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Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
12 May 2004

I would like to thank the Chair and the distinguished members of this panel for the opportunity to talk here about Afghanistan.

There have been a number of successes in Afghanistan recent months. The new constitution has been generally accepted. Increased United States government efforts have resulted in \$1.2 billion Emergency Supplemental assistance programs under the "Accelerating Success in Afghanistan" strategy. The initial stages of the Kabul-Kandahar highway reconstruction have been completed. A new "South and Southeast Strategy" has provided resources to combat hostile activities and enhance lagging reconstruction. At the recent donor's conference in Berlin, the Afghan government presented a request for aid commitments based on what it had determined would be required to re-create a functioning national economy and saw those commitments, reflecting the priorities of Kabul rather than the donors, largely met.

The war against Taliban and Al Qaida needs to continue. The national security of the United States is served by defeating these forces in detail. Key leadership figures remain to be captured. While they present only a limited military challenge, their campaign of violence and terror is preventing reconstruction and political participation in areas in the south and east.

The national security of the United States is also served by effectively implementing our commitment to assist in the international community's efforts to rebuild Afghanistan, to prevent it ever again being a base of terrorism and extremism that threatens other countries. Afghanistan still has a need for humanitarian assistance and, increasingly, reconstruction throughout all the country. Such activities also contribute to security. They demonstrate to the Afghan grass roots that their lives are being made better. Functioning government outside Kabul and a viable national economy are both evolving slowly despite many setbacks.

Through its continuing commitment to Afghanistan, the United States can demonstrate that they can help a people that suffered from Taliban and Al Qaida oppression, terrorism, and warfare. In Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. demonstrated the power of even a relative small part of its armed forces in helping their Afghan allies militarily defeat the Taliban and Al Qaida on the battlefield. In 2001, the world saw the jubilation of Afghans as the Taliban and Al Qaida were driven from Kabul, including

the joyful re-openings of the long-shuttered movie theaters. Now the U.S. is faced with the opportunity to help bring about a third success, making possible the rebuilding of Afghanistan. I believe that the United States needs to do more to meet emerging challenges to this last – and most critical – of our national security goals in Afghanistan.

Conflict in Afghanistan tends to be about legitimacy. To win the current conflict, the government in Kabul needs to continue to increase its legitimacy, building on continued commitment to the Bonn process and the desire for peace of the vast majority of the Afghan people. I believe that the U.S. and the world community need to do more. Success in Afghanistan requires effective diplomatic activity to prevent outside forces from acting as spoilers, both a near-term surge and a long-term security commitment of troops on the ground, and more resources available for addressing emerging new challenges.

The military elements of U.S. policy in Afghanistan since 2001 have been, in many ways, the most successful. Yet the U.S. must use military force with care, avoid the pitfalls of resurgent Afghan politics and avoid involvement in implementing policies of the Kabul government that would make it appear an outside creation. In some cases, international security cooperation cannot serve as a substitute for U.S. action. Perception of a long-term U.S. security commitment is crucial.

Afghanistan's new challenges come from diverse sources. The requirement, under the new constitution, for presidential and parliamentary (both houses) elections has led to critical security concerns. It has presented a target for the forces that are using terror and violence against the Kabul government and its international supporters and so must be considered the most significant security threat in Afghanistan. The Taliban and Al Qaida are making a strong attempt to limit voter registration in a number of areas in the south and east of Afghanistan.

The upcoming presidential election itself marks the formal return of Afghan politics. The wars of 1978-2001 polarized Afghans, not only along the ethno-linguistic divisions but also those of economic interest, religious practice and philosophy, class and locality, and other complex factors. Recently, these tensions have undercut ambitious internationally-supported programs aimed at disarmament. A revival in narcotics cultivation and traffic presents an international threat and provide a source of funding for those opposed to the Kabul government.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to identify many missed opportunities in Afghanistan since 2001. The prompt and skillful military action that enabled and empowered our Afghan allies to liberate

their own country from the Taliban and Al Qaida was not matched by comparable decisive action, unity of command, and application of resources in other areas. Too often, opportunities to build on momentum were not taken. The U.S. now has enough experience and knowledge to learn from mistakes.

Yet I believe the bottom line is guardedly optimistic. Afghanistan is neither the former Yugoslavia nor Iraq. The Afghan people, resilient though destitute and war-weary, have demonstrated they are willing and able to deal with the deep and fundamental issues that divide them. The U.S. needs to give them the tools to make this possible and help stop those that aim, for their own ends, to blight Afghan hopes.

What Should We Be Doing?

The current U.S. commitment to security, reconstruction and developmental aid to Afghan government is vital. The Afghan government has had an increasing role in decisions to allocate this aid, demonstrating competence and legitimacy both internationally – as seen at the Berlin conference – and domestically, where it allows the government to find sources of revenue outside of aid, build patronage and demonstrate its relevance.

The US needs to support implementation in Afghanistan that will avoid what Ambassador Peter Thomsen has termed “the briar patch of Afghan politics”. The United States must not treat the Afghan government as just another faction. Yet it must also avoid too close an embrace that will make that government appear as a creation of the U.S. Nor must the U.S. act as the Afghan government’s “enforcer”, implementing policies that Kabul lacks the political or military strength to carry out. The elections, the conflict with the Taliban and Al Qaida, disarmament, corruption, narcotics, human rights abuses, the lack of economic development and many other critical problems can block progress. These issues are now firmly enmeshed in Afghan politics. Afghans are increasingly accusing their political opponents of these (and other) problems and insisting that justice requires that foreign influence (or force) be used to put them (and their friends) into power.

What the U.S. should aim for as a priority of a strengthened commitment to Afghanistan is not implementing specific solutions devised by the Kabul government of the U.N., but rather to continue to enable and empower Afghans to work together, to build confidence in each other, and to identify steps that will lead to an emergence of a more mature political culture in a society that has been mobilized by war throughout the 1978-2001 period by using every possible claim and rationale to get Afghans to fight others, usually other Afghans.

It is vital that the U.S. not be seen as being politically manipulated in policy implementation in Afghanistan, especially with the elections likely to hold center stage for the immediate future. While the U.S. is rightly engaged primarily with the Kabul government, it also needs to engage with regional leaders (including some of those lumped together pejoratively as “warlords” by their political opponents) and, through mechanisms such as the PRTs and cooperation with NGOs, the grass roots.

The Afghan government will have in effect, to repeat the state-building process that took place in the generation before 1978 while avoiding the mistakes in that process that led directly to the tragic events that followed. It is a difficult task. There are many places in Afghanistan where nothing good came from Kabul in 1978-2001. Legitimacy and a presumption of competence and even-handedness must be rebuilt from less than zero in 2001.

Indeed, there are still many Afghans – in and out of government and of many different political alignments -- that, like the post-revolutionary Bourbons, appear to have both learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Urban Kabulis with Pushtun roots want Dari-speaking rural Panjsheris disarmed and out of their city. Those that collaborated with the Soviets during the occupation or are returning from exile demand criminalization of the “jihadis” that fought the Soviet invaders and took part in the civil wars of 1992-2001; they, in turn, disparage the “washers of dogs and cats” returning from exile that, without their record of being able to get things done on the ground (made possible by their appropriation of income, patronage networks and their Kalashnikovs), have to rely on foreign support. All will try their best to secure U.S. support in the emerging world of Afghan politics.

Regional Security Issues

The most important U.S. contribution to Afghanistan’s security is through interaction with the regional actors. In 1992-2001, it was the willingness of those actors – especially but not exclusively neighbors -- to back opposing sides in Afghanistan’s civil wars that kept the conflicts going.

If the neighbors believe the U.S. security commitment to Afghanistan be a long-lasting one, they will be more likely to permanently turn away from their 1990s policies and seek to accommodate their security interests through cooperation with the internationally-recognized government in Kabul and not by backing Afghan regional military commanders to oppose it. If the neighbors believe the U.S. presence and

interest in Afghanistan are transitory and that the U.S. is, despite its rhetoric, looking for an exit strategy, then they will hedge their bets in their relations with Afghanistan. U.S. long-term security commitments are going to be stronger than any coming from elsewhere in the international community, including NATO.

Effective US interaction with Pakistan is most important thing we do for security in Afghanistan. Pakistan's involvement with Afghanistan has been, in recent decades, an order or magnitude greater than any other neighbor. The conflict currently going on in Afghanistan by Taliban and Al Qaida is a cross-border insurgency mounted from Pakistan. It is not a grass-roots insurgency by Afghans aggrieved at the slow rate of reconstruction or that members of other ethnic groups hold ministerial positions in Kabul. Even though the Taliban may have sympathy in some areas in Afghanistan on ethno-linguistic, local, or religious grounds, it they are no longer a viable political movement inside Afghanistan. However, in Pakistan, the "Taliban culture" remains, including a network of internationally linked fundamentalist groups, madrassas and Pakistani religious parties that support the conflict in Afghanistan.

Challenging this culture is politically costly for any Pakistani government. In the longer term, however, it is likely to prove critical not only for Afghanistan but for the future nature of state and civil society in Pakistan. Yet as long as the Taliban culture remains strong across the Durand line, achieving peace in Afghanistan will be problematic, regardless of how many resources are committed by the international community, including the U.S., to Afghanistan.

The current U.S. engagement has been met with increased Pakistani willingness to address the threat to achieving peace and security in Afghanistan that is coming from Pakistan. This was demonstrated in recent Pakistani military operations in South Waziristan. It has also been seen in President Musharraf's address to parliament earlier this year and in a range of other actions dating back to his 14 January 2002 speech and before. Pakistani cooperation in arresting foreign terrorists has included a number of significant successes. These actions have been recognized by the recent U.S. designation of Pakistan as a major non-NATO ally.

Yet problems remain. Taliban leaders – not limited to "moderates" – live openly in Quetta. The Pakistani intelligence services and elements of the military have not turned away from the policies that brought Afghanistan to the disastrous situation of 2001. In recent weeks, statements of concern about Pakistani policies from U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad and the commander of Combined Forces

Command, U.S. Lieutenant General David Barno, have been matched by statements from the Afghan government.

The upcoming Afghan election is vulnerable to a broad range of action by its opponents. While the Taliban and Al Qaida must be considered the most important threat, they are not the only one. Throughout Afghanistan, regional and local leaders – who tend to perceive no viable alternative to themselves -- are likely to use all the power at their disposal, from the use of patronage to armed intimidation, to see that the elections do not overturn their power. However, in these cases, U.S. and international community interaction with these leaders are important to try and minimize their effect. The security situation is most important in those areas in the south and east where the threats to the election include terrorist violence. Nor is reducing participation to reduce legitimacy the only threat goal. Reports at the time of loya jirga delegate selection from the south have told of convoys of “voters” being trucked from Pakistan.

Regional Security is Linked to Reconstruction

The importance of reconstruction aid is that it allows the U.S. to have an impact that will increase stability while not becoming hostage to Afghan politics. For example, gender issues are likely to remain politically polarizing for the immediate future. They may be used as a shorthand to rally opposition to the current government on a range of issues. Yet by backing programs that make Afghans lives better at the grass roots by rebuilding schools or microcredit schemes that put sewing machines in villages, the US can hope to avoid its policies being perceived as contributing to the continued divisions and polarization that marks Afghan politics.

