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Senate Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate

Hearing on:
“Afghanistan: In Pursuit of Security and Democracy”
October 16, 2003
216 Hart Senate Office Building

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak about the challenges in Afghanistan, and thank you especially for the continued leadership and commitment you have demonstrated on this important issue.

I have just returned from Afghanistan last week. Mercy Corps had until recently worked without serious incident in Afghanistan since 1986, under the chaos of the mujahedin and under the rule of the Taliban. But just in the last ten months, Mercy Corps alone has had two staff members killed, four staff members kidnapped, gunfire sprayed at one of our vehicles, two cars burned and a bomb lobbed at one of our sub-offices.

Other agencies have had similar experiences, as since September 2002, armed attacks against the assistance community have gone from one a month to a current average of one every two days. Ten aid workers have been murdered since March.¹ And I have in hand the latest 15-page weekly summary from the NGO security network summarizing the many bombings, kidnappings, robberies and school burnings that don't make it into the headlines. Night letters are posted at mosques warning communities not to cooperate with western aid agencies and threatening them not to attend the funerals of those killed while doing so.² On October 6th, a notice was posted at two mosques in Kandahar City warning that all local staff members working for any international organization have a deadline of six days to resign from their jobs.

¹ Barbara Stapleton, ACBAR Security meeting, October 2, 2003, Kabul

² Afghanistan Non-Governmental Organization Security Office (ANSO) Weekly Situation Summary, Report Number – 038/03,

Currently half of the country's 32 provinces have areas deemed high risk for aid work, according to UNAMA. It is in the best interest of a confluence of bad actors – poppy growers, Taliban and warlords -- to keep the country destabilized. And as increasing parts of the country are declared to be no-go zones by both national and international assistance workers, communities are left with decreasing confidence in the future of a new Afghanistan.

On June 17th, more than 80 NGOs issued a call for expanded International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), citing the chilling impact of insecurity on the ability of Afghan families to invest in their own future, on the reconstruction progress and on the process of elections and voter registration.

Of particular concern is the impact of this rising insecurity on the Bonn Process, which calls for a new constitution and elections by June 2004. Elections require an environment free from violence, intimidation and coercion. Large parts of the south and southeast are currently too unsafe for election monitors to travel, threatening to undermine efforts to enable the Afghan people to freely choose their own government by the June 2004 deadline.

In the twenty-two months since the Taliban fell, the international community has failed to provide the two essential ingredients for democracy and reconstruction: security and sufficient financial assistance. We have squandered precious time and, even more importantly, the confidence of the Afghan people that we won't walk away from them again, as many of them believe we did a decade ago.

This week, we have two important opportunities to signal our commitment to a safe and democratic Afghanistan: On Monday, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution that approves the expansion of the now NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) beyond the limits of Kabul city, which enables us to make a genuine commitment to security. And this week you and your colleagues have the chance to put critically needed new funding into Afghanistan with the passage of the President's Emergency Supplement Request.

Since 2002, Afghanistan has been consistently under-funded. Despite early pledges at the Tokyo donor conference in 2002, and an April 2002 declaration of a Marshall Plan for Afghanistan by President Bush, Afghanistan has only received a fraction of the \$10.2 billion the World Bank/UNDP assessment identified as necessary for the first five years. The majority of those initial donor pledges have not yet fully materialized, nearly two years later, and even those funds currently

committed are shockingly low compared to other post-conflict settings. In 2002, donors spent an average of \$64 per person in Afghanistan, compared to an average of \$250 per person in Rwanda, East Timor, Kosovo and Bosnia.³

It is time to launch a new, comprehensive assessment to determine how much Afghanistan really needs over the next five years to move towards political stability, security and legitimate economic growth. The initial World Bank assessment was done quickly and without full information. It is time to conduct a more thorough assessment and pledge to respond on the basis of need.

The additional funds for Afghanistan requested in the new emergency supplemental are essential and will push forward critical programs. House leadership has already voted to increase the President's request for Afghanistan, as they have noted the high priority that Afghanistan represents and the many important projects not yet funded. I urge you to do the same.

However, any increase in foreign assistance funds underscores the need for a secure environment in which reconstruction and democracy can be effective, a lesson drawn from the cumulative experiences of the past decade. This last year I participated as a member of the CSIS/AUSA Blue Ribbon Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction where a diverse group of bipartisan members of Congress, military leaders and senior policy experts from the US government, international organizations and the non-governmental sector considered how we as a country might better organize our response to the continuing challenges of winning the peace by rebuilding failed nations.

One key finding of the Commission was that "Security is the *sine qua non* of post-conflict reconstruction ... if security needs are not met, both the peace in a given country and the intervention intended to promote it are doomed to fail. Unless comprehensive security needs are addressed up front, spoilers will find the weak areas and retain leverage to affect the political outcomes, vitiating the peace."⁴

³In four recent post-conflict settings (Rwanda, East Timor, Kosovo and Bosnia), donors spent an average of \$250 per person in aid versus per capita expenditures of \$64 for Afghanistan. Using that as the yardstick, Afghanistan assistance would equal \$5.5 billion per year for each of the next four years. At the Tokyo 2002 conference, donors pledged \$4.5 billion in reconstruction funding over five years. Even more sobering is the contrast to the proposed Iraq annual figure of \$20 billion for Iraq for this year alone. [CARE International and the Center on International Cooperation, Policy Brief, September 15, 2003](#)

⁴ Findings of this commission are summarized in "Play to Win," January 2003, a joint report of CSIS and AUSA available at www.pcrproject.org.

I understand that if the Foreign Relations Authorization bill is passed, it is likely to include an amendment that is based on some of the findings and recommendations of that Post-Conflict Commission. While I am aware that prospects for this legislation are uncertain, I hope such an amendment can still be considered in the future, as we will continue to wrestle with these issues if the last decade is any indicator. I am also encouraged to hear that in the coming year this Committee intends to focus more heavily on our country's ability to respond effectively to post-conflict situations.

Despite these lessons from the past and our continued calls for an expanded International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), however, those 5,300 troops have until this week been constrained by a mandate to operate only within the city of Kabul, while the rest of Afghanistan has spiraled into unrest and violence.⁵ Instead, the US response was to create Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), small groups of 40 – 100 military personnel. Although a creative experiment, the PRTs have thus far lacked the mandate and resources to provide either security or reconstruction. They have not been strategically located in those insecure areas inaccessible to aid workers, but rather have focused on often-duplicative efforts to build small-scale projects such as school and clinics. The military has a core competency held by no one else, which is the provision of security. There are many other local and international organizations whose core competency is to provide community development assistance at a lower cost and with greater expertise if the security environment permits.

The PRTs must have a serious shift in focus and mandate if they are to play a useful and coordinated role in the expansion of ISAF. The announced expansion of ISAF to the PRT in Kunduz is a good first step, but it must go far beyond that to address effectively the security needs of Afghanistan and reach into the more insecure parts of the country. The British have recently begun their version of a PRT in Mazar with a more explicit mandate to provide security with a focus on disarmament, army and police training, and reconstruction of large government infrastructure. This approach is well worth watching as a model for evolving the PRT approach

Clearly the long-term solution for Afghanistan is the development of its own national army and police force. Efforts to create either force are currently far behind schedule, with only 4,000 of the

⁵ The 4,800 ISAF members in Afghanistan on a per capita basis equal one peacekeeper per 5,380 Afghans. This is compared with Kosovo (1 per 48), Bosnia (1 per 58), East Timor (1 per 86) and Rwanda (1 per 3,350) Care [International Policy Brief, January 2003](#).

70,000 proposed army force trained to-date. According to the most optimistic assumptions, the central government will only have 9,000 soldiers to deploy by mid-2004. The police training effort is similarly behind schedule. The requested supplement funds will be a critical boost to these efforts, but until these forces are prepared to take a more active role, we must address the security gap that exists now or risk all the progress already seen in Afghanistan.

The primary purpose of my recent trip to Afghanistan was to meet with the Mercy Corps country team and with colleague agencies to determine how and if we might be able to continue operations in the current and very dangerous environment. In various meetings held in Kabul and Kandahar, I heard many excellent and constructive recommendations worth considering: Patrol key roads in insecure regions, increase attention to the border areas through which a stream of Taliban fighters pass. Stop assistance to the many militias under warlord command. Roll out regional training of the Afghan National Army and local police to increase their presence beyond Kabul. Refocus the PRTs to have a security mandate and position them in insecure areas that aid agencies cannot reach.

The solution is not to channel all assistance through the military or provide all aid workers with firearms and military escorts. Rather, we need to focus on creating ambient security, a secure environment that enables Afghans to invest in their future and for reconstruction, democracy and development work to go forward. Aid workers are not asking for armed escorts and guards, but rather a strategic deployment of peacekeepers into those areas most insecure and an increased focus on hastening the longer-term solutions of Afghan army and police training.

As you consider the President's Emergency Supplemental Request, I will close with two key recommendations:

1. I strongly urge you to ensure that ISAF has all the resources needed to expand beyond Kabul with a clear and genuine commitment to provide security in key provinces. Both Chairman Lugar and Senator Biden have strongly supported this in the past, and the UN Security Council resolution adopted unanimously on October 13 finally opens the door to achieving this important goal. Expanding ISAF only through the PRTs as currently configured or into already secure parts of the country will not be enough. A flexible and more strategically deployable ISAF is critical for immediate and short-term security, while the slow process of training Afghan police and army members continues.

2. I urge you to support the increased House allocation of \$1.176 billion for Afghanistan within the President's Emergency Supplement Request. These funds are critical. The House increase is a bi-partisan reflection of the high priority that Afghanistan must be given. These funds are a badly needed boost to Afghan assistance and will hopefully serve as a prod for other nations to join in with substantial packages of their own.

In my recent visit to Afghanistan, it is apparent there is much to be hopeful about – there is a building boom in Kabul and Kandahar and evidence of flourishing new businesses. More than two million refugees have returned and a record four – five million children have returned to school, up from three million last year. With your support, we can help ensure this progress is not jeopardized and instead moves forward even more quickly.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and important leadership on these issues.