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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and Distinguished Members of the
Committee:

Thank you for inviting me here today. I welcome this opportunity to provide an overview of plans to significantly increase the U.S. Government civilian presence in Afghanistan. This increase is one key element of the new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan that the President announced in March. At the time, he noted that “to advance security, opportunity, and justice – not just in Kabul, but from the bottom up in the provinces – we need agricultural specialists and educators; engineers and lawyers.” Today I will provide an update on the status of our efforts to deploy these civilian experts, discuss their activities in the context of our broader strategy to defeat Al Qaeda and its allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also discuss the expected impact of the civilian increase.

The President ordered a substantial increase in the number of civilian experts in Afghanistan because the nexus between a weak government struggling with the corrosive effects of corruption, limited growth in key economic sectors such as agriculture, and the insurgency is clear. The United States, together with the United Nations and our international partners, is committed to helping the Afghan government serve its people and develop a licit economy.

This plan for increasing civilian personnel in Afghanistan, which was most recently reaffirmed during a May 2 civilian-military coordination session led by the President’s Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Holbrooke, and U.S. Central Command (CENCTOM) Commander General

Petraeus, is comprehensive in scope, aims to get civilians on the ground soon and in large numbers, and is shaped by several guiding principles.

First, increased civilian presence at Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and other military platforms will ensure an integrated approach to countering the insurgency and extend the reach of the Afghan government. Specialists in public administration, rule of law, agriculture, municipal development, conflict mediation, and other critical areas will build and support Afghan capacity to govern their own country and will complement the efforts of the military to “clear, hold, and build” contested areas of the country, particularly in southern and eastern Afghanistan . Civilians will work alongside military counterparts at the Division, Task Force, provincial, and district level to maximize civilian input into decisions and provide greater focus on governance and development in remote, marginalized parts of the country.

Second, the required number of civilians to accomplish this mission will be determined by our Embassy and military leadership in Kabul, in close consultation with Washington. The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) completed an assessment of the number and mix of civilian personnel and determined that approximately 400 additional civilians were needed to fill critical positions in the field and Kabul between July 2009 and March 2010, bringing the total number of U.S. direct-hire civilians under Chief of Mission authority to just under 1,000.

I note that this number does not include the hundreds of civilian experts contracted by the implementing partners of U.S. programs or the hundreds of Afghan staff who serve as “force multipliers.” In other words, additional U.S. civilian personnel represent the core of a much larger civilian presence. We are currently hiring, training, and deploying the new personnel. Special Representative Ambassador Holbrooke and General Petraeus have asked the Embassy, under the new leadership of Ambassador Eikenberry, and USFOR-A to take yet another look at the civilian requirements to see if additional civilian personnel are needed. For example, the U.S. Embassy has recently identified the need for additional agricultural specialists from the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and we are working on ways to resource this requirement. The proposed civilian increase depends upon the funding requested in the FY 2009 supplemental, currently being

considered by Congress, along with recurring costs that have been requested in the Administrations' FY 2010 budget. We are grateful for the Congressional support we have received thus far for the Administration's budget and supplemental appropriations requests and encourage their swift passage.

A third principal shaping the planned civilian increase was that it should be a "whole of government" increase – including experts from a variety of U.S. departments and agencies." All relevant U.S. agencies have been called on to support this effort. In the field, 270 positions will be located at PRTs and other military platforms, drawing from personnel at four agencies: the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, USDA, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Roughly 150 positions in Kabul will be staffed by 10 agencies, including the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Homeland Security, the Treasury Department, and others.

Fourth, the civilian deployments will track closely the deployment of additional U.S. military forces. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul and USFOR-A identified 56 priority positions to be filled in June and July, in advance of the August 20 Afghan elections and shortly after the arrival of new military units. The 56 personnel will represent a nearly 50 percent increase in current civilian staffing outside of Kabul. They will pilot new civil-military District Support Teams and strengthen civilian presence on provincial and regional civil-military teams. The balance of the additional personnel will arrive in phases between August 2009 and March 2010, and will double current civilian staffing, depending on the funding provided in the FY 2009 supplemental and the FY 2010 budget. Civilian deployments have been coordinated with the arrival of military units, but the planned phased approach also allows time for necessary "clearing operations" by new military units, ensures we hire and adequately train the right people, and allows us to integrate civilians into completely new roles and positions. More broadly, the civilian increase is dependent on military progress in the "clear" and "hold" phases of the counterinsurgency effort; to be effective, our additional staff will need to be able to move and do their work beyond the wire of military installations.

Finally, the U.S. civilian increase will be integrated with an impressive proposal developed by the Government of Afghanistan outlining additional technical

assistance, as well as the civilian increase plans of international organizations, our partners, and of our Allies. Specifically, the Afghan government in late April presented a request for 650 additional Afghan and international civilian specialists, and the U.S. Embassy and other missions are conducting a thorough assessment of the gaps and overlaps between the Afghan proposal and international plans for civilian increase. The UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) is taking an appropriate leadership role in the effort. Expanding the civilian presence is one area in the counter-insurgency effort where we are counting on greater involvement from the international community. The United States cannot nor should it meet all the civilian requirements.

We are on track to staff the positions on the timeline determined jointly by the U.S. Embassy and USFOR-A. U.S. departments and agencies will be using multiple, simultaneous recruitment streams to hire the most qualified personnel as fast as possible. Positions posted to USAJobs and the State Department's website have been met with enthusiastic responses by individuals with impressive resumes and many with prior Afghanistan experience. The agencies and the Embassy are culling through the applications to ensure the right fit for each position. The candidate pool includes the State Department's Foreign and Civil Service, USAID's Foreign and Civil Service, State and USAID's temporary direct hires, and other agencies. Department of Defense (DoD) civilians will also be deployed if gaps in the civilian deployment levels or schedule are identified, and if necessary, military reservists in civilian attire – and under Chief of Mission authority – will be considered. Critical to the State Department's efforts to staff these positions quickly is senior leadership commitment: we have received explicit instructions that any bottlenecks in the hiring process be raised to the attention of Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Jack Lew.

Civilians will be deployed to the field quickly, but not without proper, tailored training. The State Department's Foreign Service Institute offers interagency personnel an Afghanistan Familiarization course and a PRT course. Additionally, all civilian personnel are currently required to take State's Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course. Equally important, my office is leading an interagency effort to explore the development of a one-week civil-military training and exercises program for all civilians who will be working closely with the military in Kabul

and the field. The better equipped our civilians are for their challenging assignments, the faster they will be able to achieve visible effects.

The Embassy and U.S. military, supported by the State Department and CENTCOM, are taking the necessary steps to support this dramatic increase in civilian personnel. These measures include expanding the Embassy's senior leadership with three additional ambassadors who will oversee the civilian increase, developing with our allies and partners a comprehensive integrated civil-military plan to guide civilian and military activities in and outside of Kabul, standing up – with Ambassador Herbst and his team's assistance – the Integrated Civil Military Action Group (ICMAG) to further integrate civilian and military efforts, establishing unified civilian command and control, and expanding the lodging and office facilities of the Embassy and military platforms to accommodate the larger staff. General Petraeus has committed to ensuring the maximum freedom of movement for civilians in the field; greater mobility translates into greater effectiveness.

The civilian effort in Afghanistan, much like the military effort, has been under-resourced for years, and the civilians will be working with Afghans officials and private citizens of varying degrees of capacity and professional experience, so we cannot expect a turnaround overnight. However, we should begin to see the benefits of a more robust civilian presence – i.e., greater Afghan capacity to govern their own country; more rapid infusion of financial resources in the local economy as a result of greater civilian oversight; faster job creation in the provinces and rural areas; increased productivity and improved marketing in agricultural and other sectors; reduced opportunities for corruption – in the short term. The key measure of impact will be that the Afghan population perceives its government to be legitimate and effective at delivering basic services and security and that people believe stability is best achieved by turning away from the Taliban.

The civilian ramp-up will be accompanied by an increase in financial and development assistance, and we recognize the inherently higher risks of waste, fraud, and abuse of financial resources. The Special Representative and his team ardently support the role of retired Marine Corps Major General Arnold Fields, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), in closely monitoring the disbursement of assistance. In fact, you may already know that the

Afghan government has specifically asked SIGAR to help in its anti-corruption efforts. Congress created SIGAR to independently audit the use of the funds and we would like to see them in every province. We value SIGAR and respect and support their mission, and Ambassador Holbrooke has voiced his support for expanding their mandate and responsibilities.

The significant increase in the number of civilian experts in Afghanistan is essential to strengthening the Afghan government, extending its reach, boosting activity in key economic sectors, and defeating the insurgency. We have a plan for rapidly expanding the civilian presence throughout Afghanistan, particularly in the part of the country where the insurgency is the most intense, and the U.S. agencies, led by the State Department and with the strong support and backing of Secretary Clinton, are working closely with our military to execute this plan. As we deploy more civilians, if additional civilian requirements are identified, we will adjust our plan accordingly, in close consultation with Congress and our military colleagues.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to share with you our plan for increasing civilian experts in Afghanistan. I look forward to any comments or questions you may have.