“The Pentagon’s latest report, which points to an uptick in insurgent attacks in Afghanistan’s rural area where unemployment and illiteracy remain high, shows that we can’t continue to kill our way to stability. The greatest threats to stability throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan continue to be pervasive poverty, which makes for an enduringly intractable conflict unless it is addressed proactively. The way forward, as the President is planning, is a drawdown of the heavy troops presence and a pivot to social and economic development. That is the only way we’ll make any headway on the larger looming threats facing Afghans and Americans alike – that of resource scarcity, pandemics and climate change – not unlike what the National Intelligence Council warns in today’s intelligence assessment. As the NIC notes, this should be our focus going forward as these threats will only become more formidable.”