TESTIMONY

Afghanistan and Pakistan
Understanding a Complex Threat Environment

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Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

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Thank you Chairman Tierney, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before you.

I will try and answer three related questions today.

1. In what kind of war is the US engaged *in general* and how do the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan play into this war?

2. Who are the United States and it allies fighting in Afghanistan? An important subset of this question is: What are the networks in Pakistan that support the Afghan insurgency?

3. Why should the US sustain its commitments in Afghanistan? After all, it is now more than seven years after 9/11 and al Qaeda is no longer headquartered there, but is instead located in Pakistan.

I will also suggest some policy proposals that flow from this analysis that are appended as an annex to this document.

1. In what kind of war is the US engaged *in general* and how do the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan play into this war?

How does American policy in Afghanistan fit into what the Bush administration framed as the 'war on terror'? President Bush declared an open-ended and ambiguous 'war on terror' and took the nation to war against a tactic, rather than a war against a specific enemy, which was obviously al Qaeda and anyone allied to it. When the United States went to war against the Nazis and the Japanese during World War II Roosevelt and his congressional supporters did not declare war against U-boats and kamikaze pilots, but on the Nazi state and Imperial Japan.

The war on terror, sometimes known as the Global War on Terror or by the clunky acronym the GWOT, became the lens through which the Bush administration judged almost all of its foreign policy decisions, which was dangerously counter-productive. The GWOT framework propelled the Bush administration into its entanglement in Iraq, which had nothing to do with 9/11 but was launched under the

rubric of the war on terror and the erroneous claims that Saddam Hussein had WMDs that he might give to terrorists, including al Qaeda to whom he was supposedly allied, and that he therefore threatened American interests. None of this, of course, was true.

The Bush administration also painted the GWOT in existential terms. Nine days after 9/11 Bush addressed Congress in a speech watched live by tens of millions of Americans in which he said that al Qaeda followed in the footsteps "of the murderous ideologies of the 20th century…They follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism," implying that the fight against al Qaeda would be similar to World War II or the Cold War. But this portrayal of the war on terror was massively overwrought. The Nazis occupied and subjugated most of Europe and instigated a global conflict that killed tens of millions. And when the U.S. fought the Nazis she spent 40% of her GDP to do so and fielded millions of soldiers. Communist regimes killed 100 million people in wars, prison camps, enforced famines and pogroms. And had the Cold War ended with a bang instead of a whimper much of the human race would have vanished. By contrast, al Qaeda might one day launch another attack on the United States, but its capacity to do so is very diminished today, and the group will never pose an existential threat to the United States.

While the Bush administration inflated the very real threat that al Qaeda and its allies pose, many Europeans have underestimated that threat. European politicians, who have lived through the bombing campaigns of various nationalist and leftist terror groups for decades, have often said that al Qaeda is just another criminal/terrorist group that can be dealt with by police action and law enforcement alone. This is not the case. A typical European terrorist organization like the Irish Republican Army would call in warnings before its attacks and its single largest massacre killed 29 people. By contrast, al Qaeda has declared war on the United States repeatedly as it did for the first time to a Western audience with Osama bin Laden's 1997 interview with CNN. Following that declaration of war the terror group attacked American Embassies, a US war ship, the Pentagon and the financial heart of the United States, killing thousands of civilians without warning; acts of war by any standard. Al Qaeda is obviously at war with United States and so to respond by simply recasting the GWOT as the GPAT, the Global Police Action against Terrorists, would be foolish and dangerous.

What then *is* the war that the US is engaged in? The United States is clearly at "War against al Qaeda and its Allies." And instead of the Bush formulation of "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" the American policy in this war should be, "Anyone who is against the terrorists is with us." After all it is only al Qaeda and its several affiliates in countries like Iraq, Lebanon and Algeria and allied groups such the Taliban that kill U.S. soldiers and civilians and attack American interests around the globe. Everyone else in the world is a potential or actual ally in the fight against al Qaeda and its affiliates because those organizations threaten almost every category of institution, government and ethnic grouping.

To what extent then is the Taliban in both Afghanistan and Pakistan allied with al Qaeda? If the Taliban isn't allied with al Qaeda then it is part of the

solution, and if it is an al Qaeda ally then it is part of the problem.

