

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL (RET) JAMES L. JONES**  
**SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**MARCH 8, 2007**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, and members of the Committee, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for having this hearing. It is a great privilege to be before the Committee today – six months since last testifying as SACEUR, and just over a month since my retirement from the U.S. Marine Corps. 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.

Today I will 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, so vital to the future of Afghanistan. Since we last met, we have witnessed successes in the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) mission to establish security and stability. What remains unchanged is that ISAF is still NATO's most important and challenging mission.

NATO's "Out of area" operations are now at greater distances and more ambitious than ever before. There are over fifty thousand soldiers deployed under NATO Command 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. The NATO Response Force is arguably its most transformational operational capability, providing strategic reserve forces and operational reserve forces on standby. This brings me full circle to ISAF in Afghanistan.

There are currently over 34,000 forces in ISAF – with 15,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines from the United States under its Command. The Alliance now has responsibility for ISAF operations throughout Afghanistan and works alongside an additional 11,500 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. 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 are worth a battalion of 5,000 troops. 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 10,000 troops for 60 days.

While SACEUR, I observed 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. This is a tough job, but essential to sustaining the role of NATO in Afghanistan, and in other areas of operation. 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 we have the will and the capability to stand and fight. Operation MEDUSA not only defeated the insurgents near Kandahar, but helped establish the conditions for reconstruction and development activities that are moving the province forward.

While ISAF is focused on establishing security and stability throughout the country, the international community's efforts in Afghanistan are based on five main pillars: training the Afghan Army, Training the Police Forces, Disarmament of Illegally Armed Groups, Judicial Reform, and Counternarcotics. While SACEUR, I shared with many of you my belief that the ultimate success in Afghanistan depends not simply on military victories. It depends on the efforts of the international community and the Karzai

government. They need to ensure military efforts are immediately followed up with the needed reconstruction and development activities in the short run, and success in the pillars of reform in the long run. Development and reconstruction activities will help meet expectations of the Afghan people who have demonstrated in two national elections, one for president, and one for parliament, that they overwhelmingly understand this effort. Progress in education, agriculture, economic development, public services and health has to go hand in hand with providing a stable and secure environment. The 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 themselves.

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.

Judicial reform is not a NATO task in Afghanistan, but it is so important to everything that's going on there. 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.

Finally, the problem that continues to worry me the most is narcotics. Afghanistan does not need to be a narco-state, but it is unfortunately well on its way. 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.

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 policy action 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.

The evidence is clear – over the past five years there has been solid progress throughout Afghanistan. However, the efforts of the international community and those of NATO need to be increased in order to consolidate and expand the gains made there to ensure long-term success. NATO's leadership role, and that of the United States remains as important as ever. With the continued support of the United States, and of this Congress, I believe NATO will ultimately succeed in solidifying the conditions necessary for sustained peace and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

