

GLOBAL ISSUES EVENING RECAP

Lute: Pakistan No. 1 Challenge

On March 3rd, General Douglas Lute, the Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan, told a packed audience at UNF Center that the "biggest international challenge" for President Obama in the next four years will be Pakistan. Assessment of seven key measures has led General Lute to conclude that substantial progress has been made in Iraq. For example, politically, during the recent provincial elections all 14 incumbents lost, with Iranian-supported elements losing in every area and Sunnis winning in several provinces. There is a "strategy for getting there." After the recently announced US troop withdrawals are completed, he envisions a partnership that will last for the next ten years under the Strategic Framework Agreement.

Gen. Lute explained in some detail why Afghanistan is more complex than Iraq and will take a lot longer. He observed, inter alia, that the Afghans have to be the ones to deliver a solution, that military measures alone are insufficient, and that Afghanistan and Pakistan are intricately linked. The US must help; otherwise Afghanistan would return to being a "custom-made safe haven" for al-Qaeda.

-Admiral Jonathan T. Howe, USN (Ret.)