No one is likely to be against schools and sewing machines. If the Taliban and Al Qaida come with guns to burn them, they need to be detected and defeated. If mullahs – supported with rupees from Pakistan’s “Taliban culture” or from foreign radical Islam – preach against them and demand the schools and sewing machines be burned, then there needs to be a countervailing support for traditional Afghan Islam, which has long demonstrated that piety can lead to resistance to fundamentalism and oppression.

It has been a long time since anyone has funded traditional Afghan religious practices and leaders, while those attacking them have enjoyed extensive foreign support. While this may be an uncomfortable issue for the U.S., it remains that a purely secular conception of reconstruction will be inadequate to deal with Afghanistan and the role of Islam in its politics and life. Reconstruction has to include not only government,

infrastructure and economy, but Afghan Islam as well. If this is not an area where the U.S. is competent or comfortable in acting, then by all means let us engage with international partners to deal with this issue, as so long as they do not have their own agendas. If there is a vacuum in funding and support here, it will be filled by men from outside Afghanistan with evil ideas and suitcases full of dollars.

This is a necessary part of security making possible reconstruction – blocking the outside spoilers. The religious element is more difficult than interacting with the regional players, for most of the action here involves sub-national actors and many of these have committed Afghan political allies. Addressing this problem in a way that will not be perceived as an attempt to criminalize opposition politics by the Kabul government is a challenge.

Security Forces in Afghanistan

The national security interests of the United States in making Afghanistan secure are likely to mandate the presence of military forces there for at least the next five to ten years. Currently, there are three distinct foreign security forces in Afghanistan. In Kabul is the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), currently under NATO. There are the coalition forces taking part in the war on terror, often with the support of aircraft and assets based outside Afghanistan. U.S. and coalition provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) (plus an ISAF German effort in Konduz) carry out high-value relief programs while being able to provide for their own security. They bring an outside presence and token of commitment to grass-roots Afghanistan.

ISAF expansion remains problematic despite the 2003 commitment to its expansion. While there are places in the north and west where such forces could be useful – Herat, Konduz, areas of tension in the northwest – they would best be employed in the south and east, to counter Taliban and Al Qaida terror and help make possible humanitarian aid and reconstruction. While NATO is making good current commitments and has offered to deploy an additional five PRTs in north Afghanistan (where there is largely not a security threat) lack of long-term security commitments to match the aid commitments made at Berlin earlier this year is disconcerting.

In reality, it has been difficult to sustain the force at its current level. While expansion of ISAF would be a good thing, it is hard to see how it could be carried out on a sustainable basis. NATO countries are finding that the Afghanistan commitment stretches their forces and funding even at current levels. They have cut back force structures and have other commitments. While expanding ISAF may be possible, before

implementing it is necessary to recall that poorly trained, ill-equipped or ineffective troops are worse than no troops. One must be hesitant about any expansion that would bring in untrained or inexperienced units – in terms of the current situation rather than conventional operations -- into Afghanistan.

Deployment of additional U.S. forces to southern and eastern Afghanistan could provide security, assist with reconstruction, and help the campaign against Taliban and Al Qaida. There is a need a short-term this-year surge deployment to deal with emerging problems such as making possible election security, the completion of high-value infrastructure reconstruction, narcotics eradication, and disarmament. Even if the troops do not carry out these missions themselves, their presence and military action against the threat will help make it possible for Afghans to carry out these actions.

The current force structure and resources overstretch by the U.S. (and any participating NATO or coalition members) means that deployment of such forces needs to be targeted to help provide security especially in areas where reconstruction efforts by the U.N. and NGOs being deterred by terrorism or, as in case of U.N. with election registration, have turned the program over to Afghans. In these areas, the US and coalition presence is currently limited to those forces waging military operations against the Al Qaida and Taliban remnants and the PRTs.

While the PRTs have done good work (despite the hostility of some NGOs and skepticism of some of the local population), their actions have not been sufficient for average Afghans in this area to see how their life is better. The deployment of additional PRTs should be made alongside the surge deployment. The PRTs can remain as a part of a long-term commitment to Afghan security.

