



**Statement before the Armed Services Committee,
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,
United States House of Representatives**

***“The Evolving Role of the Department of Defense
in Development and Security Assistance”***

Prepared Statement

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to be here today to discuss the Defense Department's evolving role in delivering security and humanitarian assistance. Over the past year, my colleague, J. Stephen Morrison, and I have co-directed a unique Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance that has sought to understand this evolution and the international and interagency dynamics it produces. This Task Force is co-led by Representatives Robert Andrews (D-NJ) and Mark Kirk (R-IL). Our task force formed from a simple yet surprisingly unusual concept—to bring together experts from the defense, diplomacy, and development sectors to examine military and civilian roles in new forms of U.S. security assistance and development. As you might imagine, these stakeholders brought a wide range of experience and viewpoints to the problem set. The Task Force's recommendations, which are scheduled to be released later this month, reflect a strong majority viewpoint that spans across each of these sometimes divided domains.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. concept and approach to global security have changed fundamentally. Weak and failing states, long neglected, have risen as a priority focus. We understand that threats to U.S. interests can emanate from within states with which the United States is not at war and that persistent poverty can be a significant contributor to those threats. There is now a strategic imperative to devise multi-decade, integrated approaches that are preventative in nature. Foundational to this preventative approach is sustainable overseas partnerships that build capacity for good governance and security, foster economic prosperity and social wellbeing, and more effectively promote community-level development. Accordingly, we now place a very explicit, and far higher premium, on the unity of effort of our foreign and national security policy instruments, especially defense, diplomacy, and development. Provisional Reconstruction Teams are emblematic of this trend.

In just a few short years, the Pentagon's role as a direct provider of foreign assistance has surged. From 2002 to 2005, DoD's share of U.S. official development assistance increased from 5.6% to 21.7%. The Department of Defense (DoD) has assumed an expanding role in counter-terrorism, capacity building, post-conflict operations, and humanitarian relief. Beyond implementing traditional military-to-military programs supported by State Department funds, DoD has been granted temporary authorities to use directly appropriated funds both for prevention and post-conflict response, concentrated in conflict-ridden, non-permissive environments where civilian actors have difficulty operating or where civilian capacities are weak or absent. DoD has also provided billions of "reimbursement" dollars to coalition members, such as Pakistan and Jordan, outside of the formal State Department-run Economic Support Funds process.ⁱ

Meanwhile, the United States has continued to under-resource the diplomatic and development instruments of its national power. The staffing, programs and operational capacities of the US Agency for International Development and the US Department of State have continued to stagnate at the very moment in history when diplomatic and development agencies should be better, not less well positioned to advance the United States' new, evolving global agenda.

Focus of Inquiry

Our Task Force focused on three areas of DoD non-traditional security assistance:

- **Counter-Terrorism (CT) Capacity Building Assistance** to help partner countries police and control their territories, so that these territories do not become havens for terrorists, criminals and insurgents. Relevant initiatives include the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership, East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, and Section 1206 authority to train and equip foreign security forces for CT and stability operations.
- **Post-Conflict Stabilization and Reconstruction** efforts to shore up weak states and prevent their deterioration and consolidate peace following “major combat operations;” including the establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) as a vehicle to promote military-civilian collaboration in the field, and the creation of new funding mechanisms, notably the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP).
- **Humanitarian Relief** in response to major natural disasters (e.g., the Indian Ocean Tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake), failed states and prolonged irregular warfare.

The Task Force also examined the newly-launched U.S. **Africa Command (AFRICOM)** with a view to how the military might pursue its coordination with the diplomatic and development communities most effectively to achieve success in the above three areas.

My testimony today will focus on the Task Force’s overall assessment of the military-civilian balance in security and humanitarian assistance and its specific findings and recommendations with respect to PRTs.

