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From: **Charles Krulak**  
Date: Tue, Sep 1, 2009 at 11:43 AM  
Subject: Afghanistan  
To: [REDACTED]

Sir,

I would imagine that your article, "Time to Get Out of Afghanistan" will result in some "incoming" on your Command Post. First and foremost, let me say that I am in total agreement with your assessment. Simply put, no desired end state has ever been clearly articulated and no strategy formulated that would lead us to achieve even an ill defined end state.

A few points:

1. The strategy of "clear, hold and build" would lead one to believe that the US and its Allies are capable of coordinating the elements of national power needed to affect such a strategy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just getting DOS and DOD on the same page is difficult enough...getting NGO's and nation building expertise into the fight is simply a non-starter in a country as dysfunctional as Afghanistan.

2. Your point about troop strength required to "protect" the population and carry out effective counterinsurgency operations is spot on. Instead of a surge of 21,000 troops, McChrystal would need a surge of hundreds of thousands. Not only would our Nation not support such a surge but, MOST distressing, the Military could not support such a surge. Not only are our troops being run ragged but, equally important and totally off most people's radar screens, our equipment is being run ragged. At some point in time, the bill for that equipment will come due and it will be a very large bill.

3. Typical of the 21st Century fight, we are fighting ideas as well as warriors. You cannot defeat ideas with bullets...you must defeat them with better ideas. For many reasons such as the dysfunction found in the Karzai government, the tribal nature of the country, the abject poverty of the average citizen, the inextricable link to Pakistan, we have been unable to come up with better ideas. We are systematically destroying the poppy fields... the country's major source of revenue. At the same time, we are trying to encourage other agricultural efforts. This is one of our "better ideas"?? Sad as it is to say, we would do better to buy the poppy crop ourselves...ridding the world of a source of drugs and maintaining the Afghan economy.

4. What in Afghanistan is deemed in our Nation's vital interest? Seriously? Who is the enemy? Seriously? Is the enemy of the United States the Taliban? Is the enemy al Queda? We need to determine the answer to those questions immediately. One would think we would have answered them already but none of our actions to date would indicate that we have.

Finally, your recommendation is sound. I would put "hunter-killer teams" along the borders and in suspected al Queda strongholds. I would support them with intelligence, logistics thru the use of parasail's, responsive airpower (need to be close), armed and unarmed (fitted with cameras, infrared, etc) drones, "reach back" capability for cruise missiles, and other capability as needed. The H-K Teams should be given minimal rules of engagement...when they identify the bad guys, they need to be empowered to take them out.

Again, don't be dismayed by the people who disagree with you. There are many retired and active duty military who feel you hit the bull's eye.

Semper Fidelis,

Chuck Krulak  
General, USMC(Ret), 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps