

**Oral Statement of
General James L. Jones, USMC,
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before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Chairman Lugar, Senator Biden, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today in order to provide you with an update on NATO's role and mission in Afghanistan.

Before I begin my remarks on NATO's current operations in Afghanistan, I would like to highlight several major operations in which the Alliance is currently involved and in doing so, provide you with the strategic context and background against which all of our efforts in Afghanistan are balanced. Today the Alliance is engaged with some 38,000 troops deployed in missions and operations on three continents.

NATO Operations

NATO continues its mission in the Balkans, notably in Kosovo, where we expect the United Nations Status Talks to produce recommendations in the future. We retain strong and capable forces (16,000) in the province in order to ensure we maintain a safe and secure environment during these potentially volatile political negotiations.

Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR, NATO's only Article 5 mission, is our primary anti-terrorism operation in the Mediterranean. This operation aims to disrupt, deter and defend against terrorism on the high seas and over the past four years, it has proven a credible deterrent. This week, NATO achieved the historic integration, under NATO command and control, of the Russian Federation warship PITLIVIY into NATO's maritime operations.

In Iraq, NATO continues its training and equipping mission in support of Iraqi

Security Forces. Our main effort remains the training of army officers inside Iraq. From the Basic Officer Commissioning Course to War College classes, NATO is engaged in training the future leaders of the Iraqi Armed Forces. The second aspect of our mission in Iraq is to assist in the equipping of the armed forces and to date, NATO nations have provided arms and equipment ranging from small arms ammunition to T-72 tanks. Finally, the Alliance continues to provide training opportunities for Iraqi Security Force personnel outside of Iraq at national training facilities or NATO institutions such as the NATO Defence College in Rome and the NATO School at Oberammergau, Germany.

In Africa, we retain a small training mission in support of the African Union in Ethiopia in order to build capacity among African forces headquartered in Addis Ababa and Darfur. NATO will continue to provide strategic lift into and out of Darfur for the nations committing forces to the African Union Mission in Sudan.

Finally, we continue the development of the NATO Response Force, which is unquestionably the most transformational, operational capability we have in the Alliance. In preparation for the NATO Response Force's full operational capability, we recently completed a major deployment exercise to the Cape Verde Islands off the west coast of Africa as a proof of concept that NATO can rapidly deploy and execute operations in austere conditions at strategic distances. While we have made great strides in transforming the forces assigned to the NATO Response Force, long-term force generation for the NRF has not been fully resourced by the Alliance. As such, we may not be able to declare Full Operational Capability by 01 October as envisaged at the Prague Summit in 2002.

Turning to Afghanistan, NATO's International Stabilisation Assistance Force (ISAF) is the main effort of the Alliance, and is composed of 19,500 soldiers from 37 nations (26 NATO and 11 non-NATO nations). Today, approximately 1,300 personnel assigned to ISAF are from the United States. This number will grow significantly when the final stage of ISAF expansion – Stage 4 -- is

complete. Multi-nationality is a key characteristic and strength in ISAF and Partner nations are a significant presence and bring considerable experience.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

As previously discussed with this Committee, NATO's involvement in Afghanistan is not new. Beginning in 2003 with NATO's assumption of responsibility for Kabul, NATO has assisted the Afghan government in the maintenance of security; facilitated the development of government structures and extension of its control; and assisted the Government of Afghanistan with reconstruction and humanitarian efforts.

Lt Gen David Richards (UK Army) is currently the Commander, ISAF (COMISAF) and the senior NATO military commander on the ground. COMISAF is responsible for commanding all of the NATO forces in Afghanistan and works very closely with the Afghan Minister of Defence, the Afghan National Army and, to a lesser extent, the Afghan National Police. The position of COMISAF is scheduled to rotate in February 2007 to the United States lead.

The NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan is the NATO Secretary General's personal representative. The SCR's role in working with the Government of Afghanistan and the International Community to ensure adequate attention is being given to non-security issues. Both COMISAF and the SCR play a very close role in coordinating with the International Community, including the UN, EU, and Non-Governmental Organizations in Afghanistan.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Operations

As NATO has expanded throughout Afghanistan, we have established Regional Commands, Forward Support Bases and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams or PRTs throughout the country. These teams enable

NATO to increase ISAF presence and operate primarily on a permissive basis, concentrating on stabilization through the provision of a secure environment, allowing the International Community (IC) to reconstruct areas that might otherwise be inaccessible to them. The Government of Afghanistan has welcomed ISAF expansion and the tangible stability and reconstruction the PRTs bring to provinces.

Since I last appeared before the Committee, NATO has assumed responsibility for the Southern Region. Aware of the volatile security conditions in the Southern region, NATO nations moved into this region with robust rules of engagement and more forces than had previously been present under the Coalition.

With the transition of authority for Region South at the end of July, NATO's efforts have shifted from the primarily reconstruction and development oriented activities as found in Northern and Western Afghanistan to operations focused on counterinsurgency operations. Over the last sixty days, the opposing militant forces appear to be testing NATO to see if it has the will and the capability to stand and fight, and the evidence so far is that the answer is overwhelmingly "yes." This past weekend, NATO concluded Operation MEDUSA, an operation designed to defeat insurgents located in Kandahar Province in order to establish the conditions for reconstruction and development activities to move forward in the Province. The countries involved in operations in Southern Afghanistan (Canada, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Romania, the United States, Denmark, Estonia, and Portugal) have performed extraordinarily well.

While we have been engaged in offensive operations almost continuously since assuming responsibility for Region South, I am convinced that the solution in Afghanistan is not a military one. We are working with the International Community and the Karzai government to make sure that our military efforts are matched very quickly with reconstruction and development activities in order to meet the expectations of the Afghan people. It has been clear from the outset that progress in education, agriculture, economic

development, public services and health care has to go hand-in-hand with providing a stable, secure environment. The Afghan authorities and ISAF are now focusing on the key task of ensuring that reconstruction and development can take place, in accordance with the priorities identified by the local authorities themselves.

Afghan National Army / Afghan National Police

One of the most important aspects of long term security is the development of Afghan National Security Forces—both the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) is about 30,000 strong and is playing a vital role in the security of Afghanistan. The US commitment to produce 50-70,000 ANA is essential. NATO nations recognize the importance of this mission and have begun fielding NATO Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams or “OMLTs” that are similar to and will replace US Embedded Training Teams (ETTs).

Currently, 15 NATO OMLTs have been offered by Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs) with 7 completely fielded. Additionally, NATO is working on a proposal to provide additional equipment and training to the ANA. This effort will be similar to our efforts in Iraq and will be in addition to US ongoing efforts to train and equip the ANA. The more rapidly we can build a capable and sufficiently robust ANA, the faster we will set the conditions for success.

ISAF's contribution to Afghan National Police training remains within means and capabilities as cited in our Operations Plan. Progress continues to be made on ANP pay. A trial ANP Salary Payment program seems to have been a success; with all police officers being paid 100% of their salary at an Afghan operated banking facility. The intention is to expand the program where the banking capacity exists. This has, in our opinion, had a positive impact on the ANP.

Judicial Reform

Closely linked to ANP development is judicial reform. While judicial reform is not an ISAF task, ISAF cannot be successful unless the rule of law is seen as working effectively and swiftly. Although some progress has been made in judicial reform, the courts and prosecution remain distrusted, corrupt, and resource-starved. One of the problems with judicial reform is the low pay of prosecutors, which make them susceptible to corruption. Currently, a top and considerably less than the Taliban are paying local youths to support their military operations. With such disincentives, the temptations for corrupt practice will continue.

Counter Narcotics

Finally, we must tackle the problem of narcotics. Afghanistan need not be a narco-state. The parts of Afghanistan currently producing the largest poppy crops are those that traditionally did not grow poppies. We need to find the means to ensure farmers can economically grow and sell legal produce.

Preliminary results of the 5-year counter-narcotics programme for the 2005-2006 growing season indicate a dramatic increase in opium production and hectares under cultivation. The headline figures show a rapidly deteriorating situation, particularly in the southern provinces. The figures produced by the UN support warnings from 12 months ago that the drug trade in the south, and particularly in Helmand was increasingly aligning itself to the insurgency.

As well as being able to use the opium issue as a means of gaining support from farming communities, there was a clear financial imperative for the insurgency. Potential revenues will have given their cause a considerable boost, considering that indications show that money is the primary motivation for their fighters and allows the insurgents to purchase arms and ammunition.

The Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN) has established five Counter Narcotics (CN) working groups in an attempt to “operationalise” the Afghan National Drugs Control Strategy (NDCS). Headquarters ISAF staff is represented on four of these working groups. While the National Drug Control Strategy is aligned with the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), it is clear that the Government of Afghanistan must do better in combating drugs. The Alternative Livelihoods (AL) programme should go hand in hand with the efforts in eradication and the poppy elimination programme (PEP). Although many programmes are ongoing, farmers complain of inadequate compensation which undermines the programme’s credibility. More “cash for work” projects must be started, new agriculture techniques should be implemented and infrastructure for irrigation must be available, together with material resources. For the Counter Narcotics initiative to succeed the Alternative Livelihoods programme must be connected to the wider development efforts in support of the ANDS and given greater priority. Simply replacing one crop for another may not be sufficient to give a previously narcotics-based local economy the support structure needed to fully develop or even survive without extensive assistance.

International Cooperation

There is a need for ever-closer co-operation and coordination between ISAF, the Government of Afghanistan, the other nations involved Security Sector Reform as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations operating in the country.

President Karzai has recognised this and created a small Policy Action Group (PAG) to act as a key policy and decision-making body. This body is Afghan-led and chaired by the President. The PAG strives to coordinate the actions of the government / International Community to achieve mutual support and much greater effect than could be achieved independently. The PAG is designed to reach down to the provincial, district and community level in order to provide integrated programmes to implement policy and serve the interests

of the Afghan people. We believe that with the full and active support of the International Community, this initiative can have a positive and long-lasting effect.

Conclusion

In conclusion there has been dramatic progress throughout Afghanistan over the past five years. Through the efforts of the International Community, Afghanistan should no longer be considered a failed state but rather a fragile state. Even with this progress, efforts must be significantly increased if we are to ensure long term success. As NATO takes responsibility for the security of all of Afghanistan, the leadership role and the resourcing role of the United States remains as important as it has ever been. With this continued support, I believe that NATO will ultimately set the conditions for Afghanistan to continue its development.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my comments.