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DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

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ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, March 16, 2011.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. “BUCK” MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive an update on security and stability in Afghanistan.

During a visit last week with U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates observed, “The closer you get to this fight, the better it looks.”

Having just returned from a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan a few weeks ago, I couldn’t agree more. That is not too close.

Our delegation met with senior military commanders and diplomats, talked to airmen at Bagram Air Base, Marines in Helmand province, and soldiers in Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban movement that harbored Al Qaeda in the years prior to 9/11.

We spent time with Afghan leaders who are trying to build a better tomorrow for their people, and excited children who were able to attend school for the first time in their young lives.

It was clear to our delegation that our forces have made significant gains in the past year and have reversed the Taliban’s tactical momentum. Our forces, working alongside their Afghan partners, have cleared former enemy strongholds, swept up significant weapons caches that are vital for the insurgency, and given more Afghans the confidence to defy the Taliban.

We have made considerable progress in growing and professionalizing Afghanistan’s army and police, so these forces are more capable and reliable partners to our own troops.

As significant as our troops’ achievements in the fields are, they can easily be undone by poor decisions made here in Washington. Although the influx of additional troops and a better-resourced counterinsurgency strategy have led to operational gains, our witnesses today have the opportunity to lay out how this progress can be consolidated into a lasting strategic victory for the United States and its Afghan allies.

In particular, the committee must understand what resources are required to reinforce the positive trends of 2010, so we can allow

the Afghan government to assume the lead in governance and security.

As Secretary Gates also said during his trip, "There is too much talk about leaving and not enough talk about getting the job done right."

Among the key questions to be addressed are, what conditions would be sufficient to permit the redeployment of some U.S. forces beginning in July 2011? Thus far, the exact term of these conditions remain ambiguous. Unfortunately, what we hear informally from commanders on the ground is that the calendar is the only condition they have been given.

Can any tactical and operational gains be permanently consolidated so long as the Taliban's leadership enjoys safe havens in Pakistan?

Fortunately, our two witnesses, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy and Commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan General David Petraeus are eminently qualified to address these issues.

Our nation has asked military families to shoulder a tremendous burden. Just as we owe it to our nation's warriors and their loved ones to remain committed to the fight by properly resourcing the fight, we also owe it to them to get the war strategy right, for nothing would do more to honor their sacrifices than to achieve a strategic victory that makes all Americans more secure.

Ranking Member Smith.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Petraeus, Under Secretary Flournoy. We appreciate you being here, and certainly we appreciate all of your leadership and work in Afghanistan.

And I want to start by concurring with the Chairman's remarks about the progress that may have been made in Afghanistan in the last year to 18 months. It has been very real.

I think I and virtually every member of this committee who has been to Afghanistan and seen that progress understands the territory that the Taliban controlled not long ago, they no longer control. They have been driven out because of the hard work of the men and women of our armed forces.

And also at great personal sacrifice. We have lost a lot of lives and many, many wounded fighting that battle, and we need to honor that, respect that, and also understand the very real progress that they have made.

And this makes a huge difference. Denying the Taliban safe haven undermines their ability to undermine the Afghan government and makes progress. And we should not fail to recognize the very, very real progress that is made.

And I think we also need to be very clear that we have unquestionable national security interests in Afghanistan. I have heard

some question those. You know, “Why are we there?” And I understand the frustration when you look at the cost and the loss of life.

And I think we need to be 100 percent clear on why we are there. We are there because the Taliban and their Al Qaeda allies clearly threaten U.S. national security interests. This is where 9/11 was plotted. And if we don’t have a secure Afghan government, there is no reason to believe that Al Qaeda and the Taliban will not return and once again have safe haven to plot attacks against us.

We need a stable government in Afghanistan. We need a stable government in Pakistan. And right now, unquestionably, in both, in different ways, they need our help to get there.

So those interests are clear, and I hope every member of this committee understands that.

At the same time, the cost of this is very high, certainly in terms of lives and wounded; also in terms of dollars. But also it is not a sustainable long-term strategy for us to be in Afghanistan forever.

That undermines our security interests by giving our enemies the ability to claim that we are occupiers that don’t intend to leave. They have a long and painful history of being occupied in that part of the world, and they are very distrustful of outside forces.

Which is why it is so important that we make it clear that we are there to help them stabilize their government and as soon as they do we will leave. And that needs to be our plan: to withdraw and draw down from Afghanistan as soon as we responsibly can.

And the “responsibly can” part is the key part of that and what I look forward to hearing from your testimony, because what really concerns me at this point is the transition.

As I said, the gains we have made are real. I have, you know, seen them myself. But how sustainable are they? We can’t continue to spend the amount of money that we are now spending in Afghanistan and have the presence that we have there forever. So at what point can we begin to transition to Afghan control?

And certainly security is a big part of that. I know we are doing a great deal of training of Afghan National Army, as well as police, and we are making progress on that front.

My biggest concern, and what I hope you will address in your testimony, is the governance issue. That is where I have, you know, the greatest concern in terms of our ability to transition.

The gains that we have made and the price that we have paid for those gains, will we be able to hold on to them as we begin the transition to a completely Afghan-run governance structure—rule of law, all of the basic elements of civil society? Can they do that in the district level, on the provincial level, in Kabul? Do they have the, you know, the ability to do that?

And there are challenges, you know, given corruption and basic lack of confidence in—competence, sorry—in the governance in Afghanistan. I think that gives us pause.

So we need the assurances that as we begin to transition out, you know, the gains that we have made and the price that we have paid for them will be sustained by an Afghan government structure that can stand without us.

That is what I am really interested as we hear your testimony. And, again, we thank you for being here. And thank you for your leadership on this critical, critical issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 67.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

As I mentioned, we have our two witnesses today, the Honorable Michèle Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, General David Petraeus, the Commander, International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces–Afghanistan.

General, you have been called many times to very important assignments. We really appreciate what you are doing and the sacrifice you have made and your family has made and all of those sitting behind you in uniform and all of those men and women that you lead in the command area where you are serving. Thank you. Secretary Flournoy.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHÈLE A. FLOURNOY, UNDER
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY**

Secretary FLOURNOY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Representative Smith, distinguished members of the committee. I want to thank you for inviting us here to address such an important topic today.

But before I offer my remarks on the current situation in Afghanistan, I would actually like to take a moment to echo and underscore the gracious remarks that General Petraeus made at the outset of his testimony yesterday regarding the devastating situation in Japan.

As General Petraeus mentioned yesterday, Japan is a very close friend and steadfast ally of the United States. We are deeply concerned with what is going on there and are very much committed to providing whatever assistance we can to this great and resilient nation to deal with and recover from this terrible sequence of disasters.

So our thoughts and prayers are very much with the people of Japan at this difficult time.

Let me just take this opportunity to update you on how we see our efforts in Afghanistan.

Nearly 10 years ago, Al Qaeda operatives carried out terrorist attacks that killed thousands of Americans and citizens from other countries. As we all know, these attacks emanated from a safe haven in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

In response to the September 11 attacks, the United States, supported by a coalition of international partners, entered Afghanistan by force in order to remove the Taliban regime and prevent further attacks by Al Qaeda and its associates.

Our mission was just. It was fully supported by the international community and initially it was quite successful.

In the years that followed, however, we lost focus on Afghanistan. While our attention was elsewhere, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and associated extremist groups reconstituted their safe havens along the border lands between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As a result of this inattention, we risked the return of a Taliban-led Afghanistan that would likely once again provide a safe haven

for terrorists who could plan and execute attacks against the United States.

When President Obama took office, he immediately undertook a thorough review of our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and reaffirmed our core goal, and that is to disrupt, dismantle and eventually defeat Al Qaeda, and to prevent its return to Afghanistan.

In the course of this review, we found that the situation in Afghanistan was actually much worse than we had thought, and that the Taliban had seized the momentum on the ground. In response, over the course of 2009, 2010, the President committed tens of thousands of additional U.S. forces to reverse that momentum.

Last December, we conducted another review, a follow-on review of our strategy's implementation. In that review, we reaffirmed our core goal and the strategy's key elements: a military campaign designed to degrade the Taliban-led insurgency, a civilian campaign to build Afghanistan's capacity to secure and govern their country; and an increased diplomatic effort designed to bring a favorable and durable outcome to the conflict.

Over the last year, we have made significant progress. With the troop surge, the U.S. and our ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] partners now have over 150,000 forces in Afghanistan, putting relentless pressure on the insurgents and securing more and more of the Afghan population.

That surge has been matched by a surge in the numbers, quality and capability of the Afghan national security forces. During the past year, the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] have increased by more than 70,000 personnel and we have been able to improve their quality substantially by developing Afghan non-commissioned officers and trainers, expanding the training curriculum, adding literacy programs, increasing retention rates and partnering Afghan units side by side with ISAF forces.

As General Petraeus will describe in some detail, U.S. and ISAF forces fighting side-by-side with an increasingly capable ANSF throughout Afghanistan have wrested the initiative from the insurgents, even in the strongholds of Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

And we have turned up the pressure on Al Qaeda and affiliated groups in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, significantly degrading, though not yet defeating, their ability to plan and conduct operations against us.

One key contributor to this positive momentum is the Afghan Local Police Initiative, a village-focused security program that has already significantly disrupted insurgent activity, denied insurgent influence in key areas and generated serious concern among the Taliban leadership.

At the same time, we have ramped up our civilian efforts to improve Afghan governance and development. Today, thanks to the civilian surge, there are more than 1,100 civilians from 9 different U.S. agencies helping to build Afghan governance and economic capacity, work that is absolutely vital to the ultimate success of our overall mission in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, the significant gains we have made in the last year are still reversible. There is tough fighting ahead and major challenges remain.

Most notably, we must continue our efforts with Pakistan to eliminate terrorist and insurgent safe havens. We seek to build an effective partnership with Pakistan that advances both of our interests, including the denial of safe haven to all violent extremist organizations.

To do so, we must demonstrate to our Pakistani partners that we will remain a strong supporter of their security and prosperity, both now and in the years to come, even as we ask them to do even more to defeat terrorism.

In addition, we must work with the Afghan government to tackle corruption, especially the predatory corruption that erodes public trust and fuels the insurgency.

And we must help create the conditions necessary to enable a political settlement among the Afghan people. This includes reconciling those insurgents who are willing to renounce Al Qaeda, forsake violence and adhere to the Afghan constitution.

This July, we will begin a responsible, conditions-based draw-down of our surge forces in Afghanistan. We will also begin the process of transitioning provinces to Afghan lead for security. By the end of 2014, we expect that Afghans will be in the lead for security nationwide.

This transition is a process, not an event. The process will unfold village by village, district by district, province by province. The determination of when transition will occur and where it will occur is going to be based on bottom-up assessments of local conditions.

This process is beginning now, and in fact, we expect President Karzai to announce the first round of districts and provinces for transition on March 21st. As this transition process gets underway and as ANSF capabilities continue to develop, we and our ISAF partners will send out our forces, as conditions allow, and gradually shift to more and more of a mentoring relationship with the ANSF.

Some of the ISAF forces that are moved out of a given area will be reinvested either in other geographic areas or in the training effort in order to further advance the transition process.

The objective here is to ensure that any transition is irreversible. We have no intention of declaring premature transitions only to have to come back and finish the job later. We would much rather stick to a gradual approach, making sure that an area is truly ready for transition before thinning out ISAF forces there. This is the surest path to long-term and lasting success.

But let me be absolutely clear, the transition that will take place between now and December 2014 in no way signals our abandonment of Afghanistan. President Karzai and President Obama have both agreed that the United States and Afghanistan will have an enduring strategic partnership that goes far beyond 2014. And we are currently working with the Afghans on the details of that partnership.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the very real costs of this war. Many of you have expressed concerns about these costs, espe-

cially in light of our battlefield casualties and our fiscal pressures here at home.

But failing in this mission or walking away would have even greater costs. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border lands have served as a crucible for the most catastrophic terrorist actions of the past decade. The outcome we seek is the defeat of Al Qaeda and the denial of the region as a terrorist sanctuary.

This objective is the reason why our brave servicemen and servicewomen have sacrificed so much and continue to do so. We are determined to bring this war to a successful conclusion for the sake of our own security, but also for the sake of the security of the Afghan people and the Pakistani people who have suffered so much, and have so much to gain from a secure and lasting peace.

Members of this committee, I want to conclude by thanking you for providing the opportunity for us to appear before you today, but also for your continued and invaluable support to the men and women who serve and your support for the policies and programs that are absolutely critical to our success in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Flournoy can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Petraeus.

**STATEMENT OF GEN. DAVID H. PETRAEUS, USA, COMMANDER,
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE AND U.S.
FORCES-AFGHANISTAN**

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, it is a privilege to be here today with Under Secretary Flournoy to report on the situation in Afghanistan.

Before I proceed, however, I too would like again to offer my sincere condolences to the people of Japan as they work to recover from one of the worst natural disasters in their history.

As the Under Secretary noted, for many years now Japan has been a stalwart partner in Afghanistan and an important contributor to the mission there. Now our thoughts and our prayers are indeed with our long-time allies and with all those in Japan affected by the earthquake and the tsunami.

As a bottom line up front, it is ISAF's assessment that the momentum achieved by the Taliban in Afghanistan since 2005 has been arrested in much of the country and reversed in a number of important areas.

However, while the security progress achieved over the past year is significant, it is also fragile and reversible. Moreover, it is clear that much difficult work lies ahead with our Afghan partners to solidify and expand our gains in the face of the expected Taliban spring offensive.

Nonetheless, the hard-fought achievements in 2010 and early 2011 have enabled the joint Afghan-NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] transition board to recommend initiation this spring of transition to Afghan lead in several provinces.

The achievements of the past year are also very important as I prepare to provide options and a recommendation to President

Obama for commencement of the drawdown of the U.S. surge forces in July.

Of note as well, the progress achieved has put us on the right azimuth to accomplish the objectives agreed upon at last November's Lisbon summit, specifically that of Afghan forces in the lead throughout the country by the end of 2014.

The achievements of 2010 and early 2011 have been enabled by a determined effort to get the inputs right in Afghanistan. With the strong support of the United States and the 47 other troop-contributing countries, ISAF has focused enormous attention and resources over the past 2 years on building the organizations needed to conduct a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign, on staffing those organizations properly, on developing in close coordination with our Afghan partners the requisite concepts and plans, and above all on deploying the additional forces, civilians and funding needed.

Indeed, more than 87,000 additional NATO-ISAF troopers and 1,000 additional civilians have been added to the effort in Afghanistan since the beginning of 2009. And Afghanistan security forces have grown by over 122,000 in that time as well.

Getting the inputs right has enabled our forces, together with Afghan forces, to conduct the comprehensive campaign necessary to achieve our goals in Afghanistan.

Our core objective is, of course, ensuring that Afghanistan does not once again become a sanctuary for Al Qaeda. Achieving that objective requires that we help Afghanistan develop sufficient capabilities to secure and to govern itself. And that effort requires the execution of the comprehensive civil-military effort on which we are now embarked.

Over the past year in particular, ISAF elements, together with our Afghan and international partners, have increased all the activities of our comprehensive campaign substantially.

We have, for example, stepped up the tempo of precise, intelligence-driven operations to capture or kill insurgent leaders. In a typical 90-day period, in fact, precision operations by U.S. special mission units and their Afghan partners alone kill or capture some 360 targeted insurgent leaders.

Moreover, intelligence-driven operations are now coordinated with senior officers of the relevant Afghan ministries, and virtually all include highly trained Afghan soldiers or police, with some Afghan elements now in the lead on these operations, particularly in the Kabul area.

We have also expanded considerably joint ISAF-Afghan operations to clear the Taliban from important, long-held safe havens, and then to hold and build in them.

ISAF and Afghan troopers have, for example, cleared such critical areas as the districts west of Kandahar that were the birthplace of the Taliban movement, as well as important districts of Helmand province, areas that expand the Kabul security bubble, and select locations in the north where the Taliban expanded its presence in recent years.

One result of such operations has been a four-fold increase in recent months in the numbers of weapons and explosives caches turned in and found. Another has been the gradual development of

local governance and economic revival in the growing security bubbles.

In fact, Marjah, the one-time hub of the Taliban and the illegal narcotics industry in central Helmand province, held an election for a community council on March 1st during which 75 percent of registered voters cast a ballot.

And as a result of improvements in the security situation there, the markets, which once sold weapons, explosives and illegal narcotics, now feature over 1,500 shops selling food, clothes and household goods.

We have positioned more forces as well to interdict the flow of fighters and explosives from insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan. And we will do further work with our Afghan partners to establish as much of a defense in-depth as is possible to disrupt infiltration of Taliban and Haqqani network members from those sanctuaries.

Meanwhile, we are coordinating more closely than ever with the Pakistani army to conduct ISAF operations that will provide the anvil on the Afghan side of the Durand Line against which Pakistani Taliban elements can be driven by Pakistani operations in the border areas.

With your support, we have also devoted substantial additional resources to the development of Afghanistan's security forces. This effort is, of course, another important component of our comprehensive approach. Indeed, it is arguably the most critical element in our effort to help Afghanistan develop the capability to secure itself.

We have seen significant progress in this arena over the past year, but we have had to contend with innumerable challenges, and our Afghan partners are the first to note that the quality of some elements is still uneven.

The train-and-equip mission is, in fact, a huge undertaking, and there is nothing easy about it. However, the past year alone has seen Afghan forces grow by over one-third, adding some 70,000 soldiers and police. And, notably, those forces have grown in quality, not just in quantity.

Investments in leader development, literacy and institutions have yielded significant dividends. In fact, in the hard fighting west of Kandahar in late 2010, Afghan forces comprised some 60 percent of the overall force, and they fought with skill and courage.

As the Under Secretary noted, President Karzai's Afghan Local Police Initiative has also been an important addition to the overall campaign. It is, in essence, a community watch with AK-47s under the local district chief of police, with members nominated by a representative shura council, vetted by the Afghan intel service, and trained by and partnered with Afghan police and U.S. special forces elements.

The initiative does more than just allow the arming of local forces and the conduct of limited defensive missions. Through the way each unit is established, this program actually mobilizes communities in self-defense against those who would undermine security in their areas. For that reason, the growth of these elements is of particular concern to the Taliban, whose ability to intimidate the population is limited increasingly by it.

There are currently 70 districts identified for Afghan Local Police elements, with each district's authorization averaging 300 ALP members. Twenty-seven of the district ALP elements have been validated already for full operations, while the other 43 are in various stages of being established.

This program has emerged as so important to our overall effort that I have put a conventional U.S. infantry battalion under the operational control of our Special Operations Command in Afghanistan to augment our special forces and increase our ability to support the program's expansion.

We have increased as well our efforts to enable the Afghan government's work and that of international community civilians to improve governance, economic development and the provision of basic services.

These are essential elements of the effort to shift delivery of basic services from provincial reconstruction teams and international organizations to Afghan government elements, thereby addressing President Karzai's understandable concerns about parallel institutions.

And we have provided assistance for new Afghan government-led initiatives in reintegration, supporting the recently established Afghan High Peace Council and provincial peace and reintegration councils.

Indeed, we recognize that we and our Afghan partners cannot just kill or capture our way out of the insurgency in Afghanistan. Afghan-led reintegration of reconcilable insurgents must be an important element of the strategy—and it now is.

In fact, some 700 former Taliban have now officially reintegrated with Afghan authorities, and some 2,000 more are in various stages of the reintegration process.

All of these efforts are part of our comprehensive civil-military approach, and we have worked hard to coordinate ISAF activities with the international organizations and diplomatic missions in Afghanistan, as well as with our Afghan partners.

We have also sought to ensure that we minimize loss of innocent civilian life in the course of our operations, even as we also ensure protection of our forces and our Afghan partners.

Of note, a recently released U.N. [United Nations] study observed that civilian casualties due to ISAF and Afghan force operations decreased by just over 20 percent in 2010, even as our total forces increased by over 100,000 and significant offensive operations were launched.

Our progress in this area notwithstanding, in view of several tragic incidents in recent weeks, I ordered a review of our tactical directive on the use of force by all levels of our chain of command and with the air crews of our attack helicopters.

I also reemphasized instructions on reducing damage to infrastructure and property to an absolute minimum. Counterinsurgents cannot succeed if they harm the people they are striving to protect.

As I noted at the outset, the Joint NATO-Afghan Inteqal, or Transition Board, has recommended to President Karzai and NATO leaders commencement of transition in select provinces in the next few months. President Karzai will announce these locations in a speech next week.

In keeping with the principles adopted by the North Atlantic Council to guide transition, the shifting of responsibility from ISAF to Afghan forces will be conducted at a pace determined by conditions on the ground, with assessments provided from the bottom up so that those at operational command level in Afghanistan can plan the resulting battlefield geometry adjustments with our Afghan partners.

According to the NATO principles, transition will see our forces thinning out, not just handing off, with reinvestment of some of the forces freed up by transition in contiguous areas or in training missions where more work is needed.

Similar processes are also taking place as we commence transition of certain training and institutional functions from ISAF trainers to their Afghan counterparts.

As we embark on the process of transition, we should keep in mind, as the Under Secretary stressed, the imperative of ensuring that the transition actions we take will be irreversible. As the ambassadors of several ISAF countries emphasized at one recent NATO meeting, we will get one shot at transition, and we need to get it right.

As a number of ISAF national leaders have noted in recent months, we need to focus not just on the year ahead, but increasingly on the goal agreed at Lisbon of having Afghan forces in the lead throughout Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Indeed, we need to ensure that we take a sufficiently long view to ensure that our actions in the months ahead enable long-term achievement in the years ahead.

We have refined our campaign plan to do just that, and we are also now beginning to look beyond 2014, as well, as the United States and Afghanistan, and NATO and Afghanistan discuss possible strategic partnerships. All of this is enormously reassuring to our Afghan partners and of considerable concern to the Taliban.

With respect to the Taliban, appreciation that there will be an enduring commitment of some form by the international community to Afghanistan is important to the insurgents' recognition that reconciliation, rather than continued fighting, should be their goal.

Before concluding, there are four additional issues I would like to highlight to the committee.

First, I am concerned that levels of funding for our State Department and USAID [United States Agency for International Development] partners will not sufficiently enable them to build on the hard-fought security achievements of our men and women in uniform. Inadequate resourcing of our civilian partners could, in fact, jeopardize accomplishment of the overall mission.

I offer that assessment, noting that we have just completed a joint civil-military campaign plan between U.S. Forces-Afghanistan and the U.S. Embassy, which emphasizes the critical integration of civilian and military efforts in an endeavor such as that in Afghanistan.

Second, I want to echo the Under Secretary's expression of deep appreciation for your support of vital additional capabilities for our troopers. The funding you have provided has, for example, enabled the rapid deployment of a substantial increase in the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets supporting our forces.

To take one example, we have increased the number of various types of persistent surveillance systems—essentially blimps and towers with optics—from 114 this past August to 184 at the present, with plans for continued increases throughout this year.

Your support has also enabled the rapid procurement and deployment of the all-terrain vehicle version of the Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected family of vehicles, with 6,700 fielded just since I took command 8¹/₂ months ago.

And your support has continued to provide our commanders with another critical element of our strategy, the Commander's Emergency Response Program funding that has once again proven absolutely invaluable as a way of capitalizing rapidly on hard-won gains on the ground.

Indeed, CERP funding, the establishment of the Afghan Infrastructure Fund, and the specific authorization for the reintegration program funding have been instrumental in enabling key components of our overall effort.

Third, I should at this point also highlight the critical work of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. These institutions are the largest donors to Afghanistan after the United States, and they have been critical to the success of such projects such as the Ring Road and the Uzbek-Afghan railroad.

We need these critical enabling institutions, and further U.S. support for them will ensure that they are able to continue to contribute as significantly as they have in the past.

Fourth, I also want to thank you for the substantial funding for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces. The continued growth of Afghan forces in quantity, quality and capability is, needless to say, essential to the process of transition of security tasks from ISAF to Afghan forces, and the resources you have provided for this component of our effort have been the critical enabler of it.

In closing, the past 8 months have seen important, but hard-fought progress in Afghanistan. Key insurgent safe havens have been taken away from the Taliban. Numerous insurgent leaders have been killed or captured. And hundreds of reconcilable mid-level leaders and fighters have been reintegrated into Afghan society.

Meanwhile, Afghan forces have grown in number and in capability. Local security solutions have been instituted, and security improvements in key areas like Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand provinces have in turn enabled progress in the areas of governance and development as well.

None of this has been easy. The progress achieved has entailed hard fighting and considerable sacrifice. There have been tough losses along the way, and there have been setbacks as well as successes.

Indeed, the experience has been akin to that of a roller-coaster ride. The trajectory has generally been upward since last summer, but there certainly have been significant bumps and difficult reverses at various points.

Nonetheless, although the insurgents are already striving to regain lost momentum and lost safe havens as we enter the spring fighting season, we believe that we will be able to build on the mo-

mentum achieved in 2010, though that clearly will entail additional tough fighting.

