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House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on US-Pakistan Military Partnership

LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS AND WITNESSES

SKELTON:

Good afternoon. Today we have with us the Honorable Michele Flournoy, undersecretary of defense for policy, Department of Defense; Vice Admiral James Winnefeld Jr., director of strategic plans and policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Ambassador Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs at the Department of State.

We thank you for being with us and being willing to address the future of American/Pakistan relationship. We are expecting votes in the very near future. And I am hopeful we can get most of your testimony in before we have to leave to vote. And we ask your indulgence while we are voting. This, however, will be the last series of votes today, as I understand it. So maybe we can expedite the hearing when we get back.

This is an extremely important and, of course, very timely hearing. It follows last week's hearing before this committee on the same topic with an outstanding panel of outstanding experts, including General David Barno, who testified that Pakistan presents the U.S. with its greatest global strategic challenge. It also follows the recent release of the administration's Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy as well as the administration's supplemental budget request for new Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund.

Moreover, this hearing comes at a time where there is legislation pending in Congress that seeks to both expand U.S. assistance for Pakistan as well as impose limitations and conditions on U.S. security assistance to Pakistan. And as we are here today, it appears security conditions in Pakistan have become even more worrisome given the Taliban's recent eastward advance from the Swat Valley to Buner, only 60 miles or so from Islamabad.

I agree with General Barno. Pakistan may well pose the greatest strategic challenge facing us today with serious implications for U.S. national security and Afghanistan as well as the entire region. And I'm pleased that Congress and the administration have both prioritized issues involving Pakistan and are committed to strengthening the U.S.-Pakistan partnership. These issues are complex. Progress is not likely to come easy. I believe the administration's recent Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy is a step in the right direction. However, strategy alone does not guarantee success.

The administration continues to request significant resources from Congress and the American people for efforts in Pakistan. Following 9/11, Pakistan has received almost \$12 billion from our country, including about \$6.4 billion in Department of Defense/Coalition support fund reimbursements. I hope the witnesses will elaborate on the fund, that is the Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund and tell us what military objections it will receive and why it should fall under the authority of the Department of Defense rather than under the authority of the State Department.

With that, I turn to my friend, the gentleman from New York.

MCHUGH:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll try to do this as quickly as possible. I'd ask unanimous consent my entire statement be entered in the record.

Let me very quickly welcome our very distinguished panelists, particularly Madam Secretary. This is, I think, your third appearance in the first 100 days. You must be going for a record. And you're probably well on your way to setting that.

But we thank all of you for being here to discuss what the chairman rightfully described as a very important issue. And certainly, this hearing is timely as the security situation in Pakistan sadly continues to be, at best, volatile. As you look at, as the chairman mentioned, the movement of Taliban elements eastward towards Islamabad, some of their activities on the streets of Lahore, we could all understand why in their recent testimony, Secretary of State Clinton noted that the Taliban, in her judgment, and I couldn't agree more, posed an existential threat to that nation.

In the meantime here on Capitol Hill, there has been what I'll call a House version of the so-called Kerry-Lugar legislation that was recently introduced by the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I think it's fair to say that unlike its Senate counterpart, this particular bill calls for what can be fairly described as heavy limitations and conditions on U.S. security assistance to Pakistan. Some have expressed concern that I share that this proposal as currently drafted is disrespectful of Pakistan's sovereignty. It would unnecessarily constrain, the Department of Defense admits, what is fairly described as an already fluid and dynamic situation in Pakistan.

We're also in the process of scrubbing the president's fiscal year 2009 wartime emergency supplemental request, which includes coalition support funds to reimburse partner nations such as Pakistan for their efforts on the war on terrorism. And this measure also provides a new authority and funding stream called the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund, or PCCF, which is a tool very ably designed, in my judgment, to improve the capacity and capabilities of Pakistan's security forces to deny safe haven and defeat Al Qaida, Taliban and other extremists groups within the Pakistan territory.

Given all these events, as I noted, this committee is rightly focused on Pakistan and the challenges before us. I would just refer everyone who has some strange interest in my comments of the past week where we outlined my support of the president's strategic direction for Pakistan and some of the questions and challenges that I hope we can explore that lie ahead.

With that, Mr. Chairman, as I said, let's get to the testimony. And I will again welcome our panelists here today. And I look forward to their comments. I'd yield back.

SKELTON:

Thank you so much.

The Honorable Michele Flournoy, would you please lead off? And again, I know we're asking a lot of you in your testimony before us. But it's always so helpful. We welcome you back.

FLOURNOY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Congressman McHugh. It is good to be back and see you again. And thank you for inviting us here today. I'm glad to have the chance to discuss efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Pakistan military partnership, which is a vital component of the administration's Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy.

Let me start by laying out the strategic context. In our recent strategy review, we went back to the most basic question. What are our national interests in Afghanistan-Pakistan and that region? We concluded that we have a vital interest in defeating Al Qaida and its extremist allies in the border regions. We must deny them safe havens from which to launch attacks against the United States and our allies.

You all know that the situation in Pakistan is deteriorating. The insurgency along Pakistan's western border has been steadily expanding. And militants are increasingly in a position to threaten the Pakistani heartland. In the Swat Valley, extremists have already exercised effective control. And last week, militants established bases in Buner, only 60 miles from Islamabad.

With instability increasing, many Pakistani civilians and political leaders fear violent retaliation if they openly oppose the extremist groups. Meanwhile, opportunities are growing for Al Qaida and its associates. From safe havens within Pakistan they can plan and stage attacks against our troops in Afghanistan and potentially against the United States itself.

Events on the ground are unfolding rapidly. With attacks in the Pakistani heartland increasing, Pakistan's civilian government has come under urgent pressure to address this growing crisis. And they are taking steps to do so in part by launching the recent military offensive.

SKELTON:

Excuse me. Could you get just a little bit closer to the microphone, please?

FLOURNOY:

I'm sorry.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

FLOURNOY:

In this context, further strengthening our partnership with Pakistan, including our military partnership, is absolutely critical. The Pakistani government is undertaking concrete actions to demonstrate their commitment to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. We must show our Pakistan partners that if they take decisive action against the extremists, we will give them the support they need.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, forging an effective partnership with Pakistan's military has not always been straightforward. Despite our efforts to reduce tension between Pakistan and India, the Pakistan Security Forces have historically viewed India, and not the militants, as Pakistan's most existential threat. And they have focused their resources accordingly.

There has also been something of a trust deficit in U.S.-Pakistan relations. From Pakistan's perspective, U.S. support has been inconsistent over the years. We have oscillated between treating Pakistan as a pariah and as a credible ally. There is mistrust on our side, too. After years of investment in Pakistan's military, we have seen some progress in countering violent extremism, but we have also seen many setbacks.

Forging an effective military partnership with Pakistan has also been hampered by a relative lack of counterinsurgency capabilities on the Pakistan side. Nonetheless, Mr. Chairman, we believe that right now it is more important than ever to strengthen our military partnership with Pakistan. We share common interests. If the militants were to cause the Pakistani government to falter, this would be as devastating to the Pakistani people and security forces as it would be for us.

It also bears emphasizing that Pakistan's Security Forces have made many sacrifices in their efforts to combat insurgency. Thousands of military personnel as well as thousands of civilians have lost their lives.

And we have had some notable successes when we have worked closely with them. For instance, our work with the Frontier Corps has resulted in improved cross-border coordination, has increased their effectiveness in operations in many agencies. But the Pakistan military still has only limited capacity to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations. Unless we provide them with better equipment and training, such operations will

continue to lead to short-term progress, but not necessarily enduring results.

Last week, Mr. Chairman, you heard testimony from three experts, all underscoring the urgency of the situation in Pakistan. We share that sense of urgency. It is vital that we act now to provide Pakistan with the capabilities they so critically need.

The proposed Title 10 Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund is absolutely crucial to this effort. The PCCF would give General Petraeus, the U.S. CENTCOM combatant commander, the authority and funding required to effectively build the Pakistan military's counterinsurgency capabilities in the kind of timeframe required. Title 10 PCCF will bring responsibilities, authorities and funding into alignment.

The PCCF is a critical tool that will allow our military assistance in Pakistan to be flexible, focused and fast providing resources when and where they are most needed in an urgent and rapidly evolving situation. With the PCCF, we can fully fund planned training and equipping efforts involving Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps with special forces and expand assistance to the Pakistani army.

FLOURNOY:

Establishing a dedicated funding stream will also signal our seriousness and our commitment to Pakistan, which is vital at this moment when, again, Pakistan is demonstrating its commitment to taking assertive action against insurgents. I want to make clear that we see PCCF as complementing existing authorities and funding streams, not replacing them. Foreign military financing continues to strengthen U.S.-Pakistani bilateral relations over the longer term. But the urgent needs the -- but beyond, excuse me -- beyond the urgent needs the PCCF is designed to meet.

Similarly, coalition support funds remain vital to sustaining Pakistan's military tempo of operations in the border region. We must almost address the historic imbalance in funding to Pakistan by increasing non-military forms of assistance. We fully support the establishment of reconstruction opportunity zones in Pakistan, and we are hopeful that the Kerry-Lugar bill will help boost rule of law and sustainable economic development efforts.

Nonetheless, the Title 10 PCCF is crucial to our strategy. As General Petraeus, Ambassador Holbrooke and Ambassador Patterson have all noted, it is through the PCCF that we can provide our commanders on the ground the flexibility they need to assist the Pakistani military.

Given the rapidly changing situation on the ground, Mr. Chairman, we do oppose rigid conditionality, such as that which is proposed in H.R. 1886. While we applaud the goal of increasing accountability, we believe that the bill as currently drafted is too inflexible, and would reduce our ability to adapt quickly as circumstances require.

We are committed to continuously evaluating our own performance, as well as that of our Pakistani partners. And to that end, we are developing measures of effectiveness that will allow us and you to hold us and our Pakistan partners accountable.

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished members, terrorism and insurgency in Pakistan are growing, increasing the urgent threat to our troops in Afghanistan and to Americans here at home. The proposed PCCF is vital to increasing the effectiveness of our partnership with Pakistan's security forces at this critical moment in time.

Thank you very much for having me here today.

SKELTON:

Thank you again.

Admiral Winnefeld?

WINNEFELD:

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Congressman McHugh. I'd like to also thank you for the opportunity to come testify today on ways to improve Pakistan's counterinsurgency capability.

Undersecretary Flounoy has already covered the goals and the challenges that we face in Pakistan. From our point of view, this is really boiling down to a matter of Pakistani will and capability.

And while we use diplomacy to build trust and buoy Pakistan's will in this very important fight in defeating the extremist threats, our ability and our efforts to build Pakistani counterinsurgency capability in the middle of an ongoing fight are also a key element of our new strategy.

The Pakistani military knows that it is a largely conventionally based force fighting in a very nonconventional environment. And we've been down this road, as you very well know, ourselves.

For Pakistan, as it was for us, change has not been easy in this type of fight, or immediate, and it requires resources. And thus, Pakistan needs the equipment and the training and the changes in doctrine that reflect the difficult lessons that we have learned over the last eight years.

Thanks to your support, we have made some progress in our efforts to enable Pakistan's Frontier Corps and their other forces, including special forces and conventional forces. But both the pace and the scope of our efforts need to be increased. One way of doing this, as Undersecretary Flounoy mentioned, is through the PCCF.

This is Title 10 authority that General Petraeus has requested, that Ambassador Patterson has endorsed, and that the president has submitted as part of his supplemental, as essential to quickly and effectively building

Pakistan's counterinsurgency capabilities -- again, in the middle of a fight.

It's urgently needed in this fight that's going on right now. We believe it will be responsive and immediate, enabling our combatant commander, General Petraeus, who has the authority and the responsibility for this fight on both sides of the border, to capitalize quickly on opportunities and to plug emergent capability gaps that we might discover.

I would say that it will support U.S. troops who are in an ongoing effort in Afghanistan, because this threat clearly does not respect borders in this fight. And it will complement the other authorities that Undersecretary Flounoy mentioned, that are designed to reimburse Pakistan for their operations, that are designed to build its long-term defense capability, both in the COIN and other environments, and to improve its governance and development. It's very complementary.

As I mentioned a moment ago, the Pakistanis also have to have the will in addition to the capability to use the COIN capability we give them. And in this light, I'd like to make two points.

First, we believe that with increased capability should come increased will. Current events, as we're all watching them unfold in Buner, will be a real test for Pakistani capability and will. And that only highlights the need for the kind of flexible authorities that PCCF would give to General Petraeus.

We want to be prepared if there is some emergent, unanticipated requirement that would pop up that we need to fulfill, or if a new opportunity arises for us to be able to work even more closely with the Pakistani security forces. And PCCF will enable that.

Second, we believe that publicly attaching conditions to our support will be detrimental to building Pakistani will to fight, and it will ultimately erode the trust that we're trying to build between our two nations. Rather, we believe that private engagement between our senior leadership is really the key to encouraging our partners, the Pakistanis, to use the assistance that we give to them wisely.

So we appreciate the committee's willingness to consider this sort of unusual enactment of authority. We believe we can't afford to wait until next year to obtain the flexibility and agility that it provides to General Petraeus. And accordingly, we ask for your support in accelerating its implementation. And we will ensure that the accountability measures are in place, so that these funds go exactly where they're intended to go, and that is into the COIN fight.

Again, I'd like to thank you and the members of the committee for your ongoing support for our troops and their mission, and I look forward to both your questions and your comments. Thank you, sir.

SKELTON:

Admiral, thank you very much.

Ambassador Boucher, why don't we go ahead and ask you for your testimony, and then we will break for the votes.

I might say that the lack of full attendance here is due to the fact that there was a caucus for the House regarding the swine flu challenge that we have. And I know that they will be coming in shortly after we vote.

Ambassador?

BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman McHugh and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for...

SKELTON:

Get real close to the mike. Get way up there. Way up there. Come on.

BOUCHER:

I'm about as close as I can without tasting it.

Thank you. It's a very great pleasure to be here today with you, and thank you for holding this hearing.

I have a slightly longer version of my remarks, but let me make a few comments at the beginning, because my colleagues, I think, have already laid out the context and the importance of this program.

In the strategy that the president laid out last month for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the approach that's taken was an integrated, comprehensive approach that involves stabilizing Pakistan and building up Afghanistan.

Overall, our success in building institutions, strengthening governance and ensuring economic growth is what will produce that kind of long-term stability. But we also all recognize that success in those areas hinges on helping Pakistan secure itself from the dangers of spreading al Qaida and Taliban insurgency.

Our role in this effort is to support a Pakistani effort to defeat al Qaida and successfully shut down the safe havens in Pakistan. But we have an active dialogue with Pakistan's civilian and military leaders. We hear from them consistently of their commitment to take on this threat, to take on the terrorist threat in Pakistan.

But it's an ongoing effort, I think, to see how they can carry that out and to make sure that we're partners with them in carrying it out. And that's where programs like this become very important.

Cooperation on the counterinsurgency has to proceed on two tracks: first, by improving the ability of Pakistani security forces to defeat and dismantle terrorist groups; and second, by expanding the regional legitimacy of the Pakistani government to all parts of their territory.

So, to accomplish these goals, we're looking for this new train-and-equip program, the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund. And as my colleagues have expressed, this is designed to be a program that can deal with the urgent problems, that can deal with them quickly and flexibly, and give the combatant commander the ability to deal directly with these difficulties on both sides of the border.

The State Department is fully supportive of this fund, fully supportive of the request for this authority to reside with the Pentagon, with the Department of Defense in the 2009 supplemental.

We think that this new authority will complement foreign military financing, which remains the foundation of long-term security assistance with Pakistan. We believe the new authority is necessary, because of the unique and extraordinary nature of the situation we face at this moment in Pakistan.

The fund would be "dual-key," meaning the secretary of state would concur in its use. It would be time-limited in order to address immediate needs. And we don't think it sets a longer term precedent for the issues of authorities from one department to the other, which we know we're all discussing now.

We want to do the other things that are necessary to make this program succeed in the counterinsurgency effort. We're proposing also to step up our assistance to strengthen police and governing institutions in the most vulnerable areas around Pakistan, so that Pakistanis can also work on the "hold" part of a clear, hold and build strategy.

So, security assistance -- this kind of security assistance -- is only one component of a much larger strategy. And those efforts are designed towards creating the kind of modern, vibrant and democratic state that Pakistanis desire, and that the U.S. looks forward to working with as a partner and advancing stability in a key region of the world.

So, I'll conclude with that, and be glad to take questions, sir.

SKELTON:

Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much.

Rather than begin questions now, I think it's best that we proceed to the floor to vote, and we will return forthwith and carry on.

So, we'll be in recess.

(RECESS)

SKELTON:

The hearing will resume, and questions will begin. Let me ask a couple opening questions.

Madam Secretary, there is a growing sense, at least here in the House of Representatives, that the coalition support fund construct is not serving the interests of either our country or Pakistan very well. And the time is right to begin moving away from that mechanism as it is. Can you recommend any alternative constructs that could achieve the same goals and objectives and be equally or more effective?

FLOURNOY:

Sir, the coalition support funds have been absolutely critical to providing reimbursement that enables the Pakistan military to maintain its operations tempo along the border with Afghanistan. Those operations are critical to helping to secure the lines of communication going into Afghanistan, supplies supporting our troops, et cetera. They're also critical in other ways.

So I think it's a very important mechanism. We have been sending teams over to work closely with the Pakistanis to ease the -- make the process go better in terms of how the reimbursement gets made while maintaining all of the necessary accountability measures to make sure that we in the executive branch and you here in Congress know how the money is being spent.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Secretary Boucher -- excuse me, Ambassador Boucher -- what do you want to be called?

BOUCHER:

You can call me anything you want to, sir.

SKELTON:

All right, Mr. Ambassador. You mentioned that the State Department is supportive of the PCCF fund being used through Title 10 and the Department of Defense. Am I clear?

BOUCHER:

Yes, sir.

SKELTON:

There is some debate here in Congress about whether this authority should be granted to the Department of Defense or the Department of State. Could you elaborate a bit on what is important by way of this authority to ensure that it can be used to make a difference on the ground in Pakistan quickly?

BOUCHER:

The issue of which authority to use and for which stream of funds is, of course, something that's being discussed on the Hill and in the administration as well. The new administration said they want to sort out some of these authorities and funding streams.

But when we looked at this immediate program, the decision was made to go for the route that we felt most suited the program in the present circumstance and most suited the need to get urgent approval for a flexible funding mechanism that would accomplish what this program could accomplish, meaning just get it up and running quickly. And so, the route goes -- this was the preferred route, was to do it under Defense Department authority. We thought that was the best way to go about it.

SKELTON:

In other words, the administration is in favor of the -- and the State Department is in favor of this fund being used through Title 10 and the Department of Defense. Is that correct?

BOUCHER:

That's the way we made the request, and we support that.

SKELTON:

And now the Department of State. Is that correct?

BOUCHER:

That's the way we made the request, and we support it.

SKELTON:

All right. You're not for it in the Department of State, right?

BOUCHER:

I'm what?

SKELTON:

You're not for it to be in the Department of State.

BOUCHER:

We're for it the way we asked for it.

SKELTON:

That's right. Defense Department, right?

BOUCHER:

Yes, sir.

SKELTON:

Good, thank you.

All right, Mr. McHugh?

MCHUGH:

Given the importance of the issue, I'm tempted to get a clarification of the ambassador's statement. I think it was pretty well established. I'm going to make a comment about it, however.

It may seem we're very closely focused on this. This is a critical issue. And I appreciated the admiral's comments about the fact of the matter is -- and I spoke to General Petraeus yesterday. Our commanders, starting with General Petraeus, view the control and flexibilities embodied both in the coalition support funds and the PCCF as absolutely essential and absolutely essentially to be -- essential that they be controlled through the Department of Defense without State Department or any other department's filters.

And I think the fact that President Obama has -- and again, been clarified -- not clarified, but reaffirmed here today by our witnesses -- has to his credit listened to the commanders on the ground. And along with the endorsement in support of Ambassador Patterson has asked for these funds in this fashion is a message that cannot be overemphasized.

MCHUGH:

I'm deeply concerned about rumblings coming from the Appropriations Committee that regardless of what Congressman Berman, Chairman Berman's bill may or may not do, there are very significant voices on that committee working as we speak to put those kinds of State Department filtering conditions on our commanders.

So just to kind of put the cherry on the -- on the sundae, if you will, I assume beyond Chairman Berman's bill, Madam Ambassador, you would also oppose any similar constraints imposed through the appropriations process, simply put.

FLOURNOY:

You said "Madam Ambassador," so I'm not sure if that's for me or some...

(UNKNOWN)

Madam. I think we can answer in unison.

(UNKNOWN)

Good point. Good point. I consider you an ambassador of goodwill, Secretary Flournoy. Madam Secretary, I apologize.

FLOURNOY:

Yes, sir. I'm sorry. We would -- we would -- I would agree with your perspective, sir.

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you.

Let -- let me just ask another question. There has been some discussion, media reports, Secretary Lindsey -- oh, secretary, boy -- Senator Lindsey Graham and I -- I'm just kicking people from one department to another here today -- Senator Lindsey Graham and I have been trading phone calls.

There has been discussion about advancing some significant monies to the Pakistanis prior to the development and passage of the -- of the supplemental.

Obviously, both President Zarkai -- Karzai and Zardari are going to be in town in the very near future, and this is looked at both as a confidence building measure, but also something to free up funds more quickly to get supporting dollars into Pakistan and begin work that I think the administration has done a pretty good job in detailing in their -- in their proposal.

Does the administration have any position on that initiative at this time?

FLOURNOY:

I think the -- this has been discussed, and I think there is a desire for getting the funding as quickly as possible. I think within the administration I think the -- the preference is probably to accelerate the entire supplemental, meaning to have an earlier decision on that and to keep this -- this monies as a coherent sort of package.

But I think, you know, if -- you know, there is definitely a desire to have this as soon as -- as possible. And I think it's open for discussion. I

don't know if there is a different view of the State Department side.

BOUCHER:

Sir, the view is essentially the same from the State Department. Hopefully, the whole package can move expeditiously in the supplemental. The supplemental contains a number of elements on Pakistan -- economic assistance, security assistance, and some operational things that we need to get on with right away.

And I think our -- our view is it's best if the whole package can move quickly.

(UNKNOWN)

Well, I thank you both.

Mr. Chairman, I'll yield back.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Dr. Snyder?

SNYDER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I -- I share the concerns of Governor McHugh -- concerns of Representative McHugh on I think his term was "unwelcome signals" that we could send if we include language in our legislation that is not as helpful to the work that you all are trying to -- trying to do.

I -- I wanted to ask. It seems like, Madam Secretary Ambassador, that we also need to have some positive signals that we send to the Pakistani people.

As I look ahead, I don't know how far off -- 15 years, 20 years, eight years -- I can foresee a time when we will look at our relationship with Pakistan as being one is a really strong economic cultural relationships. I mean it's got that kind of potential.

I mean -- and I'm always reassured when I pull out those pictures of those lawyers in coats and ties demonstrating for the rule of law and the streets of Pakistan. I mean it just seems to me that we have a lot of common shared values.

And my question is what other things could we be doing to send positive signals that this is more than just our desire to have a military ally at a time that we need military help?

BOUCHER:

Sir, that's a -- that's a very important point. I think part of it is the strategy that the administration has presented and you see in the Kerry-Lugar bill and the House bill as well, that we know that we need to beef up, do more on the economic and institutional side so that we can help Pakistan modernize its institutions of government, modernize its education system, modernize its economy so that people see the benefits of this.

There's a group I talked to not too long ago. One of the Pakistani colonels in their group said you need to offer people something more than war. And we need to offer them peace. We need to offer them prosperity.

And indeed, if you look at the whole region strategically, the opportunities that a stable Pakistan that's free from terrorism opens up economically, in terms of relations with India, in terms of access routes to Central Asia, in terms of stability between the Middle East and the Far East, are enormous.

And I think we do have that long-term interest in Pakistan and in the people of Pakistan, and we just need to make that part of our rhetoric, but also part of our programs.

SNYDER:

As you look back at the relationship in the last few years, I had occasion to talk with some Pakistani friends a few weeks ago. And they were going back far enough I didn't know what the details were, but it was like in the last year or two or three.

And they expressed concerns that they felt like we had not followed through on some things that we would -- we told them we would do as far as military equipment or those -- or something like that.

Do they have some merit to the fact that we didn't follow through like perhaps we had led them to think we would?

BOUCHER:

I -- I guess would say we probably did follow through, but we didn't necessarily follow through as fast as they wanted.

I look at the challenges that they face, and especially what the new democratic government has faced since last March when they came into place. They're dealing with an economic crisis, a political crisis a stabilizing democracy, and a huge security crisis all at the same time.

Every single one of these needs is urgent, and we've tried to come through -- through for them in a lot of ways, but some of these things take time to find and -- and procure and deliver.

And so I think they're -- they're right in saying, hey, we need it now. And that's one reason why we're coming to you with this program, because this is the way to get now to the people who are out there fighting the insurgency.

Pakistan's military just this week is pushing back against these encroachments.

SNYDER:

Well, I'm referring to if they think we have made some promises and that they should -- like our constituents, let us know if they think there's a problem. We -- we would let you know.

My last question is it seems like if I were a -- a Pakistani military leader, it would be very difficult for me to figure out how to be as involved as perhaps they would like to be in the area along the Afghanistan border, given their -- their great concern with what -- with the potential tension with India.

Is there a way that the -- the Pakistani-Indian relationships can improve, apart from what's going on in this war against terrorism, or do they go hand in hand? And I guess I'd direct that to you -- or really, any one of you.

BOUCHER:

I think there -- there are a lot of ways that the Pakistani-India relationship can improve. And one -- we've seen a lot of progress over the last few years, Pakistanis and Indians both pushing forward new ideas in trying to solve some of the issues.

The issue of terrorism, though, is central to this. The Mumbai bombings carried out by a group that was based in Pakistan really disrupted the progress that was going on.

And one of the best ways to improve Pakistan's relations with India is to see Pakistan carry through on what they started, and that is to prosecute and disband, eliminate the group that was responsible for the Mumbai bombings.

India is going through an election right now, but I hope that when the new government comes in, that they'll see the progress on terrorism and they'll be able to work with Pakistan to try to reestablish some of that broader progress.

Reduction of tensions, improvement of economic ties, people to people ties, all that I think would benefit not only stability in the region, but also the fight against terrorism in the region.

SNYDER:

Thank you.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Before I ask Mr. Coffman, let me ask the fact that Taliban forces have seized an area I think some 60 miles from Islamabad -- is that of great concern to you, Madam Secretary?

FLOURNOY:

It is of concern, and it's -- it's an example of the -- some of these militant groups moving out of the Northwest Territories in the FATA and into what, you know, I refer to as the Pakistani heartland.

I think the attacks against the cricketers, the attacks on Lahore -- we've seen a number of these examples, and it's part of what is contributing to a shift in the -- the level of concern and the determination to do something about this on the part of both Pakistan's leaders and ordinary Pakistani citizens.

SKELTON:

Mr. Coffman?

COFFMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question is I've seen analysis that show that 80 percent of the Pakistani military is focused on its border with India in the Kashmir area, that that is their -- that's their orientation.

One question is has that changed? And this section is what initiatives does the United States have to defuse the situation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir so that we can -- we can get them to focus in on the Taliban?

FLOURNOY:

Sir, if you don't mind, I'll refer the military laydown question to my colleague and just note that I think on the India-Pakistan question, I think part of the strategy that we laid out is very much of an intensive diplomatic engagement not only with Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also all the countries in the region, to try to reduce tensions where they exist, to enable some shifts in resources to deal with this problem of extremism on the border.

But I will let my colleagues chime in on the details.

WINNEFIELD:

Sir, I think that first to comment on the exact number of troops and whether they're shifting are not inside Pakistan, this unclassified forum would probably be unwise.

But I will say that the Pakistanis do have around 100,000 troops in the western area, and it's my sense from talking with my boss, who -- who does an awful lot of military diplomacy with his counterparts in the region, that -- that there is a desire on the part of Pakistan to move to the west, and it's just about building trust, which is clearly a diplomacy, a public diplomacy and a military diplomacy task that we are taking on, and we've been taking on.

And we believe were gradually building that trust. It's sort of two steps forward, one step back sometimes, and there are setbacks when things like Mumbai occur, which sort of tend to make people fix in place or even add troops and other pieces of military come in in the areas we would rather not see them.

But our sense is that the Pakistani military gets it, that they understand where the -- the real threat to their nation's stability exists, but they continue to be worried about their perennial concern, which is India. Yes, sir.

COFFMAN:

We've had testimony before this committee that seems to suggest that funding institutions such as the police and the frontier corps are more effective than funding the regular army in counterinsurgency.

And do we have in this funding -- do we have the ability to -- to be specific as to what institutes we fund, or are we simply giving it to the Pakistani government?

WINNEFIELD:

That's one of the great things about this authority is that it really leaves the -- the determination in our hands, in General Petraeus' hands, with Ambassador Patterson clearly having a very, very important input, along with the ODRP commander, Admiral Lefevre, as to us funneling this money specifically towards counterinsurgency capability with specific equipment that we determine what will be purchased for the Pakistanis, and also the training site as well.

FLOURNOY:

If I could just add, PCCF as a Title 10 authority is available to support the frontier corps with special operations forces. And this we would propose also expanding to the army forces that are in that border region.

But critical to a broader counterinsurgency strategy is also building police capacity, but that would be done under separate authorities and

funding streams that are in the State Department's purview through their INL program.

BOUCHER:

In the supplemental request that we presented, there was another \$65 million for the police and frontier corps -- about \$40 million specifically for the police.

And that would be added to some other programs that we have this year, and we hope next year, to really focus on building a stronger police capability in that area, because what we're -- you know, part of the counterinsurgency is to allow the government to maintain control in areas that the military has been able to clear out, and that's a very important priority for us, and I have to say for the Pakistanis as well.

COFFMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.

SKELTON:

Mr. Smith, please?

SMITH:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Following up a little on the counterinsurgency piece and our strategy there, first of all, can you talk a little bit about how we get the Pakistani military and police to the point where we feel confident in their ability to engage in counterinsurgency? How far off are we? What do you see as the main challenges there? Because that certainly seems critical.

I mean, it's the cornerstone of counterinsurgency by, through and with the local population and the local law enforcement, as opposed to our hand. And that's particularly true in Pakistan, given how the Pakistani people feel about us.

What's the path forward in terms of getting them to the level of capability they need to be effective everywhere, including the FATA and throughout the whole region?

FLOURNOY:

Let me start, and the admiral may well want to add.

I think there are many dimensions to this. The first is equipment. You know, they've focused most of their equipment acquisitions on their deterrent capacity vis-a-vis other neighbors, particularly India. They have not focused their equipping efforts on counterinsurgency. And there are some different kinds of capabilities that they need there.

But as important is training. And, you know, as we've learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, these operations require a different mindset, certainly, a different doctrine, different skill sets sometimes, different kinds of leadership ability. So, I think the training and education piece is just as important as the equipment piece, and giving them the ability to do population-focused military operations, where securing the population is really at the heart of what they do.

SMITH:

On that point -- sorry to interrupt. But how confident are we in our intelligence, or in Pakistani intelligence, on getting to know those critical populations, to know who the community leaders are, who the tribal leaders are, who we can work with?

Because, you know, certainly, that was the key in Iraq, was finding members of the local population who were willing to turn on al Qaida and the Taliban. I'm not as confident that we have that same level of knowledge, or even necessarily that we're working towards that level of knowledge in the critical areas in the lawless regions of Pakistan.

What's our plan for dealing with that?

FLOURNOY:

I mean, I think historically, I don't think that there's been a deep understanding of the sort of cultural demographics, if you will, of that area.

I think that certainly, with the Frontier Corps there, with Pakistan, the government moving more -- starting to focus more on that region, move people and resources into that region, that is starting to improve. They're gaining knowledge as they go, and so forth.

But I think that is an area where improvement could be made.

SMITH:

And is that an area where, within DOD or within our intel community, we're planning to ramp up our efforts to gather information on our side, either supplying...

FLOURNOY:

Sir, I don't -- I can't really comment on the intel side of it, because that's sort of out of my (inaudible).

SMITH:

OK. And we had testimony last week on this subject with some outside experts, including Mr. Kilcullen, who is very much an expert on these

issues. And he basically -- he made the statement that the Predator strikes were counterproductive, basically, you know, when you're going for counterinsurgency, building support with the population.

I don't think I agree with that. But certainly, there is a point at which, if we're doing counterinsurgency correctly, if we're building sufficient support within the local population to confront the problem that way, they do become counterproductive.

Is that something that you contemplated in terms of our strategy there, our unilateral actions and ramping that down to build up, you know, population support, and to build up the Frontier Corps' strength in that area?

FLOURNOY:

Sir, I don't mean to be unresponsive, but I don't feel -- I don't think it's a good thing for me to comment on in an open session, but we'd be happy to talk to you in a closed session on that.

SMITH:

Fair enough.

The last question has something to do with what Mr. Snyder was raising, and that's sort of the trust gap between Pakistan and the United States. And I guess this would be the ambassador.

Are there any things -- what are the most important things we can do to try to build up the Pakistani trust? I mean, there's been an excessive focus on our side with our lack of trust in them, which, of course, only exacerbates the other problem.

But in terms of exchange, and in terms of different things our government could do to try to build and strengthen our relationship with Pakistan, are there suggestions that you would have for us?

BOUCHER:

I guess I'd say that the most important thing is to come through on a broad program that actually does improve education and help them economically, and help them meet their energy needs, and help them build institutions of government that they need, and help the police provide security for people.

If we can help the Pakistani government deliver what its people want, then I think that builds the level of public, as well as governmental trust, between the two countries. And so, that's one of the thrusts of the program.

SMITH:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Mr. Franks?

FRANKS:

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank all of you.

I know that it's always difficult to speak to kind of theoretical questions, but related to any possibility of there being a breakdown in Pakistan's military hierarchy, and whether it be Taliban, or whoever it might be, that could either gain through a loyalty breach or through force of arms, control of some or all of Pakistan's military weapons, especially their nuclear weapons.

And I'm not sure what you can say in this venue, but, Admiral, what do you think should be our greatest concern there, our greatest focus?

WINNEFELD:

First of all, I would tell you that we believe that the Pakistani military is a very stable organization, that it's well led. General Kiyani has a very good relationship with Admiral Mullen, and vice versa. And you know that he's been over there many times over the last year. I've lost count. I think it's up to nine.

And he's gotten -- he's built a very deep sense for this organization, and an affinity for it, as well. And I think he would be the first to say that he is not concerned about the Pakistani military breaking down, per se, in the face of a Taliban influx or an assault upon the military organization itself.

So, I think that the thing we need to make sure that we continue to do, is to build the trust that we do with the Pakistani military. And we do that in many ways: through the IMET program, which is absolutely critical -- as you know, we had a 12-year gap there, and we're trying to recover from that; by coming through on what we agree to deliver to them; by also holding them accountable in private; by continuing our training programs that we do for them.

And it's really across a broad spectrum of building trust and buttressing their military to, A, be a good, strong COIN force, and B, be a very responsible actor inside Pakistan. Those are the things that we need to concentrate on the most, I think.

FRANKS:

Well, thank you, sir. And thank you for your service to this country, to

say the least.

Ms. Flournoy, I guess I'll put the question to you in a little different way, because, obviously, you have even the same goal that the admiral does, but just a different mechanism.

Secretary Clinton stated this week -- and I'm now quoting -- she said, "One of our concerns, which we've raised with the Pakistani government and military is that, if the worst, the unthinkable were to happen and this advancing Taliban, encouraged and supported by al Qaida and other extremists, were to essentially topple the government for failure to beat them back, then we would have to -- you know, they would have the keys to the nuclear arsenal of Pakistan."

And then she goes on to say, "We can't even contemplate that. We cannot, you know, let this go on any further, which is why we're pushing so hard for the Pakistanis to come together around a strategy to take their country back."

So, I guess -- and I unquote here again -- what is the department, from your perspective, doing about the "unthinkable," and specifically understanding and controlling Pakistan's nuclear stockpile? And what are we doing to contemplate and (ph) then (ph) come up with a strategy to ensure nuclear weapons don't fall into the hands of al Qaida?

It's a little twist on the question I asked the admiral, but, of course, some of the diplomatic approaches are obviously different than the military.

What are we doing there to really make sure that we're protecting this country, and essentially the world, from those weapons falling into the hands of the bad guys?

FLOURNOY:

First of all I would say, I think we have to be concerned anywhere where there is potential for instability in a nuclear-armed state, be it Pakistan or anywhere else.

I think the first thing we're doing, as Admiral Winnefeld described, is we're raising the issue. We're talking about it. We're emphasizing the importance of Pakistan's responsibility for the security of its weapons.

And as the admiral said, I think they are focused on this, and they take it very seriously. And they've actually invested a substantial amount of resources and time and effort in recent years to improve the security of their arsenal.

So, I think that it's something that we focus attention on, in our side and our thinking about the contingencies and such, but it's also something that we consistently raise in dialogue with them. And we try to ensure that we're there to work with them, to make sure that that focus remains.

But I think that it is definitely in everybody's mind, and there's no lack of attention being paid to it.

FRANKS:

Well, thank you. I guess maybe just -- thank you.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Mr. Marshall?

MARSHALL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For some time now, we have been underfunding State, State's activities generally worldwide that are important to us, as far as maintaining relationships, developing intelligence sources, et cetera, is concerned.

Frankly, funding to the State Department is an easy target politically. It's easy to cut that stuff and say that we need to be spending money here at home as opposed to abroad, for any number of different reasons.

I have suggested for some time that perhaps we think about funneling money through DOD to State Department-type activities as perhaps a mechanism to have a sustained, politically sustainable over the long haul, way of addressing long-term security needs that can only be met by developing the right kind of partnerships, the right kind of relationships worldwide.

We can't do this ourselves. We've got to have our partners, like the Pakistanis, furthering our strategic interests and securing nukes, basically, in this instance, and pursuing al Qaida generally. And I kind of see this as maybe headed in that direction, and in that sense positive.

I'm a little worried, though, that you seem to be pretty adamantly opposed to H.R. 1886, because of rigid conditionality, I think is the term that one of you used in testimony.

What are the conditions in H.R. 1886 that have been proposed, that would somehow constrain your ability to act, in a way that you find unacceptable?

Obviously, everybody would like to just have a free hand. You know, Congress, give us the money. We'll do the right thing with that money. Trust us.

Congress has the obligation, though, to make sure that money is to be spent appropriately. And so, some conditions were apparently proposed that you all don't find acceptable. And I'm just kind of curious to know what those conditions would be.

FLOURNOY:

I think that our concern was that the wording of some of the presidential certification requirements was -- to our reading, it seemed very absolute and inflexible, so that if -- you know, we were making progress, but we weren't at the end state yet, we're still not at the end state, so no assistance. We were worried about the way things were worded.

MARSHALL:

It kind of dawned on me that you...

FLOURNOY:

I think we also worried...

MARSHALL:

... have you...

FLOURNOY:

What?

MARSHALL:

If I could interrupt, have you already, in writing, let the bill's authors know what your concerns are, let (ph) the committee to which it's been assigned know what your concerns are authority (ph)...

FLOURNOY:

Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen have written a joint letter to actually -- to Chairman Skelton and to Mr. McHugh -- expressing our concerns about the bill, applauding the bill for its desire to increase assistance to Pakistan and to do so in a comprehensive and integrated way, but voicing concern about some of the specifically inflexible language on conditionality...

MARSHALL:

OK.

FLOURNOY:

... and so forth.

So, we are supportive of the spirit, but have concerns about the -- you know, how it's actually operationalized in the bill.

MARSHALL:

I see it's in writing, and so I don't need to further that line of questioning. I'll just read what you've written. I appreciate that.

We're going about this business once again taking the lead. It may be that we're the sole actor that's doing this. And consequently, it's going to be American tax dollars, American personnel executing this.

Who are we teaming up with? I mean, obviously, Pakistan's stability is of interest to NATO, to the entire world, really. And Nunn-Lugar (sic) proposes \$1.5 billion of additional dollars for the next five years. It just seems to me we ought to have a lot of international partners working with us.

FLOURNOY:

And, sir, we do. I've been -- and you may want to elaborate on this, ambassador, but, you know, we just -- at our urging, our allies, the Japanese actually just hosted a donors' conference for Pakistan in Tokyo, that raised, I think it was \$5.6 billion in international pledges. So, we are not alone in this.

Coming out of the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy review, we really sought to sort of rally others around our desire to strengthen the Pakistani government and offer various assistance efforts.

I don't know if you want to elaborate on that.

BOUCHER:

Sir, there's, I think, a lot of international concern about Pakistan. And the conference in Tokyo did over-pledge the amount that was required. The IMF had identified a shortfall of about \$4 billion that was going to be needed for balanced payments, budgetary and program support for Pakistan to get them through the economic crisis. And in Tokyo we came in for \$1 billion. The Japanese came in for \$1 billion. The Saudis were in for \$700 million. The rest of the Gulf, Emirates was \$300 plus. So \$1 billion from the Gulf. The Europeans were substantial. Some of the other countries that didn't pledge anything new like China are already fairly substantial supporters to the Pakistanis. So I think it was very broad international support. The final number, I think, the way the IMF counted it was \$5.25 billion against an original target of \$4 billion. So I think there is substantial support as well as international concern. And the two go together.

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Mr. Whitman?

WHITMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, members of the panel, for joining us today. I wanted to follow-up a little bit on a letter that was sent to Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates concerning the whole Pakistani issue. But I want to focus in on the international military education and training aspect of that.

And I also want to include in that a conversation I recently had with General Zinni, who is the former CENTCOM commander, and looking at the utility of that particular program. And it was pointed out by both the secretary and Admiral Mullen that that has been critical in the past. And they see it as being important into the future.

I wanted to get your viewpoints about will these programs be increased. Will they be enhanced? And how will we apply these to try to make sure that we have that sort of training and integration of thought process with U.S. forces and Pakistani forces?

And what we're seeing today are officers at the junior grade that haven't been through those training programs. And we're seeing now a difference between the senior officer corps and the junior officer corps. And I'm wondering what your thoughts are on where this is going, where do we look to enhance that and what utility will that have in our success there in Pakistan.

WINNEFELD:

Yes, sir, without using up too much of your time with specifics, I will tell you that Admiral Mullen is an extremely strong supporter of the IMET program. He came back from one of his trips one time really energizing the staff to pour more attention and time into buffing that program up essentially so that it would accomplish more of the things that you're describing.

I think we have 37, if I'm not mistaken, Pakistan IMET students in the United States right now. That's sort of a long-term program in the sense that they come over for an extended period of time. And in order to get more leverage and more exposure to the exact group of Pakistani officers you're speaking about, we would like to get some of them in, some of their non-commissioned officers over for shorter periods of time to expose them. And we believe we're going to start seeing some success in doing that.

And there are other programs that we're trying to ramp up in order to get that done. So I think the short answer is we understand this. We really want to get at that, particularly that tranch of officers that did not have the exposure. And it's a very important program for us.

