

# Remarks at the American Enterprise Institute

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On behalf of Richard Holbrooke and his team from ten USG agencies and outside experts housed in the State Department, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the civilian aspects of our strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, for which our team is responsible.

The outlines of the U.S. strategy were announced in March. The recently concluded, intensive review resulted in a far deeper, focused and aligned strategy, as much on the civilian as on the military side. As Michele noted, the complexity of the issues is enormous, as are the stakes for the United States and our partners. The President's review focused our implementation plan on what is necessary to achieve our Core Goal.

Perhaps the most important outcome, somewhat obscured by questions the significance of July 2011, is that the U.S. has enduring interests in South Asia and is committed to deeper, long-term relationships with the governments and peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan. There should be no doubt: the United States will remain politically, diplomatically and economically engaged long after the security situation improves in Afghanistan and our combat forces are able to come home. I want to take a few minutes to describe this civilian role in some detail, as it is not so well publicized.

### Sharpening Our Focus in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, our focus is building the capacity of Afghan institutions to withstand and diminish the threat posed by extremism. The review process focused on the need to understand local politics and adapt our programs to account for local realities. That does not mean we ignore Kabul. To the contrary, we are focusing our support at the national level on those ministries that can have the most direct impact on service delivery, particularly in the geographic heart of the insurgency – the south and east. But we are also broadening our support and engagement at the provincial and district levels to enhance the visibility, effectiveness, and accountability of the institutions that impact Afghan lives the most. This is where our most consequential programs will be delivered – and where we are visibly expanding our civilian commitment.

President Karzai's inaugural address set an ambitious agenda on which rapid progress is important, with international support. This agenda -- security, governance, reintegration, economic reconstruction and regional relationships – will be fleshed out in the coming weeks, including at international conferences in London and Kabul. Skipping security, which Michele addressed, I'd like to comment briefly on each of these:

- To help reverse Taliban momentum, we are focusing our reconstruction effort in areas where we can quickly create jobs, especially agriculture. Rebuilding Afghanistan's once vibrant licit agriculture will sap the insurgency of not only foot soldiers, but also income from the narcotics trade. Simultaneously, we are rapidly transforming how we deliver assistance, decreasing our reliance on

contractors and implementing a process for Afghan institutions to receive direct assistance if they enhance accountability and transparency. Our reconstruction efforts are increasingly aligned with Afghan priorities, including through programs such as the National Solidarity Program.

- On governance, we are taking President Karzai at his word and supporting strong actions to combat corruption through law enforcement, strengthened oversight, and capacity building, at all levels of government. We also recognize that the international community's sizable presence contributes to corruption. We are increasing dramatically USAID personnel for more direct oversight of our assistance and support wholeheartedly the independent audits of the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction.
- Alongside efforts to train more capable police, we are also focusing our rule of law effort on helping the Afghan government and local communities develop responsive and predictable dispute resolution mechanisms that offer an alternative to the brutal Taliban justice.
- Recognizing the political dimensions of the Afghan conflict, we have reiterated our support for Afghan-led efforts to reintegrate Taliban who renounce al-Qaeda, cease violence, and agree to participate in the constitutional process. Many districts are under neither Taliban nor government control. Others, while nominally influenced by the Taliban, are animated largely by local political disputes. Consequently, our aim is to enhance security by supporting political arrangements that prevent al-Qaeda's return and that allow the Afghan government to expand service delivery and establish non-violent politics, over time.
- Finally, we are launching a comprehensive communications effort to empower Afghans to challenge the extremists' narrative and offer their own vision for Afghanistan's future.

Each of our civilian assistance programs is tightly bound to our strategy and has a dual benefit – helping the Afghan people, while also directly contributing to achieving our core goal.

The President will soon request from Congress the resources needed to implement this focused civilian effort. His request will include not only a sizable increase in civilian assistance, but also funds to support deployment of additional civilian experts beyond the roughly 1,000 U.S. government civilians who will be on the ground by early next year. These civilians will help build Afghan governance and private sector capacity. In the field, they will work from District Support Teams and PRTs, side by side with our military. Some will also extend our permanent diplomatic presence outside of Kabul by staffing new consulates in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat.

