

**Statement before House Armed Services Committee*****“THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN”***

A Statement by

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**Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,**

I have prepared the usual formal opening statement, and two more detailed documents – one describing the growth of the threat and another showing how we failed to provide the resources to meet it. I would ask that these be included in the record.

I would like to take the few minutes I have for my oral statement, however, to focus on the fact that the war in Afghanistan is winnable and that we are losing largely because of the failures of the previous Administration, the US Congress. And yes, to some extent this Committee – although I recognize that you and several members of this Committee deserve credit for being among the first to focus on these problems.

The failures are scarcely ours alone:

- They are driven by the failures of the Afghan government and the previous Pakistani military junta.
- They are driven by the failures of some of our NATO/ISAF allies to commit the resources they need, but especially to remove the national caveats that prevent their forces from being used effectively.
- They are driven by an incompetent and corrupt mix of international aid agencies and donors who do not provide adequate accounting, and do not focus on real world needs, adequate management, and meaningful measures of effectiveness.
- They are driven by a duplicative and ineffective mix of command structures and coordinating committees that undermine both the military and aid efforts.

But, now let me bring responsibility home. We would not be where we are if we had accepted the fact that this is primarily our war, not that of our allies; and that we need to provide the leadership and resources to win it. We would not be where we are if the previous Administration had honestly faced this fact and had provided the resources necessary to win it, or if Congress had taken the necessary action to understand what was happening, and to follow the money or lack of it, to insist on transparency and public accountability.

We would not be where we are if previous Ambassadors and commanders in the field had been given the necessary resources they requested as “victory” turned into a serious insurgency, or had been told they could ask for what they needed instead of what they thought they could get.

We would not be where we are today if we had accepted the fact that we are fighting a serious war, not conducting an exercise in post-conflict reconstruction, and that we have to win this war to get to any kind of development and stability in Afghanistan and probably Pakistan as well.

We would not be where we are if we have honestly recognized that the threat posed by extremism and terrorism is now concentrated in Pakistan – and to the extent there movement have a center of gravity – it is the FATA area and was never in Iraq.

That said, where do we go from here? No one can provide a balanced picture in a few minutes, but let me focus on a few priorities for action where the Congress must now begin to constantly demand progress and honest reporting on success or failure:

- *Focus on 2009 and 2010:* We need to survive the present to shape the future. We need to meet all of the needs set forth by our Ambassadors, commanders, and country teams in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- *Realism and transparency:* We need to provide honest, detailed reporting on what is happening, what is needed to fix the situation, and progress using real measures of effectiveness. We need to stop lying to ourselves and others, and to start asking for patience and sacrifice. We need people to understand what is in the NIE, to get the DoD report on time and with a meaningful threat analysis. We need to fund SIGAR and insist on results in aid activity. We need to see that strategies have clear plans and adequate resources: Areas where the Congress has failed for the last seven years
- *Focus on realistic goals to deal with the urgencies of warfighting rather post-conflict reconstruction in mid conflict and transforming Afghan society.* We are not going to transform Afghanistan anymore than we did Iraq. Unrealistic dreams of mid and long-term development hurt the Afghan people rather than help them. We need to focus in “clear, hold, and build” in the key areas necessary to win, and deal with immediate security objectives to provide some short term security gains to reverse the psychology of sliding toward defeat.
- *Accept the fact that US resources must be used, and that we cannot expect NATO and our allies to fight our war.* We recruited allies for a police action and nation building and then let an insurgency grow through underresourcing and neglect – roughly one-fifth of the US effort in Iraq. We must provide most of the additional US troops, advisors, and resources necessary to reverse the situation or we will lose.
- *By any historical standard.* Tthe current proposals for 30,000 more US troops are the bare minimum necessary to shift from tactical victories to the kind of “clear, hold, build” strategy that had success in Iraq.

- They need to be matched by more civilian advisors and a US funding effort based on coherent five year plans and funding levels rather than supplementals and short-term fixes.
- *Focus on building up the Afghan National Army, paramilitary elements of the police, and local security forces.* Provide the money, advisors, embeds and other support necessary to make the Afghan Army effective and large enough to perform its mission.
- Stop trying to create conventional police in mid-war and when the foreign advisors, governance, and rule of law necessary to support them are not available. Take the risk of creating local security forces to ensure that “clear, hold, and build” tactics can work.
- Focus on expanding the number of platoons in a company and the number of companies in a battalion so that we don't have to build so many more higher levels staffs.
- Accept the long term funding requirements and find the embedded trainers to go with the troops; even at the expense of cutting maneuver units. We have got to treat advising as equally important to maneuver forces.
- Give proper weight to the Afghan Army and Police missions. We need a 3-star lead and the command should be the A-Team and a main effort both qualitatively and quantitatively.
- *Deal with the reality that the Afghan central government cannot be fixed in time to serve as the necessary instrument of victory.* Continue efforts at reform and aid, but create parallel US aid efforts to create and strengthen effective governance in key urban areas, provinces, and districts – acting carefully to keep them linked to the central government - - and use US/NATO/ISAF troops and PRTs to provide the core of such services.
- *Address the corruption, incompetence, and irrelevance of much or most of the foreign aid effort.* The charges that the Afghan government is corrupt at every level are true, but so is much of the aid effort.
- Some 40% passes through without impacting on the country, agricultural aid is far too limited, and aid does not focus on the areas where the Taliban threat is growing.
- The UN effort is divided, corrupt, and focused on post-conflict needs.

- Far too many allied and NGO efforts are wasteful or exercises in symbolism. US aid efforts put far too few resources into critical war-related needs and lack meaningful priorities, auditing, and measures of effectiveness.
- *Use US and allied military forces as aid personnel.* There is no prospect of getting enough civilians, and particularly civilians that can operate in high threat or combat areas. As in Iraq, military civil-military and aid efforts will be critical.
- *Treat Pakistan as an integral part of the war effort, and systematic raise the level of incentives and pressures to try to make Pakistan act.* Understand that Pakistan has other priorities, is divided, and requires both economic and military aid to act. Use tied military and economic aid as both incentive and pressure. Ensure aid flows are tied to audits and measures of effectiveness, and personnel are in place to use them. Try to revitalize efforts to expand the rule of US Special Forces to train Pakistani forces and provide embedded support.
- *Treat counternarcotics as part of warfighting.* Defer broad eradication efforts until there is major progress in “clear, hold, build.” Focus on the threat drugs now present as a key source of Taliban financing. Attack senior drug loads and traffickers as a key source of corruption.

In closing, I do not expect that this Committee agree with me as to a given course of action. I do ask, however, that it follow the leadership I have seen from its Chairman over the years and now begin to use every power of Congress to ensure that this war is given the resources and active leadership necessary to win it, that we shift to full and open transparency in facing the reasons we are losing and to show we taking the actions necessary to win, and we do not let partisanship, politics, and beltway momentum stand in the way.

In my full testimony, I make the point that it is an iron law of governance that there no good intentions, only successful actions. Let me put it differently, what is too hard in Washington ends up being too dead in Afghanistan. The choice is between bureaucracy and body bags.