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COUNTERING THE THREAT OF FAILURE IN AFGHANISTAN

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COUNTERING THE THREAT OF FAILURE IN AFGHANISTAN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Feingold, Casey, Webb, Shaheen, Kaufman, Lugar, Corker, Isakson, Barasso, and Wicker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order.

Let me explain to folks that originally this hearing had been set for 10 o'clock today. It is our hope that somewhere around 10 o'clock we will have a quorum so that the Foreign Relations Committee can conduct its business meeting. We have some nominations business to report out. So, I hope colleagues, and their staffs particularly, can ensure that if we aim for 10 o'clock, it can be a very, very minimalist requirement on everybody's time.

Meanwhile, we will go into the substance of today's hearing; the second in a series of hearings that we're going to have with respect to Afghanistan. Yesterday was the first hearing. We heard three compelling cases, each of them making strong arguments, individually, for how America should proceed. And the prescriptions ranged from dramatically reducing the footprint to expanding our commitment of troops and money to a level that would basically constitute pretty significant nation-building.

John Nagl, a coauthor of the military's counterinsurgency manual—who worked very closely with General Petraeus—argued that victory could require as many as—according to the Field Manual for standard counterinsurgency operations—600,000 troops and a commitment of at least 5 years. The bulk of those troops—up to 400,000—would eventually be Afghan. But, it was clear, and stated, that United States forces would be needed for years as trainers, as combat mentors, in order to fill the security gap before the Afghans were able to take over.

Stephen Biddle argued that the benefits of a stepped-up counterinsurgency campaign outweighed the costs, but that it was a very close call. He acknowledged both the need for more troops and the genuine possibility of failure, even if we do up the ante. In his view, there could be no effective counterterrorism without an effec-

tive counterinsurgency. And he agreed with Dr. Nagl about the need for significant United States military involvement in Afghanistan to help prevent the destabilization of the country—of Pakistan.

Finally, Rory Stewart challenged key assumptions of the administration's policy. Instead of escalation, he recommended that we maintain a small counterterrorism capacity to deny a safe haven to al-Qaeda, and continue providing development aid on a low-key, but long-term, basis. He argued that we need not physically block al-Qaeda from returning to Afghanistan, we just have to keep Afghanistan from providing al-Qaeda with conditions of security and operational ease that they couldn't get in Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, or elsewhere. He argued that Pakistan would stand or fall on its own, regardless of events across the border.

Listening to these distinguished experts argue their cases, and listening to the important and, I think, very penetrating questions of my colleagues, it was obvious that there are fundamental disagreements that need to be resolved in order to try to build a consensus around a policy for going forward in Afghanistan. Despite the differences, I believe there are some central truths on which we can all agree.

First, we need a winning civilian strategy. I've said repeatedly that we will not force the surrender of the Taliban by military force alone. Therefore, any strategy that lacks a strong civilian component is doomed.

Second, our greatest national priority here is to ensure that Afghanistan does not destabilize Pakistan. As we debate how to succeed in Afghanistan, we must evaluate the impact of every decision on our beleaguered allies in Islamabad.

But, history tells us that the challenge is not only from the East. Afghanistan shares a 1,300-mile northern border with Central Asian countries that have suffered from instability themselves. Iran and Russia have also—have vested interests in Afghanistan. Unless we find common ground with them, I would think that we will continue competing instead of cooperating.

Third, we need to counter the growing narcotics problem. As we described in a committee report released last month, senior military and civilian officials believe it will be extremely difficult to defeat the Taliban and establish good government without disrupting Afghanistan's opium trade. Afghanistan supplies more than 90 percent of the world's heroin and generates about $3 billion a year in profits; money that helps to finance the Taliban and other militant groups.

We need to be realistic and pragmatic. Unlike Iraq, Afghanistan is not a "reconstruction" project. It is a "construction" project in one of the poorest and most corrupt countries in the world. We have to come up with concrete goals, and be clear about what and how much we are prepared to do to achieve them.

I might add, there may well be a fourth thing on which we can agree, and that is that the problem of governance may even be in fact, more serious than the challenge of the Taliban. And many people suggest, and I'm not sure it isn't now becoming more clear, that the absence of governance, the inadequacy of governance, the corruption of the governance in Afghanistan is perhaps one of the

most demoralizing and defeating components of what may drive some people to the Taliban or elsewhere. And that is something we need to address.

Today, we welcome four witnesses who will take us deeper into this debate by sharing their ideas for what should change on the ground in order to succeed in Afghanistan. I might say three of them have traveled a very long distance, and we are very, very appreciative. Dr.—the Honorable Ambassador Ryan Crocker flew from the west coast to be here just for this. And General Craddock drove all the way up from North Carolina to be here. And I'm not sure of everybody else's travel arrangements, but we're enormously appreciative for everybody being here.

We're going to hear from General Craddock first. He was the Supreme Allied Commander–Europe until a couple of months ago, when he retired from the Army. He will be followed by Ambassador Ryan Crocker, our former Ambassador to Iraq and Pakistan, and Chargé in Kabul. And there are probably very few people who have as much understanding and experience in this region and in these challenges as Ambassador Crocker. Ms. Clare Lockhart, the coauthor of "Fixing Failed States," and a former adviser to the Afghan Government, will discuss her recommendations for a successful civilian strategy. And finally, Dr. Khaled Hosseini, the well-known author of "The Kite Runner" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns," who has just returned from Afghanistan as U.N. Special Envoy for Refugee Issues.

And we're delighted that each of you could be here with us today. Thank you.

Senator Lugar.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Since President Obama's inauguration, his administration has taken a series of steps to reorder American foreign policy priorities. The President identified the war in Afghanistan as his administration's highest combat priority, and has thus shifted emphasis and resources from Iraq to Afghanistan and Operation Enduring Freedom. He argued that the United States effort in Afghanistan had been neglected in favor of our intervention in Iraq. President Obama made an important effort to sustain continuity of command and control of our Defense Department at the highest levels by retaining an effective and respected Secretary of Defense and promoting General Petraeus from Commander of United States forces in Iraq to Commander of Central Command, where he heads our military efforts across the region. Both men have identified civil-military coordination as essential for progress toward U.S. goals in the region.

At a more operational level, President Obama named Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. He leads our strategic engagement with the governments of the region while our able Ambassadors, Ann Patterson in Pakistan and Karl Eikenberry in Afghanistan, work tirelessly in carrying out their respective duties.

The U.S. diplomatic effort is joined in cause by ADM Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Beyond his responsibility for assuring the fitness and readiness of our fighting forces worldwide, he is closely engaged in the delicate and essential security discussions across South Asia. In his many visits to Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan Admiral Mullen has worked to forge a closer, more confident relationship between our Government and each of theirs. These leaders are seized of our commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and strengthening the foundations for stability. They, along with Secretary of State Clinton, National Security Advisor James Jones, and Vice President Biden, are together in the final stages of a crucial review of our strategies and policies in the region.

But, the President is the Commander in Chief and he is the one who will make the final choices from the options he is presented. It is widely hoped that he will produce a coherent operational strategy for United States engagement in Afghanistan. Such an integrated strategy has yet to be unveiled, despite the many high- and low-level reviews, and none has been described by the President with the force and conviction necessary to persuade the American people to endorse what will likely be a much longer, albeit necessary, commitment to achieve stability in the region.

As he formulates his new strategy, I strongly urge the President to make a concerted effort to work personally with the Congress, which will control the purse strings for our endeavors in the region. We in Congress have heard of general outlines of an approach to the region, highlighted by the President and his senior advisers in March of this year, namely that we intend to, "disrupt, dismantle, and defeat" al-Qaeda and their allies.

We have also received extensive requests and notifications, through several supplemental appropriations and the fiscal year 2010 budget requests, identifying billions of dollars in assistance and operations funding for Afghanistan and the region. But, many questions have arisen surrounding troop levels, civilian force levels, and contractor roles and behavior. And considering the important role of development for the region, I'm troubled that there is still no USAID administrator. As a member of both this committee and the Agriculture Committee, I'm concerned about reports that $170 million in USAID money will be transferred to the Department of Agriculture to develop an expeditionary agricultural development capacity for Afghanistan. This, I believe, is normally the job of USAID.

For the moment, the committee has been informed that General McChrystal's suggestions for a future strategy and tactics are being studied in the administration. We are led to believe that after the administration has studied the McChrystal report for an indefinite period of time, the General may suggest appropriate troop levels for the United States and our NATO allies necessary to achieve the administration's final decision on objectives.

The committee hearings this week offered the administration an opportunity to explain the challenges and difficult decisions to be made after nearly a year of study. Invitations were issued, but they were declined. Thus, we have turned today to key actors and former officials experienced in government, war zones, Afghani-

stan, and the region, to provide their insight and recommendations. We are deeply grateful they have accepted our invitation to present timely information to our committee and to all Americans in an extensively covered public forum. I hope that the administration will soon decide on the time for its views to reach the American people.

In any event, it is critical that the full force and voice of the President lead the discussion around this national strategic priority with so many American lives and hundreds of billions of dollars at stake. Only he can lay the foundation that will gain the confidence of Congress and our soldiers, development experts, diplomats, and partners.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar.

We're going to begin with General Craddock and run right across the table. So, General, if you would be good enough—your full testimonies will be placed in the record as if read in full, so if you could summarize in approximately 5 minutes or so, it would be helpful, and then we could have more time for discussion.

STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN CRADDOCK, U.S. ARMY (RET.), FORMER SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER–EUROPE, MYRTLE BEACH, SC

General CRADDOCK. Chairman Kerry, Ranking Member Lugar——

The CHAIRMAN. Let me just comment, we need five more Senators, if we can get them here, for the quorum, and we'll be in good shape.

Thank you, General.

General CRADDOCK. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I think the focus of this hearing—Afghanistan—is important, timely, and essential. As I've been requested to provide insight on the counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan, I will focus my short opening remarks in that area.

Before exploring the counternarcotics challenge, I would like to emphasize that the NATO commitment to Afghanistan, as an alliance, is strong. I would also point out that the commitment differs among individual NATO members. Continued U.S. leadership in this mission is essential to both deepen the level of support of NATO and to ensure continued participation of all alliance members.

With regard to the issue of counternarcotics in Afghanistan, may I preface my comments and responses to your later questions with the understanding that my perspective is from my last assignment on Active Duty with the United States Armed Forces, that of the Supreme Allied Commander–Europe: a NATO perspective.

In October 2006, NATO assumed responsibility for the security for the entire country of Afghanistan. The authority to do so was provided to the Supreme Allied Commander by the North Atlantic Council. The means of granting that authority was through the Council's approval of the NATO military operations plan for Afghanistan. The strategic operations plan contains specific instructions, to all subordinate commands responsible for conducting operations in Afghanistan, concerning counternarcotics operations.

Specifically, NATO forces were not to conduct counternarcotics operations or activities, to include eradication of poppy crops. What was permitted was support to the Afghan counternarcotics forces. Support in terms of information, intelligence, logistic support, and, if required, in extremis support and medical support for Afghan counternarcotics forces, all upon request by those forces.

In February 2007, the current intelligence assessments, discussions with Afghan authorities, and consultations with United Kingdom and United States counternarcotics authorities all combined to establish a strong link between the narcotics traffickers and the Afghan insurgents, particularly the Taliban. A growing body of evidence indicated that much of the funding of the Taliban insurgency was being generated by the narcotics industry in Afghanistan. U.N. experts estimated upward of $200 million narcodollars going into insurgent coffers. It was at that point, as the strategic commander, I began to urge for the approval of additional authorities for NATO forces in Afghanistan to conduct operations against both narcotics facilities and facilitators. Our assessment was that reducing the money available to the insurgents would make it more difficult for them to hire soldiers, pay bomb and improvised explosive device—the IED makers, and buy weapons and materiel. All were essential in reducing the level of violence and providing enhanced security. And it was not until November 2008, some 18 months later, that NATO, via a defense ministerial meeting, approved these additional authorities. The ministers concluded, the preponderance of evidence to that date supported the assessments that the narcotraffickers were providing support to the insurgency. Subsequent guidance and orders were issued, and NATO forces began using these expanded authorities. As of mid-June this year, some 25 counternarcotics operations have been conducted, either by NATO forces alone or in conjunction with Afghan counternarcotics forces, with favorable results.

Many processing facilities, the laboratories, have been destroyed, precursor material confiscated and destroyed, opium paste and refined heroin confiscated, and personnel apprehended.

While much has been accomplished, much more remains to be done.

First and foremost, NATO ISAF forces must continue to conduct operations against the facilities and the facilitators, not only to reduce the money available to the insurgents, but also with the secondary effect of reducing the level of corruption countrywide.

Second, NATO and NATO Member Nations, on a bilateral basis, must continue to partner and support the development of the Afghan security and counternarcotics forces. The end state for this effort are fully competent, capable Afghan security forces that minimize the impact of narcotics on the Afghan society.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to appear before this committee, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Craddock follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN CRADDOCK, U.S. ARMY (RET.), FORMER SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER–EUROPE, MYRTLE BEACH, VA

Chairman, ranking member, may I first thank you for the opportunity to appear before you here today. The focus of this hearing—Afghanistan—is important, timely,

and essential. As I have been requested to provide insight on the counternarcotics (CN) efforts in Afghanistan, I will focus my short opening remarks in that area.

Before exploring the counternarotics challenge, I want to emphasize that the NATO commitment to Afghanistan—as an alliance—is strong. I would also point out that the commitment differs among individual NATO members. Continued U.S. leadership in this mission is essential to both deepen the level of support and to ensure continued participation of all alliance members.

Wth regard to the issue of counternarcotics in Afghanistan, I must preface my comments and responses to your later questions, with the understanding that my perspective is from my last assignment on active duty with the United States Armed Forces—that of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. In that capacity, I was the commander of all NATO operational forces including those in Afghanistan. Therefore, my observations and assessments will be from a NATO perspective.

In October 2006, NATO assumed responsbility for security for the entire country of Afghanistan. The authority to do so was provided to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, by the North Atlantic Council. The means of granting this authority was through the NAC's approval of the NATO military operations plan for Afghanistan.

The strategic operations plan contained specific instructions to all subordinate commands responsible for conducting operations in Afghanistan concerning counternarcotics operations. Specifically, NATO forces were not to conduct conternarcotics operations or activities—to include eradication of poppy crops. What was permitted was support to Afghan counternarcotics forces. Wthin means and capabilities, NATO forces could provide information and intelligence on narcotics activities to Afghan CN forces, they could provide transportation and logistical support, they could provide operations planning support, and they could provide in extremis and medical support—all upon request by the Afghan counternarcotics forces.

In February 2007, the current intelligence assessments, discussions with Afghan authorities, and consultations with United Kingdom and United States counternarcotics authorities—all combined to establish a strong link between the narcotics traffickers and Afghan insurgents—particularly the Taliban. A growing body of evidence indicated that much of the funding for the Taliban insurgency was being generated by the narcotics industry in Afghanistan—all the way from the poppy farmer to the movement of refined heroin through and out of the country. United Nations experts estimated upward of $200 million narcodollars going into insurgent coffers. It was at that point, as the strategic commander, I began to urge for the approval of additional authorites for NATO forces in Afghanstan to conduct operations against both narcotics facilities and facilitators. Our assessment was that reducing money available to the insurgents would make it more difficult for them to hire soldiers, pay bomb and improvised explosive device (ied) -makers, and buy weapons and materiel—all essential in reducing the level of violence and providing enhanced security.

It was not until November 2008—some 18 months later—that NATO, via a defense ministerial meeting, approved these additional authorities. The ministers concluded that the preponderence of evidence to that date supported the assessment that the narcotraffickers were providing material support to the insurgency—and that based on the original operations plan which directed action by NATO forces against the insurgents and those who supported it—adequate authority was provided without any revision or amendment to the existing plan.

Subsequent guidance and orders were issued over the following 2 months and by early spring of this year, NATO forces began using these expanded authorities. As of mid-June, some 25 counternarcotics operations had been conducted either by NATO forces alone or in conjunction with Afghan counternarcotics forces with significantly favorable results. Many processing facilities (labs) have been destroyed, precursor materiel confiscated and destroyed, opium paste and refined heroin confiscated, and personnel apprehended.

While much has been accomplished, much more remains to be done. First and foremost, NATO/ISAF must continue to conduct operations against the facilities and the facilitators—not only to reduce money available to the insurgents—but also with the secondary effect of reducing the level of corruption countrywide. Second, NATO and NATO Member Nations, on a bilateral basis, must continue to partner and support the development of the Afghan security and counternarcotics forces. The end state for this effort are fully competent, capable Afghan security forces that minimize the impact of narcotics on the Afghan society.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General Craddock.

Ambassador Crocker.

STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN CROCKER, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ AND PAKISTAN, U.S. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES TO AFGHANISTAN, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, SPOKANE, WA

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee.

It's an honor to be before you today. I have had that honor a number of occasions in the past as a witness for the administration. Today is the first time I can honestly say that in addition to it being an honor, it's also a pleasure. [Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman, Afghanistan is a critical national security interest for the United States, for the region, and for the international community. General Craddock has addressed some of the NATO perspective. I would comment briefly on a regional perspective, focusing particularly on Pakistan, where I was Ambassador from 2004 to 2007, and Iran, where I was involved in direct discussions with the Iranians on Afghanistan, from 2001 to 2003.

Mr. Chairman, as you know so well, our relationship with Pakistan is vital for our Nation's national security, as well as for stability in Afghanistan. We were closely allied with Pakistan in the effort to force the Soviets out of Afghanistan in the 1980s, but once the Soviets were out, so were we, and Pakistan went from being the most allied of allies, to being a sanctioned pariah. After 9/11, we are back. Pakistanis welcome that renewed engagement, but they ask, again, "For how long?"

We have an urgent need to build a stable, sustained relationship with Pakistan. And, Mr. Chairman, you, Senator Lugar, and this committee have shown the way, through your sponsorship of the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act. It's precisely the type of long-term undertaking both our nations need.

Pakistan today faces an interrelated set of insurgencies. Kashmiri militants to the east, al-Qaeda and Taliban to the west, and an internal insurgency that targets Pakistan's principal cities. It can be argued that much of this insurgency is of Pakistan's own making. But there is also a Pakistani narrative that says, in the case of support for the Taliban, they had no choice, after we withdrew in the 1990s.

Mr. Chairman, during my time in Pakistan, I came to know a large number of mainstream political figures and senior military officers. None of them share the Taliban's vision for Pakistan and Afghanistan, yet many remain uncertain over the long-term prospects for our relationship. We need to learn from our past experience, and build for a better future; and your legislation, Mr. Chairman, shows us all the way.

Afghanistan's western neighbor, Iran, poses a very different set of challenges. The multiple differences between the United States and Iran need no elaboration from me. On Afghanistan, however, we have at times found room for cooperation. In the wake of 9/11, when I sat down with Iranians under U.N. auspices, I found them fully supportive of United States military action to bring down the Taliban. United States-Iranian agreement on the Afghan interim authority was at the core of the success of the U.N.-sponsored Bonn Conference. And after I reopened our Embassy in Kabul in January 2002, we discussed with the Iranians, again under U.N. auspices,

ways to strengthen the interim administration and to reduce the power of warlords.

The Iranians hedged their bets, however, also providing sanctuary for al-Qaeda figures later implicated in attacks in the Arabian Peninsula that brought to an effective end that dialogue with Iran.

Mr. Chairman, the administration has stated its willingness to engage in a dialogue with the Iranians. I think this is a positive step. I certainly support it. And I hope Afghanistan will be on the agenda, that the Iranians will take a strategic look at their own interests, because I think those interests also lie in a stable Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, I would offer just a couple of thoughts based on my experience in Iraq. And one must be careful, as you note, not to draw too many parallels. Construction in Afghanistan, reconstruction in Iraq, I think, is a very good point. It is going to be very hard in Afghanistan. That does not mean hopeless. We have some very fine people in the fight. General McChrystal, Ambassador Eikenberry in Afghanistan, Ambassador Patterson in Pakistan, and my old comrade from Baghdad, General Petraeus, now overseeing both wars, I think, can give all Americans confidence that the right people are in the right place.

It is the President, as Senator Lugar said, who must show the way. When he does, I hope that this committee and counterparts in the Senate and the House will seek from my former colleagues that irreplaceable perspective which is the view from the field.

The stakes are very high, indeed, in Afghanistan, and, Mr. Chairman, I think all of us in America are indebted to you and the committee for helping us illuminate these issues.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Crocker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN C. CROCKER, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ AND PAKISTAN, U.S. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES TO AFGHANISTAN, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, SPOKANE, WA

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, thank you for the honor of appearing before you today. Afghanistan is a critical issue for America's national security. Eight years ago this week, we paid a horrific price for allowing a strategic enemy the freedom to operate in Afghanistan. We are engaged against the same enemy today in the same area. That enemy is hoping that our patience will wear thin, that we will decide the cost is too high, that we will give them back the space they lost after 9/11. Mr. Chairman, that must not happen.

Al-Qaeda and its Taliban supporters are a threat not to the United States alone but to the region and the entire international community, as the sad record of their terrorist attacks makes all too clear. It is a threat that requires an international and a regional response. General Craddock is addressing the NATO perspective. On the basis of my experience as Ambassador to Pakistan from 2004 to 2007 and my involvement in discussions with the Iranians on Afghanistan from 2001 to 2003, I offer a few thoughts on the regional environment.

Mr. Chairman, our relationship with Pakistan is vital for our own national security and for stability in Afghanistan. We understood this clearly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Our efforts against the Soviet occupation were largely staged from Pakistan. But once the Soviets were out so were we, and Pakistan went almost overnight from our most allied of allies to a sanctioned pariah. After 9/11, we were back and major military and economic assistance programs were resumed. Pakistanis welcome our reengagement. They also wonder how long we will be around this time. We need a long-term, stable relationship with Pakistan, one in which both nations and peoples can have confidence. Such a relationship can only be built up over time, overcoming past suspicions and mistrust on both sides.

Mr. Chairman, you, Senator Lugar, and this committee have shown us all the way forward through your sponsorship of the Enhanced Relationship with Pakistan Act. This is precisely the type of long-term undertaking we both so badly need.

Mr. Chairman, Pakistan today faces a triple set of interrelated insurgencies: Kashmiri militants to the east; the Taliban, its supporters and the al-Qaeda terrorists it shelters to the west; and an internal militancy that strikes at the heart of Pakistan's principal cities. Some of this militancy is of Pakistan's own making. In the Pakistani narrative, some of it, like Pakistani support for the Taliban in the 1990s, grew from a lack of other options based on our estrangement. The history of that estrangement, and fear of its repetition, drives some in Pakistan to continue to hedge their bets.

Mr. Chairman, during my time in Pakistan I came to know a large number of mainstream politicians and senior military officers. None of them share the Taliban's vision for Afghanistan or Pakistan. Yet many remain uncertain over the long-term prospects for our relationship. We need to learn from our past experience and build for a better future. Your legislation, Mr. Chairman, charts the course.

Afghanistan's western neighbor, Iran, presents a very different set of challenges. The multiple and profound differences between the United States and the Islamic Republic need no elaboration from me. On Afghanistan, however, we have at times found room for cooperation. The Taliban in Afghanistan was an enemy to both of us—Iran almost went to war with the Taliban-led Afghan Government in 1999. In the wake of 9/11, I found Iranian negotiators fully supportive of U.S. military action to bring down the Taliban. United States-Iranian agreement on the Afghan Interim Authority was at the core of the success of the U.N.-sponsored Bonn Conference on Afghanistan in December 2001. And after I reopened our Embassy in Kabul in January 2002, we discussed with the Iranians ways to strengthen the interim administration, to reduce the power of the warlords, the handover of al-Qaeda operatives, and even coordination of assistance projects. But the Iranians hedged their bets, also providing sanctuary and support for al-Qaeda terrorists who were later linked to lethal attacks in the Arabian Peninsula, actions that effectively ended our 18-month dialogue.

Mr. Chairman, the Obama administration has stated its willingness to engage in talks with the Iranians. The Iranians have signaled a positive response. I support this initiative, and believe it offers an opportunity to reengage with Iran on Afghanistan. Iranian support for the Taliban, its existential enemy, is purely tactical, a weapon in their confrontation with us. A renewed dialogue on Afghanistan could afford Tehran the opportunity to think strategically on an issue of great importance to its own long-term national security.

Mr. Chairman, I am no expert on Russia or Central Asia. But these states, too, play an important role in Afghanistan. The previous and current administrations have worked to foster trade and communication links between Afghanistan and the former Soviet Republics. It is important these efforts continue, and it is important that Afghanistan continue to be a part of our dialogue with Russia. We have no desire to repeat the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. Neither is there anything in our current effort in Afghanistan that is inimical to Russian interests. To the contrary, the defeat of an Islamic militancy close to Russia's borders should be very much in Moscow's interests.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion I offer a few thoughts based on my experience in Iraq from 2007 to 2009. One must be very careful in attempting to draw connections. They are very different countries with different histories. Iraq is largely urban; Afghanistan predominantly rural. In many respects, the challenge in Afghanistan is even greater than in Iraq. Thirty years of conflict have devastated an already poor country, leaving few services, virtually no middle class and no functioning state institutions. But hard does not mean hopeless, neither in Afghanistan nor in Iraq. Where I do see similarities is in how the United States approaches the challenges. We cannot get to the end in either fight on half a tank of gas. In Iraq, we went all in, and it made a difference. The President must lead. We have our finest people in the fight—General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry in Afghanistan, Ambassador Patterson in Pakistan. General Petraeus, my comrade in Baghdad, now oversees both wars and there is simply no one in uniform more qualified to do so. Under their charge are the thousands of committed Americans, military and civilian who are putting their lives on the line. But it is the President who must make the commitment and show the way. When he does, I hope that this committee and counterparts in the Senate and the House will seek from my former colleague that irreplaceable perspective, the view from the field.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for the privilege of testifying on this critical issue. The American people have consistently shown a willingness to make great sacrifices when they understand the stakes and have confidence in their leadership.

The stakes are very high indeed in Afghanistan, and all of us are indebted to you and the committee for illuminating the issues.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

I don't think I did justice, in introducing you, to the outstanding service that you provided us in Iraq and in Pakistan and through your career, and we are very, very grateful. I know how much value two Presidents had in your advice, and we're very grateful to you.

Ms. Lockhart.

We—I think we have two Senators?

VOICE: Two more, one's on the way.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. We're two Senators away from an interruption.

STATEMENT OF CLARE LOCKHART, COFOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF STATE EFFECTIVENESS, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. LOCKHART. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to address you.

There is now an emerging recognition that there is no purely military resolution to the situation in Afghanistan, and that governance and development are as, if not more, important tools. I believe that the establishment of Afghan sovereignty, by which I mean enabling Afghans to exercise self-rule through Afghan institutions that can provide their own security, governance, and revenue-raising capability, provides the framework that we need. And it will provide, first, a means of stabilizing Afghanistan and critically denying space for the Taliban, who, as Senator Kerry recognized, derive their strength primarily from the weakness of Afghan institutions.

Second, it provides basis for an exit—an honorable exit—for American forces and presence on the ground, or a transition strategy, if we don't want to call it an "exit strategy."

And third, it demonstrates to the Afghan population that the United States and allied presence is not an occupation. It's not an occupation at all, nor is it open-ended occupation.

The military have now articulated a clear strategy for building up the Afghan security forces and protecting the population. And I believe we now need a similar articulation of a strategy for governance and development that matches the one the military's put forward in rigor and detail.

First, I'd like to reflect on the mistakes made. I think that over the last years we have not had a clear strategy for the civilian component—for governance and development. Afghan institutions have been catastrophically underresourced. When I was on the ground in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2005, the first Afghan budget for a civil service that had 240,000 civil servants in 2002, was resourced to the level of $20 million. And this was enough to pay fuel for a month, but not to pay the doctors, teachers, and policemen, even salaries of $50 a month.

And much activity from the aid system has been counterproductive. The provision of billions of dollars, with very little accountability, particularly to U.N. agencies and NGOs—not underestimating some of the great work that many U.N. agencies have

done—and from the perspective of an Afghan citizen with no hope for a job or an education, there has been little outlet but to join the narcotics industry or sign up with the Taliban, in many parts of the country.

Moving forward, I think the first question to address is, What does good-enough—or appropriate—governance look like? The first component is certainly security; building up the Afghan National Army, the police force, the Afghan intelligence services, and justice institutions, law enforcement institutions.

But, security institutions alone won't make an Afghan Government capable of exercising authority and maintaining stability in the country. This will allow the drawdown. It requires, in my view, three other components. The first of these is rule of law; the decisionmaking institutions across the Cabinet and across the levels of Afghan governance—the capital city Kabul, but at province level, district level, municipalities and villages.

The second component is public finance. We hear a lot about corruption, and I think we need to take a clearheaded look at the other side of that coin. How do we build the systems of accountability in revenue-raising and public expenditure that will allow Afghanistan to raise its own revenue and expend its own resources on its institutions for the decades to come?

And the third component is basic services. And we're not talking, here, about a Valhalla or a Switzerland, but the basic services at the village level, in irrigation, to allow for agriculture, livelihoods, health, and education that will allow Afghans to live lives with dignity. And this will require investment in education. Another critical lacuna has been only to educate Afghans up to the age of 11; and if one only educates up to the age of 11, we're not going to have a civil service or a market economy capable of being self-sufficient.

I think we have grounds for optimism. I question the myth of Afghanistan as an inherently corrupt culture full of warlords. There is an Afghan demand for rule of law rooted in their culture. There was a reasonable standard of governance in the middle decades of the 20th century. When I arrived in Kabul, there were 240,000 civil servants in place across the country, administering the country fairly well. I think the culture of corruption has been one that's been allowed to fester in recent decades, but is not of the culture.

And finally, there was a series of successes between 2001 and 2005, where a political framework, articulated through Bonn, allowed for a number of governance initiatives to be successful; most notably, the creation of the Afghan National Army from scratch and a number of national programs, including the National Solidarity Program that saw block grants issued to every village in the country, now across 23,000 villages, that allows villages to maintain their own affairs.

I think we also have grounds for pessimism. There is a legacy of decades of war and a lost generation. And corruption was allowed to set in at the heart of government institutions. Back in 2004, the group of us who were assisting the government realized that it was probably inevitable in those circumstancs that this corruption would continue to fester and allow the country to fall back to the

Taliban. I don't think this was inevitable, had a different approach been taken, and I don't think it's too late to put it right.

I'll conclude with some short reflections on the emerging strategy. I think we can be encouraged to see that there is a strategy emerging from Kabul under the leadership of Ambassador Eikenberry and his excellent team, and in coordination with General McChrystal, to put in place a strategy that will support the creation of the adequate and necessary Afghan institutions. And I think this is balanced with understanding that we can't just focus on state institutions, we must also allow the space for Afghan civil society to hold that government accountable and invest in market institutions to create, in the short term, jobs that will pull people away from illicit activities and, over the medium term, lay the basis for an economy that will make Afghanistan self-sufficient.

And I think we face two immediate challenges. Very sadly, the elections recently held did not renew the governance settlement in the country. And this is tragic, I think, because it was avoidable. And I do think some questions need to be asked of the way that the election was managed by the U.N., so that those mistakes can be avoided in future in Afghanistan and in other countries.

But, we now face a paradox, because the COIN strategy requires there to be a host-nation government with a vision that the people can sign up to, and that government is not yet in place. I think we have different options for how a government that is good enough can be put in place. And once that political settlement is in place that will allow for the process of reconciliation with groups across the country, then I think the second key need is to articulate the governance and development strategy that is necessary. It is possible to put it into place, and then it must be resourced with the adequate resources that have been so sorely missing the last few years.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lockhart follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CLARE LOCKHART, COFOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, THE INSTITUTE FOR STATE EFFECTIVENESS, WASHINGTON, DC

INTRODUCTION

The central foundation for stabilizing Afghanistan is the restoration of Afghan sovereignty. The current imperative is to identify a framework and process to rebuild the legitimacy and credibility of Afghanistan's institutions so that Afghans can govern themselves, maintain security, and raise their own licit revenue. This will in turn provide a viable exit strategy for foreign forces and allow for lessening dependence on financial support. Exiting responsibly depends on the increase in capability of both Afghan security forces and public finance institutions. Credible governance is also the means by which the Taliban will be reduced and eliminated, as it is widely agreed that it is the vacuum of governance that provides their space of operation.

Governance is currently in crisis in Afghanistan. A combination of two decades of war, followed by international actors' lack of focus and unquestioning support have allowed corruption and the illegitimate economy to expand unchecked. The elections have not produced a legitimate winner, and rather have laid open to global public scrutiny the flaws in the conduct of elections and the organization of governance in general. It is not Afghan governance alone that is to blame. To date, much international activity and assistance has been misdirected and even counterproductive, often undermining rather than working to build up Afghan capability and sovereignty. Now that the key problems of governance by both Afghan leaders and their international partners are widely recognized, we have one final and pre-

cious opportunity to address the fundamental issues of how to restore Afghan sovereignty.

There is now the making of a good civil-military strategy on the ground. It is clear that the new administration, across military and diplomatic arenas, recognizes the depths of the problem and has identified what needs to be done. The new plans emerging from the field articulate exactly the type of actions and approaches that have been sorely missing to date to achieve stabilization. The type of initiatives that the Bonn team never saw resourced in 2001 to 2005 are now finally being supported. Realizing their objectives now requires a clear step-by-step plan for operationalizing these goals, and making a set of realistic targets clear to Congress and the American public.

Recognizing that development and governance are key foci means almost a reversal of what we have done in previous years. Whereas our large civilian institutions have been geared toward replacing native capacity, they now must be turned toward building it; the civilian actors require the same internal reflections and overhaul of instruments and policies that the military has undertaken, having arrived at the reformed counterinsurgency doctrines through much loss of life and treasure. I will focus on what standards of governance and development are realistic to aim for, the mistakes that we must learn from, and some suggestions for moving forward.

There has been much discussion about what will qualify as the United States reaching its strategic objectives. Denying al-Qaeda sanctuaries is a clear goal, but the question of how that is done remains. To do so will require an Afghan Government that is functional and legitimate enough to be able to hold the country together as the United States drawsdown, as it eventually must. I propose as a starting point, that a criterion for success could be that momentum is turned decisively against the Taliban, by use of military force, economic development, building of civilian institutions, and by strengthening the Afghan National Security Forces to the point where they can hold their own against the insurgents. We do not need a perfect Afghan Government; just one that is stable enough. Leaving behind a failing or failed state will certainly lead to civil war and probable eventual Taliban victory. Given what has happened in this last election, the goal of an effective Afghan state may seem a tall order, but I remain convinced it can be done.

It should be stressed that billions of dollars have been wasted on futile and ineffective measures, and that one cannot judge state-building in the future by what has happened in the past. Real focus on letting Afghans do the work of building their own future, except for some sputtering and inconsistently supported efforts, has only just begun. Stereotyping Afghans as somehow incapable of living in a modern state is only an excuse for our previous, misdirected policies. The Afghans I know are proud, practical people who, despite all their frustrations, are still willing to give us a chance, and certainly desperately wish to avoid the fate of living either under an oligarchy of violent drug lords or the Taliban.

WHAT IS GOOD ENOUGH GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN?

There is a much-touted myth that justice and public administration are an elusive dream in Afghanistan, with corruption endemic to the country and its people. This narrow view overlooks four factors.

First, central to Afghan culture is an ancient appreciation of justice and fairness. The concept of the Circle of Justice emphasizes the need for a ruler to rule justly in order to raise revenue from citizens to pay for the army. Afghan villagers and townspeople I have met across the country complain bitterly about the repressive corruption that they insist is alien to their culture, which puts their families constantly at risk of kidnapping and intimidation.

Second, through much of the 20th century, Afghanistan had a reasonable standard of public administration. A manual from the 1950s shows Afghan professionals running schools, clinics, and road and irrigation projects. When I traveled across Afghanistan in January 2002, in most provinces there were functioning provincial offices, with trained civil servants successfully carrying out their work.

Third, to the extent that a culture of corruption has set in, this was in large part a result of empowering militia commanders with weapons and money to pursue the jihad and then failing to bring them into the fold of rule of law once the Russians withdrew, resulting in a massive assault on the country's peace, women, and assets throughout the 1990s. Warlords are not the product of Afghan traditional society, but rather, the product of the decimation of traditional Afghan tribal governance through Afghanistan's role as a proxy for struggle by foreign powers on its soil, and, more recently, by Afghanistan having being abandoned once the short-term security goals were achieved.

Between 2001 to 2004, there were a series of examples of success in building institutions in Afghanistan, led by Afghans in partnership with small teams of international experts. The word "partnership" must be emphasized, as all too often various international actors have simply imposed their own formulas upon Afghans. On the other hand, the cooperative efforts between Afghans and mentoring organizations, with the emphasis on empowering Afghans to take over their own future as soon as practicably possible, succeeded then and efforts like them can succeed now. These include efforts to build the Afghan National Army, the National Health Program, and the National Solidarity Program (NSP), which enabled the creation of Community Development Councils in 23,000 villages, and which now will expand to the remaining 9,000 villages, many in the southeast where security and lack of funding had prevented the expansion of the program. Other successful reforms during the 2001 to 2004 period included the public finance system and currency exchange which saw the creation and countrywide acceptance of a new currency in 4 months, the GSM telecoms licensing which created 7 million mobile phones and now more than $lbn (USD) in investment, and an infrastructure program that laid a template for reconnecting Afghan markets and people internally and regionally.

WHAT SHOULD WE BE AIMING FOR?

To say that Afghan governance is central to stability is not to argue for an impossible goal, whether Switzerland or Valhalla. Rather, it recognizes that the way that rule of law is enforced is critical to the daily lives of Afghans and whether they choose to live within, or challenge, the sitting authority. Naturally, our goals must be realistic and attainable. Choice in standards will depend on four factors: The type of Afghan leadership in place, the strength of U.S. commitment, the agreement reached with Afghan stakeholders regarding redlines and goals, and the choice in the toolbox employed for implementation. While a team of reformers might be able to achieve one set of goals even if the leadership is not committed to reform, there is the possibility of getting governance in certain areas right, especially if a tough approach to benchmarks and conditionalities is used and if the right instruments are implemented. To recognize that governance is central also means understanding that the most critical factor is not what we, as outsiders, do but how the Afghans are organized to govern themselves, even if financing, advice, and benchmarks from the United States and its allies are key.

It is important to start discussion from an understanding of how the Afghan state is actually set up and how it functions. At least for now, Afghanistan is a unitary state, with all provinces governed according to the same legal framework. A provincial and district education or health officer reports to Kabul through the line ministries, not to a local governor. Many efforts now take place without understanding the set of Afghan laws and organizations that already exist. Unless and until the Afghan Constitution and legal framework change, efforts should work within this framework of laws and procedures. A "light touch" form of governance is possible, where formal structures, including line ministries, can "mesh" with local and traditional networks and social organizations. The National Solidarity Program, which feeds block grants to the local level from the center, but lets the village organize themselves how they wish, is one such example. Networks of traditional birth attendants, hawala dealers, traders, ulema and teachers can all be mobilized or partnered with for different tasks.

What type of Afghan governance will permit the stabilization of the country and provide the foundation for allocation of troops and money to be drawn down? It is necessary to articulate an "exit strategy" to demonstrate to the American public that the effort is not open-ended and to the Afghan population that the presence is not an occupation. However, an exit strategy must not be conveyed as abandonment of the country to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. A "transition strategy" might be a more appropriate term.

The components of appropriate governance in Afghanistan can be roughly characterized by five pillars. The first pillar certainly is the provision of security, through the operation of Afghan Security Forces. This will involve expanding and strengthening the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Police Force; reforming the National Directorate of Security and Afghanistan's intelligence service; and provision of law enforcement through courts, judges, and prisons. Provision of security must be embedded within a concept of rule of law and justice, otherwise this can lead to a repressive regime, thus fueling the insurgency.

The second pillar is the creation of structures and processes to ensure fair and accountable decisionmaking within a framework of rule of law. The Constitution for Afghanistan agreed upon in 2003 provides a workable basis to build upon. However, much work needs to be done to improve the functioning of the Presidency and the

Cabinet, as well as to ensure appropriate selection criteria for the appointments in key personnel including mayors, governors, and district heads. A series of checks and balances from Parliament and civil society, particularly over revenue-raising and budget allocations, are also needed.

The third pillar is to build systems of accountability in public finance, across revenue and expenditure. Afghanistan will improve its ability to function when it can raise its own revenue and spend it justly and in a way that satisfies the population. Afghanistan has the potential for wealth, most notably with its mineral wealth documented in the recent U.S. Geological Survey. This, together with customs revenue as well as land and large taxpayer revenues would provide Afghanistan with revenue many times today's figures. Reaching the revenue potential will reduce the cost of intervention and act as a forcing function to grow the economy and create jobs. Currently, much of Afghanistan's revenue is leaking, either by not being collected or by being illegitimately collected. Licensing and procurement are areas where much corruption occurs and are areas where more robust systems of transparency and oversight could bring significant financial gains. Finally, ensuring that Afghanistan's budget resources—both from domestic revenue and from international donations—are well spent across the services the population so desperately need, is key to the stability and development of the country. The State Department's efforts to ensure more funding is spent through Afghan institutions is centrally important: Not only is it much more cost efficient, an Afghan teacher costing less than two hundredths of a foreign project worker, but only by using the system will it begin to function. The Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund contains a set of benchmarks and transparency and audit requirements that make the budget function like a dual key system. American funds should either be channeled through this vehicle, or another similar mechanism should be established directly with each line ministry. Already ARTF, through its leverage over the Afghan budget, has brought about major increases in transparency in the Ministry of Water and Power and in the Ministry of Education.

The fourth pillar is basic services for the Afghan population. Roughly, a village can reasonably expect five sets of services: Irrigation, that allows them to grow their crops and sustain their livelihoods; access to transportation (a road), to permit movement to the nearest town to access markets and health care; basic health and education; access to water for drinking, and electricity. Villages are capable of organizing many of these services themselves, and the National Solidarity Program was set up in 2002 as the vehicle to channel funding and technical support to the villages in order to support these efforts. This program allows the villages to choose, design and implement projects that suit their own needs. A set of National Programs which complement National Solidarity Program now need to be created and implemented—including those for agriculture, power, education and skills, and water. Each of these will set out a national framework of policy and a package of basic services for each district, to be implemented through the most efficient mechanism whether through local government, private sector or NGO. Existing National Programs currently function effectively, but all will need constant review and adjustment.

There is often debate about whether the "central government" can carry out the services discussed and whether decentralization is necessary. This is a false debate. The real question is for each function, who needs to do what and at which level, across the five levels of Afghan governance—capital, province, district, municipality, and village. For example, in health, the capital city will monitor disease and provide the large specialized hospitals, but every district requires its own hospital and villages will need basic clinics so that travel times can be reduced. This is especially necessary as Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for a woman to give birth, and much of this problem has its roots in the long distances that must be traveled. NSP can build the clinic building, but the Ministry of Public Health will have to provide the staff. Tightly coordinated ministerial actions are needed. In public finance, only the capital is authorized to issue money supply, but every province has a finance office to collect and distribute revenue. With National Solidarity Program, each village designs and manages its own project, but engineers are available at the district level and the accounts are kept at the capital level. In the original terminology, "national" means countrywide, not confined to the capital city.

To enable the Afghan civil service to carry out these functions, we will need to invest significant sums in education as this sector has been severely neglected. You cannot transition a handoff of governing authority if there is no professional class and no trained middle class. There is a crisis of education and training, owing to the lost generation of the 1980s and 1990s and the failure to invest in Afghan education and training post-2001. There is an urgent need for a properly resourced Civil

Service training school, with branches across the country. However, if basic education only reaches to age 11, it is just as important to ensure that the pipeline of education from age 11 up to professional age exists. It is just not possible to train a doctor, engineer or accountant without proper institutional resources. If sufficient skills are to be created to manage Afghanistan's civil service, private sector and civil society, we need an urgent inquiry into the degree to which Afghanistan's secondary and tertiary education and vocational training system is functioning and where the gaps are. I might mention finally that building up the ANSF, both ANP and ANA, requires the formation of officer classes, and so few are literate that this is an immediate bottleneck on our ability to put an Afghan face on security operations.

Last, building the state cannot be seen as the total solution. As in any society, the key is the balance between the state, market, and civil society institutions. Significant attention is required to nurture Afghanistan's market institutions, to help create the space for the vibrant civil society and public discussion that will hold the government accountable, and to allow for infusions of foreign and domestic capital and the building of sustainable economic growth.

THE EXTENT OF THE CHALLENGE

To express guarded optimism is not to underestimate the challenges in building governance. The legacy of three decades of war has left an entrenched set of actors and networks deeply embedded in flows of illicit trade. While there was considerable progress in building legitimacy and foundations for institutions after 2001, to such an extent that key powers could claim in 2005 that the country was stable and plan for troop withdrawals, after 2005, stability in Afghanistan began to decline. In 2004, a memo (the "Cairo memo") was discussed by the key ground representatives of the United States, the United Nations, and Afghanistan, detailing the growing factors of disorder and corruption in the governance arrangements that would lead to the revitalization of the Taliban and loss of trust of the Afghan people. This was primarily owing to the failure to adequately resource legitimate institutions. The memo documented how supporting the "reform team" to continue an agenda of institution-building would have required an urgent financial commitment of $200m and/or facilitating control of two border posts and their customs revenue to pass to the national treasury. As support for this agenda nor funds for it could be found, the reform team left office in 2005, recognizing that the internal systems of governance would most likely begin to collapse.

Back in 2002, during the preparation of Afghanistan's first post-Bonn budget, Afghanistan required a budget of $500m for the year to be able to pay its 240,000 civil servants (including doctors, teachers, and engineers) their basic salaries of $50 per month and to cover essential running costs. As the Treasury was empty, assistance was required. Unfortunately, donors initially committed only $20 million to the 2002 Afghan budget, meaning that Afghanistan's leaders could never in the 2002–2004 period meet the basic costs of sustaining services. At the same time, $1.7 billion was committed to an aid system to build parallel organizations, which ended up employing most of the same doctors and teachers as drivers, assistants, and translators to operate small projects at significant multiples of their former salaries. While some additional funds were later committed to the World Bank-run Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, this was never enough to sustain basic governance, and the civil service atrophied.

Rather than support the essential nationwide services and programs within a framework of rule of law and policy, donors launched thousands of small, badly coordinated projects. Billions of dollars were spent through the aid complex, resulting in little tangible change for most Afghan citizens. Their perception of aid projects was most vividly captured for me in a story told to me by villagers in a remote district of Bamiyan, who described their multimillion dollar project to provide wood to build homes literally going up in smoke.

The prescriptions of the "aid complex" not only bypassed, but actively undermined Afghan capability: For example, it was the aid donors who forbade any investment in the Afghan budget for education or training over the age of 11, citing the overriding imperative of investing in primary education. Similarly, a $60 million provincial and district governance program designed to restore policing and justice services was turned down for funding in 2002 on the basis that governance was not "poverty-reducing."

At the same time, regional strongmen were strengthened over the last 8 years. This was a way of "solving" the vacuum of power left by the exit of the Taliban, but this solution has led to the arbitrary exercise of authority, predation, and fantastic levels of corruption which, by preventing the government from functioning, have left an opening for every possible destabilizing element, from cartel members

to simple criminal gangs to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. A strategy for negotiating with them is necessary in order to bring them within the rule of law through a combination of sanctions, the application of justice, and incentives to cooperate with legitimate state and market activities.

Partly as a result of the underfunding of Afghan institutions, the failure to build a robust enough set of accountabilities for either the government or the aid system, the reempowerment of jihadi commanders to whom operations were farmed out, and the failure to set out a comprehensive water and agriculture policy to restore what the Russians destroyed, narcoinfluence and other forms of corruption set in at the heart of government institutions. This was most clearly manifested in the police, customs and the way that government assets were stripped, ranging from land and mines through to licenses for a range of the country's assets. It is no wonder that the two top concerns of Afghans all over the country are insecurity and corruption. Often they are more afraid of the police and the judiciary than they are of the Taliban.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE

The U.S. Embassy team on the ground under the leadership of Ambassador Eikenberry has moved rapidly to develop approaches and strategies to support good governance and deliver development. Under current plans, ministries will be held to standards with funds conditional upon performance, as was done successfully with Afghanistan's health program. Accountability systems are going into place. There are large-scale plans for the rapid delivery of basic services to cleared villages, through the National Area Based Development Program, which involves the cooperation of key ministries to get basic services down to the district level, and the National Solidarity Program, which gets basic means of life all the way to the village level. Delivery is planned in such a way that Afghans are actually asked what they want (and this is the most crucial change of all: Consultation is security) and are employed to build it. Participation of the populace and the building of civil society go hand in hand with economic aid. Employment is crucial, and the new model of assistance being put into place emphasizes keeping money flowing in the local economy, rather than exporting funds as subcontracting percentages to Washington and Brussels. If young Afghans have legitimate opportunities for employment, recruitment opportunities for the Taliban can be rapidly reduced. The very formation of competent village councils and the existence of district councils immediately allow opportunities for reconciliation. Once a new Afghan Government is in place and agreement can be reached on a roadmap for governance and development, it will be vital to finalize and resource these plans for governance and development.

A robust plan for building the capability of the Afghan National Army now exists. The same type of rigorous plan needs to exist for each of the other key ministries, including Finance, Education, Health, Water, Power, Agriculture and Mining. This does not mean that the United States needs to resource trainers or funding for each of these. On the contrary, for many of these ministries, resourcing should come from domestic Afghan revenue and only a small number of advisers will be necessary. However, if governance and development is to be taken seriously, it is necessary for each ministry, its laws, policies, personnel and organizational maps to be understood. All too often in the past, aid planning has completely bypassed these existing structures and built thousands of small projects in parallel, ignoring for example that there is already a health or education service in place that requires strengthening.

The key steps for supporting each function are first to understand the existing context, including the organization, and then to agree upon a plan for strengthening its capability with the relevant officials, whether through financing, technical expertise, or other resources. The concept of the "National Program" harnesses such inputs into actual delivery of services, so that accountability for outcomes is built into the system. As Afghans need to see results broadly, at scale, national programs allow for implementation at scale, rather than boutique projects that, while in certain cases desirable, will not have the impact in a short timeframe. This approach will allow for progressive "Afghanization," while making resourcing dependent on meeting standards of accountability, transparency, and delivery. The face that delivers development must be Afghan, even if actual delivery takes place from whoever can get things done. Planning must start from the outset for what and how will be handed over. This means train up and mentor, rather than build big operations that cannot be maintained.

Such plans for reconstruction and development can only work if the military provides security. Insecurity has now spread across much of the country and additional

forces will be required to protect the population. Accordingly, resourcing the military plans is central to the success of efforts in governance and development.

On the civilian side, changes in how aid is designed and spent are needed. The models of the National Health and Solidarity Programs should be generalized. Greater commitments to ARTF are needed, or adoption of a "ministry certification scheme" whereby funding to a ministry's national program can flow, dependent on certain standards being reached in phases. At the moment, there appears to be a greater focus on sending in consultants and experts, rather than focusing on how we can equip Afghans to make Afghan institutions self-sufficient. Our experience in designing national programs has shown that the most successful programs often involved thousands of Afghans but only a handful of foreign experts. It will be a considerable task for the United States to unite the thousands of fragmented aid agencies—many of which it finances—behind one coherent, rule-based, restructured delivery system.

Changes are required in the way that foreign assistance is delivered, but also in the leadership style and policies and priorities of the Afghan Government. It can be debated whether governance and development initiatives will succeed if there is not an Afghan Government in place that is sufficiently committed to serving its citizens and building its own capability. It is certainly evident that the more committed and competent the government leaders are, both at the top, and throughout the system, the more effective development and governance initiatives will be. Therefore, current discussions to form a new Afghan administration are critical. Use of strict conditionalities and benchmarks can help to incentivize this new administration and encouraging the new administration to include competent and honest leaders in key positions will be fundamental to the ability to make core government services work. Where there are reformers in place, allowing them the space to formulate and execute their own programs, rather than substituting for them, is desirable.

As described above, concrete plans are also required to grow the economy and create jobs, and to open the space for public discussion and civil society. Afghanistan does not have to be poor. It has an abundance of natural gas, lapis lazuli, copper, lime, and wonderful agricultural land along with some of the most plentiful water resources in the world. With the right system Afghanistan could become a net exporter of electricity. Building value chains and webs around key assets including agriculture, fruit and vegetable processing and livestock; mining and jewelry; textiles production; and urban services will create jobs and revenue. To support these activities, new instruments are required. OPIC has run a very successful program offering risk guarantees to investors. This program should be expanded. Other, similar, programs are required to provide small- and medium-sized loans, risk guarantees and insurance. We should also look to using bond financing, enterprise funds and other vehicles, in conjunction with careful examination as to how key assets and licenses should be allocated. A regional perspective for investment in key economic assets, including water, power, transportation and trade, could catalyze economic growth and build incentives for political cooperation.

WHO DOES WHAT?

A joint civil-military plan is needed to reflect these plans. The plan should be in the nature of a "sovereignty strategy" designed to restore Afghan institutional capability for each key function. The strategy should be negotiated with the new Afghan Government, and have clear commitments, benchmarks and redlines for the short and medium term. Clear mechanisms of accountability on use of financing should be agreed upon, especially regarding collection of revenue, licensing, and procurement. Efforts should be made to ensure that the military and civilian components fully understand and are satisfied with each other's plans, and that the means to coordinate at all levels are in place.

While the United States has the clear lead in the Afghanistan effort, choices as to how to build partnerships with other countries and multilateral organizations must be made. For a narrative of a global partnership, a U.N. mandate, as obtained in late 2001, is important, and can provide the basis for partnership with China, Russia, Japan and the gulf, each bringing important contributions. NATO is clearly critical to the security effort, but to avoid a West-East narrative, NATO's efforts should be embedded within a U.N. mandate.

While the United Nations is clearly important for its mandate, and in carrying out some key tasks, its operational capability—particularly in management and financial accountability—is very questionable. If it had one task to carry out over the past 2 years, it was to manage the recent election, and it spent more than $250m on a badly organized process. In my view, 80 percent of the flaws in the process were avoidable, with simple planning and design and these same flaws were evi-

dent and documented during the 2004 elections and had all been pointed out to the United Nations in advance in a letter to the Secretary General. Back in 2001, when a small team (of which I was a member) were preparing for the political framework and reconstruction process in Afghanistan, U.N. agencies claimed that they would use the appeals for Afghanistan to generate the funds to pay off their arrears from the 1990s, and much money remains unaccounted for. U.N. agencies still for the most part refuse to share their accounts and audits with their governing boards. Therefore allocating operational tasks to the U.N. and its agencies, especially in the area of aid coordination, should be done with great caution. The U.N. mandate could cover the international presence, but tasks will be better allocated to other groups best suited for each task.

Alternative mechanisms should be found for key tasks. The Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank, is an important coordination mechanism that is already in place and that backs the Afghan budget. This mechanism ensures transparency in audit reports and in the review of the Afghan budget. This mechanism should be strengthened. An additional possible mechanism would be a World Bank/IMF plan for accountability, which could certify accountability on a regular basis. Dedicated agencies could be established for two activities: The first, the establishment and oversight of reconstruction plans and activities. Such an agency existed in Afghanistan 2001–04, called the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority, which served to design and launch the key National Programs. A similar entity could be established, perhaps as a Joint Commission between the United States and Afghanistan. PRTs could then report to such a structure. Another entity dedicated to planning and supervising education could be established to train and mentor Afghans across its civilian institutions.

A strategy for Afghan civilian institutions could be, but does not necessarily need to be driven by foreign civilian actors: The important factor is that there is a plan. A mistake in logic is often to assume that because Afghans need a functioning polity, government and institutions, it is going to be foreign aid bureaucracies that will deliver this to them. This is a fatal flaw in logic as these organizations themselves are broken and often make the situation worse. A clear strategy and process for rebuilding legitimate Afghan governance, regardless of who delivers it, is required. From there, functions and tasks can be allocated to different actors.

CONCLUSION

Getting Afghanistan right rests fundamentally on establishing good enough governance. Gearing the international presence to partner with Afghans in their attempt to stabilize their country through reclaiming their sovereignty, only for as long as this is required, will reset the partnership and lay the basis for exit of the United States and its allies. Now is the time to finalize such a plan, set benchmarks for its realization, and ensure it is resourced and supported to enable its implementation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Lockhart. An important point of view, and I'm confident people will want to follow up on it.

Dr. Hosseini, again, thank you very, very much for being with us and sharing your very important and, you know, on-the-ground vision here. We appreciate it.

[Business meeting takes place from 10:04 a.m. to 10:06 a.m.]

STATEMENT OF KHALED HOSSEINI, U.S. ENVOY FOR THE U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR), SAN JOSE, CA

Dr. HOSSEINI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

On behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I would like to express my appreciation for this opportunity to appear before you and to offer my perspectives and concerns on the Afghan refugee situation and the overall conditions in Afghanistan.

In the way of background, UNHCR currently has 12 offices inside Afghanistan, and it's had a presence in Afghanistan since the late 1980s, and maintained an office in Afghanistan during the

Taliban rule in the 1990s. At the peak of the Afghan displacement crisis in the mid-1990s, some 8 million Afghans fled home and went to neighboring Pakistan and Iran. And after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, UNHCR began the largest repatriation operation in the history of the agency, repatriating, since 2002, some 5 million Afghans. UNHCR also has offices in Iran and Pakistan, through which it assists some 2.6 million Afghan refugees who have yet to return home.

I came back yesterday from a 5-day trip to Afghanistan, where I met with ordinary Afghans, where I met with refugees, displaced people, aid workers, and officials. And I will focus my comments today first on the needs of the Afghan refugees, particularly those who have recently returned to Afghanistan from neighboring countries, and then on the needs of the Afghan people, in general.

On the issue of refugees, some have reintegrated successfully and have resumed relatively settled lives. But many that I met continue to struggle. It has been a major challenge, to say the least, for many returnees to restart their lives in a country where basic services have collapsed. Some of the returnees that I met last week lived in squalid, abandoned public buildings or in tents or on government land in dry, remote, and inaccessible areas. They complained to me of the lack of basic services, like water, food, schools, clinics, and, most importantly, jobs. Some had a great fear of the coming winter.

Given these difficult realities, maybe it's not surprising that 2.6 million Afghans still live in exile in Iran and Pakistan. Eighty percent of them have lived there for more than two decades, and half of them were born there. And after 30 years of living in exile, and giving the difficult conditions inside Afghanistan and the state's low absorption capacity, many of them may not wish to ever come home.

It is important, however, that return and reintegration be made as attractive as possible to Afghan refugees. And for that to happen, existing conditions inside Afghanistan have to be remedied so the environment within the country is more conducive to the social and economic well-being of refugees. That means Afghan authorities, in partnership with the international community, have to work on critical pull-factors like security, employment opportunity, access to land, water, shelter, education, and health facilities, in order for repatriation to become a more attractive option, and for refugees to become self-sufficient and reintegrate successfully. The needs of returning refugees and IDPs have to be included in national programs.

UNHCR can help, but its expertise lies in emergency response and in legal, physical, and material protection. As part of the initial reintegration process, UNHCR provides shelter, water, transport and family grants. But, returning refugees need more. They need security, they need stability, they need economic and social opportunities. And though UNHCR can certainly act as a partner and as an advocate for these needs, it cannot provide them, and it has to rely on reconstruction and development partners to create the socioeconomic conditions and opportunities that are required for durable return. And so, to that end, donor support and continuing engagement of the international community is indispensable.

On a broader front, let me say that Afghanistan has been in a state of conflict for almost 30 years. The country and its population made huge sacrifices during the Soviet occupation. Every family that I met and that I spoke to had been touched by tragedy, tragedy on a scale that few of us here can imagine.

Many Afghans believe that the final and violent chapter of the cold war was inked with their blood. Today, my impression is that Afghanistan faces yet another critical and pivotal moment in its recent unstable history. I believe there's an opportunity in Afghanistan—an opportunity to build on the progresses that have been made since 2002. And despite the sobering realities, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that there has been progress. For instance, 6 million children are enrolled in some 9,000 schools around the country. Afghans have greater access to the health sector. Millions of kids have been vaccinated. Commerce and enterprise inside Kabul are appreciably increased. Infrastructure is booming. And technology, especially telecommunication, appears poised to leapfrog Afghan business development. There's free press and greater personal freedom.

But, progress hasn't been fast enough or deep enough, and all of us would like to see it reach more Afghans. And there are many challenges that can undermine the progress that we have seen. The decline in refugee repatriation this year, for instance, is an indicator that security remains a major obstacle, and that the economy has not grown quickly enough, especially in rural areas. Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty, in fact, is the No. 1 killer in Afghanistan. Average life expectancy is one of the lowest in the world. Twenty-five-thousand-plus women die every year during childbirth. That's more deaths than those caused by all the suicide bombs, IEDs, and airstrikes combined. And though, historically, there is no tradition of extremism in Afghanistan, poverty can make people—especially unemployed, aimless, young people—more vulnerable to exploitation by extremist groups.

Military intervention is an important part of counterinsurgency, but it's only part of it. Counterinsurgency has to include social and economic intervention, as well. When people have a roof over their head, food on the table, and a school to send their kids to, they're less likely to be influenced by extremist forces.

These are huge challenges to be addressed, and they shouldn't be minimized. During my visit, all the Afghans that I encountered expressed their concerns about the future and some disappointment about the present. They clearly expected more from their government, but none of them wanted to go back to the past. And I see no reason why we should allow ourselves to be defeatists and let the country slide back toward its troubled past. The Afghan people don't want the moon, and we should secure the modest levels of improvements in people's lives that will earn us such good will and make such a difference in Afghanistan's stability.

There are opportunities to be seized, then, if all parties accept the responsibilities. That begins, first and foremost, with the Afghans themselves. They have to do their part. This is their country, after all. Afghan leaders have to acknowledge that their people

expect more from them, and rightfully so. They have to restore people's faith in governmental institutions.

But, I stress this, that the international community, for its part, must maintain its continued support for the Afghan people, and it has to be patient. I'm aware of the current debate in this country about the Afghan war, and I feel deep empathy for the families who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan. I know I speak for most Afghans when I say how grateful Afghans are for their service and sacrifice. And contrary to what some have said, Afghans are not an ungrateful people. But, let's not let the sacrifices of our service-people—men and women—be in vain. Let's be patient. Let's consider that no country in history has been able to establish a functioning state, a performing government, a strong economy, and a stable society in just a handful of years.

Afghans are a proud people, and they don't want to be a source of regional and international instability. They don't want to be known for producing refugees and economic migrants around the world. They want no more and no less than other people in developing countries want for their children and themselves. If the basic essentials can be provided—housing, education, and health care—I truly believe that this closure can be brought to this dark chapter of the country's recent history.

Mr. Chairman, I again appreciate the opportunity to testify before you, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee may have.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Hosseini follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. KHALED HOSSEINI, U.S. ENVOY FOR UNHCR, SAN JOSE, CA

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to appear before you today to offer our perspectives and concerns regarding the Afghan refugee situation.

My name is Khaled Hosseini, and I am the U.S. Envoy for UNHCR, a position that I have held since 2006.

UNHCR currently has 12 offices inside Afghanistan. It has been working inside Afghanistan since 1989 to support the return and integration of Afghan refugees. Since 2002, more than 5 million Afghans have returned to their homeland, including more than 4 million with UNHCR's support. UNHCR also has offices in Pakistan and Iran, through which we continue to assist some 2.6 million Afghan refugees.

I returned yesterday from a 5-day trip to Afghanistan, where I met with returned refugees, ordinary Afghans, aid workers, and officials. I will focus my comments today first on the needs of Afghan refugees, particularly those who have recently returned to Afghanistan from neighboring countries, and on the needs of the Afghan people in general.

In a nutshell, my impression is that Afghanistan faces yet another pivotal moment in its recent, unstable history. There is an opportunity to consolidate the clear progress that has been made since 2002 in a number of areas—education, health, energy, trade, communications, and construction. Progress in these sectors has assisted one of the largest repatriation movements in history.

No country in history has been able to establish a functioning state, a performing government, a strong economy, and a stable society in just a few years. After the level of conflict that a poor country like Afghanistan has suffered for three decades, we should not be surprised that recovery and development will take some time.

To address these issues, my strongest recommendation is that the international community maintain its continued support for the Afghan people. During my visit, all the Afghans that I encountered expressed their concern about the future and some disappointment about the present. They clearly expected more from their gov-

ernment and more from the international community. But none of them wanted to go back to the past. And I see no reason why we should allow ourselves to become defeatists and let the country slide back toward the past. I see no reason why we cannot secure the modest level of improvement in people's lives that would earn us some good will and make such a difference to Afghanistan's stability.

In my judgment, the international community—not just the U.S. Government—must press the Afghan Government to demonstrate greater commitment to improving the lives of its citizens. But we, the international community, must also hold ourselves accountable. Could we have organized ourselves more coherently? Could we have worked more cost-effectively? Could we have prioritized our support more logically to address the most pressing needs? I believe the answer to all these questions is "Yes." I am nevertheless convinced that the challenges Afghanistan faces can be overcome, difficult though they may sometimes appear.

BACKGROUND

UNHCR is charged by the international community with ensuring refugee protection and identifying durable solutions to refugee situations. The agency's mandate is grounded in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (hereinafter "the Refugee Convention"), which define a refugee as a person having a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

UNHCR has had a presence in Afghanistan since the late 1980s and maintained an office during the Taliban rule in the 1990s. At the peak of the Afghan displacement crisis in the mid-1990s, some 8 million refugees had fled their homes to neighboring Pakistan and Iran. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, UNHCR began the largest repatriation operation in the history of the agency. Since 2002, UNHCR has repatriated more than 5 million Afghans. Despite such a large number of returns, approximately 1.5 million Afghans remain in Pakistan and approximately 1 million in Iran. In recent years, there has been a decline in returns, which peaked in 2006. Security remains of great concern to Afghans residing in the surrounding region, and surveys demonstrate that the major additional challenges to return are primarily social and economic in nature.

UNHCR ACTIVITIES

Upon returning to Afghanistan, families face difficulties establishing a new home and securing employment. The single most pressing need of the returnees is shelter. UNHCR has established a shelter program in Afghanistan in close cooperation with the Afghan Government. Since 2002, we have built close to 200,000 houses for returning refugee families in rural areas. The government's own National Land Allocation Scheme offers the potential to assist landless returnees who so far have not been able to benefit from UNHCR's shelter program. To date, more than 300,000 plots of government land have been identified in 29 provinces.

UNHCR focuses its efforts in helping the Government of Afghanistan and local communities develop strategies to address the reasons for displacement. In addition, the office assists the government in strengthening its capacity to plan, manage and assist the return, reintegration, and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

UNHCR also provides protection and assistance to IDPs. The displacement situation inside Afghanistan is highly complex, with factors such as insecurity, economic hardship, and cultural traditions providing a backdrop. In 2008, more than 235,000 IDPs were identified throughout the country. The majority of these individuals were displaced due to protracted conflict, poverty, and livelihood failure in the southern region of Afghanistan.

Any refugee or IDP return and reintegration operation is a complex process. Afghanistan's is perhaps the most challenging of all. It was clear on this recent visit that security and employment are the most essential requirements. It was also evident, however, that resolving land and property issues in rural areas is assuming greater importance as enlarged families return to their places of origin.

After 6 years of some of the highest levels of return ever achieved by a UNHCR operation, signs of limited absorption capacity were apparent. As such, continued high levels are unlikely until greater security allows a more stable government and a more vibrant economy to take root. Overloading the fragile reintegration conditions would be counterproductive and could generate internal displacement and even out migration. It will require the coordinated interventions of assistance actors and government authorities to build greater absorption capacity in the future.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although I met with some refugees who have reintegrated successfully and have resumed relatively settled lives, many continue to struggle. It has been a major challenge for many returnees to restart their lives in a country where basic services have collapsed. The returnees that I met lived in squalid, abandoned public buildings or in tents, or on government land in dry, inaccessible areas. They complained to me of the lack of basic services like water, food, schools, clinics, and jobs. They had a great fear of the coming winter. This isn't entirely surprising. Afghanistan's population increased by 20 percent in a mere 6 years. This would be a huge challenge for any country, even a developed one. For a poor nation like Afghanistan, decimated by 30 years of war, this is an absolutely enormous figure. Given these difficult realities, maybe it's not surprising that 2.6 million Afghans still live in exile in Iran and Pakistan. Eighty percent of them have lived there for more than two decades, and nearly half of them were born there. After 30 years of exile, and given the difficult conditions inside Afghanistan and the state's decreased absorption capacity, many of them may not wish to return home.

It is important, however, that return and reintegration is made as attractive as possible. For that to happen, existing conditions inside Afghanistan have to be remedied, so that the environment within the country is more conducive to the social and economic well-being of refugees. That means that Afghan authorities and the international community have to work on critical pull factors like security, employment opportunities, and access to land, water, shelter, education, and health facilities, in order for repatriation to become an attractive option and for refugees to become self-sufficient and reintegrate successfully. The needs of returning refugees and IDPs have to be included in national programs.

It is also important that UNHCR continue to view repatriation and reintegration as an important and achievable solution for as many Afghans as possible who wish to return. This will have the additional virtue of addressing the concerns expressed by the neighboring asylum countries that repatriation receives insufficient support.

To that end, it is essential that both the Afghan authorities and the international community provide both political and financial support to Afghanistan's National Development Strategy for the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs.

UNHCR's expertise lies in emergency response and legal, physical, and material protection. Returning refugees also need security, stability, economic, and social opportunities. UNHCR can act as the advocate for these needs. However, beyond the initial reintegration assistance that UNHCR provides in shelter, water, transport and family grants, we depend very much on our reconstruction and development partners to create the socioeconomic conditions and opportunities required to sustain return. To that end, donor support and the continued engagement of the international community and the Government of Afghanistan will be critical to sustaining refugee repatriation in the years to come.

I believe there is an opportunity to build on the progress that has been made since 2002. And despite the stream of negative news, we should not lose sight of the fact that there has indeed been progress, in a number of areas. For instance, over 6 million children are enrolled in some 9,000 schools around the country. Afghans have greater access now to the health sector; millions of children have been vaccinated against preventable illnesses. Commerce and enterprise are appreciably increased. Infrastructure is booming in cities like Kabul, and technology, particularly telecommunications and wireless technology, appear poised to leapfrog business development in Afghanistan. There is free press and greater personal freedom.

But progress has not been as fast and as deep as all of us here would like, and it has not reached as many people as we would like. And there are many challenges that can undermine the progress that we have seen. The decline in refugee repatriation this year, for instance, is an indicator that security remains an obstacle and that the economy has not grown quickly enough, especially in rural areas. Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty is in fact the No. 1 killer in Afghanistan. More than 25,000 women die during childbirth every year. That's more deaths than those caused by all the suicide bombs, IED attacks, and air strikes combined. And although historically there is no tradition of extremism in Afghanistan, poverty can make people, especially young people, more vulnerable to exploitation by extremist groups. It has been stated many times that improved security alone will not end the insurgency. Investment in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres is also necessary.

There are opportunities that can be seized if all parties accept their responsibilities. The Afghans, certainly, have to do their part. This is their country after all. Afghan leaders have to acknowledge that their people expect more of them, and rightfully so. They have to restore the people's faith in the state institutions, and

demonstrate leadership, vision, and a greater commitment to improving the lives of the population. For its part, the international community will need to organize its assistance more coherently around commonly agreed objectives.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan has been in a state of conflict for almost three decades now. The country and its population made huge sacrifices during the Soviet occupation. Almost every family has been touched by tragedy on a scale that few of us can imagine. Many Afghans believe that the final violent chapter of the cold war was inked with their blood.

Yes, Afghans do not want to be a source of regional and international instability. They do not want to be known for producing refugees and economic migrants around the world. They want no more and no less than other people in developing countries want for themselves and their children. If the basic essentials can be provided—housing, education, health care, and job opportunities—I sincerely believe that a new chapter of hope and happiness can be brought to the Afghan people.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much.

And thank you, all of you, for helping to set the stage. There are a lot of questions that flow out of your testimonies, and I'm confident that colleagues here will pursue them.

What's interesting to me is—I was sitting here thinking—I was listening to your testimony, Dr. Hosseini, and to you, Ms. Lockhart—both of you describing, obviously, an urgent humanitarian need, an urgent challenge, in terms of nation-building—state-building—the challenge of governance. On the other hand, we've had troops on the ground and we have been in Afghanistan for 8 years now—we're nearing the 8-year anniversary right now—and the test for us, in terms of policy—I mean, if you took away the al-Qaeda, and you took away the attacks, then there would be a challenge to us as to what our foreign policy aid program ought to be and what the levels of assistance we might give are. But, right now, our challenge is also to try to figure out what the level of military involvement—troop involvement—ought to be; indeed, what our security interests are, and how they can be furthered with respect to Afghanistan.

The President of the United States has defined the mission in a more limited fashion, really, by saying that our goal is to take on al-Qaeda, dismantle them and/or eliminate them, and to prevent them from having a safe haven and a sanctuary from which they can attack the United States, and to prevent the destabilization of Pakistan, where we have an even larger and more vital interest.

So, the test for us, here, as we think about our policy, going forward—and we need to ask you questions about the nation-building and the relationship of it to those interests—but, the key here is really to try to hone in, I think, on those interests, and how we best serve them.

One of the essential questions we need to get at—I think, Ambassador Crocker, you can, perhaps, help us do that—is, sort of, you know, while you were there for a period of time, the Pakistanis proved themselves capable of living pretty comfortably, with a pretty awful Taliban regime. It didn't end Pakistan's capacity to govern, it didn't threaten them existentially. Now, today that's changed a little bit, obviously, because of the Haqqani network, the Baitullah Mehsud network, the presence of al-Qaeda, and other things. But, the question for us—and I want to ask you to begin here—is—help us to understand—define for us what the real impact of the Taliban is today, and might be, on the stability of

Pakistan. And would it, in fact, be an existential challenge to them if the Taliban took over in Afghanistan today?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you Mr. Chairman. That is, indeed, a key question. And, as you rightly point out, we've seen an evolution. During the 1990s, Pakistan did, indeed, work out a modus vivendi with a Taliban-led government in Afghanistan, and had relative stability at home. But, that has changed. We have seen the evidence—you pointed to the Haqqani network, the efforts of the now late Baitullah Mehsud, the developments in the Swat Valley. We have seen an increasing militancy within Pakistan, not restricted just to the border areas, that is growing to the point where, for many Pakistanis, it does raise at least the question of an existential threat.

Now, I think there are other questions in Pakistan—again, about our staying power—that still cause some hedging of bets there. The ultimate nightmare in Pakistan would be to see us once again decide we're done—we're done in Afghanistan and we're done in Pakistan, a repeat of the 1990s—leaving them with what, by that point, may be a truly dangerous enemy. So——

The CHAIRMAN. Let me—can I just interrupt you for a moment there? I don't think—I mean, let me make it clear, from my point of view, Senator Lugar's point of view—I think, the committee—there's no talk, here, and there is—I don't want anybody even beginning to think that there is a contemplation of not being committed to Pakistan, or of understanding the challenge of Pakistan. And there—the legislation we passed, which you referred to, states that commitment, and we understand the importance of Pakistan. There's no talk of diminishing that.

What the question really begs is this, To what degree is Afghanistan, in fact, left to its own devices or with a lesser footprint, at jeopardy? Are our interests, in fact, challenged if we had a different approach to Afghanistan?

Ambassador CROCKER. I think they would be challenged. Simply put, Mr. Chairman, I see reciprocity, here. I don't think long-term stability can be brought to Afghanistan without Pakistan also stabilizing. But, the reverse is also true. I don't think that Pakistan can face up to the challenges of militancy—not just on its western borders, but in the center of the country—if that militancy succeeds in Afghanistan. We all know the history of the Durand Line, its porosity, its artificial nature. There are more Pashtuns in Pakistan than there are in Afghanistan. So, a militant ascendency in Afghanistan, I think, will be severely destabilizing for Pakistan.

The CHAIRMAN. And is there any degree—yesterday it was suggested by Rory Stewart that perhaps the presence of troops and the manner of the mission in Afghanistan is, to some degree, destabilizing Pakistan, that it's adding to the capacity—coupled with the corruption of the governance, it's adding to this ability of the Taliban to, kind of, you know, find recruits and make mischief.

Ambassador CROCKER. My experience is now somewhat dated. I left Pakistan in 2007. But, as of that time, I knew of no senior Pakistani figure, military or civilian, who was advocating a United States withdrawal from Afghanistan. There was lots of criticism over how well we were prosecuting the mission, but it was taken as a given—it—in my contacts there—that that mission needed to

be prosecuted; perhaps in better or different ways, but that we needed to stay engaged there.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I'm not suggesting—I mean, I think, just a plain old withdrawal would be disastrous on any number of different fronts. I think what we're trying to figure out is how to accomplish the mission, what level of mix of military and governance improvement and nation-building, et cetera, is appropriate. I think some people are very fearful that right now there's sort of this nondescript, you know, loosey-goosey, "We've got to do this here and do this here and build this, and we're going to train the military, and we're going to do this and that," and—we heard, yesterday, that to properly effect a counterinsurgency—which has grown—I mean, the Taliban are now in control of 37 percent of country; whereas, a year ago, they were in control of 20-something percent. And that growth, you know, has to make you pause and say, "OK, you know the western part, the northern part haven't yet reached it," but we heard fears expressed that that may happen. Therefore, to be successful, you have to begin to think about what's the real troop ratio that you need to provide the security for adequate counterinsurgency. And counterinsurgency, we heard yesterday, is a distinctly different mission from counterterrorism.

The mission, as I understood it from the President, was more counterterrorism in Afghanistan and stabilization with respect to Pakistan. So, we've got to figure out if we're, sort of—you know, is there a—automatic and unavoidable mission creep, here? Or is there an inadvertent mission creep, here? Or is there something in our automatic response to how we protect Pakistan that requires us to, you know, sort of feel that you have to do the counterinsurgency? That's the—I think the biggest tension here is, What level of counterinsurgency do you need to support the counterterrorism effort and the destabilization piece? And we need to, you know, kind of, obviously, pursue it further.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to explore this thought the chairman has mentioned, which came up in our hearing yesterday, that—essentially, as one witness said, the major reason why we ought to have stability in Afghanistan is to help perpetuate stability in Pakistan, that one reason for having troops in Afghanistan is simply because Pakistan has nuclear weapons. In the event of the disintegration of governance in Pakistan, various factions might take hold of the weapons. The threat of al-Qaeda, or whatever the group it may be, gaining control of warheads or other instruments that change the situation a great deal is more harrowing than anything we've discussed.

Now, this is sort of a change in context from most of our discussions of Afghanistan. Of course, we've looked at Afghanistan in terms of how villages could become more sufficient, how agriculture yields might rise, how drug abuse might be curtailed; in essence, how more children could go to school and how women's rights would be fostered. This is the nature of the sort of discussion we've been having. The notion that Afghanistan is important strategically to the United States because of Pakistan is a different twist.

Furthermore, there have been discussions in the press—even in today's press that the stability in Afghanistan may be threatened

if the people do not accept President Karzai as their leader. It's not farfetched, some would say, that, given that next door in Iran, people continue to take to the streets to protest the results of the June 12, 2009, elections. There is a situation in which, even with our government, we want to have dialogue with Iran, as you've suggested, but the question remains as to with whom it should be conducted. Furthermore, if we reach an agreement, are the internal conditions there stable enough to ensure it is implemented given the situation I've described?

What I want, I suppose, from each of you is some idea of the stability of potential governance at the highest levels, quite apart from the regional levels and so forth, in Afghanistan? And what would it mean for this stability in the event of, as the Europeans are quoted in the press today as saying, a third of the votes for President Karzai possibly being invalid? That is a very significant charge, and it suggests that the ballots that we heard, yesterday, that have been prepared for a runoff, might be used. But, then others say, "Well, no, you don't understand. The weather gets bad. The difficulties of conducting a November election in Afghanistan are not the same as they are in the United States." And furthermore, the whole thing might get shifted into next year, which would lead to continued discussion about stability in Afghanistan, when we were originally talking about how Afghanistan helps Pakistan remain stable.

Now, finally, in preface, people are saying Pakistan, all things considered, has been pretty stable this past year. Despite the predictions that President Zardari might have grave difficulties after 3 months, he seems to be sailing along. However, we may have to worry much more about stability in Afghanistan. So, no wonder, perhaps the President says, "OK, we'd better hang on for a while before we get into a recommendation of troop levels, and a national debate with the public opinion in this country that seems to have a different timeline." And what I'm wondering is if we're not kicking the can down the road, even in our decisionmaking. I did not want to be hypercritical in my opening statement, but I just observed that General McChrystal's report always seems to be there. We going to discuss and discuss and discuss it, and digest it, and all sorts of people are going to look at it, and so forth, and then suddenly we come along, after an indefinite period, and begin to talk about troop levels.

Now, does anyone have any comment? General Craddock, do you have any thoughts about these ruminants that I have suggested?

General CRADDOCK. Well, thank you, Senator Lugar.

Indeed, it's a bit of a conundrum; there's no doubt. I think Senator Kerry's opening comments, "This is not winnable by military means," absolutely; I have said that for the past several years. The military—the security effort will set the conditions, then, for good-enough governance, as Clare Lockhart said, for investment, for development, for the creation of jobs.

As you go about the country—and I also have gone about—it's about clean water, education, a job, electricity. How hard can that be? Obviously, it takes some security to do that.

I think, from the security perspective—and this is, again, a NATO perspective—security and stability—there are two funda-

mental issues there. One is the funding the insurgency, whether it be the Taliban, HIG, Haqqani, whatever the case may be. And that's largely—and has been largely; it's down somewhat—from the narcotics business, and it has to be addressed, and it continue to be addressed, and we have to take away the wherewithal, the contributions, from that, after the value is added, and that's in the processing from the raw opium paste into the heroin, and that's why the facilities are so important to be attacked.

Senator LUGAR. General, let me interrupt that point, because many would allege that, in addition to the insurgents getting the money, the government is getting the money, that the——

General CRADDOCK. Yes, sir.

Senator LUGAR [continuing]. There are two great recipients.

General CRADDOCK. And that—that's in my opening statement, and indeed, it fuels the corruption. Now, I know the numbers are down. Right now, the latest estimates—a $3 billion industry, of which some $1 billion stays in country and $200 to $300 million to the insurgents. Where does the rest go? Corruption. Private and public. Has to be addressed.

But, the security will only create the conditions, then, for what Rory Stewart says the Afghan people are morally bound to do for themselves, which is govern better.

Senator LUGAR. So, that's the basis for our security, then, to give——

General CRADDOCK [continuing]. It is. We——

Senator LUGAR [continuing]. A framework for Afghan people to progress.

General CRADDOCK. I think it is protect the people, put an umbrella—a security umbrella around the municipalities, around the villages and towns, so that there can be investment, development, jobs created. And when the people get that, they will push the insurgents out.

Senator LUGAR. Well, my time is completed, but I appreciate that answer.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Lugar.

Senator Feingold.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, for holding all these hearings on one of the most important questions facing our Nation at this time, and we're honored to have all these distinguished witnesses here.

These hearings have contributed to a much-needed debate regarding our efforts in Afghanistan. And while there may be disagreement on some issues, one point of consensus that has clearly emerged, and that the chairman just restated, is that no one thinks we should abandon Afghanistan. The United States must remain engaged in helping the Afghan people resolve the many difficult issues facing their country, through diplomatic means and through ongoing assistance.

However, I do believe that we need to examine whether the current military strategy may potentially be counterproductive. I'm concerned that our massive military presence may be contributing to instability in the region, and could be unwittingly undermining our chief national security priority, which is, of course, relentlessly pursing al-Qaeda's global network.

Helping the Afghan people build a stable nation for themselves is an important long-term goal. We must consider how best to achieve this and whether this requires a departure from our current, overly military-centered approach.

Ambassador Crocker, Admiral Mullen, and Special Envoy Holbrooke have acknowledged at these hearings that there is a danger that U.S. military operations in Afghanistan could drive militants into Pakistan and further destabilize that nuclear-armed country. And the DNI—Admiral Blair—has testified that, "no improvement in Afghanistan is possible without Pakistan taking control of its border areas and improving governance, creating economic and educational opportunities throughout the country." Do you agree that the key to preventing the spread of militancy in the Afghan-Pakistan border region is improved governance and effective counterterrorism in Pakistan, as opposed to our military operations in Afghanistan?

Ambassador CROCKER. Senator, I would certainly join General Craddock—and, I think, most of the members—in the strong view that there is no purely military solution to problems in Afghanistan, or, indeed, in Pakistan. There is a military component to a broader solution. The military—and I apologize for treading in General Craddock's area—talks about "troops to task." Defining the task, I think, is absolutely essential at this point. And again, Mr. Chairman, I commend the committee for its focus on this. What is it that we believe needs to be done to bring, as Ms. Lockhart puts it so well, good-enough governance to Afghanistan or to allow the Afghans that opportunity? That is where long-term stability will lie. The military then becomes a component of that. We need to define our goals, our end states, the milestones along the road to that end state, if you will, and then—but, I think, only then—can we really talk in a coherent way about force levels and force composition.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, sir.

Dr. Hosseini, recent polls have shown the majority of Afghans oppose an increase in U.S. troops. Do you think there's a danger that our disregard for this preference could provoke more militancy?

Dr. HOSSEINI. I think there's no question that there's a shade of public opinion in Afghanistan that is beginning to see the security forces in Afghanistan as an occupation. My sense is that, compared to a few years ago, there are more people now who view the security forces in a negative light. And the civilian casualties have a very, very significant impact on that public opinion.

That said, on balance, I think most Afghans know that if the security forces were to leave, things would be a whole lot worse. And this is because they understand that the Afghan institutions and the Afghan security forces are not strong enough to assure the country and its people of a normal, or even seminormal, state of existence. At the end of the day, you know, any state has to exercise a monopoly over the legitimate use of force in the greater interest of the civilians at large. And the Afghan state, at this point, is not in the position to do that.

So, do the Afghans want foreign troops on their land? No. I mean, they really would prefer that there not be. They're, you

know, independent, sovereign people. But, do they see it as a necessary thing still today? I think most Afghans would concede that point.

Senator FEINGOLD. But, as to the question of an increase in troops?

Dr. HOSSEINI. I think, when you speak to Afghans on the ground, their fear is not more engagement, their fear is that there will be less engagement. There is a fear of abandonment, in Afghanistan. People have a very long memory, and they remember back to what happened at the end of the civil—I'm sorry—the Soviet invasion, where, for what—as you can put it, we've decided that it was no longer in our strategic interest who ran Afghanistan. At this point, I think the Afghan concern is with less engagement, not with more engagement.

That said, Afghans do have a concern with how troops do behave. You know, that's not to say that they approve of everything. You take an 18-year-old from this country and send them to Afghanistan, and what seems like a rudimentary and poor and unsophisticated society is, in fact, very nuanced and sophisticated in the way in which customs, manner, speech, posture is transmitted and understood. So, there's a steep learning curve for the troops there, but I think the current leadership is addressing that.

Senator FEINGOLD. Of course, I have tremendous respect for your knowledge and views on this. All I can say, for the record, is that these polling numbers, that may or may not be accurate, certainly reflect a view against our troops staying there for too long, and certainly against an increase.

General Craddock, in a recent letter to President Obama, the heads of state of Great Britain, Germany, and France said it was time to discuss metrics and timelines for international activities in Afghanistan. And while I understand that you favor staying the course in Afghanistan, do we at least agree that, by making clear that we do not intend to occupy the country indefinitely, we may be better able to build support among the American and European people for our efforts in that country?

General CRADDOCK. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, I would definitely agree with that. I don't believe the intent there is to ever occupy and stay. The key, as has been pointed out, is the enabling and development of the Afghan national security forces. As the SACEUR for the last 2½ years, I repeatedly told NATO nations, the very first thing we need are more trainers for the army and the police, particularly the police. The issue is more a public security issue than a national security issue for the people of Afghanistan. And a competent, trained, noncorrupt police force is important.

So, I think that what we have to do is to lay out, then, a timeline for development of the Afghan security forces, and hold both international support to that and the Afghans to that, so that we can, one, establish some parameters, some milestones—and meet them—and then measure effectiveness.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And thank each of you. I think this is an outstanding panel and—as we had yesterday—and each of you have unique contributions.

Ambassador Crocker, I want to thank you, especially, for your tremendous service. And I think the testimony that you and General Petraeus gave as we looked at a new strategy in Iraq was most important. And I think you alluded, in your opening testimony, how having people from the field here may be the most important thing we can do to actually ascertain what is the next best step.

So, Mr. Chairman, I hope that's going to happen soon. I hope it's going to happen in the next few weeks. I notice there's a resistance, for some reason, for that to happen, but I could not agree more.

I would also say that the themes that—before you move to our strategic interest in Afghanistan—seems to me there are two themes that—sort of underneath that. One is that we're there; meaning that—something for us, I think, to remember into the future—once we put our flag up in a country, our flag is up, and we're very resistant to ever leaving. So, that's an underlying theme; and, No. 2, that we're sort of trying to prove to Pakistan and Afghanistan that we're not fair-weather friends. So, there are, sort of, two underlying themes that make—that I know weigh much of what's happening, before you even get into the strategic-interest piece, and that's pretty prevalent in both countries when you're there.

So, let me just ask you this, Ambassador Crocker. What expectations should we have in Afghanistan? What worries me, to some degree, is, we had a success in Iraq, based on a surge; we had a political movement, that you helped create with the Sunni Awakening and getting them working on our side. There have been discussions about doing the same with the Taliban. We're obviously talking about additional troops. What are the things that we should expect in Afghanistan? And what are the lessons that are not necessarily transferable, and those that are?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, sir.

I'm probably the least qualified person in the room to talk about Afghanistan in that degree of depth. I would say, though, that I think there is—as the chairman alluded to earlier, there is a linkage between terror and insurgency. My experience has been that terror can find a nest within a broader insurgency. In other words, I cannot see how, if we define our interests narrowly, as eliminating a terrorist threat—out of Afghanistan—that we can do that with any real degree of assurance without also having a successful counterinsurgency strategy. And that, again, in my not very well informed view, takes us into the range of issues that Ms. Lockhart and Dr. Hosseini touched on. I don't think there is much of a record anywhere in the world of successful counterinsurgencies without good-enough government—governance.

