

Statement of
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Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Before the 111th Congress
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Chairman Kerry, Senator Lugar, distinguished members of the committee, it is my privilege to testify on our strategic partnerships with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

I set three priorities for the U.S. military upon becoming Chairman that continue to guide our efforts. First, we must continue to improve stability and defend our vital national interests in the broader Middle East and South Central Asia. Second, we must continue efforts to reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our Armed Forces. Third, we must continue to balance global strategic risks in a manner that enables us to deter conflict and be prepared for future conflicts. The three strategic priorities are underpinned by the concept of persistent engagement, which supports allies and partners through programs abroad and at home and which must be led by and conducted hand-in-hand with our interagency partners to achieve sustainable results. These three priorities all contribute to our Nation's ability to build and sustain enduring relationships with our Pakistani and Afghan partners.

Regional Adjustments

In Afghanistan and Pakistan we are providing additional resources to address the increase in violence we have seen over the past year. The strategic goal as outlined by the President on March 27, 2009, is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its extremist allies in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country. As that strategy was being developed in consultation with our NATO Allies and other partners, we began responding to

conditions on the ground by reinforcing the International Security and Assistance Force with some 17,700 troops, the majority of which will arrive by this summer. Our aim in Afghanistan is to check the momentum of the insurgency, train additional forces, and ensure security for the Afghan national elections in August while in Pakistan we will work with the Pakistani military to further develop their counterinsurgency skills and build stronger relationships with Pakistani leaders at all levels.

The main effort is Afghanistan, though our residual footprint in Iraq will remain larger than in Afghanistan until well into 2010. The strategic environment we face beyond these ongoing conflicts is uncertain and complex, particularly in South Central Asia. In the near term, we will maintain focus on threats to our vital national interests and our forces directly in harm's way. Increasingly, the greatest mid-term military threats will come from transnational concerns – the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology, transnational terrorism, competition over energy, water, and other vital resources, natural disasters and pandemics, climate change, and space vulnerabilities.

The global economic crisis has obviously affected South Central Asia, which, on top of existing conditions, increases the likelihood that internal strife, virulent nationalism, manufactured crises, or state conflict may generate additional crises. Economic concerns will increasingly be the lens through which we – and our partners and competitors – filter security considerations. Many nations may decrease expenditures on defense and foreign assistance, thus making the pool of collective resources we have to address challenges smaller. We will work through our military-to-military contacts to address this tendency directly and help to coordinate priorities, emphasizing that we are all bound together in this global economy.

South Central Asia

Given its strategic importance and our vital national interests, the United States will continue to engage in South Central Asia – as a commitment to friends and allies, as a catalyst for cooperative action against violent extremism, as a

deterrent against state aggression, as an honest broker in conflict resolution, and as a guarantor of access to natural resources.

Attaining our goals in this critical region requires time, resources, patience, and endurance. Most of the challenges in the region are not military in nature and can only be met successfully through development and political leadership from within. Our role remains one essentially of consistent, transparent partnership building. These actions send an unmistakable message to all that the U.S. remains committed to the common good, while steadily expanding the sets of partnerships available to address future challenges.

Central to our efforts in South Central Asia is the relentless pressure we will maintain on al-Qaeda and its senior leadership. Al-Qaeda's narrative will increasingly be exposed as corrupt and self-limiting. Though too many disaffected young men still fall prey to al-Qaeda's exploitation, I believe the populations in the region will ultimately reject what al-Qaeda offers. The U.S. military's task is to partner with affected nations to combat terrorism, counter violent extremism, and build their capacity to shoulder this same burden.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are key partners in the fight against al-Qaeda and militant global extremism and must be understood in relation to each other. Afghanistan requires additional resources to counter a growing insurgency partially fed by safe havens and support networks located within Pakistan. Additional U.S. troops will conduct counterinsurgency operations to enhance population security against the Taliban in south/southwest Afghanistan and to accelerate and improve training and mentoring of Afghan security forces. As in Iraq, our troops will live among the population. We must make every effort to eliminate civilian casualties, not only because this is the right thing to do but also because it deprives the Taliban of a propaganda tool that exploits Afghan casualties and calls into question U.S./NATO endurance and effectiveness in providing security. Although we must expect higher Alliance casualties as we go after the insurgents, their sanctuaries, and their sources of support, our extended security presence must – and will – ultimately protect the Afghan people and limit both civilian and military casualties. Our troops will integrate closely with

Afghan forces, with the objective of building Afghan security forces that are capable of assuming responsibility for their country's security.

We expect the reinforcements to have the most pronounced effect over the next 12-24 months. Security gains can only be assured when complemented by development and governance programs designed to build greater self sufficiency over time. Our commanders in the field can lay some of this groundwork through the proven Commanders Emergency Response Program to start smaller projects quickly, but these projects can not compensate for the larger, enduring programs required. A temporary boost in security that is not matched with commensurate political and economic development will not only fail to generate faith in the Afghan government and fail to convince Afghans of our commitment, but also fail to accomplish our objectives. Over time, these objectives will be met more through civilian agencies and non-governmental organizations, with a lighter military presence. Getting to that point, however, requires that military forces generate the security required for political and economic initiatives to take root.

