

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**Chairman Richard Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Hearing on**  
**AFGHANISTAN**  
**STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION: STATUS UPDATE**  
**January 27, 2004**

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is pleased to welcome General James Jones, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and Ambassador William B. Taylor, Coordinator for Afghanistan of the Department of State, to assess the international effort to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan.

The new Afghan nation is in a fragile stage of development, but there are many reasons to be optimistic about its future. The Afghan people are experiencing new freedoms, and families are being reunited as refugees return from neighboring Pakistan, Iran, and elsewhere. The new constitution approved January 4, 2004, by the Constitutional Loya Jirga, provides all citizens of Afghanistan, men and women, equal rights under the law. Afghan women are going back to school and back to the workplace. They also are participating in the political process. The Constitution reserves 25 percent of the seats in the new lower house of Parliament for women, and the new Afghan Government Cabinet includes two women.

Afghanistan is experiencing important successes in education, health care, and the development of a market economy. New businesses are being established with grants and loans from the United States and the international community designed to jump start the economy. The completion of the initial stages of the Kabul-Kandahar Road is another sign of progress that brings hope to those who are dedicated to re-building Afghanistan.

Solidifying and expanding these successes, however, depends on making further progress on security. Southern and Eastern Afghanistan, in particular, are dangerous. The Taliban has been active on the Pakistan-Afghan border, and attacks on U.S. and Afghan forces, as well as on United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel are generating fear. If security is not achieved, international aid workers and others critical to the reconstruction of Afghanistan will not be able to function.

In addition, Afghanistan's presidential elections are scheduled to be held in June 2004, followed by parliamentary elections a year later. Yet, less than half a million voters have been registered to date out of an estimated ten and a half million. The United Nations Assistance Mission is moving to register voters as quickly as possible. We must overcome security and logistical deficiencies so that free and fair elections can take place on time.

With this in mind, our Committee is intensely interested in the progress of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The NATO and U.N. decision in late 2003 to expand the ISAF outside of Kabul was an important step toward improved security. The new Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, declared last week that Afghanistan is the "number one priority of the Alliance." The United States is grateful for the wide participation of our allies in the ISAF, which includes forces from 30 contributing nations. We want ISAF to be a multilateral success story that demonstrates the potential for NATO operations and international cooperation in post-conflict situations.

But for ISAF to be considered a success, members of the alliance must improve their commitment to the operation. ISAF deployments and missions have been delayed or downsized by staffing and equipment shortages. Eight Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been established outside Kabul. This is a step forward for security, but more teams are needed and the current teams must have the capability to operate extensively outside their bases. Only one of these teams – the German contingent in Kunduz – was established under the auspices of NATO. Of the remaining seven, five are run by the United States; one by the British; and one by New Zealand.

So far, the ISAF has only deployed 5,500 troops to Afghanistan, most of which remain in Kabul. Securing the country will require more. I was concerned two months ago when I read statements by Maj. Gen. Andrew Leslie, a Canadian who serves as deputy commander of ISAF. Gen. Leslie stated: "There are 1.4 million soldiers in NATO. Where are they? Why are so few countries stepping up to the plate. The left hand has made the commitment, but the right hand is not ponying up." He went on to say, "The status quo will only lead to failure." Numerous other observers also have expressed concern about the pace and scope of ISAF security efforts. Our allies must back up their ISAF commitments with sufficient resources, troops, organization, and political will.

Last October President Bush urged Congress to pass the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act to accelerate and expand our

stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The Congress responded, providing more than what was requested. A total of \$1.6 billion in American assistance is available for Afghanistan in Fiscal Year 2004. The Administration reportedly will seek an additional \$1 billion in assistance for Afghanistan in the Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request. This Committee has been supportive of funding for Afghanistan, and we are anxious to hear from our witnesses about whether these resources are adequate and whether they can be used efficiently and effectively to stabilize and rebuild the country.

Capturing Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists and destroying their infrastructure are only a part of what is required to win the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. The U.S. and the international community must not only deny the terrorists a base of operations, they must expose the destructiveness of the terrorists' ideology and their violent methods. Every day that Afghanistan moves closer to peace, freedom, tolerance, and economic viability, the terrorists are weakened.

Our witnesses today possess extraordinary expertise concerning our operations in Afghanistan. They provide us with an excellent opportunity to sharpen our understanding of the situation and to exercise the Committee's oversight role related to Afghanistan. We welcome our witnesses and look forward to their testimony.