Overall Findings and Recommendations

The United States stands at a crossroads in defining the contours of its national security policy. The Department of Defense’s growing provision of non-traditional security assistance -- and the Pentagon’s request to expand and make some new assistance authorities permanent -- reflect an understandable effort to work around this asymmetry to respond to urgent contingencies. The Pentagon’s entry into new forms of security assistance does bring distinct short-term benefits in insecure environments, particularly in countries deemed critical to winning the global war on terrorism, where DoD conducts diverse missions such as helping improve the effectiveness of security forces, restoring systems of governance, and providing essential services.

By defaulting to reliance on the military, however, the United States aggravates existing institutional imbalances. The authority, responsibilities and resources of the U.S. military continue to grow as US civilian diplomatic and developmental capacities further erode. Moreover, recent trends risk over-extending the already stretched U.S. armed forces. Although there are compelling reasons to give DoD flexibility to provide foreign assistance in specific, circumscribed crisis situations, granting more permanent, global authorities does not address the larger structural problem and must be handled carefully to avoid undermining both sustainable capacity-building and broader U.S. foreign policy interests.

To advance U.S. national interests into the future, it will be critical to re-balance the military and non-military components of U.S. global engagement. This will entail systematically correcting the asymmetry between civilian and military resources and authorities. Equally important, it requires

building up relevant civilian expertise within State and USAID, so that they are in a position to deliver stability-creating assistance in difficult environments.ⁱⁱ

To unify the US Government's approach to national security, the Task Force intends to make the following four recommendations.ⁱⁱⁱ

First, the Executive Branch must provide increased budget transparency to Congress in the form of an integrated resource picture for U.S. foreign, national, and homeland security policy. Wholesale revision of the existing congressional authorization and appropriations structure would require bold leadership and near unanimous support in Congress – conditions that will not obtain in the near term. Nevertheless, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the National Security Council (NSC) should be required to document more systematically how the foreign assistance streams for USAID, State, DoD and other relevant U.S. agencies fit together. Such transparency would help provide an accurate portrait to Congress of what the United States is actually spending across agencies to meet its most pressing national security challenges, as well as facilitate the creation of benchmarks to assess progress in meeting these objectives through various instruments of national power.

Second, Congress should take steps to ensure more effective and comprehensive oversight over foreign and security assistance programs across existing committee jurisdictions. One potential solution would be the creation of a Select Committee on U.S. National Security in both the Senate and the House, comprised of bipartisan leadership from all relevant communities. Simply improving coordination processes across committees could also bear fruit.

Third, both Congress and the Executive need to elevate the priority attached to development, placing it on an equal footing with defense and diplomacy in U.S. foreign and national security policy. To this end, the Task Force calls for a significant increase in U.S. official development assistance (ODA), and for better integration of the multiple streams of development aid.

Fourth, to improve the performance of civilian agencies in conflict prevention and post-conflict response, the Task Force recommends the next administration appoint an NSC Senior Director for Conflict Prevention and Response to serve as a locus of inter-agency coordination on these issues in the White House, in close concert with OMB. The Senior Director should also occupy the contingency planning role envisioned in Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD-56), "Managing Complex Contingency Operations." At the same time, the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) should be empowered with a larger multi-year funding stream, so that it may lead contingency planning for the State Department and USAID. The State Department should create and Congress provide budget support for the standing Civilian Reserve Corps proposed by President Bush in his January 2007 State of the Union address. Congress and the White House should also expand the expeditionary capabilities of civilian agencies, particularly within the US Agency for International Development.

PRT Findings and Recommendations

I'd like to briefly review the Task Force's findings and recommendations with respect to PRTs. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, these joint civilian-military teams seem to have enjoyed a measure of success in enhancing local security, conducting small-scale reconstruction efforts, and facilitating the

expanding presence of the central government to localities. PRTs hold potential as a platform for integrating civilian and military instruments and provide sufficient flexibility to field commanders in unique operational environments. At the same time, PRTs suffer from important limitations, outlined below.

Ambiguous mandate and absence of interagency doctrine: Returning members complain about a lack of clear guidance on core PRT objectives, including the relative priority of security, governance and development goals. There is no interagency doctrine to provide a common frame of reference about the PRTs' mission and how to achieve it,^{iv} and the heavy focus on force protection and military considerations has often limited scope for reconstruction efforts. In Afghanistan, placement of U.S. PRTs under a military commander has often led allies and local populations to consider them overly militarized.^v

Little strategic planning or baseline assessments: PRT activities remain opportunistic and idiosyncratic, with individual PRT approaches evolving independently and shaped by the personality and interests of the PRT commander, rather than being embedded in a larger military *or* developmental effort. Although it is important that commanders retain operational flexibility, PRT activities have rarely benefited from an integrated, civilian-military planning framework linking their activities to broader USG strategies. Nor have most US PRTs conducted interagency needs assessments to inform projects in their areas of responsibility (AORs).

Shortfalls in the governance and rule of law components of PRT action: Inherent in the idea of PRTs is a continuum of activities ranging from quick impact projects and providing immediate physical security to more challenging institution-building efforts in areas like security sector reform, governance and the rule of law. Progress in addressing these higher levels of capacity-building remains modest. Despite the stated aim of expanding the reach of the Afghan central government, for example, PRTs have often empowered warlords as provincial governors and police chiefs, cementing their positions.

Little enduring developmental impact: The PRT emphasis on speed has sometimes contributed to unsustainable projects. In the words of a major interagency assessment of PRTs in Afghanistan, "Schools were built without teachers and clinics without doctors."^{vi} In response to these criticisms, Afghan PRTs have begun to adopt a "systems" approach to their intervention, reportedly including greater "synching up with USAID." The impact of this change remains to be seen.

Inadequate civilian resources, personnel and training to match ambitions: State and USAID have been criticized for failing to deploy qualified personnel to PRTs in anything like the numbers required, and projects funded via USAID's Quick Impact Project (QIP) resources remain significantly slower than those funded by CERP. These problems have been compounded by rapid staff turnover—even at the highest levels—and inadequate pre-deployment training. Similarly, DoD has been criticized for failing to match the skill sets of those deployed to PRTs with the job descriptions they are asked to fill.^{vii} Most PRTs have been formed in-country.^{viii} State is seeking to add 57 new billets at S/CRS, but this modest step falls far short of current or expected future requirements.

Fraught PRT/NGO relations: The use of soldiers to perform humanitarian and reconstruction tasks continues to draw opposition from other aid providers. This is particularly true of international NGOs, who believe PRTs blur the distinction between military and civilian spheres, erode

“humanitarian space,” and encourage the targeting of relief and development workers, NGOs would prefer that the U.S. military provide ambient security and leave humanitarian and reconstruction efforts to them.

Lack of metrics to gauge PRT performance: In the absence of any clear criteria and indicators to gauge *impact* (as opposed to simply inputs and outputs), it is difficult to assess PRT performance. Nor have PRTs developed a clear “exit strategy,” with benchmarks, outlining the transition of US/NATO operations to local control.

To maximize the potential of PRTs, the Task Force intends to make the following recommendations:

- Advises the NSC to initiate a government-wide process to clarify PRT mandate and doctrine, including agency roles.
- Recommends that DoD and its civilian partners conduct more comprehensive strategic planning and baseline assessments.
- Recommends expanded pre-deployment training of interagency teams.
- Endorses a streamlining of USAID funds in post-conflict settings.
- Calls for greater monitoring and evaluation of *impact*, including for security, governance, and development.
- Advocates the development of robust civilian response and reserve corps to support future civilian-military teams, with attendant training and incentives.
- Welcomes the recent DoD agreement with NGOs on “rules of the road” in insecure environments^{ix}.

Conclusion

In charting a whole-of-government approach to security assistance and development, the Executive Branch and Congress need to answer the following key questions.

