

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH ASIA

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND SOUTH ASIA
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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JULY 18, 2002
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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH ASIA

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:22 p.m. in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Benjamin A. Gilman [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. GILMAN. The Committee will come to order.

We want to welcome the State Department's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South Asian Affairs, Christina Rocca, to our Subcommittee once again. The Administration relies heavily on Mrs. Rocca for her expertise and guidance for that troubled region, and we are grateful that we have an opportunity to spend some time with her.

The Congress has the responsibility to ensure that our military personnel and our diplomats have all the necessary means to destroy terrorist organizations in the region that threaten our citizens.

In the past these terrorist organizations were able to gather their strength and strike us around the world without suffering serious consequences. Our Nation's policy toward Pakistan and Afghanistan failed to prevent al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden from building their networks so that they could successfully use their assets against us. The Bush Administration, which inherited these problems, has responded with appropriate diplomacy and strength.

But much remains to be done. The issue of illegal drug production and the need for a truly democratic form of government in Afghanistan are not receiving an appropriate amount of attention.

We are concerned about other developments in the region. Last weekend, 27 more Kashmiris were murdered by terrorists. In yesterday's papers, it was reported that Indian Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Advani asked our Nation to threaten to name Pakistan as a terrorist state. Millions of Indian and Pakistani troops are opposed at the border.

The newly-formed government in Afghanistan is weak due to a number of diplomatic blunders surrounding the recent Loya Jirga. The Norwegian-sponsored peace talks in Bangkok between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers have yet to get off the ground. The Government of Bangladesh is still sitting on enormous resources of untapped natural gas, and yet millions of its citizens are suffering from hunger and poverty. China continues to stir the pot in the region by arming Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka and

Bangladesh. Nepal is facing a very serious threat from a Maoist insurgency. India feels surrounded and its defense minister tells visiting diplomats and officials that China, not Pakistan, is India's number one concern.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gilman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

We want to welcome the State Department's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca to our Subcommittee. The Administration relies heavily on Mrs. Rocca for her expertise and guidance for that troubled region and we are grateful that we have an opportunity to spend some time with her.

The Congress has the responsibility to ensure that our military personnel and our diplomats have all the necessary means to destroy terrorist organizations in the region that threaten our citizens. In the past these terrorist organizations were able to gather their strength and strike us around the world without suffering serious consequences. Our nation's policy towards Pakistan and Afghanistan failed to prevent Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden from building up their networks so that they could successfully use their assets against us. The Bush Administration which inherited these problems has responded with appropriate diplomacy and strength.

But much remains to be done. The issue of illegal drug production and the need for a truly democratic form of government in Afghanistan are not receiving an appropriate amount of attention. We are concerned about other developments in the region:

- Last weekend 27 more Kashmiris were murdered by terrorists.
- In yesterday's papers it was reported that Indian Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Advani asked our nation to threaten to name Pakistan as a terrorist state. Millions of Indian and Pakistani troops are poised at the border.
- The newly formed government in Afghanistan is weak due to a number of diplomatic blunders surrounding the recent loya jirga.
- The Norwegian sponsored peace talks in Bangkok between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers have yet to get off the ground.
- The Government of Bangladesh is still sitting on enormous resources of untapped natural gas and yet millions of its citizens are suffering from hunger and poverty.
- China continues to stir the pot in the region by arming Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Nepal is facing a very serious threat from a Maoist insurgency. India feels surrounded and its Defense Minister tells visiting diplomats and officials that China, not Pakistan, is India's number one concern.

Mrs. Rocca, we appreciate your being here because we know that you will help clarify some of these matters. We look forward to hearing your testimony today.

Mr. GILMAN. Secretary Rocca, we appreciate your being here because we know that you will be clarifying some of these issues, and we look forward to hearing your testimony today and I am pleased to call on our Ranking Member, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for calling today's hearing. Since September 11, South Asia has become the epicenter on the U.S.-led war on terrorism and much has changed there, even in the 6 weeks since the Subcommittee last met on this topic. In Afghanistan, Loya Jirga has been held, and the new transitional government has been approved, except for the parliament which is, I believe, still under discussion; yet we in the international community still have a long way to go before we can declare Afghanistan a success.

The war goes on in eastern Afghanistan, albeit at a lower level of intensity and the security situation is still unstable. The assas-

sination of Vice President Qadir on July 6 is only the most recent testament to the lack of security in Afghanistan. I will say now as I have said before, the Administration's plan to train a national army is the right long-term solution to security in Afghanistan. But there is a near-term security problem that yet remains unaddressed. We need a strategy to bridge the gap between the present situation and the day, years hence, when Afghans can provide their own security. The House has passed language, in the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, calling for such a strategy, but even if that language never becomes law, it is incumbent upon the Administration to provide an alternative as it remains opposed to the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force.

Since Assistant Secretary Rocca was last with the Committee, tension between India and Pakistan has subsided, and I think everyone agrees that the efforts by Deputy Secretary Armitage and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld have produced some positive results, but there remain questions over President/General Musharraf's commitment to stopping infiltration and closing up the terrorist camps. The Government of India disputes our assertion that infiltration is down and, in any event, the heinous attacks in Jammu last weekend and on Tuesday in Anantnag show that the terrorists have not given up, and that they intend to disrupt the elections planned for this October. The United States must continue to insist that President/General Musharraf keep his commitment to stop cross-border infiltration and to close up the terrorist camps that remain in Pakistan.

Beyond the tension between India and Pakistan, there is a fundamental issue for the United States to face in its relations with Pakistan, and that is, the return of democracy to that country. There is no doubt that Pakistan has been extremely supportive of Operation Enduring Freedom, and as I have noted before, we have been extremely generous in recognizing that support. But the price for Pakistan's help must not include our abandonment of democratic principles.

The United States should and must be insisting that Pakistan return to a democratic form of government without delay. The sham referendum extending his term, the proposed constitutional changes which would expand his power beyond even General Zia's wildest dreams, and the concern that the National Assembly elections in October will not be free and fair all point to President/General Musharraf's determination to hold on to power and create only the veneer of democracy.

In the process, he has alienated the very segments of Pakistani society which had originally welcomed his coup. The response from the United States has been, at best, a mild rebuke and at worst the turning of a blind eye. We should insist that the elections in October be free and fair. The United States has nothing to fear from such an insistence. Those who argue that the alternatives to Musharraf may be someone worse ignore Pakistan's limited history with elections. Islamic parties have never done well in Pakistan elections. I think this speaks volumes about the desire of the Pakistani people to have a moderate, democratic, Muslim state. The position of the United States should be to support the wishes of the Pakistani people in that regard. I hope that Secretary Powell, when

he is in Islamabad next week, will tell President/General Musharraf that the United States expects him to keep his word about abandoning terrorism and returning to democracy.

Everywhere in the region, Mr. Chairman, there are both causes for hope and continued reasons for despair. In Sri Lanka for the first time in 7 years, there is at least reasonable cause to hope that the civil war could be brought to an end. The Norwegian-brokered cease-fire is fragile, to say the least, but the steps taken so far by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE represent significant achievements.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Government of Nepal has decided that the best way to confront a fierce Maoist insurgency is to provoke a constitutional crisis, split the ruling Nepali Congress party, have the King declare a state of emergency, and wait for the Supreme Court to sort it all out next month.

In Bangladesh, the overwhelming victory last October by the BNP brought with it hopes that the politics of retribution and confrontation might be abandoned. Indeed, the otherwise free and fair election was marred by post-election violence and the Awami League's refusal, until recently, to take their seats in parliament.

In the wake of that violence, some have raised questions about the BNP government's commitment to human rights and to protecting all of its citizens. I hope that the Secretary will address that issue so that we might have a clearer picture this afternoon. But aside from the domestic political situation, Bangladesh has been strongly supportive of the war on terrorism and is, frankly, the sort of moderate secular, democratic, Muslim state that we hope some of its South Asian neighbors can become.

Bangladesh plays a very positive role in the international community regionally, with the development of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and globally with its participation various UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. For these reasons, Bangladesh deserves our time and attention and as we were reminded in last week's news report about arsenic poisoning, Bangladesh is still a very poor country that faces tremendous development challenges.

Mr. Chairman, we have a lot of ground to cover today. And I am pleased to see the Assistant Secretary here, and I look forward to her testimony.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will try to be to the point. What we have here is an area of the world, region that has been totally neglected, and to the degree we weren't neglecting that part of the region, our policies were not based on principle and not based on those type of prerequisites that would create a better world. In just Pakistan, for example, we permitted during the war in Afghanistan for the Pakistani situation to deteriorate, and for the democratic institutions in Pakistan to deteriorate. We permitted the ISI in Pakistan, we turned a blind eye to their involvement with the drug trade and they were, everyone knows, were up to their eyeballs in the heroin trade; so we neglected that region.

We neglected to do our duty, and after the war and during the 1990s, the United States was on the wrong side in Afghanistan. We ended up siding with the Taliban. I know over and over again, I warned this Committee about our covert policy toward supporting the Taliban. Now we are reaping the rewards of this folly. Also over these last decades, we have not had the courage to step forward to India and to the rest of the world with India at our side, and tell the Indians they have to permit the people of Kashmir to have a plebescite to control their own destiny and until the root cause of much of the instability in this part of the world comes from an unwillingness and arrogance and intransigence on the part of the India not to permit the people of Kashmir the right to control their own destiny, we won't have peace until that plebescite happens and those people are given the right to free and fair elections.

