EXTREMIST MADRASSAS, GHOST SCHOOLS, AND U.S. AID TO PAKISTAN: ARE WE MAKING THE GRADE ON THE 9/11 COMMISSION REPORT CARD?

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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EXTREMIST MADRASSAS, GHOST SCHOOLS, AND U.S. AID TO PAKISTAN: ARE WE MAKING THE GRADE ON THE 9/11 COMMISSION REPORT CARD?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m. in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tierney, Lynch, Higgins, Yarmuth, Braley, McCollum, Van Hollen, Welch, Shays, Platts, Westmoreland, McHenry, and Foxx.

Staff present: Leneal Scott, information systems manager; Dave Turk, staff director; Andrew Su, professional staff member; Davis Hake, clerk; Andy Wright, counsel; A. Brooke Bennett, minority counsel; Grace Washbourne, minority senior professional staff member; Nick Palarino, minority senior investigator and policy advisor; Benjamin Chance, minority clerk; and Dawn Hu, minority intern.

Mr. TIERNEY. Good morning. A quorum is present and the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs' hearing entitled, "Extremist Madrassas, Ghost Schools, and U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Are We Making the Grade on the 9/11 Commission Report Card" will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that only the chairman and ranking member make an opening statement. Without objection, so ordered.

I ask unanimous consent that the hearing record be kept open for 5 business days so that all members of the subcommittee be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. Without objection, so ordered.

I ask unanimous consent that the following written statement be placed into the hearing record: Professor Husain Haggani, director of the Center for International Relations and associate professor of international relations at Boston University, as well as the former Pakistan ambassador to Sri Lanka. Without objection, so ordered.

With all that business out of the way, good morning to our witnesses, and thank you for your participation and your assistance here today, Mr. Shays.

America awoke to a new and terrible chapter in our history on September 11, 2001. We watched in horror as the Twin Towers disintegrated, as a Pentagon wing collapsed in flames, and as a Pennsylvania field smoldered with wreckage. Every American knows with clarity where he or she was on that morning.

Today, more than 5½ years later, the National Security Subcommittee begins a series of hearings asking whether the United States has an effective, long-term strategy for confronting international terrorism.

We will begin with the 9/11 Commission, whose report cautioned us of a "generational struggle" whose "long-term success demands the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public diplomacy, and homeland defense."

The 9/11 Commission also warned that "[i]f we favor one tool while neglecting others, we leave ourselves vulnerable and weaken our national effort." The Commission stressed the importance that any offensive efforts "be accompanied by a preventative strategy that is as much, or more, political as it is military."

So let's now ask the question: how are we doing.

Today we are going to explore U.S. policy toward Pakistan, its radical religious schools known as madrassas, and its dysfunctional education system and what impact this has on long-term national security.

The 9/11 Commission had some specific advice with regard to Pakistan, stressing "[i]t is hard to overstate the importance of Pakistan in the struggle against Islamist terrorism," pointing out that "[a]lmost all of the 9/11 attackers" spent some time in Pakistan and "traveled the north-south nexus of Kandahar-Quetta-Karachi," and warning of Pakistan madrassas that "have been used as incubators of violent extremism."

The 9/11 Commission urged the U.S. Government to "support Pakistan's government in its struggle against extremists with a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education, so long as Pakistan's leaders remain willing to make difficult choices of their own."

In December 2005, the 9/11 Commission's Public Discourse Project issued a report card that is reflected on the screen to the sides of the room. As you can see, we got a C+ for our efforts in supporting Pakistan against extremists. The report card notes: "U.S. assistance to Pakistan has not moved sufficiently beyond security assistance to include significant funding for education efforts. Musharraf has made efforts to take on the threat of extremism, but has not shut down extremist-linked madrassas or terrorist camps. Taliban forces still pass freely across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and operate in Pakistani tribal areas."

This, despite the fact that President Musharraf has repeatedly promised to crack down on extremist madrassas. In 2003 he stated, "We must finish off religious extremism. . . . We must not use the mosques to spread hatred." In January 2005, he said, "[t]he use of mosques and seminaries as producers of hate and extremism must be stopped." And in August 2005, President Musharraf said, "[W]e will not let any madrassa harbor terrorists or teach extremism and militancy." But the madrassas remain to this day.

Here is a clip of a recent Frontline show entitled, "Return of the Taliban."

[Film clip shown.]

Mr. TIERNEY. Last month, I led a congressional delegation to Pakistan and Afghanistan with subcommittee members Betty McCollum and Patrick McHenry, as well as the Education and Labor Chairman George Miller. In Afghanistan, senior United States, NATO, and Afghan military officials told us of their forces being continually attacked by Taliban foes who plan and stage their insurgent operations in Pakistan before pouring across the border to kill our troops.

But if we think these Pakistani breeding grounds of terror only threaten Afghanistan, we need to think again. The 2005 London subway terrorist bombings involved at least one British national trained in a Pakistani madrassa.

And just last week terrorists were convicted in the United Kingdom in a conspiracy to conduct an attack there with fertilizer-based bombs. Five of the seven men tried attended either madrassas or training camps in Pakistan. Yet, these extremist madrassas remain open for business.

This is a picture of a madrassa that is just outside of Islamabad. As we sit here in this hearing room today, madrassas affiliated with the Red Mosque in Islamabad continue to flout Pakistani national laws by squatting on national land. They harbor foreign terrorists. They move large numbers of burga-clad women into the compound as protection. They establish religious vigilante raids on shopkeepers and assault and kidnap indecent—or what they term indecent—women.

These madrassas have threatened a campaign of suicide bombings if they don't get their way.

This picture of the Red Mosque madrassa students burning books, CDs, and DVDs was taken just 2 days after our Congressional delegation left Pakistan. During our stay we were told of women in Islamabad having acid doused on their faces for failure to wear burgas and harassment of women who were just driving cars. And we saw first-hand, billboards in which women's facial images had been ripped away because of their so-called immodesty.

The extremists once confined to the outer reaches of Pakistan are bringing their venom right into the heart of Pakistan's manicured capital. Last week our own State Department concluded "Pakistan remains a major source of Islamic extremism and a safe haven for some top terrorist leaders."

Extremism and Jahadi curriculum in madrassas is only one side of the problem, however, as Pakistan's public school system has utterly failed to provide a viable alternative for millions of poor Pakistani families.

In December 2005 the 9/11 Commission gave the U.S. Government a D grade for not doing enough to support secular education in Muslim countries. The report card warned; "The U.S. has no overarching strategy for educational assistance and the current level of education reform funding is inadequate."

The United States also received a D for funding educational and cultural exchange programs designed to foster mutual understand-

ing between the United States and Muslim countries. The grade specifically notes recent closures of American libraries in Pakistan.

There is a bar chart that we would like to show at this time. This chart compares our Pakistan education assistance aid versus our military support. I know it is hard to see the bar for education funding because it is 15 times less than what we are spending on military funding.

Remember that the 9/11 Commission spoke of the need to use all the tools in our toolbox, and of the need in Pakistan specifically for a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education.

But in its latest budget submission the administration has requested a 33 percent funding cut for Development Assistance to Pakistan, a category that includes funding for basic education programming.

Here is the scope of the problem that we are up against: UNICEF estimates that some 13 million 5 to 9 year old children, out of 27 million total are not enrolled in school at all. That is nearly half of all Pakistani kids. And of those students who are enrolled, approximately half of them will drop out before completing primary education.

Looking at the scope of the problem, the 9/11 Commission's Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton characterized our education aid level as a "drop in the bucket." A recent Washington Quarterly article co-authored by one of today's witnesses put it this way: The United States is spending a scant $1.16 per child per year for more than 55 million school-aged Pakistani children.

Pakistan, itself, only spends a minuscule 2 percent of its gross domestic product on education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recommends at least 4 percent. Untrained, unmotivated, and absenteeism-plagued teachers have led to the phenomenon of the so-called "ghost schools," where a building sits idle and filled with students chaperoned by minders instead of educators.

All of us hope to support Pakistan and its people in their efforts to achieve for themselves a stable, prosperous, and free nation, but our national security interests and the future of Pakistani children is still more acute. Will we be safe over the next 5, 10, or 15 years as thousands—and perhaps millions—more children learn Jihad at extremist madrassas instead of learning real-world skills to become productive citizens in their own communities?

The Pakistani people are treading water during a rising tide of extremism; a tide that threatens their society and their children's futures; a tide that exposes our soldiers in Afghanistan to attack; and a tide that threatens us here at home to a gathering, new generational wave of terror.

In recent polling that has taken place, the view of the current U.S. Government by Pakistanis was viewed 15 percent favorably and 67 percent unfavorably. They thought that the United States was seeking to control world events and seeking to weaken and divide Islam and to spread Christianity at the expense of Islam. If you go on down into the different polling levels, you see the misperceptions exist in great number.

As the 9/11 Commission warned in a world of great mobility and even greater weapons: "the American homeland is the planet." We simply must follow the 9/11 Commission's sage advice to use all the elements of our power—including military might, of course, but public diplomacy, intelligence capabilities, and developmental assistance—to ensure that waves of terror never build and never crash again on our shores. That should be our job that is facing all of us here today.

[The prepared statement of Hon. John F. Tierney follows:]

Statement of John F. Tierney
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

Hearing on "Extremist Madrassas, Ghost Schools, and U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Are We Making the Grade on the 9/11 Commission Report Card?"

As Prepared for Delivery

May 9, 2007

Good morning. America awoke to a new, and terrible, chapter in our history on September 11, 2001. We watched in horror as the Twin Towers disintegrated, as a Pentagon wing collapsed in flames, and as a Pennsylvania field smoldered with wreckage. Every American knows, with clarity, where he or she was that morning.

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We begin with the 9/11 Commission, whose report cautioned us of a "generational struggle" whose "long-term success demands the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public diplomacy, and homeland defense." The 9/11 Commission also warned that "[i]f we favor one tool while neglecting others, we leave ourselves vulnerable and weaken our national effort." The Commission stressed the importance that any offensive efforts "be accompanied by a preventative strategy that is as much, or more, political as it is military."

So let's now ask the question, "how are we doing?"

Today we will explore U.S. policy toward Pakistan, its radical religious schools known as madrassas, and its dysfunctional education system and what impact this all has on our long-term national security.

The 9/11 Commission had some specific advice on Pakistan, stressing "[i]t is hard to overstate the importance of Pakistan in the struggle against Islamist terrorism;" pointing out that "[a]lmost all of the 9/11 attackers" spent some time in Pakistan and "traveled the north-south nexus of Kandahar-Quetta-Karachi;" and warning of Pakistani madrassas that "have been used as incubators of violent extremism."

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from military aid to support for better education, so long as Pakistan's leaders remain willing to make difficult choices of their own."

In December 2005, the 9/11 Commission's Public Discourse Project issued a report card.

[Show 9/11 Report Card slide #1]

As you can see, we got a C+ for our efforts in supporting Pakistan against extremists. The Report Card notes: "U.S. assistance to Pakistan has not moved sufficiently beyond security assistance to include significant funding for education efforts. Musharraf has made efforts to take on the threat of extremism, but has not shut down extremist-linked madrassas or terrorist camps. Taliban forces still pass freely across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and operate in Pakistani tribal areas."

This despite the fact that President Musharraf has repeatedly promised to crack down on extremist madrassas.

- In 2003, Musharraf stated: "We must finish off religious extremism....We must not use the mosques to spread hatred."
- In January 2005: "[T]he use of mosques and seminaries as producers of hate and extremism must be stopped."
- In August 2005: "[W]e will not let any madrassa harbor terrorists or teach extremism and militancy."

But the madrassas remain.

Here's a clip from a recent *FRONTLINE* entitled, "Return of the Taliban."

[Play *FRONTLINE* Clip].

Last month, I led a Congressional Delegation to Pakistan and Afghanistan with Subcommittee Members Betty McCollum and Patrick McHenry as well as Education and Labor Chairman George Miller. In Afghanistan, senior U.S., NATO, and Afghan military officials told us of their forces being continually attacked by Taliban foes who plan and stage their insurgent operations in Pakistan before pouring across the border to kill our troops.

But if we think these Pakistani breeding grounds of terror only threaten Afghanistan, think again.

The 2005 London subway terrorist bombings involved at least one British national trained in a Pakistani madrassa.

And just last week, terrorists were convicted in the United Kingdom in a conspiracy to conduct an attack there with fertilizer-based bombs. Five of the seven men tried attended either madrassas or training camps in Pakistan.

And yet these extremist madrassas remain open for business.

[Red Mosque Picture 1: men on the mosque]

As we sit here in this hearing room today, madrassas affiliated with the Red Mosque in Islamabad continue to flout Pakistani national laws by squatting on national land; harboring foreign terrorists; moving large numbers of Burqa-clad women into the compound as protection; establishing religious vigilante raids on shopkeepers; and assaulting and kidnapping "indecent" women. And these madrassas have threatened a campaign of suicide bombings if they don't get their way.

[Red Mosque picture 2: burning of books, etc.]

This picture of red Mosque madrassa students burning books, CDs, and DVDs was taken just two days after our congressional delegation left Pakistan. During our stay, we were told of women in Islamabad having acid doused in their faces for their failure to wear burqas and harassment of women driving cars, and we saw first-hand billboards from which women's facial images had been ripped away for their "immodesty."

The extremists once confined to the outer reaches of Pakistan are bringing their venom right to the heart of Pakistan's manicured capital.

Last week, our own State Department concluded, and I quote: "Pakistan remains a major source of Islamic extremism and a safe haven for some top terrorist leaders."

Extremism and jihadi curriculum at madrassas is only one side of the problem, however, as Pakistan's public school system has utterly failed to provide a viable alternative for millions of poor Pakistani families.

[Show 9/11 Report Card Slide #2]

In December 2005, the 9/11 Commission gave the U.S. government a "D" grade for not doing enough to support secular education in Muslim countries. The Report Card warned: "The U.S. has no overarching strategy for educational assistance and the current level of education reform funding is inadequate."

[Show 9/11 Report Card Slide #3]

The U.S. government also received a "D" for funding educational and cultural exchange programs designed to foster mutual understanding between the United States and Muslim countries. The grade specifically notes recent closures of American libraries in Pakistan.

[Show Bar Chart]

This bar chart compares our Pakistan education assistance aid versus our military support. I know it's hard to see the bar for the education funding, which is 15 times less than our military assistance.

Remember that the 9/11 Commission spoke of the need for using all the tools in our toolbox and of the need in Pakistan specifically for a, and I quote: "comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education."

But in its latest budget submission, the Administration requested a 33 percent cut in funding for "Development Assistance" to Pakistan, a category that includes funding for "basic education programming."

And here's the scope of the problem we're up against.

UNICEF estimates that some 13 million 5-9 year-old children – out of some 27 million total – are not enrolled in school at all. That's nearly half of all Pakistani kids. And of those students who are enrolled, approximately 50 percent will drop-out before completing primary education.

Looking at the scope of the problem, the 9/11 Commission's Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton characterized our education aid levels as a "drop in the bucket."

A recent *Washington Quarterly* article co-authored by one of today's witnesses put it this way – the U.S. is spending a scant $1.16 per child per year for more than 55 million school-aged Pakistani children.

Pakistan itself only spends a miniscule two percent of its gross domestic product on education. Untrained, unmotivated, and absenteeism-plagued teachers have led to the phenomenon of so-called "ghost schools" – where buildings sit idle or filled with students chaperoned by "minders" rather than educators

All of us hope to support the Pakistani people in their efforts to achieve for themselves a stable, prosperous, and free nation. But our national security interests in the future of Pakistani children is much more acute. Will we be safe over the next 5, 10, or 20 years as thousands – perhaps millions – more kids learn jihad at extremist madrassas instead of learning real-world skills to become productive citizens in their communities?

The Pakistani people are treading water during a rising tide of extremism; a tide that threatens their society and their children's futures; a tide that exposes our soldiers in Afghanistan to attack; and a tide that threatens us here at home to a gathering, new generational wave of terror.

As the 9/11 Commission warned in a world of great mobility and even greater weapons: "the American homeland is the planet." We simply must follow the 9/11 Commission's sage advice to use all elements of our power – including military might, public diplomacy, intelligence capabilities, and development assistance – to ensure that such waves of terror never build and never crash again on our shores.

That, to me, is the job facing all of us today.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing, and to our witnesses.

Today the subcommittee examines education reform in Pakistan, as our chairman has pointed out. On the surface this may seem far removed from the corners of this subcommittee, but it is not. The government of Pakistan's success overriding the persuasion of Islamic extremism in its educational system directly affects national and international security. But as we go into this inquiry we must keep in mind the inherent limitations of U.S. policy and U.S. aid affecting dramatic cultural change.

Education reform in Pakistan takes on two meanings: one, strengthening of the educational institutions; and, two, having influence over Islamic schools better known as madrassas. Both Presidents Bush and Musharraf have stated success in eradicating terror cannot be accomplished without dramatic improvement in Pakistan's education system.

The problems affecting public education in Pakistan range from the lack of qualified teachers to the limited number of school buildings. In some of the less-developed regions, teachers serve as child minders or sitters, not educators. At the other end of the spectrum, in the earthquake-ravaged and economically depressed areas, there are no physical structures to accommodate school-aged children. An entire generation in Pakistan is suffering from inadequate public education opportunities. This void and, in some instances, financial hardship has led some families to send their children to one of the 12,000 tuition-free madrassas in Pakistan. The vast majority of these madrassas teach the fundamental tenets of Islam, but in many cases they lack a curriculum for science, math, and English.