FLOURNOY:

If I could just clarify that. The PCCF authority proposal does not at all affect IMET. In fact, we are increasing our request for IMET. PCCF will allow more operational types of training. But it's a complementary effort, not a replacement to IMET.

WHITMAN:

Very good. Thank you.

Secretary Flournoy, a question about the integration of different efforts there in Pakistan. We know that there's been a lot of talk, and we had a panel that testified before us last week suggesting that there has maybe been an over-reliance on the military strength through the U.S. intervention there in the region and that maybe we ought to look at some additional efforts along the development side or the implementation of what they call soft power. I just wanted to get your thoughts about how do you integrate both of those efforts to be successful in those regions to make sure that we, not only provide security, but we look at security in a sustainable way as it relates to the other aspects of Pakistan and its economy.

FLOURNOY:

Well, when we came up with the budget proposal that's in the '09 supplemental and then also what's in '10, we very much came at it from a holistic perspective. And I think -- so you see the bulk of the assistance on the civilian side to do things like, you know, rule of law assistance, economic development assistance, ROZ's, police, et cetera.

The military piece is a portion of that, and it comes in several flavors. But I think we do have a holistic perspective.

We in Washington have worked the interagency process very hard to get coherence. And then in the person of a combination of Ambassador Holbrook, who will be looking at a regional perspective and then Ambassador Patterson and our folks on the ground. They will be very much looking to ensure, you know, those things work together. I can tell you that the military piece is very much designed to help create the security environment in which the governance and development assistance can be more effective.

WHITMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll yield the balance of my time.

SKELTON:

Mr. Taylor, please?

TAYLOR:

Madam Secretary, thank you very much for being with us.

Admiral.

Ambassador.

I'm just curious. I do come from a part of the world where \$400 million is still a lot of money. What is it, do you think, we accomplish with that \$400 million? What is your level of confidence that at the end of the day it's made a difference, that anything has changed favorably our way? Or is this just a very small downpayment on something we're going to be asked to provide a heck of a lot of money for in the near future?

FLOURNOY:

Sir, I think that as the Pakistan leadership, both civilian and military, become more focused on this threat and more willing to deal with it, I think our ability to help them develop the capabilities to be effective is going to be that much more crucial. And so, what we're talking about is, in the PCCF, monies that can help train and equip the frontier corps, the special operations forces but now expand also the army forces in the area. And that can give them very specific capabilities, equipment and training that they lack that are essential to effective counterinsurgency.

So I think this is something that we have been working piecemeal by putting together a patchwork of authorities and trying to take little bites out of the apple. What the PCCF would allow us to do is take a much more concerted and coherent approach to getting further down this road much faster.

BOUCHER:

Sir, if I could just add to that because I've gone out to the border areas a number of times. I remember a trip I was down South in the area across from Hellman (ph) where the U.S. forces are going in working with some people from the frontier corps, going out to visit forts that we had actually build along various infiltration routes.

And talking to the commander of one of these forts, I said, do you have night vision goggles? Do you have body armor for your troops? And he said, we have a very small amount, and we switch it between different places, different forts on different nights depending on where we think the smugglers or the infiltration might occur.

And I think what this program is designed to do is just sort of make sure they can all have their body armor, that they can all get out there and do what has to be done in a more coherence and concerted way. And so, it is really trying to do this in a systematic way and not just this, like the secretary said, sort of hodge-podge that we've done before.

TAYLOR:

Mr. Ambassador, if I may. And again, I'll presume you have spent years in that area, and I haven't stepped foot in Pakistan. But from everything I read, it seems to me the Pakistani government considers India their primary threat, Taliban not to be a threat. So that runs counterproductive to what you just said. Night vision goggles to protect themselves from what, the people they don't consider a threat?

BOUCHER:

These are people that are on the infiltration routes going out of Afghanistan.

TAYLOR:

Right. But they don't consider that infiltration route to be a problem.

BOUCHER:

No, they do. It's just they're not equipped to deal with the problem. And I think what this program tries to do is equip them to deal with it.

FLOURNOY:

Sir, I think they -- what you describe is historically accurate. I think there really is a shift taking place as these attacks come into the heartland of Pakistan and as, you know, they threaten the sort of Punjabi (ph) territory and so forth. I think it's also very important to see this in the context of the fact that, you know, this is an integrated theater, this border region. And we have tens of thousands of troops on the Afghan side.

Part of preventing attacks coming from Pakistan across that border is helping the Pakistanis to be more effective in securing the border, denying that area safe haven, establishing security for the population in those areas and securing the lines of communication. That has a direct impact on our forces in Afghanistan. And now that there is greater willingness on the Pakistani side to address this, I think we have to support them in being more effective because we have very -- it will affect us in very concrete ways.

TAYLOR:

In the short time I have remaining, has anyone in the Pakistani government actually asked for this money? And if so, whom?

BOUCHER (?):

There are no -- they're not asking for the money. They're asking for us to help them with their capability.

TAYLOR:

OK. What's the name? What's the title?

BOUCHER (?):

General Petraeus is asking for, General Petraeus is asking...

TAYLOR:

No, no, in the Pakistani government, who in the Pakistani government, the name and the title, is asking for this?

BOUCHER (?):

General Keiani (ph).

WINNEFELD (?):

General Kiani (ph), sir, is asking for us to dramatically enhance his armed forces, the frontier corps, the special forces that he has and, in fact, the 11th Corps, their ability to do counterinsurgency. He has lost 1,400 killed in action along the border region. He's lost a lot more people out West than he has against India. And he knows it.

He realizes -- and the entire government is beginning to realize more and more that this is the real immediate threat. At the same time, they're still worried about India. And we would love for them to worry less about India and more about the West. But they are definitely raising their awareness of and their concern about what's happening int eh West.

TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Mr. Wilson?

WILSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here today. I agree with Dr. Snyder. I'm hopeful for Pakistan. I visited the country a number of times. And the people I've met there are very dynamic. There are 30 million, possibly 40 million middle-class people, a significant high level of education. I've had the opportunity to meet with parliamentarians on my visits there. And also we have a number of members of the parliament from Islamad come and visit here. Every time I'm really impressed at the dedication of the people that I've had the opportunity to meet.

I've also had the opportunity with the earthquake relief in 2005 to

visit with U.S. Marines who were working with the Pakistani military. And the military impressed me as very professional, very well-organized. And so, I'm just, again, hopeful. But I've also seen tragedy.

I had the opportunity sadly to have breakfast at the home with Benizir Bhutto (ph) a month and a day prior to her murder. And so, I want the best for that country.

And, Admiral Winnefeld, last week when we had a hearing, there was concern expressed that Pakistan is actually on a trajectory toward becoming a failed state.

And, General, we've been discussing this whole time. But what specifically can we do to develop a strategic partnership with the country to succeed?

Actually, any of you, if you would like to.

FLOURNOY:

I think those words are very important, strategic partnership. I think one of the things we've got to do is move out of a very transactional relationship to investment in a strategic partner and long-term program to invest in strengthening Pakistan's political and social institutions, strengthening their military and their ability to provide security within their own borders, strengthening their economy and so forth.

The stability of that country is so important to our interests and to the region, I think that we have to engage as a priority at all levels using all instruments from diplomacy to assistance to the military engagement and so forth. And I think, again, this is one of the primary insights to come out of the strategy. And I think we're trying to move out in that direction. But we do need help. We do need the tools to be effective in doing that.

WILSON:

And I've served twice as the co-chair of the India Caucus. And I've made the points to our friends of India and our ally of India that the country that would benefit most from a stable Pakistan is India.

And, Secretary Boucher, you have indicated that there have been steps towards better relationship between the two countries. What can we do to promote an improvement of relations (inaudible) two countries that it would be in their mutual interest that each be successful.

BOUCHER:

I think U.S. encouragement helps them achieve the kind of progress that they've made in the past. There are more concrete things that we do. The FBI has been involved in the follow-up to the Mumbai bombings on both the Indian side and the Pakistani side, try to get the facts out, try to get the prosecutions underway, try to help them deal with this problem, eliminate

the further threat of terrorists from these people, and move on.

And I think, frankly, the more we do to help Pakistan deal with the terrorist problem, the more we open up opportunities for India and Pakistan to cooperate.

WILSON:

And what's the status of the trade relationship between the two countries?

BOUCHER:

It's open for a slightly increasing list of goods. There is a lot of potential there, should we say. And there's probably a lot of trade that goes in and out of the gulf.

But there's, I think, very identifiable trade opportunities that both would like to take advantage of.

WILSON:

And -- and what's the status of assisting in any way education? Are we helping in any way the educational -- the schools in Pakistan?

BOUCHER:

We are. It's been -- it's been a priority for previous programs. We've done a lot of it through -- for many years through budget support. Last year, we moved this into specific projects that we were funding.

