate a significant sense of urgency.

I guess my question is where have we been for 5 years? It would I think be logical to presume if we had accepted your recommendations 4 years ago, and had made a substantial investment, maybe the tone of this particular hearing would have been different today. I also agree, and I think we have to acknowledge that Afghanistan has always been a source country for opium, and while I do not disagree with the need to interdict and address whether it be with the mechanism of the herbicide et cetera, what were we expecting in terms of the livelihood of a country where 80 percent of its citizens come from rural areas?

We never created the conditions to give them a choice. So here we are today where the last statement in your written testimony, Mr. Cordesman, is the U.S. and its allies cannot afford to lose two wars. If they do not act now, they will. That is unsettling, and again media reports confirm and corroborate what you all are saying. I believe it is a question of having the political will as well as the resources, and I think that incorporates this concept of patience and perseverance and a long-term plan.

And incorporated in that long-term plan would be measurements that would provide this committee and Members of Congress and the American people of the realities. I think the example you gave, Mr. Cordesman, is so accurate. We have trained 91,000 and my memory is you said 12,000 are actually in service today. What does that mean? It means nothing. It means absolutely nothing. Are any of you aware of whether a long-term plan over a 5- or 10-year period is being developed by the administration?

Mr. CORDESMAN. I cannot answer whether it is being developed. I can tell you we do not have one. Just watching the changes in the aid program for Afghanistan since the request submitted last fall and what we have today shows we are trying to get through fiscal 2007 and fiscal 2008. There is no evidence anywhere in any testimony of a longer term fiscal plan, and a longer term detailed

plan for aid, for development of Afghan forces. It all basically shows that we win in calendar 2008, and the money goes way down, and indeed that is what is reflected in this year's budget request for Iraq which is equally disturbing.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If we accept this as the plan, would you give us your judgment in terms of what the consequences would be?

Mr. CORDESMAN. We will lose.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you.

Mr. CORDESMAN. The truth is that all I can say is whether members have time or not I would invite their staff simply to look at the DoD budget presentation and the statements on Afghanistan for fiscal year 2007 and 2008, and figure out how this could possibly work. Whether there is any member of the committee who believes we know what we are going to do in fiscal year 2008 in a way that offers us convincing chance of winning.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Bergen, do you have any comment? General Barno?

Mr. BARNO. I do know the President is making some announcements as we speak this morning on Afghanistan's strategic review and where that is going, and I do not have any knowledge of the details of that. I would say a different angle on your observation though would be that one of the most challenging problems in front of us with regard to the next 5 years in Afghanistan is integration of all of the different efforts. When I was in Kabul in my position there as the commander of our forces this idea that part of my responsibility was trying to achieve unity of effort and unity of purpose among all of the different players, getting all of the players on the same playing field, heading to the same set of goal posts, playing the same sport, not necessarily wearing the same jerseys but going in the same direction, that is an immense leadership challenge, and it is an immense management challenge.

And I think the United States has got to continue to be in the driver's seat, be a leader, be the energizer, be the catalyst for that because there are so many players involved with this. I described the challenge as an hourglass. At the top of the hourglass we had all this international aid, \$24 billion was the dollar figure I think I saw pledged international aid since 2002, and the bottom of the hourglass we had an immense set of requirements. Their infrastructure, roads, education, health care. There is just an infinite number of things that need attention.

But the bottleneck in the center of the hourglass is lack of human capacity. The lack of management capacity, both the Afghans and in the international community to take all of the different players and to integrate them and to synchronize them in a way that sent them all toward the same set of goalposts. That is a huge challenge. It is not any less complex today with NATO now taking a more significant role, but our role has now changed, and I think needs to be an aggressive leadership role within the NATO structure now to help marshal all of these efforts and unify all these efforts in a single direction.

That in my personal judgment is perhaps more important than even the dollars. The dollars are important, but if you do not have a management and a leadership structure to focus those dollars like a laser on the objectives, you want to obtain and have the

management structures in place to do that then it will be very, very difficult.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, and I would like to compliment you, Mr. Chairman, and your staff for putting together this fine hearing as well as the other hearings. I have been really impressed with the quality. Being a Republican, I was a little skeptical in the beginning, and you have pleasantly surprised me, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. We will be glad to have you on our side, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And again, I want to congratulate the panel as well. Let me just note I have spent a considerable time of my life involved in Afghanistan, and I found all of your testimony to be just inspirational to me to have a further understanding because all of you have given me some gems to think about and to put into my information bank here and where to start.

Let me just note, Mr. Chairman, I proposed legislation called the Afghan Poppy Eradication and Prosperity Act in 2005 which when my party was in control of this House was ignored, and it went right to the heart of some of the things that are being said. The idea of having yes, economic development but based on WPA type concepts where we are putting Afghan people to work thus creating a fundamental impact on their economy. Setting the foundation for an economy where there are people who, for example, Afghans who will have the money because they are building the road or the aqueduct that we are paying for, yes, but they then have the money to buy the food from the farmers.

