

Statement before the House Armed Services Committee***“THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN”***

A Statement by

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February 12, 2009

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**The Crisis in Afghanistan: Testimony by Anthony H.
Cordesman to the House Armed Services Committee,
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Let me begin by delivering two unpleasant messages. The first is that we are losing the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan and we have at most two years in which to decisively reverse this situation. The second is that we are losing largely because of the failures of the previous Administration, the US Congress. And yes, to some extent this Committee – although I recognize that its Chairman deserves credit for being among the first to focus on these problems.

They Aren't Winning; We Have Been Losing

I suspect that the core of the first message already is all too familiar. but it is important to note that the full scale of the problems we face are far less clear. Seven years after what once appeared to be a decisive victory against the Taliban and Al Qa'ida, we still do not have credible public metrics to show what is happening in either Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also is far from clear that our intelligence community and policymakers have developed the full range of information they need at any level.

For far too long, we concentrated on Iraq as the expense of Afghanistan. From 2002 onwards, we failed to communicate the scale of the steady decay in our situation in Afghanistan. We tried try to spin tactical victories into a success story, downplayed the decline in our position, and failed to provide the resources needed to win.

There was some excellent testimony by senior officials and officers who served in the field, and good reporting by bodies like the GAO. The Administration did not present the kind of weekly State Department reporting on this war that we provided on Iraq. It did not provide the same quarterly Department of Defense reporting on the war it provided on Iraq until June 2008 – seven years after the war began – and that was a semi-annual report. That initial report provided little detail on the fighting or the expansion of Taliban, Hekmatyer, and Haqqani influence and the rebirth of Al Qa'ida in Pakistan.

Then, as the situation steadily grew worse during 2008, the Administration prepared an NIE whose negative and frightening conclusions were slowly leaked, but never made public in an unclassified warning. The Administration did prepare a more comprehensive Department of Defense report, but it was not released until after the campaign and a new President came to office.

The Warning from Summary Metrics

Even today, one has to turn to leaked data, NATO/ISAF reporting, UN reporting embedded in reports issued for other purposes, and opinion polls to begin to understand the current situation in Afghanistan. The historical patterns are complex and one has to look at many different indicators over the period from 2001 to the present to get a clear picture. At the same time, many key trends in the violence are clear even if one only looks at the key trends for 2008:

- 33% increase in military clashes. Insurgent initiated attacks also increased 33% percent.
- Direct fire incidents increased 40 percent and indirect fire incidents increased 27 percent.
- Insurgent violence increased by 40% in the spring and summer of 2008.
- IED attacks increased by 27% over the course of the year -- although so did the number discovered and pre-detonated.
- Attacks along the major highway in Afghanistan, the Ring Road rose 37 percent from 2007 to 2008.
- Surface-to-air fire increased 67 percent.

(A detailed report with maps and graphs these trends, “The Afghan-Pakistan War: The Rising Threat, 2002-2008” is available on the CSIS web site at http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/090129_afghanwar.pdf. I request that this report be entered into the record.)

The Need to Focus on Warfighting in 2009 and 2010

Let me make two quick points about these data on the trends in combat. First, they show that we must focus decisively on warfighting in 2009 and 2010, and give our commanders and country teams the resources they need to win.

Second, they show that term “post-conflict reconstruction” is little more than a sick joke. To get to the mid and long term, we have to survive and dominate the present. If we succeed, the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be so different by 2011 that we will have to reshape almost every aspect of our aid and development plans to set far more realistic and modest goals based on the art of the possible and Afghan and Pakistani desires, rather than our efforts to design model countries in our own image. If we fail, there will be no mid and long term in any sense that makes current plans even mildly relevant.

The Broader Trends That Really Shape the War

More generally, however, I am deeply disturbed that the briefings I have had on this war have not yet shown that our intelligence community and planners fully understand that kinetic indicators can only measure tactical events and their outcome:

- They do not measure the growth of Taliban, Hekmatyer, and Haqqani influence and control in the countryside, and the growing Afghan fears that the Taliban will return and that only some form of coalition with the Taliban can bring stability.
- They do not measure the failure to govern at virtually every level; the scale of permeating level of corruption where government is present; and the growing size of many districts where it is not.
- They do not measure loss of government, US, and NATO/ISAF influence and popularity.
- They do not measure the adequacy of US, NATO/ISAF forces and aid personnel in the field; the nature and impact of each country's caveats on military and aid activity; the impact of the problems in the US and NATO command structure; and the matching – if not far worse – problems in the structure and coordination of the UN aid effort.
- They do not measure failures in governance; they do not measure the lack of a rule of law.
- They do not measure the growth of organized crime and the impact of our counternarcotics program in financing our enemies.
- They do not measure the corruption, irrelevance, and incompetence of most of the economic aid provided to Afghanistan and Pakistan; the lack of focus on using aid in combat and high threat areas; the acute limits to our PRTs and aid teams in the field, and the lack of meaningful accounting and measures of effectiveness for US, UN, international, and NCO aid activity.
- They do not deal with economics in terms of the distribution of income; pressures that drive people into slums or narcotics, and that empower our enemies.
- They decouple the situation in Pakistan – and particularly in the FATA and Baluchi areas – almost entirely from the situation in Afghanistan. As a result, the most we have are scattered indicators in US reporting and Pakistani claims and denials. This is one war and no competent or honest US officer, official, or leader of the intelligence community can issue summary report on the war that does not take full account of this fact.

Losing the War of Perceptions

No one who was in government at the time of Vietnam can avoid a grim feeling of déjà vu. I am constantly reminded of an exchange the late Colonel Harry Summers said that he had with a North Vietnamese officer after the collapse of South Vietnamese. They were discussing the fighting and Summers pointed out that US forces and the ARVN had won virtually every clash. The Vietnamese officer smiled and said, “Yes, but that was irrelevant.”

A recent poll by ABC, which is the latest result of years of steadily more refined polling efforts in Afghanistan, provides part of the missing picture, and shows just how urgent it is to look beyond the kinetic or tactical aspects of the war, and to shape US efforts to react to Afghan perceptions – and the broader ideological, political, and economic aspects of the war.