- *Are recent trends exceptional -- or are they part of a long-term trajectory of ever greater reliance upon DoD to provide non-traditional assistance?* I believe U.S. national interests will continue to require effective development assistance, including in support of defense and diplomatic objectives as well as for traditional poverty reduction goals. Absent a concerted major effort to ensure significant improvements in diplomatic and developmental capacities, however, DoD will inexorably shoulder an increasing share of the burden in building the capacities of weak and failing states and rebuilding war-torn countries.
- *Is the Department of Defense the right agency to be playing this role?* I think the answer is, generally, no. Other than in armed conflicts or similar discrete operations, it is inadvisable to yield leadership for humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, and post conflict reconstruction to the military. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing need for effective military contributions to overall US security assistance.
- *What impact do recent trends have on U.S. foreign policy?* DoD non-traditional security assistance can be indispensable in responding to urgent U.S. security challenges and strategic needs. At

the same time, care must be taken to strengthen rather than undermine State Department leadership in international affairs. Similarly, DoD programs must bolster broader U.S. foreign policy objectives to achieve enduring stability, economic prosperity and community development. Smart, agile concurrence procedures can help better align DoD aid programs with the broader U.S. foreign policy agenda.

- *What impact do recent trends have on U.S. development objectives?* The short-term security imperatives of winning “hearts and minds” apparent in DoD’s design and delivery of security assistance will sometimes undermine longer-term development considerations. This is necessary in some situations, particularly in cases of insurgency. As a rule, however, DoD aid programs should be nested within broader U.S. efforts to build effective, accountable, and sustainable local institutions, and the Pentagon whenever possible should work with – and be active advocates of – civilian agencies, international organizations and NGOs in the design and implementation of development and humanitarian projects.
- *What balance should the United States seek between DoD and civilian capabilities?* The Bush Administration and its successor should work with Congress to build more robust capacities within U.S. civilian agencies to help meet public security, good governance, and development challenges in unstable and post-conflict countries, and to reduce reliance on DoD for these tasks. A high priority should be augmenting and building up the capacities of civilian agencies. Not only will this allow stand alone civilian capacity, it will also create the necessary civilian capacity to liaison with and integrate into defense organizations. In the interim, the authorities granted DoD to build the capacities of partner countries, such as through Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act, should largely remain temporary and limited to named contingency operations, rather than be made global and permanent as the Bush Administration has requested.
- *How realistic is it to expect that robust civilian capacities will actually emerge and be funded?* A business-as-usual approach to these pressing issues is simply unacceptable. Meeting the security challenges of the twenty-first century requires the United States to marshal the full range of instruments of national power and influence. Creating a whole-of-government approach and requiring the Executive Branch to explain how its budgets support a unified national security and foreign aid strategy will substantially improve the nation’s ability to address the structural roots of poor governance, instability and extremism in the developing world.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I stand ready to answer any questions you or other members have at this time.

ⁱ To date, insufficient tracking of these funds has hampered DoD’s ability to justify them on the grounds of reimbursement for coalition expenses. It is also questionable whether DoD, rather than the State Department, should have authority over disbursement of coalition funds. As recent events in Pakistan have highlighted, this is a significant and potentially worrisome issue area that warrants further study.

ⁱⁱ Restoring USAID’s once-vaunted technical expertise would be a good place to start. Notwithstanding specialized units like the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), USAID has only modest standing, deployable technical expertise. There is only one person within USAID, for example, engaged full time in security sector reform (SSR).

ⁱⁱⁱ Although we acknowledged the many shortcomings in the outdated Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, the Task Force focused its energy on identifying smart, actionable steps that can attract broad bipartisan support and bring quick results.

^{iv} These difficulties are compounded by the very different approaches adopted by other nations with PRTs, including in some cases the insertion of crippling “national caveats.”

^v Another contested issue has been the provision of security and logistical support for PRTs. In early 2007 State and DoD hammered out agreement to resolve this long long-running dispute.

^{vi} *Provincial Reconstruction Teams In Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment*

^{vii} Congressional Testimony: Deputy Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, “The Role of the Department of Defense in Provincial Reconstruction Teams,” House Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, September 5, 2007.

^{viii} In response, in winter 2007 the US began offering PRT teams pre-deployment training at the Foreign Service Institute.