

U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan Implications for the U.S. and its Allies

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Abstract: The recently released *White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan* reiterates the U.S. security goal to “disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Afghanistan or Afghanistan.” The White Paper addresses the importance of Pakistan to providing security and stability to Afghanistan, the need for civil-military cooperation and state-building activities in a counterinsurgency strategy, and suggests greater international involvement in both countries. U.S. allies have praised the broad focus and objectives of the White Paper, but serious concerns remain in terms of their achievement. This paper will analyze the wide-ranging implications of the new U.S. strategy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan and pose several critiques that should be addressed prior to implementation in order to ensure that the goal of defeating al Qaeda is met.

Introduction

More than seven years after U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and five years after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Obama Administration officially released its ‘White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan’ on March 27, 2009. In his announcement, President Obama indicated that the new strategy has a “clear and focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future.”¹ The new strategy emphasizes five objectives focusing on security and governance for both Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as a role for the international community. These are 1) disrupting terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan; 2) promoting a more capable, accountable and effective government in Afghanistan; 3) developing increasingly self-reliant Afghan security forces; 4) enhancing civilian control and economic development in Pakistan and; 5) involving the international community in achieving these objectives, with a leadership role for the United Nations.² This paper will compare the new policy and its objectives to prior statements and actions by the Bush Administration, outline the implications of the White Paper for the U.S. and its allies, and critique the weaknesses of the strategy which should be addressed in order to ensure that the goal of defeating al Qaeda is met.

The release of the new strategy by the Obama Administration followed four other major reviews implemented by the outgoing Bush Administration in September 2008. According to

¹ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

² White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

media reports, the Bush reviews exposed Administration differences over American troop levels, how billions of aid dollars are spent, and how to cope with a deteriorating security situation in neighboring Pakistan.³ Specifically, the final Bush reviews were designed to address a significant decrease in security in Afghanistan while incorporating the security and economic conditions in neighboring Pakistan. Several of these strategies were presented to Obama when he took office, including one by General David Petraeus and another by Lieutenant General Douglas Lute. Allegedly, neither of these reviews was satisfactory and Obama commissioned Bruce Riedel of the Brookings Institution to conduct the current review.⁴ As the results of the prior strategies are classified, it is difficult to analyze them with respect to the new White Paper. Some similarities and differences with the new strategy, however, can be identified by using prior Bush Administration objectives and actions as the basis for comparison.

The primary similarities between the two Administrations are the focus on al Qaeda as the primary target, the need to deny al Qaeda and their supporters “safe havens,” and the application of a military “surge” to counter a rise in insurgent violence. In 2001, President Bush first announced that the air strikes in Afghanistan were “designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime.”⁵ Bush reiterated the importance of the al Qaeda threat throughout his two terms as U.S. President, including warning of future attacks and urging “the United States to deny [al Qaeda]

³ Schmitt, Eric and Shanker, Thom (23 September 2008). “Bush Administration Reviews Its Afghanistan Policy, Exposing Points of Contention”, *New York Times*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/washington/23policy.html?ref=world>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

⁴ Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer and Brookings fellow, officially chaired the review along with co-chairs Richard Holbrooke, Obama's newly named special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Michele Flournoy

⁵ 09 October 2001. “President notifies Congress about troop deployment; U.S. claims air supremacy over Afghanistan,” *CNN*. <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/10/09/ret.attack.pentagon/index.html>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

safe haven,”⁶ such as had been found in Afghanistan. The White Paper correspondingly lists the core goal of the new strategy as to “disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan,”⁷ and to “eventually destroy extremists and their safe havens within both nations [Afghanistan and Pakistan].”⁸

In terms of counterinsurgency strategy, an argument can be made that the new White Paper includes lessons learned from Bush Administration decisions for Iraq. Following a significant increase in violence in 2006-2007, the Bush Administration applied a “surge” of U.S. troops to Baghdad and Anbar, the most dangerous provinces, improved Iraqi abilities to counter al Qaeda in Iraq,⁹ and doubled the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq from 10 to 20 in a “civilian surge” of experts “with specialties like economics, agronomy, communications, and rule of law.”¹⁰ Similarly, the new Obama strategy includes increasing U.S. troops in Afghanistan, improving the ability of the Afghan National Security Forces to conduct counterinsurgency and counterterror operations and increasing the amount of coalition civilian personnel,¹¹ to “help the Afghan government serve its people and develop an economy that isn't dominated by illicit

⁶ Rhem, Kathleen. (10 March 2006). “Bush: Al Qaeda Still Biggest Threat Facing United States Today, *American Forces Press Service*, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15214> (Last accessed 21 April 2009)

⁷ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ In addition to efforts to bolster the size and abilities of the Iraq Security Forces, the U.S. reached out to unofficial groups including a coalition of Sunni tribes in Anbar province, commonly referred to as the Anbar Awakening, and developed both the Sons of Iraq and Daughters of Iraq. All are armed civilian groups credited with improving security in Iraq. Efforts are being made to integrate these groups into the official structures of the Iraqi Security Forces.

¹⁰ LaFranchi, Howard, (12 June 2007). “US civilians drive Iraq's other surge; Teams of US experts in law and management are trying to develop governance by the rule of law in northern Iraq,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0612/p01s02-woiq.html> (last accessed 21 April 2009)

¹¹ Like Iraq, the figures for U.S. civilian personnel in Afghanistan are expected to be significantly lower than the deployed military personnel. The Iraq surge deployed approximately 28,000 military personnel and 250 civilians, while the new Afghanistan deployments are anticipated to include approximately 21,000 military personnel and 400-500 civilians. Source: Ibid.

drugs.”¹² The combination of the original Bush Administration objectives as well as the incorporation of tactics applied in Iraq has led some observers to refer to Obama’s new strategy as a ‘new old’ strategy, while Bobby Ghosh at *TIME* declared that the “Obama Afghanistan Plan Breaks Old Ground”¹³

Despite these similarities, there are new elements in the Obama strategy, specifically the incorporation of Pakistan and the broad approach to defeating al Qaeda in both countries. While the Bush Administration identified the importance of Pakistan for Afghan security in the strategy reviews initiated at the end of 2008,¹⁴ the new Obama strategy focuses more intensively on Pakistan under the concept of “two countries but one challenge.”¹⁵ Pakistan also receives near-equal treatment with Afghanistan in the fifteen recommendations listed in the White Paper. The new strategy promotes improved governance and economic development for both Afghanistan and Pakistan along with increased capacity for counterinsurgency operations and a request for additional international support from allies.

In response to prior allied critiques that U.S. efforts were focused too heavily on security and military efforts without fully incorporating and coordinating with civilian efforts, the new strategy clearly states that the five key objectives will require “a realization that all elements of international power – diplomatic, informational, military and economic – must be brought to

¹² Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

¹³ Ghosh, Bobby (28 March 2009). ‘Obama Afghanistan Plan Breaks Old Ground’, *TIME*. <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1888257,00.html>. (Last accessed, 06 April 2009)

¹⁴ Schmitt, Eric and Shanker, Thom (23 September 2008). “Bush Administration Reviews Its Afghanistan Policy, Exposing Points of Contention”, *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/washington/23policy.html?ref=world>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

¹⁵ White House Briefing Room, What’s New in the Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Whats-New-in-the-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/ (last accessed 21 April 2009)

bear,”¹⁶ in what may be termed a comprehensive approach. Prior U.S. government efforts in Afghanistan were also criticized domestically for the failure to identify a ‘comprehensive solution.’ A February 2009 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the Afghanistan and Pakistan border areas referenced the need to develop a plan which “incorporate[s] all elements of national power – diplomatic, military, intelligence, development assistance, economic, and law enforcement support – called for in the Intelligence Reform Act, the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 and previous GAO recommendations.”¹⁷ The same GAO study further criticized the U.S. for not addressing earlier critiques leveled by the GAO in 2008¹⁸ that claimed the U.S. had not “met its national security goals to destroy terrorist threats and close the safe haven in Pakistan’s [Federally Administered Tribal Areas] FATA,... [or developed] a comprehensive plan that integrated the combined capabilities of Defense, State, USAID, the intelligence community, and others.”¹⁹ An additional recommendation from 2008 and repeated in the 2009 report was the need for increased oversight and accountability over U.S. funds and efforts in Pakistan, specifically “over Pakistan’s reimbursement claims for Coalition Support Funds.”²⁰ The new strategy appears to have taken these international and domestic concerns into account, emphasizing the need to coordinate all

¹⁶ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed, 06 April 2009)

¹⁷ Government Accountability Office, ‘Securing, Stabilizing, and Developing Pakistan’s border area with Afghanistan’, GAO-09-263SP (Washington DC: February 2009).

¹⁸ See GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Increased Oversight and Accountability Needed over Pakistan Reimbursement Claims for Coalition Support Funds*, GAO-08-806 (Washington, D.C.: June 24, 2008); *Combating Terrorism: U.S. Oversight of Pakistan Reimbursement Claims for Coalition Support Funds*, GAO-08-932T (Washington, D.C.: June 24, 2008); *Combating Terrorism: U.S. Efforts to Address the Terrorist Threat in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas Require a Comprehensive Plan and Continued Oversight*, GAO-08-820T (Washington, D.C.: May 20, 2008); *Preliminary Observations on the Use and Oversight of U.S. Coalition Support Funds Provided to Pakistan*, GAO-08-735R (Washington, D.C.: May 6, 2008); *Combating Terrorism: The United States Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, GAO-08-622 (Washington, D.C.: April 17, 2008)

¹⁹ Government Accountability Office, ‘Securing, Stabilizing, and Developing Pakistan’s border area with Afghanistan’, GAO-09-263SP (Washington DC: February 2009).

²⁰ Ibid.

sources of national power and to address the allocation and use of resources dedicated to Afghanistan and Pakistan so that they are “aligned with our core goals and objectives. This will involve assistance that is geared towards the strengthening of government capacity and the message that assistance will be limited without the achievement of results.”²¹

As a result of this interest in a broad strategy, fifteen recommendations (*Annex I*) were outlined in the White Paper in order to produce the desired end state: “the removal of al Qaeda’s sanctuary, effective democratic government control in Pakistan, and a self-reliant Afghanistan that will enable a withdrawal of combat forces while sustaining our commitment to political and economic development.”²² The recommendations support the five objectives of improving security and governance in Afghanistan and Pakistan by engaging the international community, but also address the importance of bolstering cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Implications for the U.S.

Four implications for the U.S. can be derived from this new strategy: 1) Increased U.S. assistance and resources will be directed towards Afghanistan and Pakistan; 2) Civil-military coordination will be emphasized amongst U.S. agencies involved in supplying assistance and resources; 3) Additional commitments will be undertaken with regards to training and developing the ANSF; and 4) U.S. diplomatic efforts will be increased in order to garner international support to achieve the U.S. objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Increased U.S. involvement

²¹ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed, 06 April 2009)

²² Ibid.

The new policy will require first and foremost an increase of U.S. resources directed towards Afghanistan, both in terms of military and civilian personnel, but also in terms of increased financial support and diplomatic efforts to engage Afghanistan's neighbors and the international community. Obama has already ordered the deployment of 17,000 additional U.S. troops, as requested by General McKiernan who is dual-hatted as Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the U.S. Forces Afghanistan (U.S.FOR-A). The additional troops will support the fighting in southern and eastern Afghanistan, including the border with Pakistan. In spring 2009 Obama plans to deploy 4,000 trainers for the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, which together comprise the Afghan National Security Forces, (ANSF). The trainers and additional troops will mean an increase of 21,000 U.S. military personnel in country²³. These troops will be supported by later deployments so that the U.S. military presence will increase from the current figures of around 31,000-33,000 to about 68,000 by the fall of 2009. The troop increase also includes key tactical support, such as strategic airlift. Two days after the White Paper release, *Deutsche Welle* reported that of the newly deployed troops, a U.S. combat aviation brigade of 3500 soldiers will arrive in the next six weeks with more than 100 helicopters, which will double the number of U.S. helicopters currently in the country. The increase in helicopters is particularly important for transporting troops and materiel to remote regions, and will be followed by a further 8000 U.S. Marines with another 50 helicopters during the next two months.²⁴ The plans for additional troops and airpower have already required preparations in Afghanistan, where civil engineers have been

²³ It is unclear whether the trainers will be exclusively U.S. military personnel or will include contractors.

²⁴ (29 March 2009). "EU Praises Obama on Afghanistan, Pledges Civilian Surge", *Deutsche Welle*. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4131025,00.html>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

deployed “to help construct about a half-dozen field bases, including dirt runways for C-130 and C-17 Globemaster transports, in support of the impending influx of soldiers and Marines.”²⁵

Improved Civil-Military Coordination

Secondly, The White Paper also specifically calls for “better civil-military coordination by U.S. agencies [and] a significant increase of civilian resources.” Obama stated he is “ordering a substantial increase in our civilians on the ground”²⁶ to boost reconstruction and development programs. While exact numbers are yet to be determined, Defense Undersecretary Michele Flournoy testified that she anticipates “an initial request from the embassy on the order of 4 (hundred) to 500, but...we expect to yield a requirement of several thousand,”²⁷ of which many are likely to be contractors due to a lack of available government staff, such as employees of USAID or the State Department. In addition to shouldering the costs of the additional military and civilian deployments, Obama has included in his budget funding for what he terms “indispensable investments in our State Department and foreign assistance programs,”²⁸ in order to build security through promoting development. The request to hire an additional 700 Foreign Service Officers in 2009 for the State Department²⁹ has been approved and Obama has urged Congress to pass two upcoming bi-partisan bills; one to provide Pakistan with \$1.5 billion in

²⁵ Rolfsen, Bruce (16 March 2009). “Civil engineers prepare for Afghanistan surge”, *Air Force Times*. http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/03/airforce_civil_engineer_031609w/ (last accessed 22 April 2009)

²⁶ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

²⁷ Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee (02 April 2009). Subject: New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Developments in U.S. Central Command and Special Operations Command; Chaired by Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO).

²⁸ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

²⁹ Losey, Stephen (25 March 2008). Federal Times, “State grapples with vacancies in midlevel Foreign Service posts,” *Federal Times*. <http://www.federaltimes.com/index.php?S=3444490>, (last accessed 22 April 2009).

direct support every year over the next five years³⁰, the other to develop economic opportunities in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan.³¹ Despite these requests to increase funds, Obama indicated that additional oversight of spending would be enforced in order to ensure an end to wasteful and unaccountable spending. New funding would therefore be required for a strong Inspector General at both the State Department and U.S.AID, and robust funding for the special Inspector Generals for Afghan Reconstruction.