Finally Mr. Chairman, again, the situation is deteriorating in Pakistan. You have a military dictatorship. They play games. This plebescite that they had on whether Mr. Musharraf should stay in power was an insult to the democratic nations of the world trying to suggest that he, in some way, through this correct process, had verified his own ability or his own legitimacy of his military regime. So I would suggest the United States and the western democracies should be exercising a positive influence on that part of the world and we haven't been exercising a positive influence.

A positive influence toward democratic government, a positive influence toward respect for other people's rights, their religious rights and their political rights, and respect for the rights of people to control their own destinies through the ballot box and also stepping forward in our tradition of instead of going to a radical alternative be more compromising with people in a system that permits all people, even with disagreements, to exist.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this hearing. We need—this is a region that needs our attention and I applaud your leadership over the last few years in trying to make sure we were doing what is right.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very troubled by the recent events in Afghanistan, and I welcome the Assistant Secretary, and I just thought I would take a moment to share my concern with the assassination of the Vice President Abdul Qadir, and my worries are that the largest ethnic group there, the Pashtuns, are beginning to lose confidence in President Karzai. I think we need to do all we can do to help Afghans feel a greater sense of being part of a unified greater Afghanistan; and, for instance, I know when Radio Free Afghanistan broadcasts, they do not refer to the ethnicity of government figures in their reports. That's one of the reasons the BBC is resisted at times because as Chairman Karzai says, "we are all Afghans."

My concern here is that a part of the country, the Pashtun part of the country, is beginning to feel alienated, beginning to feel that the Northern Alliance warlords are not sensitive to reform and not sensitive to inclusion of Pashtuns. And now we have the assassination of the Vice President. I think this really is a moment of chal-

lenge and maybe crisis, and we need to really be focused right now on what we can do to help expand that government, make sure it is broadbased, and make sure it is committed to reform. And we also need to address these Pashtun concerns.

Thank you very much again for being here, Ms. Assistant Secretary.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Royce. Any other opening statements? If not, we will proceed with the testimony by Secretary Rocca, who was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs in May of last year. Prior to joining the Department of State, she was foreign affairs advisor to Senator Brownback where she specialized on issues relating to South Asia, Central Asia and the Caucusus and Middle East. From 1982 to 1997, Mrs. Rocca was an intelligence officer with the CIA. Welcome, Secretary Rocca.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTINA ROCCA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary ROCCA. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I have a full statement which I would like to put in the record. I will shorten it considerably—

Mr. GILMAN. Without objection. Thank you.

Secretary ROCCA. First let me start by saying that I understand that you have announced you will be retiring and I just want to say how much I personally, and the Bureau have enjoyed working with you. I enjoyed it prior to coming even to the Administration when I worked up here on Capitol Hill, and we are very grateful for everything you have done and we are going to miss you.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you for your very kind words. That was an involuntary retirement, due to redistricting.

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to speak today about the developments in South Asia and our policy responses. September, since September 11, South Asia has often been in the headlines, both as a principal focus of our war against terrorism, and also because of the crisis between India and Pakistan, but we have important interests in other countries in South Asia. In Nepal, a major rural insurgency threatens to destabilize the country; in Sri Lanka a longstanding civil war may be starting to move toward resolution but the process is lining likely to be long and difficult.

Chronic political rivalries and violence compound a serious law and order problem in Bangladesh and pose a danger to the young democracy of that country. And of course, there is the long-term question of Afghanistan's future. Following the encouraging success of the Loya Jirga process, a fragile transitional government is trying to bring stability to a country torn by almost a quarter century of war.

Our relationship with the South Asian states have been central to our successful prosecution of the war on terrorism. All have been fully supportive, and their support in this war has been and will continue to be absolutely crucial. You yourselves have mentioned the roles they have played, so I won't enumerate it here. It is part

of my full statement, but we are extremely grateful for the support they have been providing and we couldn't be doing it without them.

The encouraging progress in South Asia toward prosperity and democracy is often too overshadowed by the specter of war between India and Pakistan and that is often, as I said, a large part of the concerns that we have. We are deeply concerned over the continuing high levels of tension between these two countries, and in particular, about the continued deployment of forces along their shared border as well as in Kashmir.

A surge in violence could spark a military confrontation with long lasting and devastating consequences for the entire region. The enemies of moderation in the region are aware of this fact, and are trying to exploit it through high profile terrorist attacks, such as that that we saw this weekend out of Jammu.

As Secretary Powell has put it, war is just not an option for India and Pakistan. The only way forward that offers a prospect of genuinely resolving their differences is the path of dialogue and confidence building. We are working to help the two sides find mutually acceptable ways to begin the de-escalation process. President Musharraf has pledged that infiltration into Kashmir from his country will end permanently. Pakistan needs to keep that pledge in order to begin a process of resolution of the immediate crisis and its more fundamental difficulties with India.

Once tensions begin to subside, the process should be continued by New Delhi agreeing to resume talks with Islamabad on all issues, including Kashmir. We are also supportive of Indian efforts to conduct free and fair elections in the state of Kashmir scheduled for later this year and to begin to address Kashmiri grievances. Such elections could proceed with much greater chance of success in an atmosphere free of violence and intimidation and serve as the first step toward resolution of the issue.

Finally, we continue to offer our good offices in helping the two sides resume dialogue to resolve their differences. Next week, Secretary Powell will be visiting India and Pakistan for the second time since January. On the agenda will be the crisis between India and Pakistan, but we will also start discussing and reviving the bilateral relationship with each country which has been going on all along, but somehow in the public eye has tended to not get as much attention. It is our intention to stay fully engaged with both countries as well as to reduce the tensions between them.

Let me first turn to developments in our bilateral relationships with the various countries in South Asia. India is increasingly an important player in world affairs. From the start of this Administration, President Bush has sought to effect the transformation of U.S. relationship with India. We are engaging with India on a wide range of issues from counterterrorism to security issues, climate change, commerce, strengthening democracy and HIV/AIDS. The President has looked to India as a partner in all of these issues.

We are working more closely than ever with India on military cooperation. Our military forces are now actively developing the capability to work together effectively through joint exercises, planning and senior level visits. Nonproliferation remains an important item on our bilateral agenda which we hope to address through cooperation and mutual understanding. The U.S.-India counterter-

rorism cooperation is rapidly maturing. Just last week, we hosted the fifth session of the U.S.-India joint working group on counterterrorism which predates 9/11. In the economic sphere, the pace of our engagement has also picked up, though this is one area where much more can be done. Our commercial relationship is growing too slowly and requires New Delhi to pursue important second generation reforms.

With the active participation of our respective private sectors, we are hopeful that our economic dialogue with India can and will play an important role in helping us realize the enormous potential of our economic relationship. Our two democracies are working together more intensely than before to make the world freer, more peaceful, and more prosperous. Our collaboration can only make the world a safer and more just place.

In Pakistan, President Musharraf is setting the country on a bold new course and has genuine opportunity to build a prosperous, progressive and tolerant Islamic state. President Musharraf, recognizing the danger that extremism poses and posed to his country, has denounced it and vowed to prevent the use of Pakistan as a base for extremists. His government has banned all the major extremist groups, frozen their assets and arrested many of their members. Pakistani authorities are working hand in hand with U.S. agencies in tracking and capturing remaining al-Qaeda elements that have fled to Pakistan. Pakistani troops have arrested al-Qaeda fighters in the northwest frontier province who fled coalition operations in Afghanistan, and Pakistani police have made numerous arrests of al-Qaeda and other extremists throughout their country. More than 12 Pakistani soldiers have died in such operations in the last 2 weeks.

The extremists, showing how threatened they feel with President Musharraf's action, have struck back. They have killed scores of Pakistanis and targeted westerners in Karachi and Islamabad. The government has not been intimidated; instead, it has continued its campaign against terrorists and their supporters. With Pakistan, we also have a joint working group on counterterrorism and law enforcement which met for the first time in May. President Musharraf's government recognizes that extremism feeds on economic and social dislocation. It is taking positive actions on economic and social reform. It has completed its IMF program and USAID has begun implementing programs to improve basic education in Pakistan and to support President Musharraf's efforts at educational reforms. We intend to enhance these efforts in the next fiscal year.

Poor quality of schools and lack of access to educational opportunities in Pakistan have resulted in the growth of the madrassahs, or religious schools, some of which inculcate intolerance and extremism in Pakistani youth. The government has put an ambitious program into action for revamping Pakistan's education system which includes bringing the madrassahs under control. Outside funding for the country's madrassahs have been cut off or are being scrutinized, and they must now submit to curriculum standards in order to receive government support.

It is in our interest and in the interests of all of Pakistan's neighbors for Pakistan to develop into a more stable, economically sound

and better educated society. The government has set Parliamentary elections in October. President Musharraf recently addressed his nation about plans for political reforms. We view the restoration of democracy and civilian rule within the constitutional framework as crucial to fostering long-term stability in that country.

Afghanistan, which has long been a source of instability in the region and beyond, is now moving toward stability and peace—slowly and haltingly at times—but the direction is clear. The demise of the Taliban, the destruction of al-Qaeda infrastructure, the return of former King Zahir Shah, the emergency Loya Jirga and the establishment of a new government, are the first steps in getting this war-ravaged country back on its feet, but this is only a beginning.

Continuing instability and violence, such as the recent assassination of the Afghan Vice President, are constant reminders that a great deal remains to be done. We and the rest of the international community must remain fully committed to Afghanistan's security, political stability and social economic recovery. We also need to ensure the security of our new mission in Kabul, continue assistance for reconstruction and recovery, promote respect for human rights and religious freedom by working with new Afghan groups who are trying to recreate a culture of tolerance and respect for all Afghans, including women, and we are also working with the Afghans to eradicate opium poppy.

Unprecedented amounts of food are now entering the country and distribution networks are improving. We are also the largest donor of humanitarian assistance with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of food, medicine and other necessities contributed during the last year.

