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Congressional Progressive Caucus

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77 Strong and Growing: Open to New and Different Ideas

May 12, 2009

Dear CPC Members:

For the past several weeks, we, with the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus, have been organizing a series of conversations on the security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The six-part Afghanistan-Pakistan forum, "Afghanistan: A Road Map for Progress", is the first of many policy conversations that will occur as part of the "Seeking Global Security" project. This project creates intellectual space for us to examine what constitutes real national security for America, on a variety of security issues, from Afghanistan and Pakistan, to additional topics in the near future.

In our first series on Afghanistan, for which the last panel will take place on May 13, 2009, we hosted country-specific experts and diplomats from Afghanistan and Pakistan, regional experts from the Middle East and South Asia, as well as military and development experts from the US in order to discuss alternative strategies to bring peace and stability to the region.

The appended document represents both a summation of the panelists' key concerns, as well as recommendations for consideration by the Progressive Caucus.

The series covered the following topics: Afghanistan's History/Culture/Peoples; Defining America's Strategic Interests; Role of the Military; Comprehensive Strategy for Afghanistan; US Foreign Policy vis-à-vis Pakistan; and International Diplomatic Strategies.

Experts ranged from Colonel Wilkerson (Colin Powell's former chief of staff), General Paul Eaton (commander of Iraq's security forces), Hekmat Karzai (director of Kabul's peace and security centre), Ambassador Dobbins (President Bush's special rep to Afghanistan) and Ambassador Akbar Ahmed (the UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan), among others.

With the Fiscal Year 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Bill debate on the Floor of the House this week, we ask that Members please review the attached document. We look forward to deliberating further on these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus



Mike Honda
Member, Congressional Progressive Caucus

CPC AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN FORUM: PRELIMINARY SUMMARY

According to the panelists, the most successful approach to securitization and stabilization is the National Solidarity Program (NSP), coordinated through the Afghan government's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development: <http://www.nspafghanistan.org/>. The NSP is a nationwide program that empowers Afghan villages to manage their own budgets and reconstruction activities. The NSP is embraced by local Afghans, so much so that schools built by the NSP, for example, are left protected while schools built by USAID are burned down. *This reflects the opinions of panelists Alexander Their (USIP), Clare Lockhart (Institute for State Effectiveness, Author on Afghanistan), Rueben Brigety (CAP/Former USAID), and Hekmat Karzai (Kabul, Center for Conflict and Peace).*

Recommendation: Fund the National Solidarity Program. According to the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the NSP requires another US\$200 million to complete 20,000 small projects in the coming five months.

According to the panelists, we have completely failed to build Afghan institutions, build Afghan skills, and build Afghan capacity. *This consensus, and the following recommendations, reflect the opinions of panelists Joanne Trotter (Aga Khan), Dr. Adil Najam (Boston University), Hekmat Karzai (Kabul), and Clare Lockhart (Institute for State Effectiveness).* Specifically on the following:

Resources: For every \$1.00 spent of US and international assistance, \$0.75 goes back to foreign coffers, and only \$0.25 stays in Afghanistan, leaving the country completely underdeveloped and under-resourced. Foreign private contractors are taking critical aid dollars and \$20-30,000/monthly salaries are not uncommon.

Recommendation: Require all aid dollars to have a majority percentage of dollars tied or guaranteed to local Afghan institutions and organizations.

Afghan Involvement: On many US and international military operations, local Afghans are not involved in the consultation and implementation, leading to serious errors and collateral damage. On political matters, informal decision making processes (using loya jirgas to engage religious clerics, tribal leaders, and respected community elders) are excluded.

Recommendation: Require participation of Afghan formal and informal decision-makers in military, political and economic operations and initiatives.

Institution-Building: The country's transportation system, healthcare system, education system, judiciary and law enforcement system, commerce and workforce development, etc. is failing and underdeveloped, leaving the infrastructure unstable and the state fragile.

Recommendation: Require 80-20 ratio (political-military) with all future US funding, with a special inspector general to monitor the implementation of this ratio.

Skills-Building: Foreigners are taking high skilled jobs and aid/assistance programs are not geared towards training Afghan lawyers, masons, doctors, engineers, technicians, etc., leaving the country without the skills and leaders to run on their own, which poses long term sustainability issues when foreigners leave the country.

Recommendation: Require the creation of a monitoring/accountability mechanism, with a special inspector general, to ensure country-wide job mapping, assessment and workforce development process.

Reconciliation: According to panelist Dr. Abdulkader Sinno (Author on Afghanistan, Indiana University), more funding in Afghanistan will continue to face security challenges if all ethnic and tribal leaders are not brought into the political fold. For development to be boosted there must be some way to more robustly support the Afghan government and the Ulema (religious scholars) efforts to bring these ethnic/tribal leaders into the political fold. The Afghan insurgency is greatly threatening Pakistan in the sense that it provides the propaganda for Pakistani Taliban to fight with their "Afghan brothers" in bleeding western forces.

Recommendation: Require the initiative of a dialogue process, with Saudi Arabia, who initiated previous talks between Afghan government and ethnic/tribal leaders, taking the lead or with other international organization taking the lead.

Market-building: According to Clare Lockhart (Institute for State Effectiveness), there is a need for instruments for market-building, job creation in the short term and building market institutions, including risk insurance, credit and guarantees. These are lacking in Afghanistan and are needed to create jobs.