Now, how far does this go? There, I am absolutely unable to state, but clearly there is, I think, an obligation for the administration to so state. That review is obviously underway. I think the sooner it can be brought to the point of articulation—again, what are our goals, why they are important, how they will be achieved,

and how the different components link up—I think, is essential for the American people.

Senator CORKER. I think, in fairness, the administration has been rhetorical about this narrow mission, to make it sound good; but, in essence, all the things Ms. Lockhart has laid out are components of a counterinsurgency.

And so, Ms. Lockhart, I think you did a very—I mean, basically you're talking about, in some degree, state-building or nation-building. I mean, I think we all know that those are the metrics that have been laid out. And so, we have this very poor country, that's been very poor for a long time. There are no oil resources, like there were in Iraq. And so, we're talking about building an education system and a health system, a water system, an electricity system, a security system, a police system. What are your thoughts about how we should view our long-term financial commitments? Because, let's face it, on the budget they have now, they couldn't pay for even a fraction of just the police that they have there. I'm just wondering if you might help us there.

And I'm not sure we see any future for resources to do that in Afghanistan, for the midterm.

Ms. LOCKHART. Certainly. I think, as we've discussed, the civilian governance effort has been significantly underresourced, and an increase in resources is certainly going to be necessary.

I think we probably need to look at two different scenarios for resourcing. One scenario is, if there is a process for rebuilding a legitimate government and a team of Afghan leaders in place who can govern responsibly. And, I think, in that scenario we're looking at far fewer external resources that will be needed, because Afghanistan will move more rapidly to collecting its own revenue.

And while Afghanistan doesn't have oil, it does have the potential, I believe, to be raising somewhere between $5 to $10 billion a year in its own revenue, because it does have very rich mineral resources, including copper, gold, lapis, amethyst, iron. It does have the basis for a successful agricultural economy. It was the largest exporter of fruits and nuts to the region, if not the world, in the 1970s. And it has a hardworking population and the potential for textile production, urban services, and a construction industry is certainly there. So, I think we need to move to put in place an economic strategy that will gear it to collect its own revenue.

To answer your specific question on what resources are needed, I believe that we need to be looking at a medium- to long-term commitment of resources of probably roughly a doubling of existing resources on the civilian and governance side. But, if we move aggressively to raise Afghan revenue, or to enable the Afghans to collect their own revenue, that commitment could taper down in the second 5 years of the decade.

Senator CORKER. If I could ask one more brief question.

Thank you very much.

General Craddock, how many al-Qaeda are there in the world?

General CRADDOCK. Senator, I have no idea. Card-carrying al-Qaeda? I have no idea. Sympathizers, logistics support, finance support? I have no idea.

Senator CORKER. Card-carrying. Give me——

General CRADDOCK. I don't know. I think that the—one of the reasons it's so difficult in our search is because of—there's no hierarchy that we would recognize.

Senator CORKER. You know, the number 2,000 has been thrown out, and people dispute that, and I don't want—I don't know what the number is.

The reason I asked the question—it's somewhat rhetorical—our efforts toward al-Qaeda have now created a situation where we're involved in two major nation-building/state-building efforts—Iraq and Afghanistan. And—it's just a fact—and I hope that, somehow or another, we'll figure out a different strategy, versus going around the world building states and nations almost out of whole cloth.

Senator LUGAR [presiding]. Thank you very much, Senator Corker.

Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank our witnesses for your presence here today, and the contribution you're making to this discussion and debate. I think we can have a real debate about these policies, and I think it's critical that we do.

I want to especially thank General Craddock and Ambassador Crocker for your service to our country under the most difficult of circumstances.

And I wanted to start with you, Ambassador Crocker, about a conversation that you and I had. And I don't expect you to remember any of this—I know a lot of Members of Congress visited you while you were in Iraq—but this was August 2007. Senator Durbin and I were with you at that time, and we had a dinner meeting. And General Petraeus was with us, as well. And I was very critical at the time—and I still am—about the language of Washington when we describe the conflict in Iraq, but also, now, the conflict in Afghanistan. Language like "victory and defeat," "win or lose," which, in my judgment, is both inaccurate and misleading. And I think it's important, as we get the policy right on troop levels and on nonmilitary commitments, as well, that we also get the language right, because the American people don't have, will not, and should not, have patience for a political debate in Washington that doesn't ask and answer some tough questions.

At the time, you said something I'll never forget. I want to ask you if the language that you used then is still relevant here, in what you learned from, not just your service in Iraq, but other service, as well. You said, at the time, that the words you used to describe success in Iraq were two, "sustainable stability." And I'd ask you, in the context of Afghanistan and how we deal with this strategy with regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan, are those words still operative? And anything else you can tell us about how you think we can achieve that.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator.

I do, indeed, remember the conversation, and I would share your view about the use of language. Language does count. I think, if anyone ever cared to go through the interminable records of the testimony that General Petraeus and I provided to the Congress on several occasions, I don't think you'll find a single occasion in

which either of us used those terms—to "win," to "lose," "victory," and "defeat"—because, in many respects, those are not for us to determine, as——

Senator CASEY. I said "Washington" to leave out some names. [Laughter.]

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, I believe the concept of "sustainable stability" is valid, although I may now shamelessly steal Ms. Lockhart's phrase of "good-enough governance," which I think is another way of saying much the same thing, of steps taken, measures taken, that will work, in terms of the society in which it counts, be it Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan. It may not be our model, and it may be very far from perfect; but, if it provides a situation in which the security forces of that country are capable dealing, themselves, with whatever challenges to stability there are, then I think you've got "sustainable stability."

What that will look like in Afghanistan—and, again, what the steps are to achieve it—I'm simply not competent to provide. I do think we've got the people out there who can do that, and I think, again, that what the administration needs to do is to lay out that framework. And then, since I had the experience of testifying before Congress, I would like to spread the opportunity to my current colleagues in the field to come and do the same, because I do think that field view is extremely important.

Senator CASEY. Thank you.

And I have questions that I won't get to, for both ends of the table. But, I probably have time for one more. I wanted to ask Ms. Lockhart a question about what's sometimes referred to as a "civilian surge," an increase in the number of nonmilitary personnel on the ground, which is a low number now in Afghanistan, and is building.

I was very impressed, as we always are, in August, when I visited both countries and saw the respect that General McChrystal had for the nonmilitary folks, but how well-integrated they were, and how central they are to the mission—State Department folks, Department of Agriculture, USAID, DEA, and so many others. I know this is a hard question to answer, but if you can do your best in the minute or so we have left—one, how many civilians do you think are needed or, do you have a sense of those metrics? And, two, how do we get it right with regard to our international partners, who, candidly, in some places are helping us a lot, and in a lot of significant parts of the world they're not doing much at all to help us. So, if you can address that, in terms of numbers or in terms of commitment. I know that's a hard one——

Ms. LOCKHART. Certainly. I think one of the first principles to work from is that what we're seeking to build is the space and tools for Afghan leadership and Afghan ownership. And I believe that, while the key focus on the civilian side is institution-building, it actually requires quite a small number of civilians. Certainly more—we need more civilians than there are at the moment. I probably wouldn't want to put a number on it. It probably isn't more than 1,000. But, the key——

Senator CASEY. In terms of "1,000," is this what we would need eventually, or kind of where we are now?

Ms. LOCKHART. A total number, particularly if there's going to be U.S. leadership. There are, actually, tens of thousands of foreign civilians in the country at the moment, but most of them are fragmented amongst NGOs, U.N. agencies, and——

Senator CASEY. OK.

Ms. LOCKHART [continuing]. All sorts of efforts. But, I think, a total of 1,000.

What is required, though, is a really thorough look at the skills gap on the Afghan side. And I think we should regear our focus to, What does it take to build up Afghan capability? And that does mean vocational training, secondary education, and tertiary education. Back in 2001, no investment was made in secondary and tertiary education, and vocational training; and if you're educating Afghans to age 11, you're not going to get a competent civil service. So, that's the lacuna I think we should be looking at.

In terms of getting the international partnership right, I think that relates to your earlier comment very much, that we should move away from the language of war, of victory, and of loss to—back, perhaps, to some of the original language used in the 2001–02 period of a global effort to assist the Afghan people establish stability or legitimate governance. And then, based on that, look at a division of labor and burden-sharing. I think we need, perhaps, to look more to the economic multilateral organizations, like the World Bank and the ADB, that have robust approaches to accountability, while a U.N. mandate remains important. And then look at a division of labor with Europe and what countries like China, Saudi Arabia, and gulf countries and Japan can do to contribute as part of a global alliance.

Senator CASEY. Doctor, I had a refugee question, and, General, I had a question for you, but I'm out of time.

Thank you very much.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Senator Casey.

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Senator Lugar.

I want to get back to one of the many excellent points that Senator Lugar mentioned during his extensive question, and ask about the election.

Now, today is the 17th. We're supposed to hear some definitive results. I'm told the Afghan Central Election Commission has released the results, showing that President Karzai has received 54.62 percent of the vote. Now, the international community is still waiting for the Independent Election Commission to make its assessment.

Senator Lugar raised the possibility that as many as one-third of President Karzai's votes might be invalid. I wonder if any of you can tell me when we can expect to hear something from the Independent Election Commission. It seems to me that in listening to the administration, that there's almost a resignation that President Karzai is going to be the President for the next term, and that somehow those results will be allowed to stand, to the extent that either he will be reelected on the first go-around or he will win a runoff. So, I hope several of you can comment on this.

But, let me start with Dr. Hosseini. You're here on behalf of the UNHCR, I realize. But still, you've been in the area. You've talked

extensively—I assume you've talked across the spectrum of the ethnic groups in Afghanistan. So, what is your assessment of the support among the populace for President Karzai—of their feeling with regard to the validity of the election results and what might happen?

Dr. HOSSEINI. Well, I think, when you speak to ordinary Afghans, there's no question that they express some disappointment in the performance of the Afghan Government so far. I think many of them expected more, and I—again, rightfully so.

As far as the elections, clearly there have been some irregularities with these elections, and they've been well publicized. Precise scale of these irregularities, and whether they will force a second round of the elections, is up to the ECC and the IEC to determine. And they're, you know, examining the suspect ballots, and doing a recount.

In my view, it's important, obviously, that this investigation be thorough, but also that it be relatively expeditious. And I say this as an individual and not as a—with my UNHCR hat on. You know, I think it's to the detriment of the country to have a prolonged period of political paralysis. It's to the detriment of the legitimacy of the elections, and I think it would exacerbate the Afghan people's already high level of anxiety about the elections, and cast doubt on the credibility of the outcome. So, I think it must be done relatively quickly. And, of course, the outcome has to be acceptable to most Afghans, and have at least the semblance of credibility. A difficult task, indeed.

On the elections, I do want to put the entire process in some kind of perspective and say that, as flawed as the elections are—and we shouldn't compare the second-ever Presidential elections in Afghanistan to a process here in the States or in France; let's be clear about that—but it was an extraordinary logistic achievement to even hold these elections; even more so than the last time around. Three thousand donkeys carrying ballots; thousands of people who had to be trained in the middle of conflict in insurgent-wracked areas, under the threat and intimidation of the Taliban; hundreds of female searchers that had to pat down anybody in a burqa, to make sure it's not a man carrying a suicide jacket. Those are the sorts of logistics we're talking about. So, from a logistical standpoint, it was an extraordinary achievement.

And the second point of perspective that I would offer is that, for 30 years now, the traditional means of the transfer of power in Afghanistan has been through violence, through the gun. With these elections, the Afghans have an opportunity to demonstrate that those days are in the past and that they can effect a peaceful transition of power. And maybe we, the international community, ought not to rush to judgment, and we ought to wait and let the Afghans resolve this peacefully.

Senator WICKER. Ms. Lockhart, would you like to comment about that? And do you believe President Karzai has majority support among the population of Afghanistan?

Ms. LOCKHART. I think that if the European Union's announcement today is correct, that they suspected a third of the votes were invalid, then it will be demonstrated that the incumbent doesn't have majority support. And I would agree with Dr. Hosseini, that

I think there is considerable anxiety amongst the population, and a loss of trust in their government over the last few years. What we're seeing at the moment on the ground is the Electoral Complaints Commission investigating the irregularities of process that may take several weeks, and I very much agree that that process should be resolved as quickly as possible, because the vacuum in leadership will be problematic on the ground.

I think there are four options, very quickly, from here on:

One is to accept the victory of the incumbent. The risk of this approach is that given the alliances with illegitimate forces that have been made, I don't think this will assure good-enough governance over the coming months and years, and rather, may see a further deterioration in governance.

A second approach is to accept that and then have a robust counterinsurgency effort to build good governance, bottom-up. That hasn't been tried in other insurgencies in the past, and the jury will be open as to whether it could be successful.

A third option, I think, would be to accept the victory of the incumbent, but have a robust agreement on benchmarks for accountability, going forward. And I believe that the Afghan people will be looking for the international community to take a robust approach on asking for standards of accountability and benchmarks of reaching good governance.

And the last option would be to—almost to go back to the drawing board. If the ECC is to invalidate a sufficient number of ballots or one or more of the candidates or the process as a whole, that will open the question of moving to new elections, a new peace agreement or—a new Bonn-type agreement.

Senator WICKER. Well, I'm sure you agree that it should be done expeditiously. You have any idea when we might hear something definitive from the ECC?

Ms. LOCKHART. I believe that's specified in the ECC regulations, that they must report back within a specified amount of time after the certification of results. I believe that's a month, but I could check that.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Anyone else on the panel wish to touch on this?

[No response.]

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Senator Lugar. And I would like to express my appreciation to the chairman and to you for having put together this extraordinary variety of expertise in the panel today.

I don't know any American public servant who has had more time on the ground, intellectual dedication, and emotional commitment than Ambassador Crocker, and it's great to see you here today, sir.

And, Dr. Hosseini, as someone who spent a good part of his life as a novelist, and also having worked in the dread Hollywood off and on for about 15 years, I have incredible admiration for the literary achievement that you were able to bring in "Kite Runner." I've often said that you can communicate to people on an emotional level through a piece of literature in a way that they come to un-

derstand things probably better than any other way, and it's just an amazingly powerful film, and I congratulate you what it took to put together all of that. It's so rare to see a piece of literature that can hit all the issues of loyalty and respect and father-son relationships and all those sorts of things. It was just an amazing achievement.

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation, actually, for what Senator Corker said, because it does address the difficulty that we have up here in this particular issue. And that is, when you look at where we seem to be going, here, from a national strategic perspective—I mean, from a perspective of American national interest, in terms of how to use our assets, where we put our expenditures, and in terms of national treasure, whether we should build up an infrastructure to address an enemy that is basically a mobile enemy.

And we saw this in Iraq, quite frankly. You know, we built up a huge infrastructure to address two different sets of problems. One was the issue of international terrorism, which is intrinsically mobile, and decided to relocate, after a period of time. But then also to have to pick up the pieces of what we had done following our invasion, and try to repair relationships and move Iraq forward. In terms of the advantage that the forces of international terrorism wished to have, that was pretty good for them, long-term. We spent hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars, and they remain active.

We're looking at something similar here in Afghanistan, and I know we've got national mission creep going on now, you know, talking about whether we really are going to attempt to, basically, build a state here. And there's going to be a debate about this.

And, you know, I look at what happened in Somalia a couple days ago. You know, if you're really talking about going after the forces of international terrorism, that was a pretty effective way to do it—coming over the horizon, hitting an element of international terrorism, leaving, not leaving behind an infrastructure, and being able to have the same maneuverability as your enemy has.

On the other hand, we are moving forward with a different debate here, and we will have that debate. The question is not whether there is no military solution, which has sort of been agreed upon; it is whether the military component of this solution is one that is going to work. And I say all that because I would like to ask you, on your panel here, to look at this from two different perspectives. First, at what point do we reach a tipping point with the United States military, where the presence and the operations might actually be counterproductive? This has been raised before. But, there's an additional component to this that I have a good deal of concern on, and that is, to what extent, in Afghanistan, can we actually build a national army?

I've asked this question to General Petraeus and General McChrystal. I asked it to Admiral Mullen the other day. This is not a country that has had experience with a national army. It's a country with a lot of national pride. But, the best that I can see is that, at one period in the mid- to late-1900s, there was a national army of about 90,000. If you take the police with this, we're talking about 250,000.

So, on the one hand, at what point does our presence reach a tipping point, where it's counterproductive, where people believe that we are an occupying force, or whatever you want to put on it? And then, can we actually do the other piece of this, in terms of the history of the country?

And, Ms. Lockhart, I'd actually like to get your views on that, as a starting point.

Ms. LOCKHART. I do believe that there is potentially a point at which presence may be counterproductive, but I don't believe we've reached that yet; and I think the only way that can be tested or ascertained is through polling and observation of the population.

I believe, like Dr. Hosseini, that, on balance, while there are shades of narrow criticism that the presence is an occupation, those are very much in the minority, and the majority of the population seeks very much and hopes very much that the U.S. commitment remains, and the international partnership remains, for the long-term stability of the country.

In terms of the possibility of building national institutions, whether the army or other institutions, I believe it absolutely is possible, and the remarkable success of the efforts since 2001 to build up the Afghan National Army—I had the honor to observe the first battalion graduate and walk down the street, and it was welcomed literally with the cheers of the population. And the pride of the people in that institution was remarkable, because they deeply understand that it's through institutions like that that their daily needs, most basically their security, can be met. And we've seen that in the Afghan National Army and then across the different institutions where Afghans, with a minimal commitment to training and education, do rise to the challenge of managing their own institutions.

Senator WEBB. Thank you.

Ambassador Crocker, I remember you and I had an exchange several years ago with the situation in Iraq, and one of your strongly made points was that the Iraqis of all different ethnicities had come together in a national army. In fact, your point had been that, I think, more than 200,000 Shia had actually died fighting in the Iran-Iraq war. What are your thoughts about the situation with respect to Afghanistan?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, the fortunate thing for me, Senator, is that I represent no one but myself these days, so as uninformed as my opinions may be, at least I'm entitled to have them. And since you asked to express them, I do believe that what we have seen thus far shows us, with all of the shortcomings in terms of manpower, materiel, and even abilities, that the Afghans are capable of developing and fielding national forces; as I understand it, perhaps the army more so than the police, but even with the police.

