

CODEL Hoekstra

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan and Germany



Chairman Peter Hoekstra
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Nov. 12, 2004



Introduction

Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) Peter Hoekstra (R-MI), Ranking Democrat Jane Harman (D-CA), U.S. Rep. C.A. “Dutch” Ruppersberger (D-MD), U.S. Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) and U.S. Rep. Jo Ann S. Davis (R-VA), conducted a seven-day congressional delegation (CODEL) oversight mission to the Middle East from Nov. 5 to No. 12, 2004.

The oversight mission included visits to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan and Germany, where the delegation met with intelligence officials and foreign dignitaries in the war on terror.

Upon the CODEL’s return to Washington, Chairman Hoekstra issued the following report:

Saudi Arabia

We conduct extensive discussions in Riyadh with staff at the American Embassy and the Minister of the Interior of Saudi Arabia about the cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia in the war on terror. The United States needs to look at ways in which it can effectively leverage resources in both Saudi Arabia and Iraq and gain a clearer understanding of the nature of the enemy and its relative strength and organization.

As the home of Islam, Saudi Arabia is a focal point in addressing the root causes of Islamic extremism. Saudi Arabia has much to gain by effectively dealing with the terrorist elements, and the Saudis have become crucial partners in the war on terror.

Pakistan

Pakistan is critical to stability in the region and in combating weapons proliferation. The recently exposed AQ Khan network in Pakistan was responsible for providing nuclear production materials to a number of countries. We were able to stop Libyan nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs with its exposure, but the extent of proliferation through this network remains unclear.

We are provided with an update from Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker and embassy staff on the most recent events and the relationship between Pakistan and the United States. President Musharraf has now been the target of at least two assassination attempts, but key arrests in Pakistan have impacted the ability of al Qaeda to conduct operations in the Middle East and in the United States.

Our CODEL travels to Federally Administered Tribal Areas in the remote area bordering Afghanistan. If Osama bin Laden is still in the border region, it is not surprising as to why it is difficult to locate him. It is a large and desolate area that is sparsely populated. The mountainous region has pockets of population that are widely separated. Most of the population lives in compounds with eight- to 10-foot-high walls surrounding them. The customs of the area dictate that one enters a compound only when invited. Bin Laden could easily live inside one of these compounds and maintain limited contact with the outside world. If he communicated only with couriers and not electronic means, he could stay hidden for a long time. This is frustrating to many of the people in the region, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pakistan has worked in good faith to exert more control in an area that no government has ever effectively ruled.



The people are fiercely independent and loyal to their tribes – not to a central government.

Our meeting with President Musharraf is critical. The 9-11 Commission report specified that the development of Pakistan as an ally in the war on terror is a key objective of the United States.

President Musharraf discusses his views on relations between the United States and Pakistan, the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, progress in Iraq and Afghanistan, the war on terror inside Pakistan, weapons proliferation, relations between India and Pakistan and the need for greater trade between the United States and Pakistan.

President Musharraf believes that a two-prong effort needs to be waged in the war on terror. We must wield a strong military; we need to defeat those who threaten us today. We also need to be thinking strategically. He believes that we need to use our influence to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, that resolving this will serve as the linchpin to peace in the Middle East. The second prong is to address the root causes of problems: the issues of fundamentalist Islam and economic development in the Muslim world. Teachings that glorify suicide bombers and economic conditions that do not provide hope or opportunity to young people are a deadly (figuratively and literally) combination.

Afghanistan

Security in Kabul continues to be very tight, but economic activity is increasing. Construction cranes dot the landscape. While many consider Kabul to be a dangerous area, activity on the streets indicates that much of the life of a big city continues normally and continues to expand.

Successful, peaceful elections have been completed. President Karzai, who won with 55.4 percent of the vote, is pleased with the record participation and the significant number of women who voted. Pakistan helped ensure a successful election by providing more than 400,000 Afghan nationals in Pakistan with the opportunity to vote.

Karzai is concerned about poppy and heroin production in the country. A strategy must be developed to deal with this issue. A nation of laws cannot be built on an illegal drug industry.

