

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2009 1:03 PM
To: H
Subject: RE: Sen. Levin

Levin opposed the surge, but voted for funding the troops.

Pasted below is Levin's speech on troops in Afghanistan. We'll have a copy for you as well.

Afghan speech below

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2009 Contact: Senator Levin's Office

Phone: 202.224.6221

Senate Floor Speech - Surge the Afghan Army

Remarks as prepared for delivery

Today we mark a solemn anniversary. Eight years ago this morning, our nation was attacked by terrorist extremists motivated by hatred and bent on destruction. It is always appropriate to remember the shock of that day, the innocent lives lost, and the efforts our nation has made since that day to ensure that Afghanistan, the nation that hosted those terrorists, cannot again become a safe haven for terrorists seeking to attack us. But today is an especially appropriate occasion to take stock of those efforts, and consider how best to continue them.

I recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan, where I was joined by my colleagues Senators Jack Reed and Ted Kaufman. The situation in Afghanistan is serious. Security has deteriorated. But if we take the right steps, we can ensure that Afghanistan does not revert to a Taliban-friendly government that could once again provide a safe haven for al Qaeda to terrorize us and the world.

The Obama administration's new strategy, focusing on securing the Afghan population's safety and partnering with the Afghan security forces in that effort, is an important start at reversing the situation in Afghanistan. The change in strategy has led our forces, in the words of General McChrystal's Counterinsurgency Guidance, to "live, eat and train together [with the Afghan security forces], plan and operate together, depend on one another, and hold each other accountable....and treat them as equal partners in success." The Guidance goes on to say that the success of the Afghan security forces "is our goal."

To achieve that goal we should increase and accelerate our efforts to support the Afghan security forces in their efforts to become self-sufficient in delivering security to their nation – before we consider whether to increase U.S. combat forces above the levels already planned for the next few months. These steps include increasing the size of the Afghan Army and police much faster than presently planned; providing more trainers for the Afghan Army and police than presently planned; providing them more equipment than presently planned; and working to separate local Taliban fighters from their leaders and attract them to the side of the government as we did in Iraq.

While the security situation in Afghanistan has worsened, we still have important advantages there. The Afghan people hate the Taliban. Public opinion polls show support for the Taliban at about 5%. In addition, the Afghan army is highly motivated and its troops are proven fighters.

Despite those advantages, we face significant challenges. General McChrystal believes, and I agree, that we need to regain the initiative and create a momentum towards success. General McChrystal worries, and rightly so, about the perception that we have lost that initiative, and the impact of that perception on the Afghan people, their government, al Qaeda and the Taliban. By contrast, if we can dispel that perception, we have a chance to convince local and lower-level Taliban fighters to lay down their arms and rejoin Afghan society.

I believe the most effective way to retake the initiative in Afghanistan is with a series of steps to ensure that Afghanistan's army and police have the manpower, equipment and support to secure their own nation.

First, we should increase troop levels for the Afghan army and police faster than currently planned. There are approximately 90,000 troops in the Afghan army now, and that number is scheduled to go up to 134,000 by October of 2010. The Afghan police are scheduled to reach a level of 82,000 by the same time. For a long time, many of us have urged the establishment of a goal of 240,000 Afghan troops and 160,000 Afghan police by 2013. The Afghan Minister of Defense has strongly supported those numbers. It now appears that our government and the Afghan government are prepared to accept those goals. But the need for additional Afghan forces is urgent. I believe it both possible and essential to advance those goals by a year, to 2012.

Our own military in Afghanistan has repeatedly pointed to a need for more Afghan forces. In one sector of Helmand province we visited last week, our Marines outnumbered Afghan soldiers by 5 to one. A Marine Company commander in Helmand province told the New York Times in July that a lack of Afghan troops "is absolutely our Achilles heel."

What do we need to do to increase the size of the Afghan army and police? According to Afghan Defense Minister Wardak, there is no lack of Afghan manpower; we've been assured it is available.

But we will need significantly more trainers. We asked General Formica, who is in charge of the American effort to train Afghan security forces, whether such an increase is possible. He indicated he would make an assessment of what would be necessary in order to meet the earlier timetable. In the meantime, we should also press our NATO allies with much greater forcefulness to provide more trainers. If our NATO allies are not going to come through with the combat forces they have pledged, at least they could provide additional trainers.

Larger Afghan security forces will also require more mid-level Afghan officers. In addition to supporting efforts to graduate more Afghan officers from army academies, we should consider the recommendation of Defense Minister Wardak that previous mid-level officers who fought the war against the Soviets return to service on an interim basis. Minister Wardak emphasized that those men are well qualified and well motivated, and while they may not be trained in the most current tactics, they nonetheless could temporarily meet the need of the enlarged army while the new group of officers is trained. A larger Afghan force will need supporting infrastructure, such as barracks. While the available infrastructure may not be the most modern, it is adequate and exists in sufficient amounts.

