

**(WASHINGTON, D.C.)** – U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colorado), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, critically questioned President Barack Obama’s plan for Afghanistan in a closed door unclassified briefing to the House Armed Services Committee yesterday.

“It is irresponsible for this Administration to be throwing additional personnel and resources into Afghanistan without having fully developed the necessary planning first. We should not be expanding our role in the region until this Administration comes up with a comprehensive plan,” said the Marine Corps Iraq War veteran, who has previously expressed agreement over the President’s recent plan for withdrawing our forces from Iraq.

According to Coffman, during a closed door briefing yesterday, he brought up points apparently overlooked by the Administration:

Coffman asked about the deployment of the added ground troops. “Are there any plans to deploy our troops or Afghan security forces inside the villages of rural Afghanistan?” The answer was that there were no such plans. Coffman believes that the success of the surge in Iraq was not simply due to greater numbers of U.S. ground troops but it was in how those troops were deployed. By moving U.S. ground forces outside of the larger and more secure base camps and into small forward operating bases inside of Iraqi neighborhoods and villages, the added security brought about the conditions necessary to allow the political process to move forward.

“We have been continuously briefed that the Taliban have infiltrated these villages and are intimidating the population. These villages must be a greater part of the equation,” said Coffman.

Coffman then asked if the Administration had a plan to help the farmers who are engaged in poppy production with assistance to bridge the gap between the destruction of their fields and the harvesting of different crops. The answer was that there is no plan.

Coffman is concerned that the Administration has not thought through the issue and that they are unnecessarily exposing our forces on the ground to higher casualties by requiring them to destroy poppy fields without having the resources necessary to help the farmers.

“Giving the farmers seeds to plant wheat will help them in the long run but it won’t give them the income that they need to feed their families in the short run,” said Coffman.

“I look forward to hearing from the Administration on providing the details for what now seems like a confusing strategy in Afghanistan,” said Coffman.