And as you noted, sir, while Afghanistan has a history of challenges to central governments, it also has a history of a national military. And my sense is that Afghans are quite proud of the tradition of that military in the country's history.

So, I think it can be done. I think it is being done. But, as we saw in Iraq, this takes time. The early tests that—as you know, that the Iraqi security forces faced almost took them apart. So, I think that we and the Afghans have to be careful not to put more

of a burden on these developing forces than they can bear at this time. Like so many things in this part of the world, whether its Iraq, Pakistan, or Afghanistan, this will take time. And nowhere, I think, is that more the case than it is in the development of these security forces.

Senator WEBB. My time has expired, but I appreciate both of your answers. And, of course, the difficulty is the other side of that, that the more time we have with the size of the American presence, the more risk we have of being viewed in a different light. But, I thank you for your comments.

Thank you.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Lockhart, thank you for all the work that you've done in Afghanistan, and especially in the post-September 11th period, when you were there on the ground, helping to lay out the foundation on which we can move forward in Afghanistan.

You laid out four distinct options for governance in this post-election, but you didn't say whether you thought there was a preferred means of action. Do you think one of those options is preferable?

Ms. LOCKHART. I think the—well, thank you, for your kind words—I think the first two options I outlined, of letting the current governance arrangements continue unchecked, or that plus trying to build governance bottom-up while we have a vacuum, in essence, at the top, are not going to be desirable, and probably would not lead to success.

I think the two other options, one of accepting the victory of the incumbent, but putting in place very strict conditions—a roadmap and agreeing on benchmarks, particularly on financial accountability, and asking for some devolution of power, and putting in place checks and balances—would be one preferred option; and the other would be to go back to the drawing board, and putting in place a new transitional authority, which would probably govern for a 2-to-4-year period, and one of whose central tasks will be organizing a more robust set of elections next time, which will require, I think, this inquiry into what went wrong and what the institutions that are necessary to have a successful election, one of which will be a census.

Senator SHAHEEN. And does that run the risk of creating a perception that the international community is making the determination about the future of Afghanistan and sort of erasing the elections, even recognizing that the elections might be flawed?

Ms. LOCKHART. I think that option would only be possible if the ECC, which is a domestic Afghan——

Senator SHAHEEN. OK.

Ms. LOCKHART [continuing]. Institution would first rule that either one of the—one or more of the candidates, the process, or a certain number of the ballots were invalid. So, it would have to rest on that domestic determination. And then, a lot of care would have to be taken to ensure that the process moved forward in accordance with the Afghan Constitution; and there are provisions within the Constitution that would allow that to take place.

Senator SHAHEEN. OK. Thank you for that clarification.

Dr. Hosseini, this question is really both for you and for Ms. Lockhart, I think. And I, like Senator Webb, very much appreciate your books, and think that they're wonderful and have probably done as much as any policy in this country to make Americans care about what happens in Afghanistan. So, thank you for that.

What do you see happening on the ground, in terms of coordination of aid among the international entities that are in Afghanistan and the United Nations? And several of you have referenced that. And what should be done better to improve that coordination and to deal with the corruption and the fraud that seems to be happening too much there.

Dr. HOSSEINI. Thank you for your kind words. And I may have to defer a good chunk of this question to my more qualified colleagues on the panel. But, there's a perception in Afghanistan, among civilians, that of the billions of dollars that have come to Afghanistan, not a whole lot of it has reached the Afghans themselves. There's a sense of disappointment, that even though Afghanistan has been the focus of international attention now for several years, by and large, for average Afghans, the quality of life has not improved significantly. Most Afghans are still lacking for basic social services, the same as they were a number of years ago.

I will just say that, of much of the money that comes to Afghanistan, only a fraction of it ends up in the pocket of the Afghans themselves. So much of the money is spent on providing security for the foreign presence, the—within the aid organization and the bureaucrats—to paying the salary of, you know, consultants. Much of the resources and the services that are utilized in Afghanistan are outsourced and therefore don't provide opportunity and employment for the Afghans themselves. And, of course, much of the money bypasses the Afghan Government itself, kind of reinforcing the image of the government as sort of being an impotent bystander. And I think those are all issues that have to be addressed.

But, I'm going to defer to my other colleagues about more on the issue.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

I don't know—Ms. Lockhart, Ambassador Crocker, General Craddock, who would like to take a shot at that?

Ms. LOCKHART. Just a few observations.

I think it's a terribly important point, because I think the failure to coordinate aid has actually fed into the corruption within the Afghan institutions.

I think the first requirement is not being afraid of putting a robust set of conditions for aid, either through a World Bank IMF program or a U.S. or multilateral agreement. And central to that will be insisting on transparency, particularly in licensing and revenue, as well as expenditure and audits that should be released to the Afghan public.

Second is putting the Afghan budget and institutions central. The Afghan budget is the policy coordination mechanism on the ground. I think we're making a mistake when we ask the U.N. to coordinate. U.N. mandate is important. The U.N. cannot coordinate; it's the Afghan budget. And we need a roadmap for each ministry. We've got a roadmap for the Afghan National Army; we need the same type of roadmap for the other institutions.

And then, I think, we have got a coordination mechanism; it's the ARTF, the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which is managed by the World Bank, and it acts as a dual-key system on the flow of money. And using that, or developing a parallel type of trust fund for U.S. resources, would be essential.

And then where NGOs, U.N. agencies, or private companies are contracted, then I think we need to apply the same set of robust requests for transparency and accountability, which, to date, have not been in place.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Crocker, do you have anything that you want to add to that?

Ambassador CROCKER. No, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN. OK.

Thank you both, Ambassador Crocker and General Craddock, for your service, as well.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Senator Kaufman?

Senator KAUFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the ranking member for holding these hearings right now, right in—timely. I mean, I think this decision that's going to be made right now is one of the most important decisions we're going to be dealing with in a Senate where we're dealing with a lot of important decisions. And bringing the light to this thing is just—and having the panels we did—panels today and the panel yesterday have been excellent, just the right people. And so, I just want to—I cannot commend you enough for doing this.

And I want to thank everybody on the panel. I mean, just having the ability of listening to what you have to say is so helpful in trying to deal with this.

I just have a few questions. One of them is—it's mentioned by a number of Senators, and also in the popular press—that the Somalia raid is kind of a model for United States operations in Afghanistan. Is the Somalia raid a model for United States operations in Afghanistan?

General CRADDOCK. Thank you, Senator.

A complex question. I'm not sure it's a model. I think it's a tool. And I think it has already been going on in Afghanistan over the past several years, through the United States counterterrorism forces, not so much the NATO counterinsurgent capability, with significant results. But, again, with a hierarchy that's amorphous—cells operating, as opposed to a vertical hierarchy—it's very difficult to be able to make long-term gains, because someone always then steps up. However, it is an ongoing, day-to-day operation done very precisely. It's what you don't hear that's probably more important than what you hear.

Senator KAUFMAN. Great.

Anyone else?

Ambassador CROCKER. Senator, I think that's a very important question, that certainly is beyond my expertise to adequately answer, but it is, I think, worth posing to those in the administration more qualified.

My sense is that the Somalia model, if you will, probably cannot be successfully replicated in Afghanistan. I think the dynamics there are more complex. I also think, frankly, that given that the

ISAF in Afghanistan, General McChrystal, is perhaps the most capable special operations commander that this country has ever produced, that if he thought it could be done that way, I think we'd be seeing different sets of recommendations.

Senator KAUFMAN. Great. Thank you.

There's a discussion about expediting the elections, that Senator Wicker raised, and I think, obviously, that would be key to everyone. Does anyone on the panel—I met with Abdullah Abdullah last—2 weeks ago. I don't think—there's always a chance that he might throw in with Karzai, but I think it's remote. But, just for the sake of this question, can anybody think of any way to expedite the end of this election without considering that there's a—some kind of a coalition government?

Ms. LOCKHART. Senator, it's a very important question. I'm not sure there is a way to expedite it. I think there will be a tendency to allow the ECC to complete its investigations and then make a determination on whether the process has met the standards of a "fair enough" election. I think the only thing that could bring it to a resolution earlier would be the coming together within the Afghan political elite of enough of the candidates—critically, Abdullah and Karzai, but potentially others within the political elite and—who would agree to form a type of unity government.

Senator KAUFMAN. I mean, I think it's key that—I mean, this is the worst possible time for this to happen. So, if anybody comes up with any ideas—I hear a lot of talk about expediting it, but I've not heard a single person give us a way to, kind of, get to where we have to get to. So, I'd—if you come up with anything, I would—I would very much appreciate it.

Let's talk about the civilian surge for a second, because Senator Lugar's raised that a number of times, and it's really, really important. How—one of the problems is recruiting people—how do we improve recruitment of Civil and Foreign Service officers, to move away from—as we move away from reliance on contractors?

Ambassador CROCKER. Senator, if I could just take one element of that, that I—drawing from my experience in Iraq, we need more efficient mechanisms in government to be able to respond to complex contingencies like Iraq and Afghanistan. Simply put, there are not enough people, period—not enough people with the skill sets that are required in these contingencies—within the Foreign Service, either State or USAID. It requires a process to bring in able talent from other agencies and from the private sector. And that still, frankly, does not work very well. It's the—it's called the "31/61 process" and I can tell you that it's painful in the extreme to make that work—work quickly—getting the right people in the right places.

I know that the administration has put more emphasis on building up what's called SCRS within the State Department, as a means of providing a civilian reserve, if you will. I would applaud that. But, a great deal more needs to be done to put in place the structures that will allow an administration to identify and quickly bring to the field the numbers and the skill sets that simply do not exist within the established foreign affairs agencies.

Senator KAUFMAN. I think it's good you point out the difficulty of this. People kind of glaze over this. Senator Lugar's been talking

about this quite a while, and this is really key. If we're going to be fighting wars of counterinsurgency in the future—we just kind of glaze over this—it isn't there. You know, we're trying to get people now, and we're having a hard enough time in Afghanistan. But, planning down the road is really, really important.

Can I just ask you another question, kind of, on your experience in Iraq? And it's two things. One is, how is—we're trying to get the Taliban to come over, kind of like we did with the Sons of Iraq in Anbar province. Would you comment on whether you think that's possible in Afghanistan?

Ambassador CROCKER. I do think it's possible. Again, I'm not in a position to comment with any detail on the dynamics there. But, once again, I think we've got the right people in this fight. Both General McChrystal, of course, with his substantial experience in Afghanistan and in Iraq, where I had the privilege of serving with him; and then General Petraeus—in many respects, the architect of the Awakening strategy—of course, now has oversight of both campaigns. So, I have a high level of confidence that we do have the people engaged on this that can figure out what can be done and how to do it.

All of that said—and again, my colleagues, Ms. Lockhart and Dr. Hosseini, are far more qualified to speak to it—it is—it's going to be a very different and more difficult process. The Sunni insurgency in Iraq was not deeply rooted in time or in ideology. The Taliban, of course, are both.

Senator KAUFMAN. Thank you very much. And I want to tell you, I think everyone agrees that our success in Iraq was based on the people we had there, and obviously one of the very, very best people was you. And the people we have in Afghanistan—General McChrystal, Eikenberry, Rodriguez, McChrystal—we've got a good—Holbrooke covering the whole region—we've got a good team over there, too.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Kaufman.

Let me follow up on a few things, if I can. The—sort of a parallel to a couple of questions that Senator Kaufman was asking—but, on the issue of the Taliban, which is central to this—actually, before I get to that, I want to ask you, General Craddock, because it's important to our understanding of what the options are and the Taliban, as Supreme Allied Commander you were commanding NATO forces, and you're very familiar with the tensions within that block at this point. My sense is that we are losing our allies' enthusiasm for this effort and that a number of them—I won't go into the details here, but—have been very reluctant all along to engage. Their troops don't engage. And looking to them for additional support, here—I mean, I think, essentially, we're going to kind of be on our own, here, and I think we've got to kind of—you know. Is that a fair assessment?

General CRADDOCK. Senator, I think that's a fair assessment, from a military perspective. I would agree, there is unequal burden-sharing among the alliance with regards to those who will and those who won't. I do think, however, there's opportunity with NATO allies to ask for trainers in areas where it may not be as risky and they may have some political viability. I think they

should be asked for civilian surge capability. There's plenty of that in Europe. If you knock down the wall between NATO and the EU, you might be able to access a lot of that capability that we need there.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I'd like to examine—that's a good thought there, but I want to examine this attitude a little bit. Do they know something that we don't know?

General CRADDOCK. Well, I can't speak for them, in terms of what they know.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, but you've had these conversations. I've had these conversations, and you have too. There is an attitudinal difference about the threat. There's a threat-definition difference, isn't there?

General CRADDOCK. Indeed. They——

The CHAIRMAN. But, isn't that important for us to understand?

General CRADDOCK. Well, I think it's—I think it's been discussed here. In Europe, terrorism is viewed as a police issue when it's visited upon their people, and you deal with it then, as opposed to stopping it before it gets into your country. So, the military generally does not deal with terrorism to the extent that we do here because of the attacks.

The CHAIRMAN. But, I think their perception goes, actually, deeper than that; I think there is a sense—there's a different sense of, sort of, how you manage this over a period of time.

You're nodding your head, Ms. Lockhart. You want to share your perception, then?

Ms. LOCKHART. Um——

The CHAIRMAN. Your body language got you in trouble, here. [Laughter.]

Ms. LOCKHART. I think—twofold. I would agree that there is absolutely a waning enthusiasm amongst public opinion in Europe. I think that's partly because there has yet to be a credible articulation of exactly what the strategy is going to be, and particularly the failures in Helmand, in Britain, is infecting the public debate. And that's, again, partly because in Helmand there was not a credible articulation of a governance and development strategy. So, it remains open to convince Europe. I do believe the public opinion could be reconvinced if that strategy was articulated, because the——

The CHAIRMAN. Your strategy involves a pretty significant commitment of resources, investment, personnel, civilian side—I mean it really is a nation-building strategy.

Ms. LOCKHART. It is. And I believe that there will be more appetite in Europe and other countries for engagement on training, as General Craddock articulated, and on the civilian surge elements, particularly in areas like capacity-building and economic investment. So, a sensible division of labor, going forward, may be to look to support from allies, particularly in Europe and Japan, for that civilian type of assistance, recognizing that the United States will continue to bear the brunt of effort on the military side.

The CHAIRMAN. And, General Craddock, we're going to get some folks who are more, hopefully, operational, with respect to Afghanistan itself, as we go down the road, here. But, from the military perspective, in order to do the kinds of things that Ms. Lockhart,

and others, have talked about doing, in building the governance, building the—the capacity-building and so forth—you've got to have some security. But, is it possible to do the security without the kind of current engagement in civilian collateral deaths that we currently have, or is that a—are the insurgents always capable of guaranteeing that you have that, even if you don't want it? And is that a great danger, here?

General CRADDOCK. It's my judgment that, in irregular warfare, and given what we know about the insurgents, that they were always capable of arranging that situation. I can give you chapter and verse, over and over again, of operations and targeting that looked fine, but didn't turn out that way, for myriad reasons; but, again, the use of civilians as shields is very difficult to combat.

Now, having said that, I think we can continue to work to minimize. I think that the tactical guidance put into place by General McChrystal recently has gone a long way, and will continue to do that, to minimize that pushback.

If I may, a point that Ms. Lockhart raised. The British strategy in Helmand; the Dutch strategy in Uruzgan; the strategy here or there; the United States strategy in Paktika or in Nangarhar—one of the problems we face is the arrangement of NATO. Nations view their own provinces as a fiefdom—or provinces, as the case—unlike the United States which has a regional command, so they deal with that at the expense of dealing with the country as a whole. And it has caused us problems over time.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree with that. I think one of the most significant problems has been the absence, for almost 8 years, of unified command and a unified strategy. In fact—and people need to understand this; this is important as we think about Afghanistan—we have traveled this journey for almost 7 years without a strategy. There was sort of a—you know, just a continuum, at the expense of Iraq. And I think most people have agreed that troops were diverted, resources were diverted, focus was diverted. So, it has only been in these last months that people have begun to really hone in and say, "How do you adjust?"

The challenge, as I wrote, back last February, is the clock ticking, the amount of time that's been lost to the corruption, to the—you know, to the other things—and can you make it up?

And I want to come back to that for a moment, Ambassador Crocker, if I can. With respect to the Taliban, you made a very perceptive observation in answer to Senator Kaufman's question, and you noted the historical cultural depth of the Taliban versus the insurgency in Iraq. There are different—however, we keep hearing about, sort of, different shades of Taliban. And can you share with us, perhaps, you know, to what degree can the Taliban be sort of divided, in a way, here? Can you—is there a diplomatic, slash, civilian ability to reach out to them and, in fact, give them something that they want more than being Taliban, and therefore isolating the really hardcore Taliban? Or are we dealing with a monolithic entity?

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, I would make a few observations on the methodology, if you will, and then perhaps Dr. Hosseini or Ms. Lockhart could—would have some comments more

on the nature of the Taliban as they see it, because that's not my area of expertise.

The principle we followed in Iraq was exactly what you suggest. It was talking to anyone who would talk to us, without regard to what they may have done to us in the past, trying to find splits, fissures, differences of view, people who would be susceptible to whatever blandishment we might offer, to break up an insurgency, if you will, to pull people either to our side or at least into the neutral zone. And we did that without spending a tremendous amount of time trying to figure out what ideological persuasion might exist here or there. We just kind of went at it. We—you know, the word—we got the word out that we're open for discussion.

It seems to me that a similar approach has great potential also in Afghanistan, because the Taliban is not a monolithic organization, they are not card-carrying members. There have to be many different motivations and levels of commitment, so it's by seeking ways to engage, to discuss—direct, indirect—that I think will find what the limits are of shrinking an adversary down to the smallest possible number of irreconcilables. As we put it in terms of Iraq, you want to reduce the number of people who absolutely have to be killed to the smallest number possible. And I think, again, the same methodology will work in Afghanistan.

