



Adjunct Professor of International Affairs

August 10, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Subject: After Action Report – Trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan
Friday, 23 July through Saturday, 31 July

1. PURPOSE:

This memo provides initial feedback to the CENTCOM Commander General John Abizaid reference visit by General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA (Ret) to Pakistan and Afghanistan on Friday, 23 July through Saturday, 31 July 2004.

2. SOURCES:

- a. Phone call** - Secretary of State Colin Powell on Wednesday, 21 July 2004
- b. Briefing** -Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca on Friday, 23 July 2004
- c. Briefing** - State Department - Mr. Steve Engelken on Friday, 23 July 2004
- d. Briefing** - State Department - Mr. Tod Wilson on Friday, 23 July 2004
- e. Briefing** - Defense Department - Mr. Martin Hoffman on Friday, 23 July 2004
- f. Briefing** - Ambassador Nancy Powell - U.S. Embassy Pakistan on Monday, 26 July 2004
- g. Briefing** - Ambassador Zal Khalilzad- U.S. Embassy Afghanistan on Tuesday, 27 July 2004
- h. Briefing** -LTG Dave Barno, Combined Forces Command Afghanistan CFC–A Commander on Thursday, 29 July 2004
- i. Briefing** - MG Rick Olson- Commander, CJTF 76 Afghanistan - (Multiple Days)
- j. Briefing** - MG John Cooper, (UK Army), Deputy Commanding General, CFC-A Afghanistan on Tuesday, 26 July 2004
- k. Briefing** - Assistant Secretary of Defense Mary Beth Long, SOLIC and Narcotics in Afghanistan on Tuesday 27 July 2004

- l. Briefing** - Lt General Rick Hillier, Commander ISAF (NATO) in Afghanistan on Tuesday, 27 July 2004
- m. Field Visit** -Detainee Operations Afghanistan - BG Charles Jacoby, CJTF 76, on Wednesday, 28 July 2004
- n. Country Team Briefings** – U.S. Embassy Pakistan - Political Officer Lawrence Robinson and RADM Craig McDonald, USN, on Monday, 25 July and Tuesday, 26 July 2004
- o. Briefings** - Chief OGA Pakistan and Deputy on Tuesday, 26 July 2004
- p. Briefings** - DEA Chief Pakistan and Deputy on Tuesday, 26 July 2004
- q. Briefings** - Political Officer and BG T Pat Maney - Psyops US Embassy Afghanistan on Tuesday, 26 July 2004
- r. Briefings** - CFC-A Strategic Update Afghanistan - Col Dave Lamm, Chief of Staff on Wednesday, 27 July 2004
- s. Battle Staff Update** - CJTF 76 Afghanistan Colonel Charles Cardinal, Chief of Staff on Wednesday, 28 July 2004
- t. Briefings** -National SOF Afghanistan – on Wednesday, 28 July 2004
- u. Briefing** - BG Herb Lloyd, USA (Ret.) - DYNCORPS Drug Eradication - Afghanistan on Tuesday, 27 July 2004
- v. Briefings** - “Building the Afghan Defense Sector” - OMC-A and Task Force Phoenix - Colonel Gary Varney and Colonel Jon Lopey on Tuesday, 27 July 2004
- w. Field Visit** - Asadabad, Afghanistan - Provincial Reconstruction Team- PRT LTC Ford Commander on Wednesday, 28 July 2004
- x. Field Visit** -2nd Battalion 6th Marines - Afghanistan LTC Alford on Wednesday, 28 July 2004
- y. Field Visit** -Bamian, Afghanistan - Provincial Reconstruction Team PRT (NATO) New Zealand – GRP CAPT Howse- on Thursday, 29 July 2004
- z. Field Visit** - Kandahar, Afghanistan Colonel Dick Pedersen Commander TF Bronco on Friday, 30 July 2004
- aa. Field Visit** - 2nd Battalion 5th Infantry - Afghanistan (near Tarin Kot) - LTC Terry Sellers, Commander, on Thursday, 29 July 2004
- bb. Field Visit** - Provincial Reconstruction Team PRT -Tarin Kot- Acting Commander Major Welter on Thursday, 29 July 2004
- cc. Briefing** - UK Counter Drug Operations - SAS Team Leader – on Wednesday, 28 July 2004
- dd. Key Leader Dinner (O6's)** - CJTF 76 – on Thursday, 29 July 2004

ee. Briefing - Outreach to Afghan Women Effort 1/LT Heidi Brockman plus two on Wednesday, 28 July 2004

ff. Sensing Session - CFC-A company grade officers – Wednesday, 28 July 2004

3. OBSERVATIONS-THE BOTTOM LINE:

a. The ground reality in Afghanistan has changed dramatically for the better in the past year. The Arabs of al Qaeda have been killed or run out. The Taliban are reacting ineffectively to LTG Dave Barno's aggressive and clever CFC-A tactical initiatives. The Afghan people strongly support the UN presence and US military and NATO forces (Except significantly less so in the South and Northwest).