A minority of these madrassas are indoctrinating students with anti-western, pro-Islamic fundamentalist messages. It is these madrassas and Islamic extremists they beget which pose a serious threat to regional and international security. This is the life cycle of the terrorists. The first step is Islamic indoctrination. The next step is graduation to terror training camps, many of which have connections with Al Qaeda or Taliban. Next, they move across the porous Pakistan-Afghan border into Afghanistan to raid Jihad against Coalition forces.

But that is not the only front for these Jihadists. The products of terrorist training camps have effected their terror in western venues, as well. It is known that terrorists responsible for the London underground bombing and the disrupted United Kingdom fertilizer bomb plot had links to or were trained in madrassas and terror training camps in Pakistan.

Which cities and which innocent civilians will be the next victim of this terrorism?

Pakistan has taken meaningful steps toward educational reform. After 9/11, President Bush and President Musharraf said education reform in Pakistan is a key to stemming the rise of Islamist extremism and the rise of global terrorism. President Musharraf is the first Pakistani leader in recent decades to take an unpopular stand against schools and the camps used to indoctrinate Pakistani youth with the principles of Islamist fundamentalism.

In 2002, President Musharraf laid out a three-prong approach: one, requiring registration and inspection of these religious facilities; two, excluding foreigners from their religious schools; and, three, requiring madrassas accept National Education Board testing standards. But these reforms have been difficult to implement, not only because of a lack of governance capacity and oversight, but also because of institutional resistance by the religious sector.

Critics say President Musharraf has done nothing to prevent the proliferation of the madrassas and effect meaningful reform. Other critics believe President Musharraf has provided lip service to the meaningful reforms he promised and has bowed to political pressure from Muslim political parties. And still others say Musharraf will continue to do the bare minimum to ensure continued unrestricted financial support from the United States.

The bottom line is educational reform in Pakistan is happening. Neither President Musharraf's success in strengthening the education sector nor the successes of the U.S. Agency for International Government Lead Projects can or should be overlooked; however, substantial advancement still lies ahead, and our role as legislators is to assess this reform honestly, letting the chips fall where they may, and to determine where the United States must apply pressure to ensure successful and complete reform.

We should not forget we need Pakistan's help in fighting terrorism. President Musharraf has accepted that mission. While there are great questions about President Musharraf's ability to confront madrassas, we must remain Pakistan's partner as it struggles to reform the one sector which assures the advancement and survival of their society: education.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely congratulate you and your staff on holding today's hearing. It is an opportunity for us to learn from our esteemed witnesses the status of Pakistan's education system, what accomplishments have been achieved, and the prognosis and path to eliminating the teachings of Islamist intolerance and fundamentalism.

I thank our witnesses for being here today and look forward to their testimony. I also want to thank the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, especially Charge d'Affaires, Peter Bodde, for making Ms. Ahmed's video testimony today possible.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Christopher Shays follows:]

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRMAN

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OPENING STATEMENT BY RANKING MEMBER CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
May 9, 2007

Today, the Subcommittee examines education reform in Pakistan. On the surface, this may seem far removed from the concerns of this Subcommittee, but, it is not. The Government of Pakistan's success overriding the persuasion of Islamic extremism in its educational system directly affects national and international security. But, as we go into this inquiry we must keep in mind the inherent limitations of US policy and US aid affecting dramatic cultural change.

Education reform in Pakistan takes on two meanings: (1) strengthening of the educational institutions; and (2) having influence over Islamic schools better known as *madrassas*. Both Presidents Bush and Musharraf have stated success in eradicating terror cannot be accomplished without dramatic improvement in Pakistan's education system.

The problems affecting public education in Pakistan range from the lack of qualified teachers to the limited number of school buildings. In some of the less developed regions, teachers serve as child sitters—not educators. At the other end of the spectrum, in the earthquake-ravaged and economically-depressed areas, there are no physical structures to accommodate school-aged children.

An entire generation in Pakistan is suffering from inadequate public educational opportunities. This void and, in some instances, financial hardship, has led some families to send their children to one of the 12,000 tuition-free madrassas in Pakistan. The vast majority of these madrassas teach the fundamental tenets of Islam, but, in many cases, they lack a curriculum for science, math and English.

A minority of these madrassas are indoctrinating students with anti-Western, pro-Islamic fundamentalist messages. It is these madrassas and the Islamic extremists they beget which pose a serious threat to regional and international security.

This is the life cycle of a terrorist: the first step is Islamic indoctrination. The next step is graduation to terror training camps—many of which have connections to Al Qaeda or Taliban. Next, they move across the porous Pakistani-Afghan border into Afghanistan to wage Jihad against Coalition Forces.

But that is not the only front for these Jihadists. The products of terrorist training camps have affected their terror in Western venues as well. It is known the terrorists responsible for the London Underground bombing and the disrupted United Kingdom fertilizer bomb plot had links to or were trained in madrassas and terror training camps in Pakistan.

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Critics say President Musharraf has done nothing to stop the proliferation of madrassas and effect meaningful reform. Other critics believe President Musharraf has provided lip service to the meaningful reforms he promised and has bowed to political pressures from Muslim political parties. And, still others say Musharraf will continue to do the bare minimum to ensure continued unrestricted financial support from the United States.

The bottom line is: education reform in Pakistan is happening; neither President Musharraf's success in strengthening the education sector nor the successes of US Agency for International Development-led projects can or should be overlooked. However, substantial advancement still lies ahead, and our role as legislators is to assess this reform honestly, letting the chips fall where they may, and to determine where the US must apply pressure to ensure successful and complete reform.

We should not forget we need Pakistan's help in fighting terrorism. President Musharraf has accepted that mission. And, while there are questions about President Musharraf's ability to confront madrassas, we must remain Pakistan's partner as it struggles to reform the one sector which assures the advancement and survival of their society: education.

Mr. Chairman, I congratulate you on holding today's hearing. It is an opportunity for us to learn definitively from our esteemed witnesses the status of Pakistan's education system, what accomplishments have been achieved, and the prognosis and path to eliminate the teachings of Islamic intolerance and fundamentalism.

I thank our witnesses for being here today and look forward to their testimony. I also want to thank the US Embassy in Islamabad, especially Chargé d'Affaires Peter Bodee, for making Ms. Ahmed's video testimony today possible.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Shays.

The subcommittee will now receive testimony from the witnesses that are with us here today. I want to begin by introducing those witnesses.

Mr. Christopher Kojm is the president of the 9/11 Public Discourse Project and was a Deputy Director of the 9/11 Commission.

Dr. Ahmed, I don't know if you can see us. I know our technology was having some bumps earlier, but we really are grateful for you to join us. It is 9 hours difference in time between here and your evening schedule over there. We really do appreciate your joining us via videoconference from Islamabad, Pakistan.

We have Ms. Lisa Curtis, who is a senior research fellow for the Asian Studies Center at the Heritage Foundation.

And we have Mr. Craig Cohen, who is the deputy chief of staff and fellow for the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Thank all of you for your work on the subject and for sharing your expertise today.

It is our policy on the subcommittee to swear in witnesses before they testify, so we are going to ask you to please rise and raise your right hands, as well as any persons who might be assisting you in your testimony and testifying today.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. The record will please reflect that the witnesses all answered in the affirmative, including Dr. Ahmed. Thank you very much.

We have 5 minutes allotted for each of the statements. Obviously, we are not going to hold you exactly, strictly to the 5-minutes, but we do ask you to generalize your statements. Your statements will be placed in the record by unanimous consent in their entirety, and we do want to get to questions and answers, so if you would please proceed on that basis, I think we are going to start with Mr. Kojm.

STATEMENTS OF CHRISTOPHER KOJM, PRESIDENT OF THE 9/11 PUBLIC DISCOURSE PROJECT AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR, 9/11 COMMISSION; SAMINA AHMED, SOUTH ASIA PROJECT DIRECTOR FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP; LISA CURTIS, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, SOUTH ASIA, ASIAN STUDIES CENTER, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION; AND CRAIG COHEN, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, AND FELLOW, POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM, AT THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER KOJM

Mr. KOJM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Tierney, Ranking Member Shays, distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you this morning.

I believe I can be brief, because the chairman has been eloquent in outlining the work of the Commission and the Public Discourse Project.

Governor Kaine and Mr. Hamilton have observed that all the Commission's recommendations, those relating to education, have really received the least amount of attention; therefore, they are especially grateful for the work of this subcommittee in shining a bright light, and they asked me to convey to you their deep appreciation for your leadership, including the leadership of Chairman Shays in the 109th Congress and the leadership of Chairman Tierney with the ambitious series of hearings he has outlined for this Congress.

The chairman has mentioned that the Commission felt strongly that you cannot use just one tool of American foreign policy; you need to use all the tools.

Former Secretary Rumsfeld on this point has been especially eloquent. He said 4 years ago, "Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?" The answer is no. The threat to us today is not great armies, it is an ideology, the ideology that propelled 19 young men and is propelling so many others to take their own lives in the desire to harm us.

It is important to go after Bin Laden and those who support him, to kill and capture them, but even more important are the tens of millions of young Arabs, the hundreds of millions of young Muslims who sympathize with this ideology. They represent in the long term the true threat to us. They are the wellspring to refresh the doctrine of hate and destruction.

Therefore, the Commission felt strongly that the United States has to define for itself a positive image in the Islamic world, a message of hope, a message of economic and educational opportunity. Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamic terrorism.

For this reason, as the chairman has outlined, the Commission made the recommendations it did: three important recommendations on education to combat the threat from terrorism.

Those have been outlined, so I will just speak briefly as to what has been achieved with respect to them.

On secular education, the Congress, in the December 2004, Intelligence Reform Act, did authorize the creation of an international youth opportunity fund; however, the President has not requested funds. Congress has not appropriated funds for such an endeavor.

There are educational efforts underway through the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the work of USAID, but they simply are not adequate for the task.

Our country needs a strategy for educational assistance that is part of our overall foreign policy strategy for this part of the world, and we need to fund it. We are just not funding it at any level that is appreciable that can make a difference.

On scholarship, library, and education programs, I think the important point here is that, by and large, we are moving backward. We are closing posts. We are limiting access. Much of this, of course, relates to security, but security cannot trump American national interests.

The most important part of public diplomacy is the last three feet. In the conversation between our people and the people of host countries, TV and radio is useful. I don't want to criticize it. But what really matters is building human ties and contacts. You can't influence people if you don't meet with them.

And what has happened in our libraries, we have closed them and we have substituted Web sites, we have substituted so-called America's Corners in libraries. That is not good enough. You need the human contact. Our libraries are not for just books or magazines; it is for building relationships and getting young people interested, many of them, in coming to the United States and developing education and careers.

The hardest thing in public diplomacy is funding scholarship and exchange programs, because in 1 year you can't see any impact. In 5 years you can't see much impact. But in the course of a generation there is nothing more important in public diplomacy than what we invest in scholarship and exchanges, because you shape attitudes for a generation, for the leadership of Pakistan and other countries, that they know the United States, they know how to work and relate with us, and, as we hit rough patches, as we always will in our relationship, at least we have interlocutors who have a sensible understanding of what we are trying to achieve, even if they don't agree with us.

Finally, the overall judgment of the Commission with respect to our relationship, Pakistan is important to us. Of course it is. We must have a relationship with Pakistan. President Musharraf has done a great deal in terms of apprehending bad guys. On the other hand, the Commission and the Public Discourse Project noted, as the chairman has, that there is still so much that needs to be done, especially along the frontier, in terms of better cooperation.

Turning to madrassas, the Public Discourse Project, frankly, was disappointed. The rhetoric has been good; the actions have not been fulfilled with respect to educational reform, either by Pakistani leaders or by the United States.

Let me just close by saying that Chairman Kaine and Vice Chair Hamilton understood that we cannot solve the problems of this part of the world. They are too great and our resources, no matter how much we bring to bear, can't address the problem comprehensively. Yet, it is critically important that people in the Arab world, people across the Islamic world need to know that America is on their side, that we stand for political participation, personal freedom, rule of law, economic, and, above all, educational opportunity.

Secular education opens doors to a better future. America's support for education sends a powerful message. It is a message of hope.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kojm follows:]

Prepared Statement of
Christopher A. Kojm, Visiting Scholar
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
May 9, 2007

Chairman Tierney, Ranking Member Shays, distinguished members of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs: It is an honor to appear before you this morning.

The 9/11 Commission and its follow-on organization, the 9/11 Public Discourse Project, devoted considerable attention to the topic of today's hearing. Governor Kean and Mr. Hamilton have observed that of all the Commission's recommendations, those relating to education have received the least attention. Therefore, they are especially grateful for the work of this Subcommittee in shining a bright light. They asked me to convey to you their deep appreciation for your leadership.

I. We cannot succeed with one tool alone

A central finding and recommendations of the 9/11 Commission is that you need all the tools of policy to protect the United States against terrorism. Military power is certainly necessary. It is important, but you cannot provide for the national security of the United States by the use of force alone.

The United States cannot succeed against terrorism by Islamist extremist groups unless we use all the tools of national power: military power, diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, homeland defense, economic policy, and – yes – developmental assistance and support for education.

If we favor one tool while neglecting others, we leave ourselves vulnerable and weaken our national effort. Former Secretary Rumsfeld four years ago asked exactly the right question: "Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassahs and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?"

The answer is no. The threat to us today is not from great armies. The threat to us comes from the beliefs that propelled 19 young men – and propel many others -- to take their own lives in a desire to inflict grave harm upon us.

The military struggle is part of the struggle we face, but the far greater struggle we face is the war of ideas. As much as we worry about Bin Ladin and al Qaeda – and the Commission did – we worry far more about the attitudes of tens of millions of young Arabs and hundreds of millions of young Muslims.

Those who sympathize with Bin Ladin represent, in the long-term, a far greater threat to us. They represent the well-spring to refresh the doctrine of hate and destruction, no matter how many al-Qaeda members we capture or kill.

The Commission felt strongly that the United States needed to define a positive image for itself in the Islamic world – a message of hope, a message of economic and educational opportunity. Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism.

II. What the 9/11 Commission Recommended

For these reasons, a Commission created to investigate terrorism made three important recommendations on education.

A. Support Secular Education in Muslim Countries

First, the Commission recommended the creation of an International Youth Opportunity Fund to support secular education in Muslim countries.

The Commission recommended that the U.S. government should join with other nations in generously supporting a new International Youth Opportunity Fund. Funds should be spent directly for building and operating primary and secondary schools in those Muslim states that commit to sensibly investing their own money in public education.

B. Rebuilding Scholarship, Library and Exchange Programs

Second, the Commission recommended that the United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange, and library programs that reach out to young people in the Muslim world and offer them knowledge and hope.

Just as it did during the Cold War, the United States must do more to communicate its message, to explain and defend its ideals and values. We have spent too long exporting our fears and our anger, not our vision of opportunity and hope.

If the United States does not act aggressively to define itself in the Islamic world, the extremists will gladly do the job for us.

C. Support for Pakistan Against Extremists

Third, the Commission recommended that the United States should sustain the current scale of aid to Pakistan, and support Pakistan's government in its struggle against extremists with a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for education, so long as Pakistan's leaders remain willing to make difficult choices in support of what President Musharraf has called "enlightened moderation."

III. Status of Recommendations

After the Commission delivered its report and recommendations in July 2004, the 9/11 Public Discourse Project followed up with public education in support of these recommendations, and a monitoring effort to track the status of their implementation.

The former Commissioners delivered a Report Card on the status of their recommendations at the end of 2005.

A. Support Secular Education in Muslim Countries

On the question of support for secular education in Muslim countries, the former Commissioners issued a "D" grade.

What has happened: The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 authorized the creation of the International Youth Opportunity Fund and instructed the Secretary of State to seek international cooperation in funding it. To date, the Executive branch has not requested funding, and Congress has not appropriated funding, to establish such a program.

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and USAID have initiated programs across the Arab world to support secular education improvements and the teaching of English. A number of these programs focus on female education.

What needs to be done: Congress should make appropriations to initiate the International Youth Opportunity Fund, which would allow the Secretary of State to begin seeking international contributions to the Fund.

Programs through MEPI and USAID are a constructive start to answering the challenge of secular education in Muslim countries. These programs should be components of an overarching strategy for educational assistance—and components of an overall U.S. strategy for counterterrorism. As part of that strategy, the important long-term national security tool of educational assistance should receive significantly increased funding from the Congress. The current level of education funding is not sufficient given the scale of the challenge.

B. Scholarship, Library and Exchange Programs

On scholarship, library and exchange programs, the former Commissioners issued a "D" grade.

What has happened: Overseas American libraries are closing in the regions we want to reach most, largely due to security concerns. The American Consulate and Library in Istanbul, Turkey was targeted at least six times by terrorists until it was closed in 2003. The United States closed the American Center in Islamabad in 2005. Even the American Center in New Delhi, frequently touted as a model public diplomacy facility, is being closed in 2007 due to security concerns. Over the past two years, the State Department

has increased its investment in interactive websites and American reading sections in host country libraries. Neither initiative includes the presence of U.S. personnel for dialogue, reading guidance, and educational counseling, important factors in shaping the attitudes of foreign users.

What needs to be done: The U.S. needs to make library posts abroad viable, even in the face of security challenges. The U.S. should increase support for scholarship and exchange programs, our most powerful tool to shape attitudes over the course of a generation.

C. Support Pakistan Against Extremists

On the recommendation of support for Pakistan against extremists, the former Commissioners gave a grade of "C+".

What has happened: The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 provided sense of Congress language supportive of the Commission's recommendations, but did not otherwise address them. Congressional funding in support of the President's pledge of a five-year $3 billion assistance package are encouraging signs of a long-term commitment to Pakistan. But there is still little movement beyond security assistance: Too much of our non-military assistance is in the form of a cash transfer, and too little is dedicated to improving secular education in Pakistan.

President Musharraf has made real efforts to take on the threat from extremism, yet Pakistan remains a sanctuary and training ground for terrorists. He has not lived up to his promises to regulate the madrassas properly or close down all those that are known to have links to extremist groups. Taliban forces still pass freely across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and operate in Pakistani tribal areas. Terrorists from Pakistan carry out operations in Kashmir. Finally, the results of promised democratization efforts are yet to be seen.

The challenge of education in Pakistan is far bigger than the resources we can provide – yet U.S. assistance can also make a difference. Reports indicate that the rapid U.S. aid in response to the devastating October, 2005 earthquake in Kashmir enhanced the U.S. standing in Pakistan. When we provide tangible assistance, the people of Pakistan take notice.

What needs to be done: U.S. assistance to Pakistan must move beyond security assistance. Current funding levels are not adequate to the task of helping to revive Pakistan's failing basic education system. Funding for education must be increased. The U.S. government should pressure Pakistan to act forcefully to close Taliban-linked madrassas, shut down terrorist training camps, and prevent Taliban forces from operating across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

IV. Conclusions

Mr. Chairman, the educational recommendations put forward by the 9/11 Commission face enormous challenges and, frankly, have not had much success to date.

The former Commissioners are convinced that we cannot win the war on terrorism unless we also win the war of ideas. We need to win hearts and minds across the great swath of the globe, from Morocco to Malaysia.

People in the Arab and Muslim world need to know that America is on their side – that America stands for political participation, personal freedom, and the rule of law; that America stands for economic and –above all – educational opportunity.

This is not just a counterterrorism policy: it is the right foreign policy to advance all of America's interests.

The United States cannot take on the responsibility for transforming the Arab and Muslim world. It is up to courageous Muslims to change their own societies. But the people of the Arab and Muslim world need to know that we are on their side, that we want better lives for them and their children and grandchildren. Secular education opens doors to a better future. America's support for education sends a powerful message to the Arab and Muslim world: It is a message of hope.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to responding to your questions.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Kojm. I appreciate your remarks.

Now we are going to see if the committee really has the technology down. We are going to go to Dr. Samina Ahmed and ask for her remarks.

Doctor, please.

STATEMENT OF SAMINA AHMED

Ms. AHMED. Mr. Chairman, vice chairman, distinguished members of the committee, thank you so very much for this privilege of testifying on behalf of the International Crisis Group.

My testimony will focus on the state of Islamic radicalism in Pakistan, because we have to look at the overall picture and then look at the madrassas in that context.

President Musharraf joined the United States as an ally in the war on terror. He has been the beneficiary of billions of dollars of assistance. He has also been the beneficiary of enormous U.S. diplomatic support. But we, the Crisis Group, give him an F grade in dismantling Jihadi and violent sectarian groups, in regulating the madrassas that sustain them, which were, after all, key commitments that he had made to the United States as a partner in the war on terror.

Yes, he has banned a number of Islamic radical groups, but they are still operating freely with their infrastructure intact, including those that have been declared terror organizations by the United Nations and the United States.

The Jihadi madrassas, as the chairman talked about in some detail, are one of our greatest concerns, as well as that of the United States, with good reason. It is these Jihadi madrassas or these extremist madrassas that provide and train recruits for local, regional, and international Jihads.

The chairman talked about the Red Mosque Complex, which is in Islamabad, itself. We have seen, since January 2007, the Jihadi managers of the two madrassas associated with this complex taking on the state, taking on the citizens, launching a reign of terror, but the government's response has been to cave in to their demands instead of enforcing rule of law, instead of protecting Pakistani citizens.

The demands that they have caved in, for example, are that the illegally constructed madrassas on state land will be reconstructed. These were demolished because of good reason, but caving in to their demand means that other Jihadi madrassas will now be encouraged, use force, and then the state will cave in.

But the president of the ruling party, Musharraf's ruling party, has also said that the government will accept yet another demand, which is to enforce the [foreign word], Islamic law.

These are not the kinds of signals that should have been sent to Jihadis who are challenging the right of the state and who are, in fact, a threat to international security.

Other Jihadi madrassas are also flourishing, and if you talk about madrassa reform, one of the things you have to remember is that underpinning any madrassa reform is the legislation. The legislation enacted by this government is imperfect to the extreme. If you actually look at the legislation, which is an amended act of 1860, it provides no reliable statistics, even on the number of

madrassas. The government says there is something like 13,800. Independent observers believe there could be anywhere between 20,000. Even if 10 to 15 percent of these madrassas are extremist madrassas, we have a serious problem on our hands.

Because of this imperfect nature of the legislation, we don't know how many students are in those madrassas. Even more so, it is extremely disconcerting that the religious, the Jihadi, the tiering content of the curriculum has not been addressed in this endeavor to actually reform the curriculum of the madrassas. Until that is addressed in a meaningful fashion, extremist madrassas will keep on preaching the Jihad, will keep on indoctrinating young people. The extremist madrassas are still distributing Jihadi material. They are still no ways of telling in any meaningful way the means of funding, the donors of these madrassas, how many foreign students are there. And even the madrassas that are linked to the banned Jihadi groups are still flourishing.

There is good reason that the State Department said, as you, Mr. Chairman, have alluded, that Pakistan is a major source of Islamic extremism and a safe haven for terrorist leaders, the reason being that these Jihadi madrassas provide recruits to the extremist organizations, the homegrown terrorist organizations. And, as we have seen since 2002, these homegrown terrorist organizations, many of them with links to Al Qaeda, are still flourishing.

There has been no meaningful activity on the part of the government to make sure that these organizations don't operate under changed names, don't operate under fronts. What are the compulsions of the regime? Is it because they don't have the capacity? It seems much more so that there isn't a political will.

Let's not forget that President Musharraf has a formal alliance with the Jamaat-i-Islam. This is the pro-Taliban party, the religious party, the largest party in the religious alliance that forms the government of Balochistan. You talked at Quetta? Well, Quetta is the provincial capital of Balochistan. The reason for this alliance relationship is because of regime constraints, because of the need to reach [foreign word], to marginalize his main civilian opponents, the moderate parties, the largest moderate parties being the PPP and the Muslim League that still retain the vast majority of popular support in a country where people are, for the very large part, moderate Muslims.

There are new opportunities that are now arising, and let's see if the United States takes up these opportunities in making sure that this reform project that has been put on hold is actually given new life. It is absolutely essential that, as we are in 2007, an election year, that the United States decides—another witness referred to rule of law and how important that is to the United States. Rule of law and constitutionalism should be central. A free and fair election and a democratic transition should be central to U.S. policy, because it is then when the moderate parties will come into their own. The religious extremists and the extremist madrassas will face a real challenge.

I am told when I have said this many times before, before members of various branches of the U.S. Government, what then happens? Can a moderate government, democratically elected government control the military, which is essential to any cooperation in

the war on terror? I think it is absolutely essential that the United States does not give the military a blank check. There needs to be now clear benchmarks, benchmarks on reform of the madrassas, including a demand that the Jihadi madrassas must be closed down. There need to be benchmarks also for a democratic transition and a clear signal sent that the United States will not accept the military once again intervening to stop a moderate government from implementing the reforms that would stabilize Pakistan, that could benefit Afghanistan, and that would work in U.S. national security interests.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ahmed follows:]

Testimony of Dr. Samina Ahmed, South Asia Project Director, International Crisis Group, to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Hearing on "Extremist Madrasas, Ghost Schools, and U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Are We Making the Grade of 9/11 Commission Report Card?"

Islamabad, Pakistan, May 9, 2007.

I want to thank Chairman John F. Tierney for holding this important hearing and inviting me to testify on behalf of the International Crisis Group on the threats posed to regional and international security by violent sectarian and jihadi groups in Pakistan and the network of extremist madrasas on which they depend.

The Crisis Group has been in South Asia since December 2001, and has published reports directly relevant to the issues under this committee's review. We are deeply concerned about the Musharraf government's failure to dismantle jihadi and violent sectarian groups and regulate the madrasa sector that helps sustain them. We also believe that the Musharraf government deserves an "F" with respect to the 9/11 Commission call for it to make the decision to end Taliban command and control, recruiting and training centers in Pakistan. Expanding on the multiple threats posed by Islamist extremism in Pakistan, my testimony will focus on the state of Islamic radicalism in a country which, given the right international and domestic policies and political will, could play a key role in countering global terrorism.

Religious extremism in Pakistan has become the focus of international attention in the wake of the attacks of September 11. More than five years ago, Pakistan's military government, in its role as a key ally in the war on terrorism, had pledged to curb militancy and religious extremism within the country and abroad, and to set Pakistani society on a sustainable course that would lead to political pluralism and religious tolerance. Although the Musharraf government has benefited enormously from its partnership with the United States, gaining billions of dollars in U.S. assistance as well as crucial diplomatic support, it has failed on a number of scores.

The Pakistan government has yet to crack down on violent sectarian and jihadi groups and to regulate the madrasas on which they depend. Many Islamist radical groups have been banned and then allowed to operate under changed names, including a number proscribed by the U.S. as terror organizations. Nor has the government regulated and reformed the madrasa sector, which remains their main source of recruitment. It has yet to make any meaningful progress in registering madrasas, regulating their curriculum, monitoring their funding, or checking their use in spreading political and sectarian prejudices. Extremist madrasas still provide and train recruits for local, regional and international jihads. Since Pakistan's laws on terror financing also remain muddled and opaque, madrasa funding remains unaccountable. This lack of government action is undermining regional stability, promoting extremism, and preventing the spread of democratic ideals in Pakistan.

Lal Masjid: Madrasa Reform on Hold

Nothing more amply demonstrates the government's lack of political will to combat violent sectarian and jihadi groups and to regulate the madrasa sector that helps sustain them than its failure to enforce the writ of the state against a jihadi madrasa complex situated in the very heart of the federal capital, Islamabad. Since January 2007, hundreds of hard-line male and female students from the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) complex which houses Jamia Hafsa (for women) and Jamia Fareedia (for men) have taken the law into their hands to protest the demolition of illegally constructed mosques and madrasas on state land. Demanding the imposition of the Sharia (Islamic law) in Pakistan, and attempting to forcibly impose their version of radical Islam on the country's moderate majority, they have kidnapped women after accusing them of immoral conduct, occupied a state-run children's library and attacked music and video shops.

The Lal Masjid complex is led by two clerical brothers, Maulana Abdul Aziz and Maulana Ghazi Abdul Rasheed, who had been detained for harboring and abetting terrorists in 2004 but were released after Musharraf's Religious Affairs Minister Ijazul Haq took up their cause. Lal Masjid's madrasa managers still publicly support the Taliban; and encourage their students to join the anti-Western jihad in Afghanistan. The two clerical brothers have even warned Islamabad that their 10,000 men and women students would launch suicide attacks if the state attempts to forcibly suppress their Taliban-style movement.

The Lal Masjid complex is state-run and state-funded. Yet President and Army Chief Pervez Musharraf's government has not dismissed the managers of Lal Masjid's madrasas from public service, let alone enforced the law. Instead, the government has agreed to rebuild the demolished mosques on state land, with state funding. In an attempt to appease Lal Masjid's jihadis, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, the leader of Musharraf's ruling party, the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam—PML-Q) has even expressed his government's willingness to take tangible steps to enforce the Shariah.

Lal Majid's jihadis have become the focus of international attention largely because this jihadi madrasa complex is located in the heart of the federal capital. But scores of other jihadi madrasas are thriving countrywide, promoting violent sectarianism within Pakistan and training and dispatching jihadi fighters to Afghanistan and Indian-administered Kashmir.

Five years after Musharraf declared his intention to crack down on extremist madrasas and regulate the religious education sector, his reform plan is in shambles.

- The amended Societies Registration Act of 1860, the law enacted by the Musharraf government for registering and regulating madrasas is riddled with loopholes and exceptions. This law does nothing to clarify the real number of madrasas. It also fails to generate any useful information about their activities.

- Despite bans and restrictions, the enrolment of foreign students is insufficiently regulated.
- There are no meaningful financial disclosure and oversight mechanisms of funding or other financial information. The madrasa law does not provide for independent audits or include useful information about donors or details of expenditures.
- Madrasa curriculum reform, or the government's scheme of 'mainstreaming' the madrasas, focuses on adding modern, non-religious courses but excludes the violent sectarian, jihadi content of the religious curriculum from its purview.
- Madrasas and mosques still disseminate jihadi views, despite laws against hate speech, through books, newspapers, pamphlets, handbills, audiotapes and videotapes.
- Madrasas run by banned sectarian and jihadi groups operate freely countrywide and continue to provide foot soldiers to radical Islamist organizations, for the jihads in Afghanistan and Kashmir and to al-Qaeda linked terror groups.

Domestic Extremism and International Terror

The U.S. State Department's 2006 Country Report on Terrorism has called Pakistan "a major source of Islamic extremism and a safe haven for top terrorist leaders". Senior U.S. military and intelligence officials, testifying before Congress, have warned of a resurgent al-Qaeda, aligned with local groups, extending its operations from bases in Pakistan to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. With jihadi madrasas still indoctrinating Pakistan's youth, justifying the use of indiscriminate force on religious grounds, and providing recruits for homegrown terrorist groups, many with links to al-Qaeda, there is good reason for concern.

More than five years after Musharraf promised to crack down on terrorism and to end the jihadi culture in Pakistan, jihadi and violent sectarian groups, many listed as terrorist by the United Nations and the United States and banned by his government, have been allowed to operate freely under changed names or through front organizations. These include the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), renamed the Jamaat-ud-Dawa and the Jaish-e-Mohammad which calls itself the Khadam-ul-Islam. Their leaders operate freely, issuing public calls for jihad, with the jihadi madrasas providing their organizations an endless supply of recruits. The infrastructure of these terror groups and hence their capacity to mount terrorist attacks remain intact.

The Musharraf government's successes against al-Qaeda, including its 600 arrests, appear impressive but should be weighed against its failure to eliminate Pakistan's homegrown terrorist organizations with links to transnational terrorism. In fact, the divide between homegrown terrorists and al-Qaeda is artificial at best. Both are motivated by a distorted religious ideology and rely on terror tactics.

Most al-Qaeda adherents, foreign or local, have close connections with domestic jihadi organizations. A Karachi-based al-Qaeda linked jihadi group conducted the suicide attack

that killed a U.S. diplomat in Karachi in March 2006. Links between mainstream Islamist parties, such as the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), the second largest party in the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), Musharraf's coalition partner in the Balochistan provincial government, and international terrorist networks have also come into the limelight after the arrests of a number of high profile al-Qaeda operatives from the homes of JI workers, including al-Qaeda operations chief Khalid Sheikh Mohammad in 2003.

Yet Musharraf's government remains the MMA's coalition partner in Balochistan. The military government has also worked openly with banned jihadi groups including Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the renamed LeT, in the earthquake-hit areas of Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Government inaction and the military's continued support for jihadi organizations operating in Kashmir bears major implications for Pakistani, regional and international security.

- Sectarian violence is at an all time high, even in regions such as Balochistan where such attacks were once unknown. In July 2003, an attack on a Shia mosque in Balochistan's capital, Quetta, left 54 Shias dead; a Deobandi attack on a rival Sunni group killed 47 people in Karachi in April 2006; on 27 January 2007, a suicide bomber killed at least 13 people, including the city police chief, in a sectarian attack in NWFP's capital Peshawar.
- In the absence of a robust anti-money laundering law, promised in 2002 but still to be placed before parliament, terror financing to jihadi madrasas as well as homegrown and foreign terrorist groups flows unhindered.
- With the support of their local allies, al-Qaeda has revived and reorganized its base in Pakistan.
- Pakistan-based jihadi groups including the renamed LeT still conduct terror attacks in Indian-administered Kashmir; this terror activity could disrupt the normalization of relations between the two nuclear-armed South Asian adversaries.

Madrasas, Talibanization and Compulsions of Military Rule

After almost eighth years of absolute rule, Musharraf has yet to live up to his pledges to confront and eliminate Islamic extremism. This failure owes far less to the difficulty of implementing reforms than his military government's political compulsions. Musharraf has chosen to co-opt the Islamist parties that run Pakistan's jihadi madrasas to consolidate his regime and to neutralize his moderate political opposition. Whatever measures taken thus far to contain Islamist radicalism have been largely cosmetic, and primarily aimed at easing international pressure.

