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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

MARCH 22, 2012

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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2012

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in room SD–G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Nelson, Webb, McCaskill, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Chambliss, Wicker, Brown, Ayotte, Collins, Graham, and Cornyn.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Peter K. Levine, general counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Ann E. Sauer, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Christian D. Brose, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Jennifer R. Knowles, Hannah I. Lloyd, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: Vance Serchuk, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn Chuhta and Elyse Wasch, assistants to Senator Reed; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Ryan Ehly, assistant to Senator Nelson; Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Stephen Hedger, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Mara Boggs, assistant to Senator Manchin; Chad Kreikemeier, assistant to Senator Shaheen; Elana Broitman, assistant to Senator Gillibrand; Ethan Saxon, assistant to Senator Blumenthal; Anthony Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Joseph Lai, assistant to Senator Wicker; Charles Prosch, assistant to Senator Brown; Brent Bombach, assistant to Senator Portman; Brad Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte; Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins; Sergio Sarkany, assistant to Senator Graham; Dave Hanke, assistant to Senator Cornyn; and Joshua Hodges, assistant to Senator Vitter.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. The committee meets this morning to receive testimony on the progress of the

campaign in Afghanistan. Our witnesses are Dr. Jim Miller, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and General John Allen, Commander of the 50-country International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. A warm welcome and thanks to you both.

I'm going to interrupt this hearing at this moment to take care of some nominations because we have a quorum present. I'll ask the committee to consider a list of 246 pending military nominations. They've all been before the committee the required length of time. Is there a motion to favorably report the 246 military nominations?

Senator MCCAIN. So moved.

Chairman LEVIN. Is there a second?

Senator SESSIONS. Second.

Chairman LEVIN. All in favor say aye. [Chorus of ayes.]

Opposed, nay. [No response.]

The motion is carried.

[The list of nominations considered and approved by the committee follows:]

MILITARY NOMINATIONS PENDING WITH THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE WHICH ARE PROPOSED FOR THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION ON MARCH 22, 2012.

1. LTG Thomas P. Bostick, USA, to be lieutenant general and Chief of Engineers/Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Reference No. 403).
2. Col. Peter R. Masciola, ANG, to be brigadier general (Reference No. 1007).
3. BG Michael X. Garrett, USA, to be major general (Reference No. 1144).
4. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Richard M. Scott) (Reference No. 1166).
5. BG Mark A. Ediger, USAF to be major general (Reference No. 1207).
6. In the Army, there are 28 appointments to the grade of major general (list begins with Robert P. Ashley, Jr.) (Reference No. 1210).
7. In the Marine Corps, there is one appointment to the grade of major (William J. Wrightington) (Reference No. 1282).
8. In the Marine Corps, there is one appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Mark A. Mitchell) (Reference No. 1288).
9. In the Marine Corps, there are two appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Robert F. Emminger) (Reference No. 1295).
10. In the Marine Corps Reserve, there are 73 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Paul H. Atterbury) (Reference No. 1333).
11. LTG Janet C. Wolfenbarger, USAF, to be general and Commander, Air Force Materiel Command (Reference No. 1356).
12. BG Craig A. Bugno, USAR, to be major general (Reference No. 1357).
13. In the Army, there are 53 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Keith J. Andrews) (Reference No. 1364).
14. In the Air Force Reserve, there are five appointments to the grade of brigadier general (list begins with Ondra L. Berry) (Reference No. 1384).
15. In the Air Force Reserve, there are five5 appointments to the grade of major general (list begins with Steven A. Cray) (Reference No. 1385).
16. In the Air Force, there are 25 appointments to the grade of major general (list begins with David W. Allvin) (Reference No. 1386).
17. In the Army Reserve, there are two appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Dwight Y. Shen) (Reference No. 1396).
18. In the Air Force Reserve, there are 23 appointments to the grade of brigadier general (list begins with Steven M. Balser) (Reference No. 1411).
19. LTG Clyde D. Moore II, USAF, to be lieutenant general and Commander, Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Air Force Materiel Command (Reference No. 1412).
20. In the Air Force, there are two appointments to the grade of colonel and below (list begins with Matthew R. Gee) (Reference No. 1415).
21. In the Army, there is one appointment to the grade of major (Shane T. Taylor) (Reference No. 1417).

22. In the Army, there are three appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel and below (list begins with Patricia A. Loveless) (Reference No. 1418).
23. In the Army, there is one appointment to the grade of major (Robert S. Taylor) (Reference No. 1419).
24. In the Army, there is one appointment to the grade of major (Casey D. Shuff) (Reference No. 1420).
25. In the Navy, there are three appointments to the grade of lieutenant commander (list begins with Jay R. Friedman) (Reference No. 1422).
26. In the Navy, there is one appointment to the grade of lieutenant commander (Steven J. Porter) (Reference No. 1423).
27. Col. Douglas D. Delozier, ANG, to be brigadier general (Reference No. 1427).
28. MG David D. Halverson, USA, to be lieutenant general and Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff, US Army Training and Doctrine Command (Reference No. 1443).
29. In the Air Force, there are three appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel and below (list begins with Kerry L. Lewis) (Reference No. 1444).
30. In the Army Reserve, there are three appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with John B. Hill) (Reference No. 1445).
Total: 246.

Chairman LEVIN. Our troops in Afghanistan are being asked to perform demanding and often dangerous missions and they're carrying them out superbly and professionally. General Allen, on behalf of the committee, please pass along our unwavering support for our military men and women serving with you in Afghanistan, our gratitude for their courageous and dedicated service and the support of their families.

Talking about families, I know that you have with you this morning, General, your wife, Kathy Allen, and your daughter, Bobbi Allen. I hope I had their names correct. I temporarily had them mixed up a little earlier this morning. I'm not sure if I need forgiveness from either one of them, but in any event we're delighted that they're here.

General ALLEN. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. The success of our mission in Afghanistan depends on building the capacity of Afghan security forces to take the lead for security in their country. U.S.-Afghan partnering has been critical to the mission at all levels, from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) training missions to partnering with units in the field and on up to advisors in the ministries of defense and interior. That partnership has been tested by the disturbing events of the last few weeks, including the violence following the unintentional and the very regrettable burning of Korans at a U.S. military base. The tragic and incomprehensible killing of 16 Afghan civilians in Kandahar Province, apparently by a U.S. soldier, has further strained the relationship between the United States and Afghanistan.

Last week, President Obama and President Karzai reaffirmed their common commitment to completing the process of transition in Afghanistan. In a coordinated press statement, the two presidents reiterated their support for the approach agreed upon at the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, which calls for Afghan security forces to assume "full responsibility" for security across the country by the end of 2014.

This morning, I want to focus on another part of that jointly issued statement. President Obama and President Karzai both said in that coordinated press statement that they share the goal of building capable Afghan security forces so that Afghans are in-

creasingly in charge of their own security—and; "with the lead for combat operations shifting to Afghan forces, with U.S. forces in support, in 2013."

General Allen assured me in a discussion in my office that NATO's planned transfer of full responsibility for security across Afghanistan in 2014 always assumed shifting the lead in combat operations to Afghans in all five so-called tranches or areas of Afghanistan by 2013. That's good news to me. I say good news because it has always been my belief that success in Afghanistan depends on building the capacity of the Afghan army and police so that Afghans are in the lead in providing security for their own country, not ISAF forces, and to ensure that that happens by continuing to reduce our forces.

The Afghans want their own forces providing for their own security. That's what we heard when we met with village elders at their council meeting in Helmand Province 2½ years ago. When I asked how long U.S. forces should stay, one elder told me: Only long enough to train our security forces and then leave. After that you will be welcome to visit us, not as soldiers, but as guests.

So I hope our witnesses will explain in some detail this morning how the 2013 and 2014 dates are in sync, as well as how the process of phased transition, agreed to by all at Lisbon, will unfold over the coming months and years.

General Allen, I hope that you will explain what that transition to an Afghan lead will look like and how transitioning to Afghan lead in the final part of Afghanistan can occur in 2013 when the transition is not to be completed until 2014.

In addition, we need to know what this transition means for the mission of U.S. and coalition forces. Secretary Panetta has said that as Afghanistan security forces assume the lead for security, ISAF forces will move to a "support, advise, and assist role," although ISAF forces will remain "fully combat capable." It appears that, even though Afghan security forces will be in the lead starting in 2013 throughout Afghanistan, U.S. and coalition forces may still be participating in combat operations with Afghan forces in parts of Afghanistan while the transition process continues to completion in 2014.

I also understand that the plan after 2014 is for the Afghan security forces to still receive coalition support in key enablers, such as logistics, airlift, and intelligence support, and U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) will likely be partnered with their Afghan counterparts in conducting counterterrorism operations.

We also need to know what the transition process means for the pace of U.S. troop reductions in Afghanistan. Last June, President Obama said that after the 33,000-troop U.S. surge force was brought home by the end of this summer, that U.S. troop levels would continue to draw down, this is the President's quote, "at a steady pace." Yet the fiscal year 2013 defense budget for overseas contingency operations is based on an assumption of 68,000 U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan throughout the 2013 fiscal year.

So we'll be asking you whether you support continuing to draw down U.S. forces at a steady pace, as the President said, after the 68,000-troop level is reached by September, and we'd also like to know when you expect to make your recommendation, General, on

post-surge reductions in U.S. forces in Afghanistan starting after September of this year.

Given the importance of having capable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) take over the security lead throughout Afghanistan, I was surprised and I was concerned about news accounts of a U.S. proposal to reduce the size of the Afghan forces by a third after 2014, apparently based on questions of the affordability of sustaining a larger Afghan force. According to a Wall Street Journal article last month, the United States has proposed reducing the size of the Afghan security forces from 352,000 in 2012 to 230,000 after 2014. That article cited Lieutenant General Bolger, the head of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, as saying that this proposal is based in part on "what the international community will provide" financially.

I believe that our commanders should be providing their military advice based on what they believe the Afghan security forces will need to successfully maintain security, not based on their guess about affordability 2 years down the road. In my view, it is cost effective to sustain a larger Afghan security force when compared to the costs in billions of dollars and the lives of our military men and women of having U.S. and coalition forces maintain security in Afghanistan. It may be penny-wise, but it would be pound-foolish to put at risk the hard-fought gains that our coalition partners and the Afghans have achieved, rather than support an Afghan security force that is right-sized to provide security for the Afghan people and to prevent a Taliban return to power.

Our relationship with Afghanistan will continue beyond completion of the security transition in 2014. The strategic partnership agreement being negotiated between the United States and Afghanistan will play an important role in defining the shape of that bilateral relationship. The recent memorandum of understanding (MOU) on detention operations signed by General Allen and Afghan Defense Minister Wardak has addressed one of the main obstacles to concluding the strategic partnership agreement.

Another controversial issue in those strategic partnership talks is the conduct of night raids by coalition and Afghan forces. Afghan officials have repeatedly called for an end to night raids, alleging that such operations are disruptive to Afghan lives and lead to civilian casualties. But what is often ignored here in the United States and in Afghanistan is that Afghan soldiers participate in all night raid operations.

In December, General Allen issued an ISAF tactical directive on night operations designed to "minimize the disruption and the concern caused by night operations to law-abiding Afghan citizens." That directive clearly stated that all coalition night operations are partnered operations, "carried out alongside specially trained Afghan soldiers and policemen, who are increasingly taking on responsibility for the command and control of night operations, with a view to transitioning this responsibility to them entirely as their capacity develops."

It directs, the same directive, that the Afghan security forces on night raids should be encouraged to take the lead, should be the first to make contact with local Afghans in their homes, and be the first force seen and heard by local villagers. Searches are always

to be conducted by Afghan security forces when available and female personnel are always to be used for searching women and children.

As General Allen's directive states, "Successful transition will be characterized by our Afghan partners taking increasing responsibility for the planning and command and control of these night operations."

I would appreciate our witnesses sharing with this committee the facts relative to the conduct of night raids and the ongoing talks to reach an understanding on those operations. I understand that resolving this issue could help clear the way for concluding a strategic partnership agreement by the NATO Chicago summit in May.

Many challenges remain in Afghanistan and should not be understated. Much will depend on countering the cross-border threat from insurgents finding refuge in safe havens on Pakistan's territory, including dealing with the threat from the Haqqani network; on possible progress in reconciliation talks with the Taliban. Much is going to depend on the Karzai Government improving the delivery of services and economic development, taking on corruption, providing increased transparency, and on the conduct of credible provincial and national elections.

Despite all the challenges, our troops' morale remains high and they want to see this mission through to completion and success. They deserve our support and they have our support.

Senator McCain.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me thank our witnesses for appearing before us this morning and for their continued service to our Nation. I appreciate Dr. Miller lending his expertise for this important hearing, and I obviously especially want to recognize General Allen, who might be the only witness before this committee whose congressional testimony qualifies as rest and relaxation from his day job.

I know that General Allen would be the first to say that what inspires him to get up every morning and keep fighting hard each day and long into the night is the selfless example set by the troops he leads. I know that much of the recent news from Afghanistan has been discouraging and that has only increased the desire of a war-weary public to end our mission there.

However, none of this changes the vital U.S. national security interests that are at stake in Afghanistan, nor does it mean the war is lost. It is not. There is still a realistic path to success if the right decisions are made in the coming months.

The painful lesson we learned on September 11, 2001, remains as true today as then: What happens in Afghanistan has a direct impact on our safety here at home. If we quit Afghanistan again, as we did in the 1990s, and abandon the millions of Afghans who have risked everything to be our allies in the hopes of succeeding together, the consequences will be disastrous for us both.

It does not have to be this way. Our troops have made significant military progress on the ground in Afghanistan. Four years ago southern Afghanistan was overrun by the Taliban and our coalition lacked both the resources and the strategy necessary to break the

momentum. Today the situation has reversed. Similarly, our effort to build the ANSF has been completely overhauled. The result is growing numbers of Afghan units that are capable of leading the fight. The few Afghan soldiers who turned their weapons on our troops should not obscure the larger fact that hundreds of thousands of Afghans are fighting every day as our faithful allies in a common fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban and these Afghan patriots are being wounded and killed in far greater numbers than our forces.

This should give us hope that our common goal of an Afghanistan that can secure and govern itself remains achievable over time. To sustain this fragile process, it's critical that President Obama resist the short-sighted calls for additional troop reductions, which are a guarantee of failure. Our forces are currently slated to drawn down to 68,000 by September, a faster pace than our military commanders recommended, which has significantly increased the risk for our mission. At a minimum, there should be a pause after September to assess the impact of the drawdown. It would be much better to maintain the 68,000 forces through next year's fighting season, probably longer.

At the strategic level, our efforts continue to be undermined by the perception that the United States will abandon Afghanistan once again. This creates incentives for the Taliban to keep fighting, for the Pakistan army to hedge its bets by supporting the Taliban, and for our Afghan allies to make counterproductive decisions based on fears of what a post-American future will bring.

We must reverse this dynamic, and the best way to do so is by concluding a strong strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan, which would serve as a concrete basis for a long-term political, economic, and military relationship. Just 2 weeks ago, one of the two major obstacles to this agreement was resolved as the U.S. and Afghan Governments reached an understanding on a timetable for handing over detention operations. This provides reason for optimism that a similar resolution can be found to gradually transfer the lead for so-called night raids to Afghan forces. In fact, this transition is already occurring in practice.

With these two issues resolved, the strategic partnership agreement could provide a framework for an enduring U.S. military commitment to Afghanistan beyond 2014, including joint operating facilities and long-term support for the more than 350,000 ANSF that are necessary to secure the country. This plan should also include an enduring presence of SOFs to continue counterterrorism cooperation with our Afghan partners. Such an agreement would encourage our allies to make similar long-term commitments.

This is the right way to set the conditions under which our forces can responsibly draw down and hand the lead to the Afghans. The strategic partnership would make clear to the Taliban that they cannot wait us out and win on the battlefield, thus fostering real reconciliation on favorable terms to the Afghan Government and to us. It would demonstrate to Pakistan's army that continued support for the Taliban is a losing bet and will only leave Islamabad more isolated and less secure. It would give Afghan leaders the reassurance to fight corruption and govern better. In short, this agreement can change the entire narrative in Afghanistan and the

region from imminent international abandonment to enduring international commitment.

All of this is achievable if the right decisions are made in the months ahead. Far from being unsalvageable or not worth the effort, as many now fear, this war is still ours to win. After all we have given, after all the precious lives we have lost, and with all the vital interests we have at stake, now is not the time to quit. It is the time to recommit ourselves to being successful. We owe nothing less to the tens of thousands of Americans who are risking their lives every day for this mission and for us.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Senator McCain.

Dr. Miller, we're delighted to have you with us today. You are our Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and we call now upon you. Dr. Miller.

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES N. MILLER, JR., ACTING UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY

Dr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, members of the committee: Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am pleased and honored to be here with our outstanding commander in Afghanistan, General John Allen.

The United States' vital objectives in Afghanistan remain to deny safe haven to al Qaeda and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan Government. This administration is committed to meeting these core objectives and, while we have faced and will face serious challenges, our strategy is succeeding. Our counterterrorism efforts against al Qaeda have been extremely successful. Although the job is not finished, there is no doubt that we have severely degraded al Qaeda's capacity. As a result of the surge launched in 2009, we have broken and reversed the Taliban's momentum, and the ANSF are increasingly capable and increasingly in the lead.

Mr. Chairman, our forces are performing extremely well, as I saw firsthand in a trip to Afghanistan that I took 2 weeks ago. We are well into a process of transition to ANSF leadership, as we agreed at the 2010 NATO summit. In fact, today almost 50 percent of Afghans live in areas that have begun the transition process to ANSF lead.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted, as an interim milestone at some point in 2013 the ANSF will be in the lead for providing security across Afghanistan. U.S. and coalition forces will be in a support role, which will take a number of forms. This includes U.S. and coalition forces partnered with Afghan units, as is already occurring in a number of places today, and it will also include, for example, the smaller footprint associated with U.S. and coalition forces in a train, advise, and assist role.

By the end of 2014, the ANSF will be responsible for the security of their country. By that time, U.S. and coalition forces will have moved to a much smaller presence, focused on counterterrorism and on training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, there is no doubt that the Afghanistan war has been a tough fight, and the last sev-

eral weeks have been particularly difficult. The inappropriate handling of Korans and religious material at Bagram Air Base was an error that, while unintentional, sent precisely the wrong signal. This unfortunate act stands in stark contrast to the many years during which U.S. forces have demonstrated deep respect for the religious practices of the Afghan people.

Even more recently, the Afghans and we have had to respond to the horrific killings of 16 Afghan civilians in Panjwai District, Kandahar. The Department of Defense (DOD) is conducting a full investigation of this senseless act. A suspect is now in custody at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Justice will be done and any one responsible will be held accountable.

We've also been challenged by attacks by Afghan personnel against U.S. and coalition partners, the so-called green-on-blue attacks. We will have to work through these incidents and through these challenges, as President Obama and Secretary Panetta have discussed over the last week with President Karzai.

But it is critical that these tragic occurrences not blind us to the significant progress that we have made. From 2010 to 2011, enemy-initiated attacks in Afghanistan were down 9 percent. This trend has continued in 2012. For January and February of this year, enemy-initiated attacks are down a further 22 percent from 2011 levels for those same months.