b. The change in CENTCOM and CFC-A strategy from Counterterrorism to Counter-insurgency with strong support to economic reconstruction and voter registration has been brilliant. There is an unmistakable reality and perception of change for the better. The 90% success of eligible voter registration (to include large numbers of women even in the Pashtun south) is a huge victory for the Karzai Government, the UN, and the US and NATO military forces.

c. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams PRT (80-100 troops - security plus Civil Affairs) are a brilliant and superbly effective innovation. (Although widely decried by the NGO's as a mixing of military and civilian functions). These teams work with enormous success when they are tied to the coordinated security operations of a U.S. Army or Marine infantry battalion. The PRT effectiveness is severely limited when the State Department POLAD, the USAID Rep, and the Department of Agriculture Representative are not present (which is commonplace). The CERP money and the \$1 billion of State money are starting to flow. The "Ring Road" successful completion from Kabul to Kandahar is a triumph.

d. The Joint US combat forces are a joy to see in action. They are disciplined, courageous, sensitive to the political mission, and enormously creative. Battalion, SOF, and PRT Officer and NCO leadership are superb. U.S. combat forces can operate in platoon- sized formations anywhere in Afghanistan. We have never lost a squad-sized firefight in Afghanistan. (A battlefield that devoured 120,000 Soviet troops in the disastrous Russian intervention).

e. The U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zal Khalilzad is a major factor in the US/CENTCOM successful prosecution of the new Abizaid Afghan security strategy. The Ambassador's departure in January (rumored to happen regardless of the outcome of the U.S. elections) will be a huge loss to our political-military campaign. He is strongly admired by the U.S. military team for his strategic political sense, his leverage with the Afghan government, and the enormously effective manner in which he deals with the U.S. Armed Forces. The selection of his replacement will be a key determination of whether we achieve our objectives in the coming crucial 36 months.

f. Pakistan and President Musharraf's cooperation are a vital aspect of our current success in Afghanistan. Pakistan remains a vital U.S. national security interest because of its strategic political-military importance, its shaky grip on domestic Islamic extremism, their possession of significant nuclear weapon capability and associated delivery means, the conventional military

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imbalance with India, and the key role of Pakistan in the international effort to confront massive opium/heroin production in the region.

There should be little question since the two assassination attempts on Musharraf, the V Corps Commander in Karachi, and the Prime Minister Designate -- that the Pakistani military and the ISI now view al Qaeda as a direct threat to the survival of the regime. They have not yet fully committed to taking on the Taliban who they supported and indeed created. However, in a general sense, the Pakistanis do not offer the Taliban active sanctuary and probably are largely convinced that the strategic alliance with the U.S. is so vital to their future -- that they will eventually pay the political and military costs associated with gaining control over their 1500-kilometer open border with Afghanistan. It would be a mistake to overlook the weakness in material and professionalism of the Pakistani Border Control agencies as well as the ISI. These institutions look much better than they can perform. The initial Pakistani military intervention into South Waziristan was a disaster with several hundred casualties. The subsequent March and June military efforts showed determination and courage. In the coming months we will see if they can get into Wana and hold it.

It seems clear that some retired ISI elements and perhaps 20% of the Pakistan military do not support the President. There is still lingering widespread sympathy for the Taliban among much of the frontier population. The Pakistan military has only modest control over most of the Baluchistan and Waziristan frontier. The \$3 billion U.S. five-year aid package is vital. The U.S. \$1.5 billion debt forgiveness was a huge impact on their economy. A magic wand -- if available-- would deliver F16 fighters to the Pakistanis in the coming 18 months. They deserve and need a visible reward for the risks they have incurred on our (and their) behalf.