Right now Afghan people do not even have the money to buy the food from their farmers. So the farmers not only do they not have a market elsewhere, they do not have a market to their own people. If I had any words for our administration, it would be we need to be smart, we need to be bold, and we need to be generous.

First in terms of generous, Afghanistan still has the highest infant mortality rate in the world. How do you win the hearts and minds of people whose babies are dying? I can tell you that right now because I just had three babies, as you know, in my life. Save their children. Let us save the children of Afghanistan. We can do that at least, and we should be able to hire people to build roads and aqueducts. These are doable things. So I do not believe this is beyond our capability at all.

General, let me make one disagreement with you. I do not think the answer to bringing security to Afghanistan lies in our relationship with NATO, and how we deal with NATO, and how we deal with the Germans, and how we deal with the British. It lies in how we deal with the Pakistanis and the Saudis. The Saudis are putting up millions of dollars to fund who? Our enemies. It is Saudi money that is educating these people in this hate-filled type of Islam which does not reflect the Afghan people I might add.

The Afghan people kicked the Taliban out. It was the Saudis who were financing them and still financed them, and we know that the ISI and Pakistan and the Pakistanis—this is one thing that has really come out of this hearing is the phrase of the Pashtun cartel.

Those of us who know Afghanistan know that the Pashtuns are on both sides of the border, the Pakistan side and the Afghan side.

Well, because of that, the Pakistanis are not doing what they need to have done. They are part of the enemy as well as part of the alliance against the enemy. So what we need is to make sure that the Saudis—and by the way, Mr. Chairman, I remember your remarks a couple of weeks ago. Where are the people of the gulf states, including the Saudis, in terms of donating to this reconstruction effort, not just the Europeans or the Japanese? These are the people who supposedly as Muslims should be concerned about the welfare of these fellow Muslims, and also the Islamic extremism if it takes hold will of course sweep them away as well in the end.

So we have got some challenges here, and I really appreciate the insights and the depth that was presented to us today, but I think we can do it. I am not pessimistic as my friend, Mr. Delahunt, is. I think we can do this. It is well within our capability of laying down the law to the Pakistanis and the Saudis. It is well within our capability to build those aqueducts and to hire those people. It is well within our capability to save the children of Afghanistan, and with that if anyone has any comment.

One last idea. What about the pipeline? I would like to ask is there still a pipeline proposal that could go through Afghanistan that might provide some activities there? Some economic activity?

Mr. BERGEN. On the pipeline it does not really make a lot of economic sense obviously with the security situation where it is. Just to go to something that Congressman Delahunt said, this was the lowest funded reconstruction aid in post World War II American nation building efforts. So that is one of the reasons we are where we are.

But I think an overarching point is Afghanistan is a classic sort of glass half empty half full problem, but the trend line is definitely going down, and I think we also have to say what is success in Afghanistan? Afghanistan is never going to become Belgium. It is going to a poor, weak, fragile state for the foreseeable future, but it is one where security can be improved, and it is one where the economy can be slightly improved, and I am optimistic about those things, and even some of the things that President Bush is talking about today I think will help quite well with that.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Tanner.

Mr. TANNER. I want to add my thanks, Mr. Chairman. This could not have come at a better time in my judgment this hearing, and I want to thank the panel for extraordinary insight into what our problems are. I am going Saturday to Brussels to the NATO parliamentary assembly winter meeting of the economic and security committee, the defense committee and the political committee.

I have been doing this now for around 10 years, and the frustration that I feel and you all alluded to with regard to the caveats of the member countries and so forth and the lack of focus is almost paralyzing. My question is I think what I heard was would it be fair to characterize all of your collective judgments as we are in danger, if not already, of losing momentum in Afghanistan? Would that be an accurate reflection of where we are?

Now I guess this is the first really true out of area military expedition for NATO on a scale of this magnitude, and therefore, I think it is even more important that NATO get it right. I was disappointed to learn when the defense ministers of the NATO member countries met in Spain last weekend that there was no new troop promises made. There was the caveats are still in the air.

I guess my question would be: As we, the American delegation, sits with the parliamentarians of the NATO member nations, we are looking for breakthrough language I guess to heighten the urgency of the situation in Afghanistan, and I would be very grateful for any insight any of you would have as to advice for the American delegation in this regard. We will be there next Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I would give you several pieces of advice. One, keep up the pressure on the troops. The fact is that it is not just the allies who are not contributing because of Britain's location. It is quite clear there needs to be more British forces. There has been I think a tendency to dance around what the NATO command is actually recommending, but it really turns out to be about 2,000 more combat troops at a minimum right away, and I am not talking U.S.

Mr. TANNER. Am I correct that Poland has promised 1,000, but they are not there yet?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, the problem is people rotate in and out, Congressman. So one of the real questions is: Who is going to be there how long and how many of them are combat elements? But the Poles will make a difference. The second thing is NATO, like the United States, needs operational plans and measures of effectiveness not concepts. Our great problem now is we keep talking about concepts.

The minute you start looking at measures of effectiveness and whether you really have a plan to coordinate aid, whether the aid is getting into the field and it is going where you need it, you get a completely different picture of results than if you simply say, well we threw money at it. We started this number of projects. We have this many PRTs.

