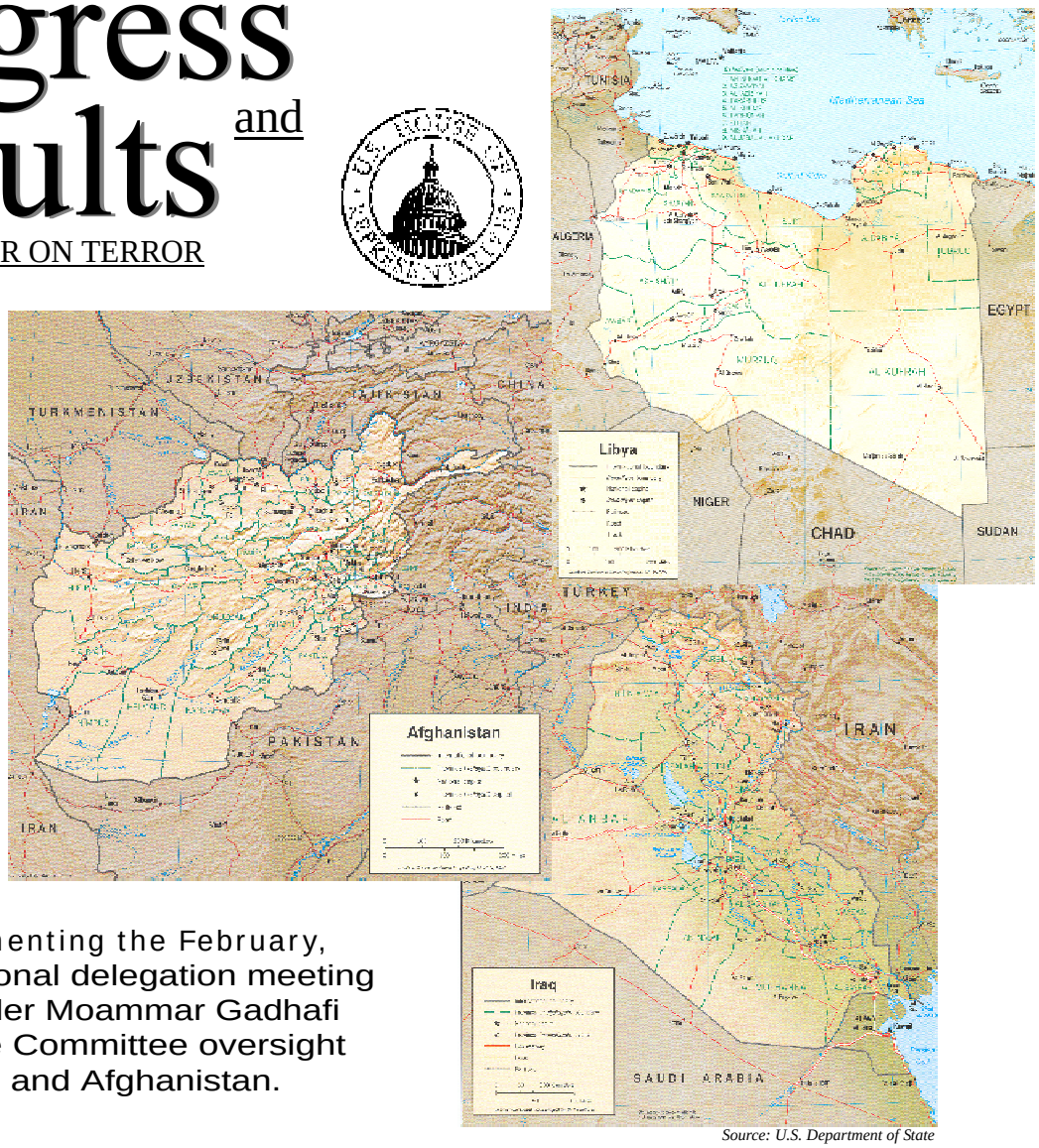
Progress and Results

IN THE WAR ON TERROR



Source: U.S. Department of State

A journal documenting the February, 2004 congressional delegation meeting with Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and Intelligence Committee oversight missions to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Written by CONGRESSMAN PETER HOEKSTRA

On Feb. 12, 2004, U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra was asked to participate in a congressional delegation (CODEL) led by members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to meet with Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

Col. Gadhafi surprised the world in December by announcing his intent to abandon his once-secret nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and renounce Libya's ties to terrorist groups. The delegation was asked by the U.S. Department of State to express to Col. Gadhafi the appreciation of the United States for the direction he is taking with his weapons programs and the willingness of the United States to move forward with him constructively.

The delegation also traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan to assess the status and performance of U.S. intelligence operating in the Middle East, as well as receive briefings from coalition military commanders and diplomats on the progress of reconstruction efforts. The following is a travel journal maintained by Hoekstra during the CODEL's oversight mission.

Thursday, Feb. 12, 2004

Washington

We depart Andrews Air Force Base on a nonstop flight to Libya. The plan is to arrive early in the morning and immediately begin meetings.

Objectives for this $9^{1/2}$-hour flight through the night? Sleep.

Congressional delegation (CODEL) members Reps. John Gibbons (R-NV), John Sweeney (R-NY), Jane Harman (D-CA), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), C.A. 'Dutch' Ruppersberger (D-MD) and Peter Hoekstra (R-MI).

Friday, Feb. 13, 2004

Libya

We arrive in Surt, Libya at 8 a.m. local time. Our congressional delegation (CODEL) is the second to meet with Col. Moammar Gadhafi in three weeks after no U.S. delegations had visited the country in more than 30 years. In some ways the experience is surreal. Back in December I never would have imagined that a visit to this country in northern Africa would ever be considered for the itinerary of a CODEL. People just don't come here.

The U.S. Department of State encouraged the CODEL to make this stop in order to continue to improve dialogue between the United States and Libya. The country's leadership recently agreed to eliminate its once-banned nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and open the country to inspections. We were asked to convey to Col. Gadhafi the appreciation of the United States for this positive decision and our willingness to proceed constructively.

Those who participated in the previous CODEL to Libya cautioned us to be prepared to lose control of the agenda. They were absolutely correct. The Libyans were gracious hosts, but they clearly demonstrated that they were in command.

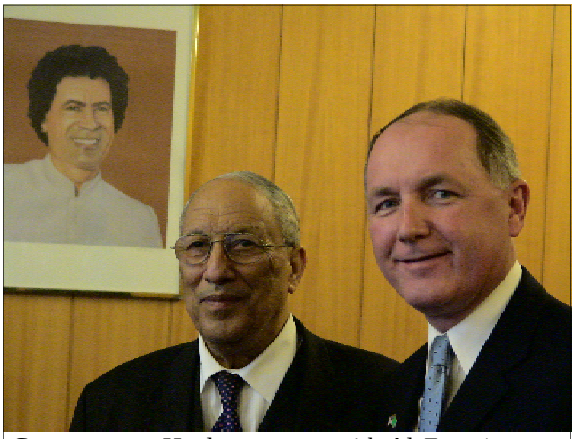
Our schedule indicated that we would meet with Libyan parliamentarians immediately upon arriving in the country. Wrong. Our hosts said that they would transport us to a hotel to rest after our long flight. We figured that if we had extra time at our disposal, we would rather spend it viewing the country. The response from our Libyan hosts was essentially: "That is fine, but for now all that you will see is the road to the hotel, because you need to go there and rest from your long trip."

We travel to the hotel, each of us receiving a room and instructions to rest and return to the lobby in 30 minutes. OK. But we did not want to do this.

Thirty minutes later we are rushed into cars and sped off. We arrive at our first meeting. We are missing a member of the CODEL. She fell asleep at the hotel, and no count of our delegation was taken. The missing member was left in the small hotel with nobody who spoke English. She eventually joins us.