In October 2008, there were only 140,000 Afghans in the ANSF. Today there are approximately 330,000, and we expect to reach our goal of 352,000 Afghans in the ANSF ahead of the October 2012 target date. Today almost 90 percent of coalition operations in Afghanistan are carried out in partnership with the ANSF, and the ANSF is in the lead for more than 40 percent of operations.

As Chairman Levin and Senator McCain mentioned, we are negotiating a strategic partnership between the United States and Afghanistan that will frame our enduring relationship. This strategic partnership will demonstrate that we learned the lessons from 1989, when our abrupt departure left our friends confused and our enemies emboldened.

In partnership with President Karzai and the Afghan Government, we recently completed a crucial milestone when General Allen co-signed a MOU on detention operations with Defense Minister Wardak. As you noted, we are also working with the Afghans on a MOU on night operations, or special operations, which when completed will further strengthen our partnership. Concluding a strategic partnership will send a clear signal that the United States remains committed to Afghan security. Such an assurance must and will continue beyond our planned transition in 2014. As President Obama said in his State of the Union address, "We will build an enduring partnership with Afghanistan so that it is never again a source of attacks against America."

The need for a long-term commitment extends also to coalition partners. As NATO Secretary General Rasmussen said in December, "Our commitment does not end with transition. We will finish the job to help create a secure Afghanistan for our shared security."

Achieving a durable peace in Afghanistan over time will require some form of reconciliation among Afghans. It is by no means certain that this reconciliation efforts will bear fruit in the near term,

but it is very much in our interest to try. As Secretary Clinton has said, any negotiated outcome with the insurgents must meet our unambiguous red lines for reconciliation. Insurgents must renounce violence, they must break all ties with al Qaeda, and they must abide by the constitution of Afghanistan.

Success in Afghanistan depends on the support of Afghanistan's neighbors, particularly Pakistan. Like Afghanistan's other neighbors, Pakistan has legitimate interests that must be understood and addressed. Pakistan also has responsibilities. Most importantly, it needs to take steps to ensure that militant and extremist groups cannot continue to find safe haven in Pakistani territory. Pakistan has powerful incentives to do so. In 2011, some 2,000 attacks in Pakistan resulted in about 2,400 deaths, mostly from improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today. We embarked on this fight more than a decade ago to ensure that the terrorist network that struck in New York, in Washington, DC, and in the skies over Pennsylvania would never again be able to use Afghanistan as their sanctuary. Thanks to the great courage and skill of the U.S. Armed Forces and civilian personnel, our coalition partners, and our Afghan partners, our strategy is working.

While success in war is never guaranteed, we are on a path to meet our objectives, to deny safe haven to al Qaeda, and deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan Government.

I would like to conclude by thanking the committee for your continued support of our effort in Afghanistan and your strong support for the great men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Miller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY DR. JAMES N. MILLER

Chairman Levin, Ranking Member McCain, and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on a matter of vital importance to the United States: the present status and future course of our military engagement in Afghanistan.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss both the progress we are making and the challenges that we face. I am especially pleased to be here with the outstanding Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, and of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, General John Allen.

The United States' objectives in Afghanistan remains to deny safe havens to al Qaeda, and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan Government.

This administration is firmly committed to meeting these core objectives in Afghanistan. In the past several years—due to the dedication and sacrifice of our forces, our coalition partners, and the Afghan people—we have made enormous strides.

- Our counterterrorism efforts against al Qaeda have been extremely successful. Although the job is not finished, we have severely degraded al Qaeda's capacity.
- As a result of the surge launched in 2009, we have broken and reversed Taliban momentum.
- The ANSF are increasingly capable, and increasingly in the lead. We have begun the transition to Afghan security responsibility, which is to be completed by December 2014.

The Afghanistan war has been a tough fight. The last several weeks have been particularly tough. We have seen some in the United States, and indeed some in Afghanistan, question whether we are on the right path. We will have to work through the difficulties, and talk through the issues, as President Obama and Secretary Panetta did last week with President Karzai.

Members of the committee, our forces are performing extremely well, as I've seen firsthand during a week-long trip to Afghanistan that finished less than 2 weeks ago. U.S., coalition, and Afghan forces are working shohna ba shohna, or "shoulder-to-shoulder," reversing the Taliban's momentum and building the capacity of the ANSF.

As a result of these shared efforts, we are well into a process of transition to ANSF leadership, as agreed at the 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit. In fact, today, approximately 50 percent of Afghans live in areas that have begun the transition process.

As an interim milestone, at some point in 2013, the ANSF will be in the lead for providing security across Afghanistan. U.S. and coalition forces will be in a support role. This support will take a number of forms, including U.S. and coalition units partnering with Afghan units, and the smaller footprint associated with a "train, advise, and assist" role.

By the end of 2014, the transition of security leadership will be complete, and Afghans will be fully responsible for the security of Afghanistan. U.S. and coalition forces will have moved to a much smaller presence focused on counterterrorism, and on training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces. Of course, remaining U.S. forces will be fully combat-capable.

Despite continued progress on transition and in the overall campaign, some recent incidents have tested the relationships that we have worked so hard to build over the past decade with the Government and people of Afghanistan.

The inappropriate handling of Qurans at Bagram Airbase was an error that—while unintentional—sent precisely the wrong signal. This unfortunate act stands in stark contrast to the many years during which U.S. forces have demonstrated deep respect for the religious practices of the Afghan people.

Even more recently, our Nations have had to respond to the horrific killings of 16 Afghan civilians, including 9 children, in Panjwai District, Kandahar. The Department of Defense is conducting a full investigation of this senseless act of violence. A suspect is now in custody at the Joint Regional Confinement Facility-Midwest at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Justice will be done, and any responsible will be held appropriately accountable.

We have also been challenged by attacks by Afghan personnel against their U.S. and coalition partners, so-called "Green on Blue" attacks. These include the shooting of two American officers at the Interior Ministry in Kabul on February 25, allegedly by an Afghan police officer. With the help of U.S. and coalition forces, the Afghans are working to improve security and counter-intelligence in order to prevent such attacks. General Allen has also directed a number of steps to improve force protection.

Working shoulder-to-shoulder with our Afghan partners is essential to our mission success. What's more, our experience to date also suggests that sustaining close relationships with the ANSF may reduce the likelihood of these horrible and unacceptable "Green on Blue" attacks.

It is critical that the tragic occurrences of the last few weeks not blind us to the very significant progress and real momentum we have seen in Afghanistan. From 2010 to 2011, enemy-initiated attacks were down 9 percent across Afghanistan. This trend has continued in 2012. For January and February of this year, enemy-initiated attacks are down 22 percent from the comparable period in 2011.

Our surge forces, in Regional Command South and Regional Command Southwest, have made tremendous progress. Previous battlegrounds, such as Sangin and Marjah, are now policed by Afghans. By the end of this September, the final U.S. "surge" forces will return home, and U.S. forces will be reduced from a peak of 101,000, to 68,000.

While the surge of U.S. forces has played a major role in improving the security situation, improvements to the quantity and quality of the Afghan National Security Forces have been critically important.

Building an effective ASNF is crucial to success in Afghanistan, and we are making good progress. To get a sense of how far we have come in the last several years, in October 2008, there were only 140,000 Afghans in the ANSF. Today, there are approximately 330,000—nearly two-and-a-half times as many. We are nearing our October 2012 goal of 352,000 Afghan soldiers and national police in uniform—and we expect to reach that goal well before October.

The quality of the ANSF is vitally important. While there is much more work ahead, we are seeing some good signs. For example, Afghan National Army attrition rates have improved from over 3 percent per month to less than 2 percent, although they are still short of the goal of no more than 1.4 percent per month. The Afghan National Police has done better than its target attrition rate of no more than 1.4 percent for the last several months.

We are seeing the results of this improvement where it counts most—on the ground. Afghan forces continue to take charge and lead operations to secure their country. Almost 90 percent of coalition operations in Afghanistan are now carried out in partnership with the ANSF. The ANSF is the lead for more than 40 percent of operations. These figures will continue to grow.

Afghan troops gave their lives protecting Americans on numerous occasions during the recent protests. The performance of the Afghan forces under this enormous stress is a clear indicator of how far the ANSF have come.

As we transition to Afghan lead on security, we are also working to conclude a Strategic Partnership that will provide a long-term framework for the enduring relationship we hope to achieve beyond the completion of transition at the end of 2014. Concluding a U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership will send a clear signal to the Afghan people, to the Taliban, and to the region that the United States remains committed to Afghan security and to regional peace and stability. As President Obama said here at the Capitol in his State of the Union address in January, "[W]e will build an enduring partnership with Afghanistan, so that it is never again a source of attacks against America."

This Strategic Partnership will reinforce the sovereignty of Afghanistan and address our shared national security concerns. Completing and implementing this Strategic Partnership will avoid the mistake of 1989, when our abrupt departure left our friends confused and our enemies emboldened.

In partnership with President Karzai and the Afghan Government, we recently completed a crucial milestone in our transition to Afghan lead, when General Allen co-signed a memorandum of understanding on detention operations with Afghan Defense Minister Wardak. Under this memorandum of understanding, both countries will work to transfer detention facilities in Afghanistan to Afghan control over the next 6 months, under guidelines designed to ensure an orderly and secure handoff of responsibility.

We are also working with the Afghans on a memorandum of understanding on "special operations," which when completed will further reinforce Afghan sovereignty and strengthen the partnership between our two nations.

The importance of a long-term commitment extends to coalition partners. At the NATO Summit in Lisbon in 2010, the United States, our allies and partners, and Afghanistan agreed to support an Afghan-led transition process. At the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago, we will discuss the next phase of transition, including shifting from primarily a combat to a support role in 2013, in advance of Afghans taking full responsibility for their own security in 2014.

As a part of NATO Summit transition discussions in Chicago, leaders will also discuss how we can support sustainable and sufficient Afghan National Security Forces for Afghanistan's future, and how we can further strengthen the NATO-Afghanistan partnership beyond 2014. As NATO Secretary General Rasmussen put it in December 2011, "[O]ur commitment does not end with transition . . . We will finish the job to help create a secure Afghanistan—for our shared security."

Achieving long-term stability in Afghanistan will require some form of reconciliation among Afghans. This is why the administration—with eyes wide open—supports responsible efforts toward a political settlement to the Afghan conflict. I would like to thank Ambassador Grossman for all of his hard work to help open the door, so that Afghans can talk to Afghans about the future of their country. As Secretary Clinton has said, the necessary outcomes of any negotiation are that insurgents must: (1) renounce violence; (2) break all ties with al Qaeda; and (3) abide by the constitution of Afghanistan, especially the guarantees for the rights of women and minorities.

Achievable, sustainable success in Afghanistan will depend on the participation and support of Afghanistan's neighbors, especially Pakistan. Like Afghanistan's other neighbors, Pakistan has legitimate interests that should be understood and addressed. But Pakistan also has responsibilities, including respecting Afghan sovereignty and working with the Afghan Government to foster regional stability. Most importantly, Pakistan needs to take decisive steps to ensure that militant and extremist groups cannot continue to find safe haven in, or conduct attacks from, Pakistan's territory.

Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today with General Allen. This has been a long and difficult war. We embarked on this fight a decade ago to ensure that the terrorist networks that struck in New York; in Washington, DC; and in the skies over Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001 would never again be able to use Afghanistan as their sanctuary and training ground.

Thanks to the great courage and skill of the U.S. Armed Forces and civilian personnel, our coalition partners, and our Afghan partners, our strategy is working.

While success in war is never guaranteed, we are on a path to meet our objectives to deny safe haven to al Qaeda, and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan Government.

We are moving intelligently and purposefully toward the day, in the near future, when Afghans once again are in full control of their own security, and able to define their own national destiny as a peaceful, stable member of the community of nations.

I would like to conclude by thanking the committee for your strong continued support of our effort in Afghanistan, and of the great men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Dr. Miller.

General Allen.

STATEMENT OF GEN. JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC, COMMANDER, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE, AND COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES AFGHANISTAN

General ALLEN. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee: Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our operations in Afghanistan. It is a pleasure to be here with my friend, Dr. Jim Miller, who is the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. It has been a pleasure for me to get to know him over the last several weeks as he has been a very important ally of mine in helping to explain some of the policy issues with which we deal on a daily basis.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to all of you for the support you provide to our men and women in uniform every day. That they are well-equipped, well-trained, and well-led is a great testament to the efforts of this committee and to the work of this Congress. So on behalf of those troops, on behalf of their families, thank you for all that you have done for them.

In the past 8 months, I have walked the ground of Afghanistan with many of those troops. Along with my friend and partner, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and my NATO compatriot Senior Civilian Representative Ambassador Sir Simon Guess, I have met with the leaders of most of the 49 other nations serving alongside us in ISAF. All through this I have been in close consultation with Afghan civilian and military leadership, most of whom have been enmeshed in this country's conflicts from the Soviet era, to the civil war, to the darkness of the Taliban, through the 10-years-plus of this conflict, enmeshed in this conflict for well over 30 years, and I've gotten to know them all quite well.

From those experiences, I can tell you unequivocally three things. First, we remain on track to ensure that Afghanistan will no longer be a safe haven for al Qaeda and will no longer be terrorized by the Taliban.

Second, as a coalition, the largest in recent history, we are well along in our progress to meet our 2010 Lisbon summit commitments to transition security lead to the ANSF by December 2014.

Third, our troops know the difference that they're making every day and the enemy feels that difference every day.

Now, to be sure, the last couple months have been trying. In the wake of the revelations that American troops had mishandled religious texts, to include the Koran, protests, some of them violent, occurred in several, but only a few, of the regions across Afghanistan. 32 Afghans lost their lives in these riots and even more were

hurt. Just since the 1st of January, the coalition has lost 61 brave troops in action from 6 different nations, and 13 of them were killed at the hands of what appears to have been Afghan security forces, some of whom were motivated, we believe, in part by the mishandling of religious materials. Just as tragic, we're now investigating what appears to be the murder of 16 innocent Afghan civilians at the hands of a U.S. servicemember.

Each of these events is heart-wrenching and my thoughts and my prayers go out to all those affected by this violence, coalition and Afghan alike. But I assure you the relationship between the coalition and the Afghan security forces remains strong.

Just 2 weeks ago, I was in Helmand Province visiting with marines and with local Afghan commanders in the wake of the Koran-burning incident, when the violence was at its peak. A young marine near Marjah said he and his unit were told about the demonstrations by their Afghan counterparts. The Afghan troops told them: "Let us patrol outside the wire for a couple of days; we have this for you." Understanding the gravity of the risk the Afghans had assumed for them, the marine continued: Our Afghan brothers were trying to protect us.

This one statement spoken by a young marine conveyed the power of this brotherhood in arms forged in battle over the years. It speaks to the trust we have built with the Afghans and to the shock absorbency of this relationship.

Yet we know there is much hard and deadly work yet to be done. But the progress is real and, importantly, it's sustainable. We have severely degraded the insurgency. As one Afghan commander told me in the south in the latter part of 2011, "This time around the Taliban was the away team."

On top of that success and as a result of our recent winter operations, we have seriously degraded the Taliban's ability to mount a major spring offensive of their own. This spring they'll come back to find many of their caches empty, their former strongholds untenable, and many of their foot soldiers absent or unwilling to join the fight.

Indeed, in Kandahar back in December, 50 former Talibs decided to formally reintegrate back into Afghan society. When asked why they laid down their arms, they complained of the unrelenting pressure they were under. They said they found themselves up against capable Afghan forces in greater numbers and with greater frequency, and while they were willing to fight foreigners, they were unwilling to fight their Afghan brothers, especially Afghans who fought back with courage and skill because of the training that we had provided them.

The training we provide them is critical to our mission. Throughout history, insurgencies have seldom been defeated by foreign forces. Instead, they have been ultimately beaten by indigenous forces. So in the long run our goals can only be achieved and then secured by Afghan forces. Transition, then, is the linchpin of our strategy, not merely the way out.

During the last 12 months, the ANSF have expanded from 276,000 to more than 330,000, and they will reach their full surge strength ahead of the scheduled deadline in October. The expansion and the professionalization of the ANSF allows us to recover

the remaining 23,000 U.S. surge troops by this fall, enables us to continue to pressure the Taliban to reconcile, and makes possible security transition to Afghans in accordance with our Lisbon summit commitments and on time.

Security conditions remain very good in areas that have transitioned thus far, from Kabul in the east to Herat in the west, from Mazar-e Sharif in the north to Lashkar Gah in the south. Later this year, ANSF are expected to assume the security lead for two-thirds or possibly more of the Afghan population.

As the potential unifying influence in Afghanistan, the Afghan forces are better than we thought they were to be. Importantly, they're better than they thought they could be. As they move to the fore, they're gaining more and more confidence and they're gaining more and more capability. In the past 5 months, 89 percent of the total conventional operations were partnered with both conventional and Afghan forces, and 42 percent of those operations had Afghans in the lead.

Over the next 2 years, coalition forces will remain combat ready, but increasingly focused on security force assistance and supporting Afghan combat operations. Afghan leadership then is simply key. I could tell you the Afghans want to lead and they want the responsibility that comes with it. In fact, for the first time our joint coalition—Afghan operational campaign plan from January 2012 to June 2013 was conceived and developed and planned with Afghans in the lead. They are truly emerging as the real defeat mechanism of this insurgency, and increasingly as an emblem of national unity. This is essential to the long-term security of Afghanistan.

But none of us harbor illusions. We know that we face long-term challenges as well. We know that al Qaeda and other extremist networks, the same networks that kill Afghan and coalition troops every day, still operate with impunity across the border in Pakistan. We know that the Taliban remains a resilient and determined enemy and that many of them will try to regain their lost ground this spring through assassination, intimidation, high profile attacks, and the emplacement of IEDs. We know that Iran continues to support the insurgency and fuels the flames of violence. We know that corruption still robs Afghan citizens of their faith in their government and that poor governance itself often advances insurgent messages.

This campaign has been long. It has been difficult and it has been costly. There have been setbacks, to be sure, and we're experiencing them now, and there will be more setbacks ahead. I wish I could tell you that this war was simple, that progress could be easily measured. But that's not the way of counterinsurgencies. They are fraught with successes and setbacks, which can exist in the same space and the same time. But each must be seen in the larger context of the overall campaign, and I believe that that campaign is on track. We are making a difference. I know this and our troops know this.

I'd like to take just another moment of your time today, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members, to end where I began this morning, with our troops and the thousands and thousands of American and coalition partners that are bearing the weight of this

conflict, and to remember that there will be a number that will never return to their families. I ask you to please know this, that they are central to my every decision and to every word that I speak before this committee.

One of them, a young marine who was laid to rest last Tuesday at Arlington Cemetery, was a hero. He knew what he stood for and he knew his mission. He knew the risks and he knew he might have to give his life for this cause for which we fight. So Sergeant William Stacey prepared a letter for his family, to be read in the event of his death, and in it he said:

> "There will be a child who will live because men left the security they enjoyed in their home country to come to his. And this child will learn in new schools that have been built, and he will walk his streets not worried about whether or not his leaders' henchmen will come and kidnap him. And he will grow into a fine man, who will pursue every opportunity his heart could desire. And he will have the gift of freedom, which I have enjoyed for so long. And if my life buys the safety of a child who will one day change the world, then I know that it was all worth it."

Mr. Chairman, I can only add that I am confident that Americans are safer today because of the sacrifices of the magnificent men and women in uniform, our servicemembers, represented in this letter by Sergeant Stacey. I am confident that we will prevail in this endeavor.