I think if NATO is to get away from debates of concepts and actually do anything practically, it has got to have measures of effectiveness and common plans. Otherwise from my own experience with ministerials either we disagree between countries or we paper over it and we never even get to whether there is any output. It is always, What is the concept?

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. I think two key words are obviously heroin and terrorism. Most of the heroin is going to Europe, and on the terrorism issue, when General Maples testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee, you remember the plot to bring down ten American airliners in Britain that would have killed thousands of people and would have had a devastating effect on local tourism and investor confidence.

General Maples testified that that was directed by al-Qaeda from Pakistan, and when you talk about Pakistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan are part of the same sort of holistic problem. We have to solve

both of these problems together, and clearly the terrorism problem is a much bigger problem particularly in Britain but also in Europe generally than it is for us for all sorts of reasons.

Chairman LANTOS. General Barno.

Mr. BARNO. I can only second Mr. Bergen's comments. I think terrorism and narcotics are the two primary reasons Europe should be concerned.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. TANNER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate that.

Chairman LANTOS. We wish you the best in Brussels, Mr. Tanner. Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have kind of a three-part presentation here. One is a question to the committee, the second is a comment, and the third is my questions to the panel. Committee, should we not have an oversight hearing on particularly Mr. Cordesman's testimony today? It seems like there are a lot of unanswered questions about what has been promised, what has come forward, what they say they are doing and what is really happening.

My comment and I am not going to go into the detail questions because I am not going to repeat what my colleagues have asked. It has been really good and a great learning experience. But I want to tell you that besides war with the horrendous weapons that we have available to all nations have, whether we admit it or not, that could annihilate the entire world and every human being if we chose, I think our next risk to total extermination comes through the expansion in the use of mind and body numbing narcotics. I just want you to know that, and I think as humans, we better start doing something about it if we want to have a world for our grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Now my question to the panel, and I am going to ask your opinion on this, because I so respect your experience. I so respect your excellence. This has been such a good hearing. When is it the United States' role to shape another nation, another region, in telling when how best to do this? Can we do it peacefully? And the second part of my question is: What is the United States' responsibility as a market for narcotics? What can we do to prevent? I mean if nobody ate tomatoes, they would quit growing tomatoes. Those are my questions.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Cordesman, would you like to begin?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, let me begin. What is our responsibility? I think what bothers me in some ways is when you send the bull into a china shop and a lot of things get broken and we had to do it because we were dealing with a critical threat to our country, you take on the responsibility of fixing things not simply getting rid of your immediate target.

We cannot walk away from I think it is 31 million people. We cannot walk away from the human issues involved. We cannot walk away from the strategic outcome of losing in Afghanistan which affects Pakistan, which affects the entire region. We have to have a long-term commitment as well as a short-term effort to win, and these are things we have to accept.

On the broader issue you raised, I am going to give you a politically incorrect answer. If you cannot solve the social dynamics of demand, counternarcotics and eradication are a politically correct waste of money. One problem that we need to remember when we talk about heroin is before heroin became the problem in Europe there was a vast increase in synthetics. If we solve the heroin problem in Europe, we will see a vast increase in synthetics again.

Is it really worse to sniff heroin than to go onto amphetamines? That is a judgment I cannot make. But if you cannot solve the demand problem, again it will not be 2009 we could have this hearing, it would be 2019, and I would bet you that there would still be the same narcotics problem and that the street price of whatever drug is then the drug of favor would be roughly the same or lower than the street prices today.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. One thing the Afghans remember very well is the fact that we closed our Embassy in Afghanistan in 1989, and they basically felt that we washed our hands of them once we had been able to use them in helping defeat the Soviets. So Afghans feel this very strongly. We have a responsibility there as we overthrew the previous government, but we have also a tremendous opportunity because unlike the Iraqis who want us out by any polling data that we know of, Afghans want us and the international community to stay. Overwhelming numbers for us to stay. So we have a responsibility but also an opportunity.

Chairman LANTOS. General Barno.

Mr. BARNO. On your first question in terms of shaping a region or nation, I think we have to keep our vital national interests in mind and our important national interests in mind, and I do not think there is anything pernicious or negative about trying to shape positive outcomes for United States national interests and particularly in an area such as this where many of our interests align with the interests certainly of Afghanistan in this case.

And having spent a lot of time with President Karzai, he is very forceful and very much an advocate for a strategic partnership with the United States, and very much wants to continue to build that close relationship with the United States, and I think in that he reflects the vast majority of the Afghan people, even today. Certainly true when I was there, but I think broadly true today as well. That is a—as Peter would point out—unique opportunity for the United States that we turn away from at our peril, and I think we have recognized that now and are moving to do more acceleration of our efforts in Afghanistan.

On the market piece of narcotics, I think despite some of the testimony this morning my sense is that the vast majority of narcotics coming from Afghanistan continue to go to Europe, to both Russia, to eastern Europe, central Europe and western Europe, and that only a very small amount comes to the United States. It is no less dangerous. It is no less deadly to Europeans than it is to Americans, but it again should be looked at as their problem in terms of energizing their response in Afghanistan.