g. The UN presence in Afghanistan is extremely effective support for US foreign policy aims. The Afghan's are strongly supportive of the UN and view them as a long-standing 18-year humanitarian partner that never abandoned them. The voter registration has been a surprising success and reflects the absolute rejection by the Afghan people of the years of misery and cruelty by the War Lords and then the Taliban. The Afghans do not understand democracy - they do yearn for stability and they reject the theological nightmare of the Taliban.

h. The NATO- ISAF force may mark the beginnings of the end for the North Atlantic Alliance's ability to execute out-of-area operations. NATO Afghanistan cannot generate adequate forces, cannot generate the right kind of forces, deploys forces with severely restricted ROE and national caveats (both explicit and unwritten), and deploys forces that cannot fight effectively nor support themselves with communications, transportation, and logistics. ISAF Field Commanders faced with command directives they do not wish to support will routinely defy instructions and get new guidance thru NATO political directives sent down thru the military headquarters in Brunssom to the ISAF commander. NATO-ISAF expansion to include the West and the South of Afghanistan would pose the immediate and real risk of another Srebrenica disaster with the population unprotected by an incapable or incompetent NATO force. There are of course exceptions. The Brits as usual are superb, the Danes and the Norwegians have cooperated fully, and the NATO units under U.S. Coalition as opposed to ISAF control are very competent (e.g. the French Commando company). Since I strongly believe that the success of NATO is essential to US national strategy going forward—I am dismayed at reaching these conclusions. NATO needs repair in a fundamental way. If it cannot be an effective MILITARY alliance, it is hard to imagine it retaining political strategic value.

i. We have a problem with the role and management of U.S. military headquarters in Afghanistan. I do not have a solution. CFC-A is a strategic and operational headquarters, which

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plays a valued role in responding to the outside world and the U.S. Embassy. It has a brilliant commander (and Deputy) and a new and effective Chief of Staff. It has done an absolutely superb job in creating the new Afghan National Army, the intermediate headquarters, and the emerging Ministry of Defense. It plays a key role in supporting our other lead nation Allies. However, CFC-A supervises ONE subordinate headquarters. The CFC Headquarters is building up to its full strength of 300 plus personnel. CFC-A is being badly supported by the Joint personnel system. To some extent this merely reflects the enormous strain on the Armed Forces personnel system. CFC personnel are heavily reservists (to include many unqualified IRR), they come and go with bewildering short-term TDY status, and they tend to be under qualified for their positions - too junior, too inexperienced, too young or too old, and lacking the Joint or Service schooling expected of these positions. They do not run the Joint logistics or the PRT's. This CFC Headquarters is supervising a U.S. Army division headquarters reinforced with extremely high caliber U.S. joint and interagency members (an Air Force Brigadier General with Staff, a Marine full Colonel, a State POLAD, etc). The CJTF 76 Headquarters (25th ID) may be the most effective military headquarters and commander I have ever observed. They are top quality people, as you would expect for one of our tactical divisions.

They are also extremely well led and brilliantly trained and managed by MG Rick Olson the 25th ID commander. They have trained together as a team for a year prior to the deployment -- following which they have been locked into their assignments for a combat tour length that will be in excess of a year. There is a possible argument for the CFC-A to be a three Star Commander (with a 100 person Military Assistance Group Afghanistan) assigned to support the CENTCOM Commander and to provide direct TACON for all PRT's and to provide strategic direction to CJTF 76. The CJTF 76 Commander could then be an operational-tactical headquarters reporting thru a dual hated MILGP Commander. One way or the other, the CFC headquarters needs high quality people, stabilized for 12 month assignments with very senior people assigned for 18 to 24 months.

j. The current success of the Coalition political-military effort in Afghanistan will be fundamentally jeopardized in the coming 24 months by our failure to confront the massive and growing production of opium and heroin, which is fueling the Taliban, the HIG, and the remnants of al Qaeda.

Heroin is also growing the military and political power of the regional War Lords who are so despised by the Afghan people. \$2.3 billion is generated by this corrosive trade which corrupts emerging government, addicts the population, distorts the economy (7% of the population now involved in the heroin economy), and destabilizes Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics. We have a limited time to jump on this cancer before it spreads and becomes inoperable.

