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NATO in Afghanistan: A Special Address by the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

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Good morning and thank you for the invitation to speak with you today. I know The Heritage Foundation spends a lot of time and effort studying and influencing the direction of the United States military—resources, operations, leadership. In fact, our moderator, Mackenzie Eaglen, recently published reports somewhat critical of both the Air Force and the Navy. Well done, Mackenzie. Good to see that you haven't forgotten the *Army* education you received at Mercer! Which reminds me of a story...

The Army, the Navy, and the Air Force decided to have a boat race on the Potomac River. All three teams worked hard to reach their peak performance before the race. On the big day, the Navy beat the Air Force by a mile. Resolved to identify its shortcomings, the Air Force created a "Metrics Team" and hired a consultant to investigate. They discovered that the Navy had eight seamen rowing and one officer coxing, while the Air Force had one airman rowing and eight officers coxing.

To prevent a repeat loss to the Navy again the next year, the Air Force made historic and sweeping changes, realigning the crew's organizational structure to four coxswain, three area coxswain superintendents, one assistant superintendent for coxing, and one rower.

They also implemented a new performance system that would give the one rower greater incentive to work harder. It was called the "Air Force Crew Team Quality Program," complete with meetings, dinners, and a three-day pass for the rower. "We must give the rower empowerment and enrichment through this quality program."

Talking Points

- NATO conducts military operations to assist the government of Afghanistan to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment with the full engagement of the Afghan National Security Forces.
- Certainly, a military solution alone will not secure and stabilize the country. Security, governance, and reconstruction and development activities must complement and support each other.
- NATO is succeeding in Afghanistan, and we will continue to succeed, but we in the international community can and must do more.
- We need to work closely with that government at all levels to reduce corruption and enable it to convince its citizens that governance can be a positive factor in their lives.
- The U.S. must work with its allies to reach agreement and consensus on a collective response to transnational terrorism—a comprehensive, multilateral response.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
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The next year the Navy won by *two* miles. Humiliated, Air Force leadership gave a letter of reprimand to the rower for poor performance, initiated a \$4 billion program for development of a new joint-service scull, blamed the loss on a design defect in the oars, and issued career continuation bonuses and leather rowing jackets to the beleaguered coxswain in the hopes they would stay for next year's race.

Meanwhile, the Army crew is still trying to figure out why the oars keep making divots in the grass while rowing.

Afghanistan and the ISAF

During my time here today, I will talk about NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and EUCOM (U.S. European Command), our current operations and initiatives, and some challenges that lie ahead.

Afghanistan continues to be the source of much public debate. The 47,000 men and women of the 40-nation International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are in Afghanistan conducting a mission critical to our global security. Yet many questions are raised in public forums about this mission. Is our involvement the correct response? Is it effective? Is it in our national interest? Is NATO failing? Or, as was said recently, "Make no mistake, NATO is not winning." These are just a few examples.

I will address these and other questions as I highlight the importance of this mission and our commitment to its success.

Just a few weeks ago, The Heritage Foundation published a *Backgrounder* calling for help in the war in Afghanistan. Perhaps most pertinently, it called for a greater level of international support for the ongoing effort, an increase in burden-sharing by NATO nations, a call on NATO leaders to educate their publics about just what is at stake, and increased cooperation with Pakistan concerning the border area. If it weren't for the somewhat negative light in which NATO was cast, people might think I've got you on the payroll.

NATO is not failing, I assure you. We are succeeding, and we will continue to succeed, but we in the international community can and must do more. As NATO's Military Commander of Opera-

tions, my job is to execute, as capably and effectively as possible, the missions given to me by the North Atlantic Council. I am not a policymaker or an influence broker. Yet I would like to take a moment to describe just what is at stake in Afghanistan.

What's at Stake?

First and foremost, our very own security, here and in Europe, as well as in Afghanistan itself. Just as economies are increasingly interdependent in our globalized world, our external and internal security is equally interwoven. Afghanistan is a mission of necessity rather than of choice. Less than a decade ago, Afghanistan was a hotbed of terrorism. Our mission is crucial to ensure that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is never again a place that terrorists—transnational terrorists—call home.

Moreover, the ISAF mission has a defining effect on the evolution of our relationship with Asia. One need only look to the borders of Afghanistan to recognize the complexity of the geopolitical situation. Pakistan, Iran, China, and the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union are all affected by the situation in Afghanistan. Extremism and terrorism must not continue to threaten stability in the region or beyond. With so much at stake, unwavering NATO support in Afghanistan remains essential. Last month in Bucharest, the heads of state and government of the 26 NATO nations and its partners reaffirmed their dedication, citing a "firm and shared long-term commitment" toward helping the Afghan people.