I want to thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today, for the extraordinary support of this committee, support that you provide every day to the young men and women of our Armed Forces, whom I am so privileged and honored to lead. I look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of General Allen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY GEN. JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our operations in Afghanistan.

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to all of you for the support you provide our men and women in uniform. That they are well-equipped, well-trained, and well-led is a great testament to the efforts of this committee and to the work of this Congress. On behalf of those troops and their families, I thank you for that.

In the past 8 months, I have walked the ground of Afghanistan with many of those troops. Along with my friend and partner, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and my NATO compatriot, Senior Civilian Representative Ambassador Sir Simon Gass, I have met with leaders of most of the 49 other nations serving alongside us. All through this, I have been in close consultation with Afghan civilian and military leadership, most of whom have been enmeshed in their country's conflict for over 3 decades.

From all of this, I can tell you, unequivocally, three things: First, we remain on track to ensure that Afghanistan will no longer be a safe haven for al Qaeda and will no longer be terrorized by the Taliban. Second, as a coalition—the largest in recent history—we are well along in our progress to meet our 2010 Lisbon commitments, to Transition security lead to the Afghan National Security Forces by December 2014. Third, our troops know the difference they are making and the enemy feels it every day.

To be sure, the last couple months have been trying. In the wake of the revelations that American troops had mishandled religious texts, to include the Quran, protests—some of them violent—occurred in several, but only a few, regions across Afghanistan. Thirty-two Afghans lost their lives in those riots; even more were hurt.

Just since the first ofJanuary, the coalition has lost 60 brave troops in action, from 6 different nations. Thirteen of them were killed at the hands of what appear to have been Afghan security forces, some of whom who were motivated, we believe, in part by the mishandling of religious materials. Just as tragic, we are now investigating what appears to be the murder of 16 innocent Afghan civilians at the hands of a U.S. servicemember. Each of these events is heart wrenching, and my thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected by the violence—coalition and Afghan alike.

But I assure you, the relationship between the coalition and the Afghan security forces remains strong. Just 2 weeks ago, I was down in Helmand Province, visiting with marines and with local Afghan commanders—in the wake of the Quran burning incident when violence was at its peak. A young marine near Marjeh said he and his unit were told about the demonstrations by their Afghan counterparts. The Afghan troops told them, "Let us patrol outside the wire for a couple days. We have this for you." Understanding the gravity of the risk the Afghans had assumed for them, the marine continued, "Our Afghan brothers were trying to protect us." This one statement, spoken by a young marine, conveys the power of this brotherhood-in-arms forged in battle. It speaks to the trust we have built with the Afghans and to the shock absorbency in this relationship.

We know there is much hard and deadly work to do. But the progress is real, and, importantly, it's sustainable. We have severely degraded the insurgency. As one Afghan commander told me in the South in the latter part of 2011, "This time around, the Taliban was the away team." On top of that success, as a result of our recent winter operations, we have seriously degraded the Taliban's ability to mount a major spring offensive of their own. This spring, they will come back to find many of their caches empty, their former strongholds untenable, and a good many of their foot soldiers absent or unwilling to join the fight.

In Kandahar, back in December, 50 former Talibs decided to formally reintegrate back into Afghan society. When asked why they lay down their arms, they complained of the unrelenting pressure they were under. They said they found themselves up against capable Afghan forces in greater numbers and with greater frequency. While they were willing to fight foreigners, they were unwilling to fight their Afghan brothers—especially Afghans who fought back with courage and skill, because of the training we had provided to them. The training we provide to them is a critical part of our mission.

Throughout history, insurgencies have seldom been defeated by foreign forces. Instead, they have been ultimately beaten by indigenous forces. In the long run, our goals can only be achieved and then secured by Afghan forces. Transition, then, is the linchpin of our strategy, not merely the "way out."

During the last 12 months, the Afghan security forces have expanded from 276,000 to 330,000. They will reach their full surge strength ahead of the scheduled deadline in October. The expansion and professionalization of Afghan security forces allow us to recover the remaining 23,000 U.S. surge troops by this fall, enable us to continue to pressure the Taliban to reconcile, and make possible security Transition to the Afghans in accordance with our Lisbon commitments and on time.

Security conditions remain very good in areas that have transitioned thus far from Kabul in the east to Herat in the west; from Mazar-e Sharif in the north to Lashkar Gah in the south; and later this year, Afghan security forces are expected to assume the security lead for two-thirds, or possibly more, of the Afghan people. As the potential unifying influence in Afghanistan, the Afghan forces are better than we thought, and they're better than they thought they would be. As they move to the fore, they are gaining more and more confidence, and they are gaining more and more capability. In the past 5 months, 89 percent of the total conventional operations were partnered with both coalition and Afghan forces, and 42 percent were Afghan-led. Over the next 2 years, coalition forces will remain combat-ready, but increasingly focused on Security Force Assistance missions.

Afghan leadership simply is key. I can tell you the Afghans want this responsibility. In fact, for the very first time, our joint coalition-Afghan operational campaign plan for January 2012 through June 2013 was conceived, developed, and planned with Afghans in the lead. They are truly emerging as the real defeat mechanism of this insurgency and increasingly as an emblem of national unity and this is essential for the long-term security of Afghanistan.

None of us harbor illusions. We know that we face long-term challenges as well. We know that al Qaeda and other extremist networks—the very same networks that kill Afghan and coalition troops every day—still operate with impunity across the border in Pakistan. We know the Taliban remain a resilient and determined enemy, and that many of them will try to regain their lost ground this spring, through assassination, intimidation, high-profile attacks, and the emplacement of IEDs. We know that Iran continues to support the insurgency and fuels the flames of violence.

We know that corruption still robs Afghan citizens of their faith in their government and that poor governance itself often advances insurgent messages.

This campaign has been long. It has been difficult, and it has been costly. There have been setbacks, to be sure, we're experiencing them now, and there will be more setbacks ahead.

I wish I could tell you that this war was simple, and that progress could be easily measured. But that's not the way of counterinsurgencies. They are fraught with success and setbacks, which can exist in the same space and time, but each must be seen in the larger context of the overall campaign, and I believe that the campaign is on track. We are making a difference. I know this, and our troops know this.

I'd like to take just another moment of your time today, Mr. Chairman, to end where I began this morning, with our troops, the thousands of Americans and coalition partners that are bearing the weight of this conflict, and those that will never return to their families. Know this, they weigh on my every decision and my every word to this committee.

One of them, a young marine, was laid to rest last Tuesday in Arlington Cemetery. He was a hero, he knew what he stood for, and he knew his mission. He knew the risks. He knew he might have to give his life for this cause for which we fight—so Sergeant William Stacey prepared a letter for his family—to be read in the event of his death. In it, he said:

> . . . there will be a child who will live because men left the security they enjoyed in their home country to come to his. And this child will learn in the new schools that have been built. He will walk his streets not worried about whether or not his leader's henchmen are going to come and kidnap him. He will grow into a fine man who will pursue every opportunity his heart could desire. He will have the gift of freedom, which I have enjoyed for so long. If my life buys the safety of a child who will one day change this world, then I know that it was all worth it. . . .

Mr. Chairman, I can only add that I am confident that Americans are safer because of servicemembers like Sergeant Stacey, and I am confident that we will prevail in this endeavor. Thank you, again, for this opportunity today . . . and for the extraordinary support you and the committee provide every day to the young men and women I am so privileged to lead.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, General Allen, for your powerful, your clear, your moving statement. Thank you for reading Sergeant Stacey's letter to us. It has the kind of powerful effect and immediate effect that I wish every American could be privileged to hear.

Let's do a 7-minute round. We have votes at 12:30 p.m. and we should be able to get in a first round for everybody.

General, let me start with you. Did you support the President's decision to draw down the 33,000 U.S. surge force by the end of this summer, and do you still support that decision?

General ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I was on record in doing so before and I do still.

Chairman LEVIN. Is that reduction on pace? In other words, are we on track to withdraw the remaining 23,000 troops of that 33,000 surge force by the end of September?

General ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I'll make the final decision shortly. I'll submit my plan to the chain of command, to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the Secretary of Defense. But I believe that that plan will leave us on track and on pace to recover those surge forces.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, you recently said, General, that you intend to wait until after the withdrawal of the surge forces in September to evaluate the situation on the ground in Afghanistan, and then some time before the end of 2012 you would make your recommendations relative to the pace of further reductions.

Can I ask you whether or not that was your idea, to wait until after the removal of the 33,000 surge force before you would make that recommendation?

General ALLEN. That was a result of a conversation with the chain of command, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Is it an idea that you think is the wise idea?

General ALLEN. I do, Mr. Chairman. I think it's exactly the best way ultimately to identify the state of the insurgency, the state of the full ISAF force, to include the U.S. force, but also to evaluate the operational requirements for 2013, in order to make a comprehensive recommendation.

Chairman LEVIN. Does that timetable mean that it would be some time in the last, say, 3 months of this year that you would make that recommendation?

General ALLEN. I believe so, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. President Obama and President Karzai in their coordinated statement last week committed themselves to two key dates. One is the 2014 date which was agreed to at Lisbon for when Afghan security forces would have full responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan; then the 2013 date, when the lead for combat operations will shift to Afghan forces, with U.S. forces in support.

Is the 2013 timeframe for transitioning the lead for combat operations, is that consistent with the Lisbon plan for completing the transition or for Afghans having full responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, the Lisbon summit envisaged that there would be several tranches of the geography of Afghanistan that would transition over time. Ultimately, we determined that it would be five tranches. The first is in transition now. The second has just begun implementation. We're in the process of deliberating on the third. We anticipate that the fifth and final tranche of transition will be announced by President Karzai probably in the summer of 2013, with implementation to begin at some point thereafter. That generally is 30 to 45 days thereafter.

Technically per the Lisbon summit, when the fifth tranche of transition ultimately begins implementation ANSF are in the lead for security across the country. That is a process which will continue, that leadership, assisted by the ISAF forces, assisted in differing ways based on the geography and the enemy threat, out to the end of 2014, sir. I hope that answers your question.

Chairman LEVIN. So that 2013 being in the lead is consistent with the 2014 date for having full responsibility; is that correct?

General ALLEN. It is, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Now, according to a Wall Street Journal article, the United States has proposed reducing the size of the ANSF from the 352,000 end strength goal for this year to 230,000 after 2014, partly to reduce the costs of sustaining the Afghan forces. Lieutenant General Dan Bolger, head of our training mission in Afghanistan, is cited as saying the proposal is based on what the international community will provide financially.

As I said in my opening comments, I believe it's cost-effective to sustain a larger Afghan security force when compared to the costs, and that is a cost in both dollars and lives. Now, it seems to me, General, given the fact that you and our military leaders agree the key to success of our mission in Afghanistan is the transition of re-

sponsibility for the security of the Afghan people to the Afghan security forces—and by the way, it's a position which I wholeheartedly believed in right from the beginning, and your statement today, your eloquent statement about transition being the linchpin of our strategy, not merely the way out, is a very succinct and very strong way of stating that.

But given the fact that transition to a strong Afghan security force is the key to success of this mission, why does it make sense to talk about reducing the size of the Afghan army by a third? Have you participated in those deliberations, and have you concluded that we should see the reduction of the Afghan force by one third?

General ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, of course the number 352,000 is a surge force. It was always intended that it would be a temporary number. So the recovery of that surge force would occur at some point in the future.

The study which was undertaken was to look out to the year 2017 and look at the various potential intelligence realities that the ANSF could face potentially. That series of studies created a number of different force structures which we believed had varying levels of capability based on the most likely potential enemy scenarios.

Of those scenarios, the one which we thought was sufficient in capability, which was the most important initial finding, was one that had the correct balance of both Afghan National Police (ANP), a Minister of Interior (MOI) presence, and an Afghan National Army (ANA) presence. That force is about 230,000. But there are a number of different options and we're continuing to evaluate what those options might be, all the way from the current force, the 352,000 force, which will continue to exist for several years once we have fielded it, down to a force that was smaller than 230,000, which probably doesn't have the right capabilities, the right combination of capabilities.

We thought that the 230,000 force, which is a target number—it is not a specific objective at this time; it is a target number—was the right target, given what we think will be the potential enemy scenario for 2017, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. So there's been no decision to reduce the Afghan force below the 350,000?

General ALLEN. I think the decision ultimately will come both from the U.S. side and in consultation——

Chairman LEVIN. But we haven't decided that it should be reduced from the 350,000?

General ALLEN. I don't believe we have, sir. I know that there are considerations—it's not a decision solely for the United States.

Chairman LEVIN. But have we decided that it is our position that it should be reduced?

General ALLEN. It is our position that ultimately that force should be reduced below 352,000, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. But we haven't decided to what level?

General ALLEN. Not to a specific number to my knowledge.

Chairman LEVIN. I would hope that that would be carefully done and not be dependent upon the financial issues.

General ALLEN. Sir, that's a very important point and, very importantly to this, we will be continuing to monitor the quality

metrics of the ANSF as it builds to a full 352,000 and is fully fielded. Those quality metrics will also be accompanied by a consistent evaluation of the security environment as well.

That security environment will be ultimately the key indicator of whether that drawdown should ultimately occur. So it'll be conditions-based. I submit those metrics every 6 months, and starting with the next set of metrics we'll begin that process of evaluating what we think the scenario will be in the post-2014 period and evaluating the conditions ultimately for the drawdown.

But for now, sir, there is an expectation that we will draw the 352,000 force down to a number that we think fits generally the security environment for the post-2014 period.

Chairman LEVIN. If conditions indicate that 350,000 is the right number or 325,000 is the right number, that's what you're going to recommend?

General ALLEN. Yes, sir. That's my hope. But at this juncture, again based on the study, based on the intelligence scenarios on which we ran the analysis, at this point 231,000 to 236,000 looks about the right number in combination of army and police capabilities.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. I sure would be interested in seeing those studies that bring it down to 231,000 or 236,000, General, because then they would contradict every study that's been done in the past. So either past studies were flawed and inaccurate or the present study is flawed and inaccurate.

But it all fits into the scenario that concerns many of us, and that is that the news is dominated by how fast we can draw down and how much we will draw down and when we will draw down. We don't hear any more commitments to victory. We don't hear any more commitments to success.

It shouldn't surprise you or anybody, General, when President Karzai exhibits some of the behavior that he does, that the Taliban feel that they can wait us out, that the Pakistanis continue to support the Haqqani network and continue to hedge their bets, because all they hear about, General, is withdrawals and pace of withdrawal. They know what's on the front page of the New York Times, which says "Debate within the administration about the pace of drawdown." Not achieving goals and then drawing down, but how rapidly we can draw down.

So I'm also interested in the fact that you can't make a decision on force levels in 2013 until the end of 2012. Is that what you're telling this committee?

General ALLEN. What I'm telling you, Senator, is that after withdrawing 23,000 troops, the drawdown, after moving through—after conducting operations during the fighting season, in the aftermath of that I need to be able to evaluate whether that force structure at 68,000 plus about 40,000 ISAF forces will be the kinds of combinations of forces, plus the progress that has been made with the ANSF, in combination to handle what I think will be the operational environment of 2013.

Senator MCCAIN. So basically you have no opinion here at the end of March 2012 as to what our military presence would be in 2013?

General ALLEN. My opinion at this particular juncture, but it's not my——

Senator MCCAIN. What is your opinion at this particular juncture?

General ALLEN. My opinion is that we will need significant combat power in 2013, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Like 68,000?

General ALLEN. 68,000 is a good going-in number, sir. But I owe the President some analysis on that.

Senator MCCAIN. In response to the chairman's question about you supported the past reductions in forces that have been made, you supported those decisions. Didn't you also say that it increased the risk?

General ALLEN. I did, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. So does it surprise you when President Karzai starts looking at a situation where the United States leaves the neighborhood? Does it surprise you when the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) continues their support of the Taliban and killing Americans, when we are sounding an uncertain trumpet, General?

General ALLEN. Sir, there may be an uncertain trumpet out there. Much of the coverage has not been helpful to this process. But I'm very clear that I believe we will be successful in this campaign.

Senator MCCAIN. I do too, militarily.

The strategic partnership agreement is close to being concluded?

General ALLEN. We have not begun the final negotiations on the strategic partnership agreement yet, sir. We think it is close.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you. I'd like to especially thank the administration for their efforts in this, but I would also like to thank my two colleagues, Senator Lieberman and Senator Graham, in their consistent efforts to get this done. There is no American that knows more about the detainee issue than Senator Graham does, and I am very grateful for his continued participation in the whole detainee issue and Senator Lieberman's consistent and many times unpopular position on this issue.

The strategic partnership agreement it seems to me is more important than just an agreement about detentions and about night raids. It means that there is a commitment on the part of the United States to remain present in force in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. Do you view it as having that degree of importance?

General ALLEN. It may be one of the most important outcomes of the recent years of this conflict.

Senator MCCAIN. So you and Ambassador Crocker are working very hard on that?

General ALLEN. We are, Senator. We are working very hard.

Senator MCCAIN. Dr. Miller, do you share that view?

Dr. MILLER. Senator McCain, yes, I do. I think it is critically important to reach the strategic partnership. The President has stated clearly that we have an enduring commitment to Afghanistan and the strategic partnership will be a concrete substantiation of that. There will be a lot of work to do after that, but it's a critical milestone.

Senator MCCAIN. You are encouraged by recent progress?

Dr. MILLER. Yes, sir. Understanding the tumultuous last couple of months that we've seen, with the events we've just talked about, I am very encouraged by recent progress. I was encouraged by the progress I saw on the ground when I was there 2 weeks ago.

Senator MCCAIN. General Allen, do you believe that the two remaining major obstacles to success in Afghanistan are corruption in the Karzai Government and continued sanctuary and support for the Taliban by Pakistan?

General ALLEN. Sir, may I hear that again, please?

Senator MCCAIN. The two remaining major obstacles to success in Afghanistan, the corruption issue in the Karzai Government and the Pakistani sanctuary and ISI assistance to the Taliban?

General ALLEN. I do.

Senator MCCAIN. Have you seen any change in that, in those two major obstacles?

General ALLEN. Sir, I think we've done good work with the Afghan Government of late. There have been a number of initiatives in partnership with President Karzai and his government. He has appointed a presidential executive commission headed by Minister of Finance Zazhilwal to partner with ISAF and with the international community on the issues of reclaiming borders, inland customs depots, and airports. That's an important move.

Senator MCCAIN. Have you seen any change in the ISI relationship with the Taliban and the Haqquani network?

General ALLEN. I have not, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. General, the American people are war-weary. Public opinion polls show that most Americans want out of Afghanistan and an end to this decade-long conflict, more than a decade, and more than a thousand lives. If you had a chance to speak to the American people about what's at stake here and your view of this conflict, what would you say to them?

General ALLEN. The first thing I would do, Senator, is to thank them for their incredible support to the men and women and to the campaign and to our Services who have come together in Afghanistan to accomplish the mission, which is to deny al Qaeda safe havens and to deny the Taliban the opportunity to overthrow the Government of Afghanistan. I would thank them for that. That's the first thing I would say.

I would say to them that the investment in this campaign by the United States and its 49 coalition partners has been to shape that insurgency and build an ANSF capability which could ultimately take over the campaign, the counterinsurgency campaign, to become the defeat mechanism of the enemy. That's happening. That transition is occurring.

I would point to that as an example of the success, as an example of the successful outcome of the investment that has been made by this country and the other countries of the coalition, ultimately to deny the Taliban the opportunity to ever overthrow this government again and to permit Afghanistan to sink once again into the darkness of the Taliban, which could permit it ultimately to welcome al Qaeda back into Afghanistan. They have made no effort to separate themselves from al Qaeda. If that were to happen, Afghanistan could once again become a launching pad for international terrorism.

I think the progress that has been made at the societal level, the progress that has been made within the ANSF to push back the momentum of the Taliban and to deny al Qaeda safe havens has been remarkable, and it has come from the sacrifices of the population of this country and the other 49 states that are part of ISAF. I would thank them for that sacrifice, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank you, General, and I hope that the American people could hear those words exactly as you articulated them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Reed is next.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Dr. Miller, for your thoughtful testimony. General Allen, thank you for your extraordinary service, you and your family. Thank you also for one of the most compelling statements that I've ever heard here, which reflects sincerely your profound appreciation of, and dedication to, the men and women you lead. Thank you very much.

General ALLEN. Thank you, sir.

Senator REED. I'm going to oversimplify, I think, what your operational challenges are, but they seem to be two in my mind. First, is to be able to embed NATO advisors with Afghani forces as they take the lead; and second, to be able to operate 24/7, in fact, to be able to particularly operate in the evening, at night, when we have tactical and technical advantages. Both of those issues have been shaken by incidents and by some of the discussions of the last few weeks.

First, with respect to the night raids, there has been some discussion of authorizing raids through Afghani judicial procedures and warrants, which to me would seriously impede your ability, NATO's ability and the Afghan military forces' ability, to operate. Is that something that's being seriously considered, and would it effectively undermine our ability to operate?

General ALLEN. Senator, it's my intention, with respect to the outcome of those negotiations for that MOU on night operations, that we not impede the contributions that those night operations make every single day in the battle space.

Just as we are accomplishing transition in other areas, it is appropriate as time goes on and as Afghans take over greater lead in security operations, that we would acknowledge the Afghan constitution in that process as well. As you recall, in Iraq we ultimately went to a warrant-based system. That system was successful, but it was successful because we were able to streamline the judicial process in ways that supported the operations rather than impeded the operations.

Sir, we're just beginning the negotiations in this regard and, as you might imagine, they're pretty sensitive at this point. But I assure you that we will get this right, we won't get it fast, and the outcome will be night operations that continue to contribute to this campaign, with Afghans deeply in the process, which is appropriate ultimately to the march towards sovereignty that we have undertaken, sir.

Senator REED. Let me just, for a bit of context: Is it accurate to say that the Haqqani network, the Taliban, operate frequently at night, conduct attacks against NATO operations at night, in fact, would not be inhibited by the potential imposition? Does that happen today?

General ALLEN. The Haqqanis are operating 24 hours a day. Night operations are particularly valuable in neutralizing their networks and the other networks that we encounter—al Qaeda, the HIG, the Commander Zero Group, Taliban.

Senator REED. Let me turn to the other issue, embedding American forces, NATO forces rather, more precisely, NATO forces. Particularly after the Panjwai incident, has that given you cause to rethink how you do this? Not only in terms of the safety of NATO personnel, but the receptiveness of the Afghan security forces and local populations to small groups of NATO personnel operating with battalions and companies of the ANA?

General ALLEN. It clearly is a potential challenge, Senator. You are correct in how you phrase that question. I'm going to watch this very closely. We've taken a lot of measures, obviously, to reduce what are known as green-on-blue attacks. I can go into greater detail about that should you desire. But it is something over which I'm significantly concerned. We're going to watch it very closely.

I take heart in the success of the Afghan local police (ALP) as potentially a model and an indicator of how this will unfold, because across Afghanistan there are multiple tens of ALP garrisons in which our special operators are embedded across the country. In all of those—and there are well over 12,000 local police—there has yet to be an attack on any one of our Green Berets, SEALs, or Marines.

So if it is done right—and I believe we will do this correctly, obviously—I think that we can continue the process of embedding our security force assistance platforms and our advisors into these formations, undertaking the measures for protection that we now have underway, sir.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Dr. Miller, Senator McCain in asking General Allen about some of the major challenges ahead, including corruption and other factors which might be generally put under the category of governance, raises a fundamental issue, which is we could have tactical success on the ground, but if the governance has failed then most experts, most commentators, suggest that in the end we will not be successful.

One of the tensions in Afghanistan historically and in the last 10 years has been between a central government and decentralized traditions, et cetera. Are you exploring ways in which, without profound constitutional changes, that the government could be more effectively decentralized, i.e., that the Afghans can decide to more effectively decentralize? Because again from my perspective that might be one way to facilitate more effective governance or at least to accept the reality on the ground of what's happening.

Any comments?

Dr. MILLER. Senator Reed, let me answer in two parts. The first is to say that the central government, the Kabul Government, is

going to remain critical to the success of Afghanistan over time, and that the work that is underway and needs to continue to deal with minimizing corruption and providing stronger institutions will be vital. Sir, as you indicated and as Senator McCain indicated, there is much work to do, and we will continue to work on institution-building. That's true from DOD and also increasingly true from other agencies as we look to strengthen them over time.

Sir, at the same time, the second point would be that what I observed when I was there 2 weeks ago was the importance of district-level and sometimes village-level leadership, the elders of the village, the role of the mosque, and the important role for districts and provinces of the governors and chiefs of police. So I think that what we're looking at for success is a model that includes a strong government in Kabul, where corruption is brought down over time, and it has resources that are able to provide not just for its own protection, but provide in part an avenue of resources back down to the local levels, and at the same time continue to build that from the grassroots, if you will, at the village and district level, build strong governance.

Sir, I think it's not an either/or. I think it's a both.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Thank you, gentlemen. My time has expired.

Senator LIEBERMAN [presiding]. Thanks, Senator Reed.

Next is Senator Chambliss.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Gentlemen, first of all thanks for your service. General Allen, particularly, you picked up right where General Petraeus left off, and we thank you for that, the kind of leadership that you provided over there. Please express to those troops that serve under you how much we appreciate their service.

General ALLEN. I will do that, sir. Thank you.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Just following up on what Senator Reed was talking about with respect to night raids, having been in Afghanistan a number of times, having visited with some of those troops, particularly Afghan troops, who are carrying out those night raids in a very professional way and in a way which has minimized even the risk of civilian casualties, it's a pretty important part of our process as we move towards ultimately achieving the victory there.

I'm really concerned about this potential shift to a warrant-based approach. General Allen, my question to you is, will that shift increase the possibility of civilian casualties and our ability to fix and finish the target?

General ALLEN. An important question, sir. I believe, Senator, that if we do this right it will not impede either the operations nor will it increase civilian casualties. As I presume you understand, we are at about 2,400 operations, special operations a year. This last year we had about 2,200 night operations. Of those 2,200 or so night operations, in 90 percent of them we didn't fire a shot. On more than 50 percent of them, we got the targeted individual, and in 30 percent more we got the next associate of that individual as well. So 83 percent roughly of the night operations, we got either the primary target or an associate.

In all of those night operations, even with the 10 percent where we fired a shot, there was less than 1.5 percent civilian casualties.

Now, I don't diminish any civilian casualties by reducing it to a percentage point. Every one of those is tragic. But after 9,200 night operations, 27 people were killed or wounded in night operations. That would argue for the power of night operations preserving life and reducing civilian casualties in all other kinds of operations than necessarily being a risk of creating additional civilian casualties. That's in my mind, sir, as we go through the process of negotiating an outcome for the "Afghanization," if you will, of night operations.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Those are very impressive statistics and, unfortunately, they're not reported in the Afghan press. They seem to only highlight the negative aspects, which, as you just stated, are very, very few.

With regard to Afghan-Taliban reconciliation, the administration has made a conscious decision to overtly seek reconciliation with the Taliban, and part of that action on the part of the administration has been to offer up five Guantanamo Bay detainees who are Taliban, who have been identified by the Taliban themselves as the five that they would like to have released as a show of good faith, according to the administration, that the United States is serious about negotiations regarding reconciliation.

Personally, I am offended by any negotiations with terrorists who are killing our men and women. But besides that, I am really offended that there would be some conversation about releasing five of the meanest, nastiest killers in the world to the Taliban as a show of good faith, particularly to have them housed in a country where our experience has not been very good in their retaining the individuals that have been previously released to them.

I understand that the negotiations now, Dr. Miller, have moved to DOD from the Department of State (DOS). I think that's a wise decision. I understand also from comments made by Secretary Panetta yesterday that these transfers are now on hold because, as some of us suspected, now the administration does not have confidence that the Qatar Government is going to be capable of living up to the requirements and conditions that we put on them for these five individuals.

My question to both of you is, do you think that the release of these five individuals to the Taliban, even under the conditions that are being discussed, is a wise move when you consider the rate of recidivism, that we know now to be about 27 percent, and when we particularly know that these are five leaders of the Taliban who have previously been declared to be too dangerous to be released and are likely to reenter the fight?

Dr. Miller, I'd like your comments, please.

Dr. MILLER. Senator Chambliss, DOD and Secretary Panetta support the process of reconciliation or efforts to support an Afghan-led reconciliation. We are doing that with eyes wide open and understanding, understanding the nature of the individuals that are involved, working closely with DOS and others to see how we can assist the Afghans.

Let me say explicitly, sir, that no decisions have been made on the possible transfer of detainees. The law requires the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, to certify to Congress that the necessary security measures and assurances

are in place before any transfer can occur. We are in absolute agreement that these assurances must be in place before anything can go forward. But as I said, no decision to do so has been taken.

Senator CHAMBLISS. General Allen, do you have any comment on that issue?

General ALLEN. I think as long, sir, as the Secretary, in accordance with law, as Dr. Miller said, can certify that they will not become recidivists, there is the break potentially on the process, and I support the Secretary's view in that regard, sir.

Senator CHAMBLISS. General Allen, in previous hearings you have noted that one of the greatest shortages you saw in our fight in Afghanistan was in "air asset support, both rotary and fixed wing, and an increased requirement for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms equipped with signals intelligence and full motion video." You also remarked that intelligence analysts and associated systems were also necessary to properly exploit the data collected.

Do you believe that since we last had a conversation about this that you are getting the kind of support from DOD and the Intelligence Community in terms of prioritizing and acquiring those assets?

General ALLEN. I think we are in better shape than we were before, Senator, and we're very grateful actually for that support. General Mattis and DOD and of course, the resources that have been made available through the Air Force and from Congress, have helped to improve that situation, sir, to include even the arrival of hyper-spectral capabilities in theater has been very helpful to us, and that arrival is most welcome.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thanks again for your commitment and for the commitment of your family.

General ALLEN. Thank you, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Chambliss.

I'm privileged to be occupying the chair while Senator Levin had to go to the floor. I just take the liberty to say very briefly that I share Senator Chambliss's concern about these five detainees. I appreciate the reassurance that you've given on the Secretary's behalf. Personally, I know that the Taliban has apparently said in these negotiations this is the way to build trust. I think it's much too, much too soon to give up five of these detainees. There are other things we ought to do before we get to that point to build up the trust. Frankly, I don't know how Secretary Panetta could ever certify that these five would not be recidivists. So personally, I hope he never does.

Senator Ben Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General Allen and Secretary Miller, for your testimony today, for being here. General Allen, please take our appreciation back to the men and women in uniform and the civilians there working together to help solve a very, very challenging problem that we all face.

One of the things that we've struggled with as a country and as individuals and as government and military is trying to outline progress and put it into a metric program to understand whether we're 25 percent toward our goal or 50 percent, because it's too easy to talk about winning or losing. Unless there's some definition

and some metric associated with that, one person's success is another person's loss.

So we established some time ago the benchmarks in Afghanistan, and I'm interested in both of your analyses here of our efforts in achieving those benchmarks. Last October, the report on progress towards security and stability in Afghanistan revealed that, of the Afghan army units assessed, only 36 percent were effective independently or with purely advisory support, and that likewise only 44 percent of the Afghan police assessed were similarly effective.

Could you give us your at least a benchmark thought about how that direction is going? Are we going from 36 percent to 40 or 50 percent for army and up from 44 percent with the Afghan police?

General ALLEN. Sir, let me offer you a couple of comments here, but I would like to take back the question so I can give you a level of specificity that your question deserves. In January 2011 there were 155 ratable kandaks, battalion-sized units, in Afghanistan. 101 of those were rated as effective with advisors or effective with assistance. None of them was rated as independent at that point with advisors.

A year later, there are 168 kandak-sized units, battalion-sized units, and we've gone from 101 to 127 that have been rated in the top 3, and 11 that have been rated independent with advisors. So in just a year there has been significant improvement.

It's not a linear improvement. It's really an improvement that gains capability over time in a non-linear way. There have been similar improvements with the police as well. But let me take back that question and make sure I get back to you with a level of specificity that it deserves, sir.

[The information referred to follows:]

The operational effectiveness of both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) continues to improve. In the ANA, the combined percentage of units rated as "Effective with Advisors" and "Independent with Advisors" increased from 33 percent in August 2011 to 53 percent in January 2012. In the ANP, the combined percentage of units rated as "Effective with Advisors" and "Independent with Advisors" increased from 37 percent in August 2011 to 50 percent in January 2012.

To assess progress in the development of the Afghan National Security Forces, the International Security Assistance Force relies on a quarterly reporting tool known as the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool, which uses Rating Definition Levels to assess a unit's operational effectiveness. Resulting reports cover quantitative data, to include personnel, equipment, and training, as well as qualitative assessments in areas affecting the effectiveness of the unit. Quantitative data reported includes personnel, equipment, and training, while qualitative data reported includes communications, equipping, intelligence, logistics, leadership, maintenance, operations, personnel, partnering, and training and education. Reports include an overall assessment of a unit's operational effectiveness based on a scale (from highest to lowest possible rating): Independent with Advisors, Effective with Advisors, and Effective with Partners, Developing with Partners, Established, and Not Assessed.

Senator NELSON. Secretary Miller, are you satisfied that progress and improvement, rather than talking about we're being successful or we're failing, but there's been progress and improvement in these areas of benchmarks that we've established? I know they've been worked on with the Secretary of State as well as the Secretary of Defense.

Dr. MILLER. Senator Nelson, yes, I am satisfied that we're making progress. I know that there will always be times when we slip back and have to regain progress that we've made before. But as

General Allen said, what we've seen is very significant progress, and we will provide detailed numbers as you've requested, sir.

Senator NELSON. Let me also deal with the issue of the numbers of personnel that are now in ANSF, both as to the present number and the future number, because we can't always evaluate everything simply on the basis of the cost, but I think we always have to know what the cost is.

Can you tell me how much it costs U.S. taxpayers to support the current ANSF? I guess let me ask you, Secretary Miller.

Dr. MILLER. Sir, let me pull up the number. My recollection is that the request for fiscal year 2012 was a little over $11 billion and that we've requested about $5.8 for fiscal year 2013. So that if you look at that cost compared to the overall cost of the conflict, it is relatively small.

Senator NELSON. I know, General, that you don't evaluate the needs simply based on what the cost is, but we can't ignore costs, and I appreciate that fact, that you're not saying we have to have the best Afghan national forces money can buy or the money that we can afford.

But it is a factor for the American people to be aware of what the true financial cost and financial burden, given the fact that the debt continues to rise and we're trying to control a deficit, and at the same time right-size the budget to take care of our national security needs as well.

Secretary Miller, do you agree with that?

Dr. MILLER. Senator Nelson, yes, I do.

Senator NELSON. I always appreciate short, crisp answers when possible.

In looking toward alternatives to violence, it's my understanding that insurgents may be looking toward alternatives to violence. At the same time, the Taliban seems to be threatening more violence and more sensational violence. Apart from the sensationalism right now of the threats following the Koran and the unfortunate slaying of civilians, is there truly a bona fide effort at trying to find alternatives to violence among the insurgency? General?

General ALLEN. Senator Nelson, that's a really important question, because it gets at the ability to decompose the insurgency, and it is pursuing the process of reintegration. In any spectrum of peacemaking that would occur in a counterinsurgency, on the one end you would have the political agreement that would be called reconciliation and on the other end you would have the individual opportunity for the insurgent himself to come off the battlefield, for whatever reason we've been able to entice him to come off.

That's a continuum. Where we have seen some pretty substantial success in the last year is in the area of reintegration. My own experience from Iraq and the Anbar Province was when we began to see the individuals reintegrate, to come off the battlefield because they had, for whatever reason, either their grievance had been resolved or they had elected finally to give up violence, that began a process of the decomposition from the bottom up of the insurgency. When enough of them begin to come over, the leadership has to listen very carefully.

What's happened in the last year in Afghanistan, which I think is very important, is that the Karzai administration through a min-

ister by the name of Stanekzai within the Afghan peace and reconciliation process and the peace committee, peace council—he is the current chief executive officer, if you will, of that organization after the assassination of President Rabbani, who headed the High Peace Council.

We have created, assisting the Afghans—it's an Afghan process, the reintegration process throughout the country—a bureaucracy which has a provincial peace committee in each of the provinces and a joint secretariat to support it. On 1 January 2011 there were about 600 insurgents who had reintegrated across the country. Today there are 3,800, and there's another several hundred that are in the process of reintegrating. There are a number of others that have gone home that we call informal reintegres, and we don't know that number, but there's even more.

That's something that the enemy, the insurgency, has to account for. They've attempted to intimidate them, but very few have gone back into the fight. I think that's a very important advance, and your question, I think, addresses that very issue.

Senator NELSON. It does, and I appreciate that response. I would hope that the reconciliation effort might be successful with the top leaders as well, but I suspect that's a much more difficult challenge.

General ALLEN. It likely will take longer, sir.

Senator NELSON. It will take longer. Thank you. Again, thanks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Chairman Levin and Ranking Member McCain have, I think, achieved a great deal of wisdom over the years in dealing with the issues that we face. I think Senator Levin has indicated his strength, I believe, and support, General Allen. He said our soldiers deserve our support and they have it, and the plan that I believe you're working on. Senator McCain has likewise said that.

Dr. Miller, you said that Afghanistan will meet the challenge, I believe, in your opening statement, and expressed a confidence that we could be successful. You quoted again President Obama's statement: "We will build an enduring relationship with Afghanistan."

Senator McCain talked about the vision that we had for the success in Afghanistan. We've had bipartisan support for that and we're having some difficulties now, at least certainly in the press, if not on the ground. We had the problem with the Koran. We've had the problems with the Afghan soldiers killing our own soldiers. We've had the problem of, it appears, one of our soldiers killed unjustifiably men, women, and children. President Karzai has been making a series of very odd statements, as far as I'm concerned, that reflect perhaps frustration, but also causes me concern about where he is.

General Allen, you're the person on the ground. I asked this question of General Petraeus when he went to lead the surge in Iraq, and the question is: In your best judgment, working for the American people, and you're required to give this Congress your best opinion as a military leader concerning our effort there, is it an effort that if we move smartly ahead following the vision that

we've had, that seems to be a bipartisan vision, can we be successful?

If the circumstances reach a point where we cannot be successful, will you tell us?

General ALLEN. I believe we can be successful, Senator Sessions, and I will tell you the moment I believe we cannot be.