Certainly they are threatened immensely more. Their youth are threatened immensely more by Afghanistan's narcotics than the United States is, and we need to continue to make that point with

them. I do not think the market or the desire for narcotics is going to change, and I think that even today if it were eradicated in Afghanistan it has shown incredible resilience because of the dollars involved to move other places, to move into other countries and other ungoverned spaces, et cetera. So we have to be very thoughtful if we are successful there that it is liable to shift into other places that will make it a continuing problem.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The situation in Afghanistan is very dire, and I think you have stressed this today. The central government is very weak. Our allies generally have made what I call a half-hearted commitment to forging stability there, and the Taliban clearly is strengthening, and a spring attack and an offensive across the country is anticipated. So while good news is hard to find, I am pleased on one front, and that is radio free Afghanistan, a product of this committee, and I authored that legislation, is on its 5-year anniversary on the air this month.

But what is clear is that we need better efforts or that country is going to revert to a failed state, and if that happens that is going to be a blessing to al-Qaeda. Even an optimistic view has the United States commitment there to Afghanistan a very lengthy one and frankly it is becoming an expensive one, but Afghanistan requires urgent attention, and I would like to go to Mr. Bergen, because you testified that the Taliban pays \$100 a month compared to \$70 for an Afghan policeman. That is one issue we really have to address because as a result Afghans are serving as Taliban fighters.

We have heard about the desertion rates both because of low pay and I suspect other factors as well. Many choose to enter the poppy trade as a consequence of the low pay, but many who stay in the army frankly start extorting, and I support training. I support the concept of raising the pay if that is what it takes. But I would like to ask you this because I have to wonder what it says about a sense of nationhood when that lack of commitment is such that people are susceptible to signing up with the Taliban for \$30 more or to criminal recruitment. I would like to ask that question. Any thoughts that you might have on that.

Mr. BERGEN. Well, I think it is the fifth poorest country in the world, and people are desperate. So if somebody is offering more money, they are going to probably take it. The biggest disaster in Afghanistan—I am sure General Barno would endorse this—has probably been the Afghan national police, with a 80 percent illiteracy rate, they are incredibly poorly equipped, they may not even have AK-47s.

They are not capable of rolling back the Taliban when they are in their area, and so to the extent that this \$8 billion that the Bush administration is recommending for the Afghan national army and Afghan national police to really build up the police, I think this is a very good idea.

Mr. ROYCE. Do Afghans really think we are committed to their country for the long haul in your judgment?

Mr. BERGEN. That is a very interesting question. I think Secretary Rumsfeld made a mistake about 2 years ago when he said we are going to start drawing down troops. This sent precisely the

wrong signal to Afghanistan, and it sent precisely the wrong signal to the regional players. The fact that Secretary Gates is talking about more troops, this is sending the right signal, but we need to keep sending these signals.

Mr. ROYCE. And on that theme—and I have had discussions with the Germans and with others in NATO, but I will ask General Barno—as you know, this committee and especially Chairman Lantos have been very frustrated by the ability to get NATO resources into the field. But over the past year NATO has gotten more forces into the fight, but I would ask how you assess their performance. Last fall the U.N. envoy to Afghanistan called for NATO forces to operate with a freer hand.

We got a copy of the *Financial Times* here that says that NATO forces are operating with a combined 71 caveats on their activity out there in the field, and I would ask when you were in-country, how did these caveats by host countries affect their operations? Affect their effectiveness to suppress the Taliban? And I would ask if you could give me an example because this is something we might want to talk in further detail to our NATO allies about.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Barno. General Barno.

Mr. BARNO. We, during my tenure there, did not have NATO forces involved in active combat roles. So their roles were in provincial reconstruction teams and essentially in stability operations initially around Kabul and then expanding to the northern part of the country. An example of a caveat though that I can recall quite well was that—at least a presumed caveat—was that we had a roadside bomb that was discovered outside of one of the NATO country's provincial reconstruction teams, not far outside the front gate of this compound.

And that country was not allowed to go and disarm that bomb, and called for Americans to come and do that task, in part because they were not equipped for it understandably, but they were not going to leave the compound until an American unit came in and disabled that roadside bomb. So I found that to be a bit disturbing in terms of the ability of that unit to be able to accomplish their mission and what is obviously going to be a difficult environment.

I think in the combat missions we have seen the most broad set of caveats has been laid out as to what units of what nations can actually engage in combat or not. Whether they can perform offensive combat roles. We have a group of nations to include the British, the Canadians, and the Dutch in the south that have been involved in all kinds of combat roles here in 2006 and have performed very well from all accounts.

We have another set of nations who have not allowed their soldiers to be involved in parts of the country or participate in operations that involve offensive combat, and that is perhaps the most disturbing or most challenging part of the caveats as they exist today.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I too want to add my commendations for your efforts. This hearing could not be more timely and your focus to what is critical at this point in time I think is to be commended. I share many of the concerns that have been raised by my colleagues. I was in Afghanistan about a year

and a half ago, and I suspect that while some things have changed based upon everything that I have read and your current testimony today, unfortunately much has not changed, and we can recount the lack of effort, but I frankly think that our administration if we do not quickly seize the initiative this year—and I think the calendar year, Mr. Cordesman, is correct because the seasons play a great role in terms of what you can do and what you cannot do, and certainly I believe the Taliban is such planning once the winter ends to focus on their offensive.

But Iraq, whether we like to talk about it or not and a lot of the mistakes that have been made in Iraq are being repeated here in Afghanistan, has in so many ways created a situation in which we have taken our eye off the ball. I have a number of questions. I am going to submit some of them because I suspect time will not allow, but let us begin first of all with regards to the economy and the narco impacts of it.

Gentlemen, I saw one of the recommendations talked about spraying the poppy fields. If you want to make farmers upset with you, I can tell you that this is a real clear way to do it. It is a rural area. I have flown over Kabul and Kandahar and the areas in between. I mean the reason besides that it is very lucrative and profitable, poppies can be stored and maintained in terms of the transportation system.

So when we talk about replacing agricultural economy—and I farm so I know something about the difficulty and the challenges—how do we begin to quickly—without the infrastructure of a government as all of you have stated—provide these farmers with an alternative without taking away their profit today? How do you do that?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, you do not in a year. That is absolutely critical. We are already going to be going into a growing season by the time the United States can blink.

Mr. COSTA. And we do not have a plan.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think we have a plan of sorts. Will it work? No. One of the key elements here is to do anything you have got to have roads, water, work through the tribes, have people in the field and actually give the money, whether it is syrup aid or some similar program, where they can spend it immediately.

Mr. COSTA. But as you said, throwing money at it without a plan. I mean I was at a PRT unit with the Army Corps of Engineers outside of Kandahar, the road that they were building.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I agree with you, Congressman. I think frankly again if you cannot get a combination of U.S. military and eight people out there, if you cannot work with the tribes and you cannot find tribal leaders to give the money to who will immediately give it to people to deal with unimproved roads, things like catchment dams, dealing with the Kenats, local generators, you are not going to address the problem in the area where the problem exists, and to do that quite frankly is probably at the earliest something we will not even start until the end of this growing season.

Mr. COSTA. So the best thing we could do as a committee is really force our folks to really come up with a plan, and frankly if we do not lead by example notwithstanding all of our frustrations with NATO I do not see it happening. General, one of the points that

the CO made—and it was a Turkish general at the time when we were there—was that with these collection of NATO forces notwithstanding the differences as you pointed out in terms of the rules of engagement, that they have all got to have their own support system which seems crazy.

I mean, whether it is the Germans having their own kitchen facility, because again, this is really the first NATO operation really outside of Europe. They are not used to consolidating and more. Have we made any progress on that in the year and a half?

Mr. BARNO. I am not sure of its current status. I do know NATO has had a long tradition of logistics being a national responsibility.

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Mr. BARNO. That very quickly gets into a lot of inefficiency as you point out when you are putting that many nations in one small location and having them all responsible for their own logistics. So I think that some opportunity to have some type of a multinational logistics command, in my personal opinion, might not be a bad way to approach this given that this is going to be a sustained mission. Sir, I would also like to comment, if I could, on the agriculture part.

Mr. COSTA. Yes.

Mr. BARNO. The U.S. is the agricultural powerhouse of the world. We have the best agriculture I think of any nation on the face of the planet, and I am not sure from my experience in Afghanistan how much of that was brought to Afghanistan to analyze the problem set in Afghanistan from an agricultural standpoint, and then devise short-term, mid-term and long-term solutions to reinstitute agriculture as the center of that economy.

Now 80 percent of the people are involved with it. We know more about agriculture I think than virtually anyone on the planet, but there has not been that connection despite some good efforts on the part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture while I was there. The amount of effort compared with what we could provide to help look at, assess and then determine the high payoff ways to rebuild the system I just do not think have been out there, and that I think in my personal belief would be very helpful.

Mr. COSTA. No, I concur. My sense is it has been too little so far. We hope it is not too late. Mr. Chairman, one more question?

Chairman LANTOS. Please.

Mr. COSTA. I have a constituency, a family that is interestingly enough in the process of constructing a 130-bed hospital in Kabul, and we are trying to inventory in our area surplus hospital equipment and other things. They are contracting out with local Afghani businesspeople. They hope to have it complete by this spring. From your experience in the area, what are the chances that an entrepreneurial effort for all the good Samaritan reasons that is taking place that once this facility is completed and we get the equipment in there that it can function in the fashion that it would be? What is your sense?

Mr. BERGEN. My sense is it is a very high probability it will function well. I mean Kabul is pretty safe. There have been 139 suicide attacks in Afghanistan last year. Very few of them were in Kabul. So I think from that point of view it is fine. But on the counternarcotics, we are spending \$750 million a year on counternarcotics

in Afghanistan which is exactly the same amount of money that Afghan farmers are deriving from poppy.

So surely this money could be better directed at crop subsidies for people who are prepared to grow cotton, fruit or nuts and divert some of that money because otherwise what is the financial incentive to do something else? I mean these people are all economic actors.

Mr. COSTA. No, that is the way they are going to live. I will submit the rest of my questions. Again thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Hopefully this will be a clarion call for this Congress and this administration to seize the initiative before it is too late. I told the President this can be a success just like we were in South Korea, but remember, South Korea, we have been there over 50 years. We still have almost 30,000 troops in South Korea, and in the 1950s and in the 1960s, it was a tough go in South Korea, and it has only been in the last three decades that we look at that as a success. It will not happen by itself.

The Afghanis I spoke to were very fearful that we were going to repeat history of the ghost wars of 1980; after the proxy war was finished, we left.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you, Mr. Costa. Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I also would like to commend our distinguished witnesses for their fine testimonies this afternoon. I seem to get the impression we have our good friend from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, as the optimist, and then describing my good friend from Massachusetts as the pessimist, and I guess I will consider myself as a realist, if that might be a better way to describe.

I noted with interest that almost 50 percent of the gross national product of Afghanistan comes out of opium heroin. What is the dollar value of the opium heroin that is produced from Afghanistan?

Mr. BERGEN. It is \$3 billion.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. \$3 billion? How does that compare to the world market among other countries that grow opium and produce heroin? They are the second largest producer of heroin in the world is Afghanistan?

Mr. BERGEN. It produces 92 percent of the world's heroin.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Ninety percent of the worlds. Okay. And I think I noted earlier that very little comes to the United States. Primarily the consumption market is in Europe and others but not in the United States, at least to that extent. As I recall, at the time of the Soviet occupation or at least the attempted effort to occupy Afghanistan clearly it was in our national interest to prevent Soviet expansion, communism and all of that. That was the basis really of our interest in a country like Afghanistan.

So what did we do? We supplied the Afghan people and the fighters with weapons and whatever means that we could do. Our interest was not necessarily because we had a real love or cultural affinity with these people. It was strictly strategic and for military purposes. What is really amazing to me here is one of the two most powerful superpowers in the world decide to invade this country and for a 10-year period the Afghan warriors kept sending body bags back to the Soviet Union, and to that extent the Soviet Union left.

I mean you have to give the Afghans some credit in terms of their ability, and I would like to class them as probably second to none as far as great warriors when it comes to fighting combat in whatever way you could do this. My question, gentlemen, is that our national interest really is to get rid of the Taliban and not necessarily to treat the people of Afghan and their leaders as we would treat other states in our own country, and I do not know if I am trying to get my point here. We are doing this for our own interests and not necessarily because we really are that much committed to the needs of the people of Afghanistan. Am I wrong on that?

Mr. BARNO. Well, sir, I guess I would argue that a stable nation in Afghanistan serves those long-term United States national interests, and that if you simply focus—from my military experience there—if you simply focused on attacking the Taliban and defeating them without doing anything for the nation, the moment we walked out after the defeat of the Taliban, the Taliban will begin to resume its march to power once again. So I think building the state to be a long-term reliable partner in that part of the world is the best guarantor for United States national interests in central Asia right now.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. I concur.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I do not believe you could conceivably defeat the Taliban simply by hunting down and killing Taliban. There are two other Islamist movements. There is al-Qaeda. If you do not deal with the country, if you do not deal with the people, we will end up with there always being more Taliban, new leaders or there will be some alternative Islamist group which grows and takes power. Simply going out and killing bad guys is fine for 45 minutes on television but as a solution to any regional problem it is a nightmare.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. And I would like to add that after the Soviet Union withdrew their forces from Afghanistan that we kind of set back ourselves. We did not really have anything more to do or to say. Only after when we were attacked on September 11, 2001, we were outraged. A guy by the name of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda organization attacked our country, and as you know, gentlemen, the Congress and everybody said we better go after this guy and his followers. And where were they? They were somewhere between Afghanistan, primarily Afghanistan, as well as Pakistan. Some parts of Pakistan.

My point that I wanted to make here is that this is when we created our interest again. It was to go after Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda and not really committed to what I said earlier that we really have such a close affinity to the needs of the people of Afghanistan that we were willing to build roads, schools, hospitals.

We have already committed some \$400 billion to Iraq, and I see this as a contradiction of our commitment. We are doing it for our own personal interest and strategic purposes but not necessarily to give the same kind of care and concern for the needs of these people. Correct me if I am wrong on that observation.

Chairman LANTOS. If I may make an observation to my friend, I am probably the only person in the room who remembers this, but the fourth point of the inaugural address of President Harry Truman was economic development. We at that time called it the point four program. So the U.S. national interest in economic development goes back well over a half a century, and I believe that this Congress will be deeply and passionately committed to that.

I want to thank this extraordinary panel for your wisdom and judgment and experience and insight. The committee has learned a great deal from you. We are grateful to you, and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

LOSING AFGHANISTAN TO OPIUM?

By Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Published February 15, 2007
The Washington Times

The spring opium harvest will soon begin in Afghanistan. So will a murderous spring offensive by the Taliban and its allies against U.S. and coalition troops. The two events are directly related, for the Taliban and the warlords are funded by the billions of dollars deriving from the massive, illegal opium trade.

