

August 20, 2002 3:44 PM

TO: President George W. Bush

CC: Vice President Richard B. Cheney
Honorable George Tenet
Honorable Condoleezza Rice

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld

SUBJECT: Afghanistan

I am persuaded that the critical problem in Afghanistan is not really a security problem. Rather, the problem that needs to be addressed is the slow progress that is being made on the civil side. Karzai needs the institutions of government, a budget that is funded and resources from the international community, so he can develop political strength in the regions. He needs to be able to show the Afghan people that he is delivering for them and that it is in their interest to help keep the Taliban out. Only with progress on the civil side will Karzai gain the strength and leverage he needs with the regional political leaders (warlords).

I do agree that there is a perception that the problem in Afghanistan is security. However, if we responded to the perception, our efforts would be concentrated on increasing the U.S. and foreign security forces in Afghanistan, rather than focusing on reconstruction. The result would be that U.S. and coalition forces would grow in number and we could run the risk of ending up being as hated as the Soviets were. In any event, without successful reconstruction, no amount of added security forces would be enough. The Soviets had over 100,000 troops and failed.

However, because of the perception that does exist, I have designated Brigadier General Karl Eikenberry, U.S. Army, to serve as the "U.S. security coordinator" on the staff of the U.S. Ambassador in Kabul. He will be working closely with the Ambassador and with Lieutenant General McNeil, Commander of the Standing Joint Task Force for Afghanistan under General Franks.

General Eikenberry's assignment will be to link together: (1) the international people who are training the Afghan policemen, the Afghan National Army and the Afghan border guards; (2) the ISAF; and (3) the people who manage the security force for Karzai. He will work with the international community to help focus their security efforts in ways that will strengthen the Karzai government.



In addition, he will communicate back to Washington, D.C. the needs in Afghanistan and what it will take for us to be successful in helping the Karzai government develop appropriate security institutions. Our goal, over time, is for the Karzai government to gain the resources, institutions and strength necessary to provide for Afghan security, so that the international community will eventually be able to phase out.

In addition, to help get the international community to aid the Karzai government in developing the civil side in Afghanistan, I have designated Dr. Dov Zakheim to take on the responsibility of “Coordinator for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan” in addition to his role as Comptroller. John Taylor at Treasury is making a real effort to get countries that made pledges to deliver on their pledges, but he needs help. Dov is excellent at this and can help to serve as a forceful representative here in Washington, D.C. to work both the international community and the interagency process.

The reconstruction task in Afghanistan requires security to be sure, but also visible progress in non-security activities. There is overlap between the two. If economic reconstruction aid does not flow, security will deteriorate. Right now, there is no one in charge in this overlap. Dov Zakheim is an Under Secretary of Defense. If he were also to be designated a Special Representative or aide to the White House, he could play a valuable role in helping to get senior level energy into USG reconstruction efforts, and in helping State and Treasury in their efforts to press the international donors to promise more and deliver more on their promises.

Very respectfully,

DHR:dh
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