

Afghanistan Requires Both Military AND Civilian Resources

Dear Colleague:

As we debate the future of our mission in Afghanistan and our federal budget priorities, I wanted to share with you important testimony provided to me recently.

During his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee yesterday, I asked General David Petraeus about a letter he recently sent to Republican Senator Lindsay Graham stressing the importance of fully funding not just the military side of our operations in Afghanistan, but also the civilian component – via the State Department and US AID – as well.

In his letter, Gen. Petraeus explained that:

“As you know, transition is soon to commence, and it will continue through the end of 2014 when the Afghan security forces will have the lead for security throughout the country. During this period, DoS will shoulder important responsibility for economic development and national sub-national governance capacity building, which includes support for ministry development, rule of law, and long-term economic development and infrastructure projects. Without a fully-resourced DoS role, the hard-earning progress our troopers have made could be put at risk.

“In short, the Embassy, including USAID, has to have the capacity to continue current capacity-building efforts and to absorb some missions currently funding and performed by military forces. I am confident that the Department of Defense and the Department of State can plan and execute a responsible and effective transition of our respective responsibilities – assuming we are *both* provided the necessary resources.”

In response to my question about why cutting this funding would be a mistake, Gen. Petraeus testified that this funding is **“so essential to building on the hard fought security gains our troopers sacrificed to much to achieve,”** and that **“this category of funding is really a national security funding issue, not just an issue of foreign assistance.”** [Click here to view my exchange with Gen. Petraeus.](#)

Like many of my colleagues, I have serious concerns about the future of the war in Afghanistan and our strategy to bring the war to a close. Regardless of your position on the war, however, I think we can all agree that we cannot let misplaced budget cuts to our State Department and civilian foreign aid agencies take away the very tools that our military leaders and their civilian counterparts tell us they need to effectively implement a plan to begin the drawdown of our military presence by building the capacity of the Afghan people to take the lead on their own security, economic development and governance.

At the same time that some in Congress argue that we need to give our military the tools they need to succeed in Afghanistan, we continue to debate spending bills that propose deep cuts in the very same civilian agencies that Gen. Petraeus point to as a key part of his strategy. The recently passed HR 1, for example, cuts 9% from current 2010 levels for USAID and nearly 14% from the

President's 2011 budget request, within an overall cut for state and foreign operations funding of 8% from current levels and 21% from the 2011 request.

I urge all my colleagues to keep Gen. Petraeus's clear warning in mind as we continue to debate our federal budget priorities in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Sincerely,

/s/
JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress