

July 7, 2009

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member McCain, distinguished members of the Committee; it is an honor to appear before you today to discuss the challenges confronting the United States in Pakistan.

My comments this afternoon are based largely on a research project I've just completed with my colleagues David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum. I know you're familiar with Dr. Kilcullen's work in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Mr. Exum is currently serving on General McChrystal's assessment team in Kabul. I've submitted the entire report as formal, written testimony.

The situation confronting the United States in Pakistan is extraordinarily difficult, and permanently altering the political dynamic there will require a sustained effort on many fronts.

Avoiding the worst outcomes in Pakistan over the coming year demands that we focus on securing areas that are still under government control, build up the police and civil authority, and measure progress against realistic benchmarks so that we know what's working and what must be changed.

The near-term challenge for the United States and its allies is to *stop the extremist advance*, both geographically and psychologically. If the militants' advance is not at least halted in the coming year, then the Pakistani state – including the supply routes supporting the coalition in Afghanistan and Islamabad's nuclear arsenal – could face an existential threat. The first priority is to change two policies that have proven especially destabilizing: drone strikes in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and unconditionally aiding the Pakistani military at the expense of other security forces.

The Case against Drones

Remote attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles are currently the United States' primary method of combating violent extremism in northwestern Pakistan. The appeal of drone attacks for policy makers is clear: their positive effects are measurable and they avoid coalition casualties. They create a sense of insecurity among militants and constrain their interactions with each other.

Despite these advantages, the costs of drone attacks inside Pakistan outweigh the benefits and they are, on balance, harmful to U.S. and allied interests. Open source reports from Pakistan suggest that remote attacks there since early 2006 have killed around 14 militant leaders and more than 700 Pakistani civilians, or just over 50 civilians for every militant killed. U.S. officials vehemently dispute these figures, and it seems certain that more militants, and fewer civilians, have been killed than is reported by

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the press in Pakistan. What matters as much as the real numbers, however, is the perception of these operations among the people of the FATA and NWFP, as well as among the people of Pakistan's other provinces.

Even beyond the Pashtun belt, drone strikes excite visceral opposition across a broad spectrum of Pakistani opinion. The persistence of these attacks on Pakistani territory offends people's deepest sensibilities, alienates them from their government, and contributes to Pakistan's instability. The U.S. reliance on drones also displays every characteristic of a tactic – or, more accurately, a piece of technology – substituting for a strategy. Currently, strikes from unmanned aircraft are being carried out in a virtual vacuum, without a concerted information operations campaign or an equally robust strategy to engage the Pakistani people more holistically.

Killing terrorists is necessary. Overemphasizing it, however, wastes resources while empowering the very people the coalition seeks to undermine. It would be prudent, until a more holistic strategy for Pakistan can be designed and implemented, to scale back the drone attacks, focusing solely on al Qaeda and not on the various other extremist elements whose aims do not extend beyond Pakistan's borders.

Strengthening the Police

With militant attacks spreading east of the Indus River and threatening the urban centers of Punjab and Sindh, where much of the Pakistani middle class lives, the United States and its Pakistani allies should build on their strengths by drawing a notional line at the Indus to defend those people already under the control of the central government. One element in this strategy should be the reallocation of funds from the Pakistani military and intelligence services – which continue to view India as Pakistan's most pressing threat – and toward the police.

The recently passed Kerry-Lugar Act is a welcome step in the right direction. It de-couples military from non-military aid, triples that non-military aid to \$1.5B per year, and includes increased allocations for the police, independent judiciary, and anticorruption efforts. It also—and I'll cover this in more detail shortly—requires benchmarks and criteria for measuring the effectiveness of U.S. assistance.

To be sure, short-term aid to the police forces is not a long-term fix for Pakistan. In the coming year, however, the neglected Pakistani police forces must be bolstered so that they can credibly secure the populations of Punjab and Sindh from militant attacks. This measure, in conjunction with the curtailment of the drone attacks, aims to halt the extremist advance at the Indus, while shoring up and building upon the historical stability of the Pakistani heartland.

Measuring Progress

All strategies require constant assessment, and President Obama's plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan is no exception. In the speech unveiling his new approach, the president promised to set clear metrics and consistently assess the impact of U.S. policies.

Effective benchmarks should measure *outcomes for the population* rather than *inputs by governments*. Too often, the international community has measured progress by tracking money raised, money spent, or

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troops deployed. These are inputs, not outcomes, and they measure effort, not effectiveness. Better benchmarks track trends in the proportion of the population that feels safe, can access essential services, enjoys social justice and the rule of law, engages in political activity, and earns a living without fear of insurgents, drug traffickers, or corrupt officials.