Larger Afghan security forces will require additional equipment. There must be a major effort to transfer a significant amount of the equipment that is coming out of Iraq to the Afghan army and police. Such a significant commitment to equip the Afghan security forces would also help demonstrate U.S. determination to take the initiative and create momentum in the right direction. There is an enormous amount of equipment coming out of Iraq; our military is calling it one of the greatest transfers of military goods in the world's history. A significant part of it could be transferred to the Afghan forces, increasing their capability without weakening our own readiness. And yet there does not seem to be that kind of a crash effort in place to do that. We need to obtain on an urgent basis a list of the basic equipment needs of the Afghan forces and a list of how those needs could be met in a major program to transfer equipment leaving Iraq.

Rapidly expanding Afghanistan's military and police forces would address one of the major problems and risks we now face there. General McChrystal told us he worries that waiting until 2013 for a larger Afghan force creates a gap in

capabilities that brings significant risk of failure. But by accelerating the training and equipping of Afghan forces by a year, we address his concern. Depending on additional capability from Afghan, rather than U.S., forces, also addresses a major problem of public perception in Afghanistan. The larger our own military footprint there, the more our enemies can seek to drive a wedge between us and the Afghan population, spreading the falsehood that we seek to dominate a Muslim nation.

Finally, we should make a concerted effort to separate the local Taliban from their leaders. In Iraq, large numbers of young Iraqis who had been attacking us switched over to our side and became the "Sons of Iraq." They were drawn in part by the promise of jobs and amnesty for past attacks, and in part by the recognition that the status quo was creating horrific violence in their own communities. In their own interests and the interests of their nation, they switched sides and became a positive force.

That same prospect exists in Afghanistan. Afghan leaders and our military say that local Taliban fighters are motivated largely by the need for a job or loyalty to the local leader who pays them and not by ideology or religious zeal. They believe an effort to attract these fighters to the government's side could succeed, if they are offered security for themselves and their families, and if there is no penalty for previous activity against us.

General McChrystal himself has emphasized the potential of such re-integration to accomplish the same result as was achieved in Iraq. Here is what General McChrystal said on July 28th:

"Most of the fighters we see in Afghanistan are Afghans, some with foreign cadre with them. But most we don't see are deeply ideological or even politically motivated; most are operating for pay; some are under a commander's charismatic leadership; some are frustrated with local leaders. So I believe there is significant potential to go after what I would call mid- and low-level Taliban fighters and leaders and offer them re-integration into Afghanistan under the constitution."

But this "game changing" possibility was apparently not factored into General McChrystal's assessment. There is no plan yet to put in place a Sons of Iraq approach in Afghanistan. It is urgent that we lay out the steps that need to be taken to involve local and national Afghan leaders in that effort. They alone can accomplish this crucial job, but first we and our Afghan allies must draft such a plan on an urgent basis. And the potential positive impact of such a plan should be taken into account as we consider the need for any additional U.S. military resources.

Afghanistan's people are grateful for our aid, but also eager to assume responsibility for their future. In a tiny village in Helmand Province, we were invited to meet with the village elders at their council meeting, their shura. One hundred or so men sat on the floor and chatted with us about their future and their country's future. When asked how long the United States should stay, one elder said: "Until the moment that you make our security forces self-sufficient. Then you will be welcome to visit us, not as soldiers but as guests."

Helping Afghanistan achieve self-sufficiency in their security is everybody's goal. On that there is little difference of opinion, in Afghanistan's village councils or in the corridors of this Capitol.

Can we help Afghanistan reach self-sufficiency in security fast enough? Can we get there in a way that regains the initiative and creates the momentum we need? Can we encourage those lower level Taliban to abandon an insurgency headed by terrorists whose fanaticism they don't share?

I believe we can, by supporting a far more rapid growth in the Afghan Army and police; by providing more trainers more quickly; by a rapid infusion to Afghan units of equipment no longer needed in Iraq; and by rapidly adopting a plan for the re-integration of lower level Taliban fighters into Afghan society. In other words, we need a surge of Afghan security forces.

Our support of their surge will show our commitment to the success of a mission that is clearly in our national security interest, without creating a bigger U.S. military footprint that provides propaganda fodder for the Taliban.

I believe that taking those steps on an urgent basis, while completing the previously planned and announced increase in U.S. combat forces, provides the best chance of success for our mission: preventing Afghanistan from again being run by a Taliban government which harbors and supports Al-Qaeda, whose goal is to inflict additional catastrophic attacks on the United States and the world. And we should implement these steps before considering an increase in U.S. ground combat forces beyond what is already planned by the end of this year.

-----Original Message-----

From: H [mailto:HDR22@clintonemail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2009 7:52 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Sen. Levin

Pls find out whether he supported the surge in Iraq and get a copy of his recent speech about troops to Af for me. Thx.