In 2002, the military government rigged the national elections. Musharraf's moderate civilian opposition, Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League (PML-N), which dominated politics during the democratic interlude of the 1990s were marginalized. Even during the 1990s, efforts made by elected governments to rid Pakistan of Islamic extremism were thwarted by the military, including, for instance, Bhutto's efforts to reform the madrasa sector and Sharif's

attempts to subdue violent sectarianism. Their governments were dismissed by the military well before their full terms.

Under Musharraf, with the military's support, for the very first time in Pakistan's history Islamist parties, members of the six party MMA alliance captured two of the four provincial (state) governments in Pakistan in the rigged 2002 national polls. The MMA now rules these strategically located provinces bordering on Afghanistan-- the Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan, where it is a coalition partner with Musharraf's PML-Q. The Islamist parties have repaid Musharraf for his support by helping him gain a vote of confidence in parliament, which extended his presidency until 2007.

Lacking a civilian constituency, Musharraf remains dependent today on the religious parties, particularly his coalition partner in the Balochistan government, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), the pro-Taliban party, and the major partner in the MMA alliance, to counter his moderate civilian opposition. The JUI runs the largest network of Deobandi madrasas in Pakistan. Not only are most sectarian, jihadi madrasas associated with the Deobandi sect, the JUI's madrasa network also provides sanctuary, support and recruits to the Taliban and their Pakistani militant allies. The JUI-led Balochistan and NWFP governments also actively promote religious vigilantism and are responsible for the creeping Talibanization of Pakistan's predominantly Pashtun tribal belt.

The military's policy of appeasing homegrown militants in Pakistan's tribal belt has focused on peace deals that have amnestied pro-Taliban militants. The military's virtual retreat to the barracks, ceding control over this strategic region bordering on Afghanistan to the Islamist radicals, has given the Taliban a secure base of operations. Emboldened Taliban and their Pakistani allies are now targeting U.S. and Afghan troops across the border and imposing oppressive Taliban-style policing and court systems in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The implications of the military government's policies are more than evident.

- Following peace deals with the military government, using the region to regroup, reorganize and rearm, Taliban and other foreign militants, including al-Qaeda are launching increasingly severe cross-border attacks on Afghan and international military personnel, with the support and active involvement of Pakistani militants.
- Appeasement has not only allowed local militants to establish Taliban-style governance structures, but Talibanization is also spreading into NWFP's settled districts.
- Taliban-linked command and control centers also operate from Quetta in Balochistan and Peshawar in NWFP, urban centers that are fully under the control of the Pakistan military, according to every knowledgeable observer, including current Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, former NATO Commanding General James Jones, the head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency and Chief of Operations at the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lt. General Douglas Lute who have testified on this issue before the U.S. Congress.

Upcoming Elections and US Policy Choices

In 2007, presidential elections and national elections are due in Pakistan. If these elections are free, fair and democratic, the moderate parties, which retain the largest segment of popular support, will form government, and the religious parties will be marginalized, creating an enabling climate for meaningful reform of the madrasa sector.

The choice that Pakistan faces is not between the military and the mullahs, as is generally believed in the West, including the United States. It is between genuine democracy and a mullah-military alliance that is responsible for the religious extremism that poses a threat to Pakistani, regional and international security. Real reform of the Pakistani state and polity will only be possible through the strengthening of the country's moderate parties and forces, with free and fair elections as an essential precondition and first step.

To prevent the military from once again derailing democracy and to pressure it from abandoning its policy of using Islamist proxies to promote perceived regional interests in Afghanistan and India, the United States must send a clear signal of zero tolerance, as it did in the immediate aftermath of September 11, backed by the threat of targeted military-specific sanctions.

The United States must change its policy of unconditional support for General Musharraf; instead it should insist on benchmarks for tangible reform.

The U.S. should call on the Musharraf government to:

- Effectively regulate and reform the madrasa sector, and close all jihadi madrasas and those affiliated with banned organizations.
- Dismantle the infrastructure of groups banned under Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Law, prosecute their leaders and prevent members from regrouping and reorganizing under new identities.
- Immediately enact meaningful anti-money laundering legislation and sign the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

The United States should:

- Make military assistance conditional on Pakistan denying the Taliban sanctuary and a base of operations on its soil; and ending Taliban recruitment, training and finances.
- Make diplomatic support and levels of financial support to the Pakistan government contingent on free, fair and democratic elections in 2007.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Dr. Ahmed. We appreciate it. We are most grateful that the technology is working on that, as well.

Ms. Curtis.

STATEMENT OF LISA CURTIS

Ms. CURTIS. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss U.S. assistance programs to Pakistan's education sector and the role of madrassas in contributing to extremism and militancy.

I will briefly summarize my written statement and ask that my full statement be included in the hearing record.

Achieving a strong and effective education system in Pakistan is essential to promoting stability, moderation, and prosperity, and should be a top priority for Washington in its relations with Islamabad. Lack of adequate education opportunities in Pakistan has contributed to development of extremist ideologies that have fueled terrorism and sectarian tensions, as well as stifled economic growth.

Pakistan's public education system has suffered tremendously over the last several decades. The overall adult literacy rate is about 43 percent, with the female literacy rate as low as 32 percent. With the population growth rate well over 2 percent, Pakistan will add about 100 million people to its population over the next 25 years. Pakistan must implement significant education reforms and raise literacy rates and skill levels so that the Pakistani youth of today will play a productive role in the future economy.

U.S. assistance to primary education and literacy in Pakistan more than doubled, from $28 million in fiscal year 2004 to $66 million in fiscal year 2005. The impact of the findings of the 9/11 Commission report issued in July 2004, which emphasized the importance of educational opportunity in uprooting terrorist ideology, as well as increased congressional oversight of USAID programs to Pakistan contributed to the increase in education spending.

The fiscal year 2008 State Department congressional budget request includes $52 million for general education programs and an additional $50 million for earthquake reconstruction of schools and health facilities.

USAID education programs focus on empowering the local community by fostering partnerships between parents and teachers that improve accountability for the children's education. I had the opportunity to visit a USAID-funded school outside of Islamabad in late 2005. I met the students, teachers, and parents, and saw first hand the pride they took in their school and their appreciation for the USAID support. Through a grant of only $1,500, USAID had helped establish a school for 500 children and built community support for the teachers and the maintenance of the school facilities.

Washington also needs to encourage the Pakistan government to follow through on its own reforms, including limiting corruption and inefficiency within the education system.

The Musharraf government launched its education sector reforms in January 2002, but has yet to fulfill its pledge to raise the education budget to 4 percent of GDP, in line with UNESCO recommendations.

The United States and other international donors should be careful not to repeat the mistakes made in the World Bank social action program implemented during the 1980's and 1990's. Although billions were spent on this program, it failed to meet basic objectives like increasing school enrollment and bringing education to remote parts of the country. Some experts believe the program failed because it did not address the problems of corruption and inefficiency within the Pakistan education bureaucracy.

The role of the madrassa in Pakistan and its contribution to Islamic militancy has been the subject of intense debate in U.S. academic and policy circles. Observers have argued over the actual numbers of madrassas and madrassa students in Pakistan. Recent statistics from the government of Pakistan indicate there may be around 12,000 madrassas and between 1.5 to 2 million madrassa students; however, the number of madrassas is not particularly relevant to assessing their link to terrorism. Many of the older madrassas have well-established reputations for producing serious Islamic thinkers, while others provide welfare services to the poor through free religious education, lodging, and food.

Most madrassas in Pakistan are not turning out terrorist foot soldiers; however, there are a handful of seminaries that do promote anti-west, pan-Islamic, and violent ideologies, and it is on these few madrassas where U.S. policymakers and the Pakistan authorities should focus their attention. Some of these dangerous madrassas are in the Northwest Frontier Province, including the semi-autonomous areas bordering Afghanistan. Some are in southern Punjab, and others are in major cities like Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi.

Some of these madrassas have contributed to sectarian tensions in Pakistan, while others have close institutional links with the Taliban. The recently jailed leader of a fertilizer bomb plot in England, Omar Khyam, was reportedly inspired and trained by Pakistan-based terrorists connected with the Kashmir militancy. In addition, one of the suicide bombers that carried out the July 7, 2005, bombings of the London transport system reportedly spent time at a Pakistani madrassa.

Washington should press Pakistan to crack down on those madrassas that continue to promote extremism and sectarian policies that lead to terrorism and destabilization of Pakistani society. The Pakistani authorities should be encouraged to clean house and any madrassa found to have links to international terrorist incidents. Islamabad should also make clear that individuals who provide protection or safe haven to Al Qaeda or like-minded terrorist groups will be held to account.

We have to use skillful diplomacy to persuade the Pakistan government to shut down completely all militant groups and to reform or close down those madrassas promoting violence and extremism. After 9/11, Pakistan did a 45-degree turn in ending official support to the Taliban. In early 2004, Pakistan did another 45-degree turn in sending troops to Wazirastan to combat Al Qaeda and Taliban elements there. However, now we need the government to complete the turn and end the permissive environment for all militant groups, including those that operate in Kashmir.

The United States should avoid, however, getting involved in Pakistan's broader madrassa reform efforts and accept that many of the traditional madrassas serve a useful purpose in educating Islamic intellectuals and providing shelter and food for impoverished youth. While a few Pakistani madrassas represent an international terrorist threat and deserve American scrutiny, most madrassas do not pose a threat.

The United States should also program more funds for specific education and development projects, rather than continue to provide the bulk of our economic assistance in the form of a direct cash transfer to the Pakistan government. Since 2004, the United States has provided $200 million annually to Pakistan in the form of direct budgetary support. We have established a consulting mechanism with Pakistan to try to ensure a portion of this money is spent on health and education; however, we cannot fully ensure that the U.S. taxpayer money is contributing to economic and human development in Pakistan.

The United States also reaps little public diplomacy benefits with the broader Pakistani population from this type of direct aid, which most Pakistanis view as benefiting the Musharraf regime, not the average Pakistani citizen.

The U.S. Congress should require that at least two-thirds of our total economic support fund [ESF], assistance be in the form of USAID project assistance related to education, health, and economic and democratic development.

To conclude, the development of a strong and effective education system is central to promoting moderation, tolerance, and economic development in Pakistan, and should, therefore, be a key plank in our relationship with Islamabad. Convincing the Pakistani government to take firm action against the handful of madrassas supporting violent extremism also is necessary, not only for the future stability of Pakistan, but to prevent future incidents of international terrorism.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Curtis follows:]

Statement of Lisa A. Curtis

Senior Research Fellow, the Heritage Foundation

Before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

"Extremist Madrassas, Ghost Schools, and U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Are We Making the Grade on the 9/11 Commission Report Card?"

May 9, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on the issue of education reform in Pakistan.[1] A strong and effective education system in Pakistan will help ensure the country steers a path of stability, moderation, and prosperity in the years to come and should therefore be a top priority for Washington in its relations with Islamabad. Lack of adequate education opportunities in Pakistan has contributed to the development of extremist ideologies that have fuelled terrorism and sectarian tensions as well as stifled economic growth. Fostering development and reform of the public education system will not only contribute to Pakistani economic prosperity and social tolerance, it will help improve the image of the U.S. by demonstrating American interest in the human development of average Pakistani citizens.

Today I will focus my remarks on the strengths and weaknesses of current U.S. assistance programs to Pakistan's education sector as well as the role of the madrassa (Islamic religious school) in contributing to militancy over the last decade in Pakistan.

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[1] The Heritage Foundation is a public policy, research, and educational organization operating under Section 501(C) (3). It is privately supported, and receives no funds from any government at any level, nor does it perform any government or other contract work. The Heritage Foundation is the most broadly supported think tank in the United States. During 2006, it had more than 283,000 individual, foundation, and corporate supporters representing every state in the U.S. Its 2006 income came from the following sources: individuals 64%; foundations 19%; corporations 3%; investment income 14%; and publication sales and other 0%. The top five corporate givers provided The Heritage Foundation with 1.3% of its 2006 income. The Heritage Foundation's books are audited annually by the national accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche. A list of major donors is available from The Heritage Foundation upon request. Members of The Heritage Foundation staff testify as individuals discussing their own independent research. The views expressed are their own, and do not reflect an institutional position for The Heritage Foundation or its board of trustees.

Background on Pakistan's Failing Education Sector

Pakistan's public education system has suffered from neglect and politicization over the last 30 years. The overall adult literacy rate for the population above the age of 15 is about 43.5 percent, while the rates for Sri Lanka and India are 92 percent and 61 percent, respectively. Female literacy rates in Pakistan are abysmal, standing at about 32 percent.[2] Barely 10 percent of children complete 12 years of schooling. With a population growth rate well over 2 percent, Pakistan is set to add another 100 million people to its current population of 160 million over the next 25 years. About half of this population will be under the age of 18. These demographic trends demand that Pakistan implement significant reforms to the education system and raise literacy rates and skill levels so that these young people can play a productive role in the future economy.

The World Bank and a number of donor agencies spent billions of dollars on a "Social Action Program" for Pakistan during the late 1980s and through the 1990s. After a decade, the program failed to achieve basic objectives like increasing school enrollment rates at the primary level and bringing education to remote parts of the country. The program failed because it did not address problems such as corruption and inefficiency within the Pakistan education bureaucracy.[3] The World Bank's experience should serve as a cautionary tale to the U.S. and other international donors demonstrating that merely throwing resources at the education sector is unlikely to bring positive results and that convincing the Pakistan government to reform its own institutions is a necessary part of the process.

U.S. Education Assistance to Pakistan: Targeting Critical Areas

U.S. assistance to primary education and literacy in Pakistan more than doubled from $28 million in Fiscal Year 2004 to $66 million in Fiscal Year 2005. The impact of the findings of the 9/11 Commission report issued in July 2004 on the importance of educational opportunity in the Middle East and South Asia to uprooting terrorist ideology and increased congressional oversight of U.S. aid programs to Pakistan contributed to the increase in education spending. The Fiscal Year 2008 State Department Congressional Budget Request includes $52 million for general education programs and an additional $50 million for earthquake reconstruction of schools and health facilities. The 2007 Emergency Supplemental Budget Request calls for another $150 million to develop Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), including the education sector. Through a program started in 2003, USAID already is constructing and furnishing 65 primary, middle, and high schools in five agencies of the FATA. The Japanese Government is partnering with the U.S. government on this project and constructing an additional 65 schools in the Tribal Areas.

USAID's education program in Pakistan provides training, technical assistance and infrastructure for government officials, citizens, and the private sector to deliver high quality

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[2] Shahid Javed Burki, "Educating the Pakistani Masses: The World Needs to Help," testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 19, 2005.

[3] Burki, "Educating the Pakistani Masses..."

education throughout the country. The program is currently focusing on selected impoverished districts in the Sindh and Baluchistan provinces in addition to the FATA (see above). The Basic Education Program benefits over 367,000 Pakistani children and USAID has so far trained over 16,000 Pakistani teachers and administrators. USAID also provides funding for needs-based scholarships for higher education and grants for Fulbright scholarships for post-graduate degrees in the U.S.

USAID education programs also focus on empowering the local community by fostering partnerships between parents and teachers that improve accountability for the children's education. I had the opportunity to visit a USAID-funded girls' school on the outskirts of Islamabad in late 2005. Through a grant of only $1,500, USAID inspired the people of this community to establish a Parent Teacher Association and to build a library for the school that serves over 500 students.

While this kind of outreach at the grassroots level is necessary, Washington also needs to encourage the Pakistan government to follow through on its own reforms. The Musharraf government launched its Education Sector Reforms (ESR) in January 2002 but has been unwilling to commit substantial resources to reforming the education sector. For example, the government has yet to follow through on its commitment to raise the education budget to four percent of GDP in line with UNESCO recommendations.

One of the major problems with Pakistan's public education sector has been the endemic corruption within the system, which has led to the phenomenon of "ghost schools," i.e. teachers not showing up to teach classes but only to collect their pay checks. The U.S. can help by supporting teacher training programs and encouraging greater accountability through community involvement, but the Pakistan government will have to do its part to limit corruption and inefficiency within the system.

Role of the Madrassa in Islamic Militancy in Pakistan

The role of the madrassa in Pakistan and its contribution to Islamic militancy has been the subject of intense debate in U.S. academic and policy circles. Observers have been unable to agree on the actual numbers of madrassas and madrassa students in Pakistan and some studies reveal that the international media has exaggerated these figures over the last few years.[4] A World Bank study from 2005, for example, says Pakistani madrassas account for less than one percent of total academic enrollment in the country.[5] In April 2002, Dr. Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi, the former Pakistani Minister of Religious Affairs, put the figure of madrassas at about 10,000, with 1.7 million students.

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[4] In Arabic the plural form of madrassa is *madaris*; however, this testimony will use a simplified English version of the word, madrassas.

[5] Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Tristan Zajonc, "Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data," *Working Paper Number:RWP05-024*, March 3, 2005.

While most madrassas in Pakistan are not churning out terrorist foot soldiers, there are a handful of religious seminaries that promote anti-west, pan-Islamic, and violent ideologies. Many of the older madrassas have well-established reputations for producing serious Islamic thinkers, while others provide welfare services to the poor through free religious education, lodging, and food. A madrassa student learns how to read, memorize, and recite the Quran and those with advanced theological training become Ulema (religious scholars). Each of the different schools of Islamic thought in Pakistan, including the Sunni Deobandis, Barelvis, Ahle-Hadith (Salafi), and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) as well as the Shiia, runs its own seminaries.

