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BEFORE

**THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS, AND CAPABILITIES**

TOPIC:

**THE ROLES OF NON-MILITARY PROGRAMS
WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTIVE APPROACH TO TERRORISM AND
INSURGENCIES**

7 MAY, 2009

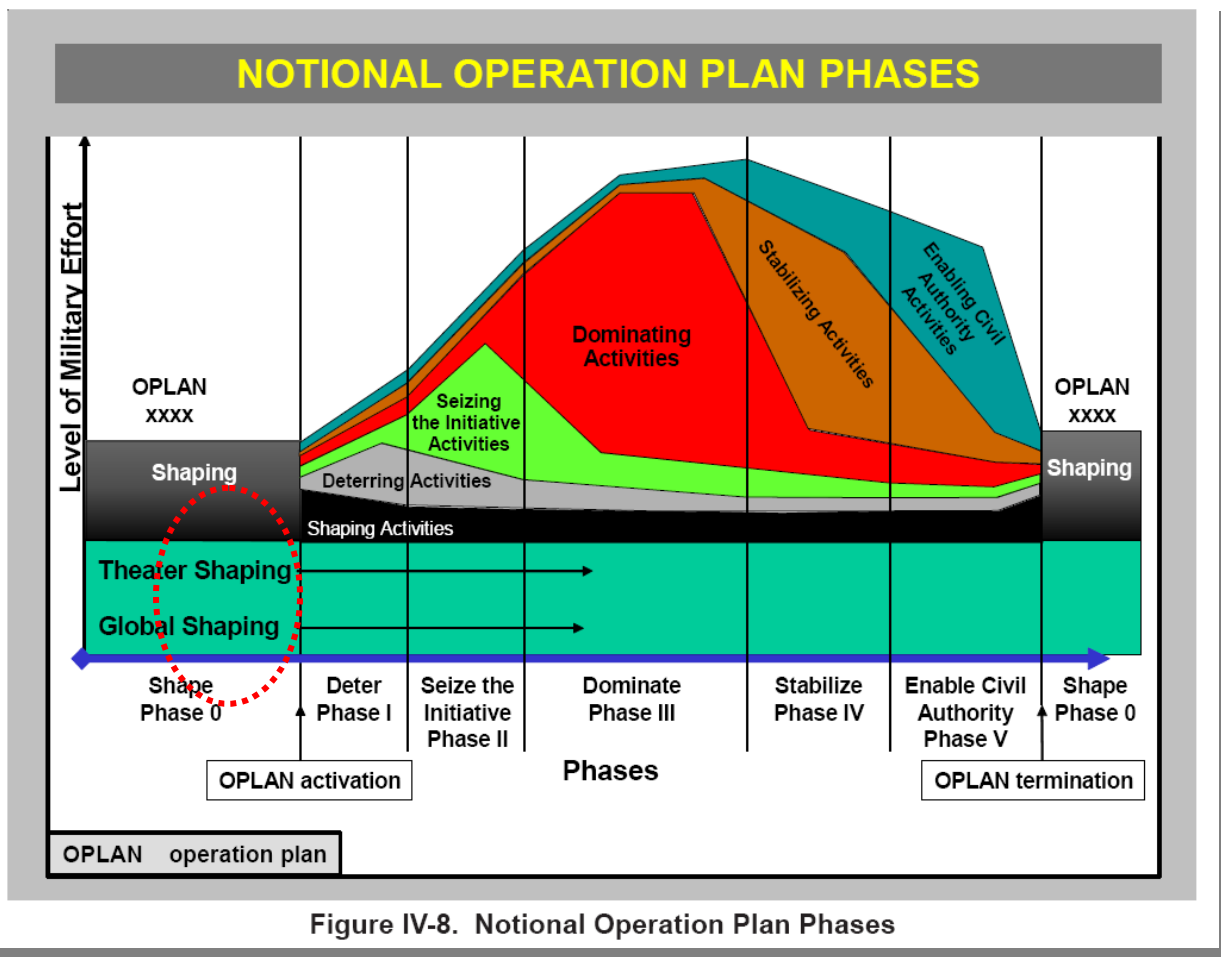
Chairman Smith and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to discuss with you the crucial and timely topic of how to address insurgencies and terrorism. In particular, our joint presentation this morning will focus on the range of non-military approaches, such as appropriately-implemented development aid, that are available to reduce the causes of terrorism and insurgencies, and what has been learned about their effectiveness as part of comprehensive, i.e., multi-dimensional strategies. In the current terminology in the defense community, our topic is: What can be done to “shape the environment” during the “steady state” that characterizes “phase zero”, so as to prevent terrorism and insurgencies from arising and spreading? We offer four basic points:

- 1. The most effective way to address terrorism and insurgencies is to prevent them from emerging in the first place by mitigating their proximate causes.**

As we have seen in Afghanistan and may be witnessing in Pakistan, fragile or weak and failed states provide vulnerable environments in which terrorists can gain sanctuary, recruits, and financial and moral support. Fragile and failed states also create conditions that can lead to ethnic, sectarian, secessionist, and other internal wars and thus insurgencies, which other terrorist and extremist groups can also exploit. The most effective way to address the problems of terrorism and insurgency is to reduce the initial conditions in these vulnerable societies that give rise to weak states and political instability, and thereby insurgencies and terrorism. The phase of instability in which such pre-emptive measures can be taken is indicated by the oval in the Defense Department graph below.¹

¹ Major Christina Schweiss, US Joint Forces Command, *Emerging Prevention Policies, Practices and Challenges: A DOD Perspective*. Powerpoint Presentation, U.S. Institute of Peace, September, 2007.



This preventive action can be done through programs that pre-empt the ability of extremist groups from being able to mobilize support from the population. While a small percentage of extremists hold grand intentions of massive destruction, global disruption, and radical ideologies, most people who pick up a gun or strap on explosives are motivated by local and immediate issues such as daily security, discrimination, inadequate basic services, pervasive corruption and impunity for well-connected elites, denial of a political voice, inadequate justice, and lack of employment opportunities.² Preventive measures that are sufficiently targeted and comprehensive can address those proximate causes by alleviating the local populations' core grievances and other drivers that fuel support for extremism.

² Guilain Denoux, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*, Management Systems International, Inc., Prepared for USAID, February 2009.

2. Preventing state failure and conflicts is more cost effective than having to intervene into internal wars once they have started.

In addition to the lives that can be saved, the *cost-savings* of preventing internal wars have been documented, in relation to the expensive, complex military operations that may be needed to intervene into already-active civil wars, genocide, and other intra-state conflicts or fighting insurgencies. The cost differences are huge. An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of ‘cure.’

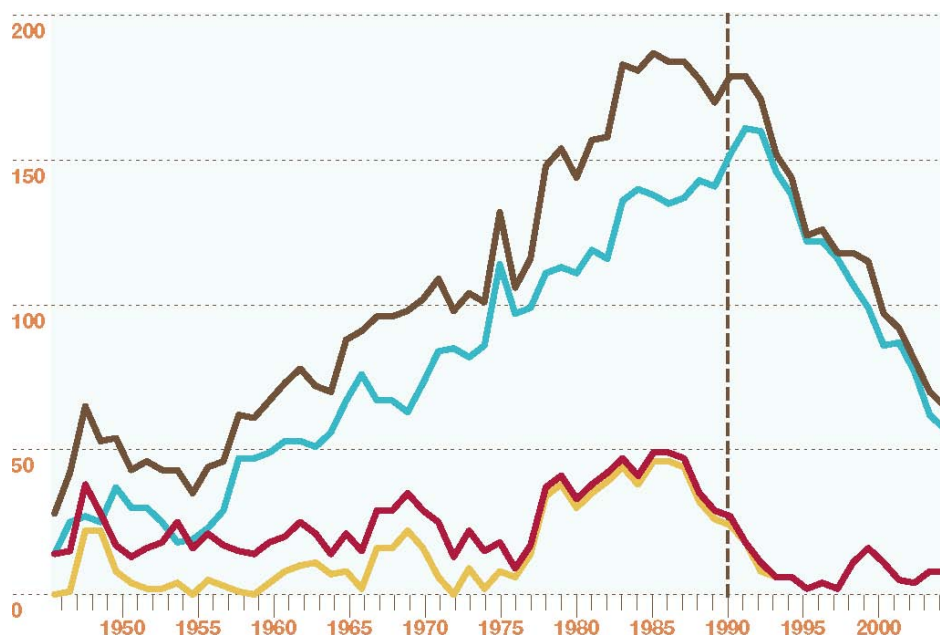
Quantitative research has been done to compare the costs of prevention with the costs of wars. The actual costs of military interventions into recent wars (e.g., Bosnia) were compared with the estimated costs if pro-active preventive action had been taken in those same settings. Also, where societies were vulnerable to conflicts but did not break out into wars (e.g. Macedonia), the costs of the preventive efforts that were actually taken were compared with the estimated costs had a war occurred in the same country. The cost ratios of prevention to war ranged from 1–1.3 to 1–479, an average of 1–59. In all the examined cases, “conflict prevention cost or would have cost the international community far less than the conflicts themselves... the cost difference in some case is truly enormous.”³