There was a fair amount of tension between Osama bin Laden and many leaders of the Taliban pre-9/11 but we need to be clear that the Taliban—never a monolithic movement—is much closer to al Qaeda today than it was eight years ago. Yes, there are local groups of the Taliban operating for purely local reasons but the upper levels of the Taliban on both sides of the Afghan/Pakistan border have morphed together ideologically and tactically with al Qaeda. Some examples follow:

-Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban, sent suicide attackers to Spain in January 2008, is at war with the Pakistani state and sees himself as part of the global jihad.

-The Haqqani family, arguably the most important component of the insurgency on the both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border, has ties with al Qaeda that date back to the 1980s.

-Mullah Dadullah, a key Afghan Taliban commander gave interviews to Al Jazeera in 2006 before he was killed, in which he made some illuminating observations about the Taliban's links to al Qaeda. Dadullah said, "We have close ties. Our cooperation is ideal," adding that Osama bin Laden is issuing orders to the Taliban. Dadullah also noted that "we have 'give and take' relations with the mujahideen in Iraq."

-Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a commander allied to the Taliban, has been close to al Qaeda since at least 1989.

-The use of suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices and the beheadings of hostages, all techniques that al Qaeda perfected in Iraq, are methods that the Taliban has increasingly adopted in Afghanistan and have grown exponentially there since 2005.

-Al Qaeda was founded in Pakistan two decades ago and bin Laden has been fighting alongside Afghan mujahideen groups since the mid-1980s. Al Qaeda Central on the Afghan/Pakistan border is much less of a 'foreign' group with far deeper and older roots in the region than Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) ever was in Iraq.

One could go on listing examples of the Taliban's ideological and tactical collaboration with al Qaeda, but the larger point is that separating al Qaeda and the Taliban is not going to be as relatively simple as splintering Iraqi insurgent groups from AQI.

While, of course, the US should be splintering, buying off and co-opting as many elements of the Taliban as possible, we also need to be realistic about how much closer Al Qaeda and the Taliban have grown together in recent years.

This is why the formulation that the United States is "At War with al Qaeda and its Allies" is a useful way to frame American policy in Afghanistan (and Pakistan and

elsewhere). If militant groups are willing to reject al Qaeda, recognize the legitimacy of their government, end their attacks on international forces and stop training terrorists for missions overseas then they there are no longer allies of al Qaeda and therefore the United States is not at war with them.

If, however, al Qaeda's allies will not takes those steps then they are enemies of the United States. Today in the Pakistan/Afghanistan region, the Pakistani Taliban, the senior leadership of the Afghan Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezbi-Islami, the Haqqani network, the Islamic Jihad Union, elements of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohamed are all allies of al Qaeda who should be considered enemies of the United States unless they take the four steps necessary to prove otherwise which, to repeat, are, reject al Qaeda, recognize the legitimacy of the government, end attacks on international forces and stop training terrorists for overseas missions.

2. Who are the United States and it allies fighting in Afghanistan?

When President Bush left office the Taliban were stronger than at any point since they had lost Kabul seven years earlier. The Taliban, which in 2002 had barely been more than a nuisance, now control large sections of Afghanistan's most important road, the 300-mile Kabul to Kandahar highway. And the south of the country is not only the source of the vast majority of the world's heroin, but it is also quite dangerous for those the Taliban deems an enemy, which, in practice, means pretty much anyone who isn't part of their movement. By mid-2008 more Americans soldiers were dying in Afghanistan every month than in Iraq. In early 2009 a US official involved in Afghan policy put the number of Taliban fighters somewhere between 12, 000 to 18,000. Whatever the exact number the Taliban today is obviously a larger force than they were in 2006 when US intelligence officials in Afghanistan estimated that they numbered *at most* 10,000.

Between the rising Taliban insurgency, the epidemic of attacks by suicide bombers and spiraling criminal activity fueled by the drug trade, by the time President Obama took office Afghanistan looked something like Iraq in the summer of 2003, when the descent into violent conflict began. As a former senior Afghan Cabinet member explained, "If international forces leave, the Taliban will take over in one hour."

When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan they were a provincial bunch; their leader, Mullah Omar, rarely visited Kabul in the five years that he ran the country and he made a point of avoiding meeting with non-Muslims and most journalists.

But this is not your father's Taliban. Where once the Taliban had banned television, now they boast an active video propaganda operation named *Ummat*, which posts regular updates to the Web. They court the press and Taliban spokesmen are now available at any time of the day or night to discuss the latest developments. The Taliban had banned poppy growing in 2000; now they kill government forces eradicating poppy fields, and they profit handsomely from the opium trade. The Taliban also offer something that you might find strange, which is rough and ready justice. The Afghan judicial system remains a joke, and so farmers and their families--the vast majority of the

population-- looking to settle disputes about land, water and grazing rights can find a swift resolution of these problems in a Taliban court. As their influence extends, the Taliban has even set up their own parallel government, and appointed judges and officials in some areas.

The Taliban's rhetoric is now filled with references to Iraq and Palestine in a manner that mirrors bin Laden's public statements. They have also adopted the playbook of the Iraqi insurgency wholesale, embracing suicide bombers and IED attacks on US and NATO convoys. The Taliban only began deploying suicide attackers in large numbers after the success of such operations in Iraq had become obvious to all. For the first years after the fall of the Taliban suicide attacks were virtually unknown in Afghanistan, jumping to 17 in 2005 and 123 a year later. Just as suicide bombings in Iraq had had an enormous strategic impact—from pushing the United Nations out of the country to helping spark a civil war—such attacks also have made much of southern Afghanistan a no-go area for both foreigners and for any reconstruction efforts.

By the time President Bush left office there were 31,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan, the most that had deployed there since the fall of the Taliban. Afghanistan is a country ideally suited to guerrilla warfare with its high mountain ranges and a land mass that is a third larger than Iraq's, while its population is some four million or so greater. Yet, by early 2009, there were four times more soldiers and policemen in Iraq than there were in Afghanistan. 560,000 members of the Iraqi security services and some 130,000 American soldiers were in Iraq, while Afghanistan had only 140,000 local soldiers and police and around 60,000 US and NATO troops. Classical counterinsurgency doctrine suggests that security forces need to be at a ratio of 25 per thousand of population to secure a country. Given its more than 30 million citizens, Afghanistan needs as many as 600,000 policemen and soldiers, yet by 2009 there were only a third of that number.

The relatively low number of soldiers means that American and NATO forces can clear the Taliban out of areas but can't hold many of those cleared areas and then rebuild them, the critical sequence in any successful counterinsurgency. One western diplomat in Kabul in 2008 described military operations in the south of the country as much like "mowing the lawn" every year. NATO forces went in and cleared out Taliban sanctuaries there and then had to go back and do it all over again in the same place the following year.

In addition to the small numbers of boots on the ground necessary to secure the country, Afghanistan's ballooning drug trade also helped to expand the Taliban's ranks. It is no coincidence that opium and heroin production, which by 2009 was equivalent to one-third of Afghanistan's licit economy--spiked at the same time that the Taliban staged a comeback. Afghanistan is the source of an astonishing 92 percent of the world's heroin supply.

The drug trade not only helped fund the Taliban it also fueled Afghanistan's pervasive corruption. By 2008, according to the watchdog group, Transparency

International, Afghanistan was rated one of the most corrupt countries on the planet, alongside such completely failed states as Somalia.

What are the networks in Pakistan that support the Afghan insurgency?

A key to the resurgence of the Taliban can be summarized in one word: Pakistan. The 'Quetta shura' headed by Mullah Omar is located in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan and the 'Peshawar Shura' is based in the capital of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. In addition, Hekmatyar operates in the Pakistani tribal areas of Dir and Bajur; the Haqqani network is based in Waziristan, and al Qaeda has a presence in Waziristan, Bajaur and Chitral. The headquarters of the Taliban and its key allies are, in short, in Pakistan.

The Taliban has deep roots in Pakistan. Many members of the movement of religious warriors grew up in refugee camps there. Not only that, but the Taliban, an almost entirely Pashtun organization, draws strength from the fact that, at some 40 million, the Pashtuns are one of the largest ethnic groupings in the world without their own state, and they straddle both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border, a line that was drawn by the British in 1893, that, in any event, many Pashtuns don't recognize. Indeed, there are almost twice as many Pashtuns in Pakistan as there are in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani government routinely denies that it provides a haven for the Taliban leadership. An explanation for the seeming dichotomy between the fact that U.S. military and intelligence officials universally hold the view that the Taliban is headquartered in Pakistan and the government denial of this, is that the Pakistani government has never completely controlled its own territory. And when civilians are at the helm, nor does it even control its own military. ISI, the Pakistani military intelligence agency, at some levels has continued to tolerate and/or maintain links with Taliban leaders throughout the 'war on terror'.

How did this happen? In part, because Pakistan's generals supplemented their decades-old policy of supporting Kashmir jihadi groups with a doctrine they termed "strategic depth," which meant they wanted to ensure that they had a pliant, pro-Pakistani Afghan state on their western border in the event that India attacked over their eastern border. In practice, the doctrine of strategic depth led Pakistan to support militant Pashtun Islamists in Afghanistan like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and later the Taliban, who the Pakistani government believed were most closely aligned with their own anti-Indian policies. Both the Kashmiri jihadi groups and the Taliban would evolve Frankenstein-like into groups that the Pakistani state could eventually no longer control, and would start to attack Pakistan's government itself.

The general backwardness of Pakistan's tribal regions, where many of the militants are located, can be gauged by the female literacy rate, which is only 3%. And an indicator of the ferocity of the tribes are the compounds in which they live, generally mud or concrete fortresses studded with gun ports ideal for fighting off raiding parties. Larger compounds are defended by artillery. In Pashtu the words for "cousin" and "enemy" are

the same, which is indicative of the endemic low-level warfare that is the way of life in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where all males are armed and the blood feud is a multi-generational pursuit that the tribesmen seem to genuinely enjoy.

It was in this remote, ungovernable region that al Qaeda rebuilt its operations from 2003 forward. An American intelligence official stationed in Pakistan said that by 2008 there were more than 2,000 foreign fighters in the region, while a US intelligence official who tracks al Qaeda put the number somewhat lower, saying the foreign militants in the FATA consisted of around 100 to 150 members of the core of al Qaeda who had sworn *bayat,* a religiously-binding oath of personal allegiance to bin Laden; a couple of hundred more 'free agent' foreigners, mostly Arabs and Uzbeks, living there who were "all but in name al Qaeda personnel", and thousands of militant Pashtun tribal members, into whose families some of the foreigners had intermarried.

The militants' training camps are relatively modest in size. "People want to see barracks. [In fact,] the camps use dry riverbeds for shooting and are housed in compounds for 20 people, where they are taught calisthenics and bomb-making," a senior American military intelligence official explained. The existence of these camps boded well for Al Qaeda, since terrorist plots have a much higher chance of success if some of the cell's members have received personal training in bomb-making and terrorist tradecraft rather than merely reading about such matters on the Internet, as many freelance terrorists have done.

To root out those militants the Pakistanis first tried the hammer approach in the FATA in 2004 with a number of military operations that were essentially defeats for the Pakistani army, which is geared for land wars with India, rather than effective counterinsurgency campaigns. The failed military operations were followed by appeasement in the form of "peace" agreements with the militants in 2005 and 2006, which were really admissions of military failure and led the Taliban and its al Qaeda allies to establish even greater sway in the FATA.

Today the militants wholly control all seven of the tribal agencies in the FATA and their writ extends into the "settled" areas of the North West Frontier Province, almost up to the gates of Peshawar, the provincial capital. They also control Swat, whose verdant valleys and towering mountains had once been one of Pakistan's premier tourist destinations, and is now firmly in the grip of the Pakistani Taliban. The Taliban conduct their own kangaroo courts publicly hanging men for infractions such as drinking, and shooting burqa-clad women for supposed promiscuity.

America handed more than $11 billion to the Pakistani military after September 11 for its help in the 'war on terror'. Yet the Taliban and al Qaeda remained headquartered in Pakistan throughout the Bush administration's two terms. By July 2007 the sixteen American intelligence agencies that collectively make up the US intelligence community all signed off on a National Intelligence Estimate that concluded that al Qaeda was not on the wane but was rather resurging, and further warned that the terror group "has protected or regenerated key elements of Homeland attack capability,

including a safe haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), operational lieutenants, and its top leadership."