Turning to Bangladesh, Bangladesh is an example of a nation where development assistance has made a significant impact. At its independence in 1971, it was one of the poorest, most densely populated countries in the world. Since then it has halved its birth rate and infant and child mortality rates and has become self-sufficient in food production. It has also made impressive strides in women's empowerment through education and employment, and it has conducted three peaceful transfers of power through free and fair elections.

Despite these successes, Bangladesh faces serious political and economic challenges as you mentioned. Deep and bitter political rivalries between the two main political parties as well as rampant corruption continue to threaten political stability and impede economic growth and reform. The current government, elected in October 2001 on a law and order platform, has been slow to deliver on its election promises.

The opposition's recent decision to take its place in Parliament, however, is a step in the right direction. But the future course of democracy and prosperity in Bangladesh will depend on the major political parties committing to work together to solve the many problems facing this nation. As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, Nepal continues to confront a violent Maoist insurgency now in its 6th year, which has left nearly 4,000 dead. The Maoists have shown themselves to be a ruthless enemy by their tactics in the field and through terrorist attacks against both government targets

and innocent civilians. Nepal's government has a right and duty to protect its citizens within the framework of its constitution. Unfortunately the leaders of Nepal's ruling political party are locked in a power struggle that inhibits the government's effectiveness in dealing with the Maoists and undertaking development initiatives that can begin to restore its authority in the countryside. The U.S. is finalizing plans for assistance as part of an international response to help the Government of Nepal to achieve its goal. Our programs are intended to facilitate the government's efforts both to restore security and to focus on development and poverty reduction.

Finally, Sri Lanka. Developments in that country give us some cause for very cautious optimism. The Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have agreed to a cease-fire and are preparing for formal talks. We are watching these developments very closely and hope that these talks will eventually bring to an end the bitter ethnic conflict that has plagued this small country for nearly 2 decades. The Norwegian government has played a key role in bringing the two sides together, and we wish them every success in their effort toward peace.

A negotiated political settlement of this conflict would be the best demonstration that negotiation, not violence, provides the most effective means for dealing with contentious issues that divide and separate peoples throughout the world. On July 24, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister will meet the President in Washington as well as the Secretary of State and other senior Administration officials. We will use these meetings to continue to encourage a negotiated settlement of conflict in Sri Lanka.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, it's clear that South Asia has become a major focal point of American foreign policy. This is for the reasons that go well beyond our immediate concerns in the war on terrorism. Our engagement with all the countries of the region will continue to grow as they themselves continue to grow and develop. A large part of our agenda will be to support the efforts of all Nations of the region to improve standards of living and strengthen democratic institutions. We are committed to a better future for this very important region. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Rocca follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTINA ROCCA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for inviting me to speak today about developments in South Asia and our policy responses. Since September 11, South Asia has often been in the headlines here, both as a principal focus of our war on terrorism, and because of the crisis between India and Pakistan. I will discuss both of those subjects today, but I also want to talk about our broader policy concerns in the region, fundamental issues that will determine our relationships with the South Asian states, that have an impact on the war on terrorism and efforts to defuse tensions between India and Pakistan and that have a strong effect on our interests, some of them vital, in surrounding areas.

Many of these concerns involve India and Pakistan—two very important countries in their own right. As Secretary Powell said during his Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony July 9, we want to “make sure that both the Indians and the Pakistanis understand that the United States is interested in them beyond this crisis.” We have a strong and growing relationship with India, a transformed relationship in the economic, scientific and security fields that has permitted a degree of cooperation following the September 11 attacks that would have been unthinkable even two years ago. With Pakistan as well, we have broken free of over a decade's

difficult relationship, as that country sets a course of moderation and cooperation with the United States.

But we have important interests in other countries in South Asia. In Nepal, a major rural insurgency threatens to destabilize the country. In Sri Lanka, a long-standing civil war may be starting to move toward resolution, but the process is likely to be long and difficult. Chronic political rivalries and violence compound a serious law and order problem in Bangladesh and pose a danger to the young democracy in that country. And, of course, there is the long-term question of Afghanistan's future. Following the encouraging success of the Loya Jirga process, a fragile transitional government is trying to bring stability to a country torn by almost a quarter century of war.

COUNTERTERRORISM

Mr. Chairman, our relationships with South Asian states have been central to our successful prosecution of the war on terrorism. All have been fully supportive, and their support in this war has been, and will continue to be, absolutely crucial. Afghanistan is currently the main battleground in the conflict, and without the close cooperation of Afghans and the Afghan government, our efforts there would be severely constrained. Pakistan continues to provide critical backing to Operation Enduring Freedom by supporting Coalition activity in Afghanistan and through its direct actions against al-Qaida and Taliban operatives in Pakistan. India was one of the first countries to offer support after September 11. Today it is supporting Coalition naval operations, cooperating closely in counterterrorism activities and participating in international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Bangladesh, the third largest Muslim country in the world, has had an important role in establishing that the war on terrorism is not a war on Islam. We will continue to work closely with all the countries of South Asia in tracking and defeating al Qaida terrorists and addressing the social and political conditions that foster extremism.

INDIA-PAKISTAN

Mr. Chairman, the encouraging progress in South Asia toward prosperity and democracy is too often overshadowed by the specter of war between India and Pakistan. We remain deeply concerned over the high levels of tension between India and Pakistan and in particular about the continued deployment of forces along their shared border and within Kashmir. A surge in violence could spark a military confrontation, with long-lasting and devastating consequences for the entire region. The enemies of moderation in the region are aware of this fact and are trying to exploit it through high-profile terrorist attacks, such as that outside of Jammu this past Saturday.

As Secretary Powell has put it, war is just not an option for India and Pakistan. The only way forward that offers a prospect of genuinely resolving their differences is the path of dialogue and confidence building. We are working to help the two sides find mutually acceptable ways to begin the de-escalation process. President Musharraf has pledged that infiltration into Kashmir from his country will end permanently. Pakistan needs to keep that pledge in order to begin a process of resolution of the immediate crisis and of its more fundamental differences with India. Once tensions begin to subside, the process should be continued by New Delhi agreeing to resume talks with Islamabad on all issues, including Kashmir. We also are supportive of Indian efforts to conduct free and fair elections in the state of Kashmir scheduled for later this year, and to begin to address Kashmiri grievances. Such elections could proceed with much greater chance of success in an atmosphere free of violence and intimidation and serve as a first step towards resolution of the issue. Finally, we will continue to offer our good offices in helping the two sides resume dialogue to resolve their differences.

In about a week, Secretary Powell will be visiting India and Pakistan for the second time since January. The United States and others in the international community are staying fully engaged with both countries to reduce current tensions and to help them get on course to resolve their differences. This week, British Foreign Secretary Straw is making his second trip there since May. Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of State Armitage were there in June.

India:

Mr. Chairman, I'd now like to turn to developments in our relationships with the countries of South Asia, starting with India.

India is an increasingly important player in world affairs. From the start of his Administration, President Bush has sought to effect the transformation of the U.S. relationship with India. We are engaging with India on a wide range of issues. From

counter-terrorism, to security issues, climate change and commerce, to strengthening democracy and fighting HIV/AIDS, the President has looked to India as a partner.

We are working ever more closely with India on military cooperation. Our military forces are now actively developing the capability to work together effectively through joint exercises, planning and senior level visits. The Defense Planning Group, which has met twice since December, provides the framework for military planning and coordination. Within that framework we are discussing technological and research and development cooperation, sales and licensing issues and peace-keeping cooperation.

Nonproliferation remains an important item on our bilateral agenda, which we hope to address through cooperation and mutual understanding. We have agreed to institutionalize our bilateral dialogue on nonproliferation and security issues as part of our discussions on the broader Strategic Framework and hope to kick off the first round in September. One area in which there is great scope for cooperation is on export controls. We have already had a series of expert-level discussions and conducted training for Indian customs officials. This cooperation should expand over time, encompassing dialogue, information sharing, training and other assistance. We are confident that the Indian government shares our concerns about preventing the spread of sensitive technologies since the diffusion of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and missiles pose a serious threat to the security of both our countries. We are also continuing to discuss with both India and Pakistan confidence-building measures to minimize the risks that nuclear weapons might actually be used, and steps they can take to bring the arms race in South Asia to the earliest possible close.

U.S.-India counterterrorism cooperation is rapidly maturing. It has contributed to the arrest of many terrorists around the world. The US-India Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism predates 9/11 and continues to expand and deepen. It held its fifth session in Washington July 11 and 12. Our cooperation includes intelligence sharing, training, countering terrorism finance and money laundering, improving border security, combating cyber-terrorism and providing mutual legal assistance. Our joint diplomatic efforts against terrorism have been unprecedented in our relationship. We have worked together in the UN to build support for UNSCR 1373 and the India-sponsored Comprehensive Convention Against International Terrorism. The United States and India have moved in unison to strangle the financial assets of terrorists.

On broader law enforcement issues, we also are steadily increasing the number of our joint activities. We signed a new bilateral treaty last October providing for mutual legal assistance and cooperation that makes it easier for American and Indian law enforcement agencies to assist each other in investigating international crime. Additionally, the United States and India have a new extradition treaty containing modern provisions.

Our two democracies are working together more intensely than ever before to make the world freer, more peaceful, and more prosperous. Our collaboration can only make the world a safer and more just place.