Recommendation: Require involvement of UN/WB/IDB, or other international organization or commerce-related agency, to map markets in Afghanistan and develop strategy/commission for market creation.

Women: Greater attention needs to be paid to the situation of women, according to panelists Joanne Trotter (Aga Khan), Clare Lockhart (Institute for State Effectiveness) and Sweeta Noori (Women for Women International). In particular, efforts should be made to: 1) Enhance female literacy; 2) Create jobs for women: opportunities at large scale could be made through developing the economic activities in jewelry making (building on Afghanistan's mineral wealth); agriculture processing (dried fruits, fruit juices and other products); textiles and ICT. Investment in these industries should be made, with particular focus on women's access to jobs in these areas; and 3) Education of women in health (doctors, nurses), education (teacher training), law and general civil service positions should be made, with attention to access of women in universities and trade schools, and attention to ensuring women have access to civil service.

Recommendation: Require involvement of UNIFEM, and relevant non-governmental organizations, in establishing a women's commission and a country-wide strategy for capacity building on political, economic and social levels.

Elections: While the Afghan government of 2001-2005 was able to maintain the trust of the population and launch a series of successful institution-building reforms, the Karzai government of 2005-2009 has been beset with problems of poor management and corruption. The experience of 2001-2005 demonstrates that institution-building and good governance is possible in Afghanistan. The elections provide a key moment for Afghans to choose a team of leaders who will pledge to serve their citizens. There is a strong chance that a team will emerge that can satisfy the demands of Afghans for accountable and legitimate leadership.

Recommendation: Require international elections experts to ensure that Afghans are enabled to vote freely in a fair process. Given the widespread reports of intimidation and vote-buying by the incumbent regime, maintaining a free and fair election will require close support to ensure the process is truly fair. This will include ensuring that credible candidates have access to the funding, media, transportation and security on a level with the incumbent regime.

Military:

Preface: *According to General Eaton, who trained the Iraq Security Forces in 2004, noted General Petraeus's doctrine vis-à-vis counter-insurgency strategies. General Eaton reiterated the 80-20 doctrine on allocated resources: 80% should be political, while only 20% should be military. General Eaton followed that comment by citing that in Afghanistan we're investing 90% of our resources towards military. General Eaton also noted his conversation w/ President Obama wherein he strongly recommended a different approach to Afghanistan – one wherein our Secretary of Agriculture is equally invested in the outcome in Afghanistan as our Secretary of Defense. Our approach to Afghanistan must be Cabinet-wide where the Secretaries of Transportation, Health, Agriculture, Education, State, Defense, Labor, Commerce and others expertise guides the non military aspects of our international foreign policy doctrines.*

Troops: 17,000 troops are neither sufficient to manage the conflict nor a useful contribution because the already deployed US/international forces are not being presently utilized. There is massive inactive duty: troops are bunkered in bases, not in the field working with/beside Afghan security forces.

Recommendation: Require UN involvement in overseeing and mandating the role of US and international military operations. Require that any increase in US troop presence is oriented toward training and support roles for Afghan security forces and not for US-led counter insurgency efforts as recommended by *panelist Colonel Wilkerson, Colin Powell's former Chief of Staff*. While there is some consensus that the 4,000 US troops commissioned to train Afghan security forces was a step in the right direction, US troop deployment needs international endorsement (especially given the President's poor EU recruitment this year). A military modus-operandi that ensures an Afghan-led effort to secure Afghanistan's peoples will bring public perception benefits as well.

Drone Attacks: Drone attacks, another equally significant issue *according to panelist Colonel Wilkerson, Colin Powell's former Chief of Staff*, are not an effective counter-insurgency tactic because the high level of civilian casualties resulting from the drone attacks is generating, not undermining, extremism in the regions targeted. Tribal and community cultural nuances are underestimated, and increased civilian casualties continue to alienate the population and give oxygen to the insurgency's propaganda.

Recommendation: Require the immediate cessation of drone attacks.

Pakistan: *According to panelists Ambassador Akbar Ahmed (Former UK High Commissioner to Pakistan), Dr. Adil Najam (Boston University), Azhar Hussain (International Center for Religion and Diplomacy), and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson (Colin Powell's former Chief of Staff), the following recommendations should be pursued:*

Recommendation: Call for an immediate cession of US drone attacks and air strikes as they only incite further extremism. Call for the reinstatement of tribal authority and a FATA/NWFP tribal-led infrastructure to which military responds and with which government coordinates. Call for sufficient resources to invest in Pakistan's civil infrastructure (education, economic development, etc). Call for madrassah-reform that is culturally and contextually feasible.

Fiscal Year 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Bill: This supplemental funding exacerbates the problematic trends already identified above – that it is predominantly military with little funding allocated for institution building, skills building and economic development. The supplemental contradicts General Petraeus's counter-insurgency doctrine of 80% (political) and 20% (military). If the supplemental focused more on economic development, institution building, local capacity building, then it would be worth funding. But as it stands, the supplemental will only exacerbate problems identified.

Recommendation: After the extensive 6-part CPC-sponsored series, the Afghanistan/Pakistan Forum task force has compiled these significant recommendations from our panelists to improve global security, particularly in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. The policy shifts and funding reallocation recommendations will significantly improve Afghanistan and its relationships with neighboring Pakistan leading to a more peaceful and economically viable and stable region. We share these preliminary recommendations for Member consideration during deliberations on the upcoming **Fiscal Year 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Bill.**