As many of you have noted in the past, and as you noted this morning here, Chairman and Ranking Member, our objectives in Afghanistan and in the region are of vital importance, and we must do all that we can to achieve those objectives.

Those of us on the ground believe that the strategy on which we are embarked provides the best approach for doing just that, noting, as dialogue with President Karzai has reminded us at various points, that we must constantly refine our activities in response to changes in the circumstances on the ground.

Needless to say, we will continue to make such adjustments in close consultation with our Afghan and international counterparts as the situation evolves.

Finally, I want to thank each of you for your continued support of our country's men and women in Afghanistan and their families. As I have noted to you before, nothing means more to them than knowing that what they are doing is important and knowing that their sacrifices are appreciated by their leaders and their fellow citizens back home.

Each of you has sought to convey that sense to them and we are very grateful to you for doing so. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Petraeus can be found in the Appendix on page 83.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

In every speech that the President has given on Afghanistan since December of 2009 he has emphasized the withdrawal of U.S. forces that will begin in July of 2011.

At the same time, Administration officials have assured us that any such withdrawal will be conditions-based.

General Petraeus, in your best professional military judgment, would you recommend that the July 2011 redeployment include the withdrawal of combat forces?

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman, I am still formulating the options that I will provide to the President and the recommendation that I will make. But I do believe that there will be some combat forces included in those options and in that recommendation.

Indeed, if I could, I think—and I mentioned this to the SASC [Senate Armed Services Committee] yesterday, because people were talking about Secretary Gates' message to the ministers of defense at NATO, getting the job done right, and then also about transition initiation and initiation of the responsible drawdown, to use the President's term, of surge forces in July.

I think it is logical to talk both about getting the job done right, as he did to his NATO counterparts, and about beginning transition and commencing the responsible drawdown of surge forces—again, at a pace determined by conditions on the ground.

Those conditions that I will assess will clearly include an assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces and their ability to do more as we do less, as we thin out but don't hand off, in accordance with transition principles, needless to say, the security situation and whether they can indeed handle it, if it has been reduced to that point, and how they have grown in their capability.

But we also must include, as both of you noted, governance and development, because those elements have a direct effect on the security situation. If governance is seen as legitimate in the eyes of the people, if it gains their support and their willing participation, then indeed, obviously, you are able to build on the hard-fought security gains, on the foundation of security that is essential but is not enough.

And then beyond that, of course, the gradual development in the economic realm, in the provision of basic services, with increasingly those services being provided by Afghan rather than international organizations is also essential to that. So these are the components, again, the very broad components, and we have got quite a rigorous assessment criteria that we employ. But those are the big ideas, if you will, that form the core of our assessments.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ranking Member Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just two questions, focusing on that transition, on getting to the point where the Afghans take over responsibility, frankly, for all elements of the security, governance.

I think the struggle is, we can lay out the arguments, and I think you laid out them fairly well, about why it is important, what we are doing to try to get us to that point. But what you will need, I think, to make the argument better is sort of measurable signs of progress. What can we look to, you know, before that point when we are all gone? I mean, we could just leave and see if they can figure it out, but I think you would—we would all agree that that is, you know, not a good plan at this point.

But what we need to see is measurable progress. You know, what can we point to in the next year—well, next few months as well as the next year or 2—that shows, here is evidence that they will be able to handle it, they will be able to take responsibility for security, and again on governance? I think that is the biggest challenge in terms of the way the Afghan governance structure is put up.

What can you give us in terms of measurable, instead of just saying, you know, July, you know, 2014 or 2011, here is where we need to be to know that we have gotten where we can safely make that hand-off?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, that is a great question. In fact, we often are asked out there, “When will the Afghans step up to the plate?” and that kind of question, which I think is an understandable and reasonable question. And these questions often take place while we are in Kabul with visitors.

And I will note quite often that, in fact, in the area that they are located, it is Afghans who have assumed the lead in security tasks, in Kabul, the greater Kabul area, which includes some one-fifth to one-quarter of the entire country’s population, somewhere around 5 million or so people.

And the face of security on the streets of Kabul, without question, is the Afghan police. And a little further out it becomes the Afghan National Army.

And every single night in Kabul there are precision, intelligence-driven operations to capture or kill, arrest, because we have actu-

ally gone to a—"we," the Afghans, have gone to a rule-of-law-based detention system in the greater Kabul area for the most part—going after those organizations, Taliban, Haqqani Network, IMU [the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan] and others that are trying to disrupt security there and have indeed periodically conducted sensational attacks.

Although the past 9, 10 months or so, those periodic attacks notwithstanding, have seen really quite good security by really any standard. In fact, President Karzai a few months back was asking what was it that was leading to this? In my view, what was it?

And it was, of course, the comprehensive approach, but it was indeed Afghan forces in the lead disrupting these different cells that are trying to carry out attacks on the Afghan people and Afghan institutions.

So I think right there, you have a very good example, essentially, of what—generally looks like and we will see if, you know, that is among the areas in which transition may proceed when President Karzai makes his announcement. But we have literally only got basically two battalions, a little bit more than that, of ISAF forces there, and they have very largely stepped back already and are what we would call a tactical or even operational over-watch stage even at this point.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Another question is about why it is important to make it clear that we are at some point leaving. And I know it is a delicate, difficult balance because you can make the one argument that says, well, the second we say that we are leaving, they just know they have to wait us out.

But on the other hand, if we don't make it clear that we are leaving, then we appear to be an occupying force. We strengthen the insurgency. We also, you know, create dependence in some different elements of Afghan society.

And the goal here isn't that the second we leave, the other side wins. The goal here is, as we said, that we build up the strength of the Afghan forces and the Afghan government so when we leave, the Afghan people win.

But talk a little bit about why it is important to deliver that—

General PETRAEUS. Well, it is a very important message. First of all, it undercuts the Taliban narrative, of course, that we intend to stay forever, that we want permanent bases, that we want to dominate the region or take Afghanistan's mineral wealth. You name it. There is a number of different conspiracy theories out there, and this pokes a hole in all of those.

Second, it does indeed impart a message of urgency. And I think we have to remember that President Obama's speech, the whole July 2011 issue, if you will, was intended to complement the message of enormous additional commitment on the 1st of December at West Point, you know, 30,000 extra forces, tripling the number of civilians, substantial additional funding request for Afghan national security forces and so on.

That was complemented, but we are not going to do this forever. Eighteen months from now, Afghan forces are going to need to begin to step up to the plate as well.

And I think that message of urgency has resonated, frankly. I think it has made a difference. And Secretary Gates in discussing this whole issue with the SASC a couple of weeks ago I think quite effectively laid out, you know, on the one hand his normal resistance to timelines and so forth during Iraq, but also his recognition of the value of, again, a message that can convey a sense of urgency to all of our partners, but specifically to our Afghan partner so that there is not a sense of dependency that is infinite.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Yes?

Secretary FLOURNOY. If I may just add, you know, as we begin this transition process, we are also placing great emphasis on discussing with the Afghans what the nature of a long-term partnership might look like. Because even as we begin the drawdown of our surge forces and eventually can envision a broader reduction in our military presence, we don't intend to leave Afghanistan in the sense of pull up tracks, abandon, leave them to their own devices.

We are, as the President said from the beginning, we are making an enduring commitment to our core goals and to the partnership with Afghanistan to achieve them. And that is going to involve long-term security assistance. It is going to involve help in building their capacity, their economic development, and so forth.

So we are very actively discussing the terms of that partnership even as we begin this transition process, to reassure them of our commitment.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. General Petraeus, a bit more than a week ago, you graciously hosted our CODEL [Congressional Delegation] in Kabul. You were very generous with your time and energy, sir. Because time and resources permitted, you gave us a longer and more thorough brief than could be afforded by your testimony here today. So I have had more than ample opportunity to have my questions answered.

I therefore will yield my time to our most junior member who was present here at gavel-fall, Congresswoman Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much, Representative Bartlett.

And I just want to tell you guys how much I appreciate your testimony here today and being with us.

General Petraeus, as the commander of our forces in Afghanistan, what is your view on the advisability of the House of Representatives passing a resolution offered by Representative Kucinich that would call for the removal of all U.S. forces from Afghanistan no later than December 31st, 2011? And specifically, how do you believe our troops would view such a measure? And how do you believe the Taliban and Al Qaeda would view such a measure?

General PETRAEUS. Well, to start with the latter elements, the Taliban and Al Qaeda obviously would trumpet this as a victory, as a success. Needless to say, it would completely undermine everything that our troops have fought so much for and sacrificed so much for.

Ultimately, though, this is about our vital national security interests. And as President Obama has identified them, foremost among these is ensuring that Al Qaeda and other transnational extremists cannot reestablish sanctuaries such as they had in Afghanistan under Taliban rule when the 9/11 attacks were planned in Afghanistan. The initial training of the attackers was carried out in Afghanistan before the attackers moved on to Germany and then U.S. flight schools, and then carried out their acts of terror.

So needless to say, this would close the door on the very, very hard-fought effort and a mission that I think is seeking to achieve a very, very important security objective of our country, as well as of our allies. Again, there are 48 troop-contributing nations, including the U.S.—I think among the biggest alliances, certainly way beyond just NATO. It is NATO plus ISAF troop-contributing nations. And what it would do in the region, of course, would be of really incalculable consequence as well.

Mrs. ROBY. And for our troops?

General PETRAEUS. Well, you know, when we have taken in particular I think tough losses, and I remember the first time when I was a division commander in Iraq in 2003 and we had a horrible night. We had two Black Hawk helicopters that collided. One was circling an operation, the other for some reason transited, and 17 great troops were killed in a single crash in a single night.

And as you might imagine, this is all that a commander, it is all that an organization can think about even after we had done the recovery in the middle of the night and everything else. And on the way out of the command post the next morning, we were trying to go through the motions of getting back to the normal battle rhythm, because you have to drive on. You have to continue the mission.

And it was a young private first class actually saw me walking out of the hallway of the command post, and he literally put his arm around me, and he said, "You know, sir, that is 17 reasons to get this thing right." We have had well over 1,000 reasons to get this thing right and many thousands more whose lives have been changed forever because of grievous wounds. And again, obviously, this would not allow us to get this right.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you so much.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, thank you for your service.

General Petraeus, thank you for your heroic embrace of a couple of major problems for this country, and all that you have done to help solve them.

I want to go back to Mr. Smith's question about the metrics that you will be looking at and we should be looking at to determine on-the-ground conditions that would determine the pace at which we would withdraw.

I notice on the chart that you gave us, page 16 of the document that is ANSF capability in the field. These quality measures of police and Afghan military readiness, are these going to play a central role in your determination of the on-the-ground circumstances?

General PETRAEUS. They do already and they certainly will. We look very closely at the capability of the forces. We try to make this as rigorous and absolutely forthright as we can. These are not measures of just quantitative items. In other words, it is not just do they have 80 percent or better of their equipment; does it work; this and that.

It also includes subjective evaluations of leadership in the organizations and, frankly, their fighting capability.

Mr. ANDREWS. I notice that on both the police and army readiness measures, none of the units are at the “green” or “independent” level yet that you are looking at. But it does look like the trending is good. On the police units, in May of 2010, 35 out of 293 units were at the “effective with advisers” level. By February, that was 96 out of 313.

In the army, the similar comparison would have been a jump from 27 units out of 115, up to 52 out of 157.

What do you think is going to happen to that pace in both the police and the army, let’s say, in the next 6-month window? What can we expect?

General PETRAEUS. Well, we certainly have every objective of increasing, again, the quality of the performance of these organizations. Keep in mind that one reason that they are generally not seen as capable of independent activities is because the forces don’t have the enablers that are necessary to do this. And that is, in fact, our effort with the Afghan national security forces is shifting increasingly from building more infantry battalions or Afghan national civil order police battalions—in other words, combat forces—to building more combat support forces—artillery and light armor, logistics and military intelligence.

Mr. ANDREWS. I would assume that if that works, we might see sort of an exponential jump in readiness because as more leaders become more battle-tested, they can elevate the level of performance in more units. Is that right?

General PETRAEUS. I am not sure that I would share “exponential.” I think we will see a steady increase in the development of these forces.

But again, the real challenge you just put your finger on, Congressman, and that is leadership. It is leader development. And you can develop private soldiers, you can develop young policemen, but development of leaders who can command companies, battalions, brigades and corps, in their structures, just as in ours, takes years. And it takes not just, again, training and experience in the battlefield, it literally takes education and professional military development.

Mr. ANDREWS. I wanted to come back to the comment you made at the bottom of page 3, your testimony, where you are concerned about—or, excuse me, I am on the wrong page—but you expressed your concern about “underfunding our AID and State Department efforts.”

I think I know the answer to this question, but describe to us what you think would happen if we made the error of underfunding those efforts as a follow-on to the sacrifices of the servicemembers in uniform.

General PETRAEUS. Well, again, it would deprive us of the ability to build on the hard-fought security gains. Again, security is the foundation on which all else is built. And once you have it, though, you do have to build on it, because it actually strengthens the foundation.

This is not a linear development, this is not security then governance then confidence, or what have you, although there is a little bit of that, there is really a spiral effect, where a bit of progress in the security arena allows a bit of progress, say, in local governance, which now lets the market reopen, which means that now the people give you a little more intelligence, tell you where the weapons—right. Just as the upward spiral can succeed and an underfunding would create a downward spiral that could get us right back in the same hornet's nest.

General PETRAEUS. It can. And it can—you know, it can enter a death spiral. And that is what you always are seeking to avoid, needless to say.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you very much for your time this morning. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate you all's efforts to put a silver lining on the dark cloud of the July withdrawal date, but, as I summarize your testimony, it is, we are just getting the inputs right. We are making significant progress. That progress is fragile and reversible. And we are going to leave in July, no matter what.

Now, we are going to be careful about it, where we leave and how we leave, and we are going to try not to pull the rug out from under anyone.

But if I am an Afghan, trying to figure out which side I am going to come down on, or if I am a Taliban, trying to pace my activities, or even if—or my own troops, I am not sure I follow that logic.

But I understand that the President said it, and that is what is happening. But I worry about whether it undercuts our efforts there.

General, I would like to ask about corruption, because we hear a lot about that. But I was intrigued by an article in *The American Interest* by Lawrence Rosen, who basically argues that the idea of corruption in a tribal society is fundamentally different from the way we view corruption.

And, as a matter of fact, he says that for Afghans to understand corruptions as Americans do more or less entails they are having to experience the whole web of religious, social and economic concepts that we have experienced. That really is asking too much.

Are we asking them too much on the anti-corruption piece of this?

General PETRAEUS. Well, thanks, Congressman.

And, first, if I could just very quickly comment on the July 2011, I think you would be correct if it were not for the Lisbon and 2014 date that was agreed at Lisbon. That I think was very reassuring to the Afghan people.

There is no question that as we explained July 2011, the concept of a message of urgency to complement the additional huge com-

mitment of the United States and so forth, that there was a residual doubt.

But I remember going out into a small village in western Afghanistan a week or so after returning from the Lisbon summit where, of course, all the NATO ISAF leaders agreed that the goal would be Afghan forces in the lead by the end of 2014, and, indeed, they were already talking about the concept of beyond 2014 with a NATO and Afghan and then U.S. and Afghan strategic partnership agreement, discussions on which have now begun.

And I was out there in this little village. There is no electricity. There is no satellite dishes. There is very little of anything. Crowd gathered around in the marketplace. And I thought I would try to explain what a summit was and what took place at Lisbon, a place far, far away and so forth.

And I started into this. And I said, "You know, there was a big meeting held a week ago."

And he said, "You mean the Lisbon summit, General?"

And I said, "Yes, did you hear about that?"

And he said, "Of course, all Afghans are politicians. And we all listen to BBC-Pashtu [British Broadcasting Cooperation—Pashtu] every night." And he said, "We were very reassured to hear the leaders talk about the end of 2014."

So I think that, again, that, as Secretary Gates explained, there is something to a message of urgency, there is something to undercutting the Taliban narrative of staying forever, but there is also something, clearly, to a responsible, conditions-based pace for drawdown.

With respect to corruption, we are not, of course, trying to turn Afghanistan into Switzerland in a decade or less. There is a very realistic understanding of the conditions in tribal societies and in village-by-village, valley-by-valley in Afghanistan.

Having said that, there is also a very clear understanding that what President Karzai and we have agreed to call criminal patronage networks, these are individuals breaking the law in substantial ways, they enjoy a degree of political protection and patronage, and they are not acting as individuals, they are networks, that these kinds of activities are a cancer that will undermine the very institutions to which we have to transition tasks and responsibilities for transition to succeed.

He is quite seized with this. Brigadier General H.R. McMaster, one of our brightest Army brigadier generals, is heading the task force that is taking this on with our Afghan partners.

In the second or third briefing to President Karzai on this, when we laid out to him the criminal patronage network that was essentially headed by the surgeon general of the Afghan military, he fired the individual on the spot, despite the individual having political protection, and then fired the entire chain of command of the Afghan army national hospital as well.

Now, these are very tough issues. Again, we are after what is, in a sense, good enough for Afghanistan, again, not trying to apply a standard of a western industrialized democracy.

But there are certain corrupt activities that do have to be dealt with, and, in particular, these that come under the rubric of criminal patronage networks are of huge importance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Secretary Flournoy, and, of course, General Petraeus, we appreciate your appearance here, once again. And I don't know how many more appearances there are going to be, but you have been just a tremendous leader for us and we all appreciate that.

I want to turn very quickly to the question that Mr. Andrews asked about the capability—Afghan capability in the field by the chart that you provided. And I, too, was looking for the independent and where that was.

So, you said that that does not include enablers. Where does the—

General PETRAEUS. Well, to be precise—

Mrs. DAVIS [continuing]. Enabling—

General PETRAEUS [continuing]. It is that the independent activity requires a sufficient level of Afghan enablers so that they can be independent. And the challenge right now is that in many cases, although the capabilities are building, but in many cases Afghan units still depend fairly heavily on ISAF elements or contracts or other vehicles to ensure their logistics, maintenance and other various—

Mrs. DAVIS. And in order for that to move, in order for that to change, on what are they dependent, in terms of funding?

General PETRAEUS. Again, the U.S.-provided Afghan Security Forces Fund is far and away the bulk of the funding. Now, certainly, there are other major contributors. Japan, for example, provides the salaries for Afghan police. There is another fund to which NATO ISAF countries contribute. But, again, it is the Afghan Security Forces Fund that is, without question—

Mrs. DAVIS. Does that 20 to 24 percent cut, which I believe is in the C.R. [continuing resolution], in H.R. 1, how does that affect it?

General PETRAEUS. Well, when that hits—and, again, we project that that would hit perhaps sometime in June, that would have an enormous effect, a negative effect, on our effort, needless to say. And it would undermine—it would undercut—our efforts to develop the enablers.

Because, again, we have always had a progression, that first you develop guys who can help you in the fight, actually out there against the insurgents, and gradually you build the institutions, the ministries, the branch school staff colleges, leader development courses.

By the way, literacy programs have featured very prominently now. We finally bit the bullet and said that, you know, having a soldier who can shoot but can't read a serial number off a weapon is not the way to go. So with basic training we also do basic literacy now, and we are way over 100,000 that have either been trained or in the process of—

Mrs. DAVIS. Could you provide a timeline then? Because, I mean, getting the independence and moving that to that place, even with the funding, sounds like a very ambitious undertaking.

General PETRAEUS. Well, it is essential. We have to, again, ensure that Afghan forces, over time, can support themselves, both with combat service support and then the actual combat support,

so artillery, mortars. They are developing a helicopter fleet, fixed-wing fleet.

You know, I cut it out of the narrative to just cut time, but we occasionally say that this effort is so big and so complex and so challenging that it is like developing the—building the world's aircraft while in flight, while it is being designed and while it is being shot at.

Mrs. DAVIS. Do you think, General, that that is one of the reasons that the U.S. has grown so impatient with this effort, that trying to get one's head around it is a very difficult thing to do?

General PETRAEUS. Well, I think there are a number of reasons. And, again, but I think the biggest is just that we have been at this for 10 years. And, unfortunately, as both the Under Secretary and I explained, we have only been at it in the right way, with the inputs having been gotten right, with that for less than 6 months or so.

It is just last fall. Though, clearly, as we were developing the inputs, we were also seeking to produce outputs.

Secretary FLOURNOY. If I could just add, you mentioned the potential cut to funding for the ANSF that the C.R. would involve. And I think it would be devastating at this point, not only in terms of building their further capability for independent operations, but also these are the same—this is the same funding that supports units that will be critical to continued partnering, to eventual transition, where they start holding real ground or expanding the amount of ground that they hold in the lead. And so it could really complicate broader timelines beyond just the development of the NSF.

So it is really, really crucial to keep that funding at the appropriate levels.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Madam Secretary and General Petraeus, it is an honor to have you before us today.

And I want to read a couple comments, and then I will just have one simple question for you.

I pulled the quotes from Secretary Gates a couple weeks ago about the 2014 withdrawal, excuse me. I want to read this to you. Says, "That is why we believe that beginning in fiscal year 2015 the U.S. can, with minimal risks, begin reducing Army active duty end strength by 27,000 and the Marine Corps by somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000."

These projections assume that the number of troops in Afghanistan would be significantly reduced by the end of 2014, in accordance with the President's strategy. So I assume from that that we are talking about 2014, 2015, with a large number of our military in Afghanistan.

Just a couple things. I have got Camp Lejeune in my district. I think I am pretty close to the Marine Corps. I don't have a military background, but I listen to them very carefully. And I have a couple of friends who are generals that are active duty, a couple that

are retired. I am not going to mention their names, it wouldn't be fair, so I am not going to do that.

But recently I was down in Jacksonville and spoke to a group, and I said, "I know you all probably would disagree with me, but I am for getting our troops out in a reasonable time in a safe way."

So this Marine, 31 years in the Marine Corps, retired as a lieutenant colonel, said, "No, let me tell you. I talk to active duty Marines, and many of them are just tired and want out. They don't see the end point."

I am getting to something else and then the question.

So he said—I said, "Well, could I use your name during a debate?"

He said, "I will give you a letter." And I will just read a couple sentences and I will get toward the end, because time is moving forward.

"It makes no difference if we are there 4 or 40 years, the result will be the same. The war is costing the United States billions of dollars a month to wage and will still continue to get more young Americans killed. Afghans have no end state for us, it has no end state for us.

"I urge you to make a contact with all the current and newly elected members of Congress and ask them to end this war and bring our young men and women home. If any of my comments will assist you in this effort, you are welcome to use them and my name, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Adams."

The retired general that I made mention to that I cannot tell you his name, but I think you would know it if I could, I asked him after the comments came out by Senator McCain and Lieberman, "General, what do you think about 4 more years?"

These are his thoughts. "I do not believe that 40 more years will guarantee victory, whatever that is, so 4 will do nothing." Then he made comments about Lieutenant General John Kelly's son being killed.

The other point—I won't have time to go through that, because I want to give you a chance to answer the questions. But in the latest poll that was released yesterday, I believe, by the ABC News-*Washington Post* poll, 73 percent of Americans say the United States should withdraw a substantial number of its combat forces from Afghanistan this summer, but just 39 percent think it will.

Well, after listening to Secretary Gates, who I respect, as I respect both of you, they are right, it ain't going to happen.

My point is, I probably will not be sitting here in 2015. You might not be sitting at the panel in 2015. But if there would be a general or a madam secretary that would say to the Congress in 2015, "We just need 2 or 3 more years to train the Afghans and to make sure that their governance can withstand," give me your thoughts on being—on 3 or 4 years from now having to say that.

Would you think we are making progress if we have to be there longer than 2014, 2015? Or would you be honest with—not you personally, but the people sitting there, would they be honest with the Congress and say, "You know, 15, 16, 17 years, for God sakes, how much more can we take, how much more can we give treasure and blood?"

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, Congressman, let me reassure you of something that I have told you and this body before, and also the SASC, and that is if I ever felt that we couldn't achieve our objectives, that I would be very forthright with my chain of command, with the President of the United States, and with all of you.

I believe the objectives are of enormous importance, as I stated earlier. You know, when I have—when the President asked me to deploy there on very short notice there was only one possible answer to that.

You know, I may not be at this table, probably won't be at 2015, but I will tell you that my son is in uniform, and Lieutenant Petraeus just completed a tour in Afghanistan, which thankfully we were able to keep very quiet, and redeployed in November, after serving as an infantry platoon leader. We are very proud of what he did. He thinks he was doing something very important.

I, candidly, I mean, this sort of—I understand the impatience of the U.S. people. I am impatient. I remember one of your colleagues actually who came to Iraq at the—we were about 6 months into the surge, it was the height of the violence, it was extraordinarily difficult, and she told me, up front, she said, "General, you need to know that I am a member of the out-of-Iraq caucus." And I said, "Congresswoman, so am I. But I just want us to get out under the right conditions."