This is more than a drug problem for the Europeans. This will defeat our war on terrorism aims by negating any ability to build a lawful, stable Afghan State. We will need a comprehensive strategy similar to our successful efforts in Bolivia and Peru - combining aerial eradication by State Department INL contract with associated alternative economic development -- combined with strong efforts to build an operative Justice system for Afghanistan. The War Lords will fight to retain the heroin trade. If we lack the will to take on this problem we will go over a cliff in the coming 24 months and see Afghanistan racked by drug-fueled narco-insurgent civil war. The Brit's have inadequate resources, people, political will and leverage to take on this problem...they are faking the effort.

k. The Afghan National Army is an ongoing dramatic success story. The U.S. Embedded Training Teams (National Guard) are a huge success. The troops are disciplined, patriotic,

strongly admired by the Afghan people, and they are good fighters. U.S. troops in the field think highly of their abilities. This is a five-year effort, which must not be rushed into action prematurely. They are still few in number (seven battalions with no helicopters nor attack aircraft), inadequate in power to take on the War Lords, poorly equipped, and their headquarters are corrupt and politically unreliable. A strong, reliable Army is the ticket out of Afghanistan for the U.S. and our Coalition Allies.

l. The Afghan National Police are a disaster. The Germans are doing a commendable job of training individual officers. However, they have no regional focus, no plans or resources to build a national police infrastructure, no vetting of the input process, and no follow-thru on oversight of trained officers, no police transportation, and no strategy to provide communications or WEAPONS. They are not going to pull this off. The U.S. must step in and help build a national police force from the top down and the bottom up simultaneously. The creation of a trained, reliable, and generally law-abiding police force will take ten years. It is, in my judgment a prerequisite to successfully getting out of Afghanistan. The associated effort by the Italians to create a system of Justice is not happening. The Italians so far seem to have produced a giant mass of Napoleonic Code Law for the future legal system -- which in the view of some informed observers should be trashed at the outset.

m. The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) to be supervised by the Japanese lacks political will, resources and leadership. President Karzai pleaded with the U.S. to support a combined political and military approach last January. Following the U.S. Presidential elections we must face up to this terrible challenge. We must not turn the Afghan people over to the very menace of the War Lords who created the hated Taliban. There must be a political and economic carrot -- there must be a military stick.

4. WHAT WENT RIGHT?

The current success of our political-economic-military efforts in Afghanistan is extremely encouraging. Afghanistan has been a cesspool for 23 years or longer. Historically it has devoured foreign invaders. It is desperately poor and lacks the most basic infrastructure. It lacks any sizable bureaucracy or intelligentsia. It has enslaved half the population - the women - "better to be a donkey than a woman in Afghanistan." The start of the campaign in Afghanistan was brilliant in the military take down and incompetent in the subsequent nation-building effort - no money, inadequate troops, no serious allies, no UN leadership, no prospect of success.

What went right?

a. We had an Afghan face on the exercise in the person of Hamid Karzai. We kept him alive. His leadership capability was dramatically underestimated. He recruited a few truly world class associates. He has acted with forbearance, political skill in building consensus, and helping create the conditions in the U.S. to facilitate economic and political support.

b. The Khalilzad/Abizaid strategy moved away from counter-terrorism and took a focus on economic and political reconstruction backed up by aggressive counterinsurgency.

c. A modest US troop presence, aggressively employed (20,000 strong) kept the War Lords and the Taliban off balance. When the al Qaeda disappeared...the counter-terrorism tactics stopped.

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- d.** The al Qaeda, HIG, and Taliban have not been able to counteract VOTING REGISTRATION. This has been a magic bullet. What can the opposition ideology offer the people?
- e.** The PRT's have begun to focus on the problems of poverty, economic reconstruction, social organization, and infrastructure development.
- f.** The Afghan's are not Arabs...they are fed up with misery and violence and basically receptive to being helped. al Qaeda were FOREIGNERS. (Like poor Che Guevara's attempt to bring his foreign revolution to Bolivian Indian ethnic groups in the 60's).
- g.** NATO-ISAF has given us international cover (not-with-standing its general ineffectiveness).
- h.** The U.S. interagency worked extremely well during the Ambassador Khalilzad era. He provided wisdom and credibility with the Afghan people while allowing the Coalition military the flexibility to do their jobs.
- i.** The courage and integrity of our military forces in country was absolutely awesome. They actually respect and admire the Afghan people. They have earned the admiration of these impoverished and desperate people.

5. SUMMARY:

It was an honor to see at first-hand the capabilities of the CENTCOM effort in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Will look forward to briefing you personally at your convenience.

Thanks for your continued dedication and leadership of our forces involved in these enormous historical events in support of the War Against Terrorism.

Barry R McCaffrey
General, USA (Ret.)