This poll was released on Monday, February 9th, and the summary prepared by Gary Langer and the ABC polling unit provides warnings that every American concerned with Afghanistan should take to heart:

Declining Support for the US and NATO/ISAF

- There has been a significant drop in the number of Afghans who call the U.S.-led invasion and overthrow of the Taliban a good thing for their country – 69%, still a substantial majority but well below the 88% who said so in 2006. And while 63% still support the presence of the U.S. military in Afghanistan, that's down from 78% in 2006, with “strong” support for the U.S. presence down from 30% then to just 12% now. (It's similar now for NATO/ISAF forces. ISAF stands for International Security Assistance Force, the U.N.-mandated, NATO-led multinational force in Afghanistan.)
- In 2005, 83% of Afghans expressed a favorable opinion of the United States Today just 47% still hold that view, down 36 points, accelerating with an 18-point drop in approval of the US in 2008. For the first time slightly more Afghans see the United States unfavorably than favorably.
- The number who say the United States has performed well in Afghanistan has been more than halved in the last three years, from 68% in 2005 to 32% now.
- Ratings of NATO/ISAF forces are no better. Just 37% of Afghans say most people in their area support Western forces; it was 67% in 2006. And 25% now say attacks on U.S. or NATO/ISAF forces can be justified, double the level, 13%, in 2006.
- The election of Barack Obama does not hold much promise in the eyes of the Afghan public: While 20% think he'll make things better for their country, nearly as many think he'll make things worse. The rest either expect no change – or are waiting to see.
- Just 18% say the number of U.S. and NATO/ISAF forces in Afghanistan should be increased. Far more, 44% want the opposite – a decrease in the level of these forces.
- Far fewer Afghans than in past years say Western forces have a strong presence in their area (34%, down from 57% in 2006), or – crucially – see them as effective in providing security (42%, down from 67%).

The Taliban is Still Seen as the Key Threat, But As Growing Stronger and Becoming More Popular

- 58% of Afghans see the Taliban as the biggest danger to the country, measured against local warlords, drug traffickers or the U.S. or Afghan governments. And 43% say the Taliban have grown stronger in the past year, well more than the 24% who think the movement has weakened.
- Notably more in the Southeast and Southwest – 55% – say the Taliban have grown stronger. And again in Helmand province, the heart of the opium trade that's said to finance the group, 63% say the Taliban have gained strength.
- The Taliban are far from achieving popular support – across a range of measures the group still is shunned by vast majorities of Afghans. But 22% say it has at least some support in their area, and this soars to 57% in the Southwest overall, including 64% in its home base, Kandahar. That's up sharply from 44% in the Southwest last year, and up from 41% in Kandahar.
- There's also evidence the Taliban have made some progress rebranding themselves. Twenty-four% of Afghans say it's their impression the Taliban “have changed and become more moderate” – far from a majority, but one in four. And that view spikes in some provinces – most notably, to 58% in Wardak and 53% in Nangarhar, bordering Kabul to the west and east, respectively.
- Another result indicates a possible change in tactics. Twenty-six% of Afghans report bombings by the Taliban in their area; that's down from 43% in 2006. Thirty-two% report murders by the

Taliban – down by 10 points from 2006 (though level with 2007). Reports of Taliban engagements with government or foreign troops is down by 12 points; arson attacks on school or government buildings, down by 18 points from the 2006 peak.

- 64% of Afghans say the government should negotiate a settlement with the Taliban in which they're allowed to hold political offices if they agree to stop fighting. But among those who support negotiations, most by far, seven in 10, say talks should occur only if the Taliban stop fighting first.
- 33% of Afghans think the government will defeat the Taliban outright with foreign support. Another 33% expect a negotiated settlement; 19% expect continued fighting; 8% foresee an outright Taliban victory.

But, Afghan Views of Their Own Security in Indicate that NATO/ISAF and the US Are Joining the Taliban in Being Perceived as the Threat

- The number of Afghans who rate their own security positively has dropped from 72% in 2005 to 55% today – and it goes far lower in high-conflict provinces. In the country's beleaguered Southwest (Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces). Only 26% feel secure from crime and violence. In Helmand alone, just 14% feel safe.
- 25% report car bombs or suicide attacks in their area in the past year; three in 10, kidnappings for ransom. 38% report civilian casualties in the past year, *attributed about equally either to U.S./NATO/ISAF forces or to anti-government forces*, and somewhat less so to Afghan government forces.
- There's been a 9-point drop in the number of Afghans who mainly blame the Taliban for the country's violence, to 27%. More, now 36%, mostly blame U.S., Afghan or NATO forces, or their governments, for the violence in Afghanistan, up by 10 points in 2008.
- Civilian casualties in U.S. or NATO/ISAF air strikes are a key irritant. Seventy-seven% of Afghans call such strikes unacceptable, saying the risk to civilians outweighs the value of these raids in fighting the Taliban. Forty-one% chiefly blame U.S. or NATO/ISAF forces for poor targeting, vs. 28% who mainly blame the insurgents for concealing themselves among civilians.
- All told, one in six Afghans reports bombing or shelling by U.S. or NATO/ISAF forces in their area within the past year, but with an enormous range, peaking at nearly half in the Southwest and nearly four in 10 in the East (Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar), bordering part of Pakistan's Taliban-associated tribal areas.
- Among people who report coalition bombing or shelling in their area, support for the presence of U.S. forces drops to 46%, vs. 70% among those who report no such bombardment.
- While 25% of all Afghans say violence against U.S. or other Western forces can be justified, that jumps, to 44%, among those who report coalition bombing or shelling in their area, and to 38% in the top five high-conflict provinces (Helmand, Ghazni, Kandahar, Paktia and Khost). It's 18%, by contrast, where no bombing or shelling has occurred, and 15% in the provinces where conflict has been lowest, roughly the northern half of the country.
- Germany's favorability rating is high at 61%; but its NATO/ISAF troops in Afghanistan have been in the North, away from the heaviest fighting. Favorable views of Great Britain are much lower, 39%; ratings of United States have dropped steadily to 47%, from a high of 83% in 2005.
- 91% of Afghans have an unfavorable opinion of Pakistan (up 11 points from last year), and 86% say Pakistan is playing a negative role in Afghanistan.