By early 2008 the Bush administration had tired of the Pakistani government's unwillingness or inability to take out the militants in the FATA and greatly expanded the number of strikes from Predator drones armed with missiles targeting militants in the tribal regions. In 2007 there were three Predator strikes in the tribal areas, while in 2008 there were 34. Several of those strikes killed al Qaeda leaders such as Usama al Kini, the mastermind of the 2008 bombing of the Marriott hotel in Islamabad; Abu Khabab al Masri, who had overseen al Qaeda's investigations into chemical and biological agents, and Abu Laith al Libi, the number three man in the al Qaeda hierarchy (perhaps the most dangerous job in the world given the half dozen or so men who have occupied that position who have subsequently been captured or killed). Under President Obama the missile strike program has actually accelerated, with five strikes already since he took office.

The missile strike program is, however, deeply unpopular among Pakistanis who see it as an infringement on their sovereignty. A poll released in June 2008 found that 52% of them blamed the United States for the violence in their country, while only 8% blamed al Qaeda! American officials have to weigh the risks from allowing al Qaeda operatives continuing to build up their network in the FATA---where they had been training Europeans for attacks in the West---against the possibility that strikes that kill civilians are a recruitment tool for the Taliban and might destabilize the government.

Despite American criticisms that the Pakistanis could do more to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda, Pakistan's officer class feels strongly that their country is doing as much as it can to combat the militants, citing as evidence the 1,347 of their soldiers who had died fighting the militants between 2001 and 2008 (a number that outweighs the 1,065 NATO and US forces who died in the same period fighting the Taliban across the border in Afghanistan.)

While there is no doubt that elements of the Pakistani army had done much to combat the militants, lingering suspicions remains about the military intelligence agency ISI, which had been instrumental in the rise of the Taliban and a number of the Kashmiri militant groups. The most dramatic evidence for the continued links that some in ISI maintained with terrorists was the suicide bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul in July 7, 2008, which killed more than 50, the single worst attack in the capital since the fall of the Taliban seven years earlier. Both the US and Afghan governments said the bombing was aided by elements of the ISI, an assertion they based on intercepted phone calls between the plotters and phone numbers in Pakistan.

The new civilian government installed following the February 2008 election tried to bring ISI under its control. Just before Prime Minister Gilani traveled to Washington in July 2008 his government announced that the ISI would hence forward report to the Ministry of Interior. Within a few hours of that announcement the Army countermanded the order, which showed who is wearing the trousers in the military-civilian relationship.

The tension between army and the civilian government could also be seen in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks in late November 2008, which were carried out by militants from Pakistan. Gilani said he would send the ISI chief to India to help with the investigation, a request that the military agency simply ignored, making it clear that Pakistan had effectively two governments: a weak democratically elected one and a strong unelected body that controls almost all decisions related to Pakistan's national security and foreign policy.

The Mumbai attacks also underlined how little things had really changed inside Pakistan's jihadi culture since 9/11. The group that carried out the attacks, Lashkar-e-Taiba, (LeT) had been officially banned in January 2002, but that did not prevent it from organizing the 60-hour attack on Mumbai, much of it carried live by news channels around the world, a series of assaults that was often described as 'India's 9/11.' The Mumbai attack underlined the fact that Pakistan had lost control of its jihadists who sought to undermine the creeping rapprochement between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.

What is worrying as Pakistan heads in to 2009 is its economy is in free-fall, a plunge that preceded the global financial crisis. And the high Pakistani fertility rate puts it on track to become the fifth largest country in the world by 2015 with a population of almost 200 million. The combination of a sharply rising population with not enough jobs will likely play into the hands of the militants who often recruit young men with time on their hands. Unless Pakistan changes that equation the plague of the Taliban, al Qaeda and the Kashmiri militant groups will only grow there.

3. Why should the US sustain it commitments in Afghanistan, after all it is now more than seven years after 9/11 and al Qaeda is no longer headquartered there, but in Pakistan?