While ISAF expansion into areas in the south and east would be a good and important advance, NATO troops are not a substitute for U.S. troops in those areas of Afghanistan. Only U.S. troops are the “boots on the ground” that indicate superpower commitment and an effective willingness to support Afghanistan and the Kabul government against both Taliban and Al Qaida and the policies of regional players.

Deployments will also have to be done to skillfully minimize friction (and friendly fire incidents). More garrisons in the south and east -- unless integrated into an effective operational concept – may only provide targets for Taliban and Al Qaida mortars and rockets. Many Afghans are anxious for an outside presence to assure security, but it needs to be implemented to avoid the streak of xenophobia that runs alongside the hospitality of Afghanistan.

An expanded U.S. security commitment should not be judged by troop end-strength but rather by effectiveness. It should include increased intelligence assets and be able to work with both grass roots Afghans and Kabul government forces to develop intelligence. It could include expanded PRTs; or units such as engineer battalions that could both initiate reconstruction programs and train Afghans – ideally demobilized fighting men paid by aid money – to take over their jobs.

While the U.S. military should look to make clear its security commitment to Afghanistan is a long-term one, in carrying out reconstruction tasks the goal should be to train and turn over the tasks to Afghans as soon as possible. Infrastructure building and provision of security are two exceptions but those digging wells and carrying out other needed tasks should be Afghans.

To meet regional goals and make Afghanistan a place that will not be a haven for terrorism and extremism, I believe that U.S. forces, concentrating on security, will need to remain in place for foreseeable future, five to ten years. I believe that a similar commitment of ISAF forces will be required if it is to remain viable. I believe that a near-term surge commitment of U.S. and ISAF forces to the south and east is required to help provide security, defeat terrorist forces, and help jump-start reconstruction.

DDR – Example of an Emerging Challenge

There is no disagreement that the DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) process is vital to the future of Afghanistan. and that, at some point in the future, there will be a single national army and police force in Afghanistan. It has also been determined by the Bonn process and the Afghan constitution that the armed forces that liberated Afghanistan in 2001 are not to enjoy the central place in national life that has been the case in many developing countries, most notably that of Pakistan. It has also been determined that the emerging national army and police forces are to reflect the entire country's ethno-linguistic makeup (especially in their commanders), which is frequently not the case in many developing countries, most notably region that of Pakistan.

Demobilization of fighting men outside the Kabul government's army and police forces without jobs creates only bandits and narcotics cultivators. Demobilization has to be a primary aim of reconstruction aid. In long term, rebirth of a national economy is the only answer. But in the short term, the U.S. may have to look to these forces to assist with security.

However, in the short term, the DDR process has led to a stand-off between U.N. authorities trying to implement it and defense minister Marshal Fahim. In the longer term, effective DDR is going to be the consequence of the successful assumption of legitimate and competent national power by the government in Kabul rather than the cause.

Since 1978, armed power wielded by Kabul has been discredited, and it will require years of increasing legitimacy and competency to restore it. The Hazaras and the Bamiyan shura are going to have a different view of the DDR process than that held in Kabul by our friends in the government. They are going to want re-assurance that the emerging national army and police force and not going to be used as the “big stick” of a repressive center-periphery relationship. The same considerations also apply to other armed forces in Afghanistan, which need to have their security situation considered on a case-by-case basis.

The U.S. can contribute to an effective DDR process. The most important elements are already being carried out – the creation of a national army and reconstruction that can both employ and train former fighting men. An important challenge will be to extend the benefits of DDR not only to the regional commanders – they already have jobs with the government – but to their senior and mid-level commanders. If they end up as bandit chiefs or narcotics growers, then the effectiveness of the entire process will be undercut.

