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SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

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Testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

“Post-Conflict Afghanistan”

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Dirksen Senate Office Building

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you the Administration’s planning and policy with respect to Afghanistan.

President Bush summed it up best in his State of the Union Address: “In Afghanistan, we helped liberate an oppressed people. And we will continue helping them secure their country, rebuild their society, and educate all their children—boys and girls.” The Department of Defense is committed to this goal in Afghanistan. We cannot permit Afghanistan to become again a safe-haven for global terrorism, and we will not. The best assurance of that is to help the Afghan people and their government lay the foundation for lasting peace and stability.

The Afghan people have suffered enormously over the last 25 years. Their sacrifices have been great, and the United States is committed to helping them raise themselves from the ashes of war and destruction,-- not only to assure them a better future, but so that Afghanistan can be a model to others of peace, moderation, and well-being in the region and in the Muslim world.

Before the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan was ruled by tyrants and terrorists, and impoverished by them. Whatever the problems that remain, there cannot be any doubt that Afghanistan is a story of accomplishment and progress:

Over 3 million schoolchildren, many of them young girls, are filling the classrooms of Afghanistan.

Schools, hospitals, clinics, and wells are being rebuilt by Afghans, with U.S. and international assistance.

Over two million Afghan refugees have returned to their native land from neighboring countries and abroad. They are voting, with their feet, their confidence in their country.

Our military Civil Affairs teams are making a difference in the lives of many Afghan villagers across the country.

Afghanistan will also adopt a new constitution by the end of the year with elections to follow in June 2004.

The United States will do its part, in this international effort, to help provide Afghans with the resources and support they require. We are confident that the overwhelming majority of Afghans welcome and support our presence in their country as a force for liberation, security, and progress.

In the dimension of security—the Defense Department’s special concern—there are certainly challenges that remain. I will discuss them in a moment. But a structure of stability has been built in Afghanistan, and a strong basis for national unity. Our job is to support our Afghan friends as they strengthen their national institutions.

This is a point I want to stress: Afghanistan belongs to the Afghans. We do not aspire to “own” it or run it. We want to help Afghans achieve their goals for peace, freedom, and security. We want to help them create the conditions that will enable them soon to take complete charge of their own affairs as rightful members of the international community, sharing the same rights citizens of so many freedom-loving countries enjoy. We do not want to overstay our welcome, or become the target of various resentments, or foster a relationship of dependency that retards Afghan progress instead of promoting it. It is a delicate balance. So far, I believe we have maintained that balance.

But, as the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act shows, the Administration and Congress clearly share the goal of doing what is needed to finish the job.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM - UPDATE

Remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda remain in outlying areas, and the Coalition war to defeat them continues. In cooperation with the Afghan government and our Coalition partners, U.S. forces are continuing combat operations, particularly in the South and Southeast of the country. Most recently [27 January], U.S. Special

Forces, with the help of local Afghans, identified and defeated a terrorist sanctuary near the southern town of Spin Buldak close to the Afghan-Pakistan border. U.S. forces in Operation Mongoose [27 January] killed a number of terrorists and seized arms caches and cave complexes. While all terrorist forces have not been eliminated, our forces are playing offense, not defense. We have eliminated terrorist sanctuaries in the country and are continuing to pursue them in the rugged terrain of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area—with the active cooperation of both governments.

SECURITY/ISAF

The overwhelming majority of Afghans live free of terrorism. Seventy-five to eighty percent of the relatively few continuing terrorist-related incidents occur in twenty percent of the country—and that is the South and Southeast portions of the country where the Taliban and al-Qaeda threat persists.

In Kabul, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), first under British and more recently under Turkish lead, has been a force for peace and stability. Whether patrolling the streets of Kabul, lifting the 24-year old curfew or helping to renovate schools, ISAF troops—about 4,500 strong—have helped to restore a sense of normalcy in a city that has been ravaged by war. In November of last year, the United Nations Security Council voted to extend the ISAF mandate until December 2003. Following Turkey's successful tenure, we look forward to continued cooperation with the Germans and Dutch as they take over as

lead nations in this important mission. And we are already considering who might be able and willing to take on the follow-on responsibility.

ISAF's mandate in Kabul, as its name suggests, is to assist the Afghans in providing security. This only underscores the importance of rebuilding Afghanistan's own national security institutions. The most important of these tasks are the training of the Afghan National Army, National Police, and Border Guard, and the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of Afghanistan's regional militias.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

We recognize the key role of building an Afghan National Army. As President Bush said to newly selected Chairman Karzai last January "we are going to help Afghanistan develop her own military. That is the most important part of this visit." Following the President's direction, the United States has taken the lead in assisting the Afghans to build a new national army. Our immediate objective for the Afghan National Army (ANA) is to build a strong Central Corps in Kabul that can protect the government of Afghanistan, give that government a counterbalance to existing regional forces, and conduct internal security operations without Coalition support.

- To date, US and French trainers have trained six battalions, with a seventh currently undergoing training.