But I think, in terms of the new budgets, the new amounts that are being requested, that would be a very high priority.

WILSON:

And -- and in the past, that's been a real problem of the lack of education and extremists taking over the system. And so thank you for your service.

BOUCHER:

Exactly. If I can just say, the goal is to create good public education systems so that it draws kids out of madrassas and into the modern sector of life and society and the economy.

WILSON:

Thank you.

SKELTON:

Before I call on Mr. Kissell, let me ask, is it not true that the key to success in Afghanistan is full cooperation with Pakistan or, I should say, by Pakistan?

FLOURNOY:

I do think that cooperation with Pakistan is -- is critical to our success in Afghanistan. I think -- and I think the pressure -- you know, enabling them to help apply pressure on their side of the border in dealing with this extremist threat is absolutely crucial to success over the long haul.

SKELTON:

We don't want to even speak of Pakistan becoming a failed state, but what if it becomes fully ineffective in helping us with the Al Qaida and the Taliban and the criminal element? What about our conflict in Afghanistan under those circumstances?

FLOURNOY:

I think the more -- the more that either side of the border becomes a safe haven for Al Qaida and other extremists, the more difficult it is for us to be -- it's going to -- the more difficult it will be for us to achieve stability and security in our objectives on either side of the border.

SKELTON:

At what point do we say, "Since you're not helping us as much as you can, we will not allow a safe haven to exist"?

FLOURNOY:

Sir, I -- I don't know how to answer that question. I think it's -- I think that our job...

SKELTON:

But it's a real -- it's a real question.

FLOURNOY:

It is a real question. And I think our job is to try to avoid getting to that point. We have opportunities, I think, to -- to make that a more remote possibility, by investing in the capacity and capability of Pakistan to avoid the kind of outcome that you're describing. And I -- and I think that's the primary course of action we should be taking.

SKELTON:

Bottom line, doesn't it amount to the will of the Pakistani government to get their house in order?

FLOURNOY:

I think there's a will component and a capability component. And I think the more effective we help them to be in addressing the insurgency when they choose to address it, which they are doing right now, the more that will build political will to keep on down that path.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Mr. Kissell?

KISSELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here today.

Madam Secretary and Mr. Ambassador, recently in Afghanistan, I had a chance to visit. And numbers given to us for polling numbers, independent of the government or the military -- this came from, evidently, media -- listed the support for the Taliban in Afghanistan being below 10 percent, single-digit numbers.

How strong is the support for the Taliban, not in Pakistan in general, but in the region where they've recently been so active? How strong is the local support for these people?

And, also, I saw a news account this weekend that indicated that parts of the Pakistan government said, "Here, you can have this. Just leave us alone over here." How true was that? And how -- how -- what does that mean to us?

BOUCHER:

I think the probably support for Taliban groups in this area, in the -- in the border areas of Pakistan is probably higher than it might be in Afghanistan. They're rooted in tribes, culture, and history, and traditional opposition to governing authority.

At the same time, when you talk to people up there, you hear they want schools for their kids, they want hospitals, they want roads, they want job opportunities. And I think, if the government can deliver those, people want to side with the government.

Now, it's been dangerous to do that. There have been hundreds of tribal leaders who have stood up over the last year or two in various meetings and supported the government, trying to get rid of the Taliban, and they've been killed. The Taliban have killed at least 200, I think, last year, tribal leaders. So it's very dangerous to stand up and side with the government.

But there are substantial portions of the population that want to do that.

The idea that maybe, well, you know, if we just left them alone, they could stay out there and not cause us any trouble, that kind of goes back on and off to British days, and it's never worked. It's never worked. It didn't work for the British, hasn't worked for this government, and particularly right now, when you see these groups trying to push in to other areas and take over other parts of the country, the government, I think, is feeling that they really do have to assert governmental authority. And that's what this is all about in many ways.

KISSELL:

Admiral, we had a group last week, and I asked this question to them. As we are successful in Afghanistan, does that help or hurt Pakistan in terms of its ability to fight the Taliban? Would it be -- would it mean that the Taliban would concentrate more there? Just what would it mean?

WINNEFELD:

It's a very difficult -- we're looking through a glass darkly when we're trying to foresee the answer to that. But I think that we can safely say that, as we're successful in Afghanistan, it's possible that some of the Taliban will be driven back over the border, which the Pakistanis are very concerned about.

I would add, as a side note, that having the authority like PCCF to enable us in an agile way, enable General Petraeus to help enable the Frontier Corps, for example, and we're going to move that effort into the south eventually, where we're going to try to strengthen the -- the capability of the Frontier Corps in the south.

And the ambassador alluded earlier to how -- how really poor they are and just the basic needs, just being able to move from Point A to Point B somehow other than being on foot down there is very difficult for them.

So strengthening them down there will help Pakistan, and it will help sort of sandwich the Taliban, who might be tempted to leave Afghanistan, if they're losing in the south, as we are confident that they will be this summer and this fall, once we get additional forces in place.

On the other hand, anywhere we can beat the Taliban, we're going to beat them. And we believe that -- that we wouldn't want to let up at all in southern Afghanistan in order to prevent, you know, them from going back across the border.

That's why we want to work closely with Pakistan. We want to use authorities like PCCF to strengthen them and -- and get this job done.

KISSELL:

Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SKELTON:

Mr. Hunter?

HUNTER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the panel.

The first question kind of ties into what Chairman Skelton said in the very beginning. He just mentioned that the Taliban are 60 miles outside of the Pakistani capital.

And I've heard the words "trust," "diplomacy," "goodwill," "strategic partnership." But I haven't heard -- heard much -- maybe the admiral could answer this -- about closing with and destroying the enemy through fire and close combat, as the Marines say, which is what they need right now.

This is the -- the \$400 million isn't going to do anything for that, nothing, about what's going on now. So what's going on now? What are we doing right -- right now to help them, if you can talk about it in this venue?

WINNEFELD:

Yes, I think in the most unclassified manner of speaking, the Pakistanis, as you can read in the press, are moving into that area in an attempt to -- to eliminate the Taliban presence, the extremist presence in Buner. That's going to be a difficult job for them, partly because we believe that it's possible the insurgents are -- are trying to entrench themselves in that area, and they're going to be hard to root out, like insurgents are anywhere, as you well know.

And what we're doing is listening to the Pakistanis. If -- if they're going to ask for requests for support, we're going to listen very carefully. And, again, having authority like PCCF would help us respond to requests like that very quickly.

If they were to request -- if there were an unanticipated need that were to emerge, whether it be training or...

HUNTER:

Are you saying that you -- you can't do that now? You can't fulfill those needs without the PCCF right -- right now?

WINNEFELD:

We are less able to do it now than we can if we have the PCCF, that's correct.

HUNTER:

Not to belabor the PCCF, but we're talking about that a lot. General Petraeus said that the PCCF, in a letter that I have here, is integral to the success of enduring freedom, because it enables the commanders on the ground to do what they need to do when they need to do it.

And this is for all of you: Do you -- do you think that, if the State Department had control of this, that it would be inserting the State Department into the military chain of command, which is so integral to have quick, efficient operations on the ground?

WINNEFELD:

I wouldn't want to paint it in -- in that negative of a light. I think it's appropriate that, for an ongoing combat operation, where General Petraeus is responsible, has the authority and the responsibility on both sides of that border for whatever we can do to make that fight go the way it needs to go, a real, no-kidding, ongoing fight, that it's appropriate for the military, from ODRP to General Petraeus, up through the chain, to have the responsibility and, therefore, the resources in order to do that.

I would add that Ambassador Patterson has a very important piece of this, in that she, as the chief of mission, she understands what's going on, on the ground, and she will have a direct influence on how a PCCF would be employed. But we believe that General Petraeus should have the authority...

HUNTER:

But theoretically...

WINNEFELD:

... to use this -- these funds.

HUNTER:

Unilaterally through his chain of command?

WINNEFELD:

I think unilaterally is the wrong word.

HUNTER:

The Department of Defense down, from the president, with that military chain of command?

FLOURNOY:

The way I would say it is, that the best way to align the authorities,

responsibilities and funding is to make PCCF a title 10 authority. And I don't think there's any disagreement between the Department of Defense and Department of State on that at this time, particularly in the urgent period of the '09 supplemental.

And I think everybody recognizes that that alignment is what is needed to be operationally responsive on the ground, particularly in a battle zone. This -- the closest analogy is the kind of authorities we've provided to build the Afghan -- support the Afghan national security forces and the Iraqi security forces. We need something comparable here on both sides of the Afghan border to be effective.

HUNTER:

Mr. Ambassador?

BOUCHER:

I think I'd agree with the -- the way Undersecretary Flournoy put it. The -- the reason we approached this in this manner was to provide a -- a more direct route to have an urgent -- because of an urgent need.