In the economic sphere, the pace of our engagement has also picked up. Though this is one area where more can be done, our commercial relationship with is growing too slowly and requires New Delhi to pursue important second generation reforms. Since January, we've seen visits by senior USG officials from the Departments of Treasury, Energy and Commerce and from the Environmental Protection Agency. During the same period, Ministers Sinha and Mahajan and other cabinet rank officers of the Indian Government have been in the United States for productive discussions with their counterparts. We look forward to enhancing these kinds of interactions under the framework of the US-India Economic Dialogue, which the President and Prime Minister reinvigorated last November. With the active participation of our respective private sectors, we are hopeful that the Economic Dialogue can and will play an important role in helping us realize the enormous potential of our economic relationship.

An area of great potential for Indo-U.S. relations is in trade and commercial cooperation. India's economy has expanded rapidly since reforms in the early 1990s. Exports to the U.S. have more than doubled since 1995. But this commercial relationship is growing too slowly. In order to fully exploit this economic potential, New Delhi must continue to pursue important second-generation reforms.

Pakistan

In Pakistan, President Musharraf is setting his country on a bold new course and has a genuine opportunity to build a prosperous, progressive, and tolerant Islamic state. President Musharraf, recognizing the danger that extremism poses to his

country, has denounced it and vowed to prevent the use of Pakistan as a base for extremists. His government has banned all of the major extremist groups, frozen their assets, and arrested many of their members. Pakistan authorities are working hand in hand with U.S. agencies in tracking and capturing remaining al Qaida elements that have fled to Pakistan. Pakistani troops have arrested al Qaida fighters in the Northwest Frontier Province who had fled Coalition operations in Afghanistan. Pakistani police have made numerous arrests of al Qaida and other extremists throughout their country. More than ten Pakistani soldiers have died in such operations.

The extremists, showing how threatened they feel by President Musharraf's actions, have struck back. They have killed scores of Pakistanis and targeted westerners in Karachi and Islamabad. The government has not been intimidated; instead it has continued its campaign against terrorists and their supporters. On July 15, the Pakistani court in Hyderabad sentenced Omar Saeed Sheikh to death and the three other accomplices to life in prison for their role in the kidnapping/murder of Daniel Pearl. We were gratified by this verdict, an important step in bringing to justice the perpetrators of this crime. We are standing by Pakistan as it faces the brutal challenge of these ruthless extremists.

Our Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Law Enforcement met for the first time in Washington in May. Pakistan Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider and a delegation of senior officials met with officials in the Departments of State and Justice, the FBI and INS to develop a closer working relationship to enhance Pakistan's law enforcement and terrorist interdiction capabilities. We will be providing \$3 million in assistance to enhance the capabilities of the Karachi Criminal Division, which has been on the forefront of combating terrorism in this violence-ridden city. It was here that Danny Pearl was kidnapped, where a car bomb at the Sheraton killed 11 French soldiers, and where the U.S. Consulate was bombed on June 14. The Joint Working Group also addressed where both sides could be more responsive to law enforcement requests.

President Musharraf's government recognizes that extremism feeds on economic and social dislocation. It is taking positive actions on economic and social reform. Pakistan has completed its IMF program. USAID has also begun implementing programs to improve basic education in Pakistan and support Musharraf's efforts at educational reforms. We intend to enhance these efforts in the next fiscal year. Poor quality of schools and lack of access to educational opportunities in Pakistan have resulted in the growth of the madrassas, some of which inculcate intolerance and extremism in Pakistani youth. The government has put an ambitious program into action for revamping Pakistan's education system, which includes bringing the madrassas, or religious schools, under control. Outside help for the country's madrassas is being monitored and they must now submit to curriculum standards in order to receive government support.

We are supporting Islamabad in its efforts to root out extremism and to promote economic, social, and political reform. During President Musharraf's visit to Washington in February, President Bush pledged to work with Congress in providing Pakistan with debt relief for fiscal year 2003; announced a multi-year \$100 million assistance program for education; and agreed to provide increased market access for about \$142 million in Pakistani apparel exports each year for the next three years.

It is in our national interest, and in the interest of all of Pakistan's neighbors, for Pakistan to develop into a more stable, economically sound, and better-educated society. The government has set parliamentary elections for October. President Musharraf recently addressed his nation about the plans of his government for political reform. We view the restoration of democracy and civilian rule within a constitutional framework as crucial to fostering long-term stability in Pakistan. Toward this end, we are moving forward in providing over \$2 million in election assistance to Pakistan to help train polling monitors, sponsor voter education and "get-out-the-vote" campaigns, and, after the elections, to help train newly elected provincial and national parliamentarians, particularly women.

With regard to nonproliferation issues, the U.S. and Pakistan met in Washington last March for a round of talks on regional and global nonproliferation issues. As with India, we have urged both sides to take steps to prevent a costly and destabilizing arms race in the region and to assist U.S. efforts to prevent the spread of technologies that could assist WMD/missile programs in other regions. The U.S. has offered assistance to help Pakistan bring its export controls up to international standards.

AFGHANISTAN

Long a source of instability in the region and beyond, Afghanistan is now moving toward stability and peace—slowly and haltingly at times, but the direction is clear. The demise of the Taliban, the destruction of al Qaida infrastructure, the return of former King Zahir Shah, the emergency Loya Jirga and the establishment of a new government are the first steps in getting this war-ravaged country back on its feet.

But all this is only a beginning. Continuing instability and violence, such as the recent assassination of an Afghan vice president, are constant reminders that a great deal remains to be done. We and the rest of the international community must remain fully committed to Afghanistan's security, political stability, and socio-economic recovery. The International Security Assistance Force in Kabul is helping the Afghans consolidate a lasting peace. At the same time, the U.S. is helping to establish and train an Afghan national army and Germany is assisting with a police force. We also need to ensure the security of our new mission in Kabul; continue assistance for reconstruction and recovery; and promote respect for human rights by working with new Afghan groups who are trying to recreate a culture of tolerance and respect for all Afghans, including women. We also are working with the Afghans to eradicate opium poppy.

Unprecedented amounts of food aid are now entering the country and distribution networks are improving. The international community has committed \$1.8 billion to Afghan reconstruction over the next year. The U.S. alone committed some \$300 million for reconstruction during the donor conference in Tokyo in January. We are also the largest donor of humanitarian assistance, with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of food, medicine and other necessities contributed during the past year.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is an example of a nation where development assistance has made a significant impact. At its independence in 1971, Bangladesh was one of the poorest, most densely populated countries in the world. Since then Bangladesh has halved its birth rate and infant and child mortality rates, and has become self-sufficient in food production. It has also made impressive strides in women's empowerment through education and employment.

A moderate Muslim democracy, Bangladesh last year saw its third transfer of power through free and fair elections. Despite these successes, Bangladesh faces serious political and economic challenges. Deep and bitter political rivalries between the two main political parties as well as rampant corruption continue to threaten political stability and impede economic reform and growth. The current government, elected in October 2001 on a law and order platform, has been slow to deliver on its election promises. The opposition's recent decision to take its place in parliament is a step in the right direction, but the future course of democracy in Bangladesh will depend on the major political parties committing to work together to solve the problems facing this nation.

NEPAL

Nepal continues to confront a violent Maoist insurgency, now in its sixth year, which has left nearly 4,000 dead. The Maoists have shown themselves to be a ruthless enemy by their tactics in the field and through terrorist attacks against both government targets and innocent civilians. Nepal's government has a right and duty to protect its citizens, within the framework of its constitution. Unfortunately, the leaders of Nepal's ruling political party are locked in a power struggle that inhibits the government's effectiveness in dealing with the Maoists and undertaking development initiatives that can begin to restore its authority in the countryside. The United States is finalizing plans for assistance as part of an international response to help the government of Nepal achieve this goal. Our programs are intended to facilitate the government's efforts both to restore security and to focus on development and poverty reduction.

While fighting terror, Nepal's citizens must simultaneously plan for the future. They must continue to hold their officials accountable for good governance, ending corruption, and finding the common ground on which they can begin rebuilding what the Maoists have destroyed. We can assist in that reconstruction by continuing to aid Nepal's economic development. Peace can provide the space in which Nepal can diversify its economy, attract foreign investment, and seek sustainable and environmentally sound ways to tap the potential of its natural resources. While much remains to be done, many in the international community stand ready to assist.

SRI LANKA

Developments in Sri Lanka give us cause for some cautious—very cautious—optimism. The Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have agreed to a cease-fire and are preparing for formal talks. We are watching these developments very closely and hope that these talks will eventually bring to an end the bitter ethnic conflict that has plagued this small country for nearly two decades. The Norwegian government has played a key role in bringing the two sides together, and we wish them every success in their efforts toward peace. A negotiated political settlement to this conflict would be the best demonstration that negotiation—not violence—provides the most effective means for dealing with contentious issues that divide and separate peoples throughout the world. On July 24 the Sri Lankan Prime Minister will meet with the President in Washington. We will use this meeting to continue to encourage a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that South Asia has become a major focal point of American foreign policy. This is for reasons that go well beyond our immediate concerns in the war on terrorism. Our engagement with all the countries of the region will continue to grow as they themselves continue to grow and develop. A large part of our agenda will be to support the efforts of all of the nations of the region to improve standards of living and strengthen democratic institutions. We are committed to a better future for this important region.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, and thank you for your analysis of this peaceful part of the world. When they terminated my Chairmanship of the Full Committee, because of term limitations, they thought they would award me with a peaceful area and gave me the Middle East and South Asia.

We want to welcome Mr. Crowley, the gentleman from New York, who has just joined us. Thank you for being here.

I have several questions and then we will turn to our other colleagues.

The manner in which the former King of Afghanistan was not permitted to run for office in the new Afghan government has been cited as an example of our Nation's heavy-handedness. Can you tell us what happened in Loya Jirga? There was some indication that the King would have liked to have run for office.

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Chairman, there has been an awful lot of publicity on this, much of it unfounded. The Loya Jirga, from our perspective, was a success especially considering where we came from and where we were just last October. It was a gathering that was representative of the Afghan people and it allowed them to elect a President. The King played an extraordinary role in convening the Loya Jirga as set out in the Bonn process, and essentially this decision was made by the Afghans.

There has been an exaggeration of the role that the U.S. played, but in this instance, we played a role of facilitator for the Afghans—the United States with the U.N. and other international actors supported the Loya Jirga process.

Mr. GILMAN. I know that the King did an outstanding job of helping to bring the parties together, and we look forward to working with the new government in Afghanistan.

Madam Secretary, earlier this month, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that Mohammed Muslim, a regional chief of Pakistan's interservice intelligence agency stated, and I quote,

“The U.S. Government destroyed the World Trade Center so that it would have an excuse to destroy Afghanistan.”

Then he went on to say after that the U.S. military killed tens of thousands of women and children in Afghanistan. This regional ISI chief went on to say that Osama bin Laden has been wrongly vilified through CIA-produced fake videos about him talking about the World Trade Center attack. His agency says there are no al-Qaeda cells operating inside of Kashmir, and he bitterly denounces what he calls our governments war against them.

If such a high level Pakistani intelligence official believes such things and continues to hold on to his post, then it appears that President Musharraf has little intention to reign in the ISI. What exactly has Musharraf done to flush out these kind of people from the ISI? Did the Administration look into accuracy of the *Christian Science Monitor* article and have the complaints been registered with the Government of Pakistan about their official?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Chairman, I am unaware of the article and I will look into it as soon as I can, but I would like to say that it is an illustration of a need for us to project our message better in this part of the world. As I think I am not the first Administration official to say that we are a little behind on this. We are working hard at making changes in order to get our message out in order for this kind of disinformation not to take hold and be passed on. We have a number of initiatives that are in train.

[The information referred to follows:]

SECRETARY ROCCA'S RESPONSE SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE AFTER THE HEARING

The person quoted as a former ISI Regional Director, Mohammed Muslim, who was speaking on his own behalf and did not represent the government of Pakistan.

Secretary ROCCA. Our public diplomacy bureau is working very hard on coming up with new initiatives. Those that we have got now include expanding publications in regional languages, expanding exchanges with target-sensitive groups, for example, with Islamic scholars and clerics from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, from youth from all the countries in the region, with educators from the region and journalists. We are also expanding Voice of America and Radio Free Afghanistan broadcasts in Dari and Pashtu to Afghanistan. We have increased support for regional journalists to cover the U.S. in a post-9/11 environment. These are first steps. There will be more coming, but I think that the quote that you just read illustrates very much the need for us to move forward on those initiatives.

Mr. GILMAN. We welcome the steps you have listed. I hope you would take a look at that article and pass it on to President Musharraf and ask him what his comments are as we welcome hearing what his response would be.

Madam Secretary, what has stalled the Norwegian-sponsored peace talks that were to begin in Bangkok with regard to Sri Lanka? Can you tell us about some of the problems and what is our government doing to try to get these talks moving along?

Secretary ROCCA. The peace talks, peace process, is moving along. The current Government of Sri Lanka has made it their number one priority, and as you have seen, they have been very active. The Norwegians have done a wonderful job of mediating it and setting up the peace talks. The LTTE has put a hold on talks temporarily. There are a number of different analyses which I

could put forth. I don't know exactly why this has happened. However, we have reason to be relatively optimistic that things will pick up again in the near future and that we will start to see actual meetings taking place. Certainly the Government of Sri Lanka is optimistic that that will be the course.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. You did say you would look into that article, but you meant to say also you don't think it is true; right?

Secretary ROCCA. I really don't know. I have not—

Mr. ACKERMAN. That the United States blew up the World Trade Center?

Secretary ROCCA. Oh, that. No, sir. I can guarantee you that is not true, yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I just wanted your opinion on the record. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary, and thank you for sharing your views with us yet again. You are always very cooperative with this Committee and provide us with a wealth of information to help us formulate our opinions.

Concerning Bangladesh, one of things that you said was that they have been slow to deliver, speaking of the Administration there, on its election promises. Does that mean they are delivering or they are not delivering at all?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Ackerman, I think the situation is rather complicated. Law and order problems in Bangladesh are not new to this Administration. They have existed for a while. This Administration was elected on the platform that they would get rid of some discriminatory laws and that they would help move forward on the entire law and order situation. The situation has been complicated by a number of things, one of them being that the opposition remained out of Parliament until very recently. It is our hope, now that the opposition is in Parliament, that the rivalry between these two parties will subside somewhat and that they can begin to do the real work of reform that is necessary in order for the situation to get better in Bangladesh.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Further on that, the current government there had committed during the election to have reforms as you point out. Among those was the establishment of a human rights commission and an anticorruption commission. Is our understanding that that process has started?

Secretary ROCCA. I believe it has, but I don't want to mislead you. Yes. I do believe that the commissions are established and that they are looking into the matter and they are into the national gas issue that Mr. Gilman raised as well.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think it would be helpful to commend them on that when you have an opportunity and to encourage the continuation of that and to note that that process has at least begun.

The problem of arsenic in Bangladesh, as pointed out in the media, is a huge problem. Will the Administration be proposing any emergency supplemental assistance that we or the international community can provide on a more rapid basis as this is literally poisoning the lives of so many people?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Ackerman, this is a problem. My very first day on the job I heard about the arsenic issue in Bangladesh. It is a matter of great concern to our Ambassador there. The Embassy has been following it very closely, and we have already been funding surveys of the situation. It is not a problem that is limited to Bangladesh, however. It also affects parts of India and Nepal. The World Bank and international financial institutions have been concerned about it and want to move forward on it. Frankly, it needs to become a priority for the governments involved as well. It is a regional issue of great concern to us and we will continue to work with the Government of Bangladesh on it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The quagmire in Pakistan, we have a government there that you point out the cooperation from which is essential to our war on terrorism and at the same time, we have a non-elected government that took office in a coup, overthrowing a duly elected government, and has had sham referendums.

With regard to the situation between India and Pakistan, General Musharraf has always been one who has expressed a great deal of zeal on the issue of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and has been implicated in terrorist attacks from the time before he was President. Does our Administration have any reason to believe that he is going to moderate or has moderated his position on Kashmir, and if we do, what evidence is there and what has he been saying out loud to the people of Pakistan about terrorist attacks in Kashmir?

Secretary ROCCA. The situation in Pakistan, as I mentioned in a shortened manner in my opening statement, is very complicated, as you know, and there is a fair amount of extremism there and a situation that has been building up for many years. President Musharraf expressed on his speech on the 12th of January a vision of Pakistan as a moderate Muslim country, leader in the Muslim world.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But specifically has he denounced terrorist attacks?

Secretary ROCCA. Yes, he has. In that speech, he vowed that Pakistan would not be used as a launching area for such attacks.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Has he reduced the ability of Pakistan to be used as a launching area?

Secretary ROCCA. He has made commitments to the President, to the Secretary of State and to other U.S. officials that indeed the infiltration across the line of control, the government support for infiltration across the line of control will end and we have seen it drop sharply. By the same token, we have also seen public condemnations on the part of President Musharraf and of Pakistani officials of attacks such as that which occurred this weekend which they condemned very quickly as a terrorist attack.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Musharraf himself did?

Secretary ROCCA. I know the minister of state did for foreign affairs, but did Musharraf himself—yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. One further question. Did Musharraf personally denounce the attack, the most recent one in Jammu?

Secretary ROCCA. I know that the foreign affairs ministry did. I don't know whether he did personally. I will have to look into it and get back to you.

[The information referred to follows:]

SECRETARY ROCCA'S RESPONSE SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE AFTER THE HEARING

While President Musharraf did not personally denounce the incident, the Minister of Foreign Affairs conveyed the government of Pakistan's official views on the attack. The standard practice in Pakistan is for the Foreign Ministry to speak for the President.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Issa.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, I want to follow up on the arsenic question, because this is an area that I hope to learn from this hearing. Do we have a stated parts per million level that there is typically found? How high is it compared to the domestic, let's say, New Mexico arsenic level that we dealt with earlier in the Congress?

Secretary ROCCA. I believe that the acceptable level is 50 parts—I can't remember the exact term—

Mr. CROWLEY. Parts per billion.

Secretary ROCCA. Per billion, and it is well above that.

Mr. ISSA. But New Mexico today is above 50 parts per billion in drinking water. I would like to try to understand it. We are a Committee that often asks for aid money and I want to be fair and reasonable in asking, and Afghanistan now is our second or third largest aid recipient. I am just concerned what is high because the world standard appears to be dramatically lower than what people are drinking in America today.

Secretary ROCCA. I don't have the current number—

Mr. CROWLEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ISSA. Sure.

Secretary ROCCA. I don't have the current number, but I will get back to you with it.

Mr. CROWLEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. Sure.

Mr. CROWLEY. My understanding is that in parts of Pakistan and other parts of the region, it is in the thousands of parts per billion.

Mr. ISSA. I could get worried about that.

Okay. If your office could follow up just so I would be a little more familiar with it.

Secretary ROCCA. I would be happy to.

[The information referred to follows:]

SECRETARY ROCCA'S RESPONSE SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE AFTER THE HEARING

There is a high degree of variability in the amount of arsenic found in groundwater from wells within the same geographic area in Bangladesh and West Bengal, and also from the same well over time. Current estimates suggest that 25 to 30 million Bangladeshis, or 20 to 25 percent of the population, may be drinking water with arsenic concentrations greater than 50 parts per billion (ppb), the current USEPA and government of Bangladesh standard. There is, however, variation in the toxic effects on individuals exposed to the same dosage of arsenic. There is some indication that the nutritional status of the individuals affects the manifestation of symptoms of arsenicosis for example.

