

**TESTIMONY FOR**  
**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY**  
**AMBASSADOR ERIC EDELMAN**  
**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, March 1, 2007**

Thank you for inviting me to appear before this committee. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you about Afghanistan.

To date, much has been accomplished in Afghanistan. We often lose sight of the fact that since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the Taliban regime has been driven from power, al Qaeda no longer enjoys a safe-haven to plan and launch attacks against the United States, and Afghanistan is a democracy. It is also worth noting that in the intervening years the Afghan economy has doubled, more than 5 million Afghan children now attend school, and the Afghan National Assembly includes more than 90 women – this in a country where women were once brutalized and pushed to the margins of society. An independent ABC News poll shows increasing confidence in the stability and economy of the country. An overwhelming 79% of Afghans polled are confident in their personal security under the current government, versus just 36% who felt safe under Taliban rule. The significance of these remarkable achievements cannot be overstated. We, in conjunction with the Afghan Government and our international partners, are working to secure our gains and set the conditions for continued progress.

The Afghan people themselves have made tremendous strides and have demonstrated their commitment to the principles of democratically elected government. President Hamid Karzai justifiably enjoys popular and broad-based support throughout his country and the international community. The Afghan National Assembly, although still in its early stages, has already achieved recognition as an impressive governmental institution. The group has had an auspicious start: confirming Cabinet and Supreme Court appointments, passing a national budget, and reviewing presidential decrees.

Our Allies have demonstrated their commitment to Afghanistan as well. On October 5, 2006, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) expanded its mission to support security, stability, and reconstruction throughout all of Afghanistan. ISAF is the first NATO mission where Alliance forces have deployed outside of the European theater. More than 35,000 ISAF personnel from 42 countries, are currently serving in Afghanistan under the command of a U.S. general, Dan McNeill. This past fall, in a series of effective combat operations, ISAF contributors demonstrated their willingness to take the fight to the Taliban on the battlefield and achieved a series of important tactical victories. Moreover, ISAF plays a key role in the effort to rebuild Afghanistan by overseeing 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) throughout the country. In 2006 alone more than 2,000 PRT projects were completed; and an excess of \$255 million dollars was spent by the U.S., Allies, and other partners in support of those projects.

Although our Allies play a key role in the overall mission in Afghanistan, the centerpiece of our efforts is a strong and enduring U.S.-Afghan relationship,

characterized by the “Joint Declaration of the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership,” signed by Presidents Bush and Karzai in 2005. A major component of this Strategic Partnership is strengthening the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), which include both the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. The ANSF, now with over 90,000 military personnel and policemen trained and equipped, are increasingly taking the lead in providing for the security and safety of their countrymen. In two weeks, Ambassador Burns and I will go to Afghanistan for the second meeting of the U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership talks.

Nonetheless, we must recognize that these gains in Afghanistan remain vulnerable and that our enemies are tenacious. This past summer, the Taliban launched a bloody campaign of violence against Afghan and international forces, as well as Afghan civilians. We expect an even greater increase in Taliban violence this coming spring. The Taliban are aware they cannot defeat the conventional military might of the United States and our Afghan and international allies. They seek to undermine the Afghan people’s sense of security, their confidence in the Afghan Government, as well as the commitment of the international community to stand with the Afghan people. We must not let that happen. We must ensure that the offensive this spring is “our” offensive.

To that end, Secretary of Defense Gates recently approved the extension of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, for 120 days. Secretary Gates further approved the deployment of a Brigade Combat Team, 3,200 soldiers strong, from the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade to replace the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division when it rotates out.

Simultaneously, we are encouraging our NATO Allies to do more. Within the past few months Allies, such as the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Poland and Norway have stepped up and offered more forces for the Afghan mission. Since Riga, progress has been made on lifting most operationally restrictive national caveats; however more work remains. We are working with our Allies to come to a common understanding and way-ahead for implementation of a NATO counterinsurgency strategy. Additionally, SACEUR identified equipment and manning shortfalls are being addressed with Allies and in several cases filled. Secretary Gates raised these concerns with his counterparts during the recent NATO Informal Defense Ministerial in Seville. Secretary Gates also encouraged Allies to share best practices learned in the field, to better communicate NATO's and the Afghan government's successes, both military and non-military, to the Afghan people. Although the Alliance understands the importance of the mission in Afghanistan, we continue to work to ensure that member countries fulfill their commitments and remove remaining restraints on their forces.