I do have to say that all these programs are carried out with a lot of consultation and a lot of effort between the departments. And it comes together in the country team that Ambassador Patterson runs in Pakistan. So I don't think we feel like...

HUNTER:

When it comes to buying things like NBGs (ph) or -- or getting them ISR, there's no State Department involvement with buying magazines for AK-47s for them.

BOUCHER:

No. But there is...

HUNTER:

No, there isn't. And should there be?

BOUCHER:

No, I don't think so.

HUNTER:

OK.

BOUCHER:

There's one place to buy those, and that's with the people who -- who

make them.

HUNTER:

Thank you.

BOUCHER:

Our job, I think, is just to say, look, you know, as we approach counterinsurgency, here's how we need to work it with the -- with the government. And we all work it together.

HUNTER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, panel.

SKELTON:

Thank you.

Mr. Loebssack?

LOEBSACK:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks for the three of you for -- for the three of you for being here today. I appreciate your service and certainly what you're trying to do with respect to Pakistan.

I have a very simple question at the outset. Can you -- can you lay out -- and I guess, Madam Secretary, that it might be your job to do this -- can you lay out what -- not what our goal is in Pakistan or what our goals are, but what is our strategy as it stands today?

FLOURNOY:

I think our strategy is to invest in strengthening the civilian government of Pakistan and the institutions of Pakistan so that they can meet the basic needs of their people and render Pakistan a secure, stable country where -- that is inhospitable to insurgency and terrorism.

I mean, that's sort of -- that's -- it is about building the Pakistanis' capacity to address their own challenges. They cannot do it alone. They need our help, and they need our help urgently. And when they start to take -- when they take steps in the right direction, we should be there supporting them to the fullest extent possible.

(UNKNOWN)

And to what extent does the strategy then include components that are beyond Pakistan's borders, Pakistan's relationship to India, to other countries around Pakistan? How does that play into the strategy, if you will?

FLOURNOY:

It's very much a regional approach. We -- as the ambassador suggested, we have an important role to play in trying to help reduce tensions between Pakistan and its neighbors, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

We're about to hold another trilateral session in Washington with the president coming soon, Pakistan with India, hosting things like the donors' conference, getting regional stakeholders to realize that they have a stake in a stable and prosperous Pakistan.

(UNKNOWN)

There's mention in your testimony of -- and -- and I was not here for your -- your oral remarks. I apologize. You may have mentioned the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones. Can you elaborate on what that is? Is -- is this something similar to the PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan?

And -- and I should mention, too, that -- that Congressman Marshall and I agree that in Afghanistan they shouldn't probably be called reconstruction zones, because they start from scratch more often than not. Is -- is this what we're talking about, PRTs, but with -- but in the case of Pakistan, something different, a little bit different?

BOUCHER:

No, this is a different -- it's a regional trade benefits program for border areas of Pakistan and all of Afghanistan so that products that they make in those areas would be able to enter the United States duty free. It's to create an opportunity for businesses to set up their manufacturing, to set up their -- and basically to get kids not to pick up a gun and pick up a job or a wrench instead.

Legislation has been introduced in both the House and the Senate. The bill on the House side is sponsored by Congressman Van Hollen and I think several others. I'm sorry, I don't know the whole list. But we're hoping that the Congress will pass this legislation.

Pakistanis have been looking forward to this. And feasibility studies say there are actually real manufacturing opportunities in those border areas, opportunities to get kids jobs and get them off the -- out of the fighting business.

(UNKNOWN)

So you're talking about the border, the FATA? You're talking about the border areas with Afghanistan?

BOUCHER:
Exactly.

(UNKNOWN)

OK. And one last question on interagency coordination, that dreaded phrase that no one likes. What's happening with respect -- because we've had a number of questions already. That's one of the advantages I have of being among the last to ask a question; I get to hear a lot of my colleagues' questions and you're responses.

But it seems as though that's not been resolved yet, perhaps. The whole idea of interagency coordination, and is there any one particular individual? Or how is that working with respect to Pakistan and our strategy?

FLOURNOY:

Well, as someone who's in the middle of it, I will actually say it's working quite well. At the Washington level, you know, the Deputies Committee, the NSC process is putting a lot of time and attention -- I mean, I'm very pleased to say that, when we finished the strategy review, we didn't just put it on a shelf. We immediately turned to, OK, how are we going to get this implemented?

And that's why we're here today. This is part of getting the strategy implemented. But I said...

(UNKNOWN)

Well, is that -- it's in the NSC principally?

FLOURNOY:

At the policy, sort of grand policy oversight level, yes. But then, if you go down a level, Ambassador Holbrooke has developed a very close relationship with the ambassadors in the region, with General Petraeus as the regional COCOM. He is working this interagency coordination piece at the regional level.

And then, when you go down on the ground and you look at the -- the embassies, in Afghanistan, there's a direct coordination between the -- the ambassador and the military commander on the ground. In Pakistan, you have an interagency country team that's working these issues.

So it's happening at multiple levels. And for the most part, I've been actually quite impressed with how well it's working so far.

(UNKNOWN)

OK. Thank you.

I see my time's expired. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

SKELTON:

Mr. Langevin will be the last questioner, unless there is someone that has additional questions on our second round.

Mr. Langevin?

LANGEVIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Flournoy, and Admiral Winnefeld, and Ambassador Boucher for your testimony here today.

There have been many news reports about the troubling level of support that the Pakistani intelligence services, the ISI, is giving to Taliban forces. If part of our strategy is to end violence in the -- in the region, is to help and train the Pakistani army on how to develop and fight counterinsurgency-style warfare, how does the ISI's close relationship to Taliban forces affect the trust and ability of -- of our forces to train and support their Pakistani partners?

And furthermore, what steps is the U.S. taking to reduce the ISI's support of Taliban forces? And what challenges does the U.S. face with ending their relationship?

WINNEFELD:

The ISI is an organization like any organization, and it has a hard time changing. I can speak from personal experience in my own department that we have gone through many changes over the years that have been difficult and painful, and they're going through a difficult and painful change right now.

And I believe that they're going to succeed. I think we're seeing them succeed. We've -- General Kiyani brought in a new ISI chief, General Pasha, who has quickly replaced all except two of his two-star subordinates inside the ISI headquarters. And we're starting to see the changes filter down throughout that organization.

Now, does that mean that they have completely changed? No, we do not necessarily believe that. It's going to take time for change to penetrate all of the different corners of that organization.

But our sense from them is that they understand the need to change, the need to make a strategic shift away from some of their past policies, and we are -- are confident that they're going to move in the right direction, never as fast as anybody would ever want them to, but -- but we believe

that, through the personal diplomacy that we've experienced between Admiral Mullen and General Kiyani, and other interchanges between the U.S. government and the Pakistani government, that they're going to get moving in the right direction.

LANGEVIN:

Thank you.

Now, there are reports today -- we've discussed this already -- that Pakistan is planning major troop movements from its borders with India to help fight the militants near the border with -- with Pakistan. And while this, of course, is welcome, the Pakistani army still remains really unprepared to fight a counterinsurgency-style war, and -- and throwing people at the problem isn't going to necessarily make it go away.

So the question I have is, does this move reflect a broader shift in the Pakistani military organization towards a more counterinsurgency-focused mission? And also, what are we planning on doing beyond helping train -- to help Pakistan bring a whole government approach to its -- its security efforts?

FLOURNOY:

I think this is exactly the kind of moment that makes the argument for the PCCF (ph) authority, in that it's a specific situation where we're getting specific requests for assistance and we would like to be able to respond urgently, quickly to say, yes, here's the equipment, training, whatever you need to be more effective.

Part of the PCCF (ph) authority is specifically designed to help train the Pakistanis in the civil military aspects of counterinsurgency, not just the clear piece, but to hold and build. How do you -- what do you actually need to do with and for the population to actually consolidate security gains once you've cleared an area to -- to protect the population, to get them on your side so that the insurgents don't return to that area?

That is very much part of what this program would enable us to do. You know, so I think the particular situation now is very much an argument for trying to get this kind of program in place.

LANGEVIN:

Thank you.

That's all the questions I had. I'm -- I'm hopeful that -- that we can provide the right support to make these things reach fruition as we -- as we intended.

I think it -- ironically, the -- the Taliban moving into Buner was -- was a real wake-up call to the -- to the Pakistani government and also the population as a whole. And we may have seen -- well, hopefully, there's a

shift that will help some of our efforts in coordination with the Pakistani government to be -- to be successful in turning this thing around and undermine the Taliban.

So thank you very much for your testimony.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

SKELTON:

Thank you very much.

Is there any further question?

If not, for the panel, we thank you for being with us, for your excellent testimony. We look forward to seeing you again.

CQ Transcriptions, April 29, 2009

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