- These battalions are all multi-ethnic and broadly representative of the country. The personnel are also vetted with respect to human rights standards.
- Over the next year and a half, we will continue to assist the Afghans in developing a capable Ministry of Defense and General Staff and a Support Command capable of providing logistical and administrative support to the Army.
- Two companies from the 3rd battalion of the ANA have deployed to Orgun-E in Paktika province, with a Special Forces team. These US-trained Afghan soldiers have effectively carried out both combat missions and civil presence tasks.

The Afghan National Army is a top priority for President Karzai and for this Administration. A well-equipped and well-trained national army will be the foundation for security and national unity in Afghanistan. We look forward to working closely with Congress in allocating the needed resources, and we welcome your continued support in the weeks and months ahead.

The US-led effort to build the Afghan National Army is just one element of the international effort for security reconstruction. Major General Karl Eikenberry serves as the US Security Coordinator in Kabul and Dr. Dov Zakheim, the Department of Defense Comptroller, also serves as the Department's Reconstruction Coordinator for Afghanistan. A key part of their mission is to spur as well as coordinate efforts among the lead nations for security reconstruction.

Germany has the lead for training the Afghan police force, and Italy is the lead for reconstruction of the Afghan judicial sector. Japan and the UN are responsible for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. The UK has the lead in working with the Afghan government to fight the scourge of narcotics. The United States is also working to identify and assist a lead nation for the Afghan border police, which has been transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Interior. Here in Washington, the State Department coordinates US assistance for these sectors.

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

Economic reconstruction is a cornerstone of long-term stability in Afghanistan. President Karzai and Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani are leading Afghanistan's effort to recover from years of war, drought, and Taliban mismanagement. Reconstruction and security are mutually reinforcing. Clearly, conditions of security facilitate economic reconstruction. But economic progress is also a long-term condition of stability—and perhaps also short-term. The international community has pledged more than \$6.6 billion in aid over 5 years at a series of donor conferences. For its part, the United States last year in Tokyo pledged nearly \$300 million for the first year of Afghanistan's reconstruction, but we have delivered twice that. Since October 2001, in fact, the United States has delivered over \$840 million toward Afghanistan's humanitarian aid and economic reconstruction.

Coordination of US Government assistance to Afghanistan is the responsibility of the State Department under the guidance of Ambassador David Johnson—major roles in the delivery of that assistance are played by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). The United States devoted \$200 million worth of emergency food assistance to Afghanistan in fiscal 2002, helping to prevent a famine and reduce hunger. The United States has helped vaccinate 4.3 million children against measles, treat 700,000 cases of malaria, and provide basic health services for more than two million people last summer. The United States is contributing \$80 million to a \$160 million effort by the United States, Japan, and Saudi Arabia to rebuild the southern half of the ring road linking Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat. The United States is also helping with other infrastructure projects, including efforts to rebuild more than six thousand wells, springs, and irrigation canals, and to restore the water supply to Kabul, Kandahar, and Kunduz.

While the State Department and USAID lead the effort, the Department of Defense also supports and assists reconstruction. U.S. military Civil Affairs troops in Afghanistan implement projects that support both the military mission and the reconstruction priorities of the Afghan central government and the U.S. Government. This support has included more than 200 projects worth over \$11 million to help reconstruct 127 schools benefiting over 200,000 students, 26

medical facilities benefiting over two million people, and 400 wells benefiting 631,000 people.

The Afghan government has called for accelerated reconstruction assistance, and rightly so. We are in consultation with President Karzai and his associates on priorities.

In 2001 we overthrew a terrorist regime in Afghanistan. Last winter we helped avert a humanitarian disaster. Our goal in 2003 is to build on the successes of the preceding years by working with the Afghan government, other nations, and the United Nations and other international organizations to help accelerate reconstruction across the country.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

The improved security situation in Afghanistan as a whole has made it possible for us to begin a transition from combat operations to what we call stability operations in most of the country. This transition will include the deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), two of which have already been deployed to Gardez and Bamiyan, and a third will be deployed to Konduz later this month.

They will be deployed in other locations, to include Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, and Parwan over the next few months. The PRTs will work with central government and regional authorities, and with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), to assist in securing the conditions for economic, civic and other programs.

The teams will be Coalition-led, multi-national and inter-agency in composition. The size of each team will differ based on regional requirements (approx. 50-60 personnel). Each team will include a range of military and civilian disciplines including Special Forces, engineers, medical personnel, State, USAID and other U.S. government agency representatives, working in close coordination with Afghan governmental ministries, local authorities, UNAMA, NGOs, and other international organizations. They are meant to facilitate the efforts of others, not substitute for them.

CONCLUSION

We are realistic about the difficulties and about how far we have to go. But it is not “realistic” to fail to recognize how far we have come. We value Congress’s vital and constructive role in the evolution of U.S. policy. We also emphasize the essential role that other nations must play—this cannot be only an American responsibility. But I can assure this Committee of the Defense Department’s strong positive commitment to support the President’s goal of helping the Afghan people secure their country and rebuild their society.

Thank you once again, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to brief you and the other members of this Committee.