

Testimony for the Record

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of the Office of Afghanistan & Pakistan Affairs at the United States Agency for
International Development**

**House Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security Hearing
Reviewing the Findings of the Interim Report on Afghan National Army Petroleum, Oil
and Lubricants**

September 20, 2012 2:00 p.m.

Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Tierney, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Larry Sampler, and I am the Senior Deputy Assistant to the Administrator and Deputy Director of the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs at the United States Agency for International Development.

Afghanistan is – and has been – a difficult and dangerous country in which to provide development assistance. USAID maintains a significant effort in Afghanistan and our programs there are delivering results. USAID’s development assistance to Afghanistan continues to remain a critical component in supporting our core U.S. national security objective there: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaida, and prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe-haven from which extremists can attack the U.S. and our allies. USAID’s efforts are part of a whole of government, civil-military effort to advance this strategic objective. Together, we are committed to promoting the development of a stable Afghanistan by partnering with the Afghan government and the Afghan people to solidify a foundation of sustainable economic growth and effective, legitimate governance.

I have been working on – and, often in – Afghanistan since 2002, in both civilian and military roles for the U.S government; I’ve worked as a representative of an international NGO; and as the chief of staff of the U.N. Mission. I have personal experiences with the challenges of implementing assistance programs in such a difficult environment. And I have seen the benefits of our assistance programs in Afghanistan:

- Under the Taliban, less than 900,000 boys and almost no girls had access to schools. Today, more than 8 million children, more than a third of whom are girls, are enrolled in school. Now, a generation of young men and women are graduating with the critical thinking skills that will make them better citizens and more resilient in opposing malicious doctrines of the Taliban and other similar organizations.
- In 2002 only nine percent of Afghans had access to even the most basic health care. Today that number is over sixty percent, and life expectancy at birth has risen by almost twenty years. And maternal mortality and infant mortality have dropped significantly.

- Our work in energy has helped triple the number of Afghans with access to reliable electricity, which has enabled the economic growth of the country. With USAID support, Afghanistan's national power utility has increased its revenues by approximately fifty percent each year since 2009, reducing the needed Afghan government subsidy from \$170 million to approximately \$30 million in 2011.

Our ultimate goal, of course, is to work ourselves out of a job by enabling Afghanistan to stand on its own two feet, without foreign assistance. To that end, USAID has been working through selected ministries in the Afghan government since the previous Administration. This work is commonly referred to as government-to-government or "on-budget" assistance.

I should note that on-budget assistance encompasses a range of mechanisms. On-budget assistance includes U.S. funds provided to the World Bank's Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), as well as specific project assistance that we provide through ministries and other agencies of the Afghan government.

USAID has been constantly learning and reforming its operations in Afghanistan over the course of our engagement there since the fall of the Taliban. Oversight and accountability is an area where USAID's leadership has focused intensively throughout the Agency, and particularly in Afghanistan. Protecting taxpayer resources is a vital concern to USAID and we have established a variety of layered measures to ensure that our programs are cost-effective and having the intended impact. We are mindful that we are stewards of U.S. taxpayer funds, and serve as their representatives as we provide assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

USAID seeks to ensure that the ministries and other agencies to which we are providing financial support are capable of implementing the desired programs, achieving the desired results, and doing so in a way that is adequately transparent and fiscally responsible. USAID accomplishes this through a system of pre-award assessments, mitigating measures, financial controls, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

As part of the financial controls, USAID maintains control of funds throughout the life-cycle of a project. We work with the Afghan government to develop projects to achieve specific outcomes, whether that is to train teachers or to build a road. We then reimburse and allow funds to be distributed only when certain benchmarks are met. This ensures the funds are accounted for and that we achieve the outcomes that are critical for our success.

Another layer of oversight and accountability is provided by the multiple, independent oversight bodies that review our programs, including the Government Accountability Office, the USAID Inspector General, and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. They complete numerous audits of our programs in Afghanistan every year that complement and reinforce our own efforts to ensure that U.S. tax dollars are used effectively and efficiently. We welcome the oversight and discipline imposed by these reviews – a number of which are initiated at our request.