The most cursory knowledge of Afghan history suggests that the absence of a government in Kabul without the robust backing of the United States will be a prelude to the Taliban returning to power. Following the expulsion of the Soviets, the George H.W. Bush administration closed the American Embassy in Kabul in 1989 and for more than a decade US policy makers paid virtually no attention to Afghans. As the country was battered by multiple civil wars, the Taliban and later al Qaeda took good advantage of the resulting vacuum. On 9/11 the United States learned a deadly and expensive lesson about how mistaken it was to stand on the side lines as Afghanistan sank into chaos.

9/11 was planned in Afghanistan and al Qaeda was headquartered there until the fall of the Taliban. Preventing Afghanistan from reverting back into a failed state dominated by the Taliban in which al Qaeda would again freely operate is a critical national security interest of the United States and its allies.

Some will no doubt advise President Obama that increased American engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be too costly and dangerous. His best response will be that on September 11, 2001, we learned that we neglect Afghanistan and Pakistan at our peril.

Annex: Policy proposals that the committee members might consider.

1. Press for better information about trends in Afghanistan

Congress must press for more information to be made public about Afghanistan from the US military, State Department and other US agencies. While the minutest trends in Iraq are a matter of public record, similar information is either not collected and/or not publicly disseminated about Afghanistan. If we don't know were we are coming from it's hard to know the direction we are headed in.

2. The U.S. must decouple the Taliban from the drug trade, which has been one of the principal motors of their resurgence.

'First, do no harm' is a sensible injunction in combating any insurgency, but the United States adopted a boneheaded counter-narcotics strategy in Afghanistan. Every year American taxpayers paid more for that anti-narcotics policy than Afghan farmers make from the gate price of their opium crops. Meanwhile, with almost every new growing season Afghanistan has produced ever-larger amounts of opium and its byproduct heroin. A more failed policy it was hard to imagine, yet the U.S. gamely pressed on with its main policy prescription, which was the eradication of poppy fields.

The Bush administration's counter-narcotics policy placed eradication at its center, even though it was met with growing Afghan skepticism and, in some cases, violence, and coincided with a general decline in public support for the U.S. and NATO mission in Afghanistan. Why was the policy so unpopular? Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and so many rural Afghans have very few options to make money other than to engage in poppy growing. Abruptly ending the poppy/opium trade was not an option as that would have put two million people out of work and impoverish millions more as the only really functional part of the economy was poppy and opium production. You simply can not eviscerate the livelihoods of the millions of Afghans who grow poppies and not expect a backlash.

The eradication approach has only created more enemies for the coalition as the farmers who had their crops destroyed are generally the poorer ones who couldn't pay the bribes to have their fields left alone. Needless to say those farmers prove easy recruits to the Taliban cause. The U.S. government, in short, is deeply committed to an unsuccessful drug policy that helps its enemies. The Taliban derives not only substantial financial benefits from the opium trade, but also political benefits from its supportive stance on poppy growing, masterfully exploiting situations in which U.S.-sponsored eradication forces are pitted against poor farmers.

As General David Barno, the US military commander in Afghanistan from 2003-2005, has wisely pointed out, the measure of a successful counter-narcotics policy should

not be hectares of poppy destroyed every year, but hectares of other crops that are planted.

To that end:

-The United States should send more agricultural advisers to Afghanistan, an overwhelmingly agricultural country, and provide them with incentives such as fast-track promotions for working in Afghanistan.

 -The United States and other NATO countries should open their markets to Afghan farm products and handicrafts.

-The international community should help Kabul set up an agency, modeled on the Canadian Wheat Board, that would purchase crops from farmers at consistent prices, and market and distribute them internationally.

-To end the culture of impunity that Afghan drug kingpins currently enjoy, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration should make public the list of the country's top drug suspects, including government officials, a practice that would likely see results in Afghanistan's shame-based culture. It appears that the list has so far not been published because it would embarrass certain officials in the Karzai government. Publication is long overdue.

-Because Afghanistan's judicial system is still too weak to handle major drug cases, Washington and Kabul should sign an extradition treaty allowing Afghan drug kingpins to be tried in the United States, as has happened in the past with Colombian drug lords.