From a counterterrorism perspective, U.S. policymakers should focus their attention on the handful of madrassas in Pakistan that have well-established links to terrorism. These madrassas are likely well-know to the Pakistani authorities and increasingly to U.S. intelligence and policy officials and deserve special focus in our counterterrorism policies. The Darul Uloom Haqqania located near Peshawar in the Northwest Frontier Province, for example, served as training ground for Taliban leaders and a recruiting center for Pakistani militants fighting in Kashmir.[6]

Other madrassas connected to violent militancy are located in the southern port city of Karachi as well as in the province of Punjab and have also contributed to sectarian tensions in the country. The banned Kashmiri militant organization Jaish-e-Muhammad (JEM - Army of the Prophet) and Sunni sectarian organization Sepah-e-Sahaba (SSP - Army of Companions of the Prophet) are head-quartered in southern Punjab. These organizations have close institutional linkages with the Taliban and have been involved in terrorism against Indian and western targets, including the murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002; the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight that landed in Kandahar, Afghanistan in December 1999; and the kidnapping and murder of five Western hostages, including American citizen Donald Hutchings, in 1995.

These madrassas and associated militant groups have an inter-dependent relationship in which the militant groups provide armed backing for the madrassas, and the madrassas in turn provide motivated recruits for the militant organizations.[7] The recently jailed leader of a fertilizer bomb plot in England, British citizen of Pakistani-origin Omar Khyam, was reportedly inspired and trained by Pakistanis involved in militancy in Kashmir. In addition, one of the suicide bombers that carried out the July 7, 2005 bombings of the London transport system reportedly spent time at a Pakistani madrassa. Convincing the Pakistan government to close down completely these dangerous militant groups and to sever their links with the madrassas should be the centerpiece of our counterterrorism policies in Pakistan.

Madrassas in Pakistan are financed either by voluntary charity or foreign entities or governments. The Saudi Arabian organization, Harmain Islamic Foundation, reportedly has

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[6] Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p.77.

[7] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc, 2003), pp. 230 – 231.

provided substantial financial assistance to the Ahle-Hadith madrassas, which have provided fighters to the banned Kashmiri militant group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LET). The Ahle-Hadith madrassas emphasize the Quran and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammed) and oppose folk Islam and practices such as celebrating the anniversaries of saints or the distribution of food on religious occasions. The large madrassa complex supporting the LET is located in the town of Muridke outside of Lahore and is well-known for preaching hard-line views on Islam. Since the Pakistan government officially banned the LET in 2002, the group has changed its name to Jamaat-ul-Dawa and played a significant role in assisting victims following the October 8, 2005 South Asia earthquake, demonstrating its ability to operate freely within Pakistani society.

President Pervez Musharraf's government has had little success with its attempts to assert greater government authority over the madrassas. In August of 2001, the Musharraf government promulgated the "Pakistan Madrassa Education Board Ordinance 2001" to establish three model madrassa institutions in Karachi, Sukkur, and Islamabad that would include English, Math, Computer Science, Economics, Political Science, Law, and Pakistan Studies in their curricula. Through the "Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance 2002," the government promised funding to madrassas that formally registered with the government. In a more controversial step, the Pakistani government demanded that madrassas expel all foreign students by December 31, 2005. Islamist groups vehemently resisted the government's efforts, however, and authorities backed down and made public statements indicating that they would not use force or shut down noncompliant madrassas to enforce the directives.[8]

The Minister for Religious Affairs Ejaz ul-Haque, son of the late former President Zia ul-Haque, is responsible for implementing madrassa reform. It was Zia ul-Haque's Islamization policies in the 1980s that resulted in an expansion of the madrassa network to support the Afghanistan jihad against the Soviets and that incorporated militant interpretations of Islam into the public school curriculum. Minister Ejaz ul-Haque has so far been reluctant to confront the prominent religious parties that have ties to foreign-funded madrassas and are resisting government reform.

Recommendations for U.S. Policy

- The U.S. should begin to program more funds for specific education and development projects rather than continue to provide the bulk of our economic assistance in the form of a direct cash transfer to the Pakistan government. Since 2004, the U.S. has provided $200 million annually to Pakistan in the form of direct budgetary support. We have established a consulting mechanism with the Pakistan government to try to ensure a portion of this money is spent on the health and education sectors. However, we cannot fully ensure that this U.S. taxpayer money is contributing to economic and human development in Pakistan. The U.S. also reaps very little public diplomacy benefits with the broader Pakistani population from this large amount of aid, which most Pakistanis

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[8] Congressional Research Services, "Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background," Christopher M. Blanchard, Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Services, January 10, 2006.

view as mainly benefiting the Musharraf regime. The U.S. Congress should require that at least two-thirds of our total economic support fund (ESF) assistance be in the form of USAID project assistance related to education, health, and economic and democratic development.

- While continuing to help train teachers and increase the quality of education in Pakistani schools, Washington also will need to encourage Islamabad to implement systemic reform of public education in order to make a significant impact on education outcomes, such as increased literacy and enrollment rates and decreased drop-out rates. U.S. policymakers and aid officials need to take to heart the results of the failed World Bank efforts from the 1980s – 90s to avoid repeating similar mistakes. Pushing for systemic reform may require the U.S. to increasingly use benchmarks with the Pakistan government in order to encourage greater efficiency and transparency within the education bureaucracy.

- Washington will need to encourage Pakistan to crack down on those madrassas that continue to promote extremist violence and sectarian policies that lead to terrorism and destabilization of Pakistani society. The Pakistani authorities should clean house in any madrassas found to have links to international terrorist incidents and make clear that those individuals who provide protection or safe haven to al Qaida and like-minded terrorist groups will be held to account. The Pakistan government's refusal to detain or punish key terrorist leaders because of their links to the Kashmir militancy signals a degree of tolerance of terrorist activity and provides a permissible environment for groups that collaborate with al Qaida and other terrorist groups. The Pakistan authorities likely know which madrassas are supplying militants for terrorist training. We should use skillful diplomacy to persuade the Pakistan government to reform or close down these schools.

- The U.S. should refrain from getting involved in Pakistan's broader madrassa reform efforts and accept that many of the traditional madrassas serve a useful purpose in educating Islamic intellectuals and providing shelter and food for impoverished youth. While a few Pakistani madrassas represent an international terrorist threat and deserve American scrutiny and condemnation, most madrassas should be left alone.

To conclude, U.S. efforts to encourage education reform and development in Pakistan should be consistent, sustained, and multi-pronged. Ensuring transparency and efficiency in the education bureaucracy is equally important to encouraging local community involvement and accountability in the day-to-day functioning of individual schools, especially in poor, rural areas. The development of a strong and effective education system in Pakistan is central to promoting moderation, tolerance, and economic development. Convincing the Pakistan government to take firm action against the handful of madrassas supporting violent extremism also is necessary not only for the future stability of Pakistan but to prevent future international terrorism.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Ms. Curtis.

Mr. Cohen.

STATEMENT OF CRAIG COHEN

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, I want to thank you and your distinguished colleagues for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is with great humility that I do so.

I am here because I am leading a CSIS study with Rick Barton on U.S. assistance to Pakistan since 9/11. It is a study about the U.S. Government approach to large aid recipients like Pakistan. We spent the last year asking experts here in the United States and in Pakistan: What are U.S. goals? Is there a coherent strategy? How much are we spending, and on what? And what has been the impact of our aid?

We have a report that is due out later this week, and with your permission we would like to submit it for the record.

Mr. TIERNEY. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. COHEN. The conclusion we reached from these conversations is that the current U.S. Pakistan relationship is the legacy of a deal made after 9/11: U.S. assistance in return for Pakistan cooperation on counter-terrorism and the war in Afghanistan. This may well have been the right deal to make after 9/11, but it has run its course.

There are three main reasons why this is so.

First, we have put all our eggs in one basket, and that basket may well be breaking. Musharraf's position is quickly weakening, and recent protests may signal the beginning of his political end.

Second, by most accounts, Pakistan is failing to deliver on the key U.S. foreign policy goal, denying Taliban safe haven on the western border. U.S. soldiers are dying in Afghanistan, and the reconstruction project is under threat due to these cross-border raids.

Third, we are not doing enough to help shape the Pakistan that will emerge 10 to 20 years down the road. By 2030, Pakistan will have 250 million people. It will be the largest Muslim population in the world, and more than half of this population will be below the age of 18.

There have been some genuine gains in the last 5 years of cooperation on intelligence, on economic growth, on a throng of relations with India, but too many in Washington and Pakistan still see this as an alliance of convenience.

Our current assistance package has reinforced this notion that America stands primarily behind Musharraf and the Pakistani military rather than the Pakistani people.

Our research has shown that the United States has provided Pakistan with over $10 billion worth of military, economic, and development assistance in the past 6 years since 9/11. The majority of this money, close to 60 percent, has gone toward reimbursing the Pakistani military for its assistance in the war on terror through Coalition support funds.

Roughly 15 percent has gone to security assistance. The vast majority of this money has gone to purchase major U.S. weapons systems which are better suited for military confrontation with India, rather than against Al Qaeda or the Taliban.

Another 15 percent has gone to direct budget support, a cash transfer to the government of Pakistan, based on loosely worded shared objectives with few real accountability mechanisms built in.

This leaves about 10 percent for long-term development and short-term humanitarian assistance, including our response to the October 2005, earthquake. Education, which the 9/11 Commission rightly said was critical to making a long-term commitment to Pakistan, comes in at only 3.4 percent of total U.S. spending. We encourage the government of Pakistan to spend 4 percent of its GDP on education, but we don't even do this with our own aid.

The United States is spending $64 million a year for over 30 to 50 million school-aged children in Pakistan. That is a little over $1 to $2 per child per year.

U.S. objectives far outstrip our means of achieving them in Pakistan. We all know the scale of the problem, and we have heard it here today: women's literacy under 30 percent, school enrollment under 30 percent, teachers who lack skills and incentives and fail to show up for work, more Pakistanis avoiding public schools and being drawn to madrassas.

Let me close by making three recommendations. First, let's become the country that provides opportunity for young Pakistanis rather than a country that is at war with Islam, which is how we are perceived today. We can't sacrifice our short-term security, but our long-term security may well depend on such a shift.

Second, education reform requires governance reform. The dominant view is that the Pakistani military is the only effective institution in the country, but rather than reinforce this through our assistance we should be supporting the long-term civilian institution building and democratic processes.

Finally, rather than trying to gain leverage by conditioning aid, which is unlikely to work, Congress ought to take a harder look at what we are spending now in Pakistan and consider a different mix of assistance and greater accountability mechanisms. We need to trust, but we also need to verify.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cohen follows:]

Testimony before the
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs,
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

"When $10 Billion Isn't Enough:
Rethinking U.S. Strategy and Assistance to Pakistan"

A DRAFT Statement by

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Mr. Chairman:

I would like to thank you and your colleagues on the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for the invitation to speak today on the subject of, "Extremist Madrassahs, Ghost Schools, and U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Are We Making the Grade on the 9/11 Commission Report Card?"

I am the author of a forthcoming study from CSIS on U.S. strategy and assistance to Pakistan since September 11, 2001. It is my privilege to sit before you today to share our findings and suggest a few thoughts for shaping a new approach for this critical relationship.

Need for a New Strategy

The current relationship between the United States and Pakistan is based on the legacy of a deal made in the aftermath of September 11: U.S. assistance in return for Pakistani cooperation on counterterrorism and the war in Afghanistan. This was the right deal for the United States to make after 9/11, but it has now run its course. The costs of continuing to pursue the current approach to Pakistan could potentially be severe for both Americans and Pakistanis alike.

The danger of a failed policy is evident. Pakistan's western border serves as a sanctuary for Taliban and al Qaeda fighters with the potential to undermine America's reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and threaten the United States and its allies. Pakistan's eastern border remains a fault line between two nuclear powers that have fought three major wars since 1947. Pakistan's internal stability is showing increasing signs of fragility, with some speculating that President Musharraf is already facing the beginning of his political end.

Washington's lack of leverage and policy alternatives in Pakistan is alarming, and its long-term plan not well articulated. Pakistan is not a front-burner foreign policy concern at present, but it could quickly become one. Even in the absence of a near-term crisis, the decisions made by the United States today will help shape the country that will emerge in the next 10 to 20 years. This is a country of 165 million Muslims, more than half of whom are under the age of fifteen.

The essential problem is this: The United States has no real Plan B in Pakistan beyond a hope that General Musharraf will find the will and capacity to live up to his rhetoric of "enlightened moderation" before he disappears from the scene. Musharraf's government, on the other hand, appears incapable of committing to a Plan A. Its own insecurity has led it to adopt a hedging strategy in which it is never fully in and never fully out. This is why five-plus years after 9/11, the United States is still wondering if Musharraf is playing a double game on combating extremism.

Balancing American Objectives

U.S. policy toward Pakistan is often described as a juggling act. The problem with juggling is that it does not permit looking ahead.

The United States has more objectives in Pakistan than it has means of achieving them. Furthermore, U.S. goals are not clearly prioritized. Different agencies and departments have different priorities, including:

- Internal, short-term stability
- Improving relations with India
- Eliminating Taliban safe havens
- Pursuing al Qaeda
- Securing Pakistan's nuclear arsenal
- Democracy
- Human rights and religious freedom
- Countering extremist ideologies
- Long-term stability and prosperity

Supporting Musharraf is not a formula for accomplishing all of these objectives any more than is simply supporting free elections. The challenges in Pakistan are complex, and all good things do not go together.

The Bush administration, though, has sent mixed signals to the Pakistanis and failed to clearly articulate what we expect in return for U.S. assistance. This has allowed Pakistan to minimally satisfy a number of U.S. demands without committing whole-heartedly to any.

From our conversations with close to 100 current and former U.S. government officials, a consensus emerged that the United States needs to balance its short-term counter-terrorism objectives with the long-term stability and prosperity of Pakistan. Most believe the current approach has been too focused on the short-term.

The 9/11 Commission got it right when it said that U.S. assistance to Pakistan must move beyond security assistance, and that we must make the "difficult long-term commitment to the future of Pakistan."

Making a Long-term Commitment

Despite the rhetoric on both sides, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship remains an alliance of convenience. There are three primary reasons for this:

- Divergent interests. Most American decision-makers do not ultimately share Pakistan's security establishment's fixation on the Indian threat. Similarly, most Pakistani decision-makers do not share America's fixation on the threat posed by "anti-coalition militants."

- Lack of trust. The history of the American-Pakistani relationship has been a roller coaster of intense engagement followed by long periods of separation. Pakistanis believe they will be left hanging out to dry once America decides its interests have been served in Afghanistan or the costs of a continued presence become too great.

- Domestic politics. Pakistan lacks a strong domestic constituency in America. At the same time, Pakistani politics continue to view U.S. foreign policy as inherently hostile to Islam.

Does the United States have enduring strategic interests in Pakistan? Do these interests align with long-term Pakistani interests? How can U.S. assistance help to achieve shared objectives?

A stable, prosperous Pakistan over the long-term is essential to U.S. efforts to help develop positive models that resonate within the Muslim world and alleviate grievances exploited by al Qaeda. The more the United States can effectively employ its non-military tools today to help achieve such outcomes, the less it will have to rely on military options in the future.

The right balance of assistance and engagement must have both a long-term and short-term pay off. Over the long-term, the United States should help to address poverty and inequality, encourage economic growth, create incentives for peace, moderation and democracy, and prevent future crises. In the short-term, we should demonstrate that America is on the side of the Pakistani people, not just the Musharraf regime, without sacrificing American security.

The relationship has become personalized, and this has hurt us. Civilian institutions in Pakistan need the support of the United States. Unfortunately, the current approach to assistance has reinforced the notion that America stands primarily behind Musharraf and the Pakistani military.

U.S. Assistance to Pakistan since 9/11

The United States has provided Pakistan with over $10 billion in military, economic and development assistance in the past six years (inclusive of FY02 through the FY07 request). Here is the breakdown of this assistance:

- The majority, close to 60 percent, has gone toward reimbursing the Pakistani military for their assistance in the war on terrorism through Coalition Support Funds.

- Roughly 15 percent has gone for security assistance. The vast majority of this money has been used to purchase major U.S. weapons systems of minimal value in combating extremism.

- Another 15 per cent has been budget support, or a direct cash transfer to the government of Pakistan with few real accountability mechanisms built in.

- This leaves about 10 percent for development and humanitarian assistance, including the response to the October 2005 earthquake.

When high-ranking Pakistani officials visit the United States, they are more likely to provide wish lists of military hardware than have a discussion about long-term strategy. If prevailing in the fight against extremism is a battle of ideas that depends on successful parnterships, material items have become the basis of these relationships.

Investing in Education

Investing in people and institutions is a better long-term strategy. Education, which has been the showcase of USAID's programming in Pakistan, comes in at only $64 million per year for over 55 million school-aged children, or a little over one dollar per child per year.

This is not to say that USAID has had no impact on education in Pakistan. But consider the scale of the problem:

- Pakistan's literacy rate hovers between 40-50%; under 30% for women.
- Secondary school enrollment in 2005 stood at only 27%; under 5% for tertiary education.
- Pakistan's government spends only between 2-3% of its GDP on education, up from under 2% five years ago but short of the 4% many experts suggest.