Because politics is about perception, and the coalition's goals are political – to marginalize the extremists, bolster the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and wean the population away from armed struggle toward peaceful politics – perceived outcomes matter the most. It is not enough to make people objectively safer and better off: before they are willing to put down their weapons and support the government, the population must *feel* safer, and must *perceive* the government as the winning side. What matters is that people have a well-founded feeling of security and progress, a belief – based in reality, not spin – that things are getting better. These trends are harder to gauge than inputs but they give a much more accurate picture than inputs alone. And although none of these metrics directly address al Qaeda, they do concentrate on the conditions under which people can be more susceptible to the influence of extremists and their enablers.

Key metrics to watch in Pakistan include the rate at which Taliban “chapters” continue to open in the Punjab and whether the balance of 2009 sees more attacks in the urban centers of Karachi and Lahore. These developments would indicate that instability is increasing in the Punjab and Sindh heartlands, and would suggest that the situation on the ground is worsening.

The assassination rate of *maliks* (government-appointed tribal representatives) in the FATA and Baluchistan is another indicator. The Taliban have killed hundreds of *maliks* since 2004, a sign of intimidation and illustrating the erosion of civil society and the collapse of law and order. A drop in killings might simply indicate that most *maliks* have been killed or driven away from their districts, but continued high assassination rates would indicate ongoing insecurity.

The Taliban infiltration rate from Pakistan into Afghanistan is another metric worth tracking. This rate has historically spiked following “peace agreements” in the tribal areas, which have usually resulted from defeats of the Pakistani Army at the hands of militants. A reduction in infiltration might indicate better security in Pakistan, and better border security; an increase would indicate Pakistan's continued failure to police its border or secure its territory.

Another indicator is the degree to which the Pakistani military is under civilian control and cooperating with the coalition. One measure of this is the proportion of Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps posts that allow the Taliban to infiltrate into Afghanistan under their noses, allow the Taliban to set up mortar and rocket firing positions nearby, or provide covering fire to protect the Taliban against the coalition. In the past, along some parts of the frontier, these actions have been extremely common, indicating either that the Taliban have intimidated Pakistani forces, struck a local deal, or that the security forces actively support the Taliban. A drop in rates of such behavior would indicate improvement.

The United States, in the years ahead, must have the wit and wisdom not only to develop a sophisticated strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also to implement it well – tracking effectiveness and adapting to changing circumstances on the ground.

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In closing, I'd like to make an over-arching suggestion. During the campaign against the Russians in Afghanistan, one slogan unified all efforts of the U.S. government: "Get the Russians out." For this campaign, we should consider using, "Build local capacity," which, while maybe not as catchy, has the virtue of being clear—and one word shorter.

Thank you for the privilege of testifying before you today.



Nathaniel C. Fick was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in June 2009. He was previously the Chief Operating Officer of CNAS and has been a Fellow at the Center since its founding in 2007.

Prior to joining CNAS, Fick served as a Marine Corps infantry officer. He took part in the earliest phases of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2001 and 2002 and led a reconnaissance unit during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In 2006, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and served in 2007 as a civilian instructor at the Afghanistan Counterinsurgency Academy in Kabul. Fick spoke at Denver's Invesco Field at the 2008 Democratic National Convention and later served on the Presidential Transition Team at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

He is the author of the 2005 *New York Times* bestseller *One Bullet Away*, recognized as one of the “Best Books of the Year” by *The Washington Post*. The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation honored the book with its General Wallace M. Greene Jr. Award, given annually to outstanding nonfiction pertinent to Marine Corps history. The book was also awarded the Colby Award from the William E. Colby Military Writers Symposium, which recognizes a major contribution to the understanding of intelligence operations, military history, or international affairs. The Commanding General of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command made *One Bullet Away* required reading for officers deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mr. Fick's writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, and *Foreign Policy*, among many other publications, and he is a frequent contributor to television and radio. He was formerly an on-air national security consultant to CBS News, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Fick serves on the boards of the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, dedicated to providing educational opportunities for the children of Marines killed in action, and the Rockefeller Center for Public Policy at Dartmouth College, which encourages graduates to embark on careers in public service.

He holds an A.B. degree with high honors in Classics and Government from Dartmouth, where he won a national championship title in cycling. He received an MPA in International Security Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where he was a Dean's Fellow, and an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

He is a certified sailboat charter captain, and lives with his wife, Margaret Angell, in Washington, D.C.