And I think that is what we are trying to do here, of course, is to achieve our objectives, gradually to transition tasks to our Afghan counterparts so that we can indeed hand off something to them that is sustainable and that avoids that country becoming the kind of sanctuary that it was in the past.

The truth is we have tried the hands-off approach in this region before, in the wake of Charlie Wilson's war. We got tired of it, we cut off all funding, and the results were what they were. I am not sure that that is the right course of action in the future.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, General, appreciate your being here today. I appreciate your excellent work.

Can you tell me about Taliban recruiting, and the Haqqani Network and folks like that? To what extent are they augmenting their numbers, are they augmenting their capabilities?

General PETRAEUS. Well, Congressman, the bulk of the Taliban are from within a relatively small radius of the fighters, they are within a relatively small radius of their village, their valley.

The leaders may come from other areas. And, indeed, there is a recruiting of suicide bombers that does take place in some of the sanctuaries in Pakistan with the senior leaders, of course, never setting foot in Afghanistan but rather exhorting their troops to fight on by cell phone or H.F. [high frequency] radio.

With the Haqqani Network there is indeed more recruiting that does take place in North Waziristan, although that area is under considerable pressure from the counterterrorist campaign that is being conducted there.

Mr. COOPER. When I see a chart like the one on page 15 about Afghan National Security Forces growth, how would you plot a chart showing Taliban forces or Haqqani Networks or other insurgents that our troops have to worry about?

General PETRAEUS. That is a hotly debated topic, and we have a methodology for trying to determine the numbers of Taliban, keeping in mind that of course it goes up and goes down based on—and based on how things are going and so forth, recognizing that there is a fair amount of the population in Afghanistan, after 30 years of war, that can adopt chameleon-like attributes as required to survive from day to day.

The general assessment is that there has been somewhere around 25,000 Taliban at their peak that may be active at a given time. There is no question but that there have been significant losses sustained by mid-level leaders and fighters in certain areas in particular.

There is also no question that these are resilient organizations and that they can find others to put into these positions, although there has been quite a replacement of Taliban leaders in recent months in particular because of upset by senior leaders with the performance of those on the battlefield in Afghanistan and also by some, in some cases, literally just having enough of it and voluntarily taking themselves out of the fight.

Mr. COOPER. So your estimate would be that the Taliban was about 25,000, their top ranks have been hurt. What would be their current troop levels or force levels, about 25,000?

General PETRAEUS. No, I would—again, it is still early in the fighting season. And, again, we will see—the way the methodology works is you literally build the organization as best you can in an analytical way by identifying.

We have pretty accurate tree diagrams, if you will, wire diagrams and link diagrams that show who the leaders are at various levels, who they work for, and roughly how many fighters we assess that they have working for them.

And as you aggregate this for a particular district and province and then country, that is how you get the estimate. And I am not sure that we would say that we are at that point in this particular fighting season by any means. We still assess that there is a fair number of leaders who are either just coming back or preparing to come back.

Mr. COOPER. About how many people would be in the Haqqani Network?

General PETRAEUS. Let me actually take that one for the record, if I could, and I will provide you the classified numbers of that and show you the structure of that organization.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 99.]

Mr. COOPER. How about their fighting capabilities?

General PETRAEUS. The Haqqani Network is generally assessed to be, again, the most challenging, frankly. Again, it is an organization that most also assess as certainly the senior leadership is very unlikely to reconcile. Where there is, on the other hand, a reasonable prospect for reconciliation of mid-level and below Taliban lead-

ers who are in Afghanistan, and even the possibility of some of the more senior leaders breaking off and considering reconciliation.

The fact is that there are some former senior Taliban government members who reconciled, if you will, living in Kabul, and are occasionally seen as conduits by the national High Peace Council and others with those who are still active.

Mr. COOPER. I see that my time is expired.

Thank you for your service, General.

General PETRAEUS. And thanks for your support of our troopers in that great state, especially the Screaming Eagles.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Akin.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to sort of move forward a little bit and ask an optimistic question. Let's say that we move forward a number of years and you put together the structure. And really, Afghanistan is looking pretty good. You have got your local police going, the military and all, even their support networks are somewhat developed.

My first question is, then how capable are they to sustain something like that with the Pak border the way it is and with the infusion of people coming across the border? How much of a threat? And do you think they could be strong enough to basically hold the border and maintain some level of civilization?

General PETRAEUS. Well, obviously a lot will depend on what Pakistan does over the years to help its neighbor to the west. It is generally assessed that the most effective way of influencing Pakistan, in fact, is by having it see that Afghanistan is going to turn out reasonably well; that indeed the Taliban-Haqqani Network and some of these other organizations will not prevail, and indeed therefore to reassess what relationships might exist with some of these organizations and whether it is time to deal with them a bit more on Pakistani soil where they have sanctuaries.

Noting that the Pakistanis have sustained enormous losses in the conduct of quite an impressive counterinsurgency campaign in what used to be the North-West Frontier Province, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and then in various of the agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, while noting again that they also recognize that there is clearly more that needs to be done and that there are areas that need more attention.

Mr. AKIN. So I think the answer that I heard was it really depends a whole lot on Pakistan.

General PETRAEUS. Well, clearly what happens in Afghanistan is related to what happens in Pakistan, but also vice-versa, and really even more broadly regionally. I think you have to take into account the actions of Iran, the actions of the central Asian states, and certainly India, and then even beyond that, Russia and others are all very important actors in the regional context of this effort.

Mr. AKIN. But your point is, a good example in Afghanistan kind of sets a higher bar for some of the other countries as well.

General PETRAEUS. Well, and it gives them reassurance as well. Clearly, the central Asian states and all the way on up to Russia are very concerned about the prospect of transnational extremism flowing out of Afghanistan together with the flow of the illegal narcotics industry.

Mr. AKIN. Right.

General PETRAEUS. That has enslaved the populations, enormous segments of the population in Iran, as well as in, again, Russia, Europe, and some of that even makes its way to the United States.

Mr. AKIN. That was going to be my second question, General. The economy, I don't think of Afghanistan as a very well-to-do economy and its main product, apparently, is heroin and poppies. How do you, in a sense, do you believe in phasing out that trade? Or do you just try and eradicate it whenever you see drugs? And how does that build into an economic model to rebuild on the foundation of stability that you are trying to create?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, we should keep in mind that there are literally trillions, with an "S" on the end, of dollars of minerals in the ground in Afghanistan. Now, you have got to get them out of the ground with human capital and capacity and—chain and transportation, everything else, to be able to exploit that for the good of the people of Afghanistan.

But there are small steps going forward in that regard. There are more tenders out there now for some of these different opportunities. And it is our hope that this will reach critical mass, really, and they will see an economic chain reaction take off at some point as companies realize the extraordinary potential that is there, in some cases with minerals that are in very short supply elsewhere in the world. So that is a very important component to this.

The illegal narcotics industry is of concern for a number of reasons. I mean, one, of course, is that it is again enslaving parts of the population of not just Afghanistan, but more so many of its neighbors and way beyond that.

The other is that it is illegal, and how can you have rule of law in a country if the major export crop is illegal?

Mr. AKIN. I just, because our time is getting a little close, my question is just from a practical point of view, when you have got the people on the ground—

General PETRAEUS. Oh, right.

Mr. AKIN [continuing]. Do you say, "If you see it, burn it; destroy it," or whatever. How do you approach it?

General PETRAEUS. First of all, if you deprive the little guy of his livelihood, you have just created more insurgents. So number one, if there is eradication—Afghan-led government eradication, because that is how it is done. And we might support it with an outer ring of security, but we also ensure that there is compensation so that these individuals are not out completely.

Our target really is the big buys. It is the industry bosses and the labs and the large infrastructure that supports this industry that we go after, and that is our focus.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, General.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Madam Secretary and General once again for being before us.

I have a couple of questions for you, General. We have been in Afghanistan about 10 years and we have lost over 1,400 U.S. lives, and we have spent more than \$300 billion on this military oper-

ation alone. We have invested over \$26 billion in training and equipping the Afghan national army. And although we are training more of those soldiers, I don't see that much progress with respect to stability or safety in the country.

Because why is it from—it almost seems like this war is ultimately about who can outlast whom. And I think that we are sacrificing a lot of lives and wasting a lot of our resources over there.

So I would really like to ask the question that former Chairman Shelton asked last year, and that is: What does success look like in Afghanistan?

General PETRAEUS. Well, thanks very much, Congresswoman.

Success in Afghanistan is a country that can secure and govern itself and in so doing, prevent the reestablishment of sanctuaries by Al Qaeda and like-minded groups.

Clearly, success will include an enduring level of some international support—very different in character, very different in level, one would think, from that at the present, but again I think most countries—you recently had the Australian prime minister here. I think she addressed Congress and talked about the importance of a commitment beyond 2014, given the recognition that Afghanistan, while it is ultimately potentially very wealthy, certainly is not in that situation right now.

Ms. SANCHEZ. General, with respect to that, there are currently 47 countries who are in this coalition with respect to Afghanistan. I know that we have gone from April and 2009 where we had 39,000 American troops there, and we now have over 100,000 in Afghanistan.

But it seems to me like some of the others, like Poland's 2,600 troops and Canada's 2,800 troops are scheduled to pull those out before the end of this year, and Italy and Germany just recently announced that they intend to begin withdrawals, and we—of their troops.

And we, or President Obama has committed when he did the surge that even though he grew the number of troops in Afghanistan from 39,000 to over 100,000, that is almost doubling or tripling it, that he would start to withdraw in this year also. And somehow, mission-creep has gotten into this thing and now we are at 2014.

The other day, I can't remember who—Gates or somebody said, or maybe it was the Vice President—we would be in there with combat troops past 2014.

So, you know, we keep coming back to this fragile and reversible. We are making gains, but it is fragile and reversible. How long do you think our allies stick with us with that? How long do you think the American people stick with this? How much past 2014 will this take, in your opinion, conditions on the ground?

Because it seems to me like we could be here in 2019, and we would still be in the same place and you would be coming before us—maybe not you; maybe somebody else, if you have had enough of it.

Fragile and reversible—I mean, what does that really mean, General?

General PETRAEUS. I could never have enough of this.

[Laughter.]

First of all, again, Canada actually is indeed going to move its combat forces out of the Kandahar area, but it has plans, as it has announced, to reinvest a substantial number of those in the train-and-equip mission, which is actually quite important because of course——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Yes, train and equip, train and equip. Everybody wants to train and equip. We have spent a lot of money on train and equip, but nobody wants to do the hard fighting.

General PETRAEUS. Well, we are also short 750 troops in the train-and-equip mission. And so these are critical trainers. And again, if trainers are the key—the ticket to transition, as the NATO Secretary General has stated, then it means a great deal if Canada fills a substantial number of the 750 trainer shortfall that we currently do face.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Let me ask you, because I have run out of time here—corruption. I mean, I have been at this corruption thing for a while now, and understand that in fact there was just a long-time observer who noted that it is no longer enough to say that corruption permeates the Afghan state. Corruption by and large is the Afghan state. The Afghan government does not so much serve the people as it preys on them.

What are we doing about that? I just—I have somebody who is close to you out there who is telling me everybody is on the take out there.

General PETRAEUS. Well, actually, we would welcome the opportunity to have Brigadier General McMaster brief you on what we are doing with the Task Force Shafafiyat, which is one of the initiatives that I launched a couple of months after taking command. He is working with the Afghan staff of the National Security Council. He and I have briefed President Karzai now 3 or 4 times. It was after one of those, as I mentioned, that President Karzai, on the spot, fired the Afghan surgeon general and hung with that despite some political support for that individual, despite his absolute failure and criminal activity in not meeting his sacred obligation to wounded warriors.

So we would welcome, again, that opportunity. Or, if he is back on mid-tour leave or so, or I would do a VTC [video teleconference] with you to lay out—because there is a great deal of effort in that regard.

There is also a considerable effort to determine that our money is not part of the problem. And, as part of that, we have debarred nine contractors, for example. There are dozens more that are under suspension to make sure that, indeed, if money is ammunition, as the counterinsurgency guidance states, that—as the counterinsurgency contracting guidance states, it needs to get into the right hands.

But we would welcome the opportunity to lay that out for you in detail.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for your service. And thank you, General, for your service to our country.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for being here. We know that you are not just a good soldier, you are a great soldier. And that is not to fluff, that is just factual.

And, Madam Secretary, we know how hard you work, and that your heart is for the best interest of this country.

General, you did mention that the gains we have had over the last decade are now fragile and reversible, but we have got the right inputs; we are headed in the right direction.

But, you know, for the last decade, everybody that sat where you have sat has told us basically the same thing: We think we have got it right.

So we have to hope you are right, but realize the possibility maybe we are wrong.

Madam Secretary, you also mentioned something that was accurate. You said we lost our focus on Afghanistan. But that can be a little misleading to some people who just hear it because it seems to suggest that maybe we went to sleep or we weren't paying attention.

The reality, as you know—and I know you have said this before—is we can't focus everywhere. We have to pick our priorities, and we have to focus. And we moved our focus to Iraq. We had a pretty successful situation there. We came back to Afghanistan.

But there are those who would say that, based on our focus in Afghanistan, we are now taking our focus off of other areas. Some would say South America, and we see the rise of drug cartels there. Some would say the Pacific, and we are watching the anti-access, denial strategies of the Chinese, where we still have no concept to deal with that.

We are seeing an increased modernization in the military of the Chinese, with cyber attacks and space attacks for which we don't seem to be focusing. We have cut out our F-22s, while we watch the Russians increase their production of their PAK FAs [Prospective Airborne Complex of Frontline Aviation] and their J-20s, and so, some would argue we are not focusing on air superiority.

We stopped focusing on jointness as much as we had, doing away with the Joint Forces Command.

We have ship repair shortfalls of \$567 million, and some would say we are risking a reduction in service life of our fleet. And many of us feel that our lack of focus on shipbuilding could cause the Chinese navy to outnumber our Navy.

Because both of you have lived with this so long, help me to articulate the priorities of why it is important that we continue that focus in Afghanistan, knowing all the things that we are accomplishing in Afghanistan.

But why is it important we continue that focus, even if it means taking our focus off of some of these other areas? And, if so, how long can we afford to do that?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Let me just start out, and I know General Petraeus wants to add.

First of all, I would say that we are certainly focused on Afghanistan because we do have vital interests at stake. The core goal of disrupting, dismantling, defeating Al Qaeda, denying them safe haven is absolutely essential. We have to achieve that, not only in

terms of where the bulk of Al Qaeda senior leadership reside, but also looking to their affiliates around the world.

And I would say we have not taken our focus off the broader war against Al Qaeda, which is global in its dimensions, not just in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But I would also tell you that, you know, Secretary Gates has very clearly enunciated a strategy that says, first and foremost, we do have to prevail in the wars we are in, given what is at stake, but we also have to invest in preventing and deterring conflicts elsewhere, and we have to prepare for the future.

So I would assure you, with the work that the Air Force and the Navy are doing on air-sea battle, that our technologists are doing in terms of science, technology, research, development, we are focused on the anti-access, area denial problem like a laser.

And you can look at our investment streams to track that. You can look at the efficiencies effort that has pulled money out of unnecessary overhead and plowed it back into the shipbuilding program and elsewhere.

So I would argue we haven't lost our focus on those other priorities. But obviously we have got, given the stakes involved, the lives on the line, we have to maintain a focus on Afghanistan, as well.

General PETRAEUS. And, if I could, Congressman, first of all, I would really go back to September 2005, when I was asked to do an assessment in Afghanistan on the way home from a second tour in Iraq, when I stood up the train-and-equip mission there.

And after doing that assessment at the request of the Secretary of Defense, I went back and briefed him in the Pentagon. And this is when Afghanistan was seen as the "war we were winning."

And I said, "Mr. Secretary, with all due respect, this is going to be the longest campaign in the long war, for all the following reasons." And it had to do with the damage of 30 years of war, the lack of human capital, the lack of infrastructure, the illiteracy rates, all of the issues that we have been grappling with, and I think have come into much higher relief since that time, as we have focused more on that.

Over 2 years ago—2½ years ago, when I took command of Central Command and focused and did an assessment of Afghanistan, I concluded that we did not have the inputs right. And I stated that at that time, and I am on the record at various times as having said that.

Therefore, the gains really are the gains of the past year. There may have been points along the way, up until 2005, maybe even a bit beyond that, where we thought as if things were headed in the right direction, but not recognizing that the Taliban were coming back.

But our assessment certainly, retrospectively, would be that the Taliban have had the momentum in the country since at least 2005. There are areas in that country that we didn't realize, until we went in and took them away from the Taliban, how long they had been there and how much infrastructure they had established there.

Now, with respect to, again, taking the focus off other areas, as a former geographic combatant commander, I would affirm that I

think we can juggle more than one ball at a time. I think we can keep a lot of plates spinning at one time.

We might feel like the guy at the circus who is racing around doing that, but we certainly have that capability, even as we, rightly, as the Secretary and the Under Secretary have noted, do everything that we can to win the wars we have got, which is of enormous importance.

Again, why Afghanistan? Because it is the home to Al Qaeda's senior leadership. It has been for decades. It has to be disrupted, dismantled, defeated. And it has some affiliates there with whom it has symbiotic relationships, other organizations that are wannabe transnational extremists as well and cannot be allowed to become that.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Madam Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Petraeus, a few numbers—about—there are about 305,000—our goal is about 305,000 ANSF in Afghanistan?

General PETRAEUS. For October this year, it is 305.4 thousand I think is roughly what it is.

Mr. LARSEN. Okay. All right. And we are short 750 trainers to get to that number?

General PETRAEUS. Well, no, I wouldn't—it is not quite a cause and effect. The 750 in many cases are for expanding the training capacity that actually develops enablers. Some of those are in that 305,000; some of them are in the projections beyond that.

Mr. LARSEN. Okay. So I am getting to the comments from Minister of Defense Wardak, who, and other reports, saying that some folks want to push that to 378,000. So, if we are not there generally with—to get to 305,000 with what we have, what is your assessment of getting to 378,000 any time soon with what we don't have?

General PETRAEUS. Well, I think that we will figure out how to do it at the end of the day, even if there is a necessity of diverting perhaps some additional U.S. forces, and they would be a mix of combat, combat service—or combat support and combat service support. Because, again, now we are increasingly doing enablers, not just—

Mr. LARSEN. Right.

General PETRAEUS [continuing]. Combat forces. But perhaps hiring more contract trainers, which is something we don't want to do, we want to draw those numbers down, and then accelerate the so-called train-the-trainer, the Afghan trainer program, which is also now starting to bear dividends.

Mr. LARSEN. Is this an ISAF decision or U.S. Forces-Afghanistan decision regarding the training? Is that a United States—

General PETRAEUS. Well, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan is an ISAF organization, but it is a dual-hatted command, just as is ISAF, with the Afghan Security Forces Fund flowing to the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan—

Mr. LARSEN. Right.

General PETRAEUS [continuing]. A commander who is also the NTM-A [NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan] commander.

Mr. LARSEN. So, then, has that decision been made, to move to 378,000?

General PETRAEUS. It has not. There is a recommendation that has gone forward. It was developed in very close consultation with the minister of interior, minister of defense of Afghanistan, was ultimately approved by President Karzai.

It is actually a recommendation of 352,000 as a floor, and if there are certain reforms that continue—because the Afghans are very much working on reforms in the area of recruiting, retention and reduction of attrition, as well as leader development and some other institutional development areas—if those continue, then there are—essentially are incentives. So if you are doing this well, then we are going to keep and go to 378,000. And that is what has gone forward.

That has the endorsement of General Mattis and the Secretary, but it also has a recognition from all of us that there is a sustainability issue.

Mr. LARSEN. Right.

General PETRAEUS. And that is what policymakers have to grapple with.

Again, it is my job to state requirements and to do so forthrightly, and that is what I have tried to do. It is the job of others, then, to determine whether those requirements can be adequately resourced and what the long-term sustainment implications are, as well.

Mr. LARSEN. And that is where we ended up—right back to us. Right. Yes. Here in Congress.

So, Secretary Flournoy, I don't think that you are—I don't think the Administration's talking enough about the long-term relationship that we will have with Afghanistan.

It is only—you know, in recent memory, there is only one country that we have been involved with and that we then left alone, and that was Afghanistan. And so I think it is important to put this strategic relationship in context.

And I want you to talk, a little bit, about specifically what this Administration and what the Karzai Administration believes would be the elements of a relationship that sees a decreasing military footprint and an increasing diplomatic and economic relationship with Afghanistan.

Because, talking with folks back home, you know, they are saying get out of Afghanistan. And the response is, well, do you mean literally America, the United States of America has no relationship with Afghanistan at all?

Because that is what people hear. And I think we need to be telling folks, we are not saying that; no one is saying that, that there is a relationship that we are going to have with Afghanistan that is strategic.

But can you give us, in 26 seconds, what those details might look like?

And perhaps the Chairman will be kind enough to give you some forbearance.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Well, I think, as we begin the transition process and the cutting the front edge of the responsible drawdown, it is very important to clarify publicly and with the Afghans what

a strategic partnership entails, what this enduring commitment involves.

I think, first of all, you could expect to have a security cooperation or assistance component, a long-term commitment to helping the ANSF continue to grow and develop and build in capability.

There will be an economic dimension, what kind of trade relations; what kind of economic assistance; what kind of collaboration on that front?

There will be a political and diplomatic component, a people-to-people component. If you look at the strategic framework agreement that we came up with in Iraq as a model, it is that kind of thing, laying out the elements of a commitment on both sides to a multifaceted interaction between the two countries over time.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair exercises great forbearance, but if members want to use the 5 minutes to prepare their question—
[Laughter.]

I will ask the witnesses to respond on the record, in deference to all the other members that are sitting here that have questions to ask.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will try to conform to the standard. And it will be difficult.

But, first of all, Secretary Flournoy, I want to thank you for your message on behalf of the Administration—and you restated it—and that is we are not abandoning Afghanistan, that there is an enduring partnership, strategic partnership, that I interpret that we will stop terrorism there to protect American families at home.

I find this reassuring to the people of Afghanistan. I know that it is appreciated by our allies and our troops serving there. And I hope it is a warning to our enemies around the world that we will not abandon the people of Afghanistan.

And, General Petraeus, it is an honor to be back with you. I always like to point out that I am very grateful personally. I have had two sons serve under your command in Afghanistan. I am very grateful my former National Guard unit, the 218th Brigade—the people of South Carolina are very proud that they were there, 1,600 troops, the largest deployment of troops since World War II in Afghanistan to help build the Afghan army and police.

And you trained our new adjutant general, Bill Livingston, very well. And so we are very grateful.

I know your success in Iraq as the co-chair of the Victory in Iraq Caucus. I appreciate the success of the surge. And then I appreciate the President accepting your recommendations for a surge in Afghanistan.

And in my most recent visit there, I was so grateful to come back to the House floor and point out that the success of the surge is truly to encourage the people of Afghanistan, their police and their army units. You have gained 70,000 more police and army personnel, with great leaders like General Wardak.

And the American people need to know that this is also assisting with literacy, marksmanship. This is real-world progress.

With that, my question really is related to our longtime ally Pakistan. Sadly, the country has been under assault by natural dis-

asters, political instability. What is the status of our military relationship with our longtime ally?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, Congressman, the people of South Carolina should indeed be very proud of their brigade, of the 218th. And it was great to have Bob at CENTCOM [United States Central Command] and wonderful to see him now become the A.G. [Adjutant General] of the state.

With respect to Pakistan, clearly it has endured innumerable challenges in recent years, terrible natural disasters, a spread of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistani that forced the initiation, some 2 years ago, of very tough fighting, very impressive counterinsurgency operations in which the Pakistanis have lost thousands of soldiers and also thousands of civilians.

The fact is that the cooperation between Pakistan, the Afghan forces and ISAF forces has never been better. We have had a number of meetings, literally just in the last couple of months, to coordinate operations where Pakistan is continuing its offensive against the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistani. And we will conduct complementary operations on our side, on the Afghan side of the border.

Again, there is also no question about the gains that Pakistan has made against the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistani and the TNSM [Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi] and some affiliates. But there is also no question about the very worrying developments, in terms of extremist activity in Pakistan with the assassination of the governor of the Punjab and the reaction to that, which was troubling to many Pakistanis, and then more recently the assassination of the minister of minorities.

Beyond that, the Pakistanis clearly recognize—and I have had many conversations with their army leadership—that more needs to be done against groups that reside in various areas of Pakistan, in north Waziristan, in Baluchistan, that are causing significant security challenges for their neighbor and their partner Afghanistan, while also being fair to recognize that the Pakistanis would rightly state that they have put a lot of short sticks into a lot of hornets' nests in recent years, and they absolutely have to consolidate some of their gains and solidify their gains and build on them before they can take on major new fights.

Nonetheless, there is a clear recognition among all of the importance of their doing that at an appropriate moment.

