

Thursday, May 6, 2010

On Heels of Trip To Afghanistan and Pakistan...

CARNAHAN WILL HOLD FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE OVERSIGHT HEARING ON AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

*Calls For Thorough Review of Anti-Terrorism Efforts
In Wake of Times Square Attempt*

(WASHINGTON, DC) – On the heels of his trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-03) today announced that he will convene a hearing on Thursday, May 20th of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight to review reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

“We cannot lose sight of the fact that our men and women in uniform are still hard at work in Iraq and Afghanistan, putting their lives on the line to keep us safe,” Carnahan said. **“We have a responsibility to them and to the taxpayers of this country to make sure that we have a strict accounting of how resources are being spent. We cannot waste resources that our troops need to keep themselves safe and get the job done.”**

Carnahan said that the hearing would utilize information gathered during last weekend’s Foreign Affairs Committee trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan, during which he and other members of the bipartisan delegation met with General Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and other U.S. and allied leaders, as well as American troops who are working to help the Afghan people rebuild their nation after years of Taliban control.

During the hearing, Carnahan will receive testimony from Arnold Fields, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction regarding what is being done to closely monitor and oversee how military and civilian resources are being spent in Afghanistan, and how success is being measured. In February, Carnahan held a related hearing examining Iraq reconstruction and how to improve efforts in the future; Special Investigator General for the Iraq Reconstruction Stuart Bowen testified during that hearing that \$4 billion in waste occurred during the Iraq program.

“We must apply the lessons learned in Iraq to crack down on waste and fraud, especially as it relates to private contractors,” Carnahan said. **“Just last month, General McChrystal questioned our reliance on private**

contractors in Afghanistan. I'm looking forward to hearing how we are monitoring the reconstruction effort so we can make sure we are directing resources in the most efficient and effective way possible."

Carnahan announced the hearing on a conference call with reporters, during which he also called for a swift and thorough review of the nation's anti-terrorism efforts in the wake of the Times Square bombing attempt.

"While we were in Pakistan and Afghanistan, I was very pleased to learn that there have been significant improvements in how our intelligence communities are working together," Carnahan said. **"But we must do more."**

Carnahan praised the Administration's quick action to strengthen enforcement of the no-fly list, calling it a common sense step. In addition, he called for additional measures to tighten security, including a review of the background check process in visa and citizenship applications, and closing a loophole that allows airlines to avoid reporting passengers purchasing tickets with cash.

"Let me be clear: There is no silver bullet when it comes to anti-terrorism measures," said Carnahan. **"But we must do everything in our power to keep our citizens safe. Terrorism is a constantly evolving threat, and that means our efforts to fight terrorism must evolve as well."**