Donor assistance and commitments between 1997 and 2012 for education in Pakistan stood at roughly $1.8 billion. The Asian Development Bank has focused on decentralization, the Canadians on teacher training, and the World Bank and the UK's DFID on budgetary support. USAID has sought a niche in strengthening management systems and institutional capacity.

The single biggest challenge in reforming education in Pakistan is the poor quality of teachers. Teachers lack skills and incentives and often fail to show up for work. Poor education is related to poor governance. Donors hesitate to pay teachers directly out of fear that this will create parallel structures that would undermine the state. The state, however, may simply lack the capacity to manage the job in the short-run.

The end result is that more Pakistanis are attending private schools and madrassahs. The real correlation between international terrorism and madrassahs is uncertain, and madrassahs play a valuable social service role within Pakistan. Certain problem madrassahs, such as Jamia Hafsa, however, need to be challenged when they confront state authority or incite violence. Musharraf has failed to do so,

perhaps out of fear of generating backlash, perhaps for more cynical reasons such as signaling the Islamist threat and his indespensibility.

Pakistan is not Turkey where hundreds of thousands march in favor of secularism. Education in Pakistan will continue to be based on Islam as the principal source of values. The most constructive debate on these issues will come from within Pakistan, absent American pressure. The problem with education is not that it is losing its secular quality, but that it is dysfunctional.

Toward a New Approach

Neither the Bush administration nor Musharraf's regime are likely to voluntarily reassess the terms of the deal crafted after 9/11. The U.S. Congress has considered three main options for exercising oversight:

- Do nothing, and hope the current arrangement works for U.S. interests;
- Condition U.S. funding on visible progress tied to combating militancy or to democracy;
- Set benchmarks based on shared objectives.

There have been some genuine gains from the past five-plus years of cooperation—on al Qaeda, economic growth and relations with India—but there is also too much that is troubling at present for Congress to simply do nothing. Our current approach may actually be counterproductive.

Domestic pressure on Musharraf is increasing, and Pakistan's military may not prove to be the guarantor of pro-Western stability that Washington hopes if Musharraf were to disappear from the scene. Action now could result in a better course.

Conditioning aid, however, ties our hands and is likely to have little real effect other than further convincing Pakistanis of American hostility and hypocrisy.

What is needed is action in five areas that could be taken in the near-term and will have significant long-term payoff:

1) Have a real strategic conversation. The U.S.-Pakistani relationship needs more frequent, honest and transparent communication on more important issues, more inclusive of a broader cross section of government and society. Congress could seek to pressure Washington and Islamabad to revitalize and transform the stalled strategic dialogue process.

2) Trust but verify. Out of these conversations must quickly come a clearer understanding of Islamabad's responsibilities and Washington's obligations for Congress to maintain current funding levels. Congress needs a clearer accounting of all the money on the table and what that money is intended to do. Benchmarks should be created on both sides around shared objectives.

3) Provide a new mix of assistance. U.S. assistance should be better targeted to the main future drivers of extremism, instability and conflict in Pakistan. Aid should provide incentives for avoiding future conflicts over energy and water resources, strengthening police and the judiciary, and marginalizing madrassahs by making public education alternatives more attractive. This may take shifting money away from short-term military cooperation and finding alternative ways to address Pakistan's security concerns vis-à-vis India.

4) Use all the tools in our toolbox. The United States should look to build new opportunities in Pakistan through increased trade, energy cooperation, harnessing remittances, and increasing exchanges. China sees the value in this approach—it signed 22 trade agreements with Pakistan in 2005, and is opening a new science and technical university. It has a target of $15 billion in bilateral trade over the next 5 years. Congress could also encourage the economic integration of South Asia. It is currently one of the least integrated regions in the world, with interregional trade at only 2% of South Asian GDP, compared to 20% in East Asia.

5) Encourage Musharraf to have a George Washington moment. The upcoming elections provide an opportunity for the United States to demonstrate its commitment to the opening of political space in Pakistan by encouraging Musharraf to either take off his uniform or walk away from power. Our inability to do so is likely to result in a rockier transition ahead. America needs to find creative ways of getting on the side of Pakistan's moderate middle. How we are perceived in Pakistan conditions the effectiveness of everything we do.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Cohen, and thank all of the witnesses for their thoughtful testimony, as well as their reports.

We are going to get to our question and answer period here. With everybody's indulgence, I am going to start with a couple of questions.

Dr. Ahmed, I noted the last thing that Mr. Cohen mentioned is that education reform requires government reform, as well. In your testimony you said, "The choice that Pakistan faces is not between the military and the mullahs, as is generally believed in the west, including the United States; it is between genuine democracy and a mullah military alliance that is responsible for the religious extremism that poses a threat to Pakistani, regional, and international security." Would you elaborate on that for us, especially with respect to our policy and what it should be coming up with the elections due in the fall.

Ms. AHMED. It is, I think, going to be the most crucial issue there is in terms of U.S. policy toward Pakistan, because this opportunity is here now. It is not going to last forever.

In 2007 you have an election approaching, in fact, two elections approaching, one for the presidency, President Musharraf's reelection bid; the second for the national parliament that will actually form a government if these elections are free and fair by going by all electoral records. If you actually look at the entire history of Pakistan, the mullahs on their own have never managed to get more than perhaps 5 percent of the vote. The first time they have actually managed to get more than that and to form two of the state governments of Pakistan was under General Musharraf. In 2002 a rigged election allowed the mullahs the advantages of state support, deprived the moderate parties and marginalized them in the process of an even playing field, and, again, through a bargaining process between the military and the mullahs, you saw the mullahs taking over even the position of leader of the opposition, which is the government awaiting in a parliamentary system in the Federal parliament.

This happened because of the military support and because of Musharraf said basically it was a necessity to sideline and to marginalize his main civilian opposition.

Despite the rigged election, you saw the two moderate parties, the Pakistan People's Party and Muslim Icnavas, gaining the largest segment of the popular ward. The Muslim Icnavas came in a fairly respectable third or fourth.

If there was an even playing field, then I think we would see the outcome of the 2002 election reversed. The mullahs would lose. They would shrink back to their 5 percent. The moderate parties, one of the two, a center left party, a center right party, would form a government. For that, however, if the military intends to retain power, it will have to rely on the mullahs. They are the only reliable civilian partners, given the fact that the opposition comes from the largest moderate parties.

In a rigged election what would we see? This is why I say this is a crucial year. The JUI, the party that is, was in some ways the creation of the Taliban, which remains a greater supporter of the Taliban, and which is still a party that has the largest network of the madrassas that produce the Taliban recruits coming back into

power with the military support in those two crucial provinces that were mentioned, Balochistan and the Northwest Frontier Province.

If we actually see what has happened in Afghanistan and where the threat comes from, it comes from recruits in these two provinces. It comes from Taliban command and control structures in these provinces. It comes from, in actual fact, state support because of the provincial governments, the state governments are providing support to the Taliban, then it means the Pakistani state is.

With a democratic transition, you would see that change, but for the first step to a democratic transition obviously has to be a free and fair election.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much for that answer.

The other panelists I would like to ask, I hear very clearly that, obviously, the fact that somebody has a madrassa doesn't mean that it is a Jihadist or extremist madrassa, that as much as we have religious schools in this country, whether they be Catholic or protestant or Jewish or whatever they might be, that exists in Pakistan, but sometimes those schools may not teach secular courses to the extent they should, and some—too many, I would argue—are probably teaching extremism on that.

How would we condition our aid? Mr. Cohen, you mentioned at the end that you wouldn't necessarily put conditions on the money that we do send as aid to Pakistan, but you said something about not conditioning it but allocating it differently, and, Ms. Curtis, you also mentioned that. Would each of you address how you think the United States ought to change its aid package? If not conditioning the money that goes to the Pakistani government, how would we distribute it?

Ms. CURTIS. Yes. I think this is an important point that really the terrorist problem, the extremism problem is coming from a handful of madrassas in Pakistan. This goes at the issue of the U.S. needing to demonstrate clearly that our fight against global terrorism is for protection of international security and it is not a fight against Islam as a religion. So, in particular, when we are talking about madrassas in Pakistan I think it is very important for us to be clear that we are not against, obviously, religious education and schools that promote Islamic thought, etc.

I think this is really key, and that is why I had raised in my testimony the importance of really honing in on those madrassas that are feeding the militant groups. They have an interdependent relationship with the militant groups. The militant groups draw recruits from these particular madrassas and the madrassas, in turn, receive armed protection from the militant groups. So it is these few madrassas that we need to be focusing our efforts on.

In terms of our aid programs, as I mentioned in my oral remarks, I think we should really look seriously at this $200 million direct cash transfer that we have been delivering to the Pakistanis over the last several years and look at that and determine whether we can projectize more of that assistance so it is more under U.S. control in terms of what we are doing to help in education, democracy, health, and all of those issues.

So those are the issues that we need to be looking at.

And then, in terms of shutting down those madrassas that are dangerous, of course, we are working with, you know, the

Musharraf government, and he has his own struggles within his own government and within the Pakistani establishment, itself, I think there is still debate on how much they are interested in cracking down, particularly in groups they have supported in the past in the Kashmir militancy. So that is the key problem.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Cohen, I am going to give you a chance, with the indulgence of the committee members, but, just very quickly, I think it might be helpful to the committee, is everybody on the panel in agreement that there are a handful of madrassas that might be extremists? Dr. Ahmed.

Ms. AHMED. I wouldn't say that 10 to 15 percent, which is what we were told by the authorities that should know about the subject in Pakistan. When we did our madrassa reports, 10 to 15 percent of maybe 20,000 madrassas is not a handful.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Kojm, what is your understanding of that?

Mr. KOJM. Well, I think the witness who has just testified, she has the most up-to-date information on it, and I am in no position to state otherwise. I would simply make the observation from the Commission that in the ideal world there would be secular education that could reach most, if not all, the population. That can't be done, so you have to prioritize the problems you address, and so it has to be those madrassas that are truly identified as those that contribute to extremism and you have just got to go at them one after another. My impression is that it certainly does not exceed what has already been mentioned.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

And Mr. Cohen?

Mr. COHEN. I don't have information that contradicts what Ms. Ahmed said.

I could speak to your aid question, if you would like.

Mr. TIERNEY. My apology to you. It has to be brief, if you would, just how the distribution would go.

Mr. COHEN. OK. I think on the distribution you need a better balance between short and long-term and between what goes to the state and what actually reaches the people of Pakistan.

Mr. TIERNEY. Directly more than through the state?

Mr. COHEN. Correct.

Mr. TIERNEY. All right. Thank you.

I thank the members of the panel for their indulgence on that.

Mr. McHenry.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I begin my questions, I want to thank the chairman for leading a co-del to Pakistan and Afghanistan before Easter, and, along with my colleague from Minnesota, Ms. McCollum, it was a very good trip, very well put together, and it was a very good bipartisan trip. We met with Dr. Ahmed there, which was an absolutely fascinating discussion, and thank you for your time.

I also want to thank the chairman for putting together that trip, and very, very sincerely I thank you for your hard work on this. The fruits of that trip are here today.

I want to commend your staff, as well, Andy Wright on your staff, and on the minority staff A. Brooke Bennett, for their work. Thank you.

Dr. Ahmed, you mention in your statement that there is a link that the madrassas and the Jihadist groups depend on each other in some way, shape, or form. Can you expand on that? I think it is a very important point.

Ms. AHMED. Thank you.

The reason why we stress the need to tackle the issue of Islamic extremist madrassas is just that: the recruitment for the homegrown terror groups comes from, the recruits come from these madrassas. The indoctrination process takes place in these madrassas.

Just think of what these children are being taught. They are being taught Jihad is acceptable. They are being taught, even as the chairman mentioned the madrassa of the Red Mosque complex, that an anti-western Jihad in Afghanistan is what you should be striving for. You have the managers of these madrassas indoctrinating these young people to actually go out and join the terror groups.

But then what you also have is a nexus between these terror groups, which are homegrown terrorists, with cross-national terror organizations, which is Al Qaeda, or regional terror groups, such as the Taliban.

So there is then an organized input from the madrassas systematically turning out Jihadis from the Jihadi madrassas, of course, to the homegrown terror groups, to the Taliban, and also to terror organizations within Pakistan that are affiliated with Al Qaeda or believe in Al Qaeda's ideology.

Mr. MCHENRY. Dr. Ahmed, could you, as a followup to this, is our current policy, the U.S. current policy toward Pakistan in our long-term best interest?

Ms. AHMED. The United States has to decide at this point in time what does it want to see Pakistan become another 5 years from now or 10 years from now. Pakistan can only become what the United States would, I think, want to see—a democratic, moderate country—if the democratic process is allowed to proceed now, if there is a democratic transition now.

If you have another 5 years of indirect or direct military rule, then I think you will see the moderate forces in Pakistan marginalized to the extent that they will find it difficult to make a comeback.

What we have seen, Congressman, in the past 2 weeks is something that I think should be encouraging for the United States: Pakistani citizens, civil society, political parties, NGO's rising up to talk and defend rule of law, to defend what they see as the central integral element to a democratic framework, which is independence of the judiciary. That is the vast majority, and I think U.S. policy should shape itself to engage with that process.

Short-term benefits, which certainly the United States to some extent has out of its engagement with this government, don't translate into long-term benefits for the United States so long as you still have these dynamics at work, which is the moderate majority sidelined and the extremists benefiting from military rule.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Ahmed.

Ms. Curtis and Mr. Cohen, Egypt, Israel, and Jordan, along with Pakistan, are the only countries in the world that receive a direct budget support from us, and it is almost a check for them to do whatever they would like with it, as you mentioned in your testimony, Mr. Cohen. What is your suggestion to this committee on how the United States can apply pressure to Pakistan under this arrangement? I mean, you mentioned 3.4 percent of our support goes to education. Give me some recommendations. Flesh that out for us on how we can use what we have at our disposal to, in essence, push aside madrassas and not make them a central part of society.

Mr. COHEN. My view is that it has to start with a more honest dialog, that there is a mechanism in place for a strategic dialog but it hasn't been taken advantage of to the extent possible. I think that if we are more honest with what we are looking for, I think what happens now, what we have heard from many, many experts here in town and in Pakistan is that different parts of the U.S. Government have different priorities. Some may be most interested in the Taliban. Some may be most interested in Al Qaeda. Others might be pushing for democracy. I think this sends mixed messages, to some extent, and there is not a clear strategy for what it is we are looking for in return. So I think it has to start there.

I think Ms. Curtis' idea of trying to shift the money that goes to budget support to education is a good idea. I think getting better accountability, both for the Coalition support funds and for the budget support—at present the Pentagon's Comptroller's office has oversight of the Coalition support funds, and the Government, OMB, as well, does oversight of the economic support funds. But I think Congress could play a greater role here, as well.

Mr. MCHENRY. Ms. Curtis, could you just finish out? And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. CURTIS. Yes. Just to repeat, I have a fairly clear recommendation for the Congress to require that a portion of that direct budgetary assistance not be provided directly but be projectized, so that would require changing the makeup of the aid budget, but I think this falls under congressional authority.

I think one of the problems—and Mr. Cohen mentioned it—is about transparency in our relationship with Pakistan. This is a difficult issue. We are cooperating with Pakistan at different levels, counter-terrorism. President Musharraf is under some pressure. He receives a lot of criticism from the Pakistani population for being seen as an American lapdog and for cooperating too much with us. So it is a difficult issue, but, to the extent that the transparency on what we are actually doing with Pakistan and why the aid is so important I think would be very helpful, if some of this transparency could be brought to the surface.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. McHenry.

Ms. McCollum.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There is so much to try to cover here in 5 minutes, especially having had the opportunity, as it was pointed out by both Chairman Tierney leading the delegation, I found Pakistan a wonderful

country, beautiful, industrious people, and full of energy, and really wanting to move forward in a very positive way. But there are some challenges, as has been pointed out, and I don't know that the United States is doing its best and trying to put its best foot forward in the way that we are working with Pakistan to address these challenges.

I am going to lure a few things out and leave it open to a discussion, maybe starting with the good doctor.

From the limited reading I did, and listening to people, it is my understanding that, if we had public schools that were well equipped, with teachers, and parents felt confident that their children were going to receive a good education there, the madrassas might be facing some competition. Competition for the madrassas, the ones that still function in a way that do not preach hate and violence between people in other parts of the world, those madrassas would start competing to keep their students by offering more math, more science, more history, more of a balanced curriculum. So that would be one thing I would like to maybe hear some speculation on.

We know that there is a youth bulge, so it would seem to me that if we are really about peace and stability for the long haul for the region, for the world, for ourselves, we wouldn't be putting a drop in the bucket toward reaching the future leaders and the future leaders' parents in that part of the world. We wouldn't be just putting 10 percent into supporting families, communities which lead to a healthier nation.

So I would like maybe discussion on that.

The issue—and it has been touched on quite a bit—of President-to-President support, rather than people-to-people, country-to-country, family to-family support, is very alarming and it doesn't speak to we are really going to be there for the long term to work in partnership.