And indeed the U.S. relationship with them, which has, I think it is fair to say, sustained a degree of tension in recent weeks in particular, as a result of the case involving the State Department employee, but hopefully we can move forward, take the rearview mirror off the bus and resume the very cooperative activities that have characterized the relationship in the past.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We will have one more, Ms. Bordallo. And then we will call a 5-minute recess, and then we will begin with Mr. Turner.

Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary and General Petraeus, it is—thank you for appearing today, and it is nice to see you again.

To begin, representing Guam, the closest neighbor of Japan, I wish to extend our prayers and condolences to the people of Japan and that they may recover from this horrendous disaster.

I have, as you both know, traveled extensively on CODELs through Afghanistan and Central Asia, since 2003, I might add, where I met you, General.

And I have seen success. I want to make—place that in the record. Just 3 weeks ago, I traveled with the Wilson CODEL. It was a very factual CODEL. And I thank you, General, for the very informative brief that you gave all of us.

Now, my first question is to the Secretary. I believe one of the keys to advancing democracy in Afghanistan is to educate the women.

Madam Secretary, you touch on this in your testimony briefly in the formation of the Afghan consultative peace jirga. My question for you is what other measures are coalition forces involved in to encourage the advancement of women's rights?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Well, I think there—writ large, there are a number of U.S. policies and programs designed to, sort of, secure and enhance the role of women in Afghan society. There are a number of State Department programs, USAID programs. Every time Secretary Clinton goes, she gives great prominence to these.

But in terms of the ISAF forces—and I know General Petraeus may want to speak to this—one of the things that—one of the innovations that has occurred is using our own female soldiers, Marines—there are troopers—in female engagement teams, the Lioness Program, where they are able to actually go into Afghan villages and access and engage half the population that otherwise would be off-limits to us.

And so they are working, face to face, with Afghan women, at the local level, trying to ensure their voice is heard, that they are part of the process of transforming an area from insecurity to security and then, you know, in terms of being participants in the broader governance and so forth.

So that is happening at that local level all the time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. Thank you.

Madam Secretary, I also—

General PETRAEUS. Maybe I could add, on that, actually—

Ms. BORDALLO. I am going to get to you, General—

General PETRAEUS. Okay.

Ms. BORDALLO. I have another question for you, but I will get to you. I tended to—I was with Speaker Pelosi on a CODEL, and we—it was strictly women meeting women, both in military and the Afghan government. And they are very vocal, and they spoke about security. That was the main thing. They wanted the U.S. to provide security for them so they can go out and teach and meet with the Afghan people.

General, to what extent, if any, must corruptive behavior by those in government in Afghanistan be countered in order to support stability?

What exactly is needed from President Karzai, in order for corruption in the Afghan system to be countered successfully?

During a dinner with Ambassador Eikenberry on this recent CODEL, we understood, from the parliament members who at-

tended the dinner, that this corruption in the government still exists. And I know this is a little out of your realm, but I think that politics and the military are commingled in Afghanistan.

So if you could help us in that? I understand there isn't even a speaker yet, appointed in the parliament. Is that correct?

General PETRAEUS. No, actually, there was a speaker elected a couple of weeks ago and the committee members have been being selected as well more recently.

In fact, as I noted to the SASC yesterday, I think there are 10 percent more women in the Afghan parliament than there are in the U.S. Congress.

Now, in part because there is a constitutional requirement for certain levels. But it does reflect, I think, a degree of seriousness about opportunities for women, which certainly in a very, very conservative society there has to be constant attention to that.

I would point out, I think the most important advance for women, though, is actually in the area of access to education. It is well known that under the Taliban, during which there were less than 1 million in school at all, in any case, in elementary school and so forth, now there are over—this year, we believe, there will be 8.2 million, according to the minister of education, and somewhere over 30, 35 percent, we believe, will actually be female students.

So this is quite an enormous step forward for them and a great opportunity.

There are actually Afghan female generals.

Ms. BORDALLO. Yes.

General PETRAEUS. There are growing numbers of Afghan female police and soldiers.

Don't get me wrong, there are all kinds of barriers, institutional norms and others that have to be confronted in some of these areas, but they are proving themselves and showing to be of enormous value in these operations. Indeed, I think it is Afghan commanders that increasingly recognize the need for that.

And then finally the corruption that has be dealt with is clearly that which threatens the institutions to which we will transition, have to transition, and that corruption which completely undermines the legitimacy of the governmental organizations which have to earn the support of the people.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will stand in recess. We will reconvene at 6 minutes after 12.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. Committee will come to order.

Mr. Turner is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of you for being here today and for your leadership on such an important issue as Afghanistan. We all know that as we look at the threats to the United States, that Afghanistan of course was the source of the attack from 9/11, and we appreciate that it is a security environment that must be secured for the United States and for—as we go forward.

General, you and I actually have had several opportunities to talk about Afghanistan. I was last in Afghanistan as you had taken the leadership position there. And my issue that I raise just about every time is the drug trade. We see—excuse me, I have got a problem with this chair. Switch chairs here.

Everyone identifies the drug trade as a source for corruption, funding the Taliban, funding the insurgency, causing instability in government; also suppressing the issue of the transition of their economy to legal production and to a stable economy from which then Afghanistan could grow.

General, I have held up several times this chart, which I am going to show you again. This shows the historical production of poppy in Afghanistan going back to 1991. And what I like about this chart—CRS [the Congressional Research Service] did this—is that it shows that we actually have, as we were looking at responding with a troop surge, we had an opium production surge.

If you fold this chart in half you can see that from this side you have the historical levels of production, and then you have these 4 years, which are really the last 4 years, that are spikes in opium production.

You indicated that really Afghanistan had turned since 2005, and you can see from the chart that 2006 is actually the first year that opium production spiked. It is almost double the historical levels of production. And I know now that in 2010 there was a reduction as a result of disease among the crops. But I don't think people are projecting that it is going to go back to half again.

We all know that the list, the to-do list of what to do with this includes eradication, attacking the labs, attacking the cash, attacking the leaders and the leadership, looking for alternate crops and supply routes.

But, General, nonetheless, even though that remains the to-do list, I am not confident that we are being as effective as we need to be, knowing that this goes directly to the heart of really what we are facing.

I looked at your written testimony. And, General, you do mention, in Marjah, the turnaround there, and that it was prior affected by the narcotics trade. But I don't see in your testimony really the drug trade being identified as a major initiative that we need to attack and address.

We looked at prior testimony that has come—that this committee has heard. We heard in 2006, General James Jones stated that, "The Achilles heel of Afghanistan is the narcotics problem. I think the uncontrolled rise of the spread of narcotics, the business that it brings in, the money that it generates is being used to fund the insurgency, the criminal elements, anything to bring chaos and disorder."

General, are we doing better? And what do we need to do? This is obviously a time when we try to look to how we bring resources to bear to what you are undertaking.

General PETRAEUS. Well, thanks. In fact, we are doing quite a bit better. Over the last 6 months, for example, we assessed that we have found and destroyed some three times or so the weight of the illegal narcotics products of various types, and also a tax on labs and so on.

The fact is that I think your slide, and we probably should help you update it because, again, it did come down this past year now and it appears as it is going to come down further this year. But what it shows is that insecurity and Taliban control lead to production of poppy and therefore the flourishing of the illegal narcotics industry, which provides somewhere around at least a third of the funding for the Taliban movement. The other elements coming from illegal activities like kidnapping, extortion and so forth, and then outside remittances, donations.

If you look at slide 12, in fact, in our packet there, you will see what happens after ISAF and Afghan forces control an area for a period. And we can work through the process of crop substitution, of providing wheat seed and other alternative crops, rather than having to resort to the poppy, which in many cases the Taliban forces the people to plant and to harvest because, again, that provides substantial revenue for them.

So there has been considerably more emphasis on this over the course of the last 6 months. Again, as the slide shows, Nawa was an area of very heavy concentration of poppy production and it has become an area now of virtually no poppy production. And it is not just the blight that has led to a reduction in poppy cultivation, but also literally just to less cultivation as well.

So again, I think there is much more attention on this than there has been in the past. It was fortuitous that you visited when you did and showed me the slide that you did when you did, because it indeed helped. It was a catalyst for a pretty substantial examination that we did of this problem. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank both witnesses for their outstanding testimony and service.

General, in the slide presentation, the last slide which talks about strategic risks, one of the clouds—storm clouds—here was the inadequate State-USAID resourcing. You know, you gave a very, I think, blunt and honest answer earlier today about the resolution that we are going to be voting on tomorrow.

And I want to first of all thank you for your answer to Senator Graham about your concerns about the budget that came out of the House in terms of the cuts to USAID and to the State Department in general.

One of the frustrations for a lot of us during that debate was that the—it was framed as cutting discretionary domestic spending, but in fact obviously the State Department and USAID were brought into those cuts. And just to be very clear on the record here, I mean in 2010 USAID was funded at a level of \$1.42 billion. H.R. [House Resolution] 1 cut that to \$1.3 billion, which was about a 14 percent reduction from what the President requested for 2011.

You know, for a lot of people, though, USAID is just an acronym. It just doesn't mean anything to the average citizen out there. And I am just wondering if you could maybe, you know, fill in that—what that means in terms of the work that USAID is doing in Af-

ghanistan and how integral it is to a successful diplomatic and military strategy, and the quicker we can pivot away from a military footprint in that country.

General PETRAEUS. Well, thanks very much, Congressman. In fact, I sent a letter to Senator Graham in response to a question that he asked of me, and it was put on the record yesterday in the SASC. And it might be worth sharing, in fact, with members of this committee.

The bottom line, though, in that letter was that I stated that this category of funding, which is so essential to building on the hard-fought security gains that our troops sacrificed so much to achieve, this category is really a national security funding issue, not just an issue of foreign assistance or some other element.

Again, without that construction of governance and development on the foundation of security that is achieved by our men and women in uniform, you cannot consolidate your gains. You can't solidify and, indeed, build on them, as we say.

Mr. COURTNEY. Another slide which was submitted, I think it was slide 13, which were some photographs of school openings, and there was a rather, well, a "shooting a bullet into our enemy's heart," which is a pretty vivid metaphor in the context of showing kids lining up for school.

But again, it shows the really strong connection between—and that may have been a CERP [Commanders' Emergency Response Program] project, but nonetheless, USAID is all about school construction. And the fact is that that is how we win with that type of investment.

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely. This particular district where the school is being opened, and it is the district governor, now, mind you, not us. He is the one saying that this is akin to shooting a bullet into our enemy's heart. This district is Mullah Omar's hometown. And needless to say, that school was not open under the Taliban.

In Marjah, there were zero schools open under the Taliban. That was a nexus of the illegal narcotics industry and the Taliban command and control. There are now five schools open, including a high school for the first time in we think almost a decade, and also five others that are under construction.

Now, it may well be that these are CERP funded, but the idea is that this is—we all work together. And as you know, when it comes to the Afghan infrastructure fund, that is jointly administered between the military and State/USAID, and I don't know if the Secretary wants to mention something on that.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would just say that at this particular point in the campaign, when we are actually getting traction on the security dimension, we are creating space for those things to happen, as General Petraeus said. You know, it is even more important now that we maintain, if not increase, the funding for some of these critical—the early stabilization programs.

As soon as you clear an area, OTI, the Office of Transition Initiatives, as part of USAID, goes in and immediately starts programs to engage the community. Agricultural development, which is the heart of the Afghan economy; capacity building so that, you know, Afghans will be more able to do for themselves over time; dispute

resolution, which goes at the heart of what the Taliban, you know, sort of really competes directly with the Taliban and the role it has tried to carve out for itself.

These are critical programs. And if we focus—we only fund the military piece, you can't actually get across the goal line without State and USAID assistance as well.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Madam Secretary, General, for being here, for your testimony, for answering the questions.

Thank you, General, for hosting us just a few weeks ago. The Chairman, Mr. Reyes and I were out and had terrific briefings, a great chance to visit. We were concerned by some of the briefings we got on corruption, but uplifted by many others.

Thank you also for your son, and please convey to Lieutenant Petraeus well done and thank you, certainly from me, and I suspect from the whole—from the whole committee.

It was surprising, almost shocking, that we could go to Marjah; no body armor, walk through the market, talk to proprietors, go to a school opening, cut a ribbon for opening a school for 500 kids, 10 teachers, but tremendous, tremendous progress.

So Mr. Forbes said that we have to hope that you are right in your estimation of progress and anticipation of the Afghans taking over responsibility. And based on a lot of what we saw, it appears that you are right. There is certainly progress being made.

And one of the places where we are definitely getting it right is the effort that General Caldwell and his folks have undertaken and are doing in training the new Afghan national security forces. The police particularly seem to be—were making progress where we didn't think it might even be possible to make progress a couple of years ago.

And the brilliant idea of including literacy training in a country where you have got—I think they said these recruits that are coming in, 85 percent can't read or write at all. They can't even read their own name. And so now this effort to get them up to what we are calling the first grade level, "see Spot run," I think is going to pay tremendous, tremendous dividends in their capability, the chance for professionalism. I was just hugely heartened by that.

And so when you look at the improved quality of the new members of the Afghan national security force, with this change in how we train them, I want to go back to Mr. Larsen's question about the 378,000 total end-strength, if you will, of ANSF in October, 2012, I think is the date that is being talked about.

And so I have just a really simple question. Do you support that number? And I know you put 350 and some enablers, but overall, are you supporting that goal? And do you think we can do it?

General PETRAEUS. I support it if and only if, again, our Afghan security force partners meet the reform goals on which they are already making progress. So they would need to continue progress in the areas of recruiting, retention and then reduction of attrition, as well as a variety of different leader-development initiatives that are critical. Indeed, without those, then it is not worth continuing

it. If they do that, that is a very tangible recognition of and, in a sense, a reward for—an incentive for meeting the very important benchmarks for the continued development of quality, as well as quantity.

Whether they can do it will depend, in fact, on reduction of attrition, in particular. They have been ahead of glide-path so far in their growth—in meeting their growth goals. But as this increases, of course, it becomes increasingly challenging. So we will have to see how they do, again, in meeting the attrition reduction goals.

Mr. KLINE. Let me ask it this way.

General PETRAEUS. The answer is yes.

Mr. KLINE. Okay. You think they will do it. All right. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

We like nuanced answers in today's modern military.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Loeb sack.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Madam Secretary, General Petraeus, thank you for your service. Thank you for being here today. It is always good to see you at these hearings, and in the past in Afghanistan. And hopefully in the future as well, General, I will be able to see you in Afghanistan at some point.

At the outset, I do want to note that the Iowa National Guard currently has roughly 3,000 soldiers deployed in Afghanistan. That is the largest for our state since World War II. And you were kind enough to assent to a video interview with my colleague Bruce Braley when he was there most recently with the—with a CODEL.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team did deploy last summer and is operating in, I believe, five provinces throughout R.C.-East [Regional Command East]. The 734th Agribusiness Development Team deployed a few months before that.

And thank you, Madam Secretary, for your comments about agriculture. I am really proud of the Iowa team that is there working in the agriculture sector. I think they are really doing a great job, the ADT [Agribusiness Development Team].

It is not Iowa, that is for sure. Having been there, I have a sense of what agriculture is like in Afghanistan. But I think it is an essential component to the strategy.

And I think it is safe to say that all Iowans are very proud of our National Guard and their activities there.

What I want to talk a little bit about is what we mean by legitimate governance, what we mean by successful governance and what we mean by successful development.

And I will just preface that a little bit by saying that before I became a congressman, I traveled overseas principally to the so-called Third World a number of times. I taught comparative politics. I know that the word “nation-building” has not been part of the vocabulary of this Administration for some time.

But I am one of those who has a lot of concerns about nation building, and I understand why folks aren't calling what we are doing necessarily nation building.

But when we talk about defining success as Afghanistan being secure and able to govern itself, and part of that being able to cre-

ate a legitimate governance system and also being able to engage in successful development in a country which I think, and correct me if I am wrong, is still about the fourth poorest country in the world—extremely poor. Having been there, I am very aware of the lack of infrastructure, all the problems that they face.

I guess my question is: How do we define things like provision of basic services, for example, when we talk about governance?

Madam Secretary, if you would? Thank you.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Well, I think that, you know, when you look at governance, we start bottom up, at the local level, to say what are the essential components? Things like a shura—a functional shura, that is representative of the population. A decent district governor. A decent, noncorrupt, nonpredatory police chief. Some funds available for basic development programs, whether it is coming from Kabul or coming from the international community.

There are some basic building blocks that, as you put them in place, really start to make a difference at the local level.

Afghanistan is going to be a poor country for decades. The economic development timeline is very, very long. And that is part of the long-term relationship that we will—we and others in the international community will have with Afghanistan. This will be something we work on with them for many, many years.

But the key—what we are focused on right now are the key governance and development pieces that are absolutely essential to the core goal of getting to the point where Afghanistan can take the lead in securing and governing itself, with continued help from the international community, but of a nature that looks like—more like a traditional long-term assistance program.

Mr. LOEBSACK. General, do you want to weigh in on that?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, you know, I think you are right, that nation-building has a bit of a pejorative connotation in this town. And—but the fact is that we have also gotten away from that a tiny bit because we want to convey a sense that we are quite measured in our objectives in Afghanistan. We are not trying to build, again, Switzerland in that country; we are trying to help Afghanistan achieve what is sufficient for Afghanistan.

So we have measured objectives that are based on a very realistic assessment of the challenges that confront us there.

Among the provision of basic services that I would add to what the Secretary described, and partly embodied in the shura council, is the issue of dispute resolution. This is an area where the Taliban can compete with local—Afghan local governance, if it is not done well.

Indeed, this is the area in which in Swat Valley, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistani was able to play on grievances, because of the lack of speedy justice because of the way the system was set up there and in the Northwest Frontier province.

So that is another important component of this. And, again, this is all part of achieving that legitimacy in the eyes of the people, governance that serves the people, that doesn't prey on them, that is transparent and sufficiently, again, representative of integrity as well.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Well, thanks to both of you.

And thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses.

And, General, in particular, I want to—again say I don't think any of us on this committee can often enough tell you about how much we appreciate your service and the consequent sacrifice you and your family are making. The nation owes you a great deal of gratitude.

You touched on this subject in your opening statement, but I wanted to be a little bit more specific. One of the commands that you have is the Joint Urgent Operational Needs, which is for persistent surveillance systems which provide actionable intel to decisionmakers to counter IEDs [improvised explosive devices] and indirect fire and protection of convoys.

Do you have enough of these systems? And, if not, how many do you need?

General PETRAEUS. We do not have enough. There is an urgent operational needs statement in, in fact a joint urgent operational needs statement, and I will get that to you for the record, what the specifics of—by each different category of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance system.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 99.]

I will tell you that the Secretary of Defense has done an incredible job, first, when I was in Iraq as the commander there, then in Central Command, and now that I am in Afghanistan, in doing everything humanly possible to produce this as rapidly as it can come off the assembly line and out of industry, as he has done with the MRAP [mine resistant ambush protected] altering vehicle and a variety of other items that we desperately have needed.

Mr. ROGERS. You mentioned the use of blimps over there, along with cameras on poles. The blimps, are they manned or unmanned?

General PETRAEUS. There is nobody in the blimp, but there is a team down at the base that is obviously steering the camera and is typically—I forget how many people are actually part of that team typically, but—and then that ties into the operation center of the unit in whose area it is being employed.

Mr. ROGERS. Excellent.

And the last question I have got, to make things simple for a simple fellow from Alabama, is, when you look at the Afghan security forces and the way you found them and then the point that they are developed now, from a professional skill set level, if you consider the way you found them a zero and the way you want them when you are gone a 10, where would you say they are on that scale in their development?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first, with respect, I wouldn't want to label where they were a zero. Again, there has been enormously hard work there. And the fact that we had not gotten the inputs right doesn't mean that there wasn't a tremendous amount of productive activity in building institutions, in building infrastructure, in building human capital and everything else.

It was just that we hadn't applied enough and in some cases didn't have the right constructs, organizations, and resourcing.

But, I mean, there is no question that there has been significant improvement in them, again, not just in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality—leader development, infrastructure development, and now increasingly the development of these critical enablers that are necessary so that we don't have to continue to enable them in every single category.

And, again, I would—General Caldwell and his team have done magnificent work, first in building the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan, which has been a big part of this, so that we have all the NATO countries and NATO ISAF countries engaged, not just those that are following the U.S. lead in what used to be the CSTC–A [Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan] organization, but now to expand it, as it has.

And that is particularly useful, because in many cases there are skill sets required for trainers that we don't have in our inventory. You know, we don't fly MI–17s, we don't fly some of the smaller fixed-wing aircraft, we don't use D–30 howitzers, and yet some of the former Soviet Warsaw Pact countries that are now either part of NATO or troop-contributing nations of ISAF have those skill sets and have been very helpful in that regard.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus, for your testimony here this morning.

I opposed President Obama's initial request for supplemental funding for the surge of an additional 30,000 troops because I had questions about our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan that I felt were unanswered, and did not feel comfortable increasing the number of servicemembers serving there without answers to those questions.

I have been there three times now, and I still have strong reservations and many unanswered questions. So I am glad you are both here and I am glad that the President has carried out several very deliberate assessments of the challenges we face.

I want to congratulate you for establishing a timeline and benchmarks to success, which you describe as an Afghanistan "that can secure and govern itself."

However, I believe this timeline and these benchmarks are almost entirely dependent upon the actions of a corrupt central government and on the growth in the size and capabilities of the Afghan national security forces, both very difficult challenges—and you have had many questions about that today.

General, *The Washington Post* reported a few weeks ago that we have recently made significant gains in Marjah, and you have alluded to that today and talked about it, as have others who have recently visited. Violence has declined, more civilians are cooperating with our forces, and last September's elections had a high voter turnout.

However, this progress required the deployment of 15,000 soldiers and a full year of fighting to secure a town of less than 80,000 people. And we were supposed to be well on our way by now to se-

curing Kandahar, a hub of Taliban activity with a population of half a million.

With progress this slow, why should we have any confidence you will hue to the timeline with substantial redeployments beginning this summer? Why should we believe that the current strategy will succeed across the rest of Afghanistan by 2014?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, with respect, Congresswoman, I think the—number of U.S. Marines that we ever had in Marjah was a bit less than 4,500. And we will get you the exact number. I think it was a few hundred less than that.

And the last I saw, I think we are down to around 1,600 now. So even though we haven't formally commenced transition in Marjah, because there are a number of other issues and challenges that have to be dealt with before we can get to that point, there is no question that we have already been able to thin out our forces and have our Afghan partners expand their presence and capability.

That notwithstanding, this is a tough fight. And I don't want to diminish the challenges that continue to confront us there. But the fact is that we have indeed been able to reduce our forces substantially and that we have been able to reinvest them, if you will, in other areas further out from the population centers and then in other districts where they were needed.

Ms. TSONGAS. But, General, nevertheless, it took quite a bit longer than you initially anticipated—

General PETRAEUS. Not longer than I anticipated, with respect, Congresswoman. I think I am on the record talking about how long these take. I think it is fair to say that we used some rhetoric at that time, like governance in a box, that turned out not to be in the box, and that kind of thing was unhelpful. And indeed there have been times when we have made pronouncements in the past.

But we have frankly tried very hard on my watch to underpromise and overdeliver. In fact, if you look at the record in my statements on Zhari and Panjway Districts west of Kandahar, and Arghandab and so forth, you will see that we were very cautious in our projections of the rate of progress there.

And, frankly, ultimately, we did actually state that we had actually done it a little bit faster than we had anticipated.

This is hard government work. It is tough fighting in very, very difficult conditions, almost like the hedgerows of Normandy, in certain respects, in some of these districts. And again, I would submit that, on my watch as the commander, that I have been very, very circumspect in projections about what it is that we will do and in explaining what we have done, and that there are a lot of caveats and that what we have tried to do is to be as forthright as we possibly could.

Ms. TSONGAS. And nevertheless, these gains are fragile. And I think what, as you testified—

General PETRAEUS. And that is my statement as well.

Ms. TSONGAS [continuing]. I think what you see here today is we have, sort of, a fork in the road, where those who see this, the fragility supporting continued investment and those who, seeing that fragility, wonder simply how much longer can we hew to this strategy?

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. David, Michèle, thank you all for coming this morning.

David, since you gave a shout-out to the 101st a while ago, the Screaming Eagles, my dad served and fought with the 101st in Korea, and he was very proud of that affiliation with that fine organization.

We talked a lot about corruption. There is some corruption that we can do something about in our supply chains and in our care and feeding of our team. As you push into that, give me a couple of—let me give you a couple questions on that, about connections between U.S. contracting and corruption in Afghanistan, as well as what are the barriers that you need to identify the malign actors and the systems?

And what can Congress do to give you either new tools or new authorities to deal with things that we can do something about when it comes to corruption?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, Congressman, it is a great question. And Senator Brown, and I think it was Senator Ayotte in the SASC have introduced legislation that would be quite helpful to us.

It basically gives us greater authority for more rapid termination of contracts when we identify that the contractors have been carrying out essentially corrupt practices or practices that undermine what it is we are trying to do as counterinsurgents. So that would be quite helpful.

We have also requested some 60 or so individuals with special skill sets to help us with oversight of these various contracting activities. Now, these are quite highly trained and experienced individuals. It is another area in which Secretary Gates has worked exceedingly hard to encourage the services to find these individuals and to provide them to us.

I think we are about halfway there in that, and there is a good prospect for additional ones coming.

We have formed two task forces, Task Force 2010 and Task Force Spotlight. The latter focuses on the issue of private security contractors as we move forward, an area of legitimate and understandable concern to President Karzai, as they can take on the role of extralegal armed groups, if not careful, without sufficient oversight.

And then the other is looking at all contracts. And we reviewed several hundred contracts to this point. There is a small percentage of those that we have identified in which there have been activities ongoing that either, again, undermine our counterinsurgency effort or corrupt or a combination of the two.

And in those cases, we have indeed debarred nine contractors, and then there are a couple dozen more—a few dozen more that are under suspension with the possibility of debarment.

Mr. CONAWAY. Will this legislation give you access to the books and records of the contractors that you may not have access to now?

General PETRAEUS. There could be a provision. Again, I am not the expert on the legislation, other than to have been assured by

those who are experts that it would be very helpful to us in what it is we are trying to do.

Because we occasionally are unable to take action as swiftly as we would like to.

Mr. CONAWAY. Okay. Michèle, most of us think that Afghanistan will be a country in which the world will have to pour resources for a long time. Can you give us some sort of a scope as to what we currently spend there as ISAF, writ large, versus the Afghan economy?

And what are the—or what are you all's plans, you know, post-our leaving, whatever that might be, with troops and the Afghans have got the national police in place and the Afghan national army is in place, and—police and all that is working—can you give us some sort of a scope as to how they—how that continues to fund that infrastructure of security?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Congressman, I would like to get back to you on the figures, particularly the comparison between what we are spending versus the Afghan GDP [gross domestic product]. So I will—if that is okay, I will take that and get back to you with the figures on the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 99.]

Secretary FLOURNOY. But I think, you know, we are seeing the beginnings of growth in the Afghan economy as they bring their agricultural sector back. But I think, long-term, the key elements are going to be creating the capacity to really build a strategic minerals extraction industry that actually benefits the Afghan people and the Afghan government, not just the foreign companies who come in, although there will be benefits for them as well.

Building a whole—they really don't have a customs, taxation—they have no real revenue-generating system that is above board and that is, sort of, formalized and so forth.

And so part of what we are doing is providing advisers to the various ministries, particularly the finance ministry, to help them put some of these structures and systems in place.

Mr. CONAWAY. All right. Please don't break our internal revenue code over there, as a go-by. That doesn't work.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Okay.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you for your service. Appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Pingree.

Ms. PINGREE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus, for joining us today. I know it has been a long day already, and I can see you are down at the bottom row, so congratulations on making it this far.

And I want to reiterate what many of my colleagues have said. That is that we all truly appreciate the hard work and sacrifice of both of you and the troops that you lead. And coming from the state of Maine, where we do have National Guard deployed and have sent so many of our citizens to this and other wars, we know what this sacrifice is.

Also in Maine, when we look at the costs of this war, we feel that there has been an extraordinarily high burden to our state when

you divide that up. It is about \$3.4 billion, the cost to our state residents in paying for the war in Afghanistan.

And I continue to hear from my constituents about the astronomical costs that we have here, both in our lives lost and the resources we sacrifice at home to support the ongoing mission. I want to talk a little bit about that.

As we have seen earlier, 75 percent of Americans have said that a substantial number of combat troops should be removed from Afghanistan this summer, according to a *Washington Post* poll released this week.

Many like myself are deeply concerned that this will not be a reality come July, and I think we know that is true.

Every day more and more Americans are looking for an end to this war, but as we sit here and talk about it, there really doesn't seem to be an end in sight.

DOD budget documents have forecast a drop of U.S. troops in Afghanistan from 102,000 to 98,250. That is only a 3.5 percent reduction, which can hardly be described as an accelerated transition.

In the President's final orders for escalation, he defined the mission of escalation as setting conditions for accelerated transition to Afghan authorities beginning in this July.

However, I believe there is a lack of transparency and accountability, and this has raised some serious concerns. And it has also made it more challenging to fully understand some of the conditions on the ground.

In recent months, I believe there has been a significant reduction in information about the war in Afghanistan coming from the Pentagon. For example, you have made it clear that a key ingredient to a successful counterinsurgency strategy is for the population in Afghanistan to support and have confidence in their government.

As you once put it, and I know you have again, you cannot kill or capture your way to victory in Afghanistan.

This makes it hard to understand why data collected quarterly about the support of Afghans, the support that they have for the government, was dropped from your most recent report to Congress in November of 2010.

I am interested in knowing whether this decision has been made to no longer collect this data, and if the decision has not been made, why it was omitted from the report?

One of my major concerns, as well as the loss of life, and one that I share with my constituents, is if taxpayer dollars are being used appropriately.

Reports by the GAO special inspector general for Afghan reconstruction and others have raised serious concerns about the potential waste of U.S. taxpayer dollars associated with security and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

Last April the Department of Defense reported that Afghan civil service support program, ACSS, will disburse \$85 million in support of civil service reform efforts from January 2010 to the end of the project in 2011.

The department also reported that the U.S. government was transferring \$30 million directly to the Afghan ministry of finance to support the civilian technical assistance plan.

And in fiscal year 2010, \$1 billion was appropriated for the commanders' emergency program with the goal of continuing reconstruction and development work.

I know you have spoken in support of that program, but I have serious concerns about how it is spent, and have not seen any accounting to Congress about those—how those U.S. taxpayer dollars have been spent.

I know this is a lot of information to provide in my last minute and would be happy to see it in writing.

But I would like to know more, and I would like the committee to have more information about how U.S. taxpayer funds in the Commander's Emergency Response Program have been used and what objectives that funding has achieved.

The CHAIRMAN. I would ask that you do wrap this up at the 5 minutes. I know you have a hard leave time and we still have several members. So—

Ms. PINGREE. And I completely concur with that. It is a lot of information and I would be happy to see it in writing. So I appreciate that.

General PETRAEUS. Let me just state, I would welcome the opportunity to provide it. We will be completely transparent with you. We have voluminous records on how CERP is spent. And the \$400 million that is spent directly by our commanders to support the security gains averages about \$17,000 a project, and we can show you every single project and lay that out for you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 99.]

General PETRAEUS. The CERP AIF [Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund] is working its way through, because that is spent in coordination with AID, as I am sure you know. And then the CERP for reintegration \$50 million has been invaluable in helping our Afghan partners initiate the conduct of reintegration of reconcilable members. We have spent about \$5 million to \$6 million of that so far.

Secretary FLOURNOY. If I could just say, I think that if you look at the reporting to Congress, that we have sought to make it more factual, more detailed, and, frankly, have been complimented on that.

On the specific issue of the polls, I will look into that and try to get to you whatever the latest polling information we have on that. Because we are striving to be more transparent, to be more factual and provide more data to Congress.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 99.]

Secretary FLOURNOY. On the July 2011 date, a couple of folks have said, you know, we are not going to realize what the President promised. We are. We will begin the responsible drawdown in July.

What 2014 is, is not moving the goal posts, it is just setting the goal of what we—when we expect to complete the transition to Afghanistan lead for security countrywide.

So these two dates are bookends. It is not a moving of the goal posts.

Ms. PINGREE. My time has run out, but I will look forward to following up with you in the future. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, Secretary Flournoy, let me just say thanks for being so accessible to us and being here so much for us so that we are able to ask. You have made yourself very available all the time. I am sure you enjoy it.

And, General Petraeus, I don't think people understand first the sacrifices and the time. I mean, you have been going nonstop since—well, since you first deployed to Iraq. So it is hard for anybody, even me with three tours, it is still nothing compared to what you have gone through, and your family, and your wife, and how tired you must be just in general of this. And I am sure nobody wants victory in Afghanistan so you can get out more than you do, and we understand that.

My little brother got back from Iraq, from his 1-year tour, without a combat action ribbon. So with that, I want to thank you, too. He was in the 4th Stryker Brigade up there, and he is not happy with you for that, but we are, my father and I.

And lastly, pertaining to Iraq as well, thank you again for giving us victory over there. You and General Keane and General Odierno and what you orchestrated. My father just wrote a book called "Victory in Iraq," and it is because of you. So I don't think we talk about that enough, that we did achieve victory there, and thank you for that.

First question is, in the first part of your testimony, General, you said, "But I do believe there will be some combat forces included in those options and in that recommendation." I think it was in regard to Chairman McKeon's question.

So the question is, is every option you are going to submit going to have combat forces included for withdrawal, or will that be one of the options?

General PETRAEUS. I am still working on the options, as I said. And there is still obviously some months to run. It is something that will be, again, based on conditions on the ground. And so we want to—frankly, any commander always wants as much flexibility as he can have prior to doing—providing options and recommendations. And so we are going to exercise that to the best of our ability.

Mr. HUNTER. But will every option have—if you give five options, will all five include a combat troop withdrawal or combat troop withdrawal could be included in your options?

General PETRAEUS. Could be included in those. Again, I don't want to get pinned down into what each option will consist of at this point in time, because we are still formulating them.

Mr. HUNTER. And when it comes to risk, obviously, is Congress going to be able to be presented with a risk analysis of your draw-down—

General PETRAEUS. Well, I—

Mr. HUNTER [continuing]. I mean, if you drop by 5,000, the risk goes up by this much, et cetera?

General PETRAEUS. Again, there is a variety of criteria, actually—one of which, by the way, is that it is a meaningful imple-

mentation of the policy, because, again, there is something about the message of urgency here that does actually have significance, as Secretary Gates has explained I think quite effectively to the SASC. But then in other cases there will certainly be risks in certain aspects.

I will lay that out for the chain of command. It is going to be extraordinarily closely held and will then be presented to the President. And, you know, beyond that point in time I will defer to the Pentagon on how they might share that with the Congress.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. Thank you.

Madam Flournoy, along with Ms. Pingree's question—she asked about CERP—I know that CERP works, because I saw it work. I mean, there is nothing better you can spend—there is no way to better spend the money than put it into the commander's hands, sometimes when that ground commander is like the mayor of that town basically for a while as it stands up.

My question is, I was working a little bit with General Duncan, Arnie Duncan—not Arnie Duncan, trying to think of his first name. He was the I.G. [Inspector General] for USAID.

General PETRAEUS. Arnie Fields?

Mr. HUNTER. Arnie Fields. Sorry, Arnie Fields. Too many Duncans and Arnies.

And he is no longer there, but we were looking at how aid is being spent on the State Department side. I think that is a big question a lot of folks have, because the military keeps extraordinary records. The State Department side doesn't always.

Who is in charge now for, you know, further on contact from me, who should we be contacting to make sure that aid money is being spent appropriately? Because we have all heard these \$100 million bumbles that USAID has done.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Sure. I think the two people who are really providing the critical oversight are the new Deputy Secretary of State, Tom Nides, and the head of USAID, Raj Shah. They have provided pretty clear guidance, policy guidance, on what the priority should be.

Down at the embassy level, that has been integrated as the civilian dimensions of an integrated campaign plan with ISAF. And there are oversight levels down at the embassy level as well.

So—but I think they would be happy to come in and explain to you how that works and how it is integrated with the military campaign.

Mr. HUNTER. And I am going to finish early. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both so much for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Under Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus, for your service to the nation. Thank you for being here today.

General Petraeus, you have done something that perhaps many people didn't think could be done, and that was to establish an orderly withdrawal from Iraq. I know of nobody who says anything like we failed over there, even though it was a mission that should not have been undertaken, in my opinion.

But nevertheless, we are in a bad situation. We are starting to draw down. We have drawn down considerably, quite a few troops there. And I look forward to the same eventuality in Afghanistan, and the sooner the better.

I have heard the President and I have heard you this morning say that the principal objective of the United States in Afghanistan is to disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al Qaeda.

And I have also heard you say today that we are there to subdue the Taliban, promote economic development, and engage in diplomacy. And I assume that the diplomacy has to do with political reconciliation. Am I correct?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, if I could, our core objective in Afghanistan, of course, again, relates to Al Qaeda. And that is to make sure that Al Qaeda does not return to Afghanistan and establish the kind of sanctuary they had prior to 9/11.

So, again, that is the focus. Now, the only way to do that—

Mr. JOHNSON. And we only have 100 or so Al Qaeda.

General PETRAEUS. The only way to make sure they don't return in greater numbers is to help Afghanistan over time develop the capability to secure and to govern itself. And that leads to the need for the comprehensive civil-military campaign that I have described to you this morning.

Mr. JOHNSON. I see. I see. So we have moved past the subdue, disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al Qaeda per se and now we are on that second strategy of subduing the Taliban.

How many of those—how many people would you say we are engaged with militarily in Afghanistan, in terms of the opposition?

General PETRAEUS. Well, as I mentioned earlier, Congressman, there is—you know, the upper bound would be in the 25,000 range when you are in the full-blown fighting season, if indeed they do return to that number. And given the losses sustained by mid-level leaders and a number of the fighters, we will have to see indeed how that transpires this spring and this summer.

It is not at that level certainly right now. You know, I can literally walk you around the map at this point and show you where the active cells and active insurgent groups are.

Mr. JOHNSON. So what I hear you saying—and I hate to interrupt, but I don't have a lot of time—is that we are substantially forward in terms of controlling the Taliban. How are we doing as far as reconciliation, political reconciliation?

General PETRAEUS. Yes, there are two components really, if you will, to reconciliation. There is the component that is reintegration of reconcilable mid-level leaders and below. And as I mentioned in my opening statement, there are about 700 of those who have officially reintegrated, gone through all the steps of the official reintegration. There are another 2,000 or so who are in various stages of that process.

And then we are trying to get a grip on how many have literally sort of unofficially reintegrated by just going back to their villages, laying down their weapons and reintegrating themselves into society without making a big deal about it so that they don't make themselves vulnerable to the Taliban or visible to the Taliban as having done that.

The other component is the reconciliation with senior Taliban-level leaders. That is something that is and has to be Afghan-led. That is what Secretary Clinton talked about in terms of the diplomatic surge, if you will, and so forth.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Coffman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Petraeus and Madam Secretary, for your service to our country.

The Secretary of Defense recently said at West Point that if a general came up to him and recommended that we do the similar action, that we invade, pacify, and worse, we in effect engage in nation-building again, that he would say absolutely not.

And I just want to second that. I think we have significant, I think, security interests in Afghanistan. And I think we don't want the Taliban to take over the country, to make that a permissive environment whereby they could leverage that as a nation-state to further destabilize Pakistan; to assist the Taliban on the other side of the Durand Line; that we need some basis from which we can launch attacks against Al Qaeda in the FATA areas of Pakistan.

And so I think that those are certainly significant, but we seem to have taken the most costly approach to achieve our security interest in Afghanistan, spending over \$100 billion a year, and that the American taxpayers will be on the hook indefinitely. Even when we are out of Afghanistan, there is a projected \$8 billion-a-year cost in terms of maintaining Afghan security forces because they don't have an economy to do that. That we are, in fact—I think our first actions in there were brilliant. We gave air, logistical and advisory support to the anti-Taliban forces in the country which were the Northern Alliance, and they drove them out.

And instead of using our leverage to say, "You know, you need to reach out," to, say, the anti-Taliban Pashtun elements in the country, and that we will assist you so long as you keep the Taliban and Al Qaeda out, we led an effort to superimpose a political system on them that doesn't fit the political culture of the country; that doesn't have the capacity to govern outside of Kabul; that is mired in corruption.

We are trying to restructure that society and build them the economy at U.S. taxpayers' expense that they have never had before. I mean, you say we are not nation-building to build them a Switzerland, but at over \$100 billion a year, we ought to expect a Switzerland.

So I, you know, I am—but I have got to tell you this. I am in a hard position here. I came into Congress after this whole thing was going on. And I volunteered to go to Iraq even though I disagreed with invading the country because I believe that once in, we have an obligation to finish the job. We just can't simply run away. We can't simply expeditiously extricate ourselves from that situation.

But, so I just want to tell you that my—I have served this country now for a third time—Army, Marine Corps and as a member of Congress on this committee—and if I can accomplish anything

on this tour of duty, it is keeping this country from ever going down this path again.

But with that said, could you please, no matter—I was with the Marines in Helmand province in November where they are making tactical successes. But tactical successes on the ground are meaningless unless we have the Afghans coming in with the governance piece after we have stabilized an area.

So could you tell me, General Petraeus or Madam Secretary, are the Afghans able to in fact accomplish that? Are there any—can you give me any specifics where they have stepped in?

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely.

Mr. COFFMAN. Please go ahead.

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely, Congressman. If you look at the five central districts of Helmand province, you will find actually quite good district governors now in charge of each of them. In some cases, it has taken more than one to get to that point, such as in the case of Marjah. But in each case now, we assess the district governors and the provincial governor as really quite positive individuals and doing good work.

With respect, I think you are arguably correct that the first actions were brilliant. Certainly, it was a lightning campaign and it took out the Taliban, but they were not sufficiently capitalized on. And had we left it like that, it would have been in the hands of the warlords that we used to get rid of the Taliban, and there is no indication that they could have controlled the country, and you would have plunged back into a civil war.

So I think, again, that we certainly have to think through, you know, the what-thens and the second- and third- and fourth-order effects of these kind of endeavors, without question and I agree with you very strongly on that.

And also with respect, this is the only approach to achieving our core objectives in Afghanistan. Now, if you don't want to achieve those objectives, then that is a different matter. But the fact is that we have tried every other approach. I put a slide in there that showed the different approaches that we tried all along the way, essentially counterterrorism, counterinsurgency-light, and these other approaches, and I can assure you that none of them are adequate. And that is why we are doing what we are doing.

Finally, I think it is only fair to recognize that Afghanistan actually first of all was a nation-state before our own state; and second, had some 40 to 50 years of quite reasonable national peace and tranquility under a central government from Kabul prior to the onset of the tragic 30 years of war that they have sustained.

Thanks again, Congressman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Madam Secretary, General, I know your time to leave was at one o'clock. Could I ask you to stay another 15 minutes?

General PETRAEUS. I think we can do another 10 minutes, but we are actually meeting with—the former speaker is our next appointment, at least on my side.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, well then let's stay another 20.

[Laughter.]

Mr. West.

Mr. WEST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary Flournoy and also General Petraeus. All the way, sir.

I spent 2½ years in Afghanistan, June 2005 to November 2007, and I am looking forward to getting back over there to visit with you in a couple months.

But based upon my recent trip to Guantanamo Bay and also some of the issues that we know we are having at Pul-e-Charkhi prison, how is the Administration planning to handle the transfer or release of high-value and third-country nationals when withdrawal occurs? And specifically, I am looking at how we are planning to release or transfer these populations of detainees who are members of Al Qaeda and affiliated splinter groups without placing our national security at risk.

General PETRAEUS. First of all, thanks for what you did do there, and we do look forward to getting another master paratrooper back out there with us.

With respect to Pul-e-Charkhi, there has actually been substantial improvement there. In fact, there was an article in *The Washington Post* about Pul-e-Charkhi that our individuals who are in charge of helping the Afghan and also the State Department INL [Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] individuals with—actually provided some updated information for them.

There are still significant areas in which there need to be improvements there, but we have actually focused a fair amount with the Joint Task Force 435, not just on ensuring that the detention facility in Parwan, which is the new facility at Bagram Airbase, not the old one, is truly an international organization that monitors this, that we are not allowed to use the name of, but call it “the gold standard” in detention operations.

And we are seeking to help our Afghan partners as well because indeed, you do have to take bad guys off the battlefield in a counterinsurgency operation. And they can’t be broken out, as they were broken out of the prison down in Kandahar on an annual basis. And there hasn’t been a jailbreak down there annually since—in the last year-and-a-half either.

With respect to the third country, this is a substantial policy issue, and I am happy to hand off to the USDP [Under Secretary of Defense for Policy] on that one.

Secretary FLOURNOY. So we do have a number of third-country nationals in the facility at Parwan, at Bagram. All of these are, as in every detainee case, they are reviewed by a detention review board within 60 days, and then every 6 months after, to determine their status, whether they meet the criteria for continued internment; whether they should be recommended for transfer to a third country for criminal prosecution and so forth.

Those recommendations come all the way up to the Deputy Secretary of Defense level for review and decision.

If we were to have additional third-country nationals captured in Afghanistan, they would be brought to that facility. That facility is not part of what is going to be transferred to Afghan control as we transition responsibility for detention operations.

General PETRAEUS. And if I could just add by the way, we have actually begun the process of transition in the detention arena as well. We started last year with the training and the development of Afghan security forces who can over time take over the various detainee housing units in the detention facility in Parwan. They already control the first one. There are a couple-hundred Afghan detainees who have been transitioned to them.

And the process is that we provide the basis for which they were detained, which is in our system, if you will, a national security threat under the U.N. Security Council resolution that gives us this authority. But then we help them establish the case for charging them under Afghan law, and interestingly, biometrics and other forensics have proven to be very helpful and very persuasive, that we get off, for example, improvised explosive devices and so forth.

And as I said, that process has begun already and a couple-hundred have already been transitioned, and it is accelerating as we go along.

Mr. WEST. Thank you very much, sir, and I will see you over in the box.

And I yield back to the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Ryan.

Mr. RYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to speak. Thank you for sticking around.

I guess it is appropriate that this may be the final question or a final bit of conversation that we have. It is the issue of suicides among our soldiers. From 2005 to 2009, we have had 1,100 soldiers commit suicide, one every 36 hours. A report in Navy Times said that 7.3 percent of Army, Navy and Marines have thought about attempting suicide.

Have we changed any of our pre-deployment training or training in general to try to help diminish these numbers a bit?

General PETRAEUS. We have. We have also taken a number of steps in the theater in a whole host of different ways, everything from increasing the staffing of medical professionals who deal with this, to the training of leaders to identify individuals who might be at risk, and literally training all to be willing to raise one's hand and not feel as if, you know, it is just unacceptable to say, "Hey, I am feeling under some considerable stress, and so forth, and would like to talk to someone about it."

Touch wood, but the rate in Afghanistan has been significantly less since these have been instituted. There are also significant policies, of course, that have been enacted for post-deployment, because that is really where the challenges are.

That is not something I have obviously had oversight of as the Commander in Afghanistan, but I have obviously monitored as an Army four-star with the Vice Chief of Staff of Army and the Chief of Staff, directing a number of actions for the post-deployment period as well.

And the Under Secretary might want to supplement that.

Secretary FLOURNOY. If I could just add, there is intense interest and concern on the part of the Secretary, the Chiefs, the service Secretaries about this issue.

Interestingly, from what we can tell, the data suggests there is not a strong correlation with deployment, in terms of the rates don't increase based on time deployed or number of deployments.

But in any case there is an intensive effort to—for a broad educational effort on how to identify the signs, giving people the sense that they can come forward with concerns without risk—taking risk in their careers, much more resourcing of prevention programs, greater availability of prevention programs, and just a much broader set of efforts to get at overall stress on the force, whether it manifests itself in this way or in other things like divorce rates or PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] and so forth.

So this has really risen to the level of getting strategic-level attention in the department.

Mr. RYAN. Well, I appreciate that, and I think a lot of these numbers don't include those people who, you know, also get in car accidents because they are drinking and driving, and substance abuse. And you guys know the whole routine.

And I wanted to bring this up to you primarily because, General Petraeus, you are the preeminent military man in our country today. And I wanted to just bring to your attention—and you guys probably know some of this already—but the recent brain science, the field of neuroplasticity gives great hope to some of these soldiers.

And I want to point you to a study and a program called Mind Fitness by Elizabeth Stanley, who is over in Georgetown with a neuroscientist, Amishi Jha. And they did this study, and it is basically dealing with working memory capacity and how through the training, through this mind fitness training—and they studied about 30 Marines—through the mind fitness training you can actually build up resiliency within the working memory capacity.

And studies have shown outside of the military increased working memory capacity has all kinds of benefits that I think would benefit the soldier, situational awareness, attention skills, awareness, all of these great things.

But in addition to that, she cites in her report here, which I will hand each of you before you leave here, working—people with low working memory capacity have poorer academic achievement, lower standardized tests, more episodes of mind wandering, which gets to the operational side.

But they are more likely to suffer from PTSD, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and are more likely to exhibit prejudicial behavior towards personally disliked groups.

So the point is, I think a part of our training pre-deployment can be working on increasing this working memory capacity as a buffer throughout the deployment and possibly an opportunity.

