

USDP Testimony to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee

“Afghanistan and Pakistan: Oversight of a New Interagency Strategy”

June 18th, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on oversight of the interagency strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. As many of you know, before returning to government service I was in the think tank world. One of the issues I spent a lot of time thinking about was the very same question this hearing is dedicated to addressing. How do we achieve unity of effort across the U.S. government when undertaking complex operations?

Needless to say, this question is of far more than mere academic interest for all of us. With thousands of U.S. and Coalition troops in Afghanistan, and with our Afghan and Pakistani partners also putting their lives on the line to combat terrorism and violent extremism, it's critical that we implement our new interagency strategy for the region in a coordinated and effective way. Lives depend on it, and we have to get this right.

We're fortunate that so many of the US officials involved in Afghanistan and Pakistan have years of experience in complex operations. We haven't always gotten it right in the past, but I can say with confidence that we have learned a great deal from previous mistakes. We now have a much keener sense of best practices, and from the White House on down, this Administration is making concerted efforts to apply the lessons learned to our current operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As you know, I took part in the Administration's recent review of our Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, along with Ambassador Holbrooke. Among other things, our review sought to clarify our core objectives in the region. Let me outline those objectives very briefly, then give you an overview of the implementation mechanisms we have developed to push our new strategy forward.

Our strategic objectives in the region are familiar to all of you. Our core objective is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its extremist allies, so they cannot use the Afghanistan-Pakistan region as a base from which to plan or carry out international attacks. But to do that effectively, we also need to promote a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan, one that serves the Afghan people. We need to develop increasingly self-reliant Afghan security forces capable of leading counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts. In Pakistan, too, we need to enhance the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism capacity of government security forces, and at the same time, foster enhanced civilian control and stable constitutional government. In both countries, we need to foster economic development. Finally, we must rally the international community around helping the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But doing all those things isn't strictly-- or even primarily-- a task for the U.S. military, though our military has a vital role to play. The challenges we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan are economic, diplomatic and informational as well as military, and we are taking a “whole of

government” approach to addressing them. To succeed, we must make good use of *all* elements of national power, military, diplomatic, and economic.

Now that our strategic review is finished, we have launched what I believe is a truly unprecedented interagency effort to implement our new strategy. We have been working hard to clarify agency responsibilities, flesh out and synchronize lines of effort, ensure alignment of resources and develop measures of effectiveness so we can see where we are making progress-- and where we may need to change course.

At the operational level, we are in the process of refining an integrated civil-military campaign plan to guide and integrate operations in the field. The civil-military plan is designed to help us achieve the unity of effort we will need, while devolving as much authority as possible to local actors.

One of the key principles of our strategy is that we need to offer clear top-level guidance and have robust coordination mechanisms, but at the same time, move forward with the understanding that there is a limit to centralized planning. That’s why this Administration has been so focused on identifying and empowering key senior leaders, military and civilian, both at the theater level and in country.

It’s an honor to testify today beside Ambassador Holbrooke, our special representative for the region, and tell you that we are absolutely committed to giving him the tools that he needs in his job. In a very short time, he has assembled an exceptionally strong interagency team over at the State Department. Though Ambassador Holbrooke’s office is based at State, it is staffed by talented individuals drawn from many different departments and agencies, from DOD to USAID to the Department of Agriculture. Several of our top DOD regional experts and military officers are currently on loan to Ambassador Holbrooke’s office.

The close coordination between individuals from many different parts of the government in Ambassador Holbrooke’s office is mirrored throughout the theater of operations. As CENTCOM theater commander, General Petraeus and his staff are in constant contact with DoD, the State Department, and other players here in Washington. The same is true for our other key senior leaders: Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal in Afghanistan, and Ambassador Patterson and Admiral LeFever in Pakistan.

But even as we have empowered senior leaders in the field, we recognize that their work must be accompanied by ongoing and intensive senior level support and oversight here in Washington. We have frequent Principals and Deputies Committee meetings and highly specialized interagency working groups.

