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February 7, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
The Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
The Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E880
Washington DC 20301

Dear Madam and Mr. Secretary:

As we will soon again face another massive opium harvest in Afghanistan, and a related spring offensive by anti-coalition militants (ACMs), it is time for some new thinking to ensure that Afghanistan does not fall into a failed narco-state status and become, once again, a safe haven for al-Qaeda. We need to act now to prevent that.

U.S. policy and organizational structure against the narco-terrorist threat in Afghanistan require new initiatives and a unified inter-agency campaign. For example, the open and public dispute with our British allies on opium eradication methods, along with the many different and often conflicting views of NATO, our Defense Department (DoD), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and other U.S. agencies on how to best handle the narcotics challenge, does not bode well for success in taking on a major source of the financing for the Taliban and other anti-coalition militants. These narcotics, and their billions of illicit proceeds, finance arms, night vision goggles, and land mines. They require aggressive action.

Afghanistan's continued development into a free democracy is crucial for U.S. interests; failure in this regard would be completely unacceptable. After careful review and consideration, we would propose the following steps be taken immediately in order to win in Afghanistan:

- 1) Appointing a high-level coordinator of overall Afghan narco-terrorism policy. This coordinator is particularly needed to create and lead a unified campaign against both drugs and terror simultaneously. To have any hope of prevailing in this fight, we must utilize all U.S. agencies, assets, and assistance, as we did in Colombia.
- 2) Resolving the dispute with our British allies over opium eradication means and methods. Further, we must design a uniform counter narcotics (CN) policy (to be collectively implemented by the US, Britain and NATO) with the British, who have the lead on CN in Afghanistan.
- 3) Implementing a new DEA ride-along policy with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and our own military forces on the ground in Afghanistan, in order that we merge and maximize ongoing U.S. and NATO military operations in those specific cases where they overlap with the DEA's own difficult struggle in unsecured areas against illicit drugs and major drug kingpins.

We were very pleased to learn of a recent, and very successful, ISAF-supported DEA/ Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) ride-along anti-drug operation in Kunduz province. This operation ought to serve as a model for our new approach. If ISAF can do it, so can our military, in tactical support of our DEA and Afghan-run anti-drug units.

- 4) Emphasis on extradition to the U.S., especially of major drug kingpins and drug warlords, using a new narco-terrorism provision in the USA PATRIOT Act that creates a federal crime when illicit drugs support acts of terrorism or foreign terrorist organizations. We must establish deterrence where none now exists. This effort would help take pressure off a nascent Afghan judicial system. These kingpins and warlords, if left in Afghanistan, would continue to undermine its legal system through bribes and threats. Extradition has worked very well in Colombia, and can work again in Afghanistan.
- 5) Making the Mi 17 helicopter program operational with adequate defensive weapons for transport of the DEA-led NIU teams to do their job, together with qualified pilots, maintenance and operational support. We have waited long enough to get this vital air lift mobility to the NIU. We need someone put in charge of getting this done now, enough time has gone by already.
- 6) Maximizing use of Huey II eradication helicopters of the State Department in support of DEA tactical operational efforts (which are generally more productive than manual eradication). Any unnecessary impediments and regulations that limit that capacity and critical need for air lift by DEA/NIU on these helicopter assets, especially during the non-opium harvesting season (July-December) in Afghanistan, need to be reviewed.

- 7) Ensuring our DEA has the vehicles, including surveillance cars and other transport vehicles to do the job against the major drug kingpins, and make certain the flexibility from other agencies and departments in country to support DEA in its vital lead role against illicit drugs, which are funding the resurgence of the ACMs, including the Taliban.
- 8) Increasing efforts, such as more professional and effective vetting systems that include extensive interviewing prior to recruitment, to ensure that the police we are helping to train in Afghanistan are not corrupt or sympathetic to our enemies.
- 9) Expediting training by the Colombian National Police's elite anti-narcotics unit, which visited Afghanistan last year (at the Committee's request), of their Afghan counterparts, including exposing the Kabul airport police chief to their proven methods of drug interdiction and seizures at the Bogota International Airport in Colombia. We were pleased to see General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, note recently the key role our Colombian allies, and America's experience in Colombia, can play in the fight against illicit drugs in Afghanistan.
- 10) Intensifying and sustaining our dialogue with the government of Pakistan regarding the stability of tribal areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Islamabad's policies toward the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and the impact of a resurgent Taliban upon international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. We are deeply concerned by unmistakable trends toward an increasing number and sophistication of cross-border Taliban attacks, including the use of improvised explosive devices and an exponential increase in suicide bombings. In this regard, Pakistani efforts to contain and reduce militancy in the tribal areas appear to have been unsuccessful; indeed, a consensus has emerged that the Taliban's establishment of a "robust sanctuary" in the FATA has been a critical factor in their resurgence. While we share the Administration's objective of developing a long-term strategic partnership with Pakistan, the Congress cannot be expected to tolerate the persistence of a safe haven for the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan.
- 11) Supporting the terrorist rewards program reform that has passed the House on several occasions and would permit expanded payments of rewards in circumstances (now prohibited) relevant to the hunt for the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and other ACM leaders in remote areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 12) Instituting a vigorous anti-opium PR campaign to all of the people of Afghanistan, using the Koran's anti-intoxicant message, through local media, religious and tribal leaders, and from the top down of the Afghan government.
- 13) Helping develop and facilitate trade promotion and increased trade building capacity for existing Afghan products and industries abroad in order to increase exports and quickly create legitimate livelihoods in place of illicit opium farming and production today.

- 14) Convincing our European allies, to whom much of Afghan heroin is now directed, to allow easy access to their markets for legitimate Afghan products and goods, as America does for cocaine-producing Andean nations in our own hemisphere.
- 15) Implementing any recommendations of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) study that the Committee initiated on the Afghan heroin flow into Iraq—upon receipt of the final report—to stem trafficking that may aggravate insecurity in Iraq.
- 16) Expediting and moving forward on the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) research plan on possible safe, tested use of mycoherbicides to help eliminate the massive opium crop in Afghanistan, without any damage to the environment or humans, as mandated in the recently passed ONDCP authorization bill. This R & D-first effort should be fast tracked.

Together, let us provide leadership in tackling the growing threat of narco-terrorism in Afghanistan, addressing the Pakistan safe haven problem, and developing a unified CN plan and strategy with our NATO allies to ensure the survival of Afghanistan's new democracy, democratic institutions, and opportunities, free of corrosive threats.

We will try to enact some of these measures into law, where appropriate, and would appreciate your support for such efforts. Many other suggestions can be implemented by the Administration on its own initiative now.

If your staffs need additional information on these or other initiatives, they can call our Ranking Republican Investigative Counsel, Mr. John Mackey, at (202) 226-8467.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



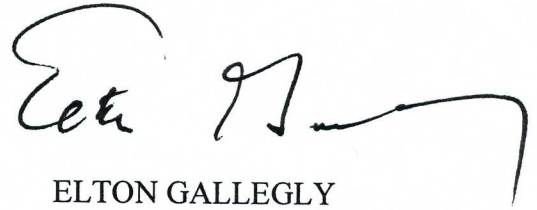
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