3. Preventive actions to strengthen fragile states and to avert conflicts are not only more cost-effective. They have been tried and have succeeded under certain conditions -- from which a number of lessons have been learned.

It is not widely known that the number of intra-state (internal) conflicts has actually declined since the mid-1990s, as shown below.

³ (Michael Brown and Richard Rosecrance, eds. *The Cost of Conflict: Prevention and Cure in the Global Arena* [Lanham, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield, 1999], pp. 224-226). In the estimate of Macedonia, for example, the actual cost of UNPREDEP was \$255 million, or 0.02% of the estimated cost of \$15 billion for a two-year conflict (p. 62). Another study finds all twelve of the retrospective and prospective conflict prevention packages that he estimated for the Balkans, Afghanistan (past and future), Rwanda, Sudan, and Uzbekistan were cost effective. (Malcolm Chalmers, *Spending to Save: Retrospective Case Studies*, Centre for International Cooperation and Security Working Paper #2. April, 2005; and *Spending to Save: Prospective Case Studies*, Centre for International Cooperation and Security Working Paper #3).

Global Trends in Violent Conflict: 1946-2004



--- Warfare Totals (*Societal + All Interstate*)

--- Intra-state Warfare

--- All Interstate Wars (*inc. colonial wars*)

--- Interstate Warfare

Since the early 1990's, the increase in international preventive diplomacy, diplomatic peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations have made a significant dent in the amount of violent conflict globally.⁴ Over the past 15 years or so, a large number of bilateral and multilateral development aid agencies as well as non-governmental organizations have been very active and working on the ground in unstable societies. They have carried out a wide variety of humanitarian, development, governance, human rights, conflict resolution and non-official diplomacy, and other programs. These programs perform such varied functions as strengthening legislatures; election monitoring; civic education; disarmament; demobilization and reintegration (DDR); psycho-social trauma healing; civil society forums; training police, promoting agriculture, micro-credit provision; and health services. These programs can help reduce,

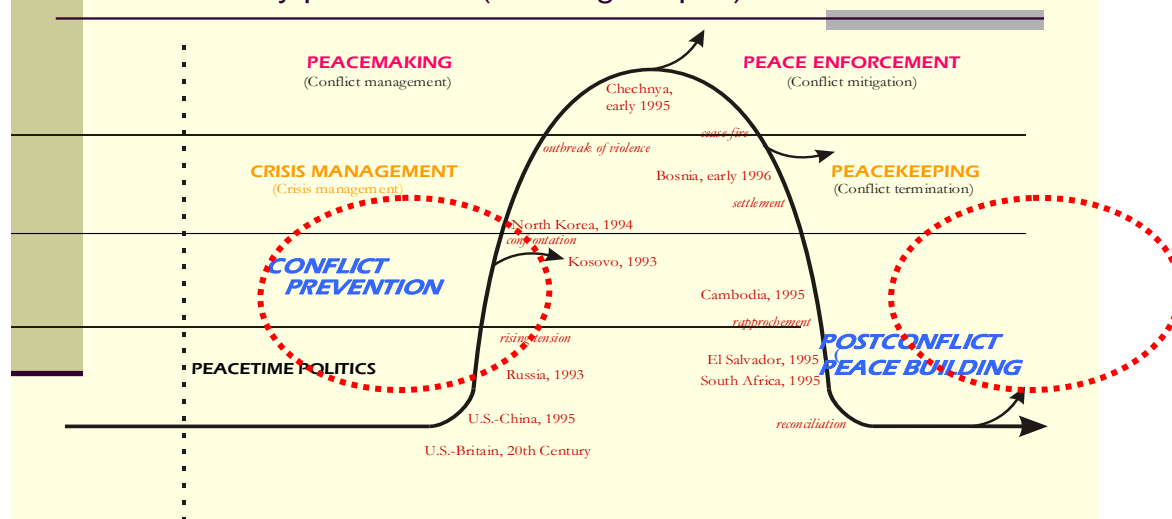
⁴ Simon Fraser University, *Human Security Report*, 2005, page 155.

directly or indirectly, the sources of state failure and of potential conflicts -- especially when they are specifically attuned to address the particular drivers of conflict in a country.

