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**BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

FEBRUARY 13, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Let me begin by noting how honored I am to appear today with Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry. As commander of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, General Eikenberry has been an invaluable leader and partner in our efforts in Afghanistan, and throughout his tenure has fostered and maintained excellent partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. He and Ambassador Neumann have formed a superb team and we will certainly miss working with him in the field. We are confident that ISAF Commander General McNeill will continue the tradition of close civil-military cooperation that has been so essential to our success thus far.

This afternoon you will be hearing from General Eikenberry and my colleague from the Defense Department about the extremely challenging spring we face in Afghanistan and the military efforts we are making to counteract the Taliban and other elements working against the Government of Afghanistan, the United States and our Allies. My State Department colleagues and I share this assessment. In the face of these challenges, we are better prepared this year to tackle the threats we face than we were last year. U.S., Afghan and Allied partners have more tools in our toolbox than ever before. While we face tremendous challenges and there is so much more to be done, we start 2007 in a better position, with more police, more Afghan National Army troops, more ISAF troops, better governance, more roads, and more development projects – particularly in the south – than we were in one year ago.

With these tools and five years of experience under our belts in Afghanistan, we have made the strategic decision that we will not sit back to

wait for our enemies to attack us. Instead, we are taking actions now to threaten, squeeze and otherwise disrupt those who oppose the ever growing Afghan Government. In essence, if there is going to be a spring offensive, it will belong to the Government of Afghanistan, the United States and our international partners.

This summer the interagency conducted a strategic review of our policy in Afghanistan to understand what was working well and what needed refining. We studied the successes of this summer whereby parts of Afghanistan, especially in the east, were successfully stabilized when military action was followed closely by good governance – including competent governors and police – and economic opportunity. Integration of all of these elements in a comprehensive manner has produced sustainable results, whereas military success without the follow-on political, economic and development efforts often led to merely a temporary calm.

We also clearly recognized that the international community, including the United States, needs to increase its level of support, join together in endorsing and implementing a “comprehensive approach,” and focus even more sharply on the needs of the Afghan people. We believe that if we take this comprehensive approach and put it to work in more of Afghanistan we will see increased stability and a strengthened Afghan Government presence across the country.

To enable this comprehensive approach, on January 26 Secretary Rice announced a request for more than \$10.6 billion in new assistance over the next two years, including more than \$6.7 billion in the FY 2007 supplemental and more than \$4 billion in FY 2008. That assistance, which will go to both reconstruction and the development of Afghanistan’s security forces, is vital not only for success this spring but also to help secure long-term success for the Government and people of Afghanistan. We hope that the Congress will support this request in its entirety.

The United States is determined to do our part, but our Allies in NATO and elsewhere need to do more as well. NATO needs to meet the requirements it set when taking on the NATO mission in Afghanistan and drop the caveats that hamper our cooperation and effectiveness. This is the message that Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates have taken to recent NATO Ministerials in Brussels and Seville. We have seen positive offers from a number of countries increasing their commitments to Afghanistan, but we

would like to see even more and will continue to talk with donor nations about what they can do to support the Government of Afghanistan.

We are also working closely with the Government of Pakistan to identify additional actions it can take to help disrupt the Taliban this spring. They are serious about this effort and have demonstrated it with a number of important activities designed to deal with militants using their territory, such as raids and attacks in the border regions in recent months against both Taliban and Al Qaeda targets. The Pakistani military continues vigorous operations and is taking casualties in this fight against this mutual enemy.

Mr. Chairman, although we have come a long way in Afghanistan, no one seeks to underestimate the challenges ahead. Our international partners and the Government of Afghanistan expect the United States to lead the way in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. The strong, long-term U.S. commitment that we display is making the difference, and it must continue with intensity.

We at the Department of State appreciate all that your committee does to support this most important endeavor. Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before this committee. I look forward to taking your questions.