

Testimony of Karl W. Eikenberry
Ambassador-Designate for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
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Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you as the nominee for the office of Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I'd like to thank President Obama and Secretary Clinton for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I would be proud and honored to join the ranks of United States Government personnel serving throughout Afghanistan. And I will look forward to consulting you regularly and hosting you in Afghanistan often.

I would like to thank Senator John Warner and Senator Daniel Inouye for their generous words of introduction.

In turn, I would like to introduce my spouse, Ching, seated behind me. Her unwavering support, as well as that of my entire family, has allowed me to pursue a career of national service. I would also like to mention my mother, Mary Drucilla, whose health restricts her to bed, but is keeping watch on me today from her care center in Raleigh, North Carolina, courtesy of television. This is a big moment for her and a humbling one for me.

If confirmed, I will assume with respect this great responsibility, conscious that success in both Afghanistan and Pakistan is in America's vital national security interest. Afghanistan is where the cold-blooded September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States were conceived and directed. Even as we speak, al Qaeda and their allies operate inside Afghanistan and from across the border in Pakistan, where they daily plan mass attacks against the United States, Europe, South Asia, the Afghan state and people, and Pakistan itself. They seek to create fear and chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to regain the territorial control that allowed them to so horrifically overturn the peace and tranquility of our Homeland

seven years ago. The collective purpose and unswerving mission of our Nation, the Afghan people, our NATO Allies, and indeed the international community, are to act decisively, so that our children and our grandchildren will never endure such acts of terrorism in their lifetimes.

I am proud of the almost forty years of service to my country that has taken me from West Point to infantry and political-military assignments in the United States, Asia, and Europe. Afghanistan has been at the center of my career since 9-11 when the terrorist-commandeered aircraft crashed into the Pentagon just below the office in which I was working. You have the records of my subsequent service during two different assignments in Afghanistan from 2002-2003 and again from 2005-2007. During the past two years, serving at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, I have remained deeply engaged in the Afghanistan mission. Throughout my time in Afghanistan, I led and worked with courageous American civilians and servicemen totally committed to defending our Nation under the most difficult and dangerous conditions. My professional experiences in Afghanistan have reinforced what I have learned throughout my career – that it is the coordinated application of diplomatic, economic, and military means, anchored by effective strategic communication, that delivers lasting success when dealing with international security threats and challenges.

The situation in Afghanistan is increasingly difficult. Time is of the essence. There are areas of instability and poor governance inside the country and threatening dangerous terrorist sanctuaries beyond its borders. Within these spaces, extremists try to exploit the weakness of the existing political system to impose their own vision of social order characterized by brutality and barbarism. There is no silver bullet and no quick, cheap, or easy solutions. There is no substitute for more resources and sacrifice. Nevertheless, I believe with the President's leadership and direction, and the support of the Congress, we can and must foster conditions for sustained success in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

There is no exclusively military solution to the issues we and our partners confront in Afghanistan. If confirmed, I will work closely with military commanders and relevant Government departments and agencies to ensure that all elements of

national power are brought to bear. I will ask for your support to provide the resources that will make such an effort possible.

One of my primary goals will be to integrate civilian and military strategies, capabilities and activities on the ground, working closely with the NATO International Security Assistance Force (NATO-ISAF) command. Our clear, hold, build, and sustain strategy depends upon protecting the Afghan people. At a minimum, this includes providing continuous security, enhanced governance and rule of law, and a sustainable legitimate economy. It requires delivering the comprehensive approach that effectively combines military and civilian capabilities.

Our national efforts in Afghanistan require the commitment of a wide range of civilian expertise to mentor judicial branch professionals, train school administrators and teachers, develop an agricultural system, and facilitate the growth of small and medium business enterprises to reduce the numbers of unemployed who are easy recruitment targets to the ranks of violent nihilistic extremism. In order to attract the best and brightest civilian personnel, we must recognize their service and support their professional development with greater vigor.

It is important to remember that while success in Afghanistan and Pakistan is vital to U.S. national security interests, it is also an urgent global security concern, with associated international commitments and obligations. The United Nations has a significant and comprehensive development mandate in Afghanistan, which has just been renewed unanimously by the UN Security Council. NATO leads the UN-mandated ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Many international organizations and actors - the European Union, the World Bank, and numerous superb NGO's - to mention only a few - are also present. We expect that our partners will join our Dutch hosts and the Afghan government in The Hague on March 31 to re-invigorate our shared commitment to Afghanistan. We will re-double our efforts to gain additional contributions from our Allies and the international community in areas where it is reasonable and essential for them to do more.