To mention one example, an Iraqi non-governmental organization (NGO) called REACH helps prevent insurgent groups coming into communities to recruit people by building wells and schools, offering micro-credit loans, providing training in leadership and peacebuilding, and other community development tasks. The micro-credit loans include a reconciliation component that requires a business plan that is jointly developed and submitted by Sunni and Shia entrepreneurs. Community leaders wanting help to build a well must first create a village council made up of diverse ethnic and religious leaders. Such programs thus address some of the key drivers fueling the insurgency by addressing public grievances related to water shortages, unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities.

In most of these countries, these programs operate on a fairly small scale and scattered way. In notable countries, however, a mix of U.S. and international policies and programs has combined to head off potential new violent conflicts before they start through a concerted preventive approach. As shown below, conflict prevention can be defined as “primary prevention” before new wars break out, and as “secondary prevention”, meaning avoiding recurrence of conflict in post-conflict situations.

Conflict prevention is “primary prevention” (avoiding violence breaking out where no recent wars have occurred), and “secondary prevention” (avoiding relapse).



Thus, in a number of countries where typical risk indicators of new potential conflict were present, conflict has been successfully averted, such as South Africa, the Balkans, the Baltics, southern Georgia, and Crimea (“primary prevention”). For example:

- In Macedonia starting in 1992, the UN preventive deployment force including 500 US troops, continuous monitoring of potential ethnic incidents by the OSCE, leadership dialogue and training conducted by the UN, a variety of U.S. and other NGO grassroots and media initiatives, and the offer of potential membership in NATO and the EU, all provided powerful incentives to the country’s ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian leaders to avoid escalation into inter-ethnic violent conflict.
- Since the mid-1990s, the OSCE’s High Commissioner on National Minorities, has helped to head off inter-ethnic conflicts in several Central and Eastern European countries such as Slovakia, the Baltic states, Albania, as well as Macedonia through informal diplomacy and crafting minority rights legislation that were adopted by the governments.
- In late 2007 and early 2008, Kenya was kept from escalating into an internal war due to fast-track international diplomacy that presented carrots and sticks and arranged for power-sharing among the leading parties.

Also, in situations of simmering conflicts or post-conflict, arrays of programs have helped avoid escalation or a relapse into violence (“secondary prevention”). For example:

- In Mindanao in the southern Philippines, US government and other aid organizations since 2002 have supported a wide range of development, governance, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding programs that have significantly eroded the base of support for the Moros Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyef Group (ASG), as well as reduced the number of clashes between clans.⁵

This accumulating global experience since the 1990’s in using such programs has been examined by researchers and formulated into a number of lessons as to what is most effective in preventing conflicts and avoiding post-conflict relapse.⁶ Below are some key lessons from these experiences that have been identified by researchers and collected in conferences, such as the recent “Whole of Government Simulation of Conflict Prevention” organized by the Center for Irregular Warfare, U.S. Marine Corps:

- Diplomacy, security, development, institution-building, and other needed policy instruments need to be applied in a *concentrated* and *synchronized* manner, *where* and *when* countries are threatened by instability and rising violence. They need to comprise a multi-dimensional, comprehensive strategy that is tailored to the particular configuration of drivers of potential conflict in each country.
- Comprehensive approaches also require better communication channels between the U.S. government and international organizations like the United Nations, regional organizations like the OSCE, the African Union and ECOWAS; multilateral partners of the U.S.; national governments in the crisis regions, and international and local NGOs involved in development and conflict prevention.
- Such strategies should build upon and strengthen the moderating groups and institutions and other crisis management capacities that may exist in a society, which may be weak

⁵ Michael Lund and Jennifer Ulman, *USAID/Philippines Mindanao Programs Evaluation: Impacts on Conflict and Peace Since 2000*. Prepared for USAID, Management Systems International, Inc., November 2008.

⁶ For a review of research on primary prevention, see Michael Lund, “Conflict Prevention: Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice,” in William Zartman, Jacob Bercovitch, and Viktor Kremenyk, eds. *Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (Sage Publications, 2008). For comparative post-conflict lessons, see Nicholas Sambanis and Michael W. Doyle, *Making War and Building Peace United Nations Peace Operations* Princeton University Press, 2006.

but can become bulwarks against instability. Established community institutions such as *shuras* traditionally have helped to resolve conflict and promote peace.⁷ Strategies should not impose one-size-fits-all formal models of Western democratic or economic policies.

- Deciding on the respective roles, size of the footprint, and balance among civilian and military agencies and NGOs in the early stages of potential conflict should be determined largely by the extent to which violence has escalated and security is threatened. Differing combination of socio-economic development aid, diplomatic engagement, political brokering and institution-building, and security assurance are needed at different stages of conflict. Generally, where a modicum of security prevails, civilian agencies can be out in front in these phases. Priority should be given to strengthening legitimate and effective governing structures at the local and national levels. Inordinate use of armed force in those contexts may actually worsen or cause conflict.
- A proper balance needs to be struck between strengthening governments and empowering civil society. Stability is best achieved through *citizen-oriented* state. Often, there is too great an emphasis on building the state and little or no effort to foster an active civil society. In Iraq and Afghanistan, local civil society leaders have complained that the international community's efforts to support the new governments have tended to exclude and undermine local civil society.⁸
- Overall, conflict prevention in these early stages does not mean simply increasing standard development aid budgets to conduct business as usual through the usual stove-piped mandates and programs, such as fighting general poverty. Rather, it involves hammering out cross-agency strategies that are specially fitted to the particular configurations of drivers of potential conflict in a given country, based on analysis of those sources and triggers.

⁷ *Community Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: The Case for a National Strategy* by Matt Waldman . Oxfam International. February 2008. <http://www.oxfam.ca/news-and-publications/publications-and-reports/community-peacebuilding-in-afghanistan-the-case-for-a-national-strategy/file>

⁸ Research has documented that the Global War on Terror often has undermined civil society's ability to hold governments accountable, as some fragile governments label any dissent from civil society as aiding extremism or terrorism. David Cortright, George A. Lopez, Alistair Millar, Linda M. Gerber-Stellingwerf *Friend or Foe: Civil Society and the Struggle against Violent Extremism*, A report to Cordaid from the Fourth Freedom Forum and Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame. October 27, 2008. http://www.fourthfreedom.org/Applications/cms.php?page_id=273

In short, prevention is not simply a high ideal, but a prudent option that sometimes works.

4. **To be able to head off future potential conflicts, the U.S. programs and analytical and decision-making tools that are already available need to be *brought together and applied more consistently and robustly* -- where and when threats are emerging, through coherent USG and multilateral strategies.**

In the coming years, potential conflicts are likely to emerge and break out in fragile and failed states, as the global economic crisis, globalization, population growth, fledgling democratic institutions, and extremism threaten to destabilize divided societies and weak governments. The good news is that many development agencies and non-government organizations are at the ready and in fact already active on the ground in the societies that are vulnerable to state failure and conflicts.

Moreover:

- The U.S., UN, and several regional entities have endorsed conflict prevention as an official policy goal.
- The typical causes of terrorism and internal conflict are known from mounds of quantitative and case-study conflict research.
- Early warning systems are operating at the global level to alert to the most stressed countries. Several unclassified early warning “watch lists” point to states that are most vulnerable to state failure and conflict. NGOs such as the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the International Crisis Group (CG) operate on the ground level in some regions to monitor trends for early warning of impending violence.
- Evidence-based analytical tools exist for assessing the drivers of particular conflicts (e.g., the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework), and to a lesser extent, for planning multi-actor strategies to target key drivers of conflict and for multi-program monitoring and evaluation.

- Conflict units in USAID, the World Bank, UN, and bilateral development agencies are producing some guides to how to re-set sectoral development and other programs to orient them to anti-conflict purposes.
- Though entities such as the U.S. Government's State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), and the UN's Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) the outlines of inter-agency decision-making infrastructures for preventive and crisis diplomacy are coming into being.