But, my colleagues would be far more knowledgeable on the nature of what we're dealing with there.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you want to comment, either of you, on what—just quickly? I want to try to——

Dr. HOSSEINI. Sure. I agree with the Ambassador. The Taliban are not a monolithic movement, if they ever were. The term "Taliban" now refers to a cluster of different groups that more or less answer to different leadership. So, part of the challenge of—and again, I'm sort of out of my element here, but—just part of the challenge of negotiating with these people is that there's no—in the absence of clear leadership structure, it's difficult to determine who exactly you speak to.

And, in addition, at the present time, it seems to me, the Taliban have no incentive, really, to negotiate, because the perception is that they've managed to frustrate the coalition.

In addition, the United States would likely ask the Taliban to sever their ties to the more radical groups, like al-Qaeda; and they may be reluctant to do that. And the Taliban, in exchange, may say to the Afghan Government that, "We'll negotiate, but we need the foreigners to leave the country." And again, these are very difficult and challenging preconditions.

That said, I think that there's an opportunity to at least engage some of the more so-called "moderate" members of the Taliban. These would be the more Afghan, the more reconcilable elements. If there's a tradition in Afghanistan, it's switching allegiances. We saw that over and over again during the civil war in Afghanistan. And, if anything, Afghans are a pragmatic people, and if certain elements of at least the Afghan movement can be convinced that it's in their self-interest and in their pragmatic interest to come over to the other side, they may be interested in doing that.

But, I will say that, on my recent trip to Afghanistan, I spoke to a lot of people on the street, and my sense is that, by and large,

a lot of people, although they don't feel any—necessarily any kinship with the Taliban, they are in favor of some kind of negotiation between the West and the Taliban.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Lugar, do you have any more questions?

Senator LUGAR. No, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, I know we have to move on, but I felt guilty that I had not asked the doctor and the general a question. So, at the risk of delaying things—just two quick questions.

Doctor, I want to commend the work of UNHCR across the world. We held hearings, at the subcommittee level, on refugees in both Iraq and Pakistan, and I was very interested in what you said about the refugee challenge in Afghanistan. I guess I'd ask you this question: What's the short-term or the near-term challenge with regard to "reintegration" of Afghanis? Second, what is the likelihood that there's going to be a dramatic increase in the number of refugees in Afghanistan? Which becomes, in all refugee situations as I saw this firsthand on the ground in Pakistan, where I visited an IDP camp there—internally displace people were for the most part treated well, and seemed to be moving back to their communities. But, if it doesn't go well, you have both a humanitarian and a security problem.

Doctor, what is your sense of the increase that may occur in Afghanistan, in terms of the number of refugees; and second, the challenge of reintegration.

The CHAIRMAN. I'd just—before you answer, I need to go down to the Finance Committee for a few minutes on the health care thing, but I just want to thank the panel for your contributions today. It's been very, very helpful. We have a distance to go yet, but I think we're beginning to shed some light on it, and we're very grateful to you for taking time to be here today.

And I thank my colleagues.

And whoever wants to be last questioner, just close it out. Thanks.

Senator CASEY [presiding]. Thank you, Chairman Kerry.

Dr. HOSSEINI. Reintegration of Afghan refugees continues to be a very difficult challenge. And to put it in perspective, let's remember that Afghanistan, even in its heyday, ranked at or very near the bottom of the global index for human development. Now, put that country through 30 years of successive civil conflict that saw the destruction of virtually every meaningful institution, and then increase its population, in a span of 6 years, by 20 percent. I would propose to you that if we increased the population of even a developed nation, like France or the United Kingdom, by 20 percent—How would they be able to handle it? Frankly, it would be chaotic. But, in Afghanistan, the lack of public administration and lack of effective governance has allowed that to happen. And so, what we're seeing in Afghanistan, in regards to refugee reintegration, is the stresses and strains of a government that is sort of more or less buckling under the strain of reabsorbing the millions of people who have come back.

So, for the refugees who have come back, reintegration in Afghanistan is a serious challenge. For some, they have more or

less been able to resume their lives in a relatively settled fashion. But, for many refugees, they continue to face the lack of basic social services; foremost among those, land, shelter, jobs, and then water, education, and access to health facilities.

I believe that the era of spontaneous, voluntary return is over. We saw 5 million people coming from—since 2002. Last year, 280,000 Afghans returned home. This year, a fraction of that; only 50,000. The reasons for that have to do partly with the low absorption capacity in Afghanistan; partly with security, particularly the refugees who are in Pakistan or originate from the Pashtun belt and who have concerns about returning to the place of origin, where the insurgency activity is very strong; part of it has to do with lack of employment opportunity. This is particularly the case for the refugees in Iran, who have relatively better living conditions, and where there is—in Iran, they've been able to make a life for themselves.

So, 2.6 million Afghans remain still abroad; 1.6 million, roughly, in Pakistan, and 1 million in Iran. And it is far from clear whether, or if, they will return from Afghanistan. As I said—to Afghanistan—as I said earlier, 80 percent of those refugees who remain abroad have lived there for more than 20 years. They no longer feel like Afghans, for many of them. They feel no personal kinship with Afghanistan, they don't dress like Afghans, they don't speak like Afghans. And the idea of uprooting their lives and resettling to a remote region in that country is not particularly attractive to them. So, it's a major challenge for the Government of Afghanistan, for UNHCR, and the governments of Pakistan, but particularly with Iran, to negotiate and to come to a resolution as to the ultimate fate of the refugees.

As far as the increased number of refugees, we are seeing far more displacement than we were a few years ago. We are now—we have over a quarter of a million Afghans who are displaced. And the reasons for displacement within Afghanistan have to do partially with the conflict, particularly in the south and the southeast, where, again, the insurgency is strong. But, part of it has to do also with land dispute, with lack of economic opportunity, and so on and so forth. So, for the foreseeable future, I think this will be a challenge for UNHCR.

Senator CASEY. One of the more interesting parts of the challenge—or the results, I should say—in Pakistan was that you had about 80 percent of the internally displaced people, who were displaced because of the military conflict in places like the Swat Valley and other places go into homes. People would take them in, based upon both, I think, Pashtun tradition and the welcoming way that they bring people into their homes; and second, because of the experience of the 2005 earthquake. So, you had a 2 million-plus in Pakistanis who were displaced, 80 percent of them were brought into homes. So, maybe the challenge there was a little different than it might be in other places, including Afghanistan.

I know we don't have a lot more time—but, General, the last question is for you and then we'll wrap up. And you may not have an opinion about this yet, because it's about 24 hours—as we do in Washington, we want opinions on something that's barely out, but the administration has put forth, now, a draft, or at least a

starting point, on metrics, what they call "evaluating progress" with regard to Afghanistan, both military and nonmilitary. I know you may not have had a chance to review it yet, but do you have an opinion on what they've produced? And, if not, what's your sense of how we should go about that? Because we need people that have the kind of experience you have to weigh in on what metrics are valid, what metrics are ones that we should use. And we have to have a—I believe—"we," meaning the Congress, the administration, both—have to give a lot of frequent, frequent, frequent reporting on progress if we want to sustain support for any kind of an effort.

General CRADDOCK. Thank you, Senator.

I have not seen the metrics. I know that the—it's been a work in progress for some time. I am a strong supporter of metrics. What we have done to date, in my judgment, has been measure performance. How many miles or kilometers of road, how many children are in school, how many vaccinations? But, we haven't measured the effect of the performance. And these metrics have to go to the next step. What is working? How do we measure it? Do we measure what we can measure, because it's easy to measure, even though not relevant, or do we measure what's important, to determine the effect, and then reinforce success, stop failure, and find something else? NATO has struggled with this. They're still working on it. The ISAF forces are working on metrics.

I think we need to pull together some good analytical minds and determine—critically determine what it is we'll focus on, both in security, governance, and this development process. They all bleed over into each other's field. You can't get one without the other.

So, I will be looking for this closely. I think that it will behoove us, in the coming very near term here, to come to grips with this. The hard part will be going out, getting the data, and then the critical objective analysis.

Senator CASEY. I hope all four of you will weigh in on that as time goes by. We need your help.

Thanks very much.

This hearing is adjourned, unless Senator Kaufman has something else. We're all set?

Hearing adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF CLARE LOCKART TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD

Question. Ms. Lockhart, I strongly believe that we should help the people of Afghanistan combat corruption but it is not clear to me that our anticorruption efforts require—or necessarily benefit from—a large foreign military presence. Indeed our historical experience is that the exigencies created by large military operations, such as the rush of aid and contracting money, can create a war economy that actually feeds corruption. Do you agree that this is a possible danger in Afghanistan?

Answer. Senator, like you, I strongly believe that combating corruption is a high priority.

When I traveled across the country in 2002, I found a largely functional civil service (the Taliban had just been the top layer) of 240,000 civil servants, and my and

my colleagues' analysis showed that the standards of accountability were quite high in the culture; at the same time crime levels in society were very low.

Since then, corruption was allowed to set in and has festered. I believe this comes from 4 main sources:

First, the decisions in 2002 to 2004 not to ensure the budget of Afghanistan was resourced: as a consequence, for several years it was not possible to meet the basic salaries of the Afghan civil service, even at the base rate of $50 per month. As a result, many key officials left, leaving the system open to abuse; and others were most likely forced into corruption in order to survive.

Second, the decision to support the "regional strongmen" with large amounts of funding channeled to them as individuals, without calling them to account for their actions. This led to the revival of the 1980s/1990s culture of warlordism, where a small number of men considered themselves to exist beyond the realm of accountability and rule of law. I have personally witnessed several events where such-used intimidation and threats of actual violence, expropriating resources (usually in multiples of millions of dollars) from officials who were distressed at the notion of putting national resources in private hands. The Loya Jirgas of 2002 and 2003 saw the population bitterly complain about the representation of such people within a national discussion, given the violations they had committed against the population in general and women in particular. The commanders have now been encouraged and permitted to build up a huge power and resource base, as opposed to 2001 when they were down to their last supplies. Bringing them within the fold of rule of law is going to be an enormous challenge.

Third, the massive funding of contractors, NGOs and U.N. agencies, which create not only a war, but an aid, economy, which channels money outside the normal governance processes of making decisions through a budget process. At the same time, this rush creates hundreds of thousands of positions in parallel organizations for Afghans, usually as drivers, assistants, and translators, so they are attracted away from their frontline positions as civil servants, doctors, teachers, engineers, along with nurses, professors to become support staff. This wage inflation from overreliance on contracting is one of the primary causes of undermining Afghan capacity, by creating incentives for people to leave low-paid public jobs for high-paid private jobs as translators and drivers. There should be regulations to prevent such "poaching," both in DOD and DOS contracting.

Fourth, the failure to understand systems of accountability (positively) or systems of corruption (negatively) through the process of public finance, from revenue collection through to budgeting, payroll, procurement, payments, accounting and auditing. The World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund is in my view the main driver of accountability, as it operates through a dual key system requiring audit reports before reimbursements for expenditure can be made, and in my view this should be the main channel for U.S. assistance. I find that the work of the World Bank in building the crucial systems of accountability and partnering in the design of the national programs with the government is not well understood, and I would encourage the World Bank team urgently to provide information briefings to key Congress committees, staff, media and the think-tank community on how this operates.

If the civilian strategy is not firmly oriented around building Afghan sovereignty, then military operations and the provision of large funding streams going to thousands of different contractors risk creating exactly the situation you describe. I think this is what has happened, especially in the last 5 years, the good news is that I see real evidence that there is wide recognition of this danger by the administration, and in Congress, and a real desire to fix it. The question is, Do we have time to turn it around? I believe we must try.

The plans emerging from the ground team in Kabul seem to be to hold ministries to strict standards of accountability and transparency, and to keep flows of money from being expropriated.

In my view, the following steps would be essential and/or helpful:

1. Ensure that the budget of Afghanistan is robust and adequately funded to meet key expenses (with maximum contribution coming from Afghanistan's revenue).

2. Request IMF to prepare realistic revenue estimates for Afghanistan's future revenue, including different scenarios for different levels of corruption and political will to grow the economy and reduce leakage in revenue.

3. Ask IMF and World Bank to prepare a plan with strict conditionalities for fund disbursements based on standards of transparency and competent execution.

4. Prepare a framework for reducing project funding outside the Afghan budget, and preventing poaching of government staff. NGOs can be contracted through the Afghan budget; e.g., the National Health Program by which NGOs and private com-

panies are contracted province by province to provide services, but with clear standards for wages and accountabilities. This model should be generalized.

5. Mandate U.S. contributions to the U.N. be conditional on the U.N. revising its wage levels for support staff so that they are on a par with Afghan Government salaries. There is a procedure for doing this. It is astonishing that much U.S. funding is going to support programs where drivers, assistants, and translators are paid upward of $600 per month when teachers, doctors, nurses, and judges are paid a fraction of this. This must be urgently investigated.

6. Investigate and prepare ways for the CERP/PRT and USAID funding to be channeled so as to maximize Afghan job creation and the basis for small- and medium-sized construction industry. There are precedents from other countries where external financing was channeled to lay the basis for a construction industry most noticeably in Singapore of the 1960s and Spain of the 1970s. This requires moving to adopt Afghan Building code and working to nurture increase of the capacity of these firms. There are often four or five levels of subcontracting, resulting in very high overhead, with Afghans being the 4th or 5th link. It would be better for all parties if they were first, and if they do not have the capacity to do so, to focus on building this capacity. I have a concrete set of proposals as to how this can be done if there is interest in following up. Valuable efforts have been made for ISAF NATO troops would buy their water from Afghanistan. Such programs could be extended to food and other essential supplies, which could mitigate the negative effects of troop presence by using them as a market force to grow the Afghan economy.

Regarding the question of presence of troops; I believe that given our previous turning a blind eye to the growing power of the "regional strongmen" or warlords, and our previous badly managed campaign which has permitted the incursions of the Taliban into previously stable areas, the presence of the threat of force and the actual use of force is going to be necessary to create conditions of stability and rule of law. Commanders in the field must use their presence judiciously, not to "support the government" in a blanket way, but rather to understand which actors are committed to working within rule of law, and how to move toward reassertion of the culture of "laws not of men" that the population is demanding, which the Taliban, in a brutal and simple way, is currently claiming to offer, via dangerous parallel governmental structures (courts and police).

Question. Ms. Lockhart, there is a common assumption that we must provide security before we can do development. I think this fails to recognize that our military presence can actually create a violent backlash that undermines development efforts. Would you agree that this is a serious concern.

Answer. With regard to the first part of your question, I believe that "we must provide security before we can do development," is an assumption that should be challenged. I think this assumption has two flaws: First, that "we" can provide either security or development. If security or development are to be provided, it is Afghan institutions and people who will provide their own security, and development is an endogenous process which must be driven by Afghan people, processes and leaders. Many of the mistaken policies of the last years have been driven by the faulty conception that security and development can be done for a native population by international actors tout court. Having said that, given the deterioration in the situation to where we are today, the ANSF are not capable of providing security for the population, most (but not all) of Afghan ministries are not funded or equipped to provide social services on a large scale, and the Afghan political elite has now subverted the civil society that could have underpinned a vibrant economy. So the question now is this: given ultimately that there is agreement that it is Afghans and their institutions that will ensure the level of security and sustained economic growth, and indeed rule of law itself, how do a foreign presence, and a foreign exit, and foreign resources and advice, help establish the conditions for Afghan sovereignty to be responsibly exercised.

The second flaw in the "security before development thesis" is that security must precede development: in my view, development is inherently about processes of change—economic, social and political—through creation of institutions and organizations. Security and development are thus symbiotic and require each other. For example, to have an army, one must be able to have finance organizations—that have a budget and payroll to underwrite the costs—and a basic education and health system, and proper nutrition, to ensure there are viable recruits to that army, and a possible officer corps. In some cases, security can be achieved through societal compacts at the local level for groups to cooperate. This therefore points again to the need for a political process to be articulated that frames all efforts made.

I agree that there is a serious concern that military presence can prompt a backlash, or at least is being portrayed as an occupation by some actors. This is why it is imperative that the presence should not be framed as an occupation, nor should the presence be an occupation. To the extent that presence continues, my view is that the presence should be framed in line with the Bonn Agreement and U.N. mandates of 2001, which saw the presence of international actors including the U.N., as a global effort to assist the people of Afghanistan to establish a sovereign government so they can govern themselves. The participants of Bonn requested ISAF forces to provide stability while their own forces were being established. The legal basis for presence is extremely important as this informs the view of legitimacy of presence. What we need to do is to examine this basis, and once policy clarifications are made, to communicate this to the global and Afghan public. It is more likely that presence would provoke a backlash if that presence is perceived to be backing up a corrupt and predatory Afghan Government.

While the overarching framing is the most important factor, the second factor is the way that any troops actually operate on the ground. Initially, ISAF forces were strongly welcomed by the population. I personally witnessed many interactions where Afghans actively praised them and asked them to stay. Where ISAF, which then came under NATO command, were initially directed only at stability or peacekeeping operations, the OEF forces were initially a separate operation, directed at combating the Taliban. In my view, confusion came when the two operations were merged in 2006 and 2007, just as the Taliban reemerged, provoking need for use of force, without explaining to the population that ISAF/NATO would not only be doing peacekeeping but would now also be doing heavy combat operations. One option would be to separate the two missions with a clear demarcation, as it is indeed bewildering for the Afghan population that the same mission is engaged both in peacekeeping and offensive operations. The other is to face a reality that the mission is complex, and mixes various elements, but to compensate for this by explaining the rules of engagement clearly to the population. Now, the change in strategy through the McChrystal doctrine of protect the population and establish ANSF, while avoiding civilian casualties, is a clear and significant shift in strategy, matched by tactical guidance. McChrystal has also recently emphasized the necessity of good communications. If these two innovations can properly be operationalized, whereby troops win the trust of the population, then there will not be a backlash, or it will be small enough to be manageable. This is what has been discovered in former COIN campaigns. And indeed, if we are to ask Afghans to buy into a new political settlement, and turn their backs on the Taliban, for this request to be believable it would be imperative that they would be protected, either through Afghan or international forces.

Finally, if Afghan forces are to be credible, competent and trusted, then serious problems with the way they operate must urgently be addressed. The ANA needs to become more balanced, as it is perceived by Pashtuns as a northern-dominated institution, and the ANP are notoriously corrupt and often not aligned to upholding and enforcing rule of law.