Hindering the implementation of DDR is a widespread belief by the Afghans affected by it in political bias by both U.N. and the Kabul government. If the U.S. retains the confidence of the regional commanders, it can act as a trusted interlocutor, looking for ways to implement DDR. This is likely to be more effective than having U.S. combat units physically disarming Afghans. Effective actions in support of DDR can include the continued provision of US Special Forces teams with Afghan forces. On multiple occasions, these have “deconflicted” potential problems and demonstrated earnest that the regional commanders should continue to support Kabul, the constitution, and the Bonn process rather than call up their foreign supporters and look for funding to start implementing their own agenda.

The US needs to work with these commanders and forces where appropriate. While they are “yesterday’s men” and they know it, their residual power – in the terms of patronage networks and armed men – is significant. Demanding that they be swept away as an a priori condition for the elections while the central government’s institutions that would replace them – and the legitimacy for their non-repressive use – are both still weak is unachievable and will undercut the potential for limited – but still real – gains

Conclusion

These are just a few elements of a vast interconnected problem. While judging the U.S. effort by money spent or number of troops in-country rather than their effect is dangerous, more U.S. resources would be good. There is a continued need for reconstruction funds. Money can smooth over many of the center-periphery political problems. There would be many fewer Afghans carrying Kalashnikovs for regional commanders or maintaining poppy fields if there were programs where, funded by aid money, they could work on rebuilding in the morning and be taught to read in the afternoons. When such programs have been offered, there have been literally hundreds of applicants for each place.

But until that time, even with more U.S. troops on the ground and more U.S. aid over what is currently available, we will have to prioritize. I believe that the elections make regional security the highest priority. But additional resources would make it possible for the U.S. to have more policy options in dealing with worsening problems such as disarmament and narcotics. Dealing with both while avoiding becoming a participant in Afghan politics or making the Afghan government appear to be a U.S. creation will be difficult, but this cannot be an excuse for inaction.

A goal of all U.S. and international action – diplomatic, security, reconstruction – is to ensure an Afghan government is able to make meeting the needs of its citizens a priority. This was not a priority in 1978-2001. The government needs, within the context of the constitution and the Bonn process, to grow revenues and patronage networks that can help stabilize Afghanistan. But do not expect – or try and fund – short-term success. While supporting the government in Kabul, we must help ensure tomorrow's Afghans do right what the former King and his governments – flush with superpower aid at the height of the Cold War – did terribly wrong in the decades before 1978.

There is a desperate need for training Afghans in many fields, especially civil administration. The concept of effective, accountable, impartial administration was put aside in 1978-2001 when power and its possession were often the sole concerns. Between the pre-1978 heritage and the skills of individual Afghans, there is hope for improvement, but this is an area where the aid is needed.

U.S./NATO troops are needed to make reconstruction possible in the south and east. But keep in mind that goal should be the minimal level of troop commitment consistent with effectiveness. While U.S. troops are a unique and important symbol of commitment, good foreign troops are

needed to share the burden and demonstrate international security commitments. The wrong foreign troops need to stay home.

The most important reconstruction aid – that only the US can provide – is preventing regional players acting as spoilers in Afghanistan. This means, in the near term, undercutting support for the cross-border actions by the Taliban and Al Qaida. In the longer term, it means support for efforts that will undercut the “Taliban culture” on Pakistan’s side of the Durand Line and encourage the growth of civil society and effective governance. Religious funding originating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region will be critical if it is used in the election process.

In the final analysis, Afghans are likely to work things better out themselves. We need to build back their infrastructure, act as interlocutors and mediators, prevent outsiders from acting as spoilers, and be guided by a goal of not doing for the Afghans what they can do for themselves. The US and the international community -- by making long term security commitments to match the aid commitments given recently at Berlin -- can help the Afghans work things out themselves. If the U.S. and the international community can enable and empower them to decide their own future and can prevent outside spoilers from doing damage, then there is cause for guarded optimism about the future of Afghanistan. But as new challenges have emerged in Afghanistan -- the need to conduct elections, the need for disarmament and narcotics eradication, the creation of a national economy – they require new responses and commitment of resources from the United States.

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