

**Statement of Mr. David S. Sedney
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia**

**Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs,
Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight,
United States Senate**

**“Afghanistan Reconstruction Contracts:
Lessons Learned and Ongoing Problems”**

June 30, 2011

Chairman McCaskill, Ranking Member Portman, and Members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for inviting us to testify before you here today.

My office falls under the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, so I would like to give you a sense of the larger strategy backdrop for much of the contract activity that is being executed in Afghanistan.

I will begin by reiterating the U.S. objectives in Afghanistan: To deny safe havens to Al Qaeda, and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan Government.

To support these objectives, U.S. and Coalition forces will continue to degrade the Taliban-led insurgency in order to provide time and space to increase the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan Government, so that they can assume the lead for Afghanistan's security by the end of 2014.

As you know, President Obama recently announced that the United States would begin a deliberate, responsible drawdown of our surge forces.

An initial drawdown of 10,000 troops will occur over the course of this year, with a further drawdown of the remainder of the surge by the end of summer 2012.

Even after the recovery of the 33,000 troops, roughly 68,000 U.S. service members will remain in Afghanistan. Clearly—not a “rush to the exits.”

More importantly, at the end of summer 2012, when the last of the surge forces are out, there will actually be *more* Afghan and Coalition forces in the fight than there are today. That’s because—by the time we complete our drawdown—the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will have added another 55,400 members, not including the additional Afghan Local Police forces.

The growth in the quantity and quality of the ANSF is one of the critical conditions that is enabling the drawdown.

More broadly, our strategy in Afghanistan is working. The momentum has shifted to the Coalition and ANSF, and—together—we have degraded the Taliban’s capability and achieved significant security gains, especially in the Taliban’s heartland in the south.

These security gains are enabling key political initiatives to make progress. We have begun a transition process that will ultimately put Afghans in the lead for security nationwide by the end of 2014. We are beginning to see reintegration and

reconciliation processes gain traction, and we are discussing a strategic partnership with the Afghans to signal our enduring commitment to regional peace and stability.

I want to emphasize that although our progress in Afghanistan has been substantial and our strategy is on track, some significant challenges remain.

In the months ahead, we will be confronted by a capable and resilient enemy that will try to regain the momentum and territory that it has lost to Afghan and Coalition forces.

However, that enemy will face an Afghan population that is increasingly experiencing the benefits of stability and self-governance. Those benefits will only become clearer as we begin the transition to full Afghan security responsibility in selected areas. Those communities will provide useful lessons on security and governance – as well as a potential model for other parts of the country.

Finally, let me emphasize how crucial it is for us to maintain a continuing role for our Coalition partners in Afghanistan – 48 countries with some 47,000 troops. These partner nations have made significant contributions and significant sacrifices.

Madam Chairman—Senator Portman—I want to close by thanking you and your colleagues in the U.S. Senate for your unwavering support for our men and women in uniform.

Thank you, again, for allowing me to appear before you today.
###