

OPENING STATEMENT
TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

BY

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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 COUNTERNARCOTICS 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.

WITH 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 RESPONSIBILITY 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 COUNTERNARCOTICS OPERATIONS OR ACTIVITIES – TO INCLUDE ERADICATION OF POPPY CROPS. WHAT WAS PERMITTED WAS SUPPORT TO AFGHAN COUNTERNARCOTICS FORCES . WITHIN 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 UPWARDS OF \$200 MILLION NARCO DOLLARS 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 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 OF 2008 -- SOME 18 MONTHS LATER – THAT NATO – VIA A DEFENSE MINISTERIAL MEETING – APPROVED THESE ADDITIONAL AUTHORITIES. THE MINISTERS CONCLUDED THAT THE PREPONDERANCE 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, PRE-CURSOR 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 COUNTRY-WIDE. SECONDLY – 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. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR QUESTIONS.