To ensure long-term success in Afghanistan, the National Security Council staff led a comprehensive interagency review of the overall U.S. strategy. Based on the conclusions of this review, we are adopting an approach that integrates military operations with political initiatives, a development agenda, regional diplomacy, and a counternarcotics effort. The overall conclusion of the review is that while our goal remains a stable and democratic Afghanistan, we must increase and accelerate our efforts across the spectrum of activities in order to reach the goals. With regards to development, State and USAID requested increased funds to accelerate key infrastructure

projects and governance and capacity building programs. Both Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates have expressed the importance of this comprehensive approach with our Allies and urged them to similarly increase their efforts at recent NATO ministerial meetings. I will focus my comments primarily on the security portion of the review developed by the Department of Defense

Our review was based on the recognition that we have seen an important shift in the strategic environment in Afghanistan. Taliban presence and strength have grown in some areas of the country, especially in the South. The relatively weak institutions of the Afghan Government enable insurgents to operate more freely in areas without a robust security presence, and to exploit the Afghan people's unmet expectations where they exist. Furthermore, the Taliban enjoy areas of sanctuary in the region, allowing its leaders to direct and support operations with low risk of military response. Simultaneously however, the ANA has surpassed our expectations. They have demonstrated conspicuous bravery and professionalism in operations alongside our own forces.

The shift in the strategic environment highlights the need to refocus and strengthen the ANSF training and equipping program. The \$5.9B requested in the FY07 Supplemental and the \$2.7B requested in the FY08 Global War on Terror Request will accelerate the pace of our ANSF train-and-equip program and expand the size and capabilities of these forces. These funds are in addition to the \$1.5B included in the FY07 Bridge Supplemental. Our goal is to have the ANSF become less reliant on international forces in the long-term, and more capable of independently taking the fight

to the Taliban. The ANSF continues to demonstrate the will to play a greater role – we must provide them the means.

Achieving our vision for the ANSF will require a significant initial investment, primarily for infrastructure and equipment, which we are looking to fund primarily through the FY07 Emergency Supplemental and to complete with the FY08 Global War on Terror Request. We expect to complete this “build” phase of the ANSF development plan by the end of 2008 – at which point 152,000 ANSF personnel will be trained and equipped. Our focus in the out-years will shift to sustainment, which we estimate at approximately \$2B annually. At last years Riga Summit, Allies agreed to undertake a significant role in both training and equipping the ANSF. Allies have come forward with thousands of tons of equipment, weapons and ammunition, and Allied forces are on the ground assisting in the training of the ANSF. We will continue to work with NATO Allies and other partners to share the burden for assisting the Afghans sustain this capability

The Afghan National Army (ANA) component of our program builds on past success. The ANA now has more than 32,000 trained and equipped personnel of an authorized strength of 70,000. Through the skilled leadership of the Afghan Ministry of Defense, the ANA has grown into a truly national army that represents Afghans of all backgrounds. Additionally, the Ministry deserves praise for its successful efforts to decrease absenteeism and to ensure new recruits are properly vetted. Afghan soldiers have fought bravely alongside international forces. Perhaps more importantly, the ANA

has won the respect of the Afghan people and has matured into a highly regarded institution of the national government.

The acceleration program will provide Afghan soldiers with more reliable and capable weapons, force protection equipment, medical equipment, and vehicles. Six battalions will receive specialized training to become rapid response Commando Battalions, focused on counterinsurgency missions. The program also will build capabilities that will allow the ANA to operate on a self-sufficient basis. The full force will include a small air corps, including both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, that will significantly increase the ANA's combat mobility. Additionally, the ANA will now include combat support units, including engineering units, military intelligence companies, and military police.

We also recognize that a more robust and capable police force is required for the mission at hand. They have the task of holding ground won by the ANA and spreading the rule of law. The development of the police force lags behind that of the ANA. Building on the work of our Allies, particularly Germany, the Departments of Defense and State are taking decisive steps to further develop the police. In FY06, \$200M was transferred from the ANA program to the ANP program to procure weapons and equipment for the police. We have developed a plan to train and equip an expanded force of 82,000 police personnel, which will build upon important strides made in the last year by the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry is in the final stages of completing reforms of its pay and rank system, which will have a major impact on morale and reducing

corruption. Additionally, the Ministry of Interior is removing corrupt leaders from its ranks. We are helping to develop several specialized units, including the Counternarcotics Police (CNP-A), which will be accelerated to develop a force modeled on the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

The CNP-A will target drug traffickers and producers, improving Afghanistan's interdiction capabilities. This year and next, we expect to complete helicopter deliveries to Afghanistan to support the CNP-A's National Interdiction Unit, improve overall investigative capacities, and expand the reach of the CNP-A to remote regions. The Afghan Border Police (ABP) also will receive additional capabilities and equipment to improve its performance in securing the border – which will simultaneously help the Afghans reap greater benefits from customs revenues. This increased Afghan capacity to arrest major traffickers and remove corrupt officials linked to trafficking will be essential to helping the Afghan Government meet the threat posed by the narcotics industry.

Improved security, however, will not by itself win the fight in Afghanistan. Afghanistan will need improved governance, better infrastructure, and greater economic development. Much has been achieved in this regard. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineering District (AED), for example, has executed over \$2B on various infrastructure projects. These included border crossing posts, ANSF barracks, and road projects. Between 2004 and 2006, commanders have used nearly \$400M of Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds to carry out critical reconstruction and assistance projects that provide immediate and highly visible benefits



to the Afghan people. For example, in FY06 \$77.4M of CERP funding was used for local and district level road construction. At the January 2006 London Conference, which launched the “Afghanistan Compact,” 64 donors pledged over \$10 billion to assist in Afghanistan’s reconstruction and development. As impressive as these figures are, however, the magnitude of the problem requires still more.

In addition to addressing security and reconstruction within Afghanistan, we must remain actively engaged in the broader region. Every effort must be made to ensure Afghan and Pakistani cooperation to thwart violence in Afghanistan. Despite some indications of greater cooperation, cross-border movement by the Taliban remains a significant problem. We are working to build on the Presidents’ tri-lateral dinner agreements from September by encouraging the planning and coordination of the agreed Pakistan-Afghan Joint Jirgas to address issues pertaining to the border areas. Secretary Gates and President Musharraf addressed many of these issues in their meeting in February. We will continue to work with Pakistan to bring order and security to the border areas. Further, we must work to ensure that other regional actors recognize the importance of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan as being in their own interest, and work towards that goal.

The stakes in Afghanistan could not be higher, but we are working hard to set the conditions for success. In the near-term, we must respond assertively and effectively to the threat the Taliban and others pose as they seek to undermine the Government of

Afghanistan and intimidate the Afghan people. For the Afghan National Security Forces, this will require our support and commitment to increasing their size and capabilities. In the longer-term, success in Afghanistan will largely depend on non-military factors such as improved governance, infrastructure development, and tangible progress in countering the threat of illegal drugs. NATO has dubbed this the “Comprehensive Approach,” meaning both military and reconstruction efforts must be employed to defeat the Taliban, rebuild Afghanistan, win confidence of the Afghan people, and develop the Government capacities. The people of Afghanistan have made clear their commitment to a future that is democratic and prosperous. They also realize the road ahead is full of challenges, and that they will need the sustained commitment and support of the international community to achieve their goals. The United States, along with our Afghan and international Allies, must seize the strategic opportunities we now face – we must secure the tremendous gains we have made, and work together to set the stage for even more progress in the years ahead.

Thank you once again for inviting me to appear before this committee. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.