NATO conducts military operations to assist the government of Afghanistan to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment with the full engagement of the Afghan National Security Forces. Successful operations by the Afghan National Army and ISAF have compelled the opposing militant forces (OMF) to adopt terrorist tactics—indiscriminate attacks designed to strike at the resolve of not only the Afghan people, but also others committed to progress in Afghanistan. While this activity has affected Afghan and international public opinion, these tactics do not enable OMF expansion on the ground, nor do they undermine our commitment.

Through a series of tactical victories, ISAF has geographically constrained the OMF's ability to con-

duct sustained activity. Seventy percent of security incidents in 2007 occurred in only 10 percent (approximately 40) of the 396 districts in Afghanistan. These 40 districts are home to only 6 percent of Afghanistan's population. So far in 2008, 91 percent of insurgent activity has occurred in just 8 percent of districts.

NATO is supporting the U.S. effort to help the Afghan government develop its forces so that it can ultimately provide for its own security. The Afghan National Army (ANA) continues to grow in size and combat capability and now exceeds the size of the ISAF. Since this time last year, the ANA has fielded nine infantry battalions, four commando battalions, six support battalions, three brigade headquarters, and three aviation units. It now plays a leadership role in 25 percent of military operations in Afghanistan. In the most hotly contested regions, the ANA participates in more than 90 percent of all ISAF operations. Today, 90 percent of the Afghan public sees the ANA as an honest and fair institution. Eighty-nine percent believe it has helped to improve security.

Conversely, the Afghan National Police Force, which has grown quickly in numbers, continues to lag significantly behind the ANA in professional ability. Police performance must be urgently enhanced. Recent pay and structural reforms will help, but corruption, criminality, and a lack of qualified leadership remain pressing issues.

Reconstruction and Development

Certainly, a military solution alone will not secure and stabilize the country. Security, governance, and reconstruction and development activities must complement and support each other. We are finally starting to see progress in the area of reconstruction and development. To date, more than 7,500 civil-military cooperation projects have been launched across Afghanistan; 75 percent are now complete.

The education of Afghanistan's children continues to move forward in most regions. Enrollment exceeds 6 million students, including more females than ever before—41 percent, according to the latest numbers, are females. Child mortality rates have been reduced by 25 percent since 2001, and 16 mil-

lion vaccinations against childhood diseases have been administered in the last five years.

NATO is making a difference in Afghanistan. However, we can and must do more. I believe the level of ambition in NATO has exceeded its political will. NATO has not yet completely filled our agreed statement of requirements for forces needed in Afghanistan. We are still short key capabilities and enablers—enablers such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, communications, and air support. Each NATO nation has its own internal issues that it must address, but a completely resourced force sends a clear message to our adversary and the Afghan people—the message that NATO is committed to achieving success.

Additionally, the more than 80 national caveats restricting the use of NATO forces limit the flexible employment of our formations. Caveats, like shortfalls, increase the risk to every soldier, sailor, airman, and marine deployed in theater. NATO forces are exceptional, but they need as much flexibility as possible to be effective on this irregular warfare battlefield.

In addition to NATO members and partners, the international community, as a whole, must increase development efforts. Through a comprehensive approach, an approach that integrates the efforts of all parties—military and civilian—we can and will achieve success. NATO, the military, sets the security conditions to allow for development efforts to become the norm, not the exception, and to support the investment needed to stimulate job creation and, ultimately, real economic growth.

Everything we do must help the government of Afghanistan achieve its good governance mandate. We need to work closely with that government at all levels to reduce corruption and enable it to convince its citizens that governance can be a positive factor in their lives. I remain firm in my conviction that NATO's efforts in Afghanistan are making a difference. We are succeeding; we are making the lives of the vast majority of Afghans better; and we are creating the conditions for a better future.

In Bucharest, our heads of state and government published a strategic vision to guide our engagement, pledging to support each other in sharing the

burden, to provide our military commanders the tools they need for success by filling remaining ISAF shortfalls, and to provide maximum possible flexibility of use of our forces. As the commander of NATO operations, I am encouraged by this stated commitment and look forward to seeing it fulfilled.

EUCOM

I'd like to shift gears and talk just a little bit about U.S. European Command. Of course, the two, NATO and EUCOM, are inextricably linked. In light of the expansion and transformation of NATO, EUCOM's engagement with our allies is more important than ever.