- 74% of Afghans see India favorably. Fewer but a majority, 57%, also have a favorable view of Iran, Afghanistan's neighbor to the west.

Afghan Views of Their Government, and Current Hopes for the Future

- In 2005, in the full flush of celebration over the Taliban's ouster, 83% of Afghans approved of the work of President Karzai and 80% approved of the national government overall. Today those have slid to 52 and 49% respectively. (Karzai's expected to run for re-election in August.) Fewer than half rate their provincial government positively.
- 59% still think the Afghan government is making progress in providing a better life for Afghans, 75% express confidence in its ability to provide security and stability, as many express confidence in their local police, and nearly as many in their provincial government.
- 57% of Afghans rate the performance of the police positively, and ditto for the Afghan Army – not overwhelmingly positive measures, but the best out there. (Again as noted, just 32 rate the performance of the United States positively; 33%, NATO/ISAF forces.) Given Afghan institutions' support, it could prove more popular to put their imprint – rather than a Western face – on anti-insurgent efforts.
- Anywhere from 63% to 66% report support for these entities among people in their area. And even though support for the central government has declined from 81% in 2007 to 65% now, these levels remain far higher than support for other players – U.S. or NATO/ISAF forces (as reported above, 37%), local commanders, 17%; foreign jihadis, 14%; the Taliban, 9%; and drug traffickers, 7%.
- Among people who say the central government has a strong presence in their area, 58% rate it positively; where its presence is seen as weak, that drops to 31%. Provincial governments are rated positively by 57% where they are seen as strong vs. 22% where weak. And the United States is rated positively by 46% among those who see U.S. or NATO/ISAF forces as strong in their area – vs. 25% where those forces are seen as weak.
- The number of Afghans who expect their lives to improve in the year ahead has dropped from a peak of 67% in 2005 to 51% today. 47%, expect a better life for their children, hardly a ringing endorsement of Afghanistan's future prospects.
- Anger against official corruption has swelled; 85% of Afghans call it a problem and 63% call it a big problem – the latter up from 45% last year. And half say corruption has increased in the past year, more than twice as many as say it's subsided.
- Ratings for the Afghan government, and Karzai personally, run anywhere from 9 to 15 points lower among people who call corruption a major problem, compared with those who call it a moderate or less serious concern.

Afghan Views of Their Economy, Aid, Drugs, and Hopes for the Future

- While 62% of Afghans rate their basic living conditions positively, that's declined steadily from 83% in 2005. And just 29% say there's a good supply of jobs or economic opportunities in their area. The number who characterize their economic opportunities as "very bad" has doubled since 2006 – from 17% then to 33% now, one in three Afghans.
- 55% have no electricity whatsoever in their homes; just one in 20 has power all day. More than half report incomes less than the equivalent of \$100 a month; 93%, under \$300. Fifty-nine% have no formal education. Forty-eight% cannot read.

- The affordability of food is worsening: 63% of Afghans say they cannot afford to buy all or even “some but not all” of the food they need, up 9 points. And while 63% report adequate availability of food (regardless of affordability), that’s down from 82% in 2006.
- Fuel prices, likewise, are a major problem; 68% say they can’t afford the fuel they need for cooking or heat, a serious issue in the cold Afghan winter.
- After electricity supply – steadily the single biggest complaint – economic opportunity and prices, another poorly rated area is support for agriculture, such as the availability of seed, fertilizer and farm equipment, a central concern in a country that’s three-quarters rural, with food prices so problematic.
- In other areas, barely over half rate their access to medical care positively. Just under half positively rate their protection from the Taliban and other armed groups. While 61% say they can move about safely, that’s down 10 points from 2007, and leaves four in 10 without such freedom of movement. And beyond food and fuel, in terms of prices overall, 58% report difficulty being able to afford things they want and need.
- 72% of Afghans say schools have been rebuilt or reopened in their area in the past five years (up 7 points from 2007); 53%, mosques; 47%, roads (up 12 points); 45%, health clinics (up 8 points); and 44%, police stations.
- Fewer than half, 42%, say they have good roads, bridges and other infrastructure in their area, that’s up sharply from 24% in 2005. Seventy-seven% rate their local schools positively; 65% say they have clean water, up 12 points compared with 2007 and a new high. And 73% support the presence of foreign aid organizations in Afghanistan.
- Nonetheless, 51% say foreign aid groups are making progress in providing a better life for Afghans. And fewer still, 30% of Afghans, say foreign development aid has benefited them personally. (Nearly three-quarters are worried about the impact of the global financial crisis on aid to their country.)
- 63 % of Afghans call raising opium poppy “unacceptable in all cases.” But in the six top-producing provinces that drops to 31 % – and in Helmand, source of two-thirds of Afghanistan’s opium poppy, to just 12%. Even nationally, few Afghans, just 13%, support spraying pesticides as a way to eradicate the crop.

While I am focusing today on Afghanistan, it is important to note that such polls provide an even clearer and more dramatic picture of how badly the US is dealing with the war of perceptions in Pakistan.

Mandating and Enforcing Realism and Transparency

So, let me make my first recommendation to this Committee: We need realism and transparency. We need honest, detailed reporting on what is happening, what is needed to fix the situation, and progress using real measures of effectiveness. We need to stop lying to ourselves and others, and to start asking for patience and sacrifice.

If you in the Congress do not change the current situation, we will continue to fly blind in terms of public policy, in validating our future plans and strategy; in developing the ability to know if the resources we provide are adequate, in knowing the level of risk we

imposed the men and women we put in danger in the field, and in establishing the level of sacrifice we need to ask from the American people.

If the past is any prologue to the future, this will not come from within the Executive branch. If you do not mandate such efforts, and hold the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Staff personally accountable for honest and comprehensive reporting that meets its deadlines, we will have the same problems in the future that we have had for the last seven years.