So a lot more studies have to be done. I wanted to take this opportunity to bring it to your attention because I think it really can be transformational for how we train our troops.

General PETRAEUS. In fact, the Army has launched an initiative, it is about a year old now, I think, on resiliency training, that you can actually, again, harden an individual psychologically in advance and actually recover more rapidly if that—if that training is carried out.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Madam Secretary, General, I know that you have given us an additional 15 minutes. I thank you for your patience. And let the former speaker know we are sorry that you are late. And we appreciate her patience.

What I would ask, we have four other members here that have been patient but not able to get their questions in. If they put them to you in writing, would you please respond to them?

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing will stand in and be adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 1:17 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MARCH 16, 2011

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 16, 2011

Statement of Chairman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-California)
House Committee on Armed Services
Hearing on
Developments in Afghanistan
March 16, 2011

During a visit last week with U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates observed, “The closer you get to this fight, the better it looks.” Having just returned from a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan a few weeks ago, I couldn’t agree more.

Our delegation met with senior military commanders and diplomats, talked to airmen at Bagram Air Base, Marines in Helmand Province, and soldiers in Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban movement that harbored Al Qaeda in the years prior to 9/11. We spent time with Afghan leaders who are trying to build a better tomorrow for their people and excited children who are able to attend school for the first time in their young lives.

It was clear to our delegation that our forces have made significant gains in the past year and have reversed the Taliban’s tactical momentum. Our forces—working alongside their Afghan partners—have cleared former enemy strongholds, swept up significant weapons caches that are vital for the insurgency, and given more Afghans the confidence to defy the Taliban. We have made considerable progress in growing and professionalizing Afghanistan’s army and police so these forces are more capable and reliable partners to our own troops.

As significant as our troops’ achievements in the field are, they can easily be undone by poor decisions made here in Washington. Although the influx of additional troops and a better resourced counterinsurgency strategy have led to operational gains, our witnesses today have the opportunity to lay out how this progress can be consolidated into a lasting strategic victory for the United States and its Afghan allies.

In particular, the committee must understand what resources are required to reinforce the positive trends of 2010 so we can allow the Afghan government to assume the lead in governance and security. As Secretary Gates also said during his trip, “There is too much talk about leaving and not enough talk about getting the job done right.”

Among the key questions to be addressed are:

- What conditions would be sufficient to permit the redeployment of some U.S. forces beginning in July 2011? Thus far the exact terms of those conditions remain ambiguous. Unfortunately, what we hear informally from commanders on the ground is that “the calendar” is the only condition they’ve been given.
- Can any tactical and operational gains be permanently consolidated so long as the Taliban’s leadership enjoy safe havens in Pakistan?

Fortunately, our two witnesses—Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy and Commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces—Afghanistan, General David Petraeus—are eminently qualified to address these issues.

Our nation has asked military families to shoulder a tremendous burden. Just as we owe it to our nation’s warriors and their loved ones to remain committed to the fight by properly resourcing the fight, we also owe it to them to get the war’s strategy right. For nothing would do more to honor their sacrifices than to achieve a strategic victory that makes all Americans more secure.

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-Washington)
House Committee on Armed Services
Hearing on
Developments in Afghanistan
March 16, 2011

Thank you for appearing before the House Armed Services Committee today, we look forward to hearing your thoughts. I would also like to thank all those brave men and women in uniform and the civilians who accompany them for their hard work and sacrifices on behalf of our nation in Afghanistan.

Like most Americans, I support a redeployment of the majority of our forces out of Afghanistan as quickly as we responsibly can do so. But the key word is “responsibly.” I want to be clear—we have real and substantial national security interests in Afghanistan. The goal is to responsibly transition security to an Afghan government that has the support of the people and can deny Al Qaeda the use of Afghanistan as a safe haven. Leaving Afghanistan immediately, as some have urged, would have a real, and potentially substantial, downside as Al Qaeda returned to a safe haven in with their Taliban allies and threatened the United States, our allies and the Afghan people.

We have made real and significant tactical gains in security, particularly in the south and southwestern portions of Afghanistan. I have visited Helmand province. Others here have visited Kandahar. The gains we have seen are real and substantial. General Petraeus, you and those who work for you deserve our congratulations for those gains. Those who have sacrificed so much for those gains deserve our profound remembrance and our gratitude, and the high cost paid underlines why it is so important to make the transition to the Afghan government as soon as we responsibly can.

The question now is how do we cement and build on the gains that have been achieved? How do we ensure that the Afghan government to which we transition security and responsibility is sufficiently capable and has sufficient legitimacy to maintain these gains and carry on the fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. If we

do not believe that the Afghan government will be sufficiently capable to handle these problems at the end of 2014, we should leave now. No one can guarantee success, but the price we are paying is too high if we do not believe that success is at least likely.

I hope the witnesses here today can reassure us that we are on the path to success in Afghanistan. I hope they can take time to explain what minimum essential capabilities must exist in the Afghan government by 2014 in the areas of governance and security for the Afghan government to take full responsibility for both in a sustainable way. How will the malign influence of warlords and powerbrokers be reduced to lessen support for the Taliban? How are we doing in achieving these goals, and what is the likelihood that we will reach them in time? What confidence do you have that we will be further along this path by the end of this year? In two years?

Across the Durand Line, Pakistan remains a challenge. Areas in Pakistan dominated by violent extremists provide safe haven for Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Incidents of extremist violence, including the assassinations of government ministers, seem to be on the rise. And while Pakistan has taken action against those elements that directly threaten the state, they have not shown the same willingness to arrest the Quetta Shura Taliban leaders or take action against the Haqqani network. We are properly acting to help build the capability of the Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps. At the minimum increasing the capability of these forces helps make sure that the state of Pakistan does not fall to an extremist threat emanating from the Pakistan. But it has not shown any sign of a strategic reorientation or increased willingness to pursue the leaders of organizations whose members are killing our soldiers and innocent Afghans.

So again, thank you Under Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus for appearing here today. I hope you can address these questions and assist us in thinking through where we go from here. We have been in Afghanistan for ten years. And while we have only recently started to properly resource this effort, the frequent, long, and repeated deployments has worn down our force and cost us hundreds of billions of dollars. These costs are worth paying if this effort can succeed. Success in Afghanistan is important to our national security. I hope that your testimony here today can assist us in making this evaluation.

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STATEMENT OF
MICHÈLE FLOURNOY
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR POLICY
BEFORE THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

MARCH 16, 2011

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Opening Statement

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee: thank you for inviting us here to update you on our efforts in Afghanistan.

Ten years ago, al-Qaeda operatives organized a deadly attack from a safe-haven in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan that killed thousands of Americans and citizens of other countries. In response, the United States, supported by valued international partners, entered Afghanistan by force in order to remove the Taliban regime and to prevent further attacks by al-Qaeda and other extremist groups operating in the region. Our mission was just, fully supported by the international community, and initially successful.

In the years that followed, however, we lost focus on Afghanistan. The war in Iraq drained resources from Afghanistan and, while our attention was turned away, al-Qaeda, the Taliban and associated extremist groups reconstituted their safe-havens straddling the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan from which they have launched attacks and sustained a resilient insurgency. At the time, we did not appreciate their resiliency, their determination to regain what they had lost, and their continuing capacity to grievously harm the United States and our allies. The return of the Taliban in Afghanistan put at risk all that we had accomplished during the first years of the war and reminded people throughout the region of previous episodes when the U.S. misunderstood the region's challenges and underestimated the commitment required to achieve our objectives. As I discussed with this committee last year, through our inattention, we risked the return of a Taliban-led Afghanistan that would likely provide a safe-haven for terrorists who could again plan and execute attacks against the United States and our allies.

President Obama, immediately upon taking office, led a thorough review of our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and reaffirmed our core goal: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda, to deny it safe haven in the region, and to prevent it from again threatening the United States and our allies. In the course of that review, we found that the situation was worse than we had thought and that the Taliban had seized the momentum in Afghanistan. In response, the President committed tens of thousands of additional U.S. forces to degrade the Taliban insurgency, thereby providing time and space to build sufficient Afghan capacity. Similarly, our

NATO Allies and other partner nations surged additional forces of their own. Perhaps most importantly, we began an intensified effort to increase the size, skills and effectiveness of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

In December 2009, the President directed the deployment of an additional 30,000 surge forces to Afghanistan to increase security, reverse the Taliban's momentum and set the conditions for a transition to Afghan security lead. He also directed that we would begin a reduction of those surge forces in July 2011, saying, "We will execute this transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground."

Last December, we conducted a follow-on review of our strategy's implementation in which we reaffirmed our core goal and the strategy's key elements: a military campaign to degrade al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorists and Taliban insurgents; a civilian campaign to build Afghan governmental capacity; and an increased diplomatic effort designed to bring a favorable and durable outcome to the armed conflict and provide a more secure future for the United States, our allies and partners, and the region. The review found that our strategy was on track, that our forces and civilians were making real progress on the ground, and that we were making great strides in growing an ANSF capable of ultimately providing security in Afghanistan. The review also validated the Lisbon Summit Declaration that called for Afghan forces to assume full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014, and confirmed that we will be ready to begin a responsible drawdown of our surge forces in July 2011.

The review also identified several important challenges we must address. We must continue our efforts with Pakistan to eliminate the safe havens from which al-Qaeda senior leaders continue to operate and from which insurgents are able to launch attacks against Afghanistan, Pakistan and our own forces. We must work with the Afghan government to tackle corruption, particularly predatory corruption that affects individual Afghan citizens in their daily lives and fuels the insurgency, as well as high level corruption that can undermine the trust of the Afghan people in their own government. In addition, we must work to reduce intra-regional sources of tension that affect Afghanistan's stability, spur economic development, and create the conditions necessary to enable a political settlement among Afghans and reconcile those

insurgents who are willing to renounce al-Qaeda, forsake violence, and adhere to the Afghan constitution.

Since the review, we have continued to make progress. Our strategy is working. With the surge, the U.S. and our ISAF partners have over 140,000 forces in Afghanistan placing relentless pressure on the insurgents and regaining more and more critical territory. That surge has been matched by a surge in the numbers, quality and capability of the ANSF. During the past year, the ANSF have increased by more than 70,000 personnel, and we have been able to improve quality by developing non-commissioned officers and Afghan trainers, expanding the training curriculum, adding literacy programs, and increasing retention rates. As General Petraeus will describe in detail, U.S., NATO, and other ISAF forces, partnered and fighting side-by-side with increasingly capable ANSF units throughout Afghanistan, have wrested the initiative from the insurgents and have successfully cleared the Taliban from much of the country, including strongholds in and around Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. We have turned up the pressure on al-Qaeda and their affiliated groups in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan and have significantly degraded their ability to plan and conduct operations throughout the theater.

Complementing our joint military operations are important, bottom-up security initiatives, led by our special forces, that provide basic assistance to Afghan communities that desire to resist Taliban influence and connect with their district and provincial government. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) program is a temporary, village-focused security program that aims to deny Taliban territory and freedom of movement in selected areas that have a limited ANSF presence. Today we have 26 validated ALP sites with a total strength of approximately 4,000 Afghans. ALP programs have already significantly disrupted insurgent activity, denied insurgent influence in key areas, and generated serious concern among the Taliban leadership. These programs complement counterinsurgency operations, ANSF development, and civilian development programs to enhance stability.

Along with our military successes, we have also ramped up our civilian efforts to improve Afghan governance and increase economic opportunity for the Afghan people. Today, thanks to the “civilian surge,” there are more than 1,100 civilian experts from nine U.S.

departments and agencies working with the Afghan Government and civil society in an effort to increase capacity and improve services delivered at the district, province and national level – with more and more of the effort directed at the local level. This is no small task in one of the poorest nations in the world with a vast and varied geography and a population of some 30 million people who have been traumatized by over 30 years of nearly continuous war.

Reintegration is now a viable alternative for those insurgents willing to break their ties to al-Qaeda, renounce violence, and agree to abide by the Afghan Constitution. I want to thank Congress for recognizing this strategic requirement and providing us important authorities and funding to support reintegration. Likewise, in London last year, the international community pledged financial support for the Afghan Government's comprehensive program designed to draw insurgents off the battlefield and help communities reintegrate them back into Afghan society. This past winter, we observed many favorable examples of both formal and informal reintegration. Formal reintegration is carried out through the three phases of the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Process: outreach, demobilization, and community recovery. To date, nearly twenty provinces have created reintegration councils, and several hundred militants have left the battlefield through this process. Informal reintegration, which is more common, but less easily measured, refers to those insurgents who simply stop fighting and become productive members of their community.

While reintegration reduces the manpower available to the insurgency, reconciliation focuses on the development of a political solution that ends armed opposition to the Afghan government by major insurgent groups. This past June, President Karzai convened the Afghan Consultative Peace Jirga that established a framework for national reconciliation. He also formed the High Peace Council that includes representation from each of Afghanistan's major ethnic and political stakeholders, including women. The High Peace Council has had substantive discussions with representatives from a variety of insurgent groups and recently met with key leaders in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey to help build consensus towards a political resolution of the conflict. The United States strongly supports these Afghan-led efforts, though we recognize that this will not be a quick or easy process.

We have always recognized that we cannot succeed in Afghanistan through military operations alone. We welcome and encourage peaceful political participation by those Taliban leaders who are willing to reject al-Qaeda, forswear violence, and accept the Afghan Constitution in order to reconcile with their fellow Afghans. As Secretary Clinton recently said, “Taliban militants will have to decide that they are better off working within the Afghan political system rather than fighting a losing struggle alongside al-Qaeda...”

As we consider a political process in Afghanistan, we must understand the broad regional dynamics at play. Afghanistan is a proud and sovereign nation that fears and resents meddling or interference in its affairs by its neighbors. Nevertheless, Iran and Pakistan still hold the potential to support or spoil progress in Afghanistan. India and the Central Asian States also seek to have their deep concerns about the security and stability of the region addressed. We will endeavor to work together with these nations to support our core goal in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the long-term stability of the region.

Let me turn now to some of the key milestones and challenges that lie ahead.

Transition -- or *Inteqal* in Dari -- is a process by which the ANSF will progressively take lead responsibility for the security of Afghan provinces and municipalities from ISAF.

Transition is built upon the following principles:

- Transition is a process, not an event and will be based upon an assessment of conditions on the ground.
- Transition is a bottom-up process that will be informed by local assessments.
- Transition is a process by which ISAF will “thin out” and progressively shift, as conditions allow, from a partnering role, to a mentoring role.
- Headquarters elements will be retained, even as combat elements thin out to facilitate and enable ANSF operations.
- As ISAF thins out, some of the “transition dividend” will likely be reinvested in other geographic or functional areas such as training.
- The transition process goes beyond terrain and also applies to key Afghan governmental institutions.

- We must ensure that get transition right the first time, so this process is irreversible.

The Joint Afghan – NATO *Inteqal* Board or JANIB met in February to determine which areas were ready for transition. This assessment was based on the readiness of the ANSF to take the lead for security responsibilities and the readiness of local government structures to provide necessary services to the people. The results of the JANIB were reviewed at last week's NATO Defense Ministerial meeting and we expect President Karzai to announce his decision on the first tranche of municipalities and provinces for transition on March 21st.

We should expect the implementation of the transition process to reflect the diverse circumstances and varied requirements of districts and provinces across Afghanistan. That said, our objective in each case is for transition to be an irreversible process that will unfold during the months and years ahead city by city, district by district, and province by province, as the security situation improves and Afghan capacity grows. During the transition, Coalition forces will “thin out” and move from a position of being in the lead for security to one where Afghan forces are in the lead with an ISAF partner: first in tactical overwatch, then in strategic overwatch. In addition to transition in the field, we are also building capacity in the Ministries of Defense and Interior to enable the transition of key functions at the national level. Even by the end of 2014 when Afghans will have the lead for security nationwide, I anticipate that some U.S. forces will remain in Afghanistan in order to train and assist the ANSF and conduct combined counterterrorism operations.

As the President directed, the surge forces that we deployed to Afghanistan last year will conduct a responsible, conditions-based force reduction beginning in July 2011. I know that General Petraeus will expand upon this issue, but let me just say that it is too early to put a number on the size of the initial withdrawal. The pace and scope of this withdrawal will be based upon conditions on the ground. At the same time, as the transition process continues, and as ISAF forces thin out in a given district or province, we anticipate that some forces will be reinvested in other geographic areas or missions, such as training the ANSF.

The transition that will take place between now and December 2014 in no way signals our abandonment of Afghanistan. Our nation has made that mistake before, and we are determined not to repeat it. President Obama and President Karzai have agreed that the United States and Afghanistan will have an enduring strategic partnership beyond 2014, and we are currently working with the Afghans on the details of that partnership. Afghans must stand in the lead, but they will not stand alone.

This strategic partnership, along with the enduring partnership declaration NATO signed with President Karzai at the Lisbon Summit, sends an important message to the government and people of Afghanistan, to our friends and allies, to al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and to others in the region: we remain committed to Afghanistan. As we responsibly reduce our combat forces, and as Afghan forces take the lead, we will continue to work with the Afghan people to assist them in the development of their key institutions. Although the scope of our commitment will evolve, our core goal will remain unchanged.

Meanwhile, logistical support also remains a challenge in Afghanistan. We are working, along with the Department of State, to secure the additional approvals that we need from countries participating in the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) that will allow us to further reduce the load we place on Pakistan's infrastructure and provide additional routes for our personnel and cargo transiting into Afghanistan. We have already secured necessary approvals from Russia and we are negotiating with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to conclude further agreements and arrangements regarding NDN routes that they control. We likewise appreciate the cooperation we have had with Kyrgyzstan's democratically elected government to support our use of the Transit Center at Manas and have recently concluded an agreement with Kyrgyzstan that will permit us to contract with a new state-owned enterprise to help meet our fuel needs. Together, these efforts demonstrate the broader and shared interest in regional cooperation to bring an end to extremism and to support a stable and secure Afghanistan.

Pakistan, too, is inextricably linked to a successful outcome in the region, in both the near and long term. Pakistan has a pivotal role to play in our efforts to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates; to help bring about a durable political solution in Afghanistan; and to promote and sustain long-term regional stability. A lasting political solution in Afghanistan will

require Pakistan to be part of the process. However, Pakistan will have to respect Afghan sovereignty and work with Afghanistan to improve regional stability. Additionally, Pakistan must take decisive steps to ensure that the Afghan Taliban cannot continue to conduct the insurgency from Pakistani territory. Continued pressure from the Pakistani side is essential to help push the Taliban toward reconciliation.

Pursuing a strategic partnership with Pakistan based on a foundation of mutual interest, mutual respect, and mutual trust guides our civilian-military efforts. Over the long term, this partnership could lead to enduring linkages between our two peoples; stronger trade and investment ties; greater regional and internal stability; and a secure Pakistan whose regionally-integrated economy is growing and benefiting all of its people and its neighbors.

There is no question that there are significant hurdles to overcome to realize this vision. The history of U.S.-Pakistan relations is fraught with disappointments, leading many in both countries to see our relationship as driven by transitory interests. In Pakistan, this is manifested in the expectation that we may abandon the region once again as soon as we have achieved our immediate objectives in Afghanistan. Our efforts to date have yielded progress in changing this mindset. However, overcoming years of mistrust will take patience, as well as sustained effort and resources.

Our approach with Pakistan is to build an effective partnership that advances both U.S. and Pakistani interests, while also demonstrating to our Pakistani partners that we will remain a strong supporter of their security and prosperity over the long-term. Central to our efforts is aligning U.S. and Pakistani interests with respect to denying safe haven to all violent extremist organizations.

Pakistan's people have suffered greatly at the hands of extremists, with approximately 20,000-30,000 civilian casualties resulting from attacks on mosques, schools – particularly girls' schools – and even a World Food Program food distribution site. Pakistan's military has incurred nearly 3,000 personnel killed in action and over 8,000 wounded as a result of extremist attacks and kinetic operations against militants. In addition to the human toll, the financial burden of nearly a decade of conflict inside of and adjacent to Pakistan has been significant, both

in opportunity costs of economic growth and in sustaining more than 140,000 troops in combat along on their border with Afghanistan. Still, Pakistan has continued the fight.

Pakistan's will to confront extremist organizations, particularly those that it does not view as a direct threat to the Pakistani state, remains a key challenge. However, its deficiencies in capacity are even more daunting. Pakistan faces a determined, complex, and resilient set of insurgent enemies. Pakistan's military has historically focused on a major conventional land war with India and they still view India as their existential threat. The capabilities needed for a counterinsurgency campaign are different and require appropriate training and equipment. We are helping Pakistan to build this much needed capacity through train and equip programs funded by the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund (PCF) and the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund (PCCF), for which Congress has provided significant support. However, enhancing Pakistan's counterinsurgency capabilities to the level needed for successful operations to clear areas then "hold" and "build" in them will require our sustained civilian and military assistance.

Before addressing some of Pakistan's key deficiencies, it is important to remark on the progress Pakistan's military has achieved to date.

First, Pakistani operations since 2009 in Swat, South Waziristan, and a number of other agencies and areas in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (formerly known as the Northwest Frontier Province), are unprecedented.

Second, Pakistan's movement of six divisions, or 1/3 of their Army, from the Indian border to the border with Afghanistan demonstrates their recognition of the significant threat emanating from certain extremist groups.

Third, Pakistan's military leadership has increased cross-border coordination with ISAF and Afghan security forces. Part of this increased coordination resulted from a tragic accident that occurred last September when ISAF forces accidentally killed three Pakistani border soldiers who were mistaken for insurgents. This incident not only led to enhanced procedures being put in place to avoid future such tragedies, but also a greater measure of operational coordination designed to ensure that kinetic operations on one side of the border do not allow insurgents to escape with impunity to the other. Such coordination would have been impossible just two years ago.

However, despite this progress, Pakistan's military forces have not yet established effective control over important areas where extremists and insurgents operate. In many cases where the military has undertaken operations to clear insurgents and hold territory, Pakistan's inadequate civilian and military capacities for the "build" phase have prevented ultimate transfer of those areas to civilian control. This deficiency forces the Pakistan military to leave large numbers of forces in cleared areas to "hold" them for indefinite periods of time rather than redeploying them to undertake new operations. In several cases, such as Mohmand Agency, military forces have been required to repeat clearing operations as insurgents have reinfiltrated.

Addressing these issues will not only require sustained military and security assistance, but the financial assistance provided through the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, also known as Kerry-Lugar-Berman. The efforts the Department of State and USAID are undertaking through the Strategic Dialogue to reach all segments of Pakistan's population with civilian capacity training and new infrastructure are essential elements for Pakistan's ability to "hold" and "build" areas to make them resistant to militant return.

In many ways, we are still in the early stages of seeing our renewed civilian-military partnership with Pakistan gain traction. Our team in the Office of the Defense Representative – Pakistan has been able to build and nurture partnerships with Pakistan's security forces on every level, including during the historic flooding and subsequent recovery efforts in the summer of 2010. These relationships have been critical to working through challenges that might once have broken the relationship, such as the late September 2010 incident on the Pakistani border post. Instead, the ability to continue communicating through crises has led to greater coordination that advances our mutual interest in a stable and secure Pakistan.

We have also made significant progress by supporting Pakistan's efforts to define their near and long-term requirements as they restructure their forces to take on this counterinsurgency fight. Through the Exchanges in Defense Planning (EDP) process, we worked with the Pakistani military leadership to develop a shared five-year vision for training and procurement. That shared vision formed the basis for the Administration's Fiscal Year 2012 request for \$350 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), \$5 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET), and \$1.1 billion in PCCF for the first year of the Multi-Year Security Assistance Commitment for Pakistan that Secretary Clinton announced in October 2010. That

commitment includes \$2.029 billion of FMF and IMET over 5 years, with PCCF levels set annually according to conditions on the ground.

“Train-advise-and-equip” programs with Pakistan’s military and paramilitary forces are central to pursuing our near-term objectives of eliminating terrorist sanctuaries and disrupting and defeating the al-Qaeda network. Through congressional support for programs like the PCF and PCCF, we are increasing Pakistan’s capacity to take on militant networks. This effort will take time, and we are working to reform our security assistance system to make it more responsive to the wartime train-and-equip needs of Pakistan, Afghanistan and other partners.

Let me conclude my remarks on Pakistan with a comment concerning the detention of U.S. diplomat Raymond Davis. The U.S. government remains extremely concerned about the continued detention of Mr. Davis and views this as a violation of Pakistan’s international commitments under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The State Department remains actively engaged in a dialogue with the government of Pakistan about releasing Mr. Davis as quickly as possible. It is critical, however, that we work to resolve this issue, so that it does not derail the important progress we have made in the last two years in building a stronger and deeper relationship between our countries.

Finally, I would like to turn to the human and financial costs of this war. Many of you have expressed concern with these costs, especially in light of our battlefield casualties and our fiscal pressures here at home. You face these costs each time you sign a letter to a constituent who has lost a loved one and each time you vote on war funding. This concern has been expressed by our ISAF allies and partners as well.