There have been significant sacrifices made by the American people in support of a sustainably stable Afghanistan. We are under no illusions about the challenges we face. But these

challenges call for exercising diligence in how we operate as we carefully and deliberately transition to an Afghan-led process which meets our standards of achievement and accountability. Our mission of defeating terrorists and denying them a safe haven remains critical to U.S. national security. The programs implemented by USAID are making important contributions toward that goal by helping Afghanistan to stand on its own.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



Biographical Summary Donald L. “Larry” Sampler, Jr.

Larry Sampler is currently the Principal Deputy Assistant to the Administrator & Deputy Director of the Office of Afghanistan & Pakistan Affairs (OAPA) at USAID.

*Creative Associates, International
Vice President & Director
Communities in Transition*

*U.S. Department of State
Office of the Coordinator for
Reconstruction & Stabilization*

*Institute for Defense Analyses and
consultant to the US government in
Iraq, West Bank/Gaza, and abroad*

*In Afghanistan from 2002 to 2005,
working in support of the United
Nations, the Government of
Afghanistan, and the international
community on issues of governance*

*Academic and professional interest
in complex contingency and
unconventional operations; and US
government interagency responses.
Work for US government (Defense,
USAID, State, other); academic
think-tank; international
organizations*

*Work for the OSCE and the Office
of the High Representative in BiH;
focus on political and pol-mil;
Chief of Staff and security
functions;*

*Special assignment as the arbiter in
Srebrenica*

*Quantitative undergraduate
studies; science policy & diplomacy
graduate studies*

*Special Operations military
background*

Sampler was Vice President and Director of the Communities in Transition division of Creative Associates International. He provided strategic leadership, subject matter expertise, and fiduciary management skills to an important and growing division within Creative. CIT focuses on societies recovering from trauma, and often works in coordination with civilian and military actors, international partners, and host nation civil society and governments in support of complex operations.

Sampler was the Deputy Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. At the Principal Deputy-Assistant Secretary level he was responsible for the operations of an office managing over \$400M in programs, and for managing the growth of the office to a robust presence in the Department of State. He was jointly appointed by the U.S. Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Sampler has been a research staff member with the Institute for Defense Analyses in Virginia. He has worked on projects related to USG interagency collaboration; responses to illicit power structures in fragile states; capacity-building in the West Bank and Gaza; and non-military contributions to the global war on terror. He was recently on assignment to the US Embassy in Iraq, working as a senior executive service advisor to the Ambassador on reconciliation and demilitarization.

Sampler served as the Chief of Staff for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; a flag-level position. Prior to that assignment, he was a consultant to the Afghan government, in support of the Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga where, as Director of International Support, he served as the focal point for international assistance and support to the constitutional process. Sampler also performed a similar role for USAID in support of the Afghan Emergency Loya Jirga in 2002. He was awarded the Constitutional Medal by President Karzai for his efforts.

Sampler has both a professional and an academic interest in post-conflict reconstruction. He has worked with USAID in a number of venues to evaluate and consider post-conflict interventions and assistance. He has been involved in research programs that include evaluations of complex contingency operations and the US government’s inter-agency responses to them; the role(s) of special operations forces in various post-conflict settings; the relationships between international civil and military actors in post-conflict and reconstruction settings; and mechanisms for identifying and supporting the appropriate institutions in post-conflict settings. He has published and presented papers on these and related subjects.

Sampler has also served with the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He served variously as Director of the Elections Operations Center; Director of Election Implementation; Deputy Chief of Staff and Operations; Deputy Political Director; and was the first international arbiter for to Srebrenica. As the International Chair of the Interim Executive Board Governing Srebrenica, Sampler was ‘first among equals’ in that troubled community, and led a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team dedicated to ensuring the safety, dignity, and eventual return of the residents of Srebrenica.

Sampler is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, with undergraduate studies in Physics and Electrical Engineering. His graduate studies there were in the Technology and Science Policy Program and focused on the role of technology in quality-of-life improvements for developing nations. He has a graduate degree in Diplomacy from Norwich University.

Sampler served in the special operations community of the US Army (and later the US Army Reserves) as a member of or attached to 5th, 10th, and 11th Special Forces Groups, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, & 360th Civil Affairs Brigade. Sampler has considerable experience in COIN from both the military & civilian perspectives.

