

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL (RET) JAMES L. JONES**  
**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**1 MARCH 2007**

Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, and members of the Committee, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and for having this hearing. Congress remains focused on NATO's ambitious undertaking in Afghanistan. This interest and the continued support of the United States for this mission are absolutely essential to its success.

It is a great privilege to be before you today, exactly a month since my retirement from active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps. Today I hope to offer the Committee some insights into both the ISAF mission, and the importance of sustaining NATO as it continues to perform valiantly in the execution of its mission, one that is vital to the future of Afghanistan.

I appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September of 2006, also to discuss Afghanistan. Since then, we have witnessed some impressive successes in the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) mission – to establish security and stability throughout the country. What has not changed since then is that ISAF remains NATO's most important and challenging mission. The Secretary General of NATO has repeatedly said that NATO cannot fail in Afghanistan; I agree with him completely on this point.

NATO's operations are now carried out at greater distances and they are more ambitious than ever before. Thirty-eight thousand NATO soldiers are deployed today on three different continents performing a wide variety of missions – from Baltic air policing to a 15,000-man unit keeping a safe and secure environment in Kosovo, to our mission in Iraq, NATO's new Response Force (NRF) is the most visible expression of our increasingly global operational capability, one which provides capable strategic reserve forces and operational reserve forces on ready-to-move standby. That being said, no mission is more important than the one in Afghanistan; it is no longer only the United States' reputation that is "on the line" in Afghanistan, it is the reputation of the 26 nations that form NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the 11 non-NATO nations who also have troops on the ground, and the 23 others who all are contributing of their national treasure in one manner or another. In short, Afghanistan's fate is about us..... all of us!

There are currently over 34,000 forces in ISAF – with 15,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines from the United States under NATO Command. The Alliance now has responsibility for ISAF operations throughout Afghanistan and works alongside an additional 13,000 U.S.-led coalition forces of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). The 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) under ISAF are the leading edge of NATO's efforts for security and reconstruction, supported by military forces capable of providing necessary security and stability. ISAF's assumption of the entire security and stability mission in Afghanistan is testament to its growing capacity to engage in defense against common security challenges, including terrorism. What makes these reconstruction teams so effective is that they're empowered. Many, but not all, PRT commanders, usually at the rank of lieutenant colonel, have the independent authority and funding to bring about immediate effects in the region by building a bridge, opening a school, digging a well, turning on electricity, paving a road, and giving a sense of comfort and reassurance in the hinterlands where the government will some day be able to get out there and replace the PRTs. As SACEUR I witnessed what PRTs can do and I continue to believe that one PRT of up to 100 people is worth a battalion of troops in terms of all the good it can bring to the people. Proactive engagement is always cheaper than reactive engagement. I would have rather had 100 people dedicated to a certain thing every single day for 365 days, than a few thousand caved troops for only 60 days.

While I was assigned as SACEUR, I witnessed NATO's civilian leadership spend a considerable amount of time working to sustain a unity of purpose for the men and women of the Alliance, along with 17 other troop contributing nations in Afghanistan. This is a tough job, but essential to sustaining the role of NATO in Afghanistan, and in other areas of operation as well. The military forces deployed under NATO are a visible and effective demonstration of NATO's collective resolve to project security in unstable regions and to deter, disrupt and defend against terrorism. ISAF continues to be a model of teamwork – a cooperation of comrades in arms working together to solve very difficult problems. I am confident that it

will continue that way. In the months since the full transfer of authority to NATO last fall, opposing militant forces have tried to test NATO to see if NATO troops had the will and the capability to prevail when challenged. The answer was a resounding "yes." Operation MEDUSA, last fall, not only defeated the insurgents near Kandahar, but helped establish the conditions for reconstruction and development activities that are moving the southern province forward.

While ISAF is focused on establishing security and stability throughout the country, the international community's efforts in Afghanistan remain based on five main pillars: training the Afghan Army, Training the Police Forces, Disarmament of Illegally Armed Groups, Judicial Reform, and Counternarcotics. As SACEUR, I shared with many of you my belief that the ultimate success in Afghanistan depends not simply on the military. It depends in large measure on the efforts of the cohesive international community and the performance of the Karzai government itself. On that score I am not as optimistic as I once was. Collectively, the international effort needs to ensure that military efforts are immediately followed up with the needed reconstruction and development activities in the short run, and success across all five pillars of reform in the long run. Development and reconstruction activities will help meet expectations of the Afghan people who have massively signaled in two national elections, one for president, and one for parliament, that they overwhelmingly understand and support this effort. Progress in education, judicial reform, agriculture, economic development, public services and health has to go hand in hand with providing a stable and secure environment. Afghan authorities and ISAF are now focusing on the key tasks of ensuring that reconstruction and development can take place in accordance with the priorities identified by the local authorities and the national government themselves; this is encouraging.