Mr. GILMAN. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ISSA. Sure, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GILMAN. I would also like to note that Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Laboratory, which is in my district, has been con-

ducting extensive investigations in Bangladesh to try to find a suitable solution. I just wanted to pass that on. Thank you.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Probably the focus that I am most interested in from this hearing, Madam Secretary, is how the Islamic world is reacting throughout this period. And you can break it down either by region or country under your portfolio. Because my concern obviously is, what effect is the war in Afghanistan having, the expanded war on terrorism, American dialogue, if you will, or rhetoric?

And I don't expect you to make statements about the President's specific statements unless you found them to be appropriate. But try to give us an understanding of where the Islamic world, by region, is going so that we can begin perhaps reacting better or modeling what we do. Because obviously my concern is, we are very quick to point out what we don't like about that area of the world, but I am not sure that telling them what we don't like has been, so far, constructive.

Secretary ROCCA. This is an interesting issue, and it is one which does affect our region and one which I touched on earlier. A lot of this information is allowed to essentially gain currency and become truth in this part of the world. And so this is something that we are looking at very closely to find out how we can deal with this.

Because it is not a question of telling them what to do and what we don't like, it is a question of getting out our story and the actual facts. And that is something that, as a whole, the State Department has been working on and continues to do so.

And I can get you a detailed information on that.

Mr. ISSA. Please.

Secretary ROCCA. But we are struggling with this question as well.

[The information referred to follows:]

Follow-up from A/S Rocca's July 18, 2002 Testimony to
The House Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia:
Request for more information on the Islamic World's
reaction to the war in Afghanistan

and

How the U.S. is conducting public diplomacy,
conveying the facts, and correcting misconceptions

Reaction to the war in Afghanistan

- Reactions of the Islamic world to the war in Afghanistan have ranged from skepticism to outright hostility. Fabricated stories of the deaths of Afghan civilians frequently appear in Pakistan's Urdu newspapers, creating an impression, believed by many, that the U.S. is targeting innocents in our attacks on the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Some attribute this to insufficient U.S. concern for the well being of Muslims; others are persuaded that in the Middle East and in Afghanistan the U.S. is at war with the Islamic world.

Public Diplomacy actions to address issues in Muslim societies in South Asia

- The State Department designed websites "Islam in America" <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/islam> and "Muslim Life in America" <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife> were expanded to include more articles on how Muslims in America enjoy religious, cultural and economic rights. Additionally, new Afghanistan websites were created i.e. "Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan" <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/sasia/afghan/usasst> and a photo gallery.
- A television and radio co-production was arranged with Pakistan TV for coverage of U.S. policy initiatives in the region in December. The State Department set up in-depth interviews with important Bush Administration policymakers. Pakistan TV also was able to interview American Muslims in the metropolitan area and in New York about what it is like to be a Muslim living in the United States. All the stories received prime time attention on Pakistan TV and radio.
- The State Department helped to establish and manned the Coalition Information Center (CIC) in Islamabad. The CIC dealt with emerging political issues and kept the international media informed about the progress of "Operation Enduring Freedom" and the defeat of the

Taliban. The Department also later set up a JIC in Kabul to allow the international media to ask questions about the Loya Jirga process.

- The State Department's Washington File coverage was increased with the hiring of new reporters and Arabic language translators. As a result, the File sent a reporter to Cuba to report accurately on how the United States was handling the confinement of Taliban and al-Qaeda prisoners there. Additionally, there were more stories written about the religious life of American Muslims and the educational and economic achievements of various Muslim groups within the U.S.
- The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in Kabul assisted freelance television crews hired by the State Department to cover the reconstruction and humanitarian relief effort inside Afghanistan. The footage that was shot was distributed to the international media. Edited individual stories were also sent by satellite to posts overseas for local placement. The Kabul PAO also filed stories and contributed digitized photos of significant events i.e. the delivery of humanitarian supplies and medical assistance to refugees.
- VOA and Radio Free Afghanistan are now broadcasting a seamless stream of programs in Dari and Pushto on the same frequency, each introducing their respective program sequence with an identifying logo. The services, aided by the direct hire of freelance Afghan journalists, were able to report on the arrival of the Afghan King to Kabul, the Loya Jirga process, and other significant political developments.
- The State Department's People-to-People exchanges of all kinds were increased. Most recently, Pakistan senior editors (8) and Indian vernacular language news reporters (16) visited the U.S. in September to report on commemorative activities marking September 11, and the continuing threat to world security.
- The State Department organized a U.S. training program for teachers and "Afghan Women in Government." The goals are two-fold: to professionalize government agencies and education; and to raise awareness of the importance of

full integration of women into the social, political and economic life of liberated Afghanistan.

- The Department organized a "Seeds of Peace" youth exchange for Afghan, Indian and Pakistani youth. The goal is to help young leaders prepare to lead their countries toward peace and away from violence.

Mr. ISSA. And I guess the second part is not dealing with misinformation or disinformation, but basically what appears to be going on factually from the plight of Israelis and Palestinians. How much is that act affecting conditions in your challenges in your region?

Secretary ROCCA. It is a cause for concern, and it is raised by the governments with us, mostly in terms of their hope for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The people of these countries, and especially in Bangladesh and in Pakistan, are very concerned about it and would like to see a peaceful resolution.

Mr. ISSA. The final question: Would it be fair to say, then, that if we made this one of our highest priorities and brought about some semblance of peace and progress in Palestine, that this would have a dramatically positive effect in your region?

Secretary ROCCA. I think it already is a priority.

Mr. ISSA. I am talking about the potential of success. The success side is what I am saying is—you know, it is great to say it is a priority, but if, hypothetically, success brought no benefit outside of just the region, then we would say, well, it is only worth what it is worth there.

My question is, would this, in fact, throughout the Islamic world, be a dramatic improvement in our stature and ability to do other projects if we were able to bring some semblance of peace and security in that region?

Secretary ROCCA. Well, I think bringing peace and security to any part of the world would have a good ripple effect. So I guess the answer has got to be, yes, sir.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Rocca, good to see you again, as always. Thank you for coming before the Committee. I am sorry that I missed your opening statement; I was unable to extricate myself from a previous appointment in a timely fashion to get over here for it.

Could you provide a brief overview of the goals of Secretary Powell's mission? And if you could then just give me a couple of minutes to talk about one other subject.

But, go ahead.

Secretary ROCCA. I think I can keep it brief.

The current situation, the tensions between India and Pakistan, is a continuing matter of great concern. We still have two armies facing each other, fully mobilized, and we are worried that the countries are putting their fate in the hands of any terrorists who wants to perpetrate some dramatic attack.

But the tensions have subsided somewhat. The crisis will, of course, be one focus, but in the bilateral relationship with each country will also be a main focus. And we have bilateral interests in each country that are different, separate, and which we would like to pursue. And so the Secretary will also be talking about those.

Mr. CROWLEY. And besides Pakistan and India, will the Secretary travel to any other South Asian countries?

Secretary ROCCA. No. He is going on his way to the ASEAN regional forum.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you. I would also like to bring up the issue of Bangladesh. And I just want to say that—while we focus our attention on Pakistan and India—we should not forget the moderate Islamic democracy in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been a staunch ally of the United States, especially after 9/11. Bangladesh deserves the continued support and positive engagement from our country.

Has our government reached out to the opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina, to commend her for taking her seat in parliament?

Secretary ROCCA. She is coming to the United States, I believe, in the very near future. And it is my understanding that I will be seeing her. And we want to absolutely—I couldn't agree with you more, sir.

First of all, we consider—India and Pakistan get an awful lot of the attention, but we also are working hard to continue to make progress in our relationship with Bangladesh, which we consider to be a very important country, a model in many ways of a moderate Muslim democracy which three times in a row has managed to have free and fair and peaceful transfer of power.

There are a lot of problems facing it, but we want to work with Bangladesh on those issues.

Mr. CROWLEY. Not to diminish the negative, but to accentuate the positive.

Secretary ROCCA. Well, I believe that—maybe I foreshortened my statement a little bit too much. But absolutely, we want to encourage what is going on. We want to reinforce—especially now that you have got the two parties working together, we want to see them—first of all, we are delighted that they are, and we want to see them work—we want to work with them to work on the problems within Bangladesh.

Mr. CROWLEY. And many of us on this Committee have had a long-term involvement and interest in the quality of the drinking water, not only in Bangladesh, but throughout the region. I would just encourage you, as you have already been encouraged by others, to impress upon the Administration the need to bring about a solution to that problem. That will not only affect Bangladesh and the regional countries around it, but also maybe help us understand our problems or potential problems here in the United States down the road. I also hope that you will continue to encourage the Bangladeshi Government to find the best use of its natural resources, particularly the great stores of natural gas that we believe are there.

And, with that, I appreciate your being here again. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. If she would like to respond.

Secretary ROCCA. I just want to say quickly that on arsenic, it has been a focus; it will continue to be. NIH, EPA, Columbia University, others are conducting and have been conducting research and surveys for quite a while. And we will continue to work with the governments in the region because this is a very serious problem.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, if I could.

Mr. GILMAN. Sure.

Mr. Crowley. Could you also comment on the Asian University for Women, and your thoughts on that? The Asian University for Women is a proposal by the Bangladeshi Government to establish a university outside Dhaka for women. I don't know if you are familiar with it at all.

Secretary ROCCA. I am afraid I am not.

Mr. CROWLEY. We will have to talk about that. But thank you.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Crowley.

The gentlelady from Virginia, Ms. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Madame Secretary, for being here to fill us in on what is going on.