Hence, the problem is not lack of knowledge or techniques, but largely inter-organizational. What is still seriously missing is a more deliberate U.S. commitment to a strategic approach to preventing state failure and conflicts, using existing programs and agencies. The U.S. government requires an infrastructure for conflict prevention with a high-level director for early warning and conflict prevention that can activate procedures for inter-agency coordination and engaging partners on the ground. Authorities and procedures need to be mandated for using the existing tools and lessons learned. Within countries on watch lists threatened by violence, international activities and goals are too dispersed across diverse professions and overstretched governmental and nongovernmental international organizations. The problem is not mainly deploying the activities to crisis spots anew. The multiple existing activities are pursued with few procedures for galvanizing them into concerted prevention strategies.

In addition, more resources need to be shifted to non-military approaches. There is a huge resource imbalance between U.S. diplomatic, development, and non-governmental organizations that are active in potentially unstable areas and budgeting for military contingency purposes.

In conclusion, we recommend that Congress would do well to take these steps for improving the US Government's (USG) preventive capacity:

- 1. Support inter-agency collaboration for prevention:** Current lack of coordination for prevention results in inefficiency, waste, and/or misapplication of U.S. power. A

decisionmaking infrastructure for conflict prevention is needed with a center for coordination, such as the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization or clearer leadership and coordination at the National Security Council to harness the potential across agencies within and external to the USG through communication, coordination, joint assessment, shared planning, and other activities. The many diplomatic, development and other programs that already operate in developing countries could be re-engineered so that they serve conflict prevention objectives more directly and in a more concerted fashion.

- a. Create a working group for weighing the options on how and where to institute an active infrastructure to support conflict prevention.
- b. Resource regional coordinators to make rapid, reactive funding decisions.

2. Mandate country-specific fragile state and conflict assessments and planning:

Effective strategies must start with ground-level assessments, updated periodically. Insiders' local knowledge and insight need to be drawn on to ensure that conflict prevention and counterinsurgency efforts truly contribute and do not inadvertently detract from security and stabilization. The Congress could encourage cross-USG and multi-lateral country consultations to jointly assess country situations and devise and implement diagnosis-driven targeted strategies, both at the field and desk officer level. Such processes would (a) apply conflict sensitive indicators to identify systematically the most important short- and long-term risks in a country that are affecting the prospects for escalating conflict as well as its capacities for peaceful management of conflict; (b) identify what actions each actor can contribute within the strategy; and (c) consult the lessons learned from actual experience with various combinations of instruments. A continuous process of assessment and conflict risk mitigation and management will more likely serve U.S. national interests in stabilization and prevention of terrorism and insurgency than repeated *ad hoc* reactive responses to crises. Institutionalize workable consultations for multi-lateral as well as U.S. inter-agency assessments (an International ICAF) that includes not only USG inter-agency teams, but international and regional organizations, like-minded high-income countries, and local actors (governmental and nongovernmental) in host nations.

- a. Collect lessons learned, best practices, and assess global preventive capacity from the extensive conflict prevention programs that have taken place over the last twenty years to ensure broad understanding of the preventive potential for mitigating risks and instability, particularly as it relates to U.S. national interests.
- b. Support the development of an interagency planning guide for conflict prevention.

3. Create budgetary flexibility to shift resource to early-stage, pro-active programs for security assurance and “conflict-sensitive” development: Military and civilian resources are out of balance. The current budget process does not support sufficient civilian responses to emerging vulnerabilities and opportunities. Righting this balance by resourcing civilian agencies faces significant organizational, cultural and legislative obstacles. But modest reallocations for conflict prevention activities could obviate larger investments in responding to crises, violence and organized threats of terrorism, thus actually resulting in savings.

- a. Provide flexible financial vehicles such as discretionary funds to allow a budgetary surge capacity for civilian organizations to address nascent conflicts.
- b. Authorize “CERP-like” funds for USAID and the State Department for rapid and direct support for local civil society NGOs who are working to prevent instability and terrorism.

4. Build in support for local capacities for prevention: Conflict prevention is fundamentally about assisting, enabling local host governments and partners at the grassroots to shape their own environment to decrease the motivations for terrorism and build local institutional capacity and resilience to prevent instability. This indirect approach often works better if locals take the lead in preventing violence and extremism by building security from the ground up, is more cost-effective for U.S. interests, and is more politically, economically, and militarily sustainable.

- a. Harness, partner with, and build the capacity of local institutions, organizations, and structures that already exist in failing and fragile states to prevent terrorism and instability. Local CSOs often have access to areas that government and military personnel find hard or impossible to reach, have greater legitimacy and trust with local populations, and are more flexible to changes in the local context.

Thank you kindly for your interest and attention.