But, let me be absolutely clear. As the President said, the threat to our national security and the security of our friends and allies that emanates from the borderland of Afghanistan and Pakistan is not hypothetical. There is simply no other place in the world that contains such a concentration of al-Qaeda senior leaders and operational commanders. Al-Qaeda and the other terrorist organizations that operate in this region have a proven ability to infiltrate across borders to conduct attacks. These dangerous groups have established safe-havens inside of a nuclear-armed state and they are allied with the Taliban, a movement that seeks to overthrow the government of Afghanistan and contributes to the destabilization of Pakistan. To allow these

hostile organizations to flourish in this region is to put the security of the United States and our friends and allies at grave risk.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate the basic principle that is at the heart of our efforts in Afghanistan. The outcome we seek is the defeat of al-Qaeda and the denial of the region as a sanctuary for al-Qaeda and its affiliates. This objective is the reason why our brave servicemen and servicewomen have sacrificed so much. It is why we have invested so much treasure.

This remote region has served as a crucible for the most catastrophic terrorist actions of the past decade. As we learned at great cost after abandoning the region in 1989, staying engaged over the long term is critical to achieving lasting peace and stability in this region and to securing our national interests. We are determined to bring this war to a successful conclusion, for the sake of our own security, but also for the security of the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan who have suffered so much, and who have so much to gain from a secure, lasting peace.

Members of the committee, I want to thank you for providing the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your continued and invaluable support for the policies and programs that are critical to our success in Afghanistan and Pakistan. ###



Michèle Flournoy
Under Secretary of Defense for
Policy



Michèle Flournoy was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on February 9, 2009. She serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy and the integration and oversight of DoD policy and plans to achieve national security objectives.

Prior to her confirmation, Ms. Flournoy was appointed President of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in January 2007. Before co-founding CNAS, she was a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she worked on a broad range of defense policy and international security issues.

Ms. Flournoy previously served as a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU), where she founded and led the university's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) working group, which was chartered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop intellectual capital in preparation for the Department of Defense's 2001 QDR.



Prior to joining NDU, Ms. Flournoy was dual-hatted as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy. In that capacity, she oversaw three Policy offices in the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Strategy; Requirements, Plans and Counterproliferation; and Russia, Ukraine and Eurasian Affairs.

Ms. Flournoy was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service in 1996, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1998 and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 2000. She is a former member of the Defense Policy Board and the Defense Science Board Task Force on Transformation.

Ms. Flournoy earned a bachelor's degree in social studies from Harvard University and a master's degree in international relations from Balliol College, Oxford University, where she was a Newton-Tatum scholar.

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STATEMENT OF
GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, U.S. ARMY
COMMANDER
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE AND US FORCES AFGHANISTAN
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
AFGHANISTAN
16 MAR 2011

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Mr. Chairman, Representative Smith, it's a privilege to be here today with Undersecretary Flournoy to report on the situation in Afghanistan.

Before I proceed, however, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to the people of Japan as they recover from one of the worst natural disasters in their history. For many years now, Japan has been a stalwart partner in Afghanistan and has made many vital contributions to the mission. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the earthquake and the tsunami.

Bottom Line Up Front

As a bottom line up front, it is ISAF's assessment that the momentum achieved by the Taliban in Afghanistan since 2005 has been arrested in much of the country and reversed in a number of important areas. However, while the security progress achieved over the past year is significant, it is also fragile and reversible. Moreover, it is clear that much difficult work lies ahead with our Afghan partners to solidify and expand our gains in the face of the expected Taliban spring offensive. Nonetheless, the hard-fought achievements in 2010 and early 2011 have enabled the Joint Afghan-NATO Transition Board to recommend initiation this spring of transition to Afghan lead in several provinces. The achievements of the past year are also very important as I prepare to provide options and a recommendation to President Obama for commencement of the drawdown of the US surge forces in July. Of note, as well, the progress achieved has put us on the right azimuth to accomplish the objective agreed upon at last November's Lisbon Summit, that of Afghan forces in the lead throughout the country by the end of 2014.

Getting the Inputs Right

The achievements of 2010 and early 2011 have been enabled by a determined effort to get the inputs right in Afghanistan. With the strong support of the United States and the 47 other troop-contributing countries, ISAF has focused enormous attention and resources over the past two years on building the organizations needed to conduct a comprehensive, civil-military counterinsurgency campaign, on staffing those organizations properly, on developing – in close coordination with our Afghan partners – the requisite concepts and plans, and, above all, on deploying the additional forces, civilians, and funding needed. Indeed, more than 87,000 additional ISAF troopers and 1,000 additional civilians have been added to the effort in Afghanistan since the beginning of 2009. And Afghanistan's Security Forces have grown by over 122,000 in that time, as well.

The Comprehensive Approach

Getting the inputs right has enabled our forces, together with Afghan forces, to conduct the comprehensive campaign necessary to achieve our goals in Afghanistan. Our core objective is, of course, ensuring that Afghanistan does not once again become a sanctuary for Al Qaeda. Achieving that objective requires that we help Afghanistan develop sufficient capabilities to secure and govern itself. And that effort requires the execution of the comprehensive civil-military effort on which we are now embarked.

Over the past year, in particular, ISAF elements, together with our Afghan and international partners, have increased all the activities of our comprehensive campaign substantially. We have, for example, stepped up the tempo of precise, intelligence-driven operations to capture or kill insurgent leaders. In a typical 90-day period, in fact, precision operations by US special mission units and their Afghan partners alone kill or capture some 360 targeted insurgent leaders. Moreover, intelligence-driven operations are now coordinated with senior officers of the relevant Afghan ministries and virtually all include highly trained Afghan soldiers or police, with some Afghan elements now in the lead on these operations.

With your support, we have also expanded considerably joint ISAF-Afghan operations to clear the Taliban from important, long-held safe havens and then to hold and build in them. ISAF and Afghan troopers have, for example, cleared such critical areas as the districts west of Kandahar city that were the birthplace of the Taliban movement, as well as important districts of Helmand Province, areas that expand the Kabul security bubble, and select locations in the north where the Taliban expanded its presence in recent years. One result of such operations has been a four-fold increase in recent months in the number of weapons and explosives caches turned in and found. Another has been the gradual development of local governance and economic revival in the growing security bubbles. In fact, Marjah, the one-time hub of the Taliban and the illegal narcotics industry in central Helmand Province, held an election for a community council on March 1st during which 75 percent of registered voters cast a ballot. And as a result of improvements in the security situation there, the markets, which once sold weapons, explosives, and illegal narcotics, now feature over 1500 shops selling food, clothes, and household goods.

We have positioned more forces, as well, to interdict the flow of fighters and explosives from insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan. And we will do further work with our Afghan partners to establish as much of a defense in depth as is possible to disrupt infiltration of Taliban and Haqqani Network members. Meanwhile, we are coordinating closely with the Pakistani Army to conduct ISAF operations that will provide the “anvil” on the Afghan side of the Durand Line against which Pakistani Taliban elements can be driven by Pakistani operations in the border areas.

Afghan National Security Force Development

With your support, we have also devoted substantial additional resources to the development of Afghanistan’s security forces. This effort is, of course, another important component of our comprehensive approach; indeed, it is arguably the most critical element in our effort to help Afghanistan develop the capability to secure itself. We have seen significant progress in this arena over the past year, though we have had to contend with innumerable challenges and our Afghan partners are the first to note that the quality of some elements is still uneven. The train and equip mission is, in fact, a huge undertaking, and there is nothing easy about it; however, the past year alone has seen Afghan forces grow by over one-third, adding some 70,000 soldiers and police. And those forces have grown in quality, not just in quantity. Investments in leader development, literacy, and institutions have yielded significant dividends. In fact, in the hard fighting west of Kandahar in late 2010, Afghan forces comprised some 60 percent of the overall force, and they fought with skill and courage.

The Afghan Local Police Initiative

President Karzai's Afghan Local Police initiative has also been an important addition to the overall campaign. It is, in essence, a community watch with AK-47s, under the local District Chief of Police, with members nominated by a representative Shura Council, vetted by the Afghan intel service, and trained by and partnered with Afghan Police and US Special Forces elements. The initiative does more than just allow the arming of local forces and the conduct of limited defensive missions; through the way each unit is established, this program mobilizes communities in self-defense against those who would undermine security in their areas. For that reason, the growth of these elements is of particular concern to the Taliban, whose ability to intimidate the population is limited considerably by it.

There are currently 70 districts identified for ALP elements, with each district's authorization averaging 300 ALP members. Twenty-seven of the district ALP elements have been validated for full operations, while the other 43 are in various stages of being established. This program has emerged as so important that I have put a conventional US infantry battalion under the operational control of our Special Operations Command in Afghanistan to increase our ability to support the program's expansion.

We have increased as well our efforts to enable the Afghan government's work and that of international community civilians to improve governance, economic development, and the provision of basic services. They are essential elements of the effort to shift delivery of basic services from Provincial Reconstruction Teams and international organizations to Afghan

government elements, thereby addressing President Karzai's understandable concerns about "parallel institutions."

And we have provided assistance for new Afghan government-led initiatives in reintegration, supporting the recently established Afghan High Peace Council and Provincial Peace and Reintegration Councils. Indeed, we recognize that we and our Afghan partners cannot just kill or capture our way out of the insurgency in Afghanistan; Afghan-led reintegration of reconcilable insurgents must also be an important element of the strategy – and it now is. In fact, some 700 former Taliban have now officially reintegrated with Afghan authorities and some 2,000 more are in various stages of the reintegration process.

All of these efforts are part of our comprehensive approach. And we have worked hard to coordinate ISAF activities with the international organizations and diplomatic missions in Afghanistan, as well as with our Afghan partners. We have also sought to ensure that we minimize loss of innocent civilian life in the course of our operations, even as we also ensure protection of our forces and our Afghan partners. Of note, a recently released UN study observed that civilian casualties due to ISAF and Afghan force operations decreased by just over 20% in 2010, even as our total forces increased by over 100,000 and significant offensive operations were launched. Our progress in this area notwithstanding, however, in view of several tragic incidents in recent weeks, I ordered a review of our Tactical Directive on the use of force by all levels of our chain of command and with the air crews of our attack helicopters. I

have also issued instructions on reducing damage to infrastructure and property to an absolute minimum. Counterinsurgents cannot succeed if they harm the people they are striving to protect.

Transition

As I noted at the outset, the Joint NATO-Afghan Transition Board has recommended to President Karzai and NATO leaders commencement of transition in select provinces in the next few months. President Karzai will announce these locations in his Nowruz speech on March 22nd. In keeping with the principles adopted by the North Atlantic Council to guide transition, the shifting of responsibility from ISAF to Afghan forces will be conducted at a pace determined by conditions on the ground with assessments provided from the bottom up so that those at operational command level in Afghanistan can plan the resulting “battlefield geometry” adjustments with our Afghan partners. According to the NATO principles, transition will see our forces thinning out, not just handing off, with reinvestment of some of the forces freed up by transition in contiguous areas or in training missions where more work is needed. Similar processes are also taking place as we commence transition of certain training and institutional functions from ISAF trainers to their Afghan counterparts. As we embark on the process of transition, we should keep in mind the imperative of ensuring that the transition actions we take will be irreversible. As the ambassadors of several ISAF countries emphasized at one recent NATO meeting, we’ll get one shot at transition, and we need to get it right.

2014

As a number of ISAF national leaders have noted in recent months, we need to focus not just on the year ahead, but increasingly on the goal agreed at Lisbon of having Afghan forces in the lead throughout Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Indeed, we need to ensure that we take a sufficiently long view to ensure that our actions in the months ahead enable long-term achievement in the years ahead. We have refined our campaign plan to do just that – and we are also now beginning to look beyond 2014, as well, as the United States and Afghanistan – and NATO and Afghanistan – discuss possible strategic partnerships. All of this is enormously reassuring to our Afghan partners – and of considerable concern to the Taliban. With respect to the Taliban, appreciation that there will be an enduring commitment of some form by the international community to Afghanistan is important to the insurgents' recognition that reconciliation, rather than continued fighting, should be their goal.

Additional Issues

Before concluding, there are four additional issues I would like to highlight.

First, I am concerned that levels of funding for our State Department and USAID partners will not sufficiently enable them to build on the hard-fought security achievements of our men and women in uniform. Inadequate resourcing of our civilian partners could, in fact, jeopardize accomplishment of the overall mission. I offer that assessment, noting that we have just completed a joint civil-military campaign plan between US Forces Afghanistan and the US

Embassy which emphasizes the critical integration of civilian and military efforts in an endeavor such as that in Afghanistan.

Second, I want to express my deep appreciation for your support of vital additional capabilities for our troopers. The funding you have provided has, for example, enabled the rapid deployment of a substantial increase in the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets supporting our forces. To take one example, we have increased the number of various types of persistent surveillance systems – essentially blimps and towers with optics – from 114 this past August to 184 at the present, with plans for continued increases throughout this year. Your support has also enabled the rapid procurement and deployment of the all terrain vehicle version of the mine resistant ambush protected family of vehicles, with 6,700 fielded since I took command. And, your support has continued to provide our commanders with another critical element of our strategy, the Commander's Emergency Response Program funding that has once again proven absolutely invaluable as a way of capitalizing rapidly on hard-won gains on the ground. Indeed, CERP funding, the establishment of the Afghan Infrastructure Fund, and the specific authorization for the reintegration program have been instrumental in enabling key components of our overall effort.

Third, I should at this point also highlight the critical work of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. These institutions are the largest donors to Afghanistan after the US, and they have been critical to the success of such projects as the Ring Road and the Uzbek-Afghan

railroad. We need these critical enabling institutions, and further US support for them will ensure that they are able to continue to contribute as significantly as they have in the past.

Fourth, I also want to thank you for the substantial funding for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces. The continued growth of Afghan forces in quantity, quality, and capability is, needless to say, essential to the process of transition of security tasks from ISAF forces to Afghan forces. And the resources you have provided for this component of our effort have been the critical enabler of it.

Conclusion

In closing, the past eight months have seen important, but hard-fought, progress in Afghanistan. Key insurgent safe havens have been taken away from the Taliban, numerous insurgent leaders have been killed or captured, and hundreds of reconcilable mid-level leaders and fighters have been reintegrated into Afghan society. Meanwhile, Afghan forces have grown in number and capability, local security solutions have been instituted, and security improvements in key areas like Kabul, Kandahar, and Helmand Provinces have, in turn, enabled progress in the areas of governance and development.

None of this has been easy. The progress achieved has entailed hard fighting and considerable sacrifice. There have been tough losses along the way. And there have been setbacks as well as successes. Indeed, the experience has been akin to that of a roller coaster ride. The trajectory,

however, has generally been upward since last summer – though there certainly have been significant bumps and difficult reverses at various points. Nonetheless, although the insurgents are already striving to regain lost momentum and lost safe havens as we enter the spring fighting season, we believe that we will be able to build on the momentum achieved in 2010 – though that clearly will entail additional tough fighting.

As many of you have noted in the past, our objectives in Afghanistan and in the region are of vital importance, and we must do all that we can to achieve those objectives. Those of us on the ground believe that the strategy on which we are embarked provides the best approach for doing just that, noting, as dialogue with President Karzai has reminded us at various junctures, that we must constantly refine our activities in response to changes in the circumstances on the ground. Needless to say, we will continue to make adjustments, in close consultation with our Afghan and international counterparts in Afghanistan, as the situation evolves.

Finally, I want to thank each of you for your continued support for our country's men and women in Afghanistan and their families. As I have noted to you before, nothing means more to them than knowing that what they're doing is important and knowing that their sacrifices are appreciated by their leaders and their fellow citizens back home. Each of you has sought to convey that sense to them, and we are grateful to you for doing so. Thank you very much.



General David H. Petraeus
Commander of International
Security Assistance Force &
Commander of U.S. Forces
Afghanistan



General David H. Petraeus assumed command of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) on July 4, 2010 after serving for over 20 months as Commander, United States Central Command.

Before his assignment as CENTCOM Commander, General Petraeus commanded Multi-National Force-Iraq where he led US and Coalition Forces during "the surge." Prior to his tour as MNF-I Commander, he commanded the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, during which time he oversaw the development of the Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual. Before that assignment, he served for over 15 months as the first Commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and the NATO Training Mission-Iraq. That deployment to Iraq followed his command of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), during which he led the "Screaming Eagles" in combat during the fight to Baghdad and throughout the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His command of the 101st followed a year deployed on Operation Joint Forge in Bosnia, where he was the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations of the NATO Stabilization Force and the Deputy Commander of the US Joint Counter-Terrorism Task Force-Bosnia. Prior to his tour in Bosnia, he spent two years at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, serving first as the Assistant Division Commander for Operations of the 82nd Airborne Division and then as the Chief of Staff of XVIII Airborne Corps.



General Petraeus was commissioned in the Infantry upon graduation as a "distinguished cadet" from the United States Military Academy in 1974. In addition to the posts noted above, he subsequently held leadership positions in airborne, mechanized, and air assault infantry units in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East, including command of a battalion in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and a brigade in the 82nd Airborne Division. In addition, he served in a number of staff assignments: Aide to the Chief of Staff of the Army; battalion, brigade, and division operations officer; Military Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander-Europe; Chief of Operations of the United Nations Force in Haiti; and Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Petraeus was the General George C. Marshall Award winner as the top graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Class of 1983. He subsequently earned MPA and Ph.D. degrees in international relations from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and he later served as an Assistant Professor of International Relations at the US Military Academy. He also completed a fellowship at Georgetown University.

Awards and decorations earned by General Petraeus include two awards of the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, two awards of the Distinguished Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal for valor, the State Department Distinguished Service Award, the NATO Meritorious Service Medal, the Gold Award of the Iraqi Order of the Date Palm, the French Légion d'Honneur, the Polish Order of Merit, the Order of Australia, and the National Defense Cross of the Czech Republic. He is a Master Parachutist and Air Assault and Ranger qualified. He has also earned the Combat Action Badge and French, British, and German Jump Wings. In 2005 he was recognized by the *U.S. News and World Report* as one of America's 25 Best Leaders, and in 2007 he was one of four runners-up for *Time* Person of the Year. In 2009, he was selected by *Foreign Policy* magazine as one of the world's top 100 public intellectuals and by *Esquire* magazine as one of the 75 Most Influential People of the 21st Century. Most recently, he was awarded the George Kennan Award by the National Committee on American Foreign Policy and the 2010 James Madison Medal by Princeton University.

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

MARCH 16, 2011

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. ROGERS

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.] [See page 44.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. COOPER

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.] [See page 25.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. CONAWAY

Secretary FLOURNOY. [The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.] [See page 48.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. PINGREE

Secretary FLOURNOY. [The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.] [See page 50.]

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.] [See page 50.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

MARCH 16, 2011

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. MILLER

Mr. MILLER. The January 2011 SIGAR report identified the absence of a “coordinated, results-oriented approach to determine whether CERP projects have achieved their goals, are being used as intended, and are being sustained.” Such an approach does exist in the Tactical Conflict Assessment Planning Framework (TCAPF)-credited by commanders as contributing to successes in areas of Helmand and Kunar Provinces. Do you believe there is merit in institutionalizing TCAPF as a means of focusing the targeting of CERP funds and evaluating their effectiveness in terms of reducing instability?

General PETRAEUS. The Tactical Conflict Assessment Planning Framework (TCAPF) is designed to identify the causes of instability, to develop initiatives to diminish or mitigate those causes, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those initiatives in fostering stability at the tactical level. By focusing on village dynamics and priorities, and, in particular, follow-up interviews, TCAPF has been useful in determining whether stability has improved as a result of implemented projects.

The Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) encompasses programs and projects intended to have immediate tactical effects for the warfighter, including development initiatives, construction projects, and humanitarian efforts. To implement CERP effectively, we established the Money As A Weapon System—Afghanistan (MAAWS-A) CERP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to provide guidelines that are, in fact, similar to those that guide TCAPF and that incorporate lessons learned from SOPs in Iraq. For example, CERP projects are currently initiated after speaking with the local Afghan population—including village elders and other local leaders—to determine their most critical needs so that we can support the highest priority requirements.

CERP could potentially benefit from TCAPF lessons learned and processes during after-action reviews. We will explore this concept further, with a particular focus on whether CERP SOPs need additional emphasis on follow-on interviews to determine whether CERP objectives were met. We will also examine whether TCAPF’s instability assessment processes could benefit from data we are gathering as part of the CERP program.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. COOPER

Mr. COOPER. What is the strength of the Haqqani network in numbers?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. COOPER. What is the fighting capability of the Haqqani network? What do they bring to the fight compared to Taliban fighters?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. TURNER

Mr. TURNER. Since you assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan, what steps have you taken to reduce the opium production?

- a) Has it been successful? Please describe.
- b) What are you doing to limit future production?
- c) What can Congress do to help?

General PETRAEUS. Since the illegal narcotics industry is the largest source of Afghanistan-derived income for the Taliban—with other revenue streams from outside the country—we are working to deprive the enemy of this important source of funding, especially in the major poppy-growing areas in the south. As we have made progress on the security front in Helmand, we have further pressured illegal narcotics networks by significantly increasing the amount of drugs interdicted and by reducing enemy freedom of movement. As security improves, we and our Afghan

partners are also pursuing development initiatives to provide licit opportunities for Afghans as an alternative to the drug trade.

Beyond security and development, we are also supporting Afghan-led eradication efforts, which are most mature in the south. Helmand Province, for example, accounts for around 70 percent of Afghanistan's eradication efforts, with approximately 1,600 hectares eradicated there in 2010. And, as of early April, more than 1,200 hectares had already been eradicated this year. Although crop-eradication initiatives are Afghan-led, we are working with our Afghan partners to offer incentives for provincial governors to pursue eradication, and these have shown signs of success this year.

Additionally, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency is mentoring Afghan counter-narcotics police, who are showing an increase in capabilities as a result.

a) Nationwide drug interdictions have increased significantly from last year, with interdictions in the south representing a significant portion of the finds. In the first quarter of 2011, we interdicted nearly 350 percent more illegal drugs than in the same time period in 2010 (with a 700 percent increase between March 2010 and March 2011). Simultaneously, there was a nearly 50 percent decrease in nationwide opium production between 2009 and 2010, although a poppy blight last year is responsible for much of that.

As part of our effort to sever the nexus between the insurgency, corrupt government officials, and narcotics traffickers, we are also working to establish a more effective counter-narcotics criminal justice center. Last year, the Afghans achieved a 98 percent conviction rate for drug-related offenses, with most sentences in the range of 15–20 years.

Clearly, much work remains to be done with all of our counter-narcotics efforts—especially capacity-building—but we have made clear progress over the last year and anticipate that we will make further progress in the coming year.

b) The most important element of our strategy to limit future production is to continue expanding the security bubbles in the most important poppy-growing areas in the south. Improved security increases the risk to narco-traffickers and also prevents the insurgency from reaping the full financial benefits of the drug trade. Additionally, security allows governance and development projects to take hold, which in turn helps to establish a licit economy that encourages Afghan farmers to grow licit crops rather than poppy.

The other important element of our long-term strategy is to build Afghan capacity to maintain and to increase pressure on narcotics networks. Among other initiatives, this includes the continued development of the Afghan National Security Forces (especially the counter-narcotics police), support for eradication efforts, and expanded rule-of-law efforts to increase the Afghan government's ability to detain and prosecute drug kingpins and corrupt officials involved in the drug trade.

c) Congress has been very supportive of our counter-narcotics efforts. Perhaps the most important area in which Congress can help is to ensure that the civilian agencies involved in counter-narcotics efforts have sufficient funding. In particular, our long-term success in this mission will depend on the important work of the Drug Enforcement Agency and the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Mr. TURNER. What conditions will you consider, in July 2011, to determine the extent of a U.S. troop drawdown?

General PETRAEUS. I will consider all elements of our comprehensive civil-military campaign as I prepare my recommendation for a troop drawdown commencing in July 2011. As part of that process, I will provide my chain of command with various options as well as my best military advice for each, which will incorporate, among other factors, assessments of: security gains in key geographic areas; Afghan National Security Forces growth and development; Afghan readiness to assume additional security responsibilities; Afghan Local Police growth and effectiveness; reintegration momentum, and Afghan governance and development, especially at the district and provincial level.

Mr. TURNER. When do you expect to reach the next "decision point," after July 2011, about possible further reductions in U.S. troop commitments?

General PETRAEUS. Current and future decisions regarding a conditions-based drawdown of U.S. troops are ultimately the purview of the President. As we begin an initial U.S. drawdown in July 2011, I will continuously assess the situation on the ground in order to provide my best military advice to my chain of command during my remaining months on the ground.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. RUPPERSBERGER

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Over the course of our involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, we have learned many valuable lessons about reconstruction and stabilization. In your opinion, what would be the most valuable lesson learned in terms of something that was done successfully. What would be the most valuable lesson learned based on a policy that did not work?