We are now in the midst of the civilian surge. I spoke last Thursday at the Foreign Service Institute with a class of 90 experts from USAID, USDA and State who will be deploying before Christmas; the next such class is in two weeks, so our tempo is quick. On Friday, I met with a packed room of Foreign Service Officers looking to sign-up for tours in 2010 and beyond. Next week, I'll travel to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where every civilian deploying to the field undergoes a week-long, realistic, intensive field exercise with our military counterparts.

Secretary Clinton is proud of noting that among these civilians are our top experts from 10 different U.S. government departments and agencies. And once deployed, they report to our Embassy in Kabul through a unified civilian chain of command, with senior civilian representatives at every civ-mil platform. In short, our selection, training and leadership is better than ever before. The result is improved civ-mil coordination at all levels of our effort in Afghanistan, and gives us the civilian expertise out in key districts that will allow our locally-focused strategy to succeed. Admiral Mullen attested to the quality of the civilians during his appearance before the Congress last Thursday.

### **Building a New Partnership with Pakistan**

In Pakistan, we also believe there is critical window of opportunity that has been opened, in this case by the relatively recent transition to democratic, civilian rule, and the broad, sustained political support within Pakistan since earlier this year for military operations against extremists. A major focus of the review regarding Pakistan was the need for the United States to develop a much broader, enduring relationship with Pakistan, a country of enormous importance to the region. Today, it is clearer than ever before that our long-term security requires us to lead the international community in helping Pakistan overcome the political, economic, and security challenges that threaten its stability, and in turn undermine regional stability. The foundation will be a long-term strategic partnership with Pakistan based on common interests, including recognition that we cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists whose location is known and whose intentions are clear.

The United States is making a sizable, long-term commitment of economic assistance to Pakistan with the following objectives:

**First**, helping Pakistan address immediate energy, water, and related economic crises, thereby deepening our partnership with the Pakistani people and decreasing the appeal of extremists;

**Second**, supporting economic reforms that are necessary to put Pakistan on a path towards sustainable job creation and economic growth; and

**Third**, helping Pakistan build on its success against militants to eliminate extremist sanctuaries that threaten Pakistan, Afghanistan, the wider region and people around the world.

New U.S. assistance will help Pakistan build a foundation for long-term development, and will also strengthen ties between the American and Pakistani people by demonstrating that the United States is committed to addressing problems that most affect the everyday lives of Pakistanis. Secretary Clinton's remarkable, three day visit to Pakistan – much of which was televised live in Pakistan – underscored our new approach, by engaging people in honest dialogue, which was both animated and cathartic. At the governmental level, she and FM Quereshi agreed to co-chair a new bilateral strategic dialogue.

We also will sustain counterinsurgency support and other security assistance to Pakistan's military and police to help them fight insurgents, as well as make greater civilian investments to meet the needs of people in areas most affected by militancy.

And like in Afghanistan, all of our efforts in Pakistan will be supported by a new public diplomacy effort expanding people-to-people contacts and challenging the extremists' narrative.

### **Mobilizing the International Community**

We are building the broadest possible global coalition in support of these efforts. Discussions at the UN General Assembly and in capitals in recent months have underscored not only the depth of international concern regarding the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also the breadth of nations with interests in contributing to stability in this volatile region of the world. Our objectives are shared not only by our ISAF partners, but also by Russia, China, India, and Muslim countries across the Middle East which all face a common threat from al-Qaeda.

We are working to organize and harness this untapped reservoir of support. Dozens of nations are taking an increasingly proactive role, with almost 30 special representatives for Afghanistan and Pakistan who meet on an increasingly regular basis and 42 nations in the ISAF coalition. This coalition will contribute increased civilian and military resources, help build legitimate trade and economic activity, curb illicit financial flows, and provide critical political support.

Our regional diplomacy is also expanding, with a sharpened focus on mitigating external interference in Afghanistan and shifting the calculus of Afghanistan's neighbors from competition in Afghanistan to cooperation and economic integration. The Afghanistan-Pakistan-United States Trilateral Dialogue, will be reinvigorated, now that the Afghan elections are over, providing a venue for advancing cooperation on issues such as transit trade, agriculture, interior issues, and intelligence.

### **An Enduring Commitment**

To conclude, the civilian side of our strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan is more focused, robust and resourced than ever before. Our commitment is for the long term. And it is wide-ranging. For anyone interested in delving more deeply into it than we can do today, we would be very happy to arrange interactions with Ambassador Holbrooke's whole of government team.

Thank you.