One of the things that I heard—and maybe the doctor could tell me if I heard this right—from people is they were fearful that the United States was going to walk away. I don't think they were fearful that the United States was going to walk away from not supplying the military. Maybe the military is concerned about it, the military guns and weapons, but that the United States wasn't going to be there to be partners in what I felt from them their desire to be more economically successful, to have more opportunities for education, more opportunities for engagement with the world.

So, with this, I am going to, especially to our U.S. testifiers, with what is going on currently with the State Department, with the realignment with USAID, with more focus on targeted specific Presidential programs—and some of them I support, like Pat Barr—are we showing a commitment to our partners that we are going to be there as the youth bulge rose for a more sustainable, peaceful, coexistent world that starts person-to-person?

With that, Mr. Chair, I would just like people to jump in as they can, maybe starting with our good friend in Pakistan.

Ms. AHMED. Thank you, ma'am.

What you said was, I think, very, very important. I think being a functioning public school system that provided people the kinds of skills that would give them employment at the job market, had

the state supported that, the madrassas wouldn't have been not even a third choice. Most of these madrassas would have literally withered on the vine.

We have said, Crisis Group has said repeatedly in all our reports—and we have done a report on public education, and we found abysmal conditions there. But, more than that, its actually not just the issue of ghost schools, in many areas there were no schools at all. What could parents do? The madrassas is a social net. We should justify that goal. It is the responsibility of the state. By the way, it is the constitutional duty of the Pakistani state to provide education to its children.

For the state to abdicate its duty and its responsibility to its child to the madrassas sector and then say, you know, it plays a social function, etc.

The fact is that what we found in our research, most parents would prefer to send their children to a public school which is affordable and provides a good education. We have also for that reason strongly stressed that international dollars and, in particular, the United States should not fund madrassa reform. It is absolutely essential they don't get into the business of actually financing the madrassa sector.

The United States should focus its attention on the form of the public education sector because that would pay dividends to the Pakistani child and to the United States.

In terms of the engagement between societies, American society and Pakistani society, unfortunately I would have to agree with you. There is deep concern amongst a number of Pakistanis in civil society that once the war on terror loses its importance for the United States the military won't be important, so it will also disengage from Pakistani civil society.

I think that is where that commitment needs to be made now and the message that should be a clear one: that the United States is there for the long haul for the right reasons, which is to strengthen that partnership between peoples in the interest of the United States and the Pakistani people and, frankly speaking, of the global community.

Thank you.

Mr. KOJM. In response to Representative McCollum's comments and Dr. Ahmed's, I think all I can say is that the members of the 9/11 Commission would agree wholeheartedly and completely with your key observation about building a long-term relationship with the people of Pakistan. That is where America's national interests are and will be for the next generation. Yes, a relationship with the president is important. The Commission doesn't gainsay that. But our national interests are with the long-term relationship.

Ms. CURTIS. I had some further comments to Congresswoman McCollum's comments, as well.

I think you are absolutely right that we are dealing with a trust deficit here, because of the cutoff of assistance in 1990 and the fact that the U.S. turned its back on Pakistan and Afghanistan after the Soviets left Afghanistan. I think we still deal with that mistrust among the Pakistani people. It is very deep-rooted. That is why I think it is dangerous when we talk about cutting assistance or even conditioning assistance, as has been raised in H.R. 1 in leg-

islation before this body. I think we have to really think twice about going down this path, because we do risk losing support from the broader Pakistani population for the overall U.S.-Pakistan relationship. That is why I have talked about, rather than cutting or conditioning, looking at how we allocate the assistance and, instead of taking away, just ensuring that there is more of a people-to-people feel to the assistance and more of an American touch at the grassroots of society.

And the second point I wanted to make, I think the Pakistan government has realized the need to expand the curriculum in the madrassas. Before 9/11, in August 2001 the Musharraf government promulgated the Pakistan Madrassa Education Board, an ordinance of 2001, and tried to establish three model madrassa institutions in three different cities, which would include English, math, and other subject areas. So there is a recognition within the Pakistan government about this problem of having too narrow of a focus within some of the madrassas, but they have just not been able to get the steam behind the efforts. There has been resistance from the madrassas, from the religious parties, and the government has not taken those entrenched interests on as of yet.

The third point I wanted to make is getting back to this question of whether it is a handful. Sir, I don't know the exact numbers of Pakistani madrassas that are teaching terrorist hatred ideology. My point is to say let's not throw out the baby with the bath water. Let's not further alienate the Pakistani population or send out a signal that somehow our fight against terrorism is against the religion of Islam, because certainly it is not, and we have to be very careful when we deal with these sensitive religious issues. So that was my point.

Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank you for that, and your point is well taken. I don't think it is missed by anybody up here. Handful means different things to different people, and I think we have to get an idea of what the scope of the issue is and then deal with it in the context which you set forth. I think you are right on that.

Mr. Cohen, I am not going to give you an opportunity unless you have something entirely compelling to say that can't be missed.

Mr. COHEN. You can go ahead, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Platts.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your attention to this issue.

As a followup to Mr. McHenry's question, Ms. Curtis, you just kind of referenced it about throwing the baby out with the bath water. With the direct funding, the last 4 years I chaired a different subcommittee of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee dealing with financial management, and very much focused on internal controls and accountability, how we spend the taxpayer funds.

Given the amount of money we are giving Pakistan and appreciate the importance of better, greater transparency and better accountability with that, what impact do you think it will have on our relations with Pakistan if we start putting more strings on that money? And then I guess in the past we withdrew some funding

because of their nuclear pursuit and the consequences then, that in doing what normally would be the right thing, more accountability, controls on that money, that could result in, you know, worsening our relationship, which ultimately hurt us in the war on terror.

Ms. CURTIS. Yes, I think this is a sensitive issue. Obviously we want U.S. taxpayer money to be, you know, spent efficiently and to meet our objectives that we have with our international security policies with Pakistan, and weighing that with the idea that we do have this historical relationship of having withdrawn a huge aid program. We had thousands of USAID workers throughout the 1980's serving in Pakistan, building up goodwill between the United States and Pakistani people, and when we withdrew our aid program we lost all that. So we need to pay attention to that history and realize that when we talk about conditioning or cutting assistance we are touching on some very raw nerves. But at the same time, obviously we need to encourage transparency, we need to make sure that our assistance is reaching the people, that the people of Pakistan know that it is U.S. assistance and that they don't see that we are just trying to prop up the government or provide a payoff, so to speak.

Mr. PLATTS. For you or for all the panelists, how confident are you today that the money is reaching the intended purpose, or, you know, achieving intended purpose and not being funneled to somebody's pocket, you know, given the current level of transparency?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, it is difficult to say. I think the problem is not so much the money that is programmed is not having an impact, because I think that it is. I haven't probably visited as many schools as Dr. Ahmed, but, you know, I have seen some of the program in action, so I think that is not the real question. I think the question is: is there enough going to the assistance? As Mr. Cohen pointed out, only 3.4 percent or something of our total assistance to Pakistan is going toward education, which is actually lower than what we are asking the Pakistani government to commit as a percentage of their GDP to education.

So I think the assistance that is programmed, the USAID assistance that is programmed, which, as I indicated, about $50 million is being requested for the education sector in this budget, I think that is probably making a difference, but the question is: is it enough, or do we need to be increasing that level?

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you. Do any of the other panelists want to comment?

Mr. COHEN. I would just agree with Ms. Curtis and say that you can have 1,000 successful projects but it could add up to one collective failure.

Mr. TIERNEY. Dr. Ahmed, I thought I heard you trying to kick in, as well.

Ms. AHMED. Yes. I would actually like to follow this up because I think it is a very important issue. It is not just the U.S. taxpayers' money, but you do want to make sure that it is used in a way that will have the most impact on Pakistani public opinion, as much as on the government's own interest. It is that balance which is the problem issue, not just the issue of transparency and accountability, which I think is absolutely essential, as well. Every cent that is spent in Pakistan is badly needed, whether it is needed

for health or any other sort of sector. But there is an imbalance between the economic and the military. That was one of the issues touched upon.

I would also like to say here that I think I disagree with this issue of conditionalities. Without any conditionalities, without any strings there is no accountability of assistance given.

In the Pakistani context, it is now one of the largest recipients of U.S. military assistance, for example, not just economic but also military assistance. If there are no conditionalities, if H.R. 1 language is thrown away because it is considered as well a signal sent that might not be well received, the signal won't be sent at all. I think that is part of the problem that the United States had in engaging with this particular government. In the past, unfortunately, and Lisa pointed that out, it was economic assistance cut. That was not the thing to do. It should never have been done in that manner.

But certainly at this point in time if there are no conditionalities put at all on assistance, in particular military assistance, then there is no signal sent that the United States really does want to see that kind of reform on the ground.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Platts.

Mr. Welch.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cohen, I just want to try to summarize to see if I understand this.

First of all, on these madrassas—and, Ms. Curtis, you, too—there is a question of whether there is foot dragging by the Musharraf government or political weakness, so that even if they wanted to do something could they. I mean, what is your conclusion, each of you, on that?

Mr. COHEN. I think that what we are seeing is the Pakistani government employs a hedging strategy, essentially, where he is a friend but he is a friend with a lot of problems at home and there are a lot of stakeholders in his government that he has to cater to.

Mr. WELCH. Right, but the reason I asked this question is this: if it is foot dragging, then obviously more pressure from Washington may be advisable; if it is political weakness, then it will be counterproductive. We have to have some of our own evaluation of which it is. Which do you think it is?

Mr. COHEN. I mean, it has been 5 years and, despite the rhetoric, he hasn't taken any action that he said he had, so——

Mr. WELCH. OK. Ms. Curtis.

Ms. CURTIS. Sir, you may not like the answer, but I think it is a little bit of both. I think you are looking at a situation where it is really a strategic decision. As I mentioned in my oral remarks, we saw a 45-degree change after 9/11. Pakistan ended its official support to the Taliban. We saw another 45-degree change in 2004 when the Pakistan military spent troops up to fight in Waziristan. But we need the full turn. We need a complete crackdown on all militant groups, including those who have fought militancy in Kashmir, including the Taliban. And we have not gotten there yet, and there are many challenges to getting there. But I think President Musharraf deserves our support. He has shown himself to be an ally in the war on terrorism and we need to continue to work

within that framework. But certainly I think skillful diplomacy, carrots, sticks—I think in the past we have not been as willing to use the sticks as perhaps we should have been, and that could be something that we could sharpen our diplomacy a bit on.

Mr. WELCH. Well, you know, I don't know what that means specifically. I mean, what would that mean the Secretary of State did tomorrow? But let me just ask, if I understand it, if there is some consensus. Right now our aid is about $10 billion. My understanding is that about 75 percent of that is military, direct military, $6 billion, and about $15 billion is for other security interests and the sales of weapons systems. Is it the general view that you have that may be upside-down or that it has to be supplemented so that we are actually trying to build or help build an educational infrastructure, No. 1, and, No. 2, move aggressively into regional trade stability and promote trade and not just leave that to China?

Mr. COHEN. That is my view, sir. I mean, we are referred to often as a fair weather friend, China as an all weather friend. China has had 22 trade deals with Pakistan in 2005.

Mr. WELCH. OK. Mr. Kojm, how about you?

Mr. KOJM. I would agree with your observation. We need balance. We don't have balance. There is severe imbalance in the nature of our assistance. We need a broader relationship that must include the economic components.

Mr. WELCH. All right. Doctor, how about you?

Ms. AHMED. It is that imbalance that really in some ways is adversely affecting American perceptions in Pakistan. Most people here see the assistance coming but they see it go directly to the military.

Mr. WELCH. Right.

Ms. AHMED. The impact on the ground, and those figures were given in comparative terms per citizen per year, how much of it is effective enough. Trade, absolutely. I think that is a very important relationship that has been neglected and perhaps should be focused on.

But again let me say this: it doesn't matter how much the balance is changed, it does matter who it goes to. If it goes to President Musharraf not to the Pakistani people, it is not going to have an impact.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you.

I yield my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Welch.

Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. In 5 minutes I would like to accomplish three tasks. One, I would like to share my concern about national security. My sense is that a greater U.S. presence in Pakistan is not one that would be appreciated and that, because of a lack of real law and order, our folks are at risk.

Another issue I want to get to is, Dr. Ahmed, you are basically responsible for my view that, whereas I thought Musharraf was trying to push people and the government away from being religious, that he actually overthrew a non-religious government. At least that was my interpretation of what you had said to me before. I would like to speak about that. I would like all of you to comment.

And my third concern relates to religious freedom. I find it somewhat ironic that, you know, in our country where we have religious freedom we are telling them in their schools and so on what they can teach and so on. I mean, I realize why, but it seems to me that it would be highly offensive to them to say you stay out of our culture and you stay out of what we teach in our church schools and so on.

So if you could talk to security, if you could tell me why I should like Musharraf and want to see him stay and want to prop him up, and if you could speak to the issue of security.

We will start with you, Dr. Ahmed.

Ms. AHMED. Thank you, sir.

Starting off with the issue of security, you are absolutely right, it is very difficult right now, given the circumstances, for American nationals to walk outside a few cities. You know, it is really important to remember this: that in 1999, when the coup took place, there were no such constraints. U.S. nationals could travel freely, work anywhere. Why is it that since October 1999, the coup, and now that we have seen the internal security situation change from a country that was moderate to a country where there are major extremist threats, major terror threats, and that under a government that claims to have effectively taken every possible action it can in the war on terror, which leads me to your second question, which is that did the military overthrow a non-religious government.

It overthrew not just a government that was cooperating with the United States in the war on terror. In fact, this was a government that actually agreed to let the United States target Osama Bin Laden. It had also taken action against sectarian terror groups, not because of the United States saying so but because it thought in its own interest. Was it a secular government in the American sense of the term? I don't think it was. It was moderate. It is a center right party. It is socially conservative.

But here's the thing: it was an elected government. It had support and it could take those political risks. A military government depending on the mullahs can't.

That takes me to your third question, which is: how do you actually restructure this relationship, as well as look at the cultural sensitivities of the people? Let me tell you, sir, that there are laws in Pakistan against hate speech. Those laws are not applied. What the extremist Madrassas preach is something which is against the law of the land. It is not something that the United States needs to tell Pakistan to do. All the Pakistan government needs to do is apply its own laws. Jihad, violence, sectarian hatred—these folks are breaking the law every day.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much. Why don't we go right down the line here as quick as we can, and maybe you can just pick one or two of those questions.

Mr. KOJM. I will just pick two here. The focus of the Commission's work really has been on secular education, creating secular educational alternatives, and did not speak to reform of madrassas in any detail except to stop the violence.

Now, in terms of the future leadership of Pakistan, the Commission spoke about enlightened moderation. These are the words of

the president, President Musharraf. In the Commission's understanding of that, that means free, fair, and open elections. That is the stated policy of the United States. That is what the Commission believes. That is what the Government of the United States in the coming year should act upon and carry out.

Ms. CURTIS. I think we have seen, through the recent demonstrations over the dismissal of the Supreme Court Justice that there is definitely a hunger for democracy, more democracy in Pakistan. I commend to you a recent IRI poll which shows that the PPP, the Pakistan People's Party, commands more grassroots support than any other political party in the country, contrary to the belief or thought here that perhaps a free and fair election might bring the religious parties to power. I think that if you just look at the grassroots support numbers, the mainstream secular PPP still commands the most grassroots support.

So it seems to me there has to be a transition back to democracy, and this may take some time but the United States needs to be encouraging in this process. Given some of the recent threats that we have seen from anti-state radicals—this is the Taliban elements in the Northwest Frontier Province—which are increasingly using the threat of violence to close down girls' schools, to close down CD book shops, etc., as well as what we are seeing in the heart of Islamabad, this is even more reason for the Musharraf government to find a way to develop a conciliatory relationship with the mainstream parties that have his same vision for an enlightened, moderate Pakistan.

You are right that the Musharraf government, its reliance on the religious parties has actually strengthened them over the last few years, so we need to give that some thought.

And, just to emphasize Dr. Ahmed's point about enforcing the rule of law, this has not been done with regard to militant groups. There has been an ambivalent attitude toward how to handle these groups. Sometimes the groups are picked up, detained, they are released a few weeks later, so there is still this permissive environment for militant groups, particularly those related to Kashmir, that the government does need to begin enforcing the rule of law.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Cohen, next time we are going to go right to left, but I do want to give you an opportunity for a brief statement.

Mr. COHEN. I think that we actually have to bear more risk. The U.S. Government can't hunker down behind a fortress of an embassy. We all bear risks when we visit. You do when you visit. I think we could do better on that.

Mr. SHAYS. Could I just say, Mr. Chairman, I have to go and speak on the House floor but I do want to come back, and I appreciate your holding this hearing. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Shays.

Mr. Braley is gone. Mr. Van Hollen.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for holding this hearing, and thank you to all our witnesses this morning.

Mr. Kojm, thank you for your service on the 9/11 Commission and keeping some focus on the recommendations. As you mention, some of those recommendations seem to be either forgotten recommendations, like we are addressing this morning. I think they are very important that we follow through, and I agree with your

conclusion in your testimony that, unfortunately, with this set of recommendations we have not had much success to date.