I had an opportunity to visit Afghanistan week before last and to see a little bit about our ongoing operations and the reconstruction of the government. I also had the opportunity to meet with several of the Afghan women, and in meeting with them—and we were asking what was important to them—education was one subject that was very important. In fact, they felt it was critical to the reconstruction of their country. And they really appreciate the supplies and the tools and all that we have sent over, but their main problem is, they have the supplies and the equipment, they don't have the teachers. I would like you to comment on that.

And then the other thing is, if you were to outline the three most critical things that we can do to aid in reconstruction and stabilizing their government, what would they be?

Secretary ROCCA. Let me start by saying that the plight of women in Afghanistan has been of great concern before recent events. It is—

Mr. GILMAN. Mrs. Rocca, could you put the mike a little closer to you.

Secretary ROCCA. Sorry.

It is one of our priorities in Afghanistan. And we are beginning a number of projects to help women, starting with humanitarian assistance. A lot of it is aimed at women and children, mothers and children, and providing just the basic needs is a beginning.

In addition, we have got a number of training programs, and education is one of them. We have got an Afghan women's advocacy training program, we have got an Afghan women lawyer training program, a teacher's—

Mrs. DAVIS. Did you say lawyers?

Secretary ROCCA. Lawyers, yeah.

Mrs. DAVIS. Okay.

Ms. ROCCA [continuing]. A teacher training project. We did refurbish the University of Kabul specifically with women in mind. We are doing an Afghan oral history project in which women are playing a big part. We have got an Afghan-women-in-government program, and we also have a number of small grants which are directed there.

There is always more that can be done, but it is something that is a high priority.

Mrs. DAVIS. I don't mean to interrupt here, but I guess what I was talking about is not already the adult women that maybe have had some education, but I am talking the young, the girls—and even the boys, because they said they just don't have the teachers.

And I guess my concern is future generations, to make sure we don't end up back in the same situation we have been in years past.

Secretary ROCCA. Which is one of the reasons we have the teacher training program, specifically with that end in mind.

Mrs. DAVIS. But I think the problem was that nobody will pay the teachers. That is why they don't have the teachers. That is what they told us; there is no pay. They can't get paid, so they don't teach.

Secretary ROCCA. Our funding is going, to the extent possible, through the Interim Authority. And I know that the education is a priority for them, so—

Mrs. DAVIS. Okay. Go ahead. If you can give me your three top priorities.

Secretary ROCCA. I believe security and stability, because we won't be able to do any reconstruction without it. Obviously, education is very high on the list.

There is so many to choose from.

Mrs. DAVIS. I know.

Secretary ROCCA. When I talk about security, we are talking about not just the military, we are talking about the police, we are talking about the judicial reforms. There are a whole lot of sub-headers that come into these three issues that you have mentioned. There is still a major need for humanitarian assistance. And we have got large numbers of refugees—unexpectedly large numbers of refugees going back, which are also very high priority, to maintain the humanitarian—

Mrs. DAVIS. It was encouraging to see some parts of the country where crops were beginning to grow again, that were not poppy crops. And, hopefully, we can help Mr. Karzai see fit to alleviate all of the poppy.

Secretary ROCCA. That is one of the projects that we also have in mind. Obviously, opium production is a very high priority, and it is one where we will be working with the British. The British have taken the lead on this. In fact, a number of nations are taking roles—this is not just a U.S. project; this is really an international effort—and we managed to eradicate 15 percent of the spring crop.

We have a number of projects. This maybe isn't enough, but it was a success given the circumstances we were operating under. And there is assistance previewed in the supplemental for dealing with the fall crop.

So anything you can do to help move the supplemental forward would also be appreciated.

Mrs. DAVIS. I should have talked to you before this morning. Thank you.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentelady's time has expired. Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

First and foremost, let me ask: Does the United States support the right of people in Kashmir to a plebiscite and to determine their own destiny?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Rohrabacher, as you know, the U.S. supported successive U.N. efforts—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That's not—I am asking you whether or not we support it. It shouldn't have that big long explanation. Do we or don't we?

Secretary ROCCA. Well, the Simla agreement in 1972, India and Pakistan reached an agreement that it would be a bilateral issue. We support India and Pakistan, and we are working toward getting these two countries to the table to resolve the issue.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, let me note that when the United States Government can say, yes, to the answer of should these people be able to control their own destiny through a democratic election, the people of that region will begin respecting us again. Right now, no wonder they don't believe that we believe in democracy and believe in people's right to vote, when we hedge on fundamental issues like that. I think that is a disgrace, and I think this Administration had better reexamine that position.

In terms of Afghanistan, let me just say that I don't buy the Administration—if that is the Administration's position—that we have done everything we can, that it is a high priority for us to get rid of the poppy crops in Afghanistan.

You are telling us we eradicated 15 percent of the crop, and that is something we should be proud of?

Let me, just so you will know, I have spent a lot of time and effort. We had the technological capability of wiping out 90 percent of that crop, and some of us were pushing to do that. And obviously—don't tell me that it is a high priority for this Administration if we are leaving it up to the British. That is just something to hide behind.

Again, 15 percent crop eradication, all that money—all that drug money now in the hands of very evil forces in that part of the world, including the forces trying to destabilize Pakistan, is not an accomplishment we should be proud of.

In terms of the way we have been handling Afghanistan, first of all, let me ask you this. For years—for many years, I have been involved in the Afghan issue, and people in the State Department, over and over again, were undermining the efforts of those of us who were trying to help those resisting the Taliban.

Are those people who actively undermined the resistance to the Taliban still employed at the State Department?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Rohrabacher, I don't know what people you are talking about. And I know it has never been the policy of the Administration to undermine the people who were working against the Taliban.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. Oh, it wasn't the policy of the State Department to put all of that aid, all of our aid through Taliban-controlled areas, and starve the areas not controlled by the Taliban? That wasn't the position of the last Administration?

Secretary ROCCA. No assistance went directly to the Taliban.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Oh, yeah. It went to NGOs who were distributing in Taliban areas. Of course. Yeah, it didn't go directly to the Taliban. You are very diplomatic, just like the State Department is also very diplomatic.

But let me get down to fundamentals. The bottom line is, being diplomatic doesn't obscure the truth. Either we believe in democracy, either we believe in eradicating the heroin production so evil

forces don't have it, either we believe in people having the right to control their own destiny, or we don't. And no amount of diplomatic terms is going to change that.

I was disappointed in the heavy-handed way that the King of Afghanistan was handled. It became very clear to the people. You say that the Loya Jirga was essentially a democratic process. Boy, that "essentially" certainly is a word that really excuses a lot of, let's say, overt and covert pressure on the system. Just from—again, from someone who has been involved and for many other people who were involved, it appeared that the King—had they had their choice, the people would have gone with the King.

Let me ask you this. If indeed we do have, as you say—by the way, I don't think we have facilitated democracy; I think we have facilitated Karzai coming to power. And, again, if we are going to have the respect of the people of that area, we have got to believe in democracy. We have got to believe in what we supposedly believe in. Our government should represent that.

Let me ask you this about, you said we are for free and fair elections, and this is facilitating democracy. Two years from now, are we going to support a free and fair election in Afghanistan, and will the King be able to run as a candidate in that election?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Rohrabacher, I think we have stated, from the President on down, that the United States is in Afghanistan for the long haul, that we intend to help the Afghan people. And according to the Bonn Agreement—as laid out by the Bonn Agreement, there are supposed to be elections after 2 years. And, of course, we will support free and fair elections in Afghanistan.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And the King's right to run in those elections?

Secretary ROCCA. Anybody's right to run.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. So a few years from now, if the people of Afghanistan choose to have the King or a member of the royal family as their leader, if they choose through free election, we will recognize that, and recognize the right to choose that option?

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Pitts.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, what has the Administration done to raise the concern about Hindu extremists in India? I speak, for instance, of Gujarat—and the destabilizing efforts along the Pakistan-India border and Kashmir?

Secretary ROCCA. Mr. Pitts, the entire issue of Gujarat is one that has been of great concern to us; it is one that we have been following very closely. Immediately after it happened, our officers from Mumbai went down to observe the situation themselves. And we were very quick to express our concern, our real sympathy for the people who underwent this horrible event, and continue to do this.

Mr. PITTS. Did we make a public statement? Did the State Department make a public statement condemning that violence?

Secretary ROCCA. We did. We condemned the violence and we also expressed condolences for the families and the people who had been affected by this violence. We have been following it closely.

Our officers have gone down to monitor the situation themselves. It will figure highly in our religious freedom report. But it is also something which is of concern to the Government of India itself.

Mr. PITTS. I understand that. I met with human rights activists from the region last month, and they were not aware that our government had made a public statement.

Can you provide me with that statement?

Secretary ROCCA. I would be happy to.

[The information referred to follows:]

EXCERPT FROM PRESS RELEASE BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS ROCCA DATED APRIL 10, 2002¹

QUESTION: As for Gujarat, the atmosphere (unintelligible) action against terrorism, if the language that you hear is pertaining to terrorism, anti-terrorist effort and then in the process a lot of innocent people get killed. Something similar might be happening in Palestine. And have you seen the reaction in Egypt and across much of the Arab world.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROCCA: The thing that people forget is that when you couch it in terms of any kind of an attack on Muslims people forget that the United States has come to the succor of Muslims on a number of occasions in the past, the war in Kosovo being just the latest example of that. The events in Gujarat were horrible, we were saddened by it, and we really hope that there will be a way to move forward to find some kind of communal peace and stability and that this does not recur anywhere else.