Empty Strategies and Inadequate Budgets and Resources

Our problems, however, are far more serious than a failure to properly characterize the situation and communicate it to the American people. We have never had an effective strategy for wining the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and we have never provided the resources that have been needed to win.

US officials have talked about strategies in broad terms for years. However, as is the case with virtually every other aspect of national security strategy in recent years – these “strategies” have never been tied this to detailed implementation plans, credible budgets and force levels, and meaningful milestones and measures of effectiveness.

The US government has failed to integrate its civil and military efforts into an effective future year program budget and plan. It has budgeted by annual supplemental, and in ways that tried to fund “victory” in the coming fiscal year, rather than fund and implement sustained, meaningful efforts.

Much of the open reporting on these budgets has also lumped together much of the budget requests and reporting on the war in Afghanistan (which seems to omit the cost of some efforts in Pakistan), with the war in Iraq, and the “war on terrorism.” Budget data have been grouped in largely dysfunctional categories that are not tied to meaningful program or military activity, and are not tied useful measures of progress and effectiveness.

The end result has been that the Administration failed to provide the resources necessary to win, and then had to react in inadequate annual increments. This chronic underresourcing of the war makes a sharp contrast with Iraq, and its scale becomes all too clear when one makes a more detailed study of the patterns in expenditures and deployment of military forces over the last eight years.

Even a glancing look at the funding profile for military and civil aid in the Department of Defense report issued in January 2009, reveals the scale of the problems. There was no real effort to create Afghan forces in FY2002 and FY2003. Funding suddenly rose to levels around \$1 billion in FY2004 and FY2005 as the Taliban scored increasing gains. It doubles to \$2,0 billion in FY2006, leaped to \$4.8 billion in FY2007, then drooped to \$2.8 billion in FY2008 and \$2.0 billion in FY2009 – in spite of the fact that the goal for the end strength of the Afghan Army nearly doubled in mid-2008. The fnding for

democracy/governance aid, development aid, and counternarcotics was similarly erratic – although in different years, and will “crash” between FY2008 and FY2009 (\$3.3 billion to \$0.9 billion)

(A report detailing the history and scale of these problems, entitled *Follow the Money: Why the US is Losing the War in Afghanistan*”, is available on the CSIS web site at :http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/080919_afghanwarcosts.pdf. I request that report this be entered into the record.)

The Administration finally did seem to focus on the need for more tangible strategies and more resources in early 2008, but it either failed to produce meaningful results or they were too embarrassing to make public in an election year. What happened to the Lute strategy exercise? Where are the plans from Chairman Mullen? Why did we have to wait for General Petraeus’s appointment to USCENTCOM to hear of a realistic strategy exercise? Why has there never been a meaningful strategy, plans, and set of effectiveness measures for the overall economic aid effort emerging from the State Department?

Supporting Our Field Commanders and Personnel in the Field

We need to take decisive and immediate action to reverse this situation. We also need to understand we have very little time in which to act, and there are often long lead times into transforming plans into action in the field. Let me reiterate a point I began with. We either turn defeat into victory during 2009 and 2010, or we will lose. We must focus on short-term warfighting, and this imposes several realities:

- We either empower our commanders and country teams in the field, and provide the resources they need to implement them, or we lose the war. We don’t have time to reinvent the wheel from the outside.
- We must provide the budgets, military forces, and aid personnel necessary to compensate for years of inadequate effort and underresourcing. This is not the time to be “cost-effective” at the margins, or to avoid making commitments to funding efforts long enough to work. We must stop the process of reacting to enemy gains and provide the resources necessary to win the initiative.
- This does not mean providing a blank check or ignoring the consequences of such efforts. Congress must ensure that there are fully credible plans and progress, and verify as well as trust. Our entire military history is one that warns that we cannot trust our own national security apparatus in wartime unless we verify its actions. Our recent military history is even more of a warning.

A Shift to “Clear, Hold, and Build?”

The good news is that we do seem to have the military leadership we need, we are addressing the gaps in our civilian leadership in the field, and we seem to be prepared to make the changes in strategy, tactics and resources that over real hope of progress.

It may be premature to judge the outcome of current US efforts to reshape our strategy and posture in Afghanistan, but they seem likely to emphasize a focused effort to replace kinetic or tactical operations out of bases with some version of the “clear, hold, and

build” tactics used in Iraq. There also seem to be plans to adopt a variation on these effort in Pakistan where embedded US advisors could quietly help Pakistani security forces develop the counterinsurgency skills they now lack, and “tied” economic aid would help provide “hold and build” capabilities in parts of FATA and the Baluchi border areas.

Such a shift to “clear, hold, and build” that links tactical action to providing a lasting security presence in the field and building support through aid in jobs, economics, and governance has already shown promise in the limited areas where it has been attempted. It could potentially reverse many of the problems and failures that empower the Taliban and Al Qa’ida over the last seven years.

But, this shift cannot be done slowly or on the cheap. In fact, it is far better to rush in the necessary mix of military and civilian personnel, and additional spending now – even at the cost of some waste and overspending – than delay and be forced to react to more enemy gains. We need to ensure that commanders and country teams will ask for and get what they need – rather than only ask for as much as they think they can get or OMB and other outsider feel they should have.

Setting Well Defined and Realistic Goals for Action in 2009 and 2010

We will also need to show the same strategic patience we showed in Iraq. In the real world, it will take at least two years of patient and consistent effort to reverse the current situation. During this period, the US must focus on realistic goals that deal with the urgent needs of warfighting, and not post-conflict reconstruction in mid conflict and transforming Afghan society or the society and culture of the border areas in Pakistan.

We will also need to set more modest and more realistic goals for those medium and long-term aid activities that do continue. We are not going to transform Afghanistan or Pakistan any more than we did Iraq. Unrealistic dreams of mid and long-term development can waste resources that could be of major value in implementing more modest programs, and hurt rather than help.

Provide the US Resources Necessary to Win: Stop Trying to Export Responsibility and the Burden

We need to be forceful and persuasive developing a coordinated approach with our allies and the Afghan and Pakistani governments, and seeking the most outside aid we can get. At the same time, we must accept the reality that US resources must be used to make virtually all of the key increases in forces and spending that our commanders and country teams recommend.