Senator SESSIONS. How would you describe these series of negative public events? How does it impact your efforts? It can't be good. But we are members of a great Congress, of a great Nation. We're engaged in policies that have ups and downs in them, and sometimes we have events that change our minds. Is this one of the situations in which you believe that the adverse events can be worked through and that this is not a fatal event in our relationship with Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. Senator, I believe we can work through them all.

Senator SESSIONS. How do you see President Karzai and his comments? When I was there with Senator Lindsay Graham and Senator McCain and several others, I was taken aback by some of the comments that were made. You were with us in that meeting just, what, 3 or 4 weeks ago. Senator McCain made clear his concerns, crystal-clear. It was an important, open, direct exchange, I thought was valuable.

But I've noticed that President Karzai has made some additional comments of the same nature since then and that is a cause of concern to me. What can you tell us about where we stand with regard to the president of Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. Senator, you have put your finger on the issue. There is frustration with these events. These events in many respects have struck a blow at the core of the relationship. President Karzai has to be able to speak to the Afghan people about putting our relationship in the context of the long-term relationship with Afghanistan.

So I understand his frustration and I understand that if it were just one event he would have a particular view on it. But we've had several events of late—the urination video, the burning of religious material, to include the Koran, the shootings in Panjwai. In the aggregate, those are significant events.

But I believe he is committed to a relationship with the United States. He was very clear in a strategic—in a video teleconference in which I was in attendance with Ambassador Crocker recently with the President. He was very clear in his commitment to a strategic partnership with the United States. But these incidents can't be ignored, and he has to explain those incidents to his own population.

Now, some of the terms that he has used I reject. I reject the use of the word "demon" when it is applied to the 130,000-plus troops that serve in ISAF and the U.S. forces among them. I reject the equivalence of our forces with the Taliban in the same sentence.

I understand why in frustration and in anger those words can come out. But on behalf of our forces, on behalf of the American people and the populations of the 50 states of ISAF, I reject that term. Those magnificent troops are sacrificing every day. Many of them are sacrificing their lives. Just before I walked in here, I was given a report on one of our troops who when he saw a small child

underneath one of our Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles in Afghanistan, threw himself under the vehicle to pull that child out so it would not be harmed, and in the process, perished himself.

Now, that's sacrifice and that's dedication to a cause, just as William Stacey, Sergeant Stacey, who was laid to rest recently, dedicated his life to this cause. I believe that President Karzai understands that, and I believe that President Karzai appreciates that as well. He has said that publicly.

But it's difficult to get past some of these recent incidents and in the process words might be spoken that we all regret. I reject the term "demon" as it is applied to our forces, and "satanic" and "inhuman." Those are terms that do not apply to us, but I can understand how in moments of stress and anger they might be uttered.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you very much, General Allen. I have to say that the people who observe your leadership in Afghanistan are universally extremely complimentary of what you're doing and the leadership you're providing. Your integrity is unquestioned, and I take great comfort in your honest analysis.

Dr. Miller, if you wanted to comment on that, my time is up, but perhaps you'd like to also comment.

Dr. MILLER. Senator Sessions, I would simply like to associate myself completely with General Allen's remarks and to say that it's been an incredibly bouncy period of a few weeks to about a month, and that during that time, during that incredibly difficult time, we have also seen, in addition to conversations between President Obama and President Karzai, a videoteleconference, telephone call, the Secretary of Defense meeting with him. We've also seen General Allen conclude the MOU on one of the most sensitive issues that we have to deal with, detention operations, during this challenging time.

To me that's a signal that there is resilience and it's also a signal of General Allen's terrific leadership, just as you've described. We need to move forward. We need to have an enduring relationship, and as General Allen said, we need to understand that tragic events will happen, that we will continue to have challenges, but that the strategy under which we are operating, the plan that we're implementing, is succeeding, and we need to have the courage and wherewithal to continue.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I just would note that Senator Graham engaged President Karzai about that strategic agreement and when we left we were worried. We didn't know what would happen. So it is a very, very important agreement and I'm glad it's been worked out, it appears, because without it I think we'd have problems and with it I think we can develop an enduring relationship.

Thank you.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Sessions. Well said.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, let me echo the comments of a lot of people up here. I appreciate your leadership. I've known you for a long time. It's a

very, very tough situation that you're confronting and we're appreciative that you're there right now.

Let me ask you to begin with, about 2 years ago, General Jim Jones, as the National Security Advisor, estimated that there were fewer than 100 al Qaeda in Afghanistan. How many al Qaeda would you estimate are in Afghanistan today?

General ALLEN. I think it's about the same, sir.

Senator WEBB. About the same. I would say as a starter in terms of our mission of denying al Qaeda sanctuary in Afghanistan, we've been pretty successful.

I would like to make another point. When we're talking about the frustration of the American people with how long this task has been taking, there is obviously a difference between toppling a government and developing long-term security practices inside a country that's gone through what Afghanistan has gone through.

But it's rather frustrating, I think, for a lot of people in this country when we are defining success at this point as having an Afghanistan military and police force that would be capable of taking charge of its own security operations by late 2014, which is about 13 years after September 11 and after this Taliban Government was toppled, and that we know the reality here that we're discussing is that that's not really the end of the war, as people are terming the war. It's a time when we're looking at a point where the Afghans will be able to fight their own war or take care of their own security measures.

We know that this is a culture that does know how to fight. I think we're being presumptuous here when we keep talking about how we're trying to train up the Afghanistan military and the police forces. They've been fighting for hundreds of years, and in fact, we should remind ourselves that it was actually the Afghans who threw out the Taliban, with the assistance of some highly qualified, but a small number, of Americans. We didn't do it; they did it.

I was very taken by one of the comments that you made, General, in your testimony when you were saying that they are actually better than we had expected them to be or you had expected them to be, the forces that are operating right now. In fact, from your comment, they're better than they thought they would be.

So, let me ask you, if they're better than we thought they would be, would one of your considerations when you're making your recommendations be accelerating the pace of our military withdrawal? You could actually see that as a signal of success, of our strength, rather than a weakness.

General ALLEN. As I said to the chairman, Senator Webb, I'm going to think in the recommendations that I make to the President through the chain of command a very important consideration will be the state of the ANSF. They are better than we thought they would be, because I believe as—and I know of your own personal experience. You have advised. You have seen forces that just required the opportunity to get into the fight to come into their own, and that's what's happening now.

So we're going to watch this very closely. We're going to do all we can with advisors to accelerate that process. If part of the outcome of my evaluation is that there is a reduced requirement for

U.S. or ISAF combat power, I'll make that part of my recommendation, sir.

Senator WEBB. Good. Thank you for that.

Dr. Miller, you're in a little precarious situation here today—I think a lot of us understand that—in that your confirmation hearing is a week from now to officially occupy the position that you're now acting in.

But I want to ask you a question about this strategic partnership, because from my perspective and from some others up here in the Senate the nature of the strategic framework agreement that took place with respect to Iraq should have been subject to much more vigorous participation by the U.S. Congress. When you're defining a security relationship with another country in which there has been this type of military involvement, it just seems to me that there should be some sort of congressional approval of the parameters that are eventually agreed upon.

Do you see this strategic partnership, this agreement, as it is moving forward as an expression of executive power, or do you see this as something that is more in the lines of a traditional role of Congress?

Dr. MILLER. Senator Webb, let me first just say very explicitly, while I welcome the opportunity to come back and testify for confirmation, any contribution that I can make to help explain what we're doing in Afghanistan——

Senator WEBB. I understand.

Mr. MILLER.—to the Senate far outweighs whether I'm confirmed or not. That said, I look forward to being back on the 29th.

With respect to the strategic partnership, this will be a critical milestone, but it won't be the last milestone. I would expect that there's a follow-on agreement that will address a number of issues, for example, including basing and so forth, that my guess would be will get more to the types of issues that you are concerned about and that you're raising.

So at this point let me say that we will commit to consult with Congress as we move forward on the strategic partnership and that we will be prepared to explain how it relates to future steps, and understand that you will have a view about what role Congress should have, the Senate should have, in each of those steps.

Senator WEBB. Let me express my concern, because if you will recall what happened in the situation with our relationship with Iraq, there were two agreements. One was a strategic framework agreement, which really defined the nature of a longer-term relationship, and then the other was the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which is more nuts and bolts. Everywhere that we have American troops, we have some kind of a SOFA.

But neither of them were brought for the formal consideration of Congress. We actually with the previous administration had to go to a room, as if this document were classified, and it was not, and sign in in order to retrieve it in order to read it. So it was pretty much kept out of the public eye and away from formal congressional consideration.

I attempted to bring it to a vote, quite frankly. I lost that attempt. But I believe when you're defining this type of far-reaching relationship between two countries that it should not be simply a

matter of the executive branch. This conversation will be continued, but I wanted to raise it today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

General Allen, on January 31 of this year Lance Corporal Eddie Dycus, a marine from Greenville, MS, was shot in the head by an Afghan army liaison noncomissioned officer embedded with Lance Corporal Dycus's unit in the Helmand Province. Yesterday my staff and I received a briefing on the details of this case from the Marine Corps and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

The ongoing Marine Corps and NCIS investigation of this case has revealed that the Afghan soldier responsible for the shooting has a questionable personal history, previously unknown to the U.S. military. I was informed by the Marine Corps that this Afghan soldier would never have been allowed to embed with our forces had we known of his history. As such, I believe robust recruit screening by the Afghan security forces could have helped avoid the tragic death of this brave young man.

General, will your team at ISAF headquarters work with the Marine Corps and NCIS to provide me with a detailed written report on the circumstances surrounding Lance Corporal Dycus's murder?

General ALLEN. Yes, sir, we will.

[The information referred to follows:]

On the night of 31 January 2012, marines from Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 5, 2d Marine Division (Forward), II Marine Expeditionary Forces (Forward) were conducting partnered static security operations at Combat Outpost (COP) Coutu, Marjeh District, Helmand Province, when they heard gunshots from the vicinity of one of the posts. The operator of the surveillance system recorded an individual outside of the COP running away. An Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier from a nearby guard post began shooting at the individual, eventually pinning him down in a ditch close to the COP.

While this was occurring, upon hearing the shot, a Marine in the Command Operations Center (COC) immediately began a radio check with all marines on post. Lance Corporal Edward J. Dycus failed to respond to the radio call. Once Lance Corporal Dycus failed to respond, two marines from the COC ran to the post manned by Lance Corporal Dycus. The two marines discovered Lance Corporal Dycus on his back with a gunshot wound to the head. The senior marine reported that a marine was down and placed the remaining marine in charge of the post. This response took less than 2 minutes from the gunshot to the discovery of Lance Corporal Dycus. Platoon sergeants arrived at the outpost and took control ordering a stretcher and movement of Lance Corporal Dycus while the medics prepared for a trauma patient. Unfortunately, upon Lance Corporal Dycus' arrival at the Aid Station, resuscitation was not possible.

A team of marines was dispatched to detain the person in the ditch. When the marines detained the shooter, he immediately began shouting that he was drugged with hashish by another ANA soldier and that this other ANA soldier was a Taliban member. He further admitted to shooting Lance Corporal Dycus. The weapon used belonged to a third ANA soldier. All three were taken into custody.

Naval Criminal Investigative Services is conducting a criminal investigation into the case and the Command initiated a JAGMAN investigation under the provisions of Judge Advocate General Instruction 5800.7E with Change 1–2. The JAGMAN was completed on 15 March 2012, finding that Lance Corporal Dycus died in the line of duty; and that the shooter's behavior leading to the shooting was "normal." There were no apparent indicators to predict his behavior and nothing unusual occurred with his interactions with the Marines.

On 4 March 2012, the Chief of the General Staff, ANA, General Karimi, formally requested the transfer of the shooter and the two other ANA personnel for investigation and prosecution in the Afghan Military Courts. This request was granted and the shooter is currently in pre-trial confinement in a military prison.

Senator WICKER. What is your current assessment of the insider threat facing troops in Afghanistan from rogue elements and individuals in the Afghan security forces? I understand this happens so frequently that it is known by the term "green-on-blue" attacks, in other words Afghan on NATO or ISAF force attacks.

How many ISAF and American personnel have died as a result of green-on-blue attacks and how many such attacks are still currently under investigation?

General ALLEN. Senator, I'll have to get you the final number on the numbers under investigation. But we've had 52 Americans who have been killed and another 60 or so, 68, who've been wounded since 2007 when we first started to track these events.

We have taken significant steps to work closely with the Afghans. I'll talk about what the Afghan side is doing and then I'll talk about what we're doing on our side. On the Afghan side, we're trying to accelerate the counterintelligence capabilities of the ANA to ensure that they have the ability down to the battalion level to detect an insider threat that may develop. They have improved the vetting process of individuals who are coming into the ANA and police with an eight-step vetting process, which includes a requirement to have a valid ID card, letters of endorsement or recommendation from village elders, and other aspects, criminal background check and so on.

There is an unprecedented level of cooperation between the National Directorate of Security (NDS), their intelligence directorate, and the ANA and the ANP to embed counterintelligence agents from the NDS in basic training, in the basic training schools, the follow-on schools, and ultimately to have counterintelligence operatives working closely with the ANA and ANP in their ranks as well.

Senator WICKER. General, how long has this new eight-step process been in place?

General ALLEN. Just months, sir.

Senator WICKER. It strikes me that that is a very high number of green-on-blue attacks.

General ALLEN. This is since 2007, sir. We've had six Americans who've been killed this calendar year.

Senator WICKER. So do you think they've tapered off?

General ALLEN. I don't think so at this point. I think that the measures that are being taken now, once they are in place, the measures that the ISAF and U.S. forces that are undertaking, those in combination I believe will begin the process of eliminating or reducing to the maximum extent possible the insider threat, as it is called. It's called "green-on-blue" for the purposes of reporting.

But those measures have really only gone into effect in this calendar year. So we're going to work very hard, both within ISAF and in partnership with the Afghans, to reduce this as much as possible.

It's important also to note that the Afghans have suffered nearly as many casualties as we have from the same kind of threat. So it's in everyone's interests that we have a combined effort to be able to sense and to eliminate——

Senator WICKER. Let me make that clear. You're speaking of green-on-green?

General ALLEN. Yes, sir, correct.

Senator WICKER. An Afghan soldier killing another Afghan soldier?

General ALLEN. That is correct, sir. So it's in all our interests to be able to sense the presence of extremists in the ranks and be able to deal with them when we do. Now, there are—and we can provide this to you; we'd be very happy to, in fact; I'll take it as a due-out—to provide you accounts of successful investigations that have occurred in the last several months where we have, in fact, intercepted, arrested, and detained individuals whose intent it was to harm either Afghans or ISAF forces.

[The information referred to follows:]

There have been 52 cases of green-on-blue attacks since 2007, resulting in 86 International Security Assistance Force members killed in action (KIA). Of those 86 KIA, 54 were U.S. servicemembers. There are currently five attacks current under investigation; three are being investigated by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command (CID), one by the Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS), and two by Regional Command East.

U.S. Army CID is currently investigating three green-on-blue investigations. The first case involves an Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier opening fire on U.S. soldiers, killing one and wounding three others. The ANA soldier was killed during the incident. The second case involves the shooting of two U.S. servicemembers at the Ministry of the Interior. The third case involved two ANA soldiers and one ANA teacher. The ANA members killed two U.S. soldiers, wounded one U.S. soldier and wounded one ANA soldier. Close Air Support killed one of the attacking ANA soldiers and the ANA teacher. There is one open NCIS case concerning Lance Corporal Dycus.

Regional Command-East is currently investigating two green-on-blue incidents. One unit reported receiving small arms fire from Afghan local police (ALP) personnel while conducting a check on an ALP checkpoint. This incident resulted in one U.S. soldier KIA and two ALP wounded in action. One later died of wounds. The second investigation involves two U.S. medical evacuation helicopters observing tracer fire on them by Afghan National Police (ANP) as they attempted to exfiltrate an area after an operation. Two Air Weapons Teams returned fire. A battle damage assessment was not conducted, and there were no U.S. casualties. The local ANP Deputy Chief of Police reported that one ANP was killed and six wounded.

Senator WICKER. It would be good to have the success stories. I'm afraid I'm asking you for a pretty detailed answer on the record, though, as far as the incidents since 2007, as far as when they occurred, because I'd like to review for myself and see if it's getting better or if it's getting worse.

Let me just ask you this. I understand that Lance Corporal Dycus's killer is being held in custody by Afghan security forces. What steps will you take to ensure that the Afghans do not either intentionally or unintentionally release this individual, and will your team at ISAF headquarters keep me updated in writing on the latest developments on the Afghan soldier's case as it makes its way through the Afghan legal system?

General ALLEN. We will certainly do that, Senator. I have been in personal contact with the Chief of the Army Staff, General Karimi, for whom I have great respect, and we have spoken on this individual person, and he has assured me that justice will be done, and they have him in the Afghan army detention facility within Pol-e Charki and they will prosecute him according to Afghan law. I have every reason to believe that he'll be held accountable.

But in any case, we'll be watching that case and we'll keep you apprised, sir.

Senator WICKER. Okay. I have a follow-up question. My time is up. It deals with some more particulars on the screening process and the way we are involved in helping screen the Afghan security forces. I'll submit that in writing.

General ALLEN. We'll take it for the record.

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much.

General ALLEN. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen. General Allen, it's good to see you again.

General ALLEN. It's good to see you, sir.

Senator UDALL. As always, thank you for your service and your dedication to this crucial mission. When Senator Jack Reed and I were in Afghanistan last fall in October, we talked at length about the plans for this year's campaign and about particularly the training plan for the ANSF. I want to make sure you have the resources to recruit, train, and equip a viable security force.

Dr. Miller, good to see you as well. I want to make sure also that the administration and DOD are in the process of developing models and plans for after 2014, after the NATO combat troops have left Afghanistan.

I have to tell you I believe that insufficient contingency planning for what might happen after the Taliban were routed in 2001 and after Saddam Hussein's regime fell in 2003 led to these long irregular wars of the last decade. I want to be absolutely certain we're not going to make that same mistake by failing to plan and prepare for a post-NATO Afghanistan.

So in that spirit, I know we've been justifiably focused on the counterinsurgency mission, training the ANSF, rooting out corruption in the Afghan Government, and working through a lot of other issues with an eye on the 2014 stepback. I'd like to talk about what happens after 2014, what capabilities will the Afghan army have, what missions will they be able to perform. In other words, do you envision the ANSF as a defensive force or one that's capable of going after the Taliban and actually disrupting their operations?

General ALLEN. Sir, let me start with that. The ANSF that will ultimately be fielded, the 352,000-person force at the end of 2013, will continue in force for some period of time after 2014. Again, as we discussed earlier, it'll be based on quality metrics, the assessment of the enemy situation, the operational environment, and so on. But we would expect to see the 352,000 force continue for at least a full year after the 2014 force.

The nature of the force that we envisage now will be a force that will be primarily capable of conducting counterinsurgency capabilities, to continue to deal with what we're calling operationally significant insurgent capabilities. So wherever we may find that there is still an insurgent threat, the capacity of that force will be focused on continuing to deal with it.

As questions, as comments that have been made this morning imply, one of the challenges that we will continue to face will be the insurgent threat across the border in the safe havens. The nature of the force as it is currently envisaged to be disposed around

the country based on the operational environment may require that more of that force ultimately be disposed to be deployed in the eastern and southern portions of the country than had been originally imagined. But I think that's fine, as we're talking through this now with Afghan leadership, and of course it'll ultimately be their decision.