We meet with Al-Zanati Mohammed Al-Zanati, speaker of the Libyan People's Congress, and proceed to a meeting with several parliamentarians. The meeting begins with a 42-minute opening

statement by our hosts – a lesson on Libyan democracy. Other presentations cover health care and the role of women in Libyan society. Two members of the host committee are women.


Congressman Hoekstra meets with Al-Zanati Mohammed Al-Zanati, speaker of the Libyan People's Congress.

Certain aspects of Libya the United States has been critical of, the Libyans hold in high esteem – most notably their chairmanship of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. They also frequently mention the great progress of their country, due mostly to the Leader of the Revolution. (They do not mention Col. Gadhafi by name.)

They say that democracy and freedom are essential to Libya's future. The hosts are cordial and deliver their message of hope and opportunity for their people.

Some of their quotes include:

- "God created man on this Earth. Therefore he has natural needs and natural rights. These are not bestowed by anyone else, and they cannot be taken away by men."
- "Every person has the right to develop to their full potential and to live in peace, security and prosperity."
- "How can you enslave people who are born free?"
- "The Leader of the Revolution has even received recognition with an international human rights award."

The meeting lasts a long time. We finally leave and quickly tour the area. We see few vehicles or people on the streets. We swiftly drive to the Mediterranean coast, which has the potential to become a beautiful area once developed. We drive to the beach and return right back to town, never stopping. We are confused because we thought we were on our way to see Col. Gadhafi. We head back toward the beautiful parliament complex for lunch. I am seated at a table with three men who do not speak English. They must be security. They express no interest in communicating. This will be a long lunch.

I finish the first course and begin nibbling on the second when a commotion starts behind me. Something is up. Congressman Sherwood Boehlert, the head of the CODEL, is rising from his table. People engage in animated conversations. It becomes clear we are leaving.

We should have left to see Col. Gadhafi by now. We hurry from the building, quickly exchange gifts and are seated in the automobiles. Remember, if you are late, you are left behind.

It appears as though we are on our way to see the colonel.

We race through the city and then through the countryside. We travel quickly, 160 kilometers per

hour (about 100 miles per hour), then up to 180 kph (112 mph). Finally, we top out at 210 kph (more than 130 mph) – a caravan of nine cars speeding through the desert.
Where are we headed? Col. Gadhafi? We stop at a large reservoir. Why are we here? The weather is cold. We stand over this large reservoir that is very similar to the Ludington water storage site. The Libyans are undertaking an extensive project to transport water from the south of Libya to the north. Impressive. But not what we came to see.

Back in the cars for another thrill ride. Back by some of the intersections and buildings we had passed previously – some for the third or fourth time. On to the colonel, right? Wrong. We stop again, this time next to a large trench – the pipeline for the water transport project. It is the Libyan equivalent of the Big Dig in Boston – a 4,000-kilometer-long pipeline that measures 12 feet in diameter.

Members of the CODEL meet with Libyan parliamentarians.

Again, impressive. But not why we came to Libya.

It is becoming late. We came to see Col. Gadhafi. Will we see him or not? Rep. Boehlert is becoming more agitated. Back in the vehicles. Where are we headed now?

We pass the same intersections and buildings. We turn more corners and suddenly approach a large cluster of tents – Col. Gadhafi's compound. We are escorted to a large tent. He will see us soon. We wait. He arrives. He greets us very politely and invites us to sit in lounge chairs. He sits in a plastic chair, clearly ailing from what he describes as back pain. He explains that he has a disc problem.

He opens the conversation with a rather philosophical statement: The United States and Libya have been enemies at war for so long, yet our two countries have never really known each other. He states that even countries at war should communicate so that they can possibly resolve their differences.

The message: "We do not know each other. That is not good." Can't argue with that.

He continues to say that his recent decision to dismantle his banned weapons programs and denounce terrorism are based solely on the self-interest of Libya. Sanctions and other reprimands by the United States and the United Nations have never had an impact and never will, he says. He speaks through a translator, although it becomes clear he can speak English. On occasion he will correct his translator or smile and nod when a member of the delegation speaks kindly of him or Libya.

We speak about weapons of mass destruction, human rights, weapons proliferation, Libya's steps to dismantle its banned weapons programs and Col. Gadhafi's view that the entire region – the entire world – should disarm, including the United States and North Korea. On human rights he discusses Libya's leadership role on the issue as evidenced by thechairmanship of the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Col. Gadhafi expresses a real desire for the normalization of relations between our countries. He indicates a desire for political and economic ties, as well as cultural and student exchanges between Libya and the United States. He obviously says everything he thinks we want to hear, going as far as saying: "Why would I want a nuclear weapon? What would I do with it?"

Col. Gadhafi criticizes the relationship between the United States and North Korea. He says that the United States did not keep its end of the 1994 Agreed Framework, which required North Korea to freeze its nuclear weapons programs in exchange for various benefits from the United States. He is also sensitive to criticism by Secretary of State Colin Powell over some of Libya's recent actions in Africa. Col. Gadhafi believes he is acting to stabilize a very sensitive region of the world. Located throughout Libya are signs and billboards highlighting Libya's interest in Africa and its desire to become a leader in the continent.

Col. Gadhafi next offers a booklet proposing a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is a one-state solution he calls Isratine. It is obvious that he has seriously thought about the issue and the various proposals to implement a peace plan.

We have visited with the colonel for nearly two hours. It seems as though he would be willing to meet for as long as we would like, but our plane departs at 6 p.m. We must go, or we are in Libya for the night. We exchange pleasantries and leave. He gives the CODEL the booklet on Isratine and another short book he wrote. Off to the airport.

Italy

We depart Libya for Sicily, Italy. It is a short flight. We land in Sicily and begin another hour-long drive. We eat dinner and arrive at our hotel at 11 p.m., the end of a long day that began the previous afternoon at 3 p.m. It is one of those days that one never forgets. This CODEL was potentially part of a process that will mark a major shift in the war on terror and the integration of Libya into the world community. Libya could move from its position as an opponent in the global war on terror to a member of the worldwide team fighting it.

Col. Gadhafi said that the United States and Libya should become partners in the same bunker in the war on terror. It is unclear why the shift in thinking has taken place, but we need to seize the moment and work to advance it. It presents an extraordinary opportunity. While we are encouraged by Libya's steps to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programs, we recognize that there are still many issues in respect to the rights of Libyan citizens within their own country that need to be addressed.

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2004

Jordan

This is the one light day in the schedule. We leave our hotel for the airport, now in a van traveling at 90 mph through highway traffic. We almost get into one accident on the way there, but these drivers are good. Off to Jordan.

Weather problems in Jordan – snow. Two feet may fall tonight. Our plane is diverted to Jordan's main airport from the small military airport for which we were originally destined. We are thrown

off schedule but finally arrive at the hotel for dinner and then head to the embassy for a briefing. Back at the hotel by 11 p.m. Time to pack. Early departure, 5:45 a.m. to Baghdad and then almost directly overnighting to Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. The next 36 hours will be very busy.

Sunday, Feb. 15, 2004

Ahhh! 6:22 a.m. I was expecting a 5 a.m. wake-up call. This does not make for a good headline back home: "Hoekstra Sleeps through Baghdad Trip. Never gets off the Ground." I am worried. I look out the window. Are those our vehicles now loading? I take a 20-second shower, quickly dress and run to the control room. Would they really leave without me? False alarm. All the wake-up calls were cancelled – snow in Jordan and a sandstorm in Kuwait from where our military aircraft would be originating. We are not going anywhere today. We have a snow day.

We meet with Jordanian officials during our unplanned stay in Amman. They are as surprised as everyone else that no WMD were found in Iraq. They feared that some of those weapons might be aimed at their country for supporting the coalition in Operation Iraqi Freedom, or that missiles would fly through their air space on the way to Israel.

Monday, Feb. 16, 2004

Iraq

Today we are finally able to leave for Iraq, an early morning departure on a C-130 military transport plane. We arrive at Baghdad International Airport. It has not changed much since I was here in September. It rained yesterday so there are several mud puddles, but it amazes me how dusty and dry much of the area has already become.

Our first briefing is with Ambassador Richard H. Jones, the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait who is temporarily working in Iraq.

He provides a detailed update on security, economic and political progress. As we have all read in the newspapers, the security threat has improved, but it has also changed. Attacks on coalition forces have decreased, but attacks on Iraqis cooperating with the coalition have escalated and become more deadly. As the recognized occupying power, the coalition is responsible for providing a secure environment for the population. Ambassador Jones highlights the Reward for Justice Program and its success in helping to capture more of the top 55 wanted senior members of the former Ba'athist regime who have eluded the coalition.

Economic development and commercial activity has progressed substantially, Ambassador Jones says. Electricity is on 24 hours a day. There is constant running water. Oil production is ahead of schedule, and that drives revenue back into the government for

additional investment. This is progress. Back in September they were not hitting their targets, and it was a major concern.

June 30 is the targeted date for the transition to Iraqi sovereignty. The Iraqi Governing Council (ICG), with the aid of coalition officials, must soon adopt a plan to make it happen. They must approve of the process for ratifying the new constitution and the process by which the transitional government will conduct the elections that will be necessary once the constitution is adopted. So much work, so little time.

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) needs to reach a consensus with the ICG on:

- The transitional administrative law that will govern Iraq until a new constitution has been approved.
- The consolidation of governmental institutions.
- The strengthening of civil society organizations.

One of the most critical steps that will need to be completed in the near future is the successful completion of elections with the meaningful participation of the many different groups within Iraq. Meaningful participation requires that they know how to employ the tools of democracy and are provided with enough time to organize. Iraq will become the largest democracy-building project in history conducted in the shortest amount of time.

Following the meeting with Ambassador Jones, we meet with Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commanding officer of troops in Iraq. He provides an overview of the military and security situation. There is much discussion about the composition and strength of opposition forces. A consensus seems to be forming that the opposition is, at a minimum, receiving support from terrorist organizations outside of the country, and that Iraqis themselves are now the primary targets.

Congressman Hoekstra greets Iraqi police recruits during a wreath-laying ceremony at the police academy in Baghdad.

The opposition is attempting to ensure that a civil society does not emerge. A civil society is one in which there is a rule of law enforced by legitimate policing agencies and reviewed by an appropriate judicial structure. The attempt to ensure that a civil society does not emerge is why police and police recruits are targeted. Leading Iraqi professionals supporting the coalition are being targeted as well.

The opposition is essentially trying to wipe out the leadership class.
The number of attacks per day is decreasing, but the attacks carried out are much more deadly. Soft targets are the priority because they are easy to mark and result in the maximum number of casualties. These are typically Iraqi people and not coalition forces. Despite the efforts of the opposition, Lt. Gen. Sanchez continues to recruit and train Iraqi police officers at a rapid pace. It is not difficult to attract applicants despite the threat to safety. There is also a commitment to provide Iraqi police

with the equipment they need, although there have been some delays.

In attempt to place the right people into key police roles, a process for reviewing the de-Ba'athification effort has been initiated, and 75,000 former police have been rehired. (Police play a different role than security forces. Police officers are typically responsible for jobs like traffic control, while security personnel are responsible for law enforcement and crime prosecution.)

While other meetings – specifically those of an intelligence nature – did take place during our stop, the clear highlight of the day in Baghdad was the visit to the police academy to recognize the courage and the sacrifice of those Iraqis training to become police officers.

Police and police recruits had been the targets of recent shootings and bombings, killing more than 100 of them. We wanted to draw attention to how important we felt they were to the new Iraq. We hoped to lay a wreath and express our sympathy and support at an appropriate location. Finally, through the help of some powerful friends in Washington, and over the objections of the CPA, arrangements were made to present a wreath at the academy.

