

TESTIMONY OF THE DIRECTOR FOR STRATEGY AND POLICY
LIEUTENANT GENERAL WALTER SHARP
PREPARED FOR THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

JUNE 22, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Skelton, Members of the Committee: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to brief you today on the significant progress we are making in Afghanistan, and to acknowledge your steadfast support to our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines operating in and around Afghanistan.

Our overarching US government strategy for winning the peace in Afghanistan is predicated on six lines of operation that include improving governance; defeating the terrorist threat and improving security; improving rule of law and justice; enhancing economic and social development; implementing regional and donor strategies; and integrating and synchronizing United States government actions. Today, I would like to focus on our progress and plans to defeat the terrorist threat and improve security in Afghanistan, which will lead to a more stable and more prosperous Afghanistan.

But before I do that, I would like to take a moment to commend Ambassador Khalilzad and Lieutenant General David Barno for their outstanding service in transitioning

coalition efforts from primarily combat operations to a stabilization and reconstruction focus with targeted combat operations against those still seeking to destabilize Afghanistan. Many challenges remain as insurgents, terrorists, druglords, criminals, and corrupt officials destabilize Afghanistan in pursuit of their own agendas. Despite these challenges, I am confident we will continue to make progress, especially as the Afghans take on more responsibility for their own security and putting an "Afghan face" on operations. We also have the additional benefit of having Lieutenant General Eikenberry in command allowing us to capitalize on his vast knowledge and understanding of Afghanistan.

We have made major strides since I appeared before your committee last April. Eight million Afghan people, despite terrorist attacks, threats and intimidation, and difficult weather conditions, elected a new President. Formal militia groups have disarmed, nearly 100 percent of known heavy weapons are under Afghan government control, and over 65,000 new security forces are trained and fielded. However, this progress in no way eliminates the challenges posed by the enemies of the Coalition and the Government of Afghanistan.

Enemy Operations

The successful elections were a victory for the Afghan people and a shocking defeat for the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), and al Qaida. The elections, coupled with the Government of Afghanistan instituted reconciliation program and difficult winter weather, impacted enemy morale and caused fissures within the command structure.

Consistent with trends over the past two years, we have seen a recent increase in violence as winter receded. Al Qaida, Taliban, and other anti-coalition militias continue to attack coalition, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Afghan security forces, and aid workers and other non-combatants. According to the intelligence community, these groups do not pose a strategic threat to the Government of Afghanistan. But they can and do create a sense of insecurity among the population, stymie reconstruction efforts and weaken the influence of the Afghan government in some regions, especially in the south and east. Despite post-election setbacks this winter, the enemy continues to embark on a war of attrition with the hope that the international community will grow weary and eventually leave Afghanistan before the Afghans are strong enough to stand on their own. We will not allow them to succeed.

The upcoming Assembly and Provincial elections scheduled for September 18th will mark a new beginning for a truly democratic Afghanistan and greater government influence throughout the countryside. Understanding this, Al Qaida and the Taliban will attempt to increase the level and frequency of attacks leading up to September to disrupt elections and to discredit Afghanistan's legitimate government.

In response, the coalition will continue to plan and conduct combined offensive operations with Afghan forces to weaken and destroy the insurgents and shape the security environment for a successful election.

While insurgents are increasingly unwelcome in historically hospitable areas of Afghanistan, they still find safe haven in remote areas of western Pakistan and certain urban centers. President Musharraf has the will to root out al Qaida terrorists and the Government of Pakistan has taken extensive steps against terrorist forces in Pakistan. Pakistan has captured key al Qaida members, expanded Pakistani military presence in traditionally off-limits tribal areas, facilitates on-going logistics support to US/Coalition forces in Afghanistan, as well as continues efforts to reduce terrorist support by addressing educational reform, terrorist financial support networks,

and through cooperative law enforcement efforts. The Pakistani military has closely cooperated with US military forces in Afghanistan and provided strong support for the Afghan election process by expanding border security operations. Pakistan still has some limitations that prevent robust and sustained operations. Enhancing Pakistan's capabilities for reducing the flow of terrorists is critical to helping alleviate security concerns in Afghanistan. We will continue to cooperate with Pakistani forces to secure the border region and improve Pakistan's military capabilities through strong US-Pakistan military-to-military cooperation and security assistance. We will also focus heavily on equipping and training Afghan border security forces.