We need to make NATO/ISAF work as well as we can. *But*. we cannot expect NATO and our allies to fight our war. We recruited allies for a police action and nation building and then let an insurgency grow through under-resourcing and neglect – roughly one-fifth of the US effort in Iraq.

This means we must provide most of the additional US troops, advisors, and resources necessary to reverse the situation or we will lose. It may well be the case that the current proposals for 30,000 more US troops are the bare minimum necessary to shift from tactical victories to the kind of "clear, hold, build" strategy that had success in Iraq. Whatever happens, we cannot afford to under resource the military effort.

Provide Effective Unity of Effort

At the same time, the chain of command in Afghanistan, and the overall effort in Afghanistan and Pakistan, must have clear US character and be able to function effectively. It may or may not be possible to put one officer formally in charge in Afghanistan. If NATO/ISAF cannot be fixed, however, the US must develop a parallel command and act.

It is not enough to appoint a US envoy to deal with both Afghanistan and Iraq. There must be an integrated US effort that manages the war as one war and integrates the efforts of the country teams.

Make Developing Afghan Forces the Core of Any Additional Military Build-Up and Focus on Immediate Warfighting Needs

We can almost certainly create larger and more effective Afghan forces, and help develop Pakistani counterinsurgency capabilities if Pakistan will let us. The immediate focus should be on building up the Afghan National Army, paramilitary elements of the police, and local security forces. We need to provide the money, advisors, embeds and other support necessary to make the Afghan Army effective and large enough to perform its mission, and to eventually eliminate the need for large US forces.

We do not have the resources, quality of Afghan governance, or time, however, to do everything at once. We need to carefully reexamine efforts to create the Afghan National Police. We may have to stop trying to create conventional police in mid-war and when the foreign advisors, governance, and rule of law necessary to support them are not available. We almost certainly will have to take the risk of creating local security forces to ensure that "clear, hold, and build" tactics can work. This will scarcely be risk free, but much can be done to have them funded and report through the government, and not through warlords or tribal leaders.

Look Beyond the Afghan Central Government and Develop Governance and Services at the Provincial and District Level.

We must also deal with the reality that the Afghan government cannot be fixed in time to serve as the necessary instrument of victory. We must continue efforts at reforming and aiding the central government, but we also need parallel efforts to create effective governance in key urban areas, provinces, and districts. These should be structured to rely on the central government, and have as many ties to it as possible, but we must stop

relying on a top down approach. We need to do more to build-up from the bottom in key urban areas and districts, and strengthen the “middle” at the provincial level

We need to adapt techniques that had considerable success in Iraq. This means resourcing and using US/NATO/ISAF troops and PRTs to provide the core of such services in conflict and in high threat districts until Afghan capabilities can be brought on line and civilian aid workers can be more secure.

Come to Grips with the Massive Problems in the Economic Aid Effort

Economic aid is a weapon, and some of our most successful efforts in Iraq occurred in the field when we substituted dollars for bullets. We do, however, need to stop talking vacuously about “soft” and “smart power” in Washington and actually provide it in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We will still have to use US and allied military forces as aid personnel for at least several more years. The latest report on US participation in the PRTS, issued in January 2009, indicates that they now have 1,021 serving military but only 11 DOS, 12 USAID, and 11 USDA civilians. There is no prospect of getting enough civilians, and particularly civilians that can operate in high threat or combat areas. As in Iraq, a civil-military and aid role for the military will be critical.

But, we need operational civilian partners for the military, and reversing the present course of the fighting will mean such civilian partner could be needed for a decade to come. Our military efforts – whether combat or civil -- need to be matched by training and deploying more civilian advisors. They also need to be supported by funding an economic aid effort based on coherent multi-year plans rather than supplementals and short-term fixes. There will be a medium and long-term, and there are other critical needs than warfighting.

What we can do far more quickly is to make a comprehensive and immediate effort to address the corruption, incompetence, and irrelevance of much of the present foreign aid effort in Afghanistan. As is the case with NATO/ISAF, this will require more hardnosed realism in dealing with our allies. Unlike Iraq, many of the most serious problems lie in allied, international, and NGO efforts. The charges that the Afghan government is corrupt may true, but so is much of the aid effort. Afghan experts claim that some 40% of aid passes through without impacting on the country, and virtually all experts claim the effort is not properly integrated, that agricultural aid is far too limited, and that aid does not focus on the areas where the Taliban threat is growing.

We need equally realism in determining whether parts of the UN effort are divided, corrupt, and focused on longer-term, post-conflict needs. The same is true of the complaints of Afghan and other aid workers that far too many allied and NGO efforts are wasteful or exercises in symbolism. More broadly, both some aid workers and military officers complain that such current aid efforts put far too few resources into critical war-related needs and lack meaningful priorities, auditing, and measures of effectiveness.

It is even more important, however, to clean up our own aid efforts. We need to start acting on an iron law of government: *There are no good intentions, there are only successful actions.* The State Department, AID, and Department of Defense have failed to develop an integrated aid plan, budget request, and provide the personnel and funding needed for urgent war fighting needs. This needs to be forced upon the Executive Branch, and the senior officials involved need to be held personally accountable on a regular basis.

Congress can play a key role in forcing such changes. Hearings, legislation, and use of the GAO can be key tools in forcing such changes. The Congress has also created a Special Inspector General for Reconstruction in Afghanistan (SIGAR), but not properly funded the effort. The mandate also does not focus on warfighting problems, or call for an integrated review and analysis of aid to Afghanistan and Pakistan and US and non-US efforts. This should be changed immediately, particularly if new US aid efforts are to be directed at the FATA and Baluchi areas in Pakistan – where the problems in ensuring aid is used honestly and effectively may be even greater than in most of Afghanistan.

Mandate that All US Government Plans, Budgets, and Reporting Cover the War in both Afghanistan and Pakistan

The ultimate center of gravity in this war is not Afghanistan. It is the threat posed by the creation of Al Qa'ida and extremist sanctuaries in Pakistan, and the risk of destabilizing a major, nuclear-armed, regional power.