Pakistan is crucial to our success in Afghanistan. In my nine trips to Pakistan, I've developed a deeper understanding of how important it is that we, as a Nation, make and demonstrate a long term commitment to sustaining this partnership. In my military judgment, the programs outlined in the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 can serve as an important demonstration of our Nation's enduring commitment to the government and people of Pakistan. The bill's long term approach, extending over the next five years, can help to allay the fear of abandonment that I have encountered during my interactions with Pakistani leaders. These programs, focused on civilian projects, will be essential complements to the programs we have underway with our military counterparts. It is essential that we have an expansive program of civilian assistance alongside our military assistance to the government of Pakistan. We look forward to working with Committee to ensure that this proposed legislation best positions us to achieve our strategic goals. In my military judgment, I also believe the Reconstruction and Opportunity Zone legislation the President has asked Congress to pass is an accompanying program which can stimulate badly needed

jobs in Pakistan's troubled border region as well as in Afghanistan. These jobs would encourage legitimate livelihood alternatives for economically vulnerable young men and help counter the illicit and destabilizing income options that are now prevalent.

We are taking multiple approaches to rebuild and strengthen relationships and address threats common to both of our nations. One key approach in the near term is to help Pakistan's military to improve its overall – and specifically its counterinsurgency – capabilities. Beyond the trainers we will continue to provide, the Pakistani Counterinsurgency Capability Fund, Foreign Military Financing and Coalition Support Funds provide us the means to address this issue directly, and I ask the Congress to support these initiatives and provide the flexibility to accelerate their implementation. We will ensure that greater accountability measures are in place so that these funds go where they are intended to go. These programs will help the Pakistanis take continued action to combat extremist threats in western Pakistani territories which will complement the reinforcement of troops and special operations efforts in Afghanistan to maintain pressure on al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership. We will also be well served by a substantially larger International Military Education and Training program with Pakistan, to help enhance and forge lasting mil-to-mil relationships. I endorse a similar approach for and with our interagency partners, and I fully support the building of the Civilian Response Corps, which could be of considerable use to our diplomats in South Central Asia. Achieving the objectives of any campaign requires increased emphasis not only on fully developing and resourcing the capacity of other U.S. agencies (State, USAID, Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce and so forth), but also on increasing our Nation's ability to build similar interagency capacities with foreign partners.

Al-Qaeda has expressed the desire for WMD and their intent to strike our homeland is undisputed. Consequently, the nexus between violent extremism and the proliferation of WMD, most dangerously in South Central Asia, remains a grave threat to the United States and our vital national interests. The defeat of al-Qaeda would significantly diminish the threat from this nexus, but does not

fully remove it given the conceptual blueprint already established for other extremists. We will continue to support national efforts to counter, limit, and contain WMD and missile proliferation from both hostile state and non-state actors. We will also team with partners inside and outside the region to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen regional governments' confidence that we can address the WMD threat. To this end, I remain satisfied that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are secure and that Pakistan's leadership and military are intensely focused on this issue. We have worked together closely and share the same strategic concerns, namely that this threat requires vigilance for the duration, given the magnitude of damage that could be wrought by even a single incident. We both recognize that we can never take the duty to safeguard nuclear weapons and material for granted.

In all, we must recognize the limits of what can be accomplished at what price and at what pace in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. This will be a long campaign. In keeping with the President's pledge to hold ourselves accountable, the interagency is working to develop measures of effectiveness to help us measure progress in both countries. We do understand the sensitivity to these measures our partners have, but our Nation's efforts also make it clear to them that we are committed to providing sustained, substantial commitment. Progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be halting and gradual, but we can steadily reduce the threats to our Nation that emanate from conditions in those countries. We are taking steps now to move additional troops into place, to refine the command structure, and to benefit from the pertinent counterinsurgency lessons we have learned thus far as we move forward with our Afghan, Pakistani, interagency, and international partners in accomplishing the strategic goal directed by the President.

Of particular importance in accomplishing this goal is India, which has emerged as an increasingly important strategic partner of the United States. The historic regional security dynamics between Pakistan and India complicate an already complex situation. We have seen some progress in transparency and timeliness of communications between the two nations, particularly in the

aftermath of the attacks in Mumbai last November. To the extent that we can continue to assist our two partners in resolving points of potential conflict and cooperating to address extremist threats to both nations, the better will be the effects of our actions already underway in South Central Asia.

Conclusion

In providing my best military advice over the past 18 months, one important point I have made, consonant with Secretary Gates, is that our military activities must support rather than lead our Nation's foreign policy. Our war fighting ability will never be in doubt. But we have learned from the past seven plus years of war that we serve this Nation best when we are part of a comprehensive, integrated approach that employs all elements of power to achieve the policy goals set by our civilian leaders. This approach is crucial in South Central Asia. To this end, I believe we should fully fund the State Department as the lead agent of U.S. diplomacy and development, an action that would undoubtedly resonate regionally and globally. This approach obviously requires the backing of a robust military and a strong economy. As we win the wars we are fighting and restore the health of our Armed Forces, the military's approach will increasingly support our diplomatic counterparts through the persistent engagement required to build networks of capable partners. By operating hand-in-hand with partners and integrated with the interagency and non-governmental organizations, we will more successfully protect the citizens of this Nation.

On behalf of our service members, I would like to thank Congress for the sustained investment in them and for your unwavering support in time of war.