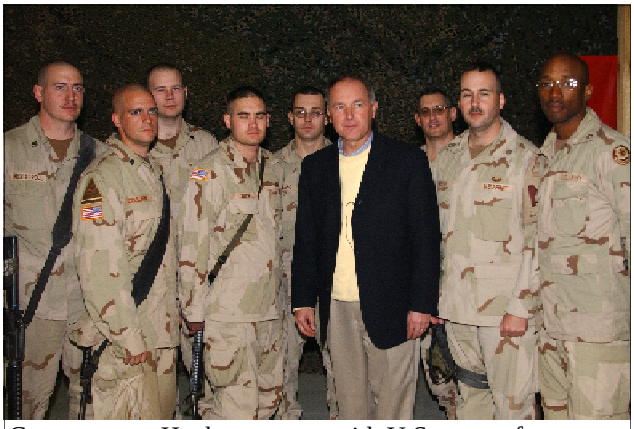
In front of about 500 cadets, the CODEL presented a wreath, expressed our sympathy and support and shook hands with about 200 of the recruits. As we completed the handshakes and expressed our appreciation, they broke into applause and an Arabic chant. It was an unbelievable and moving experience. We shook hands with them, and they expressed how happy they were that we visited them to say thank you. It was great.

The visit to the police academy also allowed us to see downtown Baghdad firsthand. Traffic had increased since I was here in September. Commerce on the streets was booming. The one gas station we spotted was busy but there were no lines.

It is vitally important that we continue providing Iraqis the essentials – food, gas and electricity – at levels higher than those of the pre-Saddam days, and especially at levels that prevent long lines at gas stations and electricity blackouts. One of the issues with a growing economy is that the more it grows, the more pressure increases for adequate levels of fuel and electricity.

Our day in Baghdad ends with another personal and meaningful event – dinner with the troops. I have said it repeatedly, and I will continue to say it – this is a terrific group of men and women. I eat dinner with 10 soldiers from Michigan. Several of them have been stationed in Iraq for more than eight months. Some patrol sectors of Baghdad daily.

They say that the situation here is noticeably improving. One had been at the "Assassin's Gate" – the U.S. name given to the checkpoint outside the former palace of deposed leader Saddam Hussein – when it was attacked by a bomber. No Americans were killed in the incident, but a number of Iraqi civilians were. He was quiet. This young soldier had seen more death and carnage in one brief moment than the



Congressman Hoekstra meets with U.S. troops from Michigan serving in Iraq.

Congressman Hoekstra sits down for a meal with 10 U.S. troops from Michigan currently serving in Iraq.

rest of us will see in a lifetime. Most of these soldiers probably had.

Back to the plane for Jordan, and then for another overnight trip, this time to Uzbekistan and on to Afghanistan. Another night spent on a plane, rather than in a hotel room.

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2004

Afghanistan

We arrive in Uzbekistan at about 6:45 a.m. A quick trip to a hotel, shower and back to the airport for another ride on a C-130 to Afghanistan. We arrive in Kabul after a $2^{1/4}$-hour flight. I had been told to expect a significant difference between the Kabul I witnessed 18 months ago and the current Kabul. Actually, what I see of Kabul over the next six hours is very similar to what I saw before. On the drive to the embassy, I wonder how much progress has been made.

U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad provides us with a briefing on the situation in the country. Political reform is progressing. A new constitution is in place. It strongly and specifically protects women's rights. It also includes a clause prohibiting any laws that conflict with Islam. We will need to wait and see specifically how the newly elected government – which requires that at least 25 percent of the parliament be made up of women – will write the laws governing polygamy, divorce, inheritance and other laws that affect women's rights.

A member of the delegation raises the issue of human rights abuses, specifically those against women, in the province of Herot. Ambassador Khalilzad indicates that Herot has been identified as an area of concern and contrast. Governed by one of the strongest warlords in Afghanistan, Herot is developing rapidly and is quite prosperous compared with the rest of the country. It is secure, but there are suspected human rights abuses, including suspected cases of forced marriage.

The keys to success in Afghanistan are not much different than those in Iraq. Government institutions need to be organized and led by competent and ethical leaders. A civil society with the rule of law fairly applied and enforced is essential. Security is a concern as well. In light of these requirements, Afghanistan and the reconstruction team are working hard to establish a larger and more effective police force.

Elections are scheduled for June, but could take place later because the process is moving more slowly than expected. Right now the effort is focused on registering voters. To maintain the integrity of the elections process, registration was limited to 54 sites – managed by the United Nations – nationwide. For a country larger in size than the state of Texas, 54 sites is not a sufficient number. The plan has since been revised to increase the number to 4,000 by the end of March.

The United States is viewed very favorably by the people of Afghanistan. We have liberated them from two corrupt regimes: the Russians and the Taliban. They know that al Qaeda – and by extension the Taliban – destroyed the World Trade Center in New York and significantly damaged the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and they have experienced the Taliban's destruction of Afghanistan.

Even with some of the military accidents that have occurred, they appreciate U.S. soldiers and see them as a very disciplined security force. President Hamid Karzai is seen by many as an extension of the U.S. presence, but many view that positively. President Karzai says that Ambassador Khalilzad might be the most popular individual in Afghanistan, that if his name was on the ballot this summer he might win the election. However, although Ambassador Khalilzad is of Afghan origin, his name will obviously not appear on the ballot. President Karzai is expected to win reelection.

Major issues remain in Afghanistan. Areas in Pakistan continue to serve as a sanctuary for the Taliban and other terrorist groups. Border security remains difficult. The United States knows by experience that slipping into Afghanistan undetected is not difficult. The illegal drug economy grew significantly last year, delivering the second-largest poppy crop in history. Afghanistan cannot be permitted to become a narco-state. On the positive side, insurgent attacks have diminished in the country. Large-scale attacks have been replaced by smaller, indirect attacks such as bombings and missile assaults. However, these attacks are still dangerous and sometimes deadly.

Like in Iraq, coalition and domestic soldiers are fighting a war on terrorism and working to establish a secure environment while building a democracy. These parallel tracks are difficult to accomplish, especially when you want to see them through on an accelerated timetable.

The meeting with President Karzai goes very well. He appears more confident about his role than when I first met him 18 months ago, as well as more cognizant of the challenges faced by Afghanistan and the opportunities that are present. In person he is an impressive individual. He maintains focus on several issues, including the following:

- Elections need to be held this summer.
- The narcotics trade presents a severe threat to the development of the country. A country cannot support an effective government if illegal drugs form a dominant part of the economy. There needs to be a rule of law.
- Warlords threaten to undermine the central government.
- Outside forces threaten to destroy the process.

Many aspects of Afghanistan's development are proceeding positively. Road construction is progressing nicely – maybe not as fast as President Karzai would like, but key highway segments are opening. The economy grew by 30 percent last year. If the country can maintain a growth rate of 7 to 8 percent over the next several years, it will be poised to increase per capita income from the current average of $150 per person to $1,000 per person. More than 100 new high-rises have been

built over the last two years (a high-rise being a building of four or more stories). President Karzai states: "We are rebuilding our infrastructure slowly. Remember, we had very little to begin with, and much of that was destroyed."

One might slightly expand on the president's remarks to say: "Afghanistan as a nation is rebuilding slowly. Remember, much of what it had – and it was not a significant amount – in the form of government, infrastructure and civil society has been destroyed."

The challenges continue to be great. We leave the president and head back to the airport.

Another flight delay. The plane does not have clearance to enter Uzbekistan air space, causing a delay of 90 minutes. A scheduled dinner with the under foreign secretary is cancelled. Uzbek's air force might feel some heat for the problem. For members of the CODEL, one less event might be just what we need.

Tuesday evening I will fly with the CODEL from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan, about a $1^{1/2}$-hour flight. We will be provided with the opportunity to change clothes and then board a regular plane for a $4^{1/2}$-hour flight to Incerlick, Turkey. At Incerlick I will be on the ground briefly to catch a plane to Istanbul. That flight takes $1^{1/2}$ hours. I will wait in Istanbul for four hours and then catch a $4^{1/2}$-hour flight to Frankfort, Germany. In Germany I will wait for two hours before boarding a 10-hour flight to Chicago. In Chicago I will go through customs and then wait another two hours before finally catching the last 30-minute leg to Grand Rapids and then drive home to Holland. I will arrive home Wednesday afternoon, another night on a plane or in airports.