But we're actually having conversations out to the end of 2014 now on our bilateral campaign plan and we're beginning to have discussions about the period from 1 January 2015 until the other end of 2017. The expectation would be that we would dispose the forces in Afghanistan in direct proportion and in direct response to the operational environment and the insurgent threat.

The expected force will ultimately be a force that has sufficient policing capacity to provide protection to the population and an army and an air force that have the capacity to move sufficiently quickly to the point of requirement, either back up the police as necessary or to conduct additional counterinsurgency operations. So we're looking for a force that has those balanced capabilities.

Senator UDALL. Dr. Miller, would you like to add anything to that overview?

Dr. MILLER. Senator Udall, General Allen has pretty well covered it. I would say that we understand what the composition is to be of the 352,000, with 195,000 ANA and 157,000 ANP. The composition and the overall number when and as those numbers are reduced based on conditions is not yet determined, and that is—as we think about the post-2014 planning, we need and we are thinking about a range of different contingencies and a range of different situations, and understand that, while one has a plan, at the end of the day, that that plan will need to be adjusted over time.

General ALLEN. Sir, may I come back to this very briefly?

Senator UDALL. Please.

General ALLEN. I apologize. We will still see the force disposed almost certainly along the original plan. But elements of that force, as again based on the enemy situation, would be deployed in an expeditionary manner for periods of time and then go back to the basing. So the forces that would otherwise be deployed to the north will still be garrisoned in the north, but elements of it we would imagine, to be determined with detailed planning, would deploy to those areas where their specific skills or their additional combat power would be needed.

But we would envision that those would be temporary deployments. So we'd still see the army based, as we have envisaged it, across the country, but the force would mass as necessary to deal with those operationally relevant insurgent hot spots.

Senator UDALL. So if we don't see a broad reconciliation process, peace talks, the Taliban included in the Afghan national government, these forces would be prepared to take the fight in a counterinsurgency construct to the Taliban, to the Haqqani network, and others who would have as a goal to undercut the stability and security of Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. That's correct, and they are demonstrating those capabilities already.

Senator UDALL. On those capabilities, who's responsible for determining what those capabilities for the ANSF should be and then

for measuring that progress toward meeting those requirements? Is that you, General? Is it the MOI? Who all are involved?

General ALLEN. Clearly they are measuring them as well, and we compare those measurements. Within the ISAF forces, it is both an assessment that is done by the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan, but it's also an assessment that's done by the operational commanders.

Senator UDALL. Talk a little bit more about the ALP. You shared with us last fall your plans and hopes there and the ALP seemed to offer an opportunity, as well.

General ALLEN. It is, I think, a substantial contribution, frankly, to the security of Afghanistan. The ALP does a number of things for the campaign. The first is that it provides the opportunity for Afghans to defend themselves. They're not militias. They're not individuals that are hired apart from a local population, then inserted into that population.

Our special operators will go to a village or to a town. They'll spend some time living with that population. They'll ultimately in conversation with the leadership of that population, they'll determine that they seek to be basically mobilized as a community to defend themselves. It's their decision. When they make that decision, then we begin to recruit the ALP.

The individuals of any particular garrison are vetted by the local elders. They're vetted, of course, for a police record. They are technically and officially associated with the Ministry of Interior through the local district chief of police. They're trained by our special operators, Green Berets, SEALs, or Marines, who then live amongst them and continue to mentor their capabilities.

What has happened with the ALP is it has created opportunities for large amounts of the Afghan population to reject the Taliban. There have been signals intelligence cuts that we have gotten where Taliban commanders have said: "If you can kill an ALP commander, so an Afghan local policeman who is leading his own tribesmen in that particular village, if you can kill an ALP commander, it's worth 10 coalition soldiers."

The Taliban are very threatened by the ALP because the significant terrain, the key terrain in a counterinsurgency, is the human terrain, and the ALP deny the human terrain to the Taliban.

We're only about halfway through in the fielding of the force. We're at about 12,000 now. The force will grow to an envisioned strength of 30,000. Once we reach that point, then we'll need to make some hard decisions about whether we retain that force, continue it in its existence, or even expand that force. We would do that, obviously, with the Afghans in the lead on that decision.

Senator UDALL. My time has expired, but two final comments. The power of this concept, I think, is very significant. It works within the tribal structure in Afghanistan. It's not comparative in a sense to the Sunni Awakening in Iraq, but there are elements of this that engage the local population and fit again a tribal world view. So count me as somebody who wants to support this going forward.

General ALLEN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator UDALL. Second, again I just want to underline the need for post-2014 contingency planning, so that we don't see ourselves

involved in a long irregular war over the next decade. We're going to continue to have a presence in Afghanistan. There's much at stake. We don't want to be attacked again. But we can, I think, learn a lot from what's occurred over the last 10 years in Afghanistan and Iraq, so that we set this as the right kind of stage as we hand off the country to Afghanistan.

Thanks again for your service, both of you.

General ALLEN. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator Brown.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Allen, thank you. Dr. Miller, thank you.

General, I was honored to serve in Afghanistan this summer and to meet with you and discuss the challenges and appreciate all of your service and sacrifice and those of our men and women that are serving, first of all. It was my greatest honor that I've had to do that, especially meeting with you and all of the commanders under your command.

A couple of things I noted from that trip was the fact that we were contracting with the enemy. By that trip, Senator Ayotte and I, with the blessing of the chairman and others, were able to address that in our recent defense authorization bill. So how is that? Is that helping?

General ALLEN. Absolutely. The ability to terminate a contract on the spot for misconduct within that contract is very helpful.

Senator BROWN. Great. I was also able to, at a time, learn about some of the Base Allowance for Houses issues affecting our guardsmen and I was able to address that as well through the chairman's help and support in getting an amendment up to do that. So just those two issues alone made the trip worthwhile.

The other thing I noted during that time period was the amazing amount of audits that you and your command are subjected to. Is that better than it was or what?

General ALLEN. Importantly, I have to start by saying we have benefited from these audits.

Senator BROWN. I understand that.

General ALLEN. But we've gotten important help within DOD and from other audit agencies in consolidating like or identical requirements so that we can get one audit that can provide universal return. So that has been very helpful.

Senator BROWN. Has that been done? Because I know it's something that I brought up to the chairman, and with his leadership and the ranking member's leadership we were able to put that message out as well, that if you're going to audit, hey, they're not avoiding the audits, but to take all the men and women who are serving and then put them in the office doing audits, it's just, it's counterproductive, especially with the drawdown. Is that now working a little better?

General ALLEN. We think it is, sir. Thank you.

Senator BROWN. One of the things I wanted to note is, when we had to get that signoff for those night raids, I'm deeply concerned, probably as Senator Graham is, about the rule of law issues. Who

is, in fact, signing off on these? Are these judges, Afghan judges? Can you just go through the process as to how that would work?

General ALLEN. Senator, we're really just starting these negotiations and they're very sensitive.

I'd be happy to give it to you as a classified addendum.

[The information referred to follows:]

General Allen's response is retained in committee files.

Senator BROWN. Absolutely. Let me just say, though, I am concerned about the rule of law issues, as is Senator Graham, as I remember, going and observing, not only at the detainment facility and participating in a review of release, but deeply concerned about that. So I know you're going to take that in consideration.

The green-on-blue issues. How are those soldiers that have killed our soldiers, how are they actually treated? Are they arrested? Are they in jail? Where are they? What's the status of those folks?

General ALLEN. Many of them were killed on the spot. The others that were apprehended are in the hands of the Afghan military. As I said, the one who killed Lance Corporal Dycus is in the military detention facility in Pol-e Charki, and I was, by General Karimi, who I believe you've met, assured that justice would be done in that regard. I'm confident that he will be true to his word, sir.

Senator BROWN. No doubt about that.

I noted with Senator Udall—I was able to go up to Paktika and actually observe and meet the leadership on the ALP program. I too am a huge supporter. I am also deeply concerned that by getting that program up to 30,000, yet we're doing a dramatic drawdown—how does that all work out? Getting that program up and running is without a doubt the clearest deterrent for the Taliban to reestablish ties in that region and potentially reestablish camps and potentially export terrorism around the region and eventually potentially moving on other parts of that—other countries within that region.

How do you think that's going to shake out?

General ALLEN. I think it's going to continue to be an important mechanism for holding the ground in Afghanistan.

Senator BROWN. Quite a bit less cost and less manpower.

General ALLEN. Much less cost. The special operators that we have dedicated to that, we're in the process, and I'm working very closely with our Special Operations Command, led by our great Green Beret, General Chris Haas, who I think you've met——

Senator BROWN. Yes.

General ALLEN.—and I hold in very high esteem. We are working now the process, just as we're transitioning other aspects of the ANSF, transitioning the special operators in those units as well to Afghan special operators. That's a natural course of events that should occur. That now frees up our Green Berets, SEALs, and Marines to go elsewhere.

If you watch the unfolding of the campaign plan, what happens ahead of the movement of our conventional forces is you will see VSO and ALP sites appearing ahead of us.

Senator BROWN. Oh, I know.

General ALLEN. Holding the terrain and denying it to the enemy, so that when our conventional forces ultimately have to maneuver on the ground, our casualties are much less, the population is far more receptive to our presence, and the ANSF is able to accomplish its objectives far more quickly.

Senator BROWN. The thing I found fascinating also is just the simple thing of putting in a road that has connected these villages to one another that have not been connected for centuries——

General ALLEN. Exactly.

Senator BROWN.—or ever. Now when the Taliban is trying to move on a village, we have other villages moving in to help, which has never been heard of. You have the ALPs out there and you see they are communicating, I forget if it was by bell or by light, depending on the situation, and letting them know that there's trouble.

Are you finding that kind of a fascinating thing that's happening, that's never happened in, I think, the history of Afghanistan politics and tribal negotiations and involvement with each other?

General ALLEN. We're seeing cooperation that, I think, is really helpful. We're also seeing the resilience of the ALP that we hadn't anticipated. They're taking casualties and they're staying on the checkpoints. They're taking casualties and they're still going out on patrol.

Senator BROWN. I remember being on that post where they were having battles and they fought many battles there, and finally the Taliban moved on.

General ALLEN. That's exactly right.

Senator BROWN. I would encourage you, sir, to keep us in the loop on that program, and if you hear that it's being jeopardized in any way or being shortchanged, you need to let the chairman and the ranking member know, and all of us who are huge supporters of that program, to make sure that we can gvie you the tools and resources you need to complete the mission.

Thank you very much, sir.

General ALLEN. Thank you, Senator Brown.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Brown.

Senator Begich.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, thank you both for being here. Thank you for being patient as many members obviously have a lot of questions for you.

General, I want to point out—and I don't do this that often, but I want to point out Colonel Pruitt. He did an incredible job for us when we went to Afghanistan. We had a lot of modifications in our schedule, let me just say that, and adjustments were made rapidly, which gave me even more security that what's going on there in the sense of our troops are doing a great job. So I just want to point that out. The Colonel didn't ask me to do this. Now he'll say why did I do it, because you did a great job, and you made our trip a lot easier in a very compressed time.

General ALLEN. Senator, thank you, and I'll extend him 18 months to make sure that he supports your next visit. [Laughter.]

Senator BEGICH. I like it. Thank you very much. Sorry about that, Colonel.

But let me also say that—and I know you know this, and that is, one-tenth of the force over there comes from Alaska right now, in the sense of their station capacity, about 9,000 troops. I had a great opportunity to see the 125. I didn't have a chance to see the 425, but it was an incredible team. All the testimony that you've given is similar to what I heard and saw in the sense of the changes that occur, have been occurring since I was there in May 2009, my first trip there.

There's a lot of changes with the security forces, which is encouraging and, I think, a critical piece. If I remember some of the conversations we had there on the ground, that as they become more adapted to their abilities and capacity that they're able to maintain and hold these areas and take the lead, which, I think, is an impressive piece of the equation here, where in 2009, to be very frank with you, in May 2009, I was not very secure in that view. Today I do see that.

I want to say thanks to the teams, and I know it's not just the U.S. troops, but a big chunk of it is. But we have great allies over there helping train our folks. Next week I'll be over in Croatia and I know Croatia, they've been an incredible partner, as many others have, and I'll echo that to them and thanking them for their help.

General ALLEN. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Senator BEGICH. I just want to say that to me is important.

I also saw some incredible technology, and I say that in a way that's not like advanced technology, in regards to the IEDs that are being produced and that we're having to manage and deal with. But some of those chemicals and material are coming from Pakistan. We know that. You know that. We all know that.

Tell me what you think we need to be doing or where we are in this regard? I know you talked a little about Pakistan in the earlier discussion. Both of you did. This to me is one of my biggest concerns about—and I'll be very frank with you—the lack of focus in my view by Pakistan in helping us assist in this effort, when we know and we can also pinpoint where it's coming from, but we are not getting the full cooperation.

Help me understand, because this is one big question I get from Alaskans in the frustration they have as we see 9,000 of our troops there and they're very frustrated with this fact of the lack of participation. I know some will correct me from DOS. I'm sure I'll get a call momentarily. But the fact is I didn't see it as much as they could be doing.

Who wants to take that?

Dr. MILLER. Senator, let me first say that I had the opportunity when I was in country a couple of weeks ago to meet with the Arctic Wolves, who are doing a terrific job.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you.

Dr. MILLER. Both as they operate themselves and in partnering with coalition and Afghan forces.

I think an element to the challenge you describe is that we have, just as you indicated, gotten better at the counter-IED fight within Afghanistan. We've gotten substantially better over time. Unfortunately, because it's not just persisted, but because the enemy has continued to adapt, and our Joint IED Organization has done good work and obviously our team in country has continued to focus on

that challenge, I can say that at multiple levels, multiple times, we have raised this, the challenge of this type of sanctuary for the development and for the movement of IEDs from Pakistan into Afghanistan. Pakistan has a very significant interest in stability in Afghanistan. They also have a significant interest in this problem because, as I noted, they are actually suffering significant casualties within Pakistan.

We will continue to work with them. We will continue to do everything possible to address this and to reduce the threat that these IEDs pose to U.S., coalition, and Afghan forces.

Senator BEGICH. I appreciate the comment. I recognize the delicacy of how to deal with this. But I also look at it from another perspective, for example on the capacity of Afghanistan—and this is around some of the stuff we're doing around governance and its economic capacity to survive. Here we know Afghanistan used to be an incredible producer of incredible products, vegetables, fruits, so forth. India has a market that's just ready to take it, but Pakistan is a problem here, to move those products at an aggressive rate, because of their issues with India.

So I know it's a complicated process, but if we ever want to make that region more secure we have to figure these pieces out. Pakistan seems to be a critical piece from the national security perspective of Afghanistan, but also from the economic opportunities that are being denied to them.

Do either one of you want to comment on that?

Dr. MILLER. Senator, I agree with what you said and the importance of developing both internal and external markets for Afghanistan as they begin to grow more capacity.

If I could say, I want to thank you and the committee for the support of the DOD contribution in this, the Task Force on Business and Stability Operations. Part of what it does is looking for long-term significant moves on the Afghan economy, mineral extraction for example. But a key part of it is also to look at this bottom-up grassroots industry and to help develop that, and particularly in the areas where we've cleared and held and so now we're building, helping them develop that capacity.

I noted I was in Afghanistan just a couple of weeks ago. I was in India less than a month ago and had an opportunity to speak also with a number of their senior officials. They have a longstanding interest in Afghanistan and they are also interested in and are committed to that economic relationship.

Let me just conclude by saying that regional context is critically important. Over time the economic element is going to be vital. Sir, I understand that we have work to do, and we're committed to continue to work on it.

Senator BEGICH. Very good.

General Allen, I know you spoke earlier about where we are and the status of the withdrawal and what would happen over time and so forth. You had some areas of still concern as you monitor this and watch this. I know Senator Nelson was and I was a supporter of it. We have a benchmark list within the last authorization bill. Honestly, I would love if you would share not only with me—I'm sure other Members may want to see—where we are on those benchmarks, and then how those benchmarks—and this one, be-

cause my time is now out, but how those benchmarks could influence the timetable currently in place, but also can a positive movement on those benchmarks have any movement in accelerating any drawdown that may occur?

So could you, you or whoever would be the appropriate person, look at those benchmarks we have and then see how their metrics or benchmarks compare to where we're at in our 2014 target for combat troops out. But then, are there benchmarks that could accelerate, that may give you an opportunity to accelerate the combat troop withdrawal? Could you do that for the record and present that at some point?

General ALLEN. We have your question, sir.

Senator BEGICH. Great.

General ALLEN. We'd be glad to do that, sir.

[The information referred to follows:]

The President has directed the recovery of U.S. surge troops that will bring U.S. troop levels to 68,000 by October 1, 2012. This recovery is fully underway, and we will meet our directed timelines.

Security transition is also an important milestone in the campaign. The ability to transition a geographic area from coalition security lead to the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) reflects the growing capability of the ANSF to assume responsibility for the security of their country, with international assistance. This summer, we will implement the third tranche of areas to transition to an Afghan security lead. Along with tranches 1 and 2, this tranche will bring approximately 75 percent of the Afghan population into transitioned areas.

By late 2013, the final tranche, tranche 5, of the transition process will be implemented. At that point, the ANSF will assume lead security responsibility for all of Afghanistan. The implementation of this tranche will be a significant milestone in Afghan sovereignty. In support of this transition process, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has begun a rolling force conversion from conventional formations to Security Force Assistance, to advise and assist the ANSF. ISAF forces will be prepared to conduct combat, but our main focus will be on support to the ANSF.

The legitimate and transparent conduct of elections as well as a peaceful transfer of power will be another significant milestone in this campaign. In mid-2014, Afghanistan will hold a presidential election and conduct the transfer of power from President Karzai to a democratically elected president—its first peaceful transfer of power in modern times.

Finally, the last milestone for the ISAF campaign will be on 31 December 2014 when transition is complete; Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and ANSF will have full security responsibility for Afghanistan.

Senator BEGICH. Great. Thank you very much. Again, I can't say enough about the work and the troops on the ground there. They're incredible, they're motivated, they're excited, everyone from the Wounded Warrior Team that we saw to the folks doing the dock work to the folks sitting in the tower moving planes to the troops on the ground. It was impressive, and of course I was very proud to say that one-tenth of the force over there comes from the bases of Alaska. So I just want to say thank you all for the work you're doing every day.

General ALLEN. Thank you for your support as well, sir.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Begich.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you, Dr. Miller and General Allen, for being before the committee today. In particular, General Allen, I want to thank you for your powerful testimony repudiating some of the arrant and outrageous rhetoric that sometimes comes from President

Karzai about our troops. We share your sentiments about their integrity, their bravery, and their sacrifice. So thank you for your testimony in that regard.

Let me share my opinion, that is the same as Senator Chambliss and Senator Lieberman, about the transfer of these five high-value detainees. These are the worst of the worst. These five have the blood of Americans and our allies on their hands. I want to commend Secretary Panetta for taking his certification responsibilities so seriously, because I just don't see how you could possibly certify that these five guys wouldn't return to the battlefield, given our history of recidivism from Guantanamo.

So I just wanted to express that and commend the Secretary for what I understand to be his position right now on those five detainees.

General Allen, we recently had General Mattis before the committee, and Senator McCain spoke with General Mattis about the report that al Qaeda is making a comeback in Iraq. General Mattis said that al Qaeda's comeback is particularly noteworthy in western Iraq and even said that al Qaeda's threat is extending into Baghdad.