The US must treat Pakistan as an integral part of its war effort, and systematically raise the level of incentives and pressures to try to make Pakistan act. It must understand that Pakistan has other priorities, is divided, and requires both economic and military aid to act. Use tied military and economic aid as both incentive and pressure.

At the same time, the US cannot simply have its military forces stand aside from the threat in Pakistan and wait of Pakistan to take military action. President Obama is correct in continuing UAV strikes and keeping up the pressure. This, however means we need as much dialog with Pakistan as possible and to add more “carrots” to any “sticks.”

Pending legislation to provide aid to the Fatah and Baluchi areas is a key potential tool – *if* the US ensures such aid flows are tied to audits and measures of effectiveness, and *if* the US or Pakistani personnel are in place to use such aid funds effectively. The US also has every reason to keep up military aid as long as Pakistan is active against the threat and to revitalize efforts to expand the rule of US Special Forces to train Pakistani forces and provide embedded support.

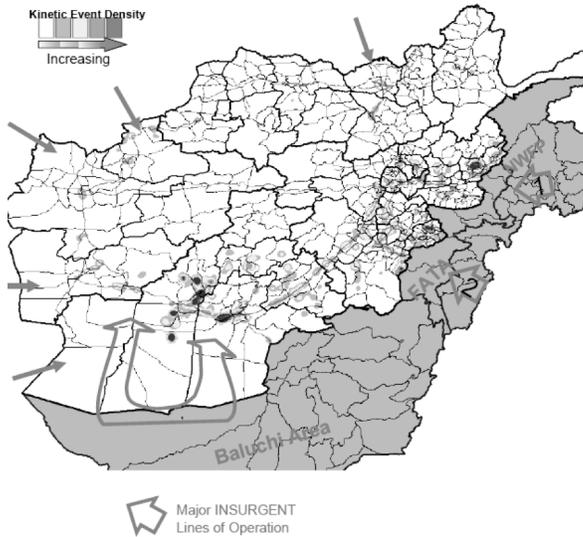
Treat Counternarcotics as Part of Warfighting.

There are many other areas where detailed action is needed, but one last area where we need to make major adjustments in failed policies is counter narcotics.

Our focus should be on winning the war, not finding new ways to lose it. The US should defer broad eradication efforts until there is major progress in the "build" side of "clear, hold, build," and creating a viable agricultural sector. It should focus on the threat drugs now present as a key source of Taliban financing. It should avoid focusing on the countryside, and attack senior drug lords and traffickers as a key source of corruption.

A mid-war crisis is no time for interesting social and economic experiments. Members of Congress and the Administration should not attempt new experiments in eradication -- or in providing untested incentives not to grow drugs or crop substitutes -- in mid conflict. The US should focus on getting aid to the farmer, particularly in the high threat/high drug areas in the south. The priority is to deal with immediate economic needs now, and move on to more comprehensive efforts once (and if) the trends in the fighting are reversed.

NATO/ISAF Security Summary 2008

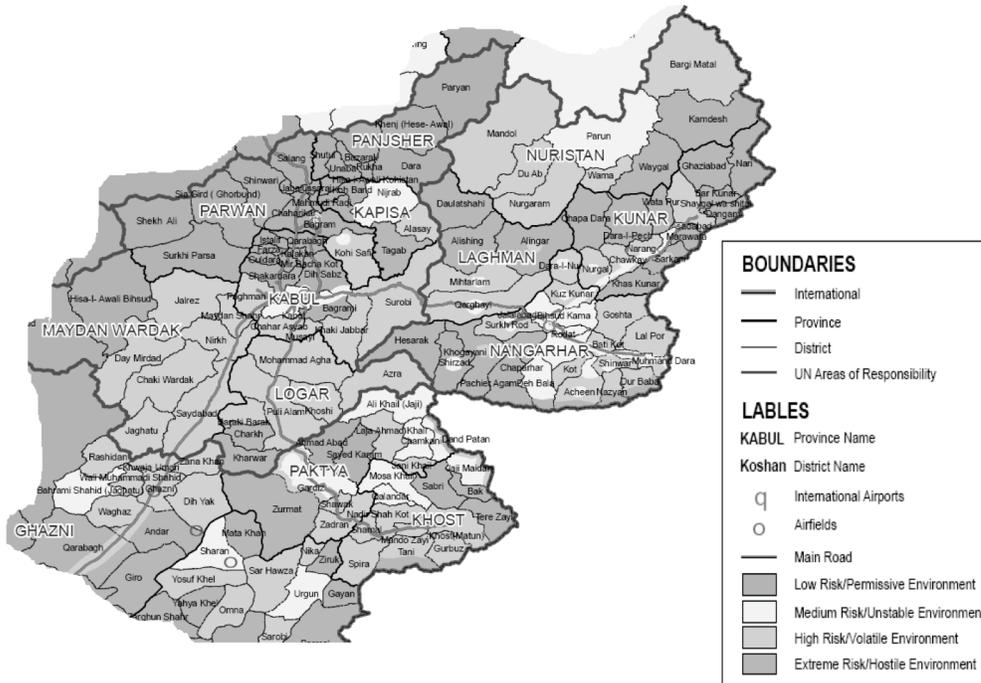


DATA DERIVED FROM NATO/JOIIS DATABASE
Source: NATO – ISAF "Metrics Brief 2007-2008"