-The United States should also endorse a pilot demonstration project to harness poppy cultivation for the production of legal medicinal opiates such as morphine for sale to countries like Brazil that are in short supply of cheap pain drugs. While there are some legitimate criticisms of this idea—principally that it would be difficult to make sure that Afghan opium was only going into the legitimate market—one low-risk approach would be to allow the legalized opiate trade to debut as a pilot project on a small scale in a province with reasonable security. Farmers engaged in legalized poppy growing would enjoy financial incentives that could be revoked, and they would face criminal penalties if they tried to divert their product to the illicit market. Congress could amend the law that requires U.S. opiate manufacturers to purchase at least 80 percent of their opiates from India and Turkey (affording them a guaranteed market) to include Afghanistan. This preferential trade agreement, which was designed to serve U.S. political and strategic interests, should be recalibrated to fit our present-day strategic interests in Afghanistan, where vital national security interests are at stake.

3. Press for security-led reconstruction.

The United States should focus on completing two high-profile projects that will have real benefits for the Afghan people. The first is to secure the important Kandahar-to-

Kabul road, which was opened as a blacktop freeway with much hoopla in 2003, but which is now a suicidal route for anyone driving it without a security detail. This would have broad economic benefits to the country and would send the same kind of signal that securing Route Irish between Baghdad city and Baghdad airport did two years ago, which is that the coalition can bring security to key roads. The second is to finish the work on the Kajaki Dam in southern Afghanistan, which will provide electricity to some 2 million Afghans, most of whom live deep in Taliban country.

American aid should be tied, in part, to an Afghan public employment program similar to the Works Progress Administration program that President Roosevelt instituted during the Great Depression. Afghanistan has a chronic 40 percent official unemployment rate. It also has a desperate need for new roads and dams, and must repair the agricultural aqueducts destroyed by years of war. Meanwhile, Kabul and other major Afghan cities are awash in debris and trash. Cleaning up that rubbish would have a salutary effect on the residents of those cities. Much of the labor required to fix Afghanistan's problems does not require great skill, and millions of Afghans could be set to work rebuilding and cleaning up their country. It is puzzling that the manual labor for major Afghan projects such as the Kabul-to-Jalalabad road has been performed by Chinese workers. This practice must end and contracts for such projects must specify that Afghans are hired for those jobs that they can perform.

4. Much of the terrorism in the region emanates from Pakistan. What can be done about this?

-The mapping of the social networks of terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan should include the identification of the clerical mentors of suicide bombers, as it seems likely that only a relatively small number have persuaded their followers of the religious necessity of martyrdom. Armed with such intelligence, the United States and NATO could ask Pakistan, where most of the suicide attackers originate, to rein in especially egregious clerics.

-The United States, together with the Pakistani and Afghan governments, should also target the production and distribution networks of *As-Sahab*, al Qaeda's video/audio production arm, as well as the Taliban's analogous *Ummat* propaganda division. Given the close connections between these networks and al Qaeda and the Taliban, such an effort would also provide important clues to the whereabouts of terrorist leaders.

-The president should take every opportunity to make it clear that America's commitment to Afghanistan is not just until the next election cycle, but for years to come. The American public, which understands that Afghanistan's reversion into a failed state would be a prelude to al Qaeda regaining a safe haven in the country, will support this approach. Elements of the Pakistan national security apparatus are not prepared to eliminate militant groups on their territory because they are a means of asserting de facto control over Afghanistan should the Americans withdraw. Only an unambiguous declaration of long-term U.S. commitment will convince Pakistan's government to end its passive tolerance for the militant groups headquartered on the country's western border.

-To help tamp down the insurgency in FATA and other areas of the NWFP, America should help the Pakistanis build up their counterinsurgency capabilities. The Pakistani army is built for a land war with India, not for fighting terrorists and insurgents. Pakistani officers should be encouraged to attend counterinsurgency courses at American war colleges, and the United States should support such courses at Pakistan's National Defense University. None of this would cost a lot of U.S. dollars and would yield potentially large results, as the new U.S. counterinsurgency strategy has done in Iraq.

-Small amounts of discrete U.S. aid in support of deradicalization programs for jailed Pakistani militants could also yield large returns. Such programs have had some success in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore, but have not been tried in Pakistan. Pakistani officials would benefit from learning about best practices in countries that have already spent years in building up their own counter-radicalization programs.