The deteriorating security in Afghanistan has been made possible by the opium crop's skyrocketing expansion. Much of the money is used to buy sophisticated weapons for the Taliban and warlords, pay their fighters, purchase supplies, bribe Afghan and Pakistani officials and provide an impoverished population with the means to earn a living and thereby secure their allegiance and support.

Seen in this context, it is clear that U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan are battling more than merely a few thousand militants. They are at war with an expanding narco-state that extends throughout the country. Without this support, our enemies would be hard-pressed to operate, much less continue increasing their numbers and firepower. Given this reality, the odds against success are lengthening.

After five years of sustained U.S. effort in Afghanistan, it should be apparent to all that our strategy has not succeeded. Yet as a new approach is about to be rolled out, it does not appear that those formulating this new proposal fully understand that the Taliban and its allies cannot be defeated without also targeting their principal source of financing—the illegal drug trade.

Our anti-narcotics policy has long been hobbled by conflicting views and bureaucratic battles between the various players, including the Departments of Defense and State, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and other U.S. agencies, along with our NATO allies, especially the British. There is little prospect these long-entrenched divisions will be reconciled by themselves.

To encourage the administration to focus on this central problem, I and four of my colleagues on the House Foreign Affairs Committee recently sent a letter to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates recommending a number of steps be taken immediately, including:

- Appointing a high-level coordinator of Afghan narco-terrorism policy to create and lead a unified campaign against drugs and terror that utilizes all U.S. agencies, assets and assistance, as we are doing successfully in Colombia.
- Implementing a new DEA “ride-along” policy with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and our own military forces on the ground in Afghanistan in order to combine ongoing U.S. and NATO military operations when these overlap with those of the DEA.
- Extraditing to the U.S. major drug kingpins and drug warlords, using a new narco-terrorism provision in the USA PATRIOT Act that makes the use of illicit drugs to support acts of terrorism or foreign terrorist organizations a federal crime. Extradition has worked well in Colombia, and can work in Afghanistan.
- Expediting training by the Colombian National Police's elite anti-narcotics unit, which visited Afghanistan last year, of their Afghan counterparts. We were pleased to see Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, note recently the key role our Colombian allies, and U.S. experience in Colombia, can play in the fight against illicit drugs in Afghanistan.

- Helping develop and facilitate trade promotion and increased trade-building capacity for Afghan products and industries in order to increase exports and create legitimate livelihoods in place of illicit opium farming and production today.

Of course, these recommendations must be part of a much broader effort that includes a greatly enhanced effort by Pakistan to secure its tribal areas and the president's proposals to increase funding for roads, rural electrification, alternative livelihood programs, and training for security forces. But without a comprehensive counternarcotics policy, these efforts by themselves are unlikely to succeed.

The problem with our strategy in Afghanistan is not primarily one of resources, but of policy. Our enemies draw their strength not merely from their weapons and their fanaticism, but from the opium in the fields as well.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida is the ranking Republican member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

LETTER TO THE HONORABLES CONDOLEEZZA RICE AND ROBERT M. GATES FROM
VARIOUS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

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February 7, 2007

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The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
The Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
The Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E880
Washington DC 20301

Dear Madam and Mr. Secretary:

As we will soon again face another massive opium harvest in Afghanistan, and a related spring offensive by anti-coalition militants (ACMs), it is time for some new thinking to ensure that Afghanistan does not fall into a failed narco-state status and become, once again, a safe haven for al-Qaeda. We need to act now to prevent that.

U.S. policy and organizational structure against the narco-terrorist threat in Afghanistan require new initiatives and a unified inter-agency campaign. For example, the open and public dispute with our British allies on opium eradication methods, along with the many different and often conflicting views of NATO, our Defense Department (DoD), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and other U.S. agencies on how to best handle the narcotics challenge, does not bode well for success in taking on a major source of the financing for the Taliban and other anti-coalition militants. These narcotics, and their billions of illicit proceeds, finance arms, night vision goggles, and land mines. They require aggressive action.

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Afghanistan's continued development into a free democracy is crucial for U.S. interests; failure in this regard would be completely unacceptable. After careful review and consideration, we would propose the following steps be taken immediately in order to win in Afghanistan:

- 1) Appointing a high-level coordinator of overall Afghan narco-terrorism policy. This coordinator is particularly needed to create and lead a unified campaign against both drugs and terror simultaneously. To have any hope of prevailing in this fight, we must utilize all U.S. agencies, assets, and assistance, as we did in Colombia.
- 2) Resolving the dispute with our British allies over opium eradication means and methods. Further, we must design a uniform counter narcotics (CN) policy (to be collectively implemented by the US, Britain and NATO) with the British, who have the lead on CN in Afghanistan.
- 3) Implementing a new DEA ride-along policy with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and our own military forces on the ground in Afghanistan, in order that we merge and maximize ongoing U.S. and NATO military operations in those specific cases where they overlap with the DEA's own difficult struggle in unsecured areas against illicit drugs and major drug kingpins.

We were very pleased to learn of a recent, and very successful, ISAF-supported DEA/ Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) ride-along anti-drug operation in Kunduz province. This operation ought to serve as a model for our new approach. If ISAF can do it, so can our military, in tactical support of our DEA and Afghan-run anti-drug units.