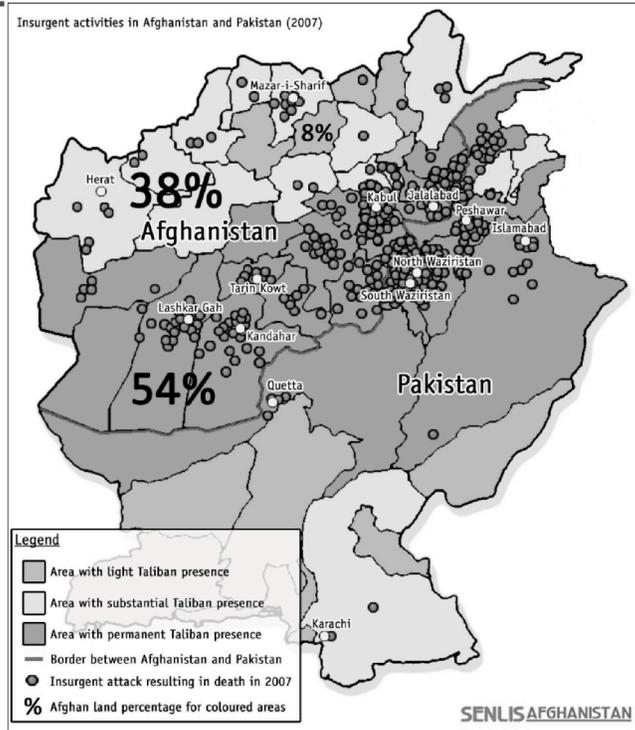
2008

- 24% Afghans perceive improvement, 19% perceive worsening (Sep 08 poll)
- 70% of kinetic events continue to occur in 10% of the districts
- 33% increase in Kinetic Events
- IED events up 27%....single largest cause of casualties
- 119% more attacks on GIROA
- 5% less Suicide Attacks
- 50% more Kidnappings/Assassinations
- ISAF/OEF Deaths: up 35%
- Civilian Deaths: up 40% - 46%*
- Building Host Nation Capacity:**
ANA: 13 more Kandak BNs formed
46 Kandaks capable of BN Ops
- ANP: 52 districts undergoing FDD
13 of 20 Civil Order Police BNs fielded

UN Accessibility Map 2008: East Afghanistan

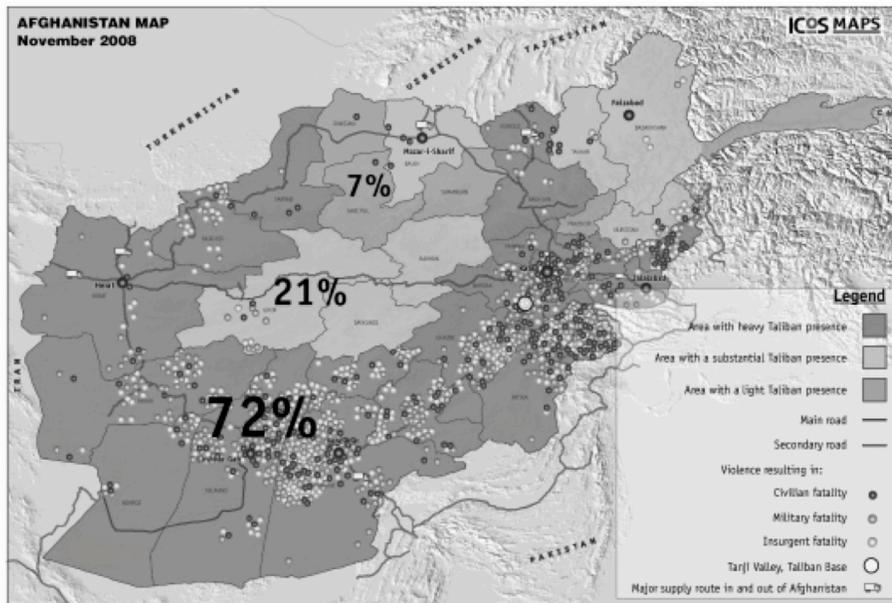


Senlis Estimate of Rise in Fatal Attacks in 2007

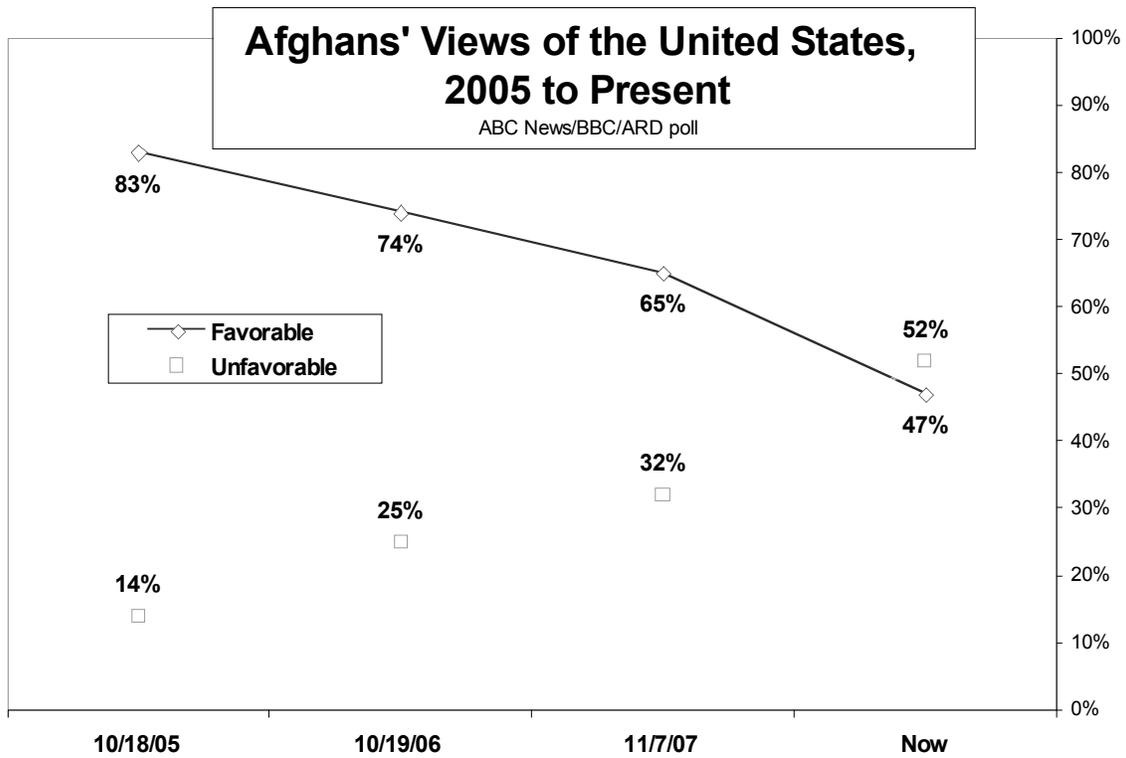
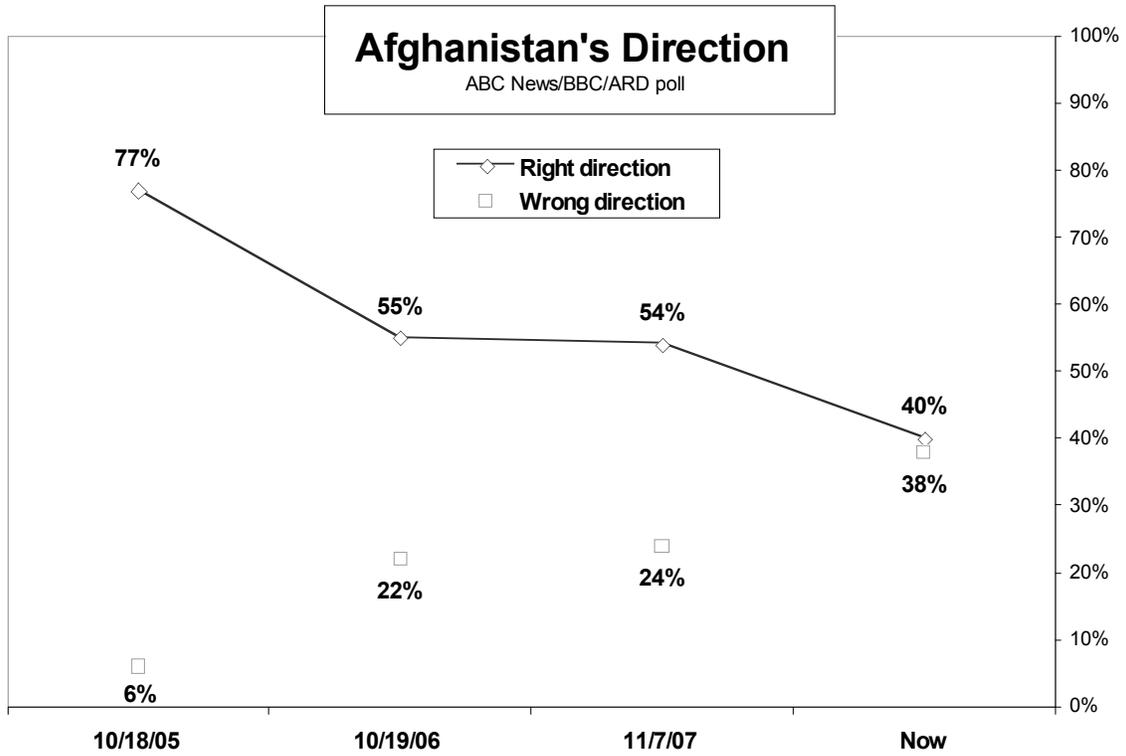


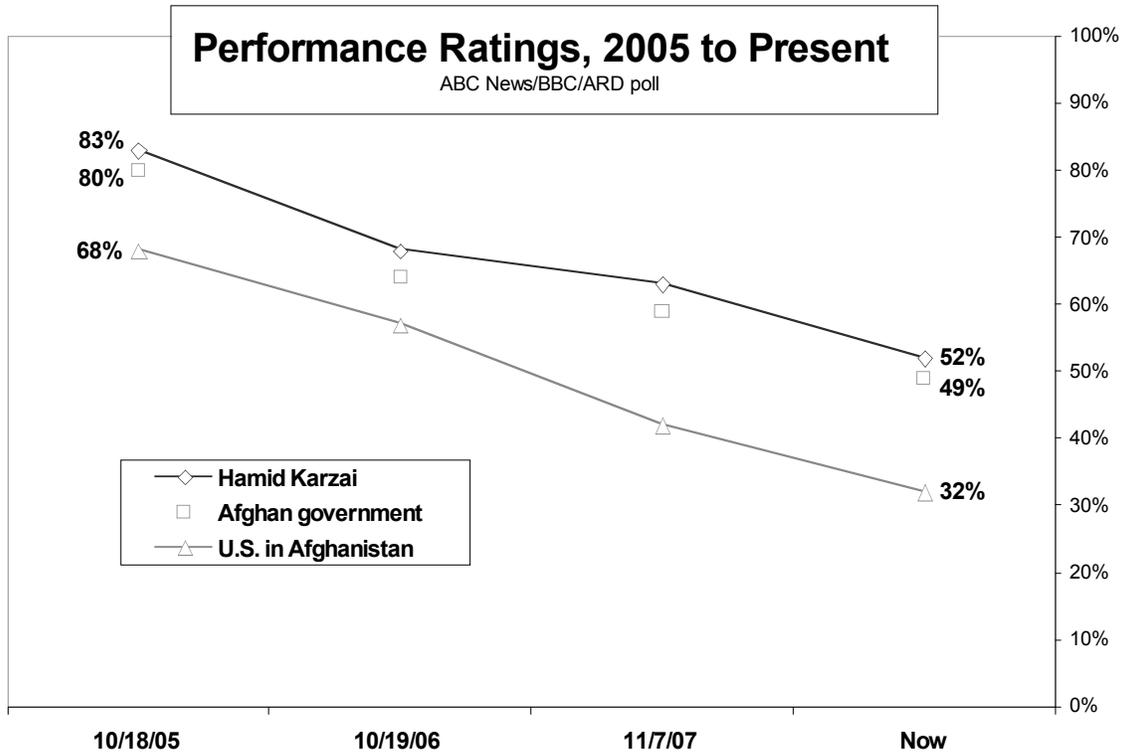
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Taliban Presence in November 2008



Source: ICOS, 'The Struggle for Kabul: The Taliban Advance', December 2008, p.9.





Support in Your Area for U.S./NATO/ISAF Force

ABC News/BBC/ARD poll