Today the Afghan national army is about 30,000 strong and plays a pivotal role in the security of Afghanistan. The U.S. commitment to train an army of approximately 70,000 soldiers continues. NATO nations have been fielding NATO operational, mentor and liaison teams. Currently, NATO has 15 such teams offered by troop-contributing nations, with seven of them completely fielded and 17 more remaining to be fielded. The more rapidly NATO can build a capable and sufficiently robust Afghan national army, the faster it will establish conditions for success.

When I last testified in September, it was my judgment that much more needed to be done to train the police force, as well as provide adequate numbers, equipment, training, and pay, coupled with the need to fight against corruption. ISAF's contribution to the Afghan national police training remains within means and capabilities. Sadly, this is work that still needs to be done.

Judicial reform is not a NATO task in Afghanistan, but it is vital to everything that transpires in the country. Judicial reform remains one of the key areas where a progress must be made, as the courts and prosecutorial capabilities of the state remain distrusted, overly corrupt and resource starved. A major problem with judicial reform is the low pay of prosecutors, which makes them susceptible to corruption. I remember a meeting last year with the Attorney General of Afghanistan, who told me that prosecutors' average pay was \$65 a month. By comparison, an interpreter working for the United Nations makes 500 Euros a month. A top Afghan judge earns less than \$100 a month – less than the cost to rent an apartment in Kabul; less than what the Taliban pay locals to support their military operations. This situation cannot be allowed to stand. Italy, as the lead G-8 nation of this effort, should be encouraged to do much more than it has to date.

Proper training of police forces is also in need of a massive infusion of resources in order to provide security in the countryside. Germany is the lead G-8 nation for the coordination of this effort, but it has been inadequate to date.

Afghanistan's most serious problem is not the Taliban, it is the alarming growth of its economic dependence on narcotics. It now permeates nearly every aspect of Afghan society and underwrites much of the violence we are fighting throughout the nation. It is Afghanistan's true "Achilles' Heel". Afghanistan does not need to become a narco-state, but it is unfortunately well on its way to becoming one. The parts of Afghanistan which are currently producing the largest poppy crops are not those that are traditionally known for the growth of such product. The need to find the right means to ensure that farmers can economically grow and sell legal produce, in addition to developing an overarching and understandable

way ahead in the overall fight against narcotics, is vital. Ninety percent of Afghan narcotics are sold in the European markets. The money returns to Afghanistan and fuels the IEDs and terrorism that kills and wounds our soldiers. In my opinion this is the number one problem affecting the recovery of the nation. The lead nation for this effort is the United Kingdom, and it is failing in developing and implementing a cohesive strategy to even begin to resolve a problem that will result in international failure in Afghanistan if not addressed.

There remains a need for closer cooperation and coordination between NATO and the government of Afghanistan, as well as those nations, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, involved in security sector reform. President Karzai has recognized this and has sought to create a policy action group to make decisions and coordinate across the spectrum of reform. This body is Afghan-led and chaired by the president. The Policy Action Group is designed to reach down to the provincial district and community level in order to provide integrated programs that implement policy and serve the interests of the Afghan people. I believe that this group has a good chance of succeeding and will contribute to the enhanced cohesion and coordination that thus far has been absent in the delivery of international relief.

One word about Afghanistan's relationship with its neighbor Pakistan. If the international community fails to impose its will on the two leaders of the nations in question, it is quite likely that the border situation, left unaddressed, will continue to destabilize both countries. Metrics of behavior should be imposed on both national leaders in order to bring about a healthier relationship that is less focused on "finger-pointing" and more focused on effectively securing the vital border region. We will have much less to fear from a so-called "Spring offensive" by the insurgent forces if some accords between the two nations can be reached and implemented. Thus far, I am not encouraged.

The evidence before us is clear – over the past five years there has been solid progress throughout Afghanistan. However, efforts of the international community combined with those of NATO need to be increased in order to consolidate and expand the gains made throughout the nation to ensure long-term success. NATO's leadership role, as well as that of the United States remains crucial. With the continued support of the people of the United States for what is an internationally approved mission, and with the support of this Congress, I believe we can and will ultimately succeed in solidifying the conditions necessary for sustained peace and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan. There is an "exit strategy" for Afghanistan, the question before us is whether, as an international community, we can organize ourselves in such a way as to successfully reform those pillars of this new society that absolutely must be reformed. Time is not on our side in this worthy quest.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. Thank you for asking me to appear before this distinguished committee and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have at this time.