I would just like to pick up a little bit on the conversation Mr. Shays was having, because, as Dr. Ahmed said in her testimony, General Musharraf has managed to present himself in the west as the one thing that is really standing between stability and extremism in Pakistan, and that we need to make sure that we support him at all costs or we risk having religious extremists take over. But the testimony this morning is pretty clear, and Dr. Ahmed is unambiguous in her statement that he relies in many ways on the religious parties. Just to quote from Dr. Ahmed's testimony, "Lacking a civilian constituency, Musharraf remains dependent today on the religious parties."

So it does get at this question really that we started to talk about in response to the last questions about really being insistent, from the U.S. perspective, on free and fair elections coming up and insisting that we allow greater participation in the political process.

I agree with what you said, Ms. Curtis, about it was a huge mistake in the 1980's for the United States to withdraw essentially from Pakistan its assistance, but I guess, in terms of sending the signals now—and this goes to the question of conditioning the assistance—Dr. Ahmed suggests that we condition assistance to Pakistan on free and fair elections. The signal I understand from her testimony that would then be sent to the Pakistani people is not that we are interested in withdrawing, but that we want to be a partner with you in open and free elections and making sure someone cannot be the head of the military and at the same time the head of the civilian government.

So if you could speak a little bit more to that issue, because it goes to the sort of global question about whether or not greater openness in the political process will lead to greater participation, will actually lead to less influence from religious parties if their overall influence in the population is actually less than sometimes appears, and allow voices of moderation to come to the fore, and maybe in the longer run that is the best strategy, because you said, Ms. Curtis, we have to stand behind Musharraf, and sometimes people interpret that I think is at all costs. In other words, he is the last thing standing between stability and extremism in Pakistan. And he has used that sort of sense effectively, and some of the testimony here today suggests that is really not an accurate presentation of the situation.

I am interested in people's perspective on conditioning aid or other ways we can really send a strong message this time that we are serious about free and fair elections in Pakistan. Having been born in Pakistan, I have a little interest in this.

Mr. TIERNEY. The question to Ms. Curtis?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. It is for everybody. We will start with Ms. Curtis.

Ms. CURTIS. Yes. I just wanted to clarify, I absolutely agree with you that it is not accurate to say that President Musharraf is the only thing that stands between a stable and radicalized Pakistan. You are absolutely correct about that. And what I have indicated is that, under President Musharraf's leadership, the Pakistan gov-

ernment did make the right decision right after 9/11. They have handed over several senior Al Qaeda leaders, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed just to name one. Who knows how many more acts of violence would have been perpetrated internationally had he not been arrested.

That said, as I indicated, we are seeing this growing hunger for democracy in Pakistan. I think, you know, we shouldn't underestimate the vibrant civil society that is in Pakistan, sophisticated politicians that are there. There is more to Pakistan, obviously, than one military leader, and we need to recognize that. That is why we are seeing, I think, a productive stance for the U.S. Government would be to encourage President Musharraf to move toward democracy, realizing the process may take some time, but we really do need to begin thinking about that and not being afraid that free and fair elections will somehow lead to radicalized regime coming to power. Pakistan is not Lebanon. It is not Egypt. It is not the Palestinian territories. The situation is a lot different. So I think the more people understand that and understand the situation in Pakistan, that we will see that we do not need to fear democracy and, in fact, in the long run it is going to help in terms of turning Pakistan into a moderate, prosperous state.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Does anyone have an overwhelming comment to make? We would be happy to hear it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Cohen, you have been shut out before. I would like to give you the opportunity and then we will go to Dr. Ahmed.

Mr. COHEN. I will just say that military leaders in Pakistan have a shelf life. That is what history has shown. So if we are not willing to encourage an opening of the democratic process now, then we have to at least prepare for a more difficult or violent transition.

Mr. TIERNEY. Dr. Ahmed, are you getting ready to comment?

Ms. AHMED. Yes. Mr. Chairman, I think this is a very important issue that was raised, one of timing. For us to say now the coup took place in October 1999, the elections will take place in 2007, that the military still needs time and there should still be a gradual transition that, I think, is not the way to go. This is an election year. For the United States now not to be supportive of the process of a free and fair election would send the signal that the United States is not interested in a democratic transition in Pakistan. It is way too long a time to say well, let it be gradual.

The first step, as I said in my testimony, as well, to a democratic transition is a free and fair election, and it is not going to be another 8 years from now. I think the opportunity will be lost.

The electoral time table is now before this country, before Pakistan, and it is also before the United States of America. There are two choices for the United States right now. It can either stay outside the process—in other words, it will not support the process or it will support the process of a democratic position. The fence-sitting period I think is coming to an end. The United States has to decide its own interests, to see a moderate democratic Pakistan and to back a process of free and fair elections, or else, as I said, the opportunity in some ways will be lost.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. And thank you, Mr. Van Hollen.

Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to take it to a more macro level with respect to the Arab Muslim world.

I think one thing that is profound is the demographics of the Arab Muslim world. I think it is a common strand through the 9/11 Commission's report that there seems to be a disproportionate focus on the here and now and not enough focus on the future. You know, when you look at 170 million people in Pakistan, disproportionately very, very young, the literacy rate is less than 50 percent. Males are twice as literate as females in that society.

When you look at the situation in Iraq, you know, 50 percent of the population is under the age of 18. Places like Iran, 75 percent of the population is under the age of 25. Despite the leadership of a lot of these countries transitioning and more permanent, the populations are very vulnerable to influences. I think the profound failure of American diplomatic policy in the Middle East is not to focus more attention on the future and those young people who are very susceptible.

When you look at the conflict that has pervaded the Middle East, you know, most of these families are fatherless or they are disproportionately fatherless. So what these young Arab Muslim populations are looking for is a paternal influence, so it is either going to be positive or negative, and I think our role as a Nation has to be to promote not only a strong military presence but also a generous spirit consistent with American military policy in the aftermath of World War II, and helping these countries evolve. Much easier said than done, but my concern is for, you know, cultural violence that has been perpetrated on young Arab Muslims, and obviously it is in our best interest to find a way through education, through cultural exchange, and through economic development to change the direction there.

So I think it is true, as the 9/11 Commission said, it is military struggle versus the war of ideas. It is not Bin Laden any more; it is those who sympathize with him. It is not Al Qaeda; it is Al Qaedaism. And I think the very narrow and myopic focus of the administration has been, you know, as Donald Rumsfeld had said, the measure and the success of the war on terrorism, are we stopping more terrorist activity than is being created every single day, or so I paraphrase.

I think the answer is I think we are losing a larger struggle, which speaks profoundly and urgently to the need for a more strategic diplomatic strategy with both friend and foe in the Arab Muslim nations, and particularly focused on the emerging generations who will serve the basis for the leadership in those nations, as well.

I know it is more of a general comment, but I think it is profoundly important. I would just like your thoughts on it.

Mr. KOJM. Congressman, since you started with the Commission I think I should at least start the answer here.

Thank you for your generous comments about the Commission report.

I think your points are exactly on the mark. If you look at Pakistan, itself, which we have talked so much about today, where has

the United States had the greatest influence in shaping popular views? There is no question about it. It is the assistance we provided in the aftermath of the terrible, terrible earthquake in Kashmir. American helicopters delivering aid, the wonderful logistics capacity of our young people in the military made a difference in people's lives. This changes people's views. It is emblematic of the nature of the relationship that the United States should have across the board in terms of making a difference in people's lives, education, economic opportunity, hope for the future.

Ms. CURTIS. Just building on those comments, yes, we did receive a lot of appreciation from the Pakistani people after our robust and rapid response to the horrible earthquake which occurred in October 2005 in Pakistan. Unfortunately, a few months later there was—not unfortunately, but what happened as a result of an operation that was aimed at targeting al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda No. 2, was that there were civilian casualties in that strike, and a lot of the goodwill that had been built up by our earthquake assistance dissipated.

So we do have a problem, and it is a challenge that we have to live with, in that there are people who hate us and who are not going to change and who are plotting the next 9/11 who we need to target and we need to handle a certain way.

On the other hand, we need to show, as you said, our generous spirit to the large majority of the population, you know, that doesn't support violence against Americans. There has been a new poll out by worldpublicopinion.org that came out just about 2 weeks ago which shows the majority of Pakistanis do not support violence against the United States, but they do sympathize with some of the goals of Al Qaeda.

So I think what I am trying to say is there is really a dual approach, and I agree totally with you that we need to focus more resources on these kind of people-to-people exchanges, assistance issues, because we do see that it does make a difference in people's opinion of America when we act out of sheer goodwill and demonstrate our interest in the betterment and development of the people, themselves.

Mr. COHEN. I would just add that the poll that Ms. Curtis cited also said that only 2 percent of Pakistanis who were surveyed believed Al Qaeda was behind 9/11, and if that is the premise of our posture there is that we are there and we are giving the assistance because of 9/11, then we start to see the problem.

I think after 9/11 America began exploiting fear and anger, and we need to get back to exploiting optimism.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Higgins.

I want to thank all of our witnesses.

Do any of the Members wish to ask a followup question at all? I don't want to shut anybody off. But, failing that, I would just like to close with one group of thoughts.

Obviously I think we have all seen the importance of education and ramping up our attitude about educational aid to Pakistan and trying to make sure that we do that in an appropriate way that doesn't try to interfere with the reform of the madrassas so much as make sure we put up good viable public institutions as an alter-

native and make sure that the Musharraf government does take action against the more radical extremist madrassas on their own.

The other aspect of that is, of course, we need free and fair elections, and how do we go about making sure the U.S. position is consistent and clear on that.

I would like to ask Dr. Ahmed just one last question on that. If we are going to assist in free and fair elections, does that necessarily mean that they have to insist on the return to Pakistan of the leaders of two of the major parties, Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif, both of whom have outstanding legal matters against them, and I think some people might see that as interference of the United States in domestic matters, or will a free and fair election be possible without their return? Can you give us a little perspective on that?

Ms. AHMED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On that particular issue of an even playing field for all the political parties, if there are legal matters against that would hamper the return of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, well, the Pakistan government has to deal with those legal matters. But for the United States to say that we will not support the participation of major party leaders in an electoral exercise would also be problematic. By just specifically supporting a level playing field for all the political parties—in other words, the removal of all restrictions on freedoms of association and expression—that, alone, I think sends a clear enough message to the Pakistan government.

I would say, though, that the United States is already engaged with the Pakistan government as far as the election process is concerned, but not quite in an effective way, because it appears at the moment the only engagement goal taking place through USAID is with the Election Commission of Pakistan, which is, after all, not autonomous and not independent. So there are already mixed messages being sent, which is why the necessity, as you said, very clearly of clarity of that message, that the United States will support a free and fair process.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Doctor.

Mr. Lynch, would you like to ask some questions before we close?

Mr. LYNCH. I would, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Five minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your having this hearing.

I, like several members of this committee, have just returned from an area that is seeing a lot of activity from the Taliban right on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border near Waziristan.

I have a couple of questions. One is sort of a long-term question and it deals with some of the situations we are seeing with the Taliban-connected Madrassas and other radical Islamic madrassas. Is there right now an honest broker or an entity that we could support? Let's face it, the United States has lost any credibility that it has had in that part of the world, so our opportunity to go in and offer a competing model to the madrassas right now openly would be very difficult. I am just wondering if there is an entity or a movement within Pakistan that we could support either openly or clandestinely that would offer a competing model to the more radical madrassas. I feel we have probably already lost the young-

est generation in Pakistan already because we really haven't had a strong competing model and we have been beaten to the punch.

So that is the first half of my question. I would just like to get a sense of what the panel thinks.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Cohen, why don't we start with you.

Mr. COHEN. Well, it is not a political organization, but I think the rural support development programs that exist there succeed for the same reasons the madrassas do, which is they have local knowledge and people see that they are part of the community. From what I have seen—maybe others can comment—they have been successful.

Mr. LYNCH. I am sorry? Can you repeat that again?

Mr. COHEN. Sure. There is a rural support development network which has Pakistani mobilizers in communities, and they do building schools, building roads, very grassroots types of activities, but they are spread out through a fair swath of the country, and people are from those communities and that is what gives them credibility.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Would the gentleman yield for a second? Who sponsors those people? I mean, who are they?

Mr. COHEN. They get funding from a number of donors, including USAID, including the World Bank, Asia Development Bank, so it is an indigenous organization, though, I believe.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Ms. CURTIS. I had the opportunity when I was in Pakistan several years ago to meet with the Baluchistan rural support program which he was talking about, and they are doing good grassroots work. The Aga Khan Foundation is another private foundation that is doing a lot of good work on the education front.

I think one thing we have to look at is the overall government effort, as well. As I indicated in my testimony, there is need for major reform of the sort of overall education bureaucracy in Pakistan. As I mentioned, the World Bank spent billions on Pakistan in the 1980's and 1990's without substantially increasing enrollment rates, literacy rates, etc. So we need to think very carefully about the organizational setup of the education system and think about the good work that is being done at the local level, and how could we sort of organize that and bring that together so that it is a more systematized setup rather than having, you know, a bunch of diverse private efforts.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

Mr. Kojm.

Mr. KOJM. Thank you. I would really defer to my colleagues on the panel, especially Dr. Ahmed, on the best local institutions for us to work with.

Mr. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS. Dr. Ahmed.

Ms. AHMED. There are any number of local citizen-run initiatives in Pakistan where that model we were talking about is already being applied with huge success in some of the poorest of cities. I give you one example, which is called the Citizen's Foundation School System. It is actually run in the poorest of slum areas where the children would be more susceptible to either being taken in by the madrassa managers because their parents can't support

them, or to those kinds of influences. These schools, by the way, are as good as some of the best American schools, run in the slum areas of Pakistan.

So it is not as though the madrassa don't exist, but I agree with Lisa. I think it is really important that the public school sector is where the focus needs to be. The state needs to reform the public school sector. It needs to make that, because that is where the largest number of children will go. It needs to make that more viable, more sustainable, to give the children a sense of direction but also skills so that they can be productive citizens in the work force.

I would want to add that I don't think you should be so despondent about the youth of Pakistan. You would be surprised that the vast majority, despite the poverty and despite the bad winters, the vast majority of Pakistanis, barring a tiny fringe radical element, are moderate, democratic, and support all the ideals that the United States also believes in.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, if I could, just one final question for Dr. Ahmed.

Mr. TIERNEY. Sure.

Mr. LYNCH. Dr. Ahmed, you note in your testimony that, "The choice that Pakistan faces is not between the military and the mullahs, as is generally believed in the west, including the United States; it is between genuine democracy and a mullah military alliance that is responsible for the religious extremism that poses a threat to Pakistani, regional, and international security."

Could you talk about this point? This is hitting the nail on the head right here about what the alternatives are and who we can make our alliances with. I would just like to hear your remarks on that.

Ms. AHMED. Thank you, Congressman, because I think that is where the problem lies in U.S. policy at this point in time, not quite understanding that it isn't the military as the only partner in the war on terror, but actually if the United States was to adopt the right policy directions now, or at least tweak its policy directions, it will be the Pakistani people. Why I say that is simply this: what we have seen in the past 8 years, really, under General Musharraf is the mullahs come into their own, not the mullahs being sidelined by the military. What we have seen is the moderate parties being sidelined by the military.

As a result of this partnership between the military and the mullahs, two out of the four state governments of Pakistan—unprecedented, by the way, in this country's history—are in the hands of the mullahs. Are we then saying that we want to keep the status quo or change it? How can we change it, and what are the most reliable partners the United States can find? Trust me, Congressman, it is the Pakistani people who are the most trusted partners, for a very simple reason: if they want free and fair elections, they would vote for the moderate parties who would have the best partnership, largely because they would, A, have legitimacy; B, the support of their constituents; and, C, share the same goals.

There is a Charter of Democracy signed between the two major parties, and I would suggest that perhaps you should have a look

at it. These are the two major parties that would, in a free and fair election, form a government and be the largest party in opposition.

The charter specifically says that they will fight extremism and terrorism in Pakistan's national interest, and that is exactly what the United States should be looking for, not a quid pro quo, we will give you so you will give us, but a commitment to eliminating terrorism and radicalism in a strategic country, which is absolutely essential if the war on terror is to succeed.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Lynch, we have copies of that charter if you or any other Member would like to have a look at it, as well.

I want to thank all of our witnesses today for their time and for the valuable testimony. I think it was certainly a help to all of the Members.

I also want to thank the U.S. Mission in Pakistan for assisting our videoconferencing of Dr. Ahmed to the hearing, our friend Zharzhay Peter Boney for his cooperation in that.

I want to say one last thing. The subcommittee invited representatives of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to participate in today's hearing, specifically invited Mr. John Anthony Gastright, Jr., the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs at the State Department and Mr. Mark S. Ward, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator of Asia and the Near East at USAID.

These officials were invited to testify, but the State Department and USAID declined our invitation. It seems that these agencies expressed an unwillingness to address any issue raised by the first panel in close proximity to the first panel's offerings. We find that highly questionable and unacceptable, but rather they insisted on testifying first. We are not in the habit of having the administration or anybody else set the schedule of the agenda for our hearings. We think it was important to hear what today's witnesses had to offer and then to hear from people in the State Department and USAID as to what they were doing in contrast to the comments we heard.

So after this hearing I will talk to other members of the subcommittee to determine whether we are going to give a second opportunity for those individuals to testify at some later hearing on that.

Without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned. Again I thank all of our witnesses and participants today.

Dr. Ahmed, thank you for joining us long distance.

[Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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