International Coalition

There is still a good deal of work to accomplish, and fortunately, our coalition friends are also involved in the fight. Over the past year I have hosted two Multi-lateral Coalition Conferences in Poland and Romania to discuss collective strategies to achieve international security objectives. From these meetings, it is clear to me that the world community understands how important a stable and democratic Afghanistan is to winning the Global War on Terror and for maintaining stability in the Central and

South Asia region. The coalition is strong with 40 nations involved in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The U.S. military has over 18,000 troops under ENDURING FREEDOM, and when combined with about 1,700 coalition troops from 18 nations, the total is over 20,000. 36 nations are providing forces to ISAF, which today numbers over 9,000 troops. 29,000 troops in Afghanistan is the right size force at this time. Coalition and NATO forces may surge additional battalions during the upcoming election period as was done during the Presidential elections.

NATO-ISAF Expansion

NATO-ISAF is becoming a prominent force in Afghanistan. Beginning as mainly a protection force for Kabul in 2002, ISAF expanded stabilization and security operations into the North in June 2004, fulfilling stage 1 of ISAF's expansion plan. On May 31st of this year NATO implemented the 2nd stage of ISAF expansion, taking responsibility for the western portion of Afghanistan, and resulting in ISAF being responsible for half of the country. Planning for a further expansion of ISAF to southern Afghanistan, Stage 3, is continuing. Thanks to our NATO allies and Coalition partners, we expect NATO to complete Stage 3 in early 2006, which will transfer responsibility for stabilization and

security operations in southern Afghanistan, including Kandahar, the traditional home of the Taliban.

Working with NATO, we are developing a plan for greater synergy under a single, unified NATO commander. The expansion of ISAF promises to increase international participation in Afghanistan, while still achieving our objectives of creating a moderate, stable government capable of providing for its own security.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)

A key component of our stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan are Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs. PRTs, manned by both military and civilian personnel, extend the reach and influence of the Afghan Government, shape the environment for reconstruction activities and provide a visible international presence that deters terrorist and criminal activities, especially in remote areas, where the National government has never had authority.

The PRT program began in November 2002 with the establishment of three pilot offices. Since then we have expanded to 20 sites, including 13 under Coalition command and 7 under NATO-ISAF command. This summer, two newly established NATO-ISAF PRTs will become operational under ISAF in western Afghanistan for a total of 9, a Lithuanian-

led PRT at Chagcharan and Spanish-led PRT at Qaleh-ye Now.

PRTs in themselves do not represent the ends, but rather provide the means for helping the Afghan's build local governmental capacity, security and economic success. Over time, PRT tasks will migrate into provincial government offices as local resources and administrative capacity increase.

Afghan Security Forces

As with the PRTs, a primary objective in Afghanistan is to migrate security operations to the Afghans as they build capacity and capability to manage the threats with minimal assistance. The threats in Afghanistan are complex, multi-faceted, and eventually, best understood and dealt with by the Afghan people. Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the Office of Military Cooperation - Afghanistan (OMC-A), Afghan security forces are expanding and improving every day. Under a new arrangement, OMC-A will transform into the Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan (OSC-A) and will direct all US efforts toward organizing, training and equipping Afghan security forces and institutions.

Afghan National Army (ANA)

The Afghan National Army is rapidly gaining capability and is on track to become the one and only Army of Afghanistan, replacing numerous local and private militias.

The ANA is comprised of a Central Corps in Kabul and four Regional Corps based in Kandahar, Gardez, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat. These regional headquarters extend the government's influence across the country. Today, the ANA has over 24,000 combat troops and we have accelerated training to reach a final force of 70,000 in September 2007, a full three years ahead of schedule. Afghans are brave and tenacious fighters and ANA battalions, or Kandaks, continue to prove themselves alongside Coalition forces in combat operations. Our program of embedding military trainers with fielded Afghan units is yielding terrific results.

The ethnically balanced ANA is a unifying force for the country, and the Afghan populace has been universally positive during encounters with them. Most Afghans are not accustomed to seeing professional Afghan soldiers and at times they have initially been mistaken for foreign troops. The people are proud of "their" Army.

As ANA capability grows, we can transition greater responsibility to the Afghan Government and reevaluate the US force posture. In addition to training fighters, we are also building logistics, training and acquisition institutions, and command and control capabilities critical for the Afghans to sustain and operate on their own. It is

critical for us to put the right tools in the hands of the Afghan government so it will be able to effectively deal with any security threats that threaten the hard fought gains we have achieved together in the fight against terrorism.

America's investment in the ANA over the next several years is key to building a lasting peace in Afghanistan, and subsequently, will prevent terrorist threats with global reach from reemerging in the region. We appreciate Congressional support to-date and look forward to continued support in the future.

Afghan National Police (ANP)

Perhaps even more important than the ANA to long-term security in Afghanistan is the National Police. Due to the efforts of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) in cooperation with Germany the police training has expanded rapidly. The Afghan National Police, or ANP, number over 41,000 with an additional 3,500 Border, Highway and Counternarcotics Police currently serving. The Ministry of the Interior's forces will eventually number 62,000 by January 2006. Under OSC-A, which is working closely with INL, we are creating a countrywide police-mentoring program to aid the field training and professional development of the force,

improve infrastructure and provide critical equipment and vehicles. Fifty-five Afghan police officers have already completed the pilot phase of the Field Training Officer course. The program will expand nationwide using FY05 supplemental funds. We must also work to assist the Italians in building the justice system and detention facilities so we can get the criminals off the street.

As with the ANA, Congressional support and America's investment is critical to building a professional and effective police force to fight corruption and spread the rule of law, which is so critical to defeating the insurgency.

Counternarcotics

One of the greatest threats to our strategic efforts in Afghanistan is the expanding drug trade. The Coalition and ISAF are in active support to help the Afghans execute an Afghan solution. The US Government strategy in support of United Kingdom and Afghanistan efforts addresses the drug problem through five lines of operation or "pillars." These include Public Information, Alternative Livelihoods, Law Enforcement, Interdiction and Eradication.

While we have made progress, much remains to be accomplished. Last year DoD obligated \$73 million from the FY 04 Supplemental to enhance border control, improve

intelligence collection and sharing, and to provide training, equipment, and transportation for Afghan, US, and United Kingdom interdiction forces.

This year, U.S. Central Command has a plan to commit \$242 million in DoD counterdrug funds from the FY05 Supplemental, expanding on the work done last year and increasing emphasis on border and regional security, police and judicial infrastructure, and a sustainable airlift capability for the Ministry of the Interior.

In addition to helping build Afghan capacity to address the drug problem, CFC-A is supporting law enforcement efforts. CFC-A provides intelligence, planning, logistics, airlift, and *in extremis* defensive support and Medical services to interdiction forces. Most recently, on June 18, CFC-A provided intelligence support, mission planning and airlift to elements of the Afghan National Interdiction Unit in a joint operation with the US Drug Enforcement Administration. This highly successful raid of laboratories in Nangarhar Province resulted in the destruction of over 9,500 pounds of opium.

Though not a DOD-led program, we believe a critical aspect of our drug efforts is the development of Alternative Livelihoods for farmers who are involved in the drug business to take care of their family. Alternative

livelihoods will increase stability by reducing poppy cultivation and the flow of funds to warlords or others who challenge the authority of the central government; helping the Afghan's become agriculturally self-sufficient again; and providing jobs critical to reducing crime and popular support for the Taliban.

Addressing the narcotics trade in Afghanistan is a long-term effort. The Afghan government will need a great deal of international assistance for the foreseeable future.

Summary

Overall, we have witnessed a significant acceleration in progress over the last year. While the insurgency remains persistent and the drug trade remains a strategic threat, we remain on a positive glidepath.

Eliminating the Pakistan sanctuary, securing the borders, producing enough economic opportunities for former militia and those dependent on the drug trade, and building professional Afghan security forces remain the keys to success in Afghanistan.

In order to maintain the initiative, we need Congress's continued support in fully funding the Afghan National Army and Police programs. In concert, we need to assist the international community in building civil justice institutions and adequate detention facilities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Skelton, and distinguished Members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide this update on our progress in Afghanistan. I look forward to answering your questions.