EXCERPT FROM DAILY PRESS BRIEFING BY PHILIP T. REEKER, DEPUTY SPOKESMAN, WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 15, 2002²

QUESTION: Do you have any comment on the remarks of Prime Minister Vajpayee in recent days? He was quoted as saying wherever there are Muslims in large numbers, they do not want to live in peace. Any comment?

MR. REEKER: I think I would first want to point out that we understand from the Prime Minister's Office that they have clarified his remarks, saying that the remarks as you reported them, George, were "taken out of context." Our position on communal violence that has occurred recently in Gujarat Province is clear. I can point out that one of the things Assistant Secretary Rocca talked about last week in New Delhi was condemnation for the horrible violence in Gujarat, and urged all parities to seek a peaceful solution to their differences.

I think you are aware that India has long prided itself on being a multiethnic secular nation, accepting of all religions, and it is very important that parties seek peaceful resolution to their differences, because this type of violence doesn't benefit anybody and it simply results in the loss of innocent life.

Mr. PITTS. I will be happy to give that to them.

The Administration took a bold step in the Middle East by outlining a plan and process for peace. Has the Administration considered doing the same for Kashmir?

Secretary ROCCA. Our position on this is that no outside government can impose any peace plan on the two nations involved. The two nations involved need to get together and talk about it themselves. They need to work this out. It is not something that can be superimposed from the outside by any nation.

We are working, however, to get both sides to the table, and we have made it very clear to both sides that we don't think it can be resolved without dialogue.

¹This information was obtained from the following Web site: http://www.fisiusa.org/fisi_US_Statements/USLawStmt13.htm

²This information was obtained from the following Web site: www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2002/9396.htm

Mr. PITTS. Why isn't India more receptive to more open dialogue on Kashmir with the international community?

Secretary ROCCA. Well, the current situation, the current crisis, needs to be diffused first. India has said that when there is a peaceful situation, they are willing to talk about all issues, including Kashmir.

Mr. PITTS. They are willing to talk about—

Secretary ROCCA. All issues that exist between India and Pakistan, including Kashmir. But we need to see steps, serious steps, being taken toward de-escalation first.

Mr. PITTS. Okay. Let me proceed to—I have only 5 minutes here.

How much of the aid money committed to Afghanistan has actually been given to their government to implement assistance programs? And how long will it be before the committed money is sent there?

It seems like the sooner we get the money there, the better. It allows the Afghans to see the actual results from our presence and involvements. With the assassination of the Vice President, and the accidental deaths of villagers by an errant military operation, there is a growing antagonism toward the United States. I think the sooner we get aid into Afghanistan, the better.

Secretary ROCCA. As you know, our overall contribution in Tokyo, for example, was \$297 million, pledged in January. And of those funds pledged, USAID has—planned level up to—now has reached \$224 million for relief, recovery, and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Of that amount, USAID has obligated to commit—has obligated or committed \$166 million for food, for nonfood aid and reconstruction activities, and has firm plans for a further \$47 million and has \$10 million left in reserve. There is a request for additional assistance in the supplemental bill as well.

And we are also—we have also provided, I believe, disbursed already over \$107 million for the returning refugees.

Mr. PITTS. One final question: What is the United States doing to help ensure the rights of religious minorities in Bangladesh?

Secretary ROCCA. This is an issue that we take very seriously and we have extensively investigated. This is something which is not new. In every case that has come to the Embassy's attention, where they have been able to, they have gone out and investigated. Many of them have turned out not to be—have turned out to have other issues involved, like personal reprisals and regional disputes. But in those issues where we found any human rights abuses, we have raised them and continue to raise them, and they figure in our human rights report.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Pitts. Thank you.

Mr. Gilman. Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the Chair.

And I appreciate your testimony here this morning. I will keep my questions relatively brief because I know we have got a vote on the Floor.

Bangladesh, it is my understanding, has been particularly helpful in various peacekeeping missions around the world, being willing to commit troops and doing particularly helpful things in that area. I know that one of the key industries relative to the economy

in Bangladesh is the textile industry and their access to markets around the world. Are there any Administration or administrative actions that could be taken that might increase those opportunities for Bangladesh to get a fair shake at making their products available to Americans out here?

Secretary ROCCA. Congressman, Bangladesh's portion of the textile market is already considerable, and it has gone up steadily. The issue of providing them more tariffs is one that we discuss. I can't say that we hold out too much hope; but the fact of the matter is that these tariffs are going to disappear in a couple of years. So what we have been doing is work with the Government of Bangladesh and talk to them about reconfiguring their industry in such a way so that they position themselves to be competitive when those quotas go away, because it is coming. It is right around the corner; it is just a year and a half away. And we feel very much, very much that they need to both diversify their industries and also to essentially position themselves to be more competitive.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Also, what is being done to explore Bangladesh's untapped oil and natural gas resources? And would this not provide badly needed economic investment in Bangladesh? Getting additional oil reserves on the market would help the United States and many other countries around the world. So, could you address that briefly.

Secretary ROCCA. Yes, certainly.

The gas reserves in Bangladesh, by U.S. company estimates, are considerable, and we have been encouraging the Government of Bangladesh to use those reserves, to exploit the gas that they have for the very reasons that you cited. It would certainly be an important injection into the economy, bringing forth an investment, et cetera.

It is an issue which is very complicated and very touchy in Bangladesh, and it is one which the current government has submitted for review. They have commissions studying it. And we are hopeful, and we continue to work with them, that there will eventually be a breakthrough, and that we will find that they will be able to exploit this natural resource which they have and which is so promising for foreign investment in their country.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Assistant Secretary, on June the 5th, the State Department issued a blanket travel warning on India; and soon after, I, along with Congressman Jim McDermott, wrote to Secretary Powell warning of the damaging effects that that travel warning was having on commercial ties between the United States and India. And as you know, on June 26th, the State Department went halfway there and revised its travel warnings for Americans to defer "all but essential travel to India."

And I know Secretary Powell will be in the region soon, and I hope, with the Administration's continued hard work, conditions will warrant a complete lifting of that travel ban.

Also, press reports indicate that the U.S. and India have seen a flurry of joint military exercises. And when you were in India in May, U.S. and Indian paratroopers participated in the largest combined military exercises between two countries.

Indian officers, I understand, will observe cold weather exercises that we are going to have in Alaska this winter or later this year. And these exercises, I think, are an important aspect of our foreign policy; and I was going to ask you to comment on the Administration's military-to-military plans with India, which you did touch on in your testimony.

And lastly, you also touched on education reform in Pakistan. And I know President Musharraf has announced his intention to reform madrassahs, those schools where radicalism and anti-Western lessons are taught. I know that the AP reported recently that the government had curtailed funding to those madrassahs whose students or the head of the madrassah had been linked to militancy.

But the question I have is, we know there are over 7,000 of these schools, for sure, that are funded by Gulf States money, by Saudi sources and sources in other countries. And I was going to ask, how can we cut off those resources that go in to fund this type of training? And how do we in the United States take action to establish or help establish a modern education system in South Asia with reading and writing and arithmetic, not jihad, as the subject matters?

Secretary ROCCA. Thank you. These are all very important questions. Let me start quickly with the travel warning and tell you that this is something which we are looking at. It is constantly under review, and I will take back your recommendations.

I just want to reiterate something which I know you know, but it was not taken lightly in the first place. There were serious concerns that brought on the initial travel warning. As I said, it is constantly under review, we are looking at it right now.

Military-to-military cooperation with India has moved very quickly and has been very successful. We have a number of initiatives under way. For example, we have got a defense policy group which meets to discuss these issues. We have a strategic framework dialogue; we have military exercises. We have had new port calls to India, which we didn't used to have. And India is helping in Operation Enduring Freedom with patrols of the Straits of Malacca.

So we have got a really dynamic military-to-military cooperation going with India. But that is only part of a broader relationship where we feel that on many, many fronts we are moving forward to make this an all-encompassing relationship.

On education reform in Pakistan, there are a number of points you touched on. Obviously, this is a very high priority. Frankly, this was a high priority for General Musharraf when he came into office. It is something that they have been working on since. And obviously current events have put it into sharper focus.

The United States has been providing assistance for education. We had sanctions on Pakistan before and were not able to help the government on their education program. The government school system is broken; the public school system is totally broken.

The initiative on the madrassahs is something that we welcome, but it is not something that we have asked for or that we imposed. It is what President Musharraf himself has said needs to be done in order to turn Pakistan around.

The funding mechanisms is something that the Government of Pakistan is looking at. And in fact, I believe they have—they are requiring that any foreign funding be disclosed. This is something which is up to the Government of Pakistan.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ROYCE. If I could.

Mr. GILMAN. One more question.

Mr. ROYCE. In Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, while I was there, the question was brought up repeatedly, that it is Gulf States money, it is Saudi money that is coming in to fund this, not just in Pakistan but in the whole region.

And so I just bring to the Administration's attention, we need to figure out a strategy for Gulf States' money. It isn't the governments in the Gulf States, but it is influential people in the Gulf States that are funding these jihadi schools. And we need to address that. Thank you.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Royce.

One last question by Mr. Ackerman. And I want to thank the Secretary for being here today; and some of us have to run to the Floor.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I was asked before about the international community being involved in the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. I just wanted to say that it was—it is the view, I believe, of the Indians, I am sure that that would be outside interference in an internal matter concerning their state. But I would like to add that it is very disappointing that the Indian proposal, that there be bilateral monitoring between the Indians and the Pakistanis on the Line of Control to make determinations whether or not there are incursions there, has been rejected by General Musharraf.

I think that that is unhelpful, and perhaps we could encourage you to encourage the Secretary to mention that to him, that we think, many of us, that that would be helpful.

Secretary ROCCA. Thank you.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

The Committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:49 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]