This oversight structure aims to ensure synchronized efforts and continuous assessment of our progress against strategy-driven measures of effectiveness. The President receives frequent briefings and updates from key leaders both here and in the field, and regular SVTCs and visits to the field by Ambassador Holbrooke, Secretary Gates and others also help ensure that there’s no gap in understanding between Washington and those on the ground.

Within DOD, we have established a fusion cell called the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell, or PACC, to provide focused support for General McChrystal's efforts. Through the PACC, which will have liaison officers from other relevant USG departments and agencies, real-time information on all aspects of US operations and programs in the region will be shared, integrated and de-conflicted.

We still have a lot of work ahead of us as we continue to build efficient and effective coordination structures. But I want to emphasize that we've already made real progress improving interagency cooperation. We know that to succeed, we have to break down the stovepipes and artificial barriers that have, in the past, sometimes led to uncoordinated and ineffective action. So we're making sure that we are sharing expertise and cross-checking information all the time, at every level. That way, when we identify problems, we can quickly sort them out and move ahead.

On the ground, I think you can also see unprecedented civil-military and interagency efforts unfolding. In Afghanistan, the President has already committed an additional 21,000 troops, and at DOD, we are actively supporting the "civilian surge," which will bring at least 400 more civilian experts to Afghanistan by next spring. We're coordinating closely with the State Department to provide security and other forms of logistical support to civilians working in our Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and we are also sending our own DoD civilian experts into the field. Secretary Gates and I have both made it clear to our civilian workforce that this task has the highest priority, and we've been very pleased by the response: many of our most talented civilians employees have volunteered to go to the field.

We're very proud of all the Americans who have stepped forward to help, both those in uniform and those working in civilian capacities. And we are committed to supporting our State Department colleagues in every way possible if it looks like more civilian experts are needed or if those already in theater require additional assistance.

I should add that coordination and oversight doesn't begin and end with the executive branch of the US government. The challenges we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan can only be addressed effectively if we seek the expertise and assistance of those of you here in Congress, as well as that of our international partners and allies. Events in Afghanistan and Pakistan affect the prosperity and security of both the region and the world, and we all need to work together to address the challenges we face.

That's why Ambassador Holbrooke and so many others in this effort have been more or less living on airplanes lately. We're committed to ensuring that our efforts are in tandem with those of our NATO partners and those of our partners in the region and in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In fact, as you all know, a major focus of our effort involves increasing partner capacity.

In Afghanistan this involves building up the capacity of indigenous security institutions, even as we provide the resources necessary to enable enduring progress in governance and development. In Pakistan, this involves working with the Government of Pakistan to enhance its ability to combat extremism within its borders.

Let me give you some additional detail on these efforts from a DoD perspective, starting with those in Afghanistan. One of our main efforts at the Defense Department is developing the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). Our goal is to enable them to take responsibility for their own security. To that end, we are working with the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, as well as our international partners. There are currently about 170,000 individuals in the Afghan security forces, out of an authorized end-strength of 230,800 – and we are looking closely at that end-strength number to determine how much further expansion might be necessary.

The Afghan National Army has made enormous progress lately. In 2009, the ANA has on an average led 56% of all deliberate operations. As of May, 29 ANA “kandaks” (battalions) were able to operate independently. The Afghan National Police are not yet as far along, but several promising initiatives to improve the ANP are underway. The Focused District Development (FDD) program, for instance, is our main effort to train district level police and has been implemented in a total of 64 key districts. FDD has also trained 12 provincial police companies. To train the Afghan Border Police (ABP), we have instituted the Focused Border Development Program which has trained 2,773 ABP to date. Similarly, the 4th Brigade of the 82nd Infantry Division (4/82) will be deploying to Afghanistan later in the year. Their primary mission will be to train and mentor the Afghan National Army and Police.

Other recent deployments are also geared towards increasing and leveraging partner capacity. The 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (2D MEB) is deploying to southern Afghanistan now, and the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team (BCT) will deploy to Afghanistan later this summer. These units, as well as Special Operations Forces (SOF) and various enabling units, will significantly increase the counterinsurgency capabilities of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

Let me turn now to Pakistan. The President’s new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan recognizes the central fact that we cannot succeed in Afghanistan without an increasingly secure and stable Pakistan. And Pakistan is right now at a critical moment in its fight against violent extremism: we’re very pleased by the increased commitment of Pakistan’s civilian and military leaders to countering the insurgency, and we are committed to doing everything we can to support this effort.

DoD, in close coordination with the State Department, is helping to train and equip Pakistan's security forces to enhance their ability to conduct counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. We are currently working with the Pakistan’s Frontier Corps, which is at the forefront of the fight against extremist groups in the North West Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In addition, we are conducting training activities with Pakistani Army special forces. Building the capacity of the Pakistani military to conduct counter-insurgency operations could not be more critical as Pakistan undertakes counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in the Swat Valley, Buner, and Lower Dir areas of the North West Frontier Province.

We are also working with our Pakistani and Afghan partners to establish Border Coordination Centers along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. These Border Coordination Centers are designed to prevent friendly fire incidents, help secure the border, reduce cross-border

attacks against U.S. and Coalition forces operating in Afghanistan, and reduce tensions between the Afghan and Pakistani militaries. The first Border Coordination Center was established at Torkham Gate in Afghanistan in August 2008, the second will be operational on the Afghan side of the border in mid-2009, and Pakistan has agreed to begin construction on a third Border Coordination Center inside Pakistan by the end of 2009.

Nothing comes for free, of course, and here on the Hill you're all aware of our ongoing efforts to fully resource our Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy. DoD requested funding for key programs in Afghanistan for FY09, including \$229 million for DoD Counternarcotics; \$5.6 billion for Afghan Security Forces Funding; and \$753 million for Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds. We are requesting approximately \$9 billion for these programs in FY10 (CN: \$293.1 million; ANSF \$7.5 billion; CERP: \$1.2 billion).

When it comes to Pakistan, we provide significant funds to the Government of Pakistan through the Coalition Support Fund, but in addition to CSF, Pakistan-related DOD budget requests for FY09 total \$425.8 million, of which \$400 million is for the PCCF; for FY10, we have requested \$738.4 million, including \$700 million for the PCCF (which the supplemental appropriations conference report makes available to the State Department in FY 10) The PCCF will help to consolidate funding streams for DoD programs in Pakistan and allow us to further assist the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to defend its nation against extremists. The PCCF includes funding to train Pakistani security forces in a wide spectrum of counterinsurgency doctrines, including civil-military operations to support populations affected or displaced by ongoing operations.

This is a good moment for me to highlight Pakistan's recent efforts to provide for and protect the more than 2 million people displaced by recent counterinsurgency operations. The U.S. has pledged \$110M – including \$10M for DoD to deliver emergency food and supplies – to ensure those who have been displaced receive all necessary services until they can safely return to their homes. The State Department has also requested an additional \$200M in the FY09 Supplemental to support these populations. Our efforts to support the Government of Pakistan government in meeting the needs of its people not only aids the displaced population, but contributes to the larger goal of creating a secure, stable Pakistan in which long-term development efforts can eventually take root. Investing in the security and prosperity of Pakistan and Afghanistan is, in a very real sense, investing in our own security.

Let me close by saying, again, that this is probably one of the most complex operations our government has ever undertaken. It has—and will—require an unprecedented level of interagency coordination, as well as coordination with our partners and allies. But I can truly say that I think our government has been rising to the occasion. I've never seen such unity of effort in the interagency process.

As I said, the stakes here are high. We all know it, and we're all committed to doing whatever it takes to support our new strategy. That effort requires a lot of creativity, a lot of flexibility, and a lot of willingness to move beyond traditional stovepipes to just get the job done. But we're already beginning to make progress, and with your help, I believe we will continue to do so.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you once more for inviting us here to testify today. We are grateful for your ongoing support, and I look forward to continued discussion and engagement with you and your colleagues. Thank you.