Karzai appears to be solidifying his power, confronting the warlords and enhancing the identity and power of the national government. He is implementing a strategy to facilitate the transition of former members of the Taliban into mainstream Afghanistan. He is identifying the major impediments to the success of his country and implementing strategies to deal with them.

There are challenges, including a lack of depth in leadership. Threats to success exist and are recognized, but discernible progress is being made.

Iraq

The CODEL meets with members of U.S. intelligence, U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte, Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, the ministers of defense and interior and a group of Sunni leaders who provide us with a report on progress:

- The situation in Iraq continues to be difficult. Opposition forces, including Iraqi nationalists opposed to



the presence of the United States, former Sadaam Hussein loyalists and foreign fighters, continue to present problems. This is a difficult and persistent enemy that adapts new tactics as conditions change. Ambassador Negroponete and Prime Minister Allawi discuss the importance of efforts in Fallujah to attack the terrorists and stabilize the country so that we can work on political and economic development. Those opposed to building a new Iraq would do everything they could to try and disrupt the political progress and elections in Iraq. This increase in violence is unwelcome but not unexpected.

- Opposition forces are brutal. Execution-style murders and kidnappings, including the kidnapping of the prime minister's cousin, wife and daughter-in-law the day before we arrive, are becoming more common. Improvised explosive devices targeted at coalition forces, assassinations of local and national political leaders and suicide bombings targeting civilians are also becoming more common. These tactics are difficult to defend against and are intended to disrupt the reconstruction process and intimidate the public and the political leadership.
- The next weeks and months will be critical. Security needs to be established to enable the election process. It is a process that will create more political legitimacy and enable economic development. It will not be an easy process. Iraq has truly become the focal point for the war on terror.
- Political leadership in Iraq remains resolute. Prime Minister Allawi is open to dialogue, but he is willing to use force when absolutely necessary. Iraqi leaders are conducting their jobs at great personal risk. Those building a new Iraq are paying a high price, but it is impressive to see the willingness to continue the effort. In these difficult times, it is a positive sign that offers hope to the outcome of this difficult conflict.

The Sunni leaders clearly feel as though they are being discriminated against by the new regime, and that they are not being included in the building of the new Iraq. The Sunnis are the minority population in Iraq and were more closely identified with Hussein's regime. They were the dominate force and leaders of the military, political, economic and educational sectors of the country. They were the beneficiaries of Hussein's regime, and they now believe they are paying the price.

They are passionate in their views, and the very fact that they were willing to meet with us indicates that they were willing to risk their safety to participate in the reconstruction process. Some traveled nearly 200 miles to meet with us. They perceive that they are being excluded from the new military and the political process and are systemically being removed from positions of economic influence. They are a critical and important component of the new Iraq. The position of the United States is that every segment of the Iraqi people needs to participate in the process.

U.S. Military Technological Capabilities

In Qatar we are provided with the opportunity to receive an in-depth briefing from Central Command on the progress in Iraq, but more specifically on the progress in Fallujah.

A two-hour briefing by military intelligence provides us an overview of U.S. technological capabilities and their practical applications in conflicts like Fallujah. The technology used by the U.S. military provides America's fighting forces with a clear battlefield advantage.



Conclusion

Members of the CODEL are focused on how to apply what we have learned to our work in Washington. Issues such as resources, training, language and diversity are all discussed. It is readily apparent that the Intelligence Committee has some great opportunities to positively impact the future of the U.S. intelligence community. The global war on terror will define the world for a long time, and the intelligence community needs to adapt to meet a real and growing threat.

The war on terror waged by Muslim extremists is being played out in many places, most notably in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the Netherlands and the rest of Europe and parts of Asia and Africa. It is a war being fought on many fronts and a number of different levels: militarily, politically and diplomatically. Middle East countries must continue to engage their efforts to limit extremism, and there must be economic development throughout the Muslim world. This is a long-term undertaking that must be resolved by confronting many issues simultaneously and effectively.

The Intelligence Committee will need to play an effective role in:

- Overseeing the work of the intelligence community operating in the Middle East;
- Ensuring that the intelligence community is adequately funded and directed to effectively perform its work;
- Educating members of Congress about the implications of their votes relating to foreign policy.
- Educating the public on the nature of the threats facing the United States and what can and cannot be done to address them.