General PETRAEUS. The most valuable lesson learned about reconstruction and stabilization in both Iraq and Afghanistan is that reconstruction and stabilization is not an end in itself, but rather a means to lay the foundation for long-term security and development. In Afghanistan, we are dealing with a severely fractured and war-torn social and economic environment, where government capacity to deliver critical socio-economic services to the grassroots is weak. In these conditions, we have learned that we need to pursue both top-down and bottom-up approaches. For instance, we have to build capacity in key ministries to ensure that the Afghans can build sufficient security forces and also improve the ability to deliver certain services, such as those associated with the rule of law. At the same time, we also have to build up local communities with governance and development programs to empower the Afghan people and to increase economic opportunities. The World Bank-led National Solidarity Program is one example that incorporates local decision-making, prioritizes projects, and requires a minimum 10 percent community input—all of which supports our goal of mobilizing communities and connecting the people to their government.

One of the most valuable lessons we have learned during these conflicts is the need to continually improve coordination and communication—with the host nation as well as other stakeholders, such as U.S. government agencies, international partners, and non-governmental organizations. When it comes to coordinating with the host nation, it is particularly important to work with local partners and leaders to ensure a sense of responsibility and ownership by the community. In Iraq, we frequently tended to take a top-down approach to reconstruction, which did not always promote responsibility at the local level, and that in turn often undermined the long-term sustainability of individual projects. Although we have been more effective in Afghanistan, there are still instances where a lack of buy-in undermined the goal of a given initiative.

More generally, we have learned the importance of coordinating with all the various stakeholders, on matters large and small, to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts and that we are all focused on the same goals. Obviously, this is a particular challenge considering how many actors are often involved. Still, improving our ability to get everyone on the same page is the only way that we can establish the necessary unity of effort to be successful in this endeavor.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Currently, the Department of Defense, Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development have all been working together to implement reconstruction policy.

- a) Is this relationship working?
- b) How could it work better?
- c) Would you recommend the development of a separate agency to take over reconstruction policy?

General PETRAEUS. a) Yes, a combined U.S. Embassy, USAID, ISAF, and USFOR-A civil-military team is working together closely to plan and to implement reconstruction policy, particularly with the development of large-scale strategic infrastructure projects.

There are many examples of our combined efforts, especially in recent years. For instance, USAID and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have leveraged resources to address multiple Afghanistan water-resource issues. Over the last year, USAID has used Economic Support Funds to finance USACE provincial watershed assessments, 15 of which were completed in February 2011 (the remainder should be completed by June 2011). These assessments are critical to identify small-scale dam sites with the potential to increase agricultural production.

A more significant example of our ability to work together on reconstruction is the newly created Afghan Infrastructure Fund (AIF), a joint venture between the State Department/USAID and the Defense Department. Projects require joint approval by the Secretaries of State and Defense, which requires close coordination. The initial proposal for this year's \$400 million allotment included improvements to the Northeast Power System and the Southeast Power System, other projects to improve the national electricity grid, and funds for rule-of-law initiatives. We are currently working on a second list of projects to be nominated for funding in 2012.

- b) The relationship between the Defense Department, the State Department, and USAID has improved over the last several years as all three agencies have increas-

ingly focused on the civil-military counterinsurgency campaign plan. Despite the increased coordination and common goal, there is still room to improve our collective understanding of individual roles and responsibilities and how they fit into the overall campaign plan. This is particularly true when it comes to development efforts, but, as noted, we have made substantial progress in this arena.

c) I would not recommend creating a separate agency to lead reconstruction policy, especially considering the improvements we have made and are making along this important line of effort. Creating another agency would not necessarily translate into either better policy or better policy implementation. It could, in fact, have the opposite effect since it would inevitably increase bureaucratic friction and confuse the current roles and responsibilities that have evolved over many years and in response to many lessons learned.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. FRANKS

Mr. FRANKS. General, President Obama has noted that “Pakistan is central to our efforts to defeat Al Qaeda” and has insisted that Pakistan deal with terrorist safe havens within their borders. As a result, we have poured money into the country in hopes of having some effect on Pakistani leadership. I am concerned how Pakistan is using these funds, especially given the recent killings of non-Muslims and the arrest of Raymond Davis, not to mention their nuclear stockpile.

a) What is Pakistan doing with all of the funds we have given them?

b) Are we handing money to trusted hands that share similar goals or are we funding a government that is increasingly opposed to our vision?

General PETRAEUS. a) As commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces—Afghanistan, I do not have oversight of U.S. funds provided to Pakistan. Obviously, we coordinate closely with other U.S. entities working with Pakistan—and I have a working relationship with Pakistani military leaders—but specific funding questions would be better answered by the Office of the Defense Representative—Pakistan, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the State Department.

b) Again, questions along these lines are better answered by the U.S. agencies that directly control the funding and by senior U.S. policymakers responsible for foreign policy.

Mr. FRANKS. General, I am a big supporter of the Guard and Reserve Components of our military forces and I deeply appreciate their service to America. Given the 2014 timeframe, what is the role of the Guard and Reserve today in Afghanistan and how do you see their role evolving with the projected change of our Nation’s force structure?

General PETRAEUS. Current and future operations depend on a fully integrated Active, Guard, and Reserve force with the flexibility to respond quickly to changing operational requirements. As it is currently sized, the U.S. Army is dependent on the Reserve and National Guard to maintain the current deployment tempo in Iraq and Afghanistan and to provide critical enabling capabilities on the battlefield. In Afghanistan, Reservists and Guardsmen play particularly important roles in the fields of Engineering, Signal, Medical, Civil Affairs, Transportation, Logistics, and Military Police.

As we move toward 2014 and beyond, a smaller active force may be even more dependent on these key enablers, although the number of troops deployed will also affect the roles of the Reservists and Guardsmen. Regardless, there is little doubt that our Guard and Reserve Components will be critical elements of our overall force in the years to come.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. JOHNSON

Mr. JOHNSON. Al Qaeda has a relatively small presence in Afghanistan—likely less than 100 fighters, is that correct?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. Is it correct that the overwhelming majority of combat engagements for coalition and Afghan security forces in Afghanistan do not involve Al Qaeda; instead, they involve a variety of armed groups with various ideological, political, or tribal identities and objectives?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. Is it fair to say, General, that many of the warring factions in Afghanistan—and many of them are Pashtun—are principally concerned with domestic Afghan and local political issues?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. Rather than attacking and further alienating these factions, General, and attempting to force their total submission to the Afghan central government, is it worth considering whether we should instead play the role of the honest broker and mediate disputes between these Afghan factions, facilitating the redress of grievances, so a political settlement can be achieved?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. You have said, “You don’t end an industrial strength insurgency by killing or capturing all the bad guys. You have to kill, capture, or turn the bad guys, and that means reintegration and reconciliation.” As we approach the 10th anniversary of the Bonn Conference, where are we on the reconciliation piece of that strategy? What will a likely political settlement look like?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. In an op-ed in *The New York Times* on Wednesday, March 23, Lakhdar Brahimi and Amb. Thomas Pickering write that, “we believe the best moment to start the process toward reconciliation is now, while force levels are near their peak.” In other words, we’re at our position of greatest negotiating strength now. Do you agree with that and believe it’s time to start negotiating? If not now, when will be the right time?

General PETRAEUS. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. The spending resolution that the House passed last month cut the International Affairs budget by 16 percent. How would cutting State and USAID funding affect operations in the AfPak area?

General PETRAEUS. Reducing State and USAID funding could significantly affect operations in Afghanistan, and, depending on the scale of the cuts, potentially undermine the hard-fought gains that we have made over the last year. Our State and USAID partners are involved in every element of our comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign. For example, State and USAID provide substantial funding and, just as importantly, institutional knowledge necessary to construct strategic infrastructure and to establish effective governance and rule of law—all of which is critical to the long-term stability of Afghanistan.

Additionally, as the transition process begins, there will be a greater emphasis on the civilian elements of our civil-military campaign. In particular, we will need to support the Afghan government as it strengthens human and institutional capacity and as it works to improve basic-service delivery to the Afghan people. This includes initiatives to improve health care, education, sanitation, food security, vocational training, and access to potable water—all of which are important to successfully carrying out irreversible transition.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN

Mr. WITTMAN. General you stated that the core objective is ensuring that Afghanistan does not once again become a sanctuary for Al Qaeda. Achievement of this objective, I feel, is shared by everyone in this room and it requires that we help Afghanistan develop sufficient capabilities to secure and govern itself. You stated that in a typical 90-day period, precision operations by SOCOM units and their Afghan counterparts alone kill or capture some 360 targeted insurgent leaders. I am assuming that these leaders have ties to the Taliban, Al Qaeda, the Haqqani Network, and various other groups sympatric to the Taliban and radical Islamic terrorism.

a) It has been promulgated by multiple sources, including our current administration, that Afghan forces will take over throughout Afghanistan by the end of 2014; at that time who will assume the duties of kill/capture missions and the prolonged detention of captured insurgents?

b) Do you see a shared strategic partnership in this endeavor after 2014? The main point here being that if we are sending SOCOM units to kill or capture these targeted insurgents, who live most likely become high-value detainees, I assume they are threats to our national security. These aren’t people we just want to “let go” of or lose situational awareness and control of after 2014.

c) Between now and 2014, how do you and the ISAF plan to release or transfer these populations of detainees, who are members of Al Qaeda and affiliated splinter groups, without placing our national security at risk?

d) Is there an adequate plan in place for transfer or release?

General PETRAEUS. We intend for Afghan security forces to be in the lead for security across the country by the end of 2014. Obviously, capture/kill missions and detainee operations will remain important components of the fight over the next few years. To increase Afghan capacity to carry out targeted raids, we have been and are continuing to build Afghan commando and special operation units for high-precision missions. The Afghan Army has already fielded a formidable special operations component with nine commando kandaks and 14 Special Forces A-Teams, all of which are increasingly capable of performing independent operations. We intend to further increase the numbers and capabilities of these units in the years ahead so that Afghans can assume more responsibility for high-end missions. That said, even after 2014, some targets may require high-end technology and capabilities that our armed forces alone possess.

We have already started transitioning the Detention Facility in Parwan, and we are working with our Afghan partners to build Afghan capacity for detention operations. We believe that Afghans will possess the personnel and capacity to lead this effort by the end of 2014.

Mr. WITTMAN. General, you have stated that it is imperative to ensure the transition actions we take are irreversible. We have one shot to get this right. You recognize that we and our Afghan partners cannot kill and capture our way out of this insurgency.

a) With that said; can you please elaborate on the Afghan-led reintegration of reconcilable insurgents?

b) What is a reconcilable insurgent?

c) What is the reintegration process?

d) How do we know that these 700 former Taliban who have been reintegrated, and 2000 who are in the process are not just biding their time?

e) Are any of these men being reintegrated and then allowed to join the ANA or the ALP? As you know these guys have been fighting for 30 plus years, and even though we have the watch, they have the time.

General PETRAEUS. a) Reintegration is a process whereby insurgents lay down their arms and rejoin Afghan society. Reintegration is focused on lower-level fighters and commanders, and the official program—the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP)—was implemented by the Afghan National Security Council in September 2010. Since APRP began, more than 1,700 fighters have officially enrolled, and an additional 2,000 are in some form of negotiation. ISAF's role in these efforts is to support them however we can, with the understanding that these must be Afghan-led processes in order for them to be successful.

b) A reconcilable insurgent is an individual who is willing to stop fighting and to engage in dialogue and grievance resolution with community leaders or with the Afghan government; the central goal is for him to peacefully rejoin his community with dignity and honor. Due to the local nature of the insurgency—a majority of insurgents fight near their homes—the grievances driving fighters are often local in nature. The APRP seeks to enable local agreements so that villages and communities can reach out to insurgents, address grievances, and offer enticements to stop fighting. There are various reasons that an insurgent might choose to lay down his weapon, including fear over being targeted, a belief that fighting is no longer the way to achieve his goals, or simply that he is tired of fighting. Reintegration depends on trust and confidence among Afghans as well as the active participation of the Afghan government, which we are encouraging.

c) APRP has three phases: 1) Social Outreach, Confidence Building, and Negotiation, 2) Demobilization, and 3) Consolidation of Peace. In the first phase, community, district, and provincial leaders reach out to insurgents—via both modern and traditional means—to learn of their grievances and to encourage them to peacefully rejoin their communities.

If there is a willingness to reintegrate, and an insurgent meets APRP eligibility criteria, the ex-combatant enters the demobilization phase and is formally enrolled in APRP. Formal enrollment includes an intent-to-reintegrate form, individual survey, biometrics collection, small-arms registration, and heavy weapons turn-in. The reintegration candidates are then provided assistance to aid in meeting their basic needs and to replace financial support that may have been provided by the insurgency. This assistance lasts for approximately 90 days, during which time the goal is to enroll the reintegration candidates in disengagement training. This training is designed to counter common misperceptions among ex-combatants and to increase their chances of becoming healthy, productive members of their communities. The

training includes modules on civics, dispute resolution, social responsibility, religion, and health. Upon successful completion of disengagement training, the candidate signs a Declaration of Reintegration.

The third phase of APRP, Consolidation of Peace, aims to ensure that peace and reintegration are permanent. It involves community recovery initiatives that benefit the entire community, not just the insurgent. Elements of this phase include vocational and literacy training, long-term employment opportunities, and community development projects.

d) It may be that a few of the more than 1,700 former fighters who have joined APRP are biding their time, but intelligence reports, interviews, and surveys of reintegration candidates all indicate that the vast majority of reintegration activities are genuine. The extensive steps involved in APRP also help to ensure that the willingness to leave the fight is sincere. The key is to continually engage ex-combatants as they proceed through the process and to facilitate local efforts since this is a very personal, community-based process that seeks to bind ex-combatants to their community, to the local government, and to the national government.

e) When reintegration candidates complete the demobilization process, they are once again full citizens of Afghanistan, with all of the rights and responsibilities that entails. This means that a reintegrated individual is eligible to join the Afghan National Security Forces or the Afghan Local Police, assuming he meets the rigorous criteria and clears the multi-layered vetting process that each of these organizations have implemented.

Mr. WITTMAN. General, can you discuss with us the importance of Village Stability Operations (VSO) and how this is going to affect the counterinsurgency? Can you talk to us about the objectives of VSO and how you see this integrated civil-military approach succeeding in Afghanistan?

General PETRAEUS. Since 2009, Village Stability Operations (VSO) and, since fall 2010, the Afghan Local Police (ALP) program—a vital extension of our greater VSO efforts—have factored significantly into our civil-military counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign design and will continue to do so. VSO and ALP represent an integrated approach that is both bottom-up and top-down, providing security, development, and governance effects that are focused at the local (or village) level in rural Afghanistan. These local effects are also tangibly linked to the district, provincial, and national Afghan government in a manner that extends the government's presence to rural areas—a key goal of our COIN campaign.

VSO and ALP districts also support the larger campaign plan by disrupting insurgent infiltration routes and by denying insurgents staging areas from which they can attack populations in key districts. By working through local shuras and community leaders, VSO and ALP help to mobilize communities to defend themselves. After all, no one is more vested in the security of a village than those who live there and those who have offered their own sons to defend the village. This “defense in depth” adds security in areas where Coalition forces are minimal or absent. In this respect, VSO and ALP act as important “thickening” agents to increase security-force presence, especially in rural areas. As of early May, there were 39 validated ALP sites with more than 5,800 ALP patrolmen, with plans to expand to a total of 77 sites.

In the vast majority of VSO and ALP sites, we have seen violence levels decrease since these sites were established. Initially, there is often a spike in violence as insurgents challenge new forces in areas that had been previously been uncontested, but, over time, violence subsides. Surveys suggest that strong majorities believe that ALP is capable of defending their community, and we are also starting to see an increase in the number of people returning to VSO communities. Finally, bazaars and commerce have become more robust in VSO/ALP areas. All of these are important signs of localized progress, and, taken together, are increasingly contributing to our overall COIN campaign.

Mr. WITTMAN. General Petraeus, you mention in your testimony the importance of improving governance at the local level in Afghanistan.

a) Am I to assume the same holds true at the national level as well?

b) What are your thoughts with respect to governance capacity in central government ministries?

c) Are these efforts also being hindered by State and USAID funding decisions?

General PETRAEUS. a) Yes, our civil-military efforts to help our Afghan partners improve governance must be both bottom-up at the local level and top-down at the national level.

b) Despite many challenges, the Afghan government continues to make measured progress in building the human and institutional capital of its central line ministries. For example, we have seen notable advance at the Ministries of Defense and Interior; continued institutional growth and development in those ministries will be

particularly important as Afghans assume more responsibility for security efforts as part of the transition process. The Ministry of Justice likewise will need to increase capacity and effectiveness as well as its ability to extend its reach into the provinces with rule-of-law initiatives. And other ministries—such as the Ministries of Commerce, Mines, Agriculture, and Rural Development—have important roles to play in economic development.

All the ministries face institutional and personnel shortcomings, but there are important efforts underway to improve the situation. For example, there are numerous capacity-building initiatives supported by donors, to include merit-based hiring, pay increases for government employees, improvements to the systems and processes linking central line ministries to provincial offices, and training programs for civil servants.

Increasing the capacity of the central line ministries is a long-term project that will require substantial investment in human-resource development over many years, but further progress is necessary to lay the foundation for long-term Afghan self-sustainment.

c) These efforts are not yet being hindered by State and USAID funding decisions, but they likely would be if funding support is significantly reduced or is reduced in critical areas. Without strong support for the civilian elements of our civil-military campaign, stabilization and transition efforts will face real limitations—and we will potentially put our hard-fought gains at risk.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SUTTON

Ms. SUTTON. Understandably, there are many more preparations that need to be made for the drawdown of U.S. forces beginning in July.

a) What is being done to coordinate the withdrawals of other NATO member countries whose forces are currently deployed in Afghanistan? Will their departure be phased out over the 2011-to-2014 timeframe?

b) With three of the Regional Commands led by other nations, does the U.S. expect to take over in the interim in each of these areas, or will the withdrawals of these other nations involve a turnover directly to Afghan forces?

General PETRAEUS. a) During the Lisbon Summit and subsequent international conferences, partner nations agreed on key principles as we move forward with plans to transition to Afghan security lead by the end of 2014. These principles included affirmation that any drawdowns during that time would be conditions-based and would also entail “reinvesting” troops elsewhere in the country or in the training mission, as Canada is in the process of doing. Further, members of the Alliance have reaffirmed their commitment to Afghanistan through the end of 2014 and even beyond. Given all this, I believe that the actions of partner nations will be coordinated and based on conditions on the ground in Afghanistan. We will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure that decisions on troop drawdowns do not adversely affect the hard-fought gains that we have made.

b) Troop decisions are still being formulated by partner nations—as well as by the U.S.—so any discussions of specific areas or partner-nation plans would be premature. All troop-contributing nations agree that transition should be based on conditions on the ground, and, further, as Secretary Gates said during the March Defense Ministerial in Brussels, our goal is for members of the Alliance to abide by the principle of “in together, out together.” Obviously, the continued growth and development of Afghan security forces will inform decisions about troop drawdowns as well as the nature of the transition in any given geographic area, which will likely vary by region.

Ms. SUTTON. Our brave men and women have been serving in Afghanistan since 2001, along with civilian personnel, contractors, diplomats, and many others. Many have bravely served and much has changed in Afghanistan’s landscape after a U.S. presence.

a) What do you believe it will look like in 2014?

b) Are there only U.S. civilian personnel?

c) Are any of our soldiers still deployed, and how many?

d) Would those soldiers be restricted to certain areas, or bases?

e) Will we be the only country with a presence, or will other NATO members also have personnel stationed there after 2014?

General PETRAEUS. a) I am still developing recommendations for my chain of command for the initial conditions-based drawdown of U.S. troops to commence in July 2011. Given that, it would be premature to speculate on our force posture in 2014.

b) It would be premature to predict the exact composition of our military and civilian presence in 2014 since those are ultimately decisions for the President.

c) Again, it would be premature to predict exact numbers or even the nature of our mission in 2014, since our long-term relationship with and support for Afghanistan is the subject of current negotiations.

d) It is too early to predict what our force presence or mission will look like in 2014, but it is likely that our posture—to include troop numbers, bases, roles, and areas of operation—will look very different than it does today.

e) During the Lisbon Summit and subsequent international conferences, partner nations reaffirmed their commitment to Afghanistan through the end of 2014 and even beyond. Obviously, force levels will be determined by individual nations, but we are confident that decisions with our partners will be well-coordinated. Additionally, NATO and Afghanistan signed a Declaration on an Enduring Partnership during the November 2010 Lisbon Summit, and NATO is currently working with the Afghan government to determine the scope and nature of NATO's long-term relationship with Afghanistan.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. PALAZZO

Mr. PALAZZO. I represent South Mississippi, a military-heavy district where all branches of service are represented, including Camp Shelby, one of our Nation's premier mobilization bases, and one of the largest Guard and Reserve training sites in the Nation. This weekend I had an opportunity to participate in a hero's homecoming with a great group of soldiers, the Mississippi National Guard's 287th Engineer Company (Sappers). These soldiers were conducting route clearance and IED/roadside bomb removal, allowing for their fellow soldiers' safe travel on the roads of Southeastern Afghanistan. With this in mind, we must be mindful that there is a dark cloud over America, our national debt. Still, I remain committed to making sure funding is provided in a manner that continues to train for, equip, and execute our mission successfully, so that our men and women in uniform can do their job and return home safe and sound.

a) Many of these soldiers told me that the MRAPs and mine rollers that they are currently using are saving their lives every day. How do you perceive the performance of the MRAPs and mine rollers currently in service?

b) Do you believe we need more MRAPs and mine rollers in Afghanistan?

c) What do you feel is the current trend regarding IEDs and Roadside Bombs in Afghanistan? Are we seeing more or less as we continue to improve technology to identify and disarm threats?

d) Is the equipment we are using currently, the best possible for the job?

General PETRAEUS. a) The Mine Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles (MRAPs) and mine rollers currently deployed in Afghanistan are performing extremely well and are saving lives and limbs on a daily basis. MRAPs offer far superior protection for our troops than the up-armored High Mobility, Multi-Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) that they replaced. And the "V"-shaped hull and armor plating on these vehicles are specifically designed to provide enhanced protection against mines and IEDs. Based on current data gathered by Combined Joint Task Force Paladin, the executive agent for Counter-IED efforts in Afghanistan, U.S. Service personnel have a 96 percent survival rate when attacked by IEDs or small-arms fire while traveling in an MRAP. Mine rollers, specifically designed to detonate IEDs preemptively, provide additional protection to our servicemembers. Overall, these assets have proved invaluable in saving lives and minimizing damage to other critical lifesaving, protective equipment.

b) Based on the current deployment projections for MRAPs, the rate of loss due to battle damage, and the current and projected production rate, we are confident that all current and future requirements will be met. We will, however, continually assess these requirements as conditions on the ground warrant. On this point, it should be noted that the incredible work to surge this equipment to theater would not have been possible without strong congressional support.

c) Over the last year, the number of IED incidents theater-wide has increased, although not nearly to the same degree as other forms of attacks, most notably direct-fire incidents. There are obviously deviations based on seasonal factors, such as declines during winter or the annual poppy harvest, and, of course, we have significantly increased our total force numbers.

While the total number of IED attacks is higher, the effectiveness of these attacks has declined since October 2010 (an effective IED is one that causes a casualty). In the event of an effective IED attack, the rate of those killed or seriously injured has also declined steadily since August 2009. Further, the rates of IEDs found and cleared—versus those that detonate—have remained at or above expected seasonal levels. This is possibly due to increased mounted and dismounted operations, tar-

geted raids to disrupt IED networks, improved detection capabilities, neutralizing technologies such as mine rollers, more tips from local Afghans, and the possibility that the enemy is emplacing IEDs more hastily as a result of more patrols and more intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms.

On the second question, just as we are constantly adjusting our tactics, so too is the enemy. We anticipate that the enemy will continue to use IEDs and one of its main weapons of choice since IED emplacement minimizes direct confrontation with our forces. We will continue to adjust our tactics and pursue new technologies to minimize the risk IEDs pose to our troopers.

d) Yes, the equipment we are using represents the best technology that we have developed. Over the past 16 months, we have deployed billions of dollars in new equipment to counter IEDs, including MRAPs and variants like the MRAP All Terrain Vehicle (more than 14,000 vehicles total), sophisticated metal detectors, electronic counter-measures (jamming devices), mine rollers, robots, myriad surveillance platforms, and other gear. Most of this equipment was specifically designed for the Afghanistan area of operations, based on lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan. We have also redoubled our efforts to take lessons learned from the field on tactics, techniques, and procedures and institutionalize them in short order. We will continue to assess the needs of our warfighters and to ensure that we meet constantly-changing battlefield requirements.