This travel stretch will require 22.5 hours in the air and out of six nights of travel, I will have spent three of them aboard airplanes. I expect to be exhausted by the time I arrive home.

Conclusions

On my flights home, I catalogue what I have learned:

- Libya is an evolving opportunity. Col. Gadhafi's entreaties should receive a positive response in the good-faith process of "trust, but verify."

- People in Afghanistan and Iraq seem to be overwhelmingly pleased that the Taliban and Saddam Hussein are gone. This is evidenced by the following:

    - That U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad is one of the most popular people in Afghanistan.

    - The positive response from children on the streets of both countries when we drove through.

    - The positive reception from Iraqi police cadets.

    - The responses from Americans and others who are in daily contact with Iraqis and Afghans.

    - Reports from immigrants of Afghanistan and Iraq in the United States.

- Significant progress has been made politically, economically and in the development of civil and social institutions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

    - The Afghan economy grew by 30 percent with an 8 percent growth rate projected for the next several years.

    - Iraqi oil and electricity production has reached levels similar to those prior to the liberation from Hussein's regime. In many cases they have surpassed those levels.

- The future still holds much uncertainty for both countries. There remains much work to accomplish, and negative events could create major setbacks, such as:

    - The attack on Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

    - Insufficient supplies of food, electricity and gasoline to meet basic human requirements this summer.

    - Successful terrorist attacks that continue to disrupt nation-building efforts.

- The schedules for the next transitions in the governing statuses of Iraq and Afghanistan are aggressive, very aggressive considering the nature of the change and amount of work that needs to be completed by then.

- The military focus in both countries has changed. Large-scale attacks against coalition forces have almost completely stopped, but smaller attacks against coalition or NATO troops, still occur, but less frequently. Most of these enemies are hard to identify and difficult to pursue. In both countries the opposition is now attacking country nationals involved in or receiving training for a role in new civil society institutions such as law enforcement, the justice system and health care. These are typically the softer targets that are easier to attack and inflict a maximum amount of casualties.

- Both countries still need to develop the framework for the new institutions necessary for a civil government.

- Miscalculations have been made in some programs that the United States has implemented. Second-guessing does not help, but preparing a review to learn lessons from and recalibrate some efforts needs to occur.

- American men and women on the ground are talented people who are accomplishing invaluable work to acheive difficult objectives. They are writing the playbook as they move forward and face the challenges and opportunities that present themselves.

- The tasks at hand are phenomenally difficult and performed under some very unfavorable conditions.

- Other Middle Eastern countries are encouraged by the changes in Iraq and Afghanistan,

especially some of those countries neighboring Iraq.

- Not finding stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq needs further analysis. Weapons inspectors believe that they might yet exist, but I believe three things:

    - It is unlikely – but not impossible – that stockpiles of WMD will be found.

    - The programs and ongoing WMD development efforts by Hussein clearly indicate his intent and were as dangerous as if he possessed actual materials. He would have had the capability to create chemical and biological weapons quickly once inspectors left and sanctions were lifted.

    - There is probably much that we will never know about what Hussein was doing or planning because of the destruction and looting of many suspect sites and government files.

The final chapters in rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan are being written right now. It will require the coalition to get most things right the first time, to quickly correct miscalculations and adapt to changing circumstances. It will require Iraqis and Afghans to aggressively step to the plate and carry more of the load.

These two countries have suffered years of tyrannical leadership and wars that destroyed their social and civil structure and are expected to be on the road to representative democracies with stable governments and institutions in a very short time. These are the two largest democracy-building projects ever undertaken in such a short period. I believe that we need to recognize that both of these countries will continue to need some form of assistance after the transitional governments are installed.

Much work has been accomplished, but much remains to be done.

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