General Allen, you've served in Iraq with distinction. You understand not only your current responsibilities in Afghanistan, but the importance of what we've done in Iraq, and obviously the role that Iran can play in Iraq, not only in Iraq, but currently in Afghanistan.

Can you help me? What was the perception of us not leaving a follow-on force in Iraq and Afghanistan, given your need to, of course, make sure that we execute a strategic partnership? Second, what lessons can we take from that as we go forward in making sure that we have that follow-on agreement in Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. Back in November of last year, President Karzai, I think, wisely convened something called the loya jirga. The loya jirga, which in this case was over 2,000 Afghan notables from all walks of life, came together for several days to answer in essence two questions: should there be a strategic partnership with the United States; and should Afghanistan pursue peace with the Taliban, the first of the two being the preeminent outcome of the loya jirga.

The Afghan constitution states that the voice of the people as expressed through the loya jirga is the highest expression of the Afghan people. There was no question as the committees of the loya jirga reported out one after another that it was the desire of that representative body of the Afghan people, that they desired a long-term relationship with the United States, the individual contours of which remained to be negotiated, but they desired a long-term relationship with the United States.

I don't believe that there was ever in Iraq a similar expression or a similar grouping of the Iraqis to express themselves about that long-term U.S. presence. Thankfully, because of the loya jirga and the articles ultimately that accompanied its expression, we have a feel for what that relationship should be.

I think that the voice of the people as expressed in the loya jirga was quite a blow to the Taliban, and when it supported a strategic partnership, which will ultimately come into effect, I think, within

probably weeks, another blow to the Taliban, that will set up the conference, the summit of the heads of state of the 50 nations of ISAF in Chicago in May. When they register their unequivocal support for Afghanistan, not just to 2014 but in the years that follow, that will be another blow to the Taliban and a signal that the international community desires peace and stability in Afghanistan, which is not just good for the Afghan people, not just supportive of the Afghan Government, but ultimately good for the region as well, for Pakistan, and even for Iran.

So I think the ground is just different in Afghanistan now. These tragedies recently notwithstanding, which have, in fact, complicated the issue, I believe that President Karzai and his government still remain committed to a strategic partnership and we will pursue that.

I hope I got to your question. I apologize.

Senator AYOTTE. Let me ask you. You testified that Iran is playing a role in the counterinsurgency. What role is Iran playing and how important is entering this strategic partnership in terms of not only the interests in not having Afghanistan become a safe haven for al Qaeda again, but also as a blow to Iran and their influence in the region?

General ALLEN. Great question. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so do geopolitics. Should the United States leave Afghanistan, should ISAF, should NATO leave Afghanistan, that would create in my mind for all intents and purposes a geopolitical vacuum, ahead, however, of the ANSF being ready to take full security.

What the strategic partnership does is it puts the region on notice that the presence of the United States and the international community in Afghanistan is a presence that is reassuring to the Afghan people, it is a presence that is reassuring to the Afghan Government. It buys the time necessary for the Afghan Government to go through the process of reform necessary for, as President Karzai has said, to get at this culture of impunity with respect to corruption. It buys time for the ANSF to continue their professionalization.

A stable Afghanistan is in the interests of the region and, while the Iranians may not be happy about an American presence there, or a western presence, nonetheless the Afghan people desire it, and that presence ultimately works to Iran's benefit as well because it will affect the cross-border flow of narcotics, the cross-border flow of weapons and human trafficking. There are over 1.5 million Afghan refugees in Iran. They might be able to go home in a stable Afghanistan. It's in their interests as well.

Senator AYOTTE. Just to be clear, we have great concerns about the Iranian regime, and it is in our interest that we form this strategic partnership in terms of thwarting their interests in that area. We do not want them to fill that power vacuum. Isn't that true?

General ALLEN. That's correct, and the Strategic Partnership Agreement would do that.

Senator AYOTTE. That's important to the security of the United States of America and our allies.

General ALLEN. Absolutely, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you both and thank you for your service to our country.

General ALLEN. Thank you.

Dr. MILLER. Senator, if I could just add very quickly: first to reiterate the importance of the strategic partnership and our enduring commitment and how that is not only essential for security within the country, but affects perceptions of the Taliban and others, including Iran; and second, to say that we have seen Iran playing, in a sense, both sides of the fence. They have provided some support to the Afghan Government and they've provided some support to the Taliban. If they see it in their interest to stir the pot and so forth, I think that the strategic partnership, the advancement of the ANSF, and the clear expression of commitment by the United States and the coalition is going to have to cause them to recalculate, and that's essential.

Senator AYOTTE. We all want Iran to have to recalculate. So thank you both.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Dr. Miller. General Allen, I thank you for your service and for the support I know you get from your wife and your daughter. I know it's a family affair.

Dr. Miller, if I may. I have serious reservations about the sustainability of the Afghan security forces. The Afghan people know war and have had their military built by multiple foreign powers. According to the recent RAND report sponsored by the Army, the Soviet goal was 315,000, to build their Afghan troops to 315,000. They never got there because the Afghan military was plagued with corruption, illiteracy, and desertion. Those are the very same problems that I understand that we're facing now.

Our goal has been stated as to build the Afghan security forces to 352,000 by October of this year. Yet General Burgess recently testified that they still rely on us for logistics, intelligence, and transport. So my question would be, Dr. Miller, as the Afghan army built in the 1980s did not last, what is your assessment of how long our Afghan army will endure that were trying to build now and will they be able to secure their country without our help once we leave?

Dr. MILLER. Senator, I was searching for the precise figures. I'm sure that General Allen has them in his head, and so I'll just say that to date our experience is that for the ANA, that their monthly attrition rates are coming down. They're not quite to the targets that we'd like to have, but they're coming down and they're very close. For the ANP, they have a period of at least several months where they have been below that attrition rate. That's just one indicator of their sustainability.

There is no question that sustaining, growing this force, and then sustaining it as a quality force is going to be a continued challenge. But as General Allen said, it is not just the path to transition; a competent and capable ANSF is the path to success. So as we continue to provide resources, as we continue to have our units partner with them and as we transition to mentor them and then over time as we move to strategic overwatch, this is going to continue to be an essential mission. It's one that I know that this committee and Congress has watched closely.

Metrics don't capture all of what's going on, but they capture some elements, and we are committed to continuing to provide the best information we can on those metrics. But we've seen very substantial growth in quantity and we've seen—and General Allen is better able to speak to it, but by the indicators that I've seen, we've seen also improvements in quality, and as that force grows up to the 352,000 level some time before October of this year, that focus on quality and that focus on training is going to need to be sustained, not just for the rest of this year, but for many years to come.

Senator MANCHIN. That's what I was afraid of, yes. That's what I've been hearing. The problem that I have with this—and if I may, I should ask General Allen—I just have a respectful disagreement on our mission there. So with that being said, I respect the job that you do in very adverse conditions, I really do. But I just, I have some concerns.

What I will say is that—and, General Allen, I've always said that we should really be rebuilding America. We have so many needs in our country, rather than the money that we're spending in Afghanistan.

I've been there. I've had the honor of going twice, once as a governor to thank our Guards—people for the job they do; and then to go back as a Senator to see. Sir, I did not see an improvement over the 5-year lapse that I had been, 2006 to 2011. I saw deterioration. So that I came to some of the conclusions because of what I experienced.

But I would say this: I did not see things getting better, despite the best efforts that we put forward. President Karzai just endorsed the code of conduct that allows husbands to beat wives, encourages segregation of the sexes, reduces the rights of women in divorce cases. There have been more U.S. troops killed by our Afghan allies than by al Qaeda or the Taliban last month.

The Wartime Commission on Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan estimates that waste and fraud averaged about $12 million every day for the past 10 years. That's about $4.4 billion per year for the past 10 years. That would go a long way in West Virginia, I can assure you.

We've given $85 billion to rebuild Afghanistan. Many of these projects are not sustainable. We could have built nearly six new elementary schools in this country. This just goes on and on.

So my question would be, sir, why do we continue to give this country more money for nation-building? I know there's the group of people that make this decision and I'm sure that they don't want me to refer to that as "nation-building," but I don't see it any other way than nation-building.

What effects are the large infrastructure projects having on the insurgency? I was there at the time General Petraeus was just prepared to rotate out and I had asked the same question there. So I guess I would put that same question forth.

General ALLEN. I think the large infrastructure programs do carry a risk, as you point out, of a long-term operations and maintenance tail, that I think we're only now beginning to understand. But the infrastructure programs that have been supported by the Afghan Infrastructure Fund, for example, which ultimately will

connect the northeast power system and the southeast power system, will work to raise the level of the Dahla Dam, will repair the hydro rotors of the Kajaki Dam and install the third turbine, while they are heavy infrastructure programs, it has the capacity of delivering capacity to the population from Kabul along Route 1 to Kandahar and the Pashtun population in the south that would otherwise not have been available to them, and it has been, I think, an important contribution to our ability to eject the Taliban from the population in the south. The bridging strategy which has been underway for electricity in Kandahar for some period of time has provided us the ability to electrify businesses and provide electricity to the population that the Taliban couldn't have hoped, couldn't have even imagined providing to that population, which has given them opportunities. It has given them the ability to support a government and to pursue economic opportunity that would otherwise not have been possible.

Senator MANCHIN. My time is running out, the other thing that really, which took me over the top, was that the only country that was successful or is trying to be successful in extracting any of the minerals that they have, such as copper, is China. China doesn't have a boot on the ground, hasn't invested a dollar there, and I know they're expecting us to give them the protection that they're needing and the infrastructure for them to extract that mineral that their country will profit by.

That's just beyond my comprehension, that we could be doing that there when we should be taking care of America.

Dr. MILLER. Senator, if I could just answer that, that last piece. It is very much in our interest, vital interest, to ensure that al Qaeda doesn't find sanctuary in Afghanistan again, and in order to do that that the Taliban not——

Senator MANCHIN. Sir, if I may, al Qaeda has presence everywhere else. You said yourself that there's very little presence of al Qaeda. But you're going to go everywhere in the world? Now we're going to police the whole world and set up shop?

Dr. MILLER. No, sir. But that is a sign that this campaign has been successful. Afghanistan was the source of the attack on the United States on September 11. So it is different, and because of our history there and our commitment there it is different.

What I wanted to say is, with respect to the economic development of Afghanistan, we are making, in addition to the Afghan Infrastructure Fund, making other relatively modest investments compared to the stakes that we have. What we should insist upon is that we have a level playing field, not that it's tilted in our favor, but that for the economic development of Afghanistan that we have the opportunity to compete and our businesses have the opportunity to compete. While they may not win every one, I believe that they will win their share.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you so much.

My time is up, and I truly just appreciate your service. I really do.

General ALLEN. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Miller, you testified earlier this week on the House side that it would cost between $4 and $5 billion a year to sustain the Afghan security force at approximately the current end strength of 352,000. The Afghan Government has total revenue of under $2 billion. So even if the Afghan Government were to devote every dime that it has to the Afghan security forces, which obviously would not be feasible, it doesn't cover even half of the cost.

Since the Afghan security forces are the linchpin of the administration's strategy, this is a key issue because the Afghan Government cannot afford to sustain its own forces. Now, I know that the administration is trying to get commitments for long-term funding from other governments, but when I look at most of the European countries they have budget problems that are worse than our own and they haven't met even the NATO-established targets for defense spending, much less the contributions for the ANSF.

So that leads me to the question of how long do you project that we Americans are going to have to bear most of the cost of paying for the Afghan security forces? Are we talking about 10 years or 20 years? Can we realistically expect that the Afghan Government is ever going to be able to sustain the cost of its own security forces?

Dr. MILLER. Senator Collins, the Afghan Government, I believe, can, will, and should pay a share of the cost of the ANSF, and I believe that we'll see a commitment from them to do so. But you are correct that it will not be for the near-term, perhaps for the mid-term, it will not be a majority of those costs.

You are also correct that this administration is working hard to ask other countries, other ISAF countries, contributing countries, to make a commitment to the long-term sustainment of the ANSF. We are in a sense at the front end of that process, but we're looking to get all the commitments that we can and be able to have a conversation about that at the Chicago NATO summit, and then to be able to follow on that with more of a focus on economic development at the Tokyo summit.

Understand that before I would come back up to the Senate or to Congress and ask for resources from the American people, ask you for that, we'll do everything possible to make sure that Afghanistan contributes the amount that it can, that we've done everything possible to get contributions from others, and then ask for the amount that we believe is necessary to sustain the ANSF at a level that will provide for stability in the country and will provide for reduced risk to the United States.

Senator COLLINS. Just when I look at the numbers and look at how poor Afghanistan is, it just seems to me that we're looking at a never-ending commitment. I'm not saying that the Afghans won't contribute, but when their entire budget is less than half the cost of sustaining the troops right today, that's troubling.

I want to turn to another broader issue. General Allen, your opening statement was so eloquent and moving, and the story you told of the incredible sacrifice of our troops is inspiring. It's inspiring to all of us who are aware of those sacrifices and how patriotic our troops are and how much we ask of them.

It also gives me some hope when I hear you say: "I'm confident that we will prevail in this endeavor. I believe we will be success-

ful." But then I step back and I recall that I've heard very similar assessments from our commanders for 10 years now, that we're making progress, that they're hopeful that we'll be successful in the end, but that the gains are fragile and reversible.

I also read press reports of a new assessment by our Intelligence Community, and I realize this is a classified assessment and that you cannot address it publicly in detail. But if the press reports are correct, they're very discouraging, they're very pessimistic about what the new National Intelligence Estimate says.

One report in the Los Angeles Times quotes an official as saying that last year's surge may be unsustainable. It goes on to say that the National Intelligence Estimate also casts doubt about the sustainability of the broader objectives of improving governance, developing a competent ANSF, reducing corruption, reaching conciliation, and eliminating the safe havens in Pakistan.

An official goes on to report that the Afghan Government in Kabul may not be able to survive as the United States steadily pulls out its troops and reduces military and civilian assistance.

Again, General, I know that you cannot discuss the classified assessment, even though so much of it appears to have made its way into the press. But tell me why those concerns are wrong in your judgment? Why are you optimistic that ultimately we will be successful and prevail, which would seem to contradict these reports? I know our troops are terrific and that they will do anything they're asked and even more. I know your own leadership is brilliant. I just wonder if this is doable.

General ALLEN. Ma'am, if I didn't think it was doable I would tell you, and I'd tell you very quickly, because I wouldn't want to spend another life in this fight if it wasn't doable. We did disagree, and I'd be very happy to provide you a classified response as to why we did. It wasn't just the Commander of ISAF who disagreed. It was the U.S. Ambassador, the Commander of Central Command, and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

The issue is more in the assessment about the future than it is about the present. I evaluate our success in the future by the success I'm seeing in the present, and I'm confident that if we continue on this trajectory, with the kinds of capabilities that we have, with the kinds of successes that ANSF are achieving, that we can prevail in this.

I can't, unfortunately, go into the details here, but I believe we can illustrate why we differ in that particular assessment. I have to be quick to point out that I know a number of those analysts, and every single day as the commander I benefit from the magnificent work they do in producing intelligence necessary for me to make decisions. So I appreciate that.

But there were—and you touched on a number of them and, unfortunately, it did get into the media—there were a number of areas that we believe that we see right now that gives us hope that in the long-term assessment which begins in 2014, the start point for that assessment is just different than we see it now. I'm very happy to give you our view on that, ma'am.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. I would very much welcome that classified rebuttal. That would be very helpful.

Again, thank you so much for your leadership and your personal sacrifices.

General ALLEN. Thank you.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Collins, the request is for an updated classified rebuttal—is that correct?

Senator COLLINS. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Is that something then you'll give us for the record?

General ALLEN. Yes, sir, we will. We'd be glad to, Mr. Chairman.

[The information referred to follows:]

[Deleted.]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Blumenthal is next.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join in thanking you for your service, General Allen, and for the eloquence and the power of your responses today. My wish is that more Americans could hear them firsthand. They contain some very powerful information that you shared with us during my last visit, information about the success of our special operations, our night raids, particularly the very low rate of civilian casualties, the high rate of successfully seeking targets and degrading the leadership of the insurgents, Taliban, al Qaeda.

You've noted in the materials that you've provided that the IED rate of interdiction and success, at least on our part, is declining, at least over the last month. But I think that it's fair to say, is it not, that the insurgents seek to rely more on the IEDs as they find themselves less successful in engaging us in direct attacks; is that correct?

General ALLEN. That is correct, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. We've heard testimony from others, including Director Clapper, that Pakistan has made—and I'm quoting, I think, from him and from the legislation that I sponsored that requires Pakistan to make a more significant effort, that he has seen no significant effort, and others have testified to the same effect. Would you disagree with them? Have you seen a significant effort?

General ALLEN. At a classified level, I can tell you that Pakistan has taken steps on a couple of important areas. But on the whole, with respect to the reduction of the flow of calcium ammonium nitrate, which is the principal precursor, if you will, to the homemade explosive that inflicts so many casualties, we have not seen the level of cooperation or action that we have requested or desired.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I think you've answered my question very well, and any other information you can provide on a classified basis certainly I would welcome as well.

I gather that we are also making progress, I've heard, from General Barbero and the officials at JIEDDO, in providing more of the equipment that protects our troops, both dismounted—well, principally dismounted, in terms of gear, and, in fact, may have new iterations of that gear?

General ALLEN. There's really been terrific work that has been done in that regard, Senator. Of course, your leadership and the

leadership of the committee has done an awful lot, everything from the undergarment, which is saving lives and troops' futures, to improvements in the armor applications, the armor kits for the MRAPs, to the hyper-spectral imagery capabilities of some of our ISR assets, to improvements in intelligence to permit us to attack the network.

All of these have contributed to reducing the vulnerability of our troops and reducing the casualties. But the casualties are still too high.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Still too high and having seen, as you have done far more than I, the results of these absolutely insidious bombs, the effects on our warfighters——

General ALLEN. Absolutely.

Senator BLUMENTHAL.—when they come back, absolutely unacceptable. So I thank you and commend you for the tremendous leadership that you and others in our Marine Corps and Army and other branches have done in combating it.

I want to turn for a moment to some of the problem areas that you've identified and others in this effort. Going beyond the military terrain, so to speak, you've identified the human terrain, which includes the problems of corruption in the Karzai administration. That's a challenge that has to be addressed, in my view and, I think, perhaps others, perhaps yours as well.

I wonder if you could tell us whether you believe there's progress in that area?

General ALLEN. Senator Blumenthal, we have a line of operation within the campaign plan which seeks to diminish and reduce the influence of corruption on those aspects of our relationship with Afghanistan that could compromise our mission. To that end, we have leveraged Task Force Shafafiyat, which is transparency, Task Force Transparency, working closely with Task Force 2010 with respect to contracting, to reduce our vulnerabilities to money flowing directly into the pockets of the insurgents themselves.

Task Force Shafafiyat is working very closely with our own embassy, with the interagency back here in the United States, with the Intelligence Community, on a series of initiatives which ultimately can provide support to reducing corruption.

We have recommended an illicit activities for Afghanistan initiative, which I believe it did receive favorable consideration by DOD and I believe it's being considered for a full-blown interagency approach. We think that the Afghan threat finance cell which we—it's an interagency cell in Afghanistan in partnership with Task Force Shafafiyat, the U.S. embassy, the British embassy, and others, to include partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Justice. It's helping us to create a synergy to get after corruption.