Expand the Afghan National Security Forces

The focus on strategy specifically refers to training and developing the ANSF in order to allow a transfer of authority of security responsibilities from U.S. and coalition forces to the ANSF, in what is being termed the ‘Afghanization’ of the security efforts. In his statement on the White Paper, Obama said, “we will shift the emphasis of our mission to training and increasing the size of Afghan security forces, so that they can eventually take the lead in securing their country.”³² The increase of 17,000 troops will enable more U.S.-Afghan partnering on counterinsurgency operations, as part of Obama’s goal to pair every American unit in Afghanistan with an Afghan unit. The 4,000 additional trainers will specifically focus on ramping up ANSF to meet the near-term targets outlined in the White Paper.³³

Diplomatic Outreach

U.S. diplomatic efforts will also be involved in the new strategy. The standing, trilateral dialogue among the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan will be continued and broadened

³⁰The bill co-sponsored by John Kerry and Richard Lugar will focus on building schools and roads and hospitals, and strengthen Pakistan’s democracy.

³¹ The second, co-sponsored by Maria Cantwell, Chris Van Hollen and Peter Hoekstra that creates opportunity zones in the border regions to develop the economy and bring hope to places plagued with violence.

³² Obama, Barack, “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, (27 March 2009). The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

³³ Goals: Build/train an Afghan army of 134,000 and a police force of 82,000 by 2011

with regular meetings on shared strategic issues such as intelligence sharing and military cooperation.³⁴ Obama also declared his intent to marshal international support for Afghanistan and Pakistan and to work with international organizations to help Pakistan weather the economic crisis.³⁵ Accordingly, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited The Hague from March 31-April 4, 2009 to attend an International Conference on Afghanistan and promote the new strategy. The discussions at The Hague resulted more in statements of support for U.S. efforts rather than specific commitments, which were outlined in greater detail following the April 4, 2009 NATO summit. Iran, however, pledged to contribute to counternarcotics efforts and Germany announced plans to “spend another €50 million (\$66 million) on equipping Afghanistan's armed forces and... [to] help improve the Afghan civilian air surveillance.”³⁶

Obama also continues to urge “an important leadership role for the United Nations” to address the objectives for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Specifically, Obama said he supports the UN mandate “to coordinate international action and assistance, and to strengthen Afghan institutions.”³⁷ The White Paper suggests the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) “take the lead in exploring ways that donors could systematically share the burden of

³⁴ The first trilateral U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan meeting was held February 24-26, 2009 with the purpose of exchanging views on the strategic issues discussed in the White Paper. The next meeting is reportedly scheduled for May 05-07, 2009. (Remarks of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, February 26, 2009 at the *Trilateral Meeting with Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta and Pakistan Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi.*)

³⁵ Obama, Barack, “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, (27 March 2009). The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

³⁶ Gebauer, Matthias, (01 April 2009). “More Bark than Bite; Afghanistan Conference Yields Few Concrete Results,” *Der Spiegel*. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,616736,00.html> (last accessed 22 April 2009)

³⁷ Obama, Barack, “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, (27 March 2009). The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

building Afghan capacity and providing civilian expertise.”³⁸ This includes the formation of a new Contact Group for Afghanistan and Pakistan bringing together NATO allies and other partners, but also to expand international involvement by the Central Asian states, the Gulf nations and Iran; Russia, India and China. As Obama stated on March 27, “none of these nations benefit from a base for al Qaeda terrorists, and a region that descends into chaos. All have a stake in the promise of lasting peace and security and development.”³⁹

Implications for U.S. allies

One of the five objectives outlined in the White Paper lists the importance of “involving the international community to actively assist in addressing [the] objectives for Afghanistan and Pakistan.”⁴⁰ In order to gain this support, the Obama Administration conducted a media blitz of European capitals to promote the new White Paper within one week of its release to the media. President Obama attended a NATO summit on April 04, 2009, while Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attended a conference on Afghanistan in The Hague, 31-April 4, 2009 where outreach efforts were extended to include regional actors such as Iran and Russia. While not explicitly linked to the new U.S. strategy, a meeting of the ‘Friends of Democratic Pakistan’ preceded the 2009 Pakistan Donors Conference “where development partners welcomed and took into account the government’s commitment to address security concerns and noted the need for strong

³⁸ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

³⁹ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

⁴⁰ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

regional cooperation to address common issues.”⁴¹ Although the U.S. has worked hard to raise international support for the new strategy, the White Paper cautions “there are no quick fixes to achieve U.S. national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan,”⁴² indicating it is likely the U.S. will request additional international assistance for years to come.

International support is necessary to achieving five of the fifteen recommendations outlined in the new strategy: 1) Resourcing and prioritizing civilian assistance in Afghanistan; 2) expanding the Afghan National Security Forces: Army and Police; 3) engaging the Afghan government and bolstering its legitimacy; 4) breaking the link between narcotics and the insurgency and; 5) strengthening Pakistani government capacity. These recommendations reflect the U.S. commitment to incorporate civilian efforts along with military operations and to identify opportunities for international involvement in both military and non-military forms. Military aid could include “combat forces, trainers and mentors, strategic lift, and equipment,”⁴³ while non-military aid requests range from economic or financial support of civilian efforts in Afghanistan, to an increase in activities by the UN, “other international organizations, and non-governmental organizations.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, the White Paper proposes that diplomatic aid could be brought to bear on regional security efforts and specifically to “promote the development of regional organizations that focus on economic and security cooperation.”⁴⁵

As prior requests from NATO allies for additional military contributions or a removal of the caveats limiting troop movement or activities have been rebuffed, Obama Administration

⁴¹ (23, April 2009), “Conference conveys strong int’l financial support: MoF”, *Daily Times*. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C04%5C23%5Cstory_23-4-2009_pg5_13 (last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁴² White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

officials have indicated a greater interest in finding alternative opportunities for allied commitments, as reflected by the range of options above. While military support would be greatly welcomed, Obama announced that, “from our partners and NATO allies, we will seek not simply troops, but rather clearly defined capabilities: supporting the Afghan elections, training Afghan security forces, a greater civilian commitment to the Afghan people.”⁴⁶ Defense Undersecretary Michele Flournoy testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that if allies do not wish to provide troops, they can contribute “trainers for the army, trainers for the police, contributions to the (ANSF) trust fund, the law and order trust fund, sending civilian advisers, [or] civilian assistants.”⁴⁷

International Response

The international community initially responded well to the release of the White Paper, and the U.S. received commendation from European states, as well as from Afghan and Pakistani leaders. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated that the new U.S. strategy “is a lot closer to the European perception of what our presence is,”⁴⁸ while French foreign ministry spokesman Eric Chevallier indicated that the global strategy was, “exactly what France has been calling for over the last months.”⁴⁹ European officials also praised the inclusion of Pakistan in the White Paper, as well as the more comprehensive approach emphasizing civil-military cooperation. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband told reporters “the key was to strike ‘the

⁴⁶ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009).

⁴⁷ Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee (01 April 2009). Subject: U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan; Chaired by Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI).

⁴⁸ (27 March 2009). “EXCERPTS-New U.S. strategy on Afghanistan, Pakistan”, *Reuters*. <http://in.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idINSP42709520090327?pageNumber=3&virtualBrandChannel=0&sp=tr>. (Last Accessed 06 April 2009).

⁴⁹ (28 March 2009). “French Plan for Armed EU Police in Afghanistan Raises Concerns”, *Deutsche Welle*. http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4134924,00.htmlhttp://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7969636.stm. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

right balance between military and civilian missions,”⁵⁰ in a nod to the inclusion of civilian opportunities, such as economic development and effective governance. The positive reception of the new strategy has resulted in pledges of support for Afghanistan and Pakistan, although with an emphasis on non-military contributions. While “European officials said it was unlikely they would significantly bolster their military presence in Afghanistan, they were sharpening their focus on Pakistan — part of a shift toward a more regional approach.”⁵¹

Military Assistance

Although NATO leaders resisted calls for combat troops, the April 04, 2009 summit did produce results. A press release on the same day stated that NATO would support current efforts and initiatives to develop the Afghan National Army and Police, assist the electoral process by providing additional forces for security, expand the National Army Trust Fund both in size and scope⁵², and support the development of the Government of Afghanistan, including improving NATO-Afghanistan relations, Afghanistan-Pakistan relations and increasing the support of the international community.⁵³ Specifically, these declarations translate to the establishment of a NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) within ISAF which would include mentoring for the Afghan National Police and oversight of higher level training for the Afghan National Army. The police mission would work in close coordination with the International Police Coordination Board to ensure nationwide, standardized training while the Afghan National Army

⁵⁰ Kole, William, (27 March 2009). “EU to send Afghanistan more cash, police trainers,” *Associated Press*. http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hZ-tpAmC97YX1J1q45nqGwiA_BJAD976HALO0, (last accessed April 2009)

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² To be expanded by \$100 million and its role will be broadened to cover more Afghan military expenditures

⁵³ (04 April 2009). “Summit Declaration on Afghanistan”, NATO Press Release, Strasbourg/Kehl. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52836.htm?mode=pressrelease. (Last accessed, 06 April 2009)

would receive 70 additional European military training teams to accompany Afghan army units.⁵⁴

NATO allies also agreed to send up to 5,000 more military trainers and police to Afghanistan, including forces to help protect candidates and voters at upcoming elections.⁵⁵ Approximately 3,000 of these troops would be sent on short-term deployments to provide elections security, while the remaining 1,400-2,000 would provide training for the Afghan National Army. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said that, of the pledged troops, 900 new troops would come from Britain, 600 from Germany and 600 from Spain. Italy and France were committing fresh forces and a large number of countries have announced that they will provide additional support, including Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Poland, Turkey, Croatia and Germany.⁵⁶ Several states have also endorsed France's suggestion for a 300-member European Gendarmerie Force that would provide training and mentoring of Afghan National Police. Franco Frattini, Italy's foreign minister said Italy was ready to send Carabinieri officers to train Afghan police and to deploy up to 250 troops but those forces would also stay only for a few months to help secure the country ahead of summer presidential elections.⁵⁷

Non-Military Assistance

NATO leaders also said they expect to hold more talks with Iran about future cooperation, which bolsters U.S. interests in involving Afghanistan and Pakistan's neighbors in

⁵⁴ Cody, Edward (05 April 2009). "NATO Backs Obama's Afghan Plan but Pledges Few New Troops", *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/04/AR2009040402594.html>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

⁵⁵ Raum, Tom (04 April 2009). "Obama hails 5,000 more NATO forces for Afghanistan", *Associated Press*. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090404/ap_on_go_pr_wh/eu_obama. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

⁵⁶ (04 April 2009). "Extra Nato troops for Afghan poll", *BBC*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7982821.stm>, (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

⁵⁷ Kole, William, (27 March 2009). "EU to send Afghanistan more cash, police trainers," *Associated Press*. http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hZ-tpAmC97YX1J1q45nqGwiA_BJAD976HALO0, (last accessed April 2009)

regional security efforts. Following U.S. outreach at The Hague conference, Iran announced that, despite its dislike of the “ineffective” foreign forces in Afghanistan, it was “fully prepared” to help fight drugs-trafficking and rebuild Afghanistan, while Russian representatives also indicated they could do more to assist coalition efforts.⁵⁸ The EU, meanwhile, recently announced plans to send observers, if security permits, to observe local and presidential elections, as well as to increase its contingent of police trainers from 250 to 400 this summer. EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner also said the EU would grant additional financial aid to Afghanistan, and “we will certainly contribute to a civilian surge, having some more funds available.”⁵⁹ Since 2002, the EU has given about euro1.3 billion (\$1.7 billion) to Afghanistan, and 610 million euros (\$811 million) has been slated for the 2007-2010 period. The EU also pledged 490 million euros (640 million dollars) to Pakistan at the April 17, 2009 Pakistan Donors Conference, where representatives from 31 countries and 18 international organizations pledged over \$5 billion to assist Pakistan with economic development. While the top donors included the U.S., Japan, and Saudi Arabia,⁶⁰ Iran and China also contributed funds, reflecting a multilateral interest and commitment to improving conditions in Pakistan.

In simple terms, the inclusion of civilian efforts and Pakistan into the U.S. strategy has found supporters amongst U.S. partners and resulted in a reassertion of international commitments to Afghanistan. However, in what could be considered a portent sign for coalition efforts in Afghanistan, U.S. partners remain unwilling to dramatically increase their military

⁵⁸ (02 April 2009). “Afghanistan and Pakistan; More troops and money; But the same old problems”, *Economist*. http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13415301. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

⁵⁹ (29 March 2009). “EU Praises Obama on Afghanistan, Pledges Civilian Surge”, *Deutsche Welle*. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4131025,00.html>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

⁶⁰ Japan pledged one billion dollars over two years and Saudi Arabia pledged 700 million dollars. The U.S. also pledged one billion dollars as a ‘down payment’ on a previously stated commitment to Pakistan ; (17 April 2009). “Donors pledge more than five billion dollars to Pakistan,” *RFI*. http://www.rfi.fr/actuen/articles/112/article_3501.asp, (Last accessed 22 April 2009).

deployments, and the new strategy is, at its core, a security strategy requiring strong military components. NATO partners have agreed to some short-term deployments but the response from the international community has largely been to provide funding to support civilian objectives. While the civilian and military objectives are inextricably linked, the U.S. and a few partners are handling the bulk of the military operations in Afghanistan, and the overall burden on the U.S. military will likely increase in the long-run if the security situations in both Afghanistan and Pakistan do not soon improve.

Implications for Afghanistan

The White Paper lists the objectives for Afghanistan as disrupting terrorist networks, “promoting a more capable, accountable and effective government”, and “developing increasingly self-reliant Afghan security forces.”⁶¹ As a result of these objectives, the recommendations for Afghanistan are specifically focused on increasing the size of the Afghan National Army and Police, involving local government in capacity building efforts, bolstering the legitimacy of the of the central government and improving its ability to “integrate reconcilable insurgents” as well as its ability to cooperate with Pakistan. With these stated goals, Afghanistan gets renewed attention from the U.S. and international community including increased troops, trainers, civilian support and financial aid. Representatives from Afghanistan participated in a meeting to discuss the strategic review prior to its release, but Afghan President Hamid Karzai officially praised the new strategy, indicating, “This is better than we were expecting, as a matter of fact... [The strategy] has our full support and backing... and we'll be

⁶¹ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

working very, very closely with the U.S. government to prepare for and to work on implementing all that was laid out in this strategy.”⁶²

The new strategy implies that the Afghan government will need to work with the U.S. in two key areas. The first is to increase the size and capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces in order to transfer authority from coalition to Afghan control. The second is to improve governance in Afghanistan, ranging from addressing corruption to engaging moderate Taliban. As U.S. funding and resources will be directed to both projects, these efforts will also require improved oversight, such as regular evaluations of the training programs and an increased role for Special Inspector Generals to monitor spending.

Develop the Afghan National Security Forces

As previously stated, the new U.S. strategy plans to double the size of the Afghan army to 134,000 by 2011, reserving the right to conduct future reviews and increases if necessary. The Afghan police, which have frequently been criticized for poor performance, are to be increased to 82,000 and re-evaluated to ensure they meet better standards. U.S. troops are to be paired with Afghan troops when conducting operations, and additional trainers are to be sent to help meet the current targets. The increase in both U.S. and Afghan troops are expected to result in increased counterinsurgency operations in south and east Afghanistan, particularly along the Afghan-Pakistan border, as well as an increase in counternarcotics efforts.

Improve Governance Capabilities

As part of its efforts to promote a more capable and effective government, Obama stated that the U.S. “will seek a new compact with the Afghan government that cracks down on corrupt

⁶² (28 March 2009). “Afghan leader welcomes US review”, *BBC*.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7969636.stm. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

behavior, and sets clear benchmarks, clear metrics for international assistance so that it is used to provide for the needs of the Afghan people.”⁶³ In addition to providing clear support for the Afghan government, another aspect of improving Afghan governance includes reaching out to people “who've taken up arms because of coercion, or simply for a price.”⁶⁴ The new U.S. strategy promotes implementing a reconciliation process in each province to work with local leaders, the Afghan government, and international partners to end the support for the Taliban and reinforce the support and legitimacy of the Afghan government.

Provide Accountability

Obama’s request for a strong Inspector General at both the State Department and U.S.AID, and robust funding for the special Inspector Generals for Afghan Reconstruction imply a clear commitment for the U.S. to better monitor spending in Afghanistan, “measure progress and hold ourselves accountable. We’ll consistently assess our efforts to train Afghan security forces and our progress in combating insurgents.”⁶⁵ These commitments follow criticisms leveled at the U.S., that aid monies for projects in Afghanistan have been spent with insufficient supervision, (and thus with limited effectiveness) and that the Afghan security forces are unable to provide domestic security. Both of these failures have hampered the ability of the U.S. to achieve its security goals and exit Afghanistan. As a result, the commitment to improved oversight of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan indicate an emphasis not only on ensuring that aid is appropriately used, but that the training programs and strategies effectively prepare the government of Afghanistan and its security forces to take ownership of the conflict. Coalition forces will be unlikely to leave Afghanistan until the U.S. and its allies are confident that the

⁶³ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

central government and the ANSF can maintain internal control and prevent the use of Afghan territory as staging grounds for global terror attacks. Increased accountability measures should identify waste, improve the effectiveness of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and speed the U.S. transfer of security operations to the purview of the ANSF.

Implications for Pakistan

The inclusion of Pakistan in the new strategy indicates the Obama Administration's recognition of the importance of Pakistan in disrupting, dismantling and defeating al Qaeda. In order to combat terror networks and encourage Pakistani economic development, the U.S. has pledged to provide additional aid to Pakistan as well as to renew the U.S.-Pakistani relationship and repair the 'trust deficit' between the two states. White Paper recommendations for Pakistan include: 1) bolstering Afghanistan-Pakistan cooperation; 2) engaging and focusing Islamabad on the common threat; 3) assisting Pakistan's capability to fight extremists; 4) exploring other areas of economic cooperation with Pakistan and; 5) strengthening Pakistani government capacity.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari hailed the new U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a "positive change" because of an emphasis on economic progress as a means to combat militancy,⁶⁶ and indicated he welcomed the new legislation such as the Kerry-Lugar bill to grant additional funding to Pakistan. However, the renewed aid and attention to Pakistan are likely to be counterbalanced by pressure on Pakistan to increase actions against al Qaeda, and to "successfully shut down the Pakistani safe haven for extremists."⁶⁷ This implies the Pakistani military will need to adjust its posture from a focus on a conventional war with India towards a

⁶⁶ Haider, Zeeshan (28 March 2009). "Pakistan's Zardari hails US strategy review", *Reuters*. <http://www.reuters.com/article/featuredCrisis/idUSISL478252>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

⁶⁷ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

focus of counterinsurgency operations in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area and also that the U.S. will be closely monitoring Pakistani activities in order to ensure U.S. security goals are being met.

Counterinsurgency Focus

Leaders in the Department of Defense testified to Congress on April 1-2, 2009 that there is a significant challenge in trying to re-orient the defense posture of the Pakistani military. The Pakistani military tends to regard its primary security threat as India, “the country from which Pakistan once seceded and with which it has since waged three wars.”⁶⁸ Amid criticisms of insufficient attention or manpower dedicated to the tribal areas, particularly after the Mumbai attacks increased tension between India and Pakistan, U.S. special representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke suggested taking some of the estimated 300,000 Pakistan troops posted along the Indian border and transferring them to boost troops fighting Taliban militants. “But a former governor of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, Khalid Aziz, says that will be difficult, because Pakistan's military is still focused on its long-time rival India. ‘The threat perception from the Pakistan point of view is imminent threat from the Indian direction.’”⁶⁹ Not only is the threat perceived as emanating from the East, but there is a “relatively common attitude in the military which holds that the fight against terrorism in the northwestern part of the country is being forced upon them by the Americans and that they are fighting the wrong war.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Koelbl, Susanne and Sandberg, Britta (08 April 2009). “The World’s Most Dangerous Place; Islamic Groups Form Unholy Alliance in Pakistan,” *Der Spiegel online*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,618170,00.html>, (Last accessed 22 April 2009).

⁶⁹ Newhouse, Barry, (25 February 2009). “Struggle in Swat Valley Highlights Pakistan's Counterinsurgency Troubles”, VOA. <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2009-02/2009-02-25-voa57.cfm>. (Last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁷⁰ Koelbl, Susanne and Sandberg, Britta (08 April 2009). “The World’s Most Dangerous Place; Islamic Groups Form Unholy Alliance in Pakistan,” *Der Spiegel online*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,618170,00.html>, (Last accessed 22 April 2009).

Moreover, the focus on conventional warfare has resulted in the Pakistani military being relatively ill-equipped and ill-trained to fight counterinsurgency warfare. U.S. support to Pakistan has attempted to remedy this situation, which are to be expanded under the new strategy. Both Defense Undersecretary Michele Flournoy and the Commander of the U.S. Central Command, General Petraeus indicated that one of the reasons the new strategy calls for a whole-government approach for Pakistan, including economic aid and political engagement, is to increase the amount of tools Pakistan has to conduct counterinsurgency operations, ranging from training and equipment for military operations, to resources for civilian operations such as assisting refugees and promoting economic development.⁷¹ Zardari announced that the Pakistani government had set up a National Counter-Terrorism Authority and planned to recruit 80,000 additional police with the help of funding from Pakistan's allies.⁷²

Additional Funding and Oversight

As previous U.S. spending on Pakistan has been criticized for not being effectively monitored,⁷³ Obama has announced he is unwilling to cut Pakistan a blank check, and that “Pakistan must demonstrate its commitment to rooting out al Qaeda and the violent extremists within its borders.”⁷⁴ In what is likely to be the most significant implication of the new strategy for Pakistan, a new bill sponsored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.) would attach strict conditions and limits to Pakistani aid. The bill would

⁷¹ Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee (02 April 2009). Subject: New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Developments in U.S. Central Command and Special Operations Command; Chaired by Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO).

⁷² Haider, Zeeshan (28 March 2009). “Pakistan's Zardari hails US strategy review”, *Reuters*. <http://www.reuters.com/article/featuredCrisis/idUSISL478252>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009)

⁷³ Government Accountability Office, (February 2009). ‘Securing, Stabilizing, and Developing Pakistan’s border area with Afghanistan’, GAO-09-263SP Pakistan-Afghanistan Border.

⁷⁴ Obama, Barack, (27 March 2009). “Remarks by the President on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

authorize \$3 billion in aid to train and equip the Pakistani military over the next five years, along with \$7.5 billion in economic and development assistance. However, the bill would limit the kinds of military equipment Pakistan could receive and the ways in which it could be used, and require regular audits and presidential certification of counterinsurgency progress.⁷⁵ According to the *Washington Post*, in addition to monitoring Pakistani progress in areas such as defeating extremists and protecting human rights, it would also prohibit additional U.S. spending on Pakistan's F-16 jet fighter fleet, which the Bush administration agreed to upgrade. While critics allege that the F-16 is more important for a conventional war with India than fighting a counterinsurgency war along the Afghan-Pakistan border, U.S. and Pakistani defense officials have been engaged for years on the F-16 program and Pakistani officials still want delivery of the aircraft.

While the additional U.S. aid is likely to be welcomed by the Pakistani military, the conditionality of future grants and emphasis on achieving results in counterinsurgency operations may lead to friction over concerns of U.S. interference and pressure on Pakistani defense affairs. The U.S.-Pakistani relationship will need to be carefully managed in order to assure Pakistani defense officials that the U.S. security goals of disrupting and defeating the al Qaeda safe havens in Pakistan are also relevant security concerns for Pakistan, and thus should be treated as a priority over the perceived threat of a conventional war with India.

Critique

Although the U.S. and President Obama have received a great deal of praise from the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as European allies for the new strategy, several

⁷⁵ DeYoung, Karen (04 April 2009). "Congress Moves to Set Terms for Pakistan Aid; White House Wants to Draft Its Own", *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/03/AR2009040303827.html?nav=hcmodule>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

critiques can be leveled at the new approach, the majority of which address the efficacy of security operations within Pakistan. The first critique concerns the merits of combining Afghanistan and Pakistan into one “AFPAK” theater; the second questions the emphasis of security operations directed at al Qaeda versus Taliban groups. Other critiques identify the challenges for Pakistani counterinsurgency operations; the impact of collateral damage on civilian populations in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and; the implications for increasing U.S. resources and combat troops to both states.

Combining Afghanistan and Pakistan into AFPAK

Defense Undersecretary Michele Flournoy identified the ‘critical aspect of this new strategy’ as “the recognition that Afghanistan and Pakistan are two countries but that they comprise a single theater for our efforts and for our diplomacy.”⁷⁶ The ungoverned border regions have created safe havens for terrorists and proved conducive to narcotics smuggling. Improving security and stability for Afghanistan will require regional cooperation, including reducing the ability of al Qaeda to operate out of the Afghan-Pakistan border areas. Current U.S. Administration officials, however, are walking a fine line between acknowledging the importance of Pakistan for Afghanistan security and development and lumping the two, sovereign, states together into a single strategy. A challenge of including Pakistan in such a strategy is the fact that it is a sovereign country, and as such, the U.S. has limited means with which to ensure its security concerns are being addressed.⁷⁷ The U.S. has conducted unmanned drone attacks with the discrete blessing of the Pakistani military and sent trainers and assistance, but Pakistani President Ali Asef Zadari explicitly stated he wants Pakistani, not U.S. forces

⁷⁶ Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee (02 April 2009). Subject: New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Developments in U.S. Central Command and Special Operations Command; Chaired by Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO).

⁷⁷ This is in contrast to Afghanistan, which is a sovereign nation that has welcomed foreign troops on its soil and allowed the U.S. to targeting al Qaeda and its supporters.

conducting counterinsurgency operations in the Afghan-Pakistan border regions.⁷⁸ The Pakistani military has indeed conducted counterinsurgency operations in the border areas, but the most publicized attacks are the aforementioned U.S. drone strikes which are criticized by the Pakistani population for killing more civilians than insurgents. Any U.S. security strategy involving Pakistan requires addressing the reality that the U.S. has a limited ability to influence policy and operations in Pakistan, despite the long-running financial assistance and military training programs. There are no guarantees that U.S. security concerns in Pakistan will be fully endorsed and resolved by the Pakistani government and military, regardless of the amount of money channeled to Pakistan. Moreover, media reports indicate that “many Pakistanis — including opposition parliamentarians — see the rise of violent Islamist militancy not as Pakistan's problem but as a byproduct of Washington's war in Afghanistan. They believe the problem would be solved by the departure of the U.S. forces and their allies from the region.”⁷⁹ As a result, Pakistani conceptions of security threats may differ from those outlined in the new White Paper strategy, and the U.S. may not see its objectives fully realized in Pakistan.

Why the Taliban matter

The opening paragraph of the White Paper states that the growing size of al Qaeda and terrorist groups are “a direct result of the terrorists/insurgent activities of the Taliban and related organizations,”⁸⁰ but the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy explicitly focuses on defeating al Qaeda, not the Taliban groups. This focus is flawed not only because the Taliban groups provide safe

⁷⁸ Zardari to U.S.: Let Pakistan go after terrorists; New president says American action in border region threatens stability, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26841274/> (last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁷⁹ Reeves, Philip (15 October 2008). “Afghanistan And Pakistan's Embattled Frontier, Pakistanis Debate Role In Combating Militants,” *NPR*. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=95734624> (last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁸⁰ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

haven to al Qaeda but because they also undermine government stability in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and while also attacking U.S. and coalition troops. The support the Pakistani Taliban provide to al Qaeda is not disputed in the White Paper, but the size of the space in which they are permitted to operate is growing. Areas under Taliban control now have expanded under Pakistani efforts at accommodation. In one such deal, Islamic sharia law was officially implemented in the Swat region of the North West Frontier Province in exchange for an end to the Taliban insurgency,⁸¹ and news reports indicate that the Taliban are attempting to expand their influence in neighboring areas. In a recent interview, the Taliban spokesman for Swat stated that “Osama bin Laden and other militants aiming to oust the U.S. from Afghanistan would be welcome and protected in Swat,”⁸² further reinforcing the need to counter Taliban in order to defeat al Qaeda.

Beyond the link between the Taliban and al Qaeda safe havens, two of the five White Paper objectives list the importance of enhancing governance in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is directly threatened by the Taliban groups on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border. The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has resulted in increased attacks against coalition and Afghan forces and challenged efforts to extend the control of the Afghan central government. Insurgents have also crossed the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan to attack Pakistani, U.S. or coalition security forces.⁸³ Meanwhile, a Pakistani Taliban group under the leadership of Baitullah Mahsud has been blamed by the Pakistani government for dozens of suicide bombings and attacks in Pakistan, including the March 31, 2009 attack against a Lahore police station which killed at least eleven people. Mehsud has also threatened to launch

⁸¹ (13 April 2009). “Pakistan passes Swat Sharia deal”, *BBC*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7996560.stm. (Last accessed 23 April 2009).

⁸² Khan, Zarar, (22 April 2009) “Taliban extend hold, advance near Pakistan capital”, *Associated Press*. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090422/ap_on_re_as/as_pakistan (last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁸³ Northam, Jackie (25 July 2008). “Taliban Tightens Grip Near Northern Pakistan Border,” *NPR*. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92871376> (last accessed 22 April 2009)

attacks on the United States,⁸⁴ and announced that he had recently set up a “Council of Mujahidin” uniting different groups “to step up attacks on US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.”⁸⁵ These examples should illustrate that accommodating the Taliban have not improved security in Pakistan or achieved the objectives in the White Paper. Given the threats posed by the Taliban groups to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and coalition forces, the U.S. security strategy should give greater attention to combating the Taliban and not just al Qaeda.

Pakistani Counterinsurgency Efforts – Potential Impact

A related critique of the new security strategy questions not only whether Pakistan shares the same security objectives as the U.S., but whether Pakistani counterinsurgency efforts would be effective against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan, despite U.S. aid and urging. One reason for this concern is that the relatively weak central government has been unwilling or unable to challenge alleged links between the Taliban and the Pakistani military. As previously stated, the Pakistani government has combined counterinsurgency operations with attempts at accommodation, such as ceding portions of border provinces to Taliban control. The U.S. is pushing for “a greater willingness to cooperate... to eliminate the sanctuary enjoyed by al Qaeda and other extremist groups,”⁸⁶ but, as previously stated, this would increase the Pakistani military’s conflicts with the Taliban groups who control the safe havens where al Qaeda operates. President Zardari has stated his intent to target insurgent groups,⁸⁷ but there are

⁸⁴ Ali, Zulfikar and King, Laura (01 April 2009). ‘Pakistan’s Taliban leader threatens attacks in the U.S.’, *Los Angeles Times*. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-pakistan-threat1-2009apr01,0,1183316.story>. (Last accessed, 06 April 2009)

⁸⁵ (01April 2009). “Taleban: we will launch attack on America that will amaze world,” *The Times*. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6011879.ece> (last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁸⁶ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

⁸⁷ Zardari to U.S.: Let Pakistan go after terrorists; New president says American action in border region threatens stability, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26841274/> (last accessed 22 April 2009)

recurring allegations of pro-Taliban sentiment and support amongst members of the Pakistani military, including mid-level operatives in the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI).⁸⁸ As Subhash Kapila notes in his recent analysis, the U.S. ignores the linkages between the Pakistan Army and ISI⁸⁹ with the Taliban and al Qaeda and “mistakenly believes that it is within Pakistan Army’s capabilities to both quell the terrorism and insurgency challenges within Pakistan and also be willing to assist the United States in the overall implementation of Af-Pak strategy.”⁹⁰ These links are problematic because unofficial support received by the Taliban from their military contacts will aid them to avoid U.S. or Pakistani attacks. For example, when the Taliban group led by Jalaluddin Haqqani “needs to stay a step ahead of American forces stalking them on the ground and in the air, they rely on moles within the spy agency to tip them off to allied missions planned against them.”⁹¹

Preparing for Collateral Damage

Another challenge regarding the efficacy of counterinsurgency efforts in both Pakistan and Afghanistan is the collateral damage and civilian casualties caused by coalition attacks, often by U.S. unmanned drones. The damage is compounded by the instability in the border regions of Pakistan which have forced thousands of refugees into unhygienic camps manned with insufficient staff and resources. A recent report by Pakistan’s intelligence services has indicated

⁸⁸ “The Taliban’s widening campaign in southern Afghanistan is made possible in part by direct support from operatives in Pakistan’s military intelligence agency, despite Pakistani government promises to sever ties to militant groups fighting in Afghanistan, according to American government officials. The support consists of money, military supplies and strategic planning guidance to Taliban commanders.” Mazzetti Mark and Schmitt, Eric, (26 March 2009). “Afghan Strikes by Taliban Get Pakistan Help, U.S. Aides Say,” *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/world/asia/26tribal.html?_r=1 (Last accessed 22 April 2009)

⁸⁹ Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency

⁹⁰ Kapila, Subhash (02 April 2009). ‘Afghanistan: United States “Af-Pak” Policy Blueprint Strategically Analyzed’, *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper no. 3129. <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers32/paper3129.html>. (Last accessed, 06 April 2009).

⁹¹ Mazzetti Mark and Schmitt, Eric, (26 March 2009). “Afghan Strikes by Taliban Get Pakistan Help, U.S. Aides Say,” *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/world/asia/26tribal.html?_r=1 (Last accessed 22 April 2009)

that many of these camps not only harbor insurgents, but are fertile recruiting ground for the Taliban. According to an unnamed Pakistani official, “Taliban militants have been exploiting the deaths of women and children in both U.S. drone attacks and bombings by Pakistani forces to coax angry young men to join hands with them for revenge.”⁹² In Afghanistan, Mullah Zubiallah Akhond, a Taliban commander in Oruzgan province, also notes that coalition attacks provide new recruits: “The people who are fighting with the Taliban are the brothers, uncles and relatives of those killed by the Americans. They have joined the Taliban and are fighting the Americans because they want to avenge their brothers, fathers or cousins... many of them have rejoined the movement after the savage attacks carried out by the Americans.”⁹³

The use of U.S. military drones to attack al Qaeda targets should be carefully weighed against the backlash the attacks engender amongst the local populations. Greater attention must be paid to providing security for the non-combatant population, limiting the civilian casualties resulting from bombing attacks, and improving the livelihood of the Afghans and Pakistanis living in the refugee camps and border regions. Currently their grievances being exploited by the Taliban to recruit new fighters, and the U.S.-led counterinsurgency operations are generating new recruits for the next battle. The White Paper makes no mention of the specific tactics planned for future counterinsurgency operations, but does indicate an interest in overcoming the ‘trust deficit’ faced in Afghanistan and Pakistan, “where many believe that we are not a reliable

⁹² Latif, Aamir (09 February 2009). “Taliban Finds Fertile Recruiting Ground in Pakistan's Tribal Refugee Camps”, *US News and World Report*. <http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/world/2009/02/09/taliban-finds-fertile-recruiting-ground-in-pakistans-tribal-refugee-camps.html> (Last accessed 23 April 2009).

⁹³ (16 December 2008), 'I was still holding my grandson's hand - the rest was gone', *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/16/afghanistan-taliban-us-foreign-policy> (Last accessed 23 April 2009)

long-term partner.”⁹⁴ Part of overcoming the trust deficit amongst the local populations is ensuring the collateral damage of counterinsurgency operations is minimized.

Americanization of the conflict

The new strategy will greatly increase the amount of U.S. resources directed towards Afghanistan and Pakistan. After years of suffering the diversion of U.S. attention to involvement in Iraq, the original front against al Qaeda now has pride of place and is receiving the attention and resources it deserves. Moreover, while the goal of the new strategy is combating terrorism, the strategy also addresses the importance of combining governance and economic development with security, and increasing civil-military cooperation. The flip side of this argument, however, relates to a question of how much of the fight and funds can be shouldered by the U.S. The monetary nature of this criticism is particularly relevant due to the current fragile state of the U.S. economy combined with an escalating federal budget. The international community has pledged financial assistance, such as civilian staff, police and army trainers and short-term troop deployments election security, but has made limited proposals for increased combat troops. Meanwhile, the deployment of an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan this year will bring the number of foreign troops there to nearly 90,000, more than two-thirds of them Americans. Although many will technically report to NATO commanders, the U.S. will increasingly be in charge.⁹⁵ As a result of an increased troop presence, U.S. forces will likely conduct the bulk of the counterinsurgency operations and incur the brunt of the casualties.

⁹⁴ White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group’s Report on U.S. Policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan (27 March 2009). The White House. http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

⁹⁵ DeYoung, Karen and Chandrasekaran, Rajiv (26 March 2009). “In Afghan War, U.S. Dominance Increasing; Washington Post: With More American Troops and Civilians On the Way, NATO Is Likely To Lose Clout”, *CBS/Washington Post*. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/03/26/politics/washingtonpost/main4894565.shtml>. (Last accessed 06 April 2009).

As Senator Begich noted during testimony on the new strategy, the Army Field Manual 3-24 indicates a preferred ratio of 20 to 25 soldiers per 1,000 people in order to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations. Troops in Iraq face a ratio of about 28 to 1,000 when combining the Iraqi Security Forces, U.S. and Coalition troops. In comparison, Begich noted that troops in Afghanistan currently face a ratio of about seven to 1,000. Even with the confirmed deployments and trainings, by 2011 the ratio would only be about nine to 1,000.⁹⁶ The underlying concern in these figures is that, if by 2011 the ratio is insufficient, additional Afghan soldiers and police would have to be trained. As U.S. partners are willing to supply only a limited amount of ANSF trainers, and unwilling to supply additional combat troops for counterinsurgency operations, this means that additional U.S. forces will have to be considered for future deployments. As a result, “the war in Afghanistan more and more is looking like an American war, and the U.S. will continue to do the bulk of the heavy lifting even with the new NATO pledges.”⁹⁷ The predicted increase of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan is being termed the “Americanization” of the conflict, in which the U.S. is assuming more of the responsibilities and risks of battling al Qaeda, which the U.S. has billed as an international threat.

Two implications can be determined from the Americanization of the military operations in Afghanistan. First, the overt recognition that the many of the European coalition allies have reached the limit of their military contributions to Afghanistan, particularly as differences of opinion exist between many European states and the U.S. regarding the threat of al Qaeda. If the trend continues for coalition members to favor civilian over military contributions, the increased U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan is likely to lead to more U.S. decisions over military

⁹⁶ Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee (01 April 2009). Subject: U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan; Chaired by Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI).

⁹⁷ Raum, Tom (04 April 2009). “Obama hails 5,000 more NATO forces for Afghanistan,” *Associated Press* http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090404/ap_on_go_pr_wh/eu_obama. (Last accessed 22 April 2009).

operations, which may not be palatable to all coalition members. Secondly, the increased U.S. military presence could lead to a preference for military solutions over civilian solutions, which are critical to long-term stabilization of Afghanistan beyond the removal of al Qaeda and its supporters.

Conclusions

The new White Paper is first and foremost a counterinsurgency strategy to defeat al Qaeda, and should be treated as such. It is not a development strategy for Afghanistan or Pakistan, although it includes long-term state-building efforts and identifies the importance of civil-military cooperation and international and non-governmental organizations. Due to this emphasis on security, the military component of the strategy is far more developed than the civilian commitment. While counterinsurgency operations are necessary for short term gains, improving governance and economic development in Afghanistan and Pakistan are required for long-term success.

The short-term will be challenging for the U.S. and its allies. Along with the introduction of the new strategy, the U.S. has agreed to significantly increase its military presence and gained smaller, limited deployments from coalition forces. The Afghan security forces will be pushed to rapidly expand both capacity and capability while Pakistani security forces will be pressured to conduct counterinsurgency operations for which the military may be insufficiently equipped to handle. Both the Afghan and Pakistani governments will be strained to extend and maintain central government control and support to their local populations, particularly if there is civilian blowback from increasing counterinsurgency operations. Moreover, the collateral damage caused by military efforts is attracting more recruits to the

insurgency, thus proving harmful to the long-term goals of developing stable central governments in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As expressed in the critique, there are real concerns about extending counterinsurgency operations to Pakistan. The coalition forces control the ground in Afghanistan and, within the limits of geography and strategic airlift, will likely be able to conduct the operations required to achieve success against al Qaeda on the Afghan side of the Durand Line. Not so in Pakistan. Coalition troops are not welcome in Pakistan, and while drone attacks are overlooked, the U.S. strategy will have to rely on the efforts of the Pakistani security forces. Indeed, much of the new strategy hinges on the assumption that the Pakistani civilian government can successfully pressure the Pakistani military to implement the necessary security measures to support the new policy. These efforts will require massive restructuring of the Pakistani military coupled with plans for long-term development. President Zardari has affirmed his commitment to both these aims, but with the rising power of Taliban groups in Pakistan's western provinces, only time will tell if he is successful. If not, the threat of the Taliban and al Qaeda could increase and the U.S. military could risk being dragged into yet another conflict.

An additional concern about the security emphasis of the new strategy is that coalition members are unlikely to provide additional combat troops for military operations or training, and instead focus on the civilian development operations. The long-term transfer of the military burden onto the U.S. and 'Americanization' of the war could thus divide civil-military responsibilities whereby European states and other allies manage the civilian operations while the U.S. controls combat operations. Currently NATO supports the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan so this is a non-issue, but the increasing civilian role for European NATO members should fuel the ongoing debate within NATO regarding its post-1989 role in out

of area operations and how to ensure that the division of civilian and military responsibilities still results in cooperation to achieve the same core security goals.

Appendix I

White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan

Summary of recommendations for Afghanistan and Pakistan

- 1) Executing and resourcing an integrated civilian-military counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan
- 2) Resourcing and prioritizing civilian assistance in Afghanistan
- 3) Expanding the Afghan National Security Forces: Army and Police
- 4) Engaging the Afghan government and bolstering its legitimacy
- 5) Encouraging Afghan government efforts to integrate reconcilable insurgents
- 6) Including provincial and local governments in our capacity building efforts
- 7) Breaking the link between narcotics and the insurgency
- 8) Mobilizing greater international political support of our objectives in Afghanistan
- 9) Bolstering Afghanistan-Pakistan cooperation
- 10) Engaging and focusing Islamabad on the common threat
- 11) Assisting Pakistan's capability to fight extremists
- 12) Increasing and broadening assistance to Pakistan
- 13) Exploring other areas of economic cooperation with Pakistan
- 14) Strengthening Pakistani government capacity
- 15) Asking for assistance from allies for Afghanistan and Pakistan

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