- 4) Emphasis on extradition to the U.S., especially of major drug kingpins and drug warlords, using a new narco-terrorism provision in the USA PATRIOT Act that creates a federal crime when illicit drugs support acts of terrorism or foreign terrorist organizations. We must establish deterrence where none now exists. This effort would help take pressure off a nascent Afghan judicial system. These kingpins and warlords, if left in Afghanistan, would continue to undermine its legal system through bribes and threats. Extradition has worked very well in Colombia, and can work again in Afghanistan.
- 5) Making the Mi 17 helicopter program operational with adequate defensive weapons for transport of the DEA-led NIU teams to do their job, together with qualified pilots, maintenance and operational support. We have waited long enough to get this vital air lift mobility to the NIU. We need someone put in charge of getting this done now, enough time has gone by already.
- 6) Maximizing use of Huey II eradication helicopters of the State Department in support of DEA tactical operational efforts (which are generally more productive than manual eradication). Any unnecessary impediments and regulations that limit that capacity and critical need for air lift by DEA/NIU on these helicopter assets, especially during the non-opium harvesting season (July-December) in Afghanistan, need to be reviewed.

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- 7) Ensuring our DEA has the vehicles, including surveillance cars and other transport vehicles to do the job against the major drug kingpins, and make certain the flexibility from other agencies and departments in country to support DEA in its vital lead role against illicit drugs, which are funding the resurgence of the ACMs, including the Taliban.
- 8) Increasing efforts, such as more professional and effective vetting systems that include extensive interviewing prior to recruitment, to ensure that the police we are helping to train in Afghanistan are not corrupt or sympathetic to our enemies.
- 9) Expediting training by the Colombian National Police's elite anti-narcotics unit, which visited Afghanistan last year (at the Committee's request), of their Afghan counterparts, including exposing the Kabul airport police chief to their proven methods of drug interdiction and seizures at the Bogota International Airport in Colombia. We were pleased to see General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, note recently the key role our Colombian allies, and America's experience in Colombia, can play in the fight against illicit drugs in Afghanistan.
- 10) Intensifying and sustaining our dialogue with the government of Pakistan regarding the stability of tribal areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Islamabad's policies toward the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and the impact of a resurgent Taliban upon international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. We are deeply concerned by unmistakable trends toward an increasing number and sophistication of cross-border Taliban attacks, including the use of improvised explosive devices and an exponential increase in suicide bombings. In this regard, Pakistani efforts to contain and reduce militancy in the tribal areas appear to have been unsuccessful; indeed, a consensus has emerged that the Taliban's establishment of a "robust sanctuary" in the FATA has been a critical factor in their resurgence. While we share the Administration's objective of developing a long-term strategic partnership with Pakistan, the Congress cannot be expected to tolerate the persistence of a safe haven for the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan.
- 11) Supporting the terrorist rewards program reform that has passed the House on several occasions and would permit expanded payments of rewards in circumstances (now prohibited) relevant to the hunt for the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and other ACM leaders in remote areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 12) Instituting a vigorous anti-opium PR campaign to all of the people of Afghanistan, using the Koran's anti-intoxicant message, through local media, religious and tribal leaders, and from the top down of the Afghan government.
- 13) Helping develop and facilitate trade promotion and increased trade building capacity for existing Afghan products and industries abroad in order to increase exports and quickly create legitimate livelihoods in place of illicit opium farming and production today.

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- 14) Convincing our European allies, to whom much of Afghan heroin is now directed, to allow easy access to their markets for legitimate Afghan products and goods, as America does for cocaine-producing Andean nations in our own hemisphere.
- 15) Implementing any recommendations of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) study that the Committee initiated on the Afghan heroin flow into Iraq—upon receipt of the final report—to stem trafficking that may aggravate insecurity in Iraq.
- 16) Expediting and moving forward on the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) research plan on possible safe, tested use of mycoherbicides to help eliminate the massive opium crop in Afghanistan, without any damage to the environment or humans, as mandated in the recently passed ONDCP authorization bill. This R & D-first effort should be fast tracked.

Together, let us provide leadership in tackling the growing threat of narco-terrorism in Afghanistan, addressing the Pakistan safe haven problem, and developing a unified CN plan and strategy with our NATO allies to ensure the survival of Afghanistan's new democracy, democratic institutions, and opportunities, free of corrosive threats.

We will try to enact some of these measures into law, where appropriate, and would appreciate your support for such efforts. Many other suggestions can be implemented by the Administration on its own initiative now.

If your staffs need additional information on these or other initiatives, they can call our Ranking Republican Investigative Counsel, Mr. John Mackey, at (202) 226-8467.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Ranking Republican Member
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

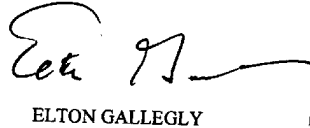


MIKE PENCE
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on the
Middle East and South Asia

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DANA ROHRABACHER
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on International
Organizations, Human Rights and
Oversight



ELTON GALLEGLY
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on Europe