Specifically to your question, sir, President Karzai, who has publicly spoken frequently about this culture of impunity which must be addressed in order for Afghanistan to shrug off the corrosive effects of corruption and ultimately become a functioning democracy, has created a presidential executive council, commission, to work in partnership with us to attempt to defeat the organized criminal penetration and seizure of the borders, airports, and inland cus-

toms depots, which robs the Afghans daily of millions and millions annually of resources.

As well, the Ministry of Defense has recently undertaken and completed a transparency and accountability working group, which is a complete survey of the Ministry of Defense, led by Minister Wardak. Everything from patronage associated with recruiting and assignment to procurement of systems and weapons and pay, facilities. It's a very comprehensive assessment, which has been built into a work plan to begin to address those specific issues.

The Ministry of Interior is undertaking very shortly a similar assessment, which will really lay bear the corruption issues in the two security ministries which are our principal partners both in terms of building a credible ANSF, but also ultimately being the shield for stability for the state.

Those are important outcomes. Now, the proof of the pudding, of course, is in the eating. What we are seeking to do is, having now designed effective work plans, now we have to start checking off the items. That's really where we'll see how serious everyone is in their commitment to do this.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. On a related note, before my time expires, I have observed some of the reports relating to human trafficking among contractors. There are about 70,000 out-of-country employees from the Philippines, from other countries, employed by contractors and subcontractors there. I'm going to be introducing a measure, along with at least one other member of this committee, to seek to prevent and remedy that problem. It has been identified by the Commission on Contracting as a problem as well. I don't know whether you have any observations on that issue.

Chairman LEVIN. If you could make those brief, because we have two more Senators and our vote has started.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. You can respond in writing, as Senator Levin has observed.

[The information referred to follows:]

In order to focus our available military effort on critical tasks, U.S. and coalition forces rely on civilian contracts for the performance of essential support services. In order to meet these requirements, service providers employ a wide variety of people to include U.S. citizens, local Afghans, and third country nationals (TCNs). As of April 2012, prime vendors employ approximately 33,000 non-United States, non-Afghan TCNs under Department of Defense (DOD) contracts in Afghanistan. The following initiatives are in place to mitigate the risk of illegal trafficking in persons associated with DOD contracts in Afghanistan:

(1) Coalition forces and contractors are required to prioritize hiring local Afghan workers as part of the Afghans First Initiative. By providing effective management and oversight of contracts, DOD elements ensure that contract verbiage includes Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) language as well as the requirement for service vendors to submit primary and subcontractor information for validation. Efforts are also ongoing to help increase the percentage of Afghans employed by U.S. contracts vice the percentage of TCNs.

(2) From January to February 2012, the DOD Inspector General (IG) Office of Special Plans and Operations visited nine coalition installations across Afghanistan to assess CTIP measures. This is part of a series of DOD IG CTIP audits that began in August 2009. So far the assessment has:

- Conducted 110 interviews involving 78 personnel from contracting officers
- Interviewed 145 local and TCN contract employees
- Reviewed DOD Criminal Investigation Division and IG investigative case data related to CTIP
- Assessed 240 DOD contracts for appropriate Federal Acquisition Regulations on CTIP

Below are a few results from the assessment:

- 93 percent of 240 contracts contained current Foreign Acquisition Regulation CTIP language (laws changed in 2003, 2006, and 2008) and 96 percent included some CTIP clauses. This was a dramatic improvement from an earlier assessment where only 50 percent of contracts included CTIP.
- 85 percent of contracts included a local supplement explaining worker rights—especially with respect to passports and living conditions.
- The Contingency Contracting and Acquisition Policy Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics developed CTIP worker's rights awareness materials that were written and distributed in several languages appropriate for both local workers and TCNs in Afghanistan.
- U.S. Government personnel were trained on CTIP statutes and how to identify related issues.

General ALLEN. I'm glad to.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, we have a lot of ground to cover and a short time to get there, so let's just start with the big themes here. General Allen, is this a defining period in the war in Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. I believe it is, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Would you agree with me, we really haven't had it right over 10 years? Really since General McChrystal have we had the right strategy with the right resources?

General ALLEN. I believe we have the right strategy now with the right resources.

Senator GRAHAM. So it's really not 10 years. Unfortunately, we just had it right for the last several years.

Do you agree with me, Dr. Miller and General Allen, that Afghanistan is the center of gravity for the moment in the war on terror?

General ALLEN. I believe it is, sir.

Dr. MILLER. Senator, I do. Given our history there, it's also essential for our credibility in conducting operations elsewhere.

Senator GRAHAM. Here's a comment: No one can guarantee success in war or politics. You can do your best. I have a great deal of confidence in your plan. I ask my colleagues to listen closely. You have asked good, hard questions, but I have come to conclude that you and your plan represent the last best chance for success in Afghanistan.

Do you both agree with that?

General ALLEN. I concur with that, sir.

Dr. MILLER. Senator Graham, this is an essential moment in Afghanistan——

Senator GRAHAM. I got you. That's good.

Dr. MILLER. Senator, I want to say that there will be bumps on the road, and you know that, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. This is the last best chance, no guarantees?

Dr. MILLER. No guarantees.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Dr. MILLER. This can be done.

Senator GRAHAM. Here's my comment to my colleagues: I understand it is difficult back home, but I believe that this is our last best chance, and the only way we will really fail at the end of the

day is for our political system not to support the General at a time of his greatest need. I know it's costly, I know it's gone on a long time, but we have to keep it in perspective.

Dr. Miller, I urge the administration to stand by this plan to make sure he has the resources he needs, and I will promise the President of the United States and the members of this committee I will do everything on the Republican side to give you the support you need to execute this plan.

Now, in terms of the cost. Would you agree with me, General Allen, in the history of warfare the attack on this country of September 11 that cost probably $1 million to plan and execute, was the best return on investment in the history of warfare in terms of the cost it inflicted upon the intended target?

General ALLEN. A great asymmetric advantage.

Senator GRAHAM. So here's what you need to understand: It took $1 million to knock down the 2 towers and kill over 3,000 Americans, and the place that attack came from is Afghanistan. So please think about what it would be like for our future safety if the place we went to, to secure, we failed. I think we would be buying in terms of costs a lot more than the cost of staying and getting it right.

Now as to the army. General, Senator Levin and I have the same absolute opinion on this. What's the difference in cost between 230,000 and 330,000 a year to maintain Afghan soldiers, an army of 330,000 versus 230,000? Is it $1 billion, $2 billion, $3 billion? Do we know the difference?

General ALLEN. It's between $2 and $3 billion, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. What I would suggest to this committee, after all we've done, that we should take a view that that $2 or $3 billion of annual cost for a period of time is the best investment we could ever make to make sure we don't have to go out again.

General Allen, is it your goal to leave Afghanistan, withdraw with security and honor for the United States?

General ALLEN. Of course it is, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, do you agree with me that the strategic partnership agreement, if entered into and executed properly, is the turning point in the war?

General ALLEN. I believe it is, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you agree with me that if we maintain the night raids as a military tactic the enemy will suffer greatly?

General ALLEN. He will.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you agree with me that you will never allow that program to be terminated; you will always strive for Afghan sovereignty in terms of its implementation?

General ALLEN. I will, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. To the detention agreement: Will you please tell Captain Meyer, the man who's been doing this along with his team, that he extended and took a year away from his family that he didn't have to do, and it bore great fruit. To you and your Afghan partners, congratulations on the agreement.

General ALLEN. Thank you, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, do you agree with me that if we have a follow-on force not of just trainers, but of a counterterrorism force, strategically located in Afghanistan, air bases with American air

power and special forces units, that's the end of the Taliban's dreams of ever taking over Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. I do believe that, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. That is part of the strategic partnership agreement; is that correct?

General ALLEN. It hopefully will be, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. That is the insurance policy for this nation that never again will Afghanistan go into terrorist hands; do you agree?

General ALLEN. I agree with that.

Senator GRAHAM. That Pakistan needs to quit betting on the Taliban because they're losers?

General ALLEN. It will stabilize Afghanistan, which is good for Pakistan.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, tell me how the people of Afghanistan view the Taliban as a whole? Do they miss them?

General ALLEN. There is no love lost there, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. They hate them, don't they?

General ALLEN. They consider that period what they call "the darkness."

Senator GRAHAM. What is the feeling on the ground in Afghanistan of the 85 percent of the people who want to live free of the Taliban about what we may or may not do? How do they feel right now?

General ALLEN. I think they are deeply concerned that we may not conclude a strategic partnership agreement.

Senator GRAHAM. I am telling everybody in this committee that if we get this right not only will they feel better, but I will feel better and we will win this thing.

Killing bin Laden. Congratulations to the administration and to our military. Did the killing of bin Laden affect the Taliban much at all?

General ALLEN. I believe it affected al Qaeda as a network. The Taliban, there's no registry of that.

Senator GRAHAM. So to those who believe that you can kill a few terrorists and we'll be safe and come home, do you agree with that, General Allen? Is that the way to maintain perpetual security?

General ALLEN. No. No, the stability comes from a long-term presence.

Senator GRAHAM. Doesn't the stability come helping the many where they live fight and defeat these bastards in their backyards, so we don't have to send 100,000 troops?

General ALLEN. Not just help them to be able to fight, but also to give the population confidence that it's the right force for them, too.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Graham, I hate to do this——

Senator GRAHAM. I'm done.

Thank you for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. In order to give Senator McCaskill just a few minutes, because the vote has started. I really appreciate it. I hate doing that.

Senator McCaskill.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

Thank you both. I think only our military could be accomplishing what we're accomplishing in the most difficult circumstances. Every day that passes, I stand in awe of the leadership of our military and the sacrifices that you all make.

Some of my colleagues have touched on some of this, so I won't feel the need to go into it. But I've spent an awful lot of times looking at contracting. I know those auditors are pesky, but you are aware, I know——

General ALLEN. Thank you for that.

Senator MCCASKILL—that we have $20 billion of reconstruction money in Iraq that can't be accounted for. SIGIR can't find $20 billion that we spent on reconstruction. We know, and I can cite in this question, a number of projects that we built in Iraq, prisons that are sitting empty, health care facilities that never opened, water parks that stand crumbling.

Some of this was AID projects, some of this was Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP), and what I affectionately call Afghanistan Infrustructure Fund (AIF) now, the Son of CERP, which is this new thing we're doing that the military is engaging in major infrastructure construction, as opposed to what we've traditionally done in this country and had all of that come under the aegis of DOS. This is new territory.

Now, what I want to really drill down on in just the couple of minutes I have, I am aware of the projects that we are funding with the AIF money currently. I'm aware of the three power projects. I'm aware of the two transportation projects, and I'm aware of the three water projects. I know that the 2012 money is going to complete these projects, even though many of them will not be completed until 2014 and beyond.

What worries me most is what is this new $400 million for in AIF? In other words, if we are completing these projects now what this envisions is that we're going to start brand-new major infrastructure projects where, regardless of what Senator Brown says, we all know that some of the security we have to buy works its way into the hands of the bad guys. We know that they have no capability of sustaining many of these because of their Gross Domestic Product, the Afghanistan people, and the government. They don't even have a national highway system with any kind of revenue that can even fix highways after we build them.

So I am confused. The studies that have been done, while I think CERP—as I began on this committee way down on that end, I had heart-to-hearts with General Petraeus about fixing broken windows and storefronts. We have morphed far beyond fixing broken windows and storefronts. We are now doing major, major multi-million dollar infrastructure projects.

I just don't think we've seen the studies that show, other than just intuitively knowing the country likes it that we're putting a lot of money into their economic development, that it actually is helping with the counterinsurgency.

So I need to know, why are we just reflexively asking for the almost billion dollars in CERP and AIF for this next year? Or are there specific plans?

General ALLEN. We will give you the specific plan for the AIF. Let me take that for the record, and we will give that to you to the level of detail that you're satisfied, Senator.

[The information referred to follows:]

Fiscal Year 2013 Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund:

The President's fiscal year 2013 budget requested $400 million for the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund (AIF). These funds will be used predominantly in the power sector and applied to ensure the delivery of sustainable electricity to the Kandahar region and throughout the country. Previous projects have increased the electricity available in Kandahar, improved the quality of life for the city's residents, and have had a positive counterinsurgency (COIN) effect. In fiscal year 2013, we will continue to fund the Kandahar Power Bridging Solution, as a decrease in electricity in this key area would be interpreted as a failure of the Afghan Government, creating a negative COIN effect.

Completion of other AIF projects in water and road sectors will have an immediate COIN effect by improving the quality of daily life and by providing opportunities for economic growth. Prior to making a final selection on fiscal year 2013 projects, we will continue to collaborate with the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and nongovernment agencies to ensure that any infrastructure work is accompanied by efforts to build the technical capability and capacity of Afghans and the Government of Afghanistan to provide for the long-term sustainment of infrastructure projects. In addition, we will prioritize projects and make the final selection after evaluating the contributions from our partners and international organizations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. We will seek to leverage resources from international partners wherever possible.

Following the Chicago conference in May and the Tokyo conference in July, we will refine the AIF fiscal year 2013 project list, and submit it to Congress as part of the annual notification process.

Fiscal Year 2013 CERP:

The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) is the only program designed to enable U.S. commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements within their area of responsibility. CERP provides immediate assistance to the indigenous population and projects selected remain within the intent of the program. To date in fiscal year 2012, over 4,500 projects have been executed that are below the $50,000 threshold. Only two projects in fiscal year 2012 exceed $500,000 in value. The bulk of these projects support local, immediate requirements and are based on commander's assessments. Commanders are equipped with improved decisionmaking tools when considering projects. Fiscal year 2012 approval processes apply increased scrutiny when evaluating effects and risk associated with CERP to include the risk of facilitating corruption or funding the insurgency.

As we work towards transition in fiscal year 2013, it is imperative that we continue to assist the Government of Afghanistan to build the capacity required to ensure delivery of essential services. Without CERP, the reduction in spending associated with reduced U.S. and coalition presence will impact the Afghan local economy and derail gains achieved over the past decade. Carefully planned and executed CERP projects designed to build capacity and mitigate the economic impact of retrograde will help ensure that hard-won COIN achievements are durable.

General ALLEN. When I took command, one of the most important admonitions that I gave my commanders was fiscal responsibility. I told them that we have to ensure that every dollar that we spend in Afghanistan is a dollar that ultimately contributes to Afghanistan's security, not robs it of economic security over the long term.

That is why we are moving—first of all, if you look at our obligation rate for CERP, it isn't that high this year because we're going for the right kinds of projects. The vast majority of the projects are $50,000 and below, and they're community projects. They're projects which ultimately the community had a say in, that will help the community. We're going to continue to focus in that re-

gard, so that when we spend money it doesn't create additional dependency, it doesn't ultimately create some form of economic disadvantage. We seek to have that money really do what the commanders need CERP to do, which is to provide on-the-ground immediate assistance that can be of an urgent nature, ultimately to accomplish the mission.

Senator MCCASKILL. I know the unobligated money and I really hope you seriously consider this. I want you to look at what we're building and that we're going to finish it. I want you to look at the unobligated CERP moneys, because it's significant.

General ALLEN. Yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. We've appropriated over $3 billion and we have $1.5 billion that has not even been obligated. Maybe it would be time to say we could do without that $800 million for the next fiscal year.

General ALLEN. We won't spend a dollar that we don't need to spend, ma'am. That's my obligation to you and the American people.

Senator MCCASKILL. I think it——

Dr. MILLER. Senator, could I add?

Senator MCCASKILL.—might be something that would help reassure the American people that, if we have unobligated money that we've already appropriated, then maybe not asking for more would be a show of good faith with the American people that we're not going to be building things in Afghanistan that we really need to be building here that might not be sustained, in light of the challenges that Afghanistan faces.

General ALLEN. Very fair comment, Senator. I have identified money that I will not spend. I have done scrubs of military construction. We recognize we're not going to obligate all of CERP, and we're going to make sure that we return that money if we don't need it.

Senator MCCASKILL. That sounds good.

Dr. MILLER. Senator, could I——

Senator MCCASKILL. I'm sorry, I can't. I think we have to go vote—we are? Oh, okay. Go ahead.

Dr. MILLER. Senator, I just wanted to add my commitment to bring to you our plan for fiscal year 2013 and to agree that we need to make the case on an item-by-item basis for the AIF for how they're going to fit, how they're going to be sustainable; and to say that I sit on the Afghan Resources Oversight Council for DOD. I spend time on this. I agree we need to do better. We're working at it, and we appreciate your support and we appreciate it. But for DOD and in the field, we have to do better on auditing, we have to do better on contracting. We will continue to work hard on it.

Senator MCCASKILL. I worry that if we go down the path of new major reconstruction projects, that as we draw down a consideration that you will have is not just the transition as it relates to the safety and security of our troops, but what will we have to leave on the ground for the contractors? Because I think we're going to end up with a situation like we did in Iraq, that we found ourselves pulling out and all of a sudden we looked and we still had tens upon thousands of contractors on the ground.

I just want to make sure that those two pieces are getting wedded together and we are just not going down the path with blinders on, AIF, more reconstruction, not realizing that we could be in 2018 still building a dam with minimal troops on the ground in terms of any kind of security protection.

General ALLEN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you both very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

The good news is that Senator Lieberman has come back in time for his questions. The better news is we're going to take a 5-minute break before his questions.

We thank you both very much. Your testimony has been very strong, very clear, very powerful, and very moving. So we will take a 5-minute break and that will leave Senator Lieberman enough time to get his questions in and enough time for you to have a few moments.

Thanks. [Recess from 12:47 p.m. to 12:52 p.m.]

Senator LIEBERMAN [presiding]. Seeing our two witnesses here, I'll be happy to gavel the hearing back to order.

I've been as impressed as everybody has said they have been before by your testimony. Thank you very much for it. As I reentered the room, I was going to say I was impressed by your physical stamina as well. But I'm glad that mercy got the best of us and we weren't testing any of you, both of you, any further.

Thank you very much. I think this has been a really important day of testimony, combined with the testimony before the House. Though there are some questions that have been expressed here about various aspects of our policy, I think the reaction that I hear from the committee members is generally one of support, that we're doing well militarily, this is a situation that we've invested a lot of life and treasure into over a period of time, and it is winnable if we continue on the course.

So the reaction you've drawn, I think, is a tribute to both the strength of your testimony and what you've referred to in very moving terms, which is the strength of our troops there, our forces there. So I thank you for that.

I came back because I wanted to go to two statements you made in your prepared testimony, General Allen. I want to draw you out a little bit on it. You mentioned the counterproductive role played in different ways by two of the neighbors, Pakistan and Iran, noting that the Taliban operates "with impunity" in Pakistan and that "Iran continues to support the insurgency and fan the flames of violence."

Let me ask you about Pakistan first and about the significance to the fight in Afghanistan of the continued sanctuaries or safe havens for our enemies that exist in Pakistan. Bottom line, can we win this fight if those sanctuaries continue to be protected in Pakistan?

General ALLEN. Senator, I think we can. I believe it's going to require some pretty hard decisions with the Afghans eventually with respect to how they'll dispose of their forces on the ground. The east clearly, the eastern corridor from North Waziristan eastward towards—up Route 7 to Kabul, that whole area and the secu-

rity zone around Kabul is under threat from the Taliban operating out of the safe havens in Pakistan.

I believe that, with continued operations in the east and ultimately disposing enough of the Afghan forces in the east, we can build a sufficient defense