To address the dynamic and important area of responsibility that is Europe and part of Africa, EUCOM has developed a Strategy of Active Security that identifies the capabilities needed to address threats and requirements in the region, a strategy that emphasizes conflict prevention. Proactive security measures are significantly less costly than reactive contingency missions to the world's hotspots.

EUCOM has a responsibility to build military capacity and capability to best position our military forces, both American and those of our allies, to combat current and evolving threats. If we can agree that legitimacy plays a major part in the success of military action in our new security environment, then some degree of multilateralism is essential. To be effective multilaterally, militaries need to be modernized, interoperable, and they must train together.

To achieve this end, EUCOM embarks upon a program of Theater Security Cooperation. We integrate and build the capacity of our allies through numerous cooperative assistance programs including combined exercises, International Military Education and Training, and Foreign Military Financing.

Through International Military Education and Training, EUCOM provides education and training opportunities for foreign military and civilian personnel. Today, we continue to see the value of this program in the professional development and transformation of militaries in such established partners as Poland, Romania, Tunisia, and numerous other nations. Through Foreign Military Financing, EUCOM helps countries meet their defense needs.

It strengthens alliances and coalitions by building military capabilities, provides interoperability with U.S. and Allied forces, and enhances cooperation.

EUCOM organizes train-and-equip programs with nearly all our Baltic, Balkan, and Eurasian partners. We have provided tactical human intelligence collection and management training to NATO allies—including Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—for the past three years.

The United States recognizes the need to have capable partners in addressing current and future threats. In the end, our forces must be multifunctional and interoperable to address the variety of threats in the 21st century.

The Future of NATO and EUCOM

What lies ahead for NATO and for EUCOM? Speaking here in the United States, I get a rare opportunity to quote one of the great pundits of our time, Yogi Berra: "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future."

First, transnational terrorism remains a serious threat in the 21st century, and the United States does not stand alone in this assessment. Our European allies share our concern about the gravity of the threat and agree that the potential acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists is especially worrisome and deserves our full attention. We further agree that the terrorist threat is an enduring one, one that cannot be quickly defeated.

However, our agreement ends with our differing views of the appropriate strategic response to this threat. Many European nations see terrorism as an issue of public security to be addressed primarily as a law enforcement matter. American policy sees a more extensive role for its military as part of a comprehensive solution, utilizing the various instruments of power.

Complicating any response is the character of this transnational terrorism. Sovereign states are not the face of the threat; rather, we are up against multiple terrorist groups and complex terrorism networks. This reality serves to seriously limit the effectiveness of traditional diplomatic and economic solutions. Of course, these instruments of power do still play key roles, but this new paradigm calls for new solutions.

We must work with our allies to reach agreement and consensus on a collective response, a comprehensive, multilateral response. In my judgment, any other method will inevitably fall short.

Second, an issue that promises to challenge our nation and our alliance in the near future is one of energy security. I am concerned that the ability to use energy, whether it be natural gas, oil, or another source, as a political bargaining chip is increasingly becoming a reality. When a single nation or group of nations controls the reserves, the production, and, most important, the distribution means—such as pipelines—to their advantage, the potential exists for particularly onerous acts, coupled with a limited capability to respond. We have already seen instances where valves have been closed, affecting not just a single nation, but those further downstream as well. As we continue to see a more narrowly defined control of distribution means, the potential for a targeted shutdown increases.

We must find ways to adequately provide security for sea lanes, offshore oil installations, harbor facilities, and pipelines. One facet of EUCOM's Strategy of Active Security assists nations in securing energy supplies in transit.

Moreover, diversity in types, sources, and transportation routes are keys to security. Even with an expanded, collective maritime presence, the number of offshore installations, harbors, and pipelines that can be protected is limited. With such limita-

tions, prevention becomes critical. A lack of stability and security could lead to a reduction in availability and a restriction of transit routes.

I believe energy security has to be a focal area for the United States and NATO, as well as for the European Union. Again, we need a proactive, comprehensive, multilateral approach to address this evolving challenge.

Conclusion

In closing, as a good soldier, I do not play partisan politics. So I neither support nor oppose the ideologies of The Heritage Foundation. Yet I applaud your work, as well of the work of your counterparts all along the political spectrum. Organizations such as yours are working hard to make our nation stronger—something we, no doubt, all have in common.

As I said, I remain apolitical, but I recently learned, that the funding that started The Heritage Foundation in 1973 was provided by Joseph Coors of the Coors Brewing Company. So, it seems I may have indirectly and unknowingly contributed to your organization, in a very minor way, over the years.

Thank you for joining me here today, and thank you for your commitment to the United States of America.

—General Bantz John Craddock, United States Army, is the current Commander, U.S. European Command, and the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.