Critical to our collective progress is helping the Afghans strengthen and expand both their National Army and Police so that they have the essential capability to secure their own country.

The Focused District Development (FDD) program is the centerpiece of our efforts to develop a reliable and capable Afghan police force in troubled and insecure districts. Such measures, coupled with commensurate governance, rule of law, and rural development initiatives, show promise. However, in the absence of sufficient international and Afghan Army forces, police mentors, and complementary aid measures, there will be no lasting success. The way ahead is clear, but the resources to date have been regrettably insufficient.

It is well understood that we must strongly encourage and support the Afghan people to establish accountable, sustainable, and effective governance. This includes helping them build the capacity to deliver essential government services and rule of law, including continued development of traditional forms of dispute resolution to ensure protection for the rights of the Afghan people, especially women. Security against terrorists and criminals is essential, but so too are justice and equity for all. Afghans must feel a beneficial and protective presence from a legitimate government from urban centers to the remotest villages.

The United States, our international partners, and most importantly, the Afghans, must work to reduce corruption and strengthen the rule of law. Without real progress on these issues, success will be very difficult to achieve. We need to expand training and education for Afghan judicial and law enforcement officials who are dedicated to serving their people's access to justice and protection.

Today's sobering reality is that Afghanistan supplies more than 90 percent of the world's illicit opiates. The corrupting effect of drugs and the steady revenue stream provided by the narcotics trade fuel the insurgency and are a scourge, eroding Afghan aspirations for security, government probity, and economic development. We must acknowledge that the drug trade also affects Afghanistan's neighbors, who suffer from high rates of addiction and narco-trafficking associated crime and violence. Accordingly, a coordinated and cooperative regional approach is essential to counter this growing threat.

With Special Representative Richard Holbrooke and other key players, if confirmed, I will review our counter narcotics policy as a matter of the highest urgency.

Afghanistan's low revenue base, excessive corruption, high poverty, and lack of economic and social services infrastructure present formidable challenges, yet they are not insurmountable. Our foreign assistance has supported gains in Afghan society. To illustrate, infant mortality has dropped 22%, there is increased access to quality health care for Afghans living in rural areas, an impressive 5.8 million children have been enrolled in schools since the ousting of the Taliban, and power generation is increasing with hope for the provision of continuous electricity in Kabul later this year.

However, there must be better coordination between the various international donors to avoid duplication of efforts, there must be better prioritization of initiatives, and more aid must be channeled to the eastern and southern provinces where insurgency, narco-trafficking, and corruption are rife. Even more important, assistance must be directly targeted to the Afghan people, fostering the capacity for civic society development and enhancing their standards of living. Currently, far too much development money is being spent on costly overheads - namely foreign consultants, contracts, and security expenditures.

On August 20th, Afghanistan will hold its second presidential and provincial council elections. For the first time in their history, the Afghans are leading the preparations for the elections. It is important that these elections be fair and free of intimidation, demonstrating to the Afghan people and the world that they are fully capable of exercising their electoral rights of choosing those who will govern them. The United States is committed to supporting the Afghans in pursuit of this goal.

Much has been said recently regarding the potential for reconciliation between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. The United States will continue to support an Afghan-led process, seeking to encourage Taliban and other insurgent groups to lay down their arms, commit to supporting the Afghan Constitution and cut all ties to al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups.

The Administration is emphasizing a regional approach to the security challenges in both Afghanistan and Pakistan based upon their obvious linkages. This has been highlighted with the appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. If I am appointed as Ambassador, I will work closely with him and colleagues within the region to support related diplomacy.

I will close with a few words directly to the people of Afghanistan. It is evident to me after having the privilege of serving in your country that you share with Americans and all peoples of the world an overwhelming desire to live in peace with dignity. With our support, you strive with your own unique talents and steady determination, to create accountable governance, a patriotic and responsive army and police that serve to protect you, access to justice, healthcare and education, and growing opportunities to provide for the livelihood of your families and proud nation in honorable ways. After three decades of war and turmoil, you desire to fully reclaim your Nation. When you achieve your goals, international terrorists, narco-trafficking criminal gangs, and militant extremists will find no witting safe haven. This is where your interests, America's interests, and indeed those of the region and the world come together. Your success is our success, and you are worthy allies.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will be deeply grateful for your continued support and advice. I fully understand the challenges I face now and in the years to come. I am committed to working with Congress to ensure effective communication and coordination of our policies and programs.

I again thank the President, Secretary Clinton, and the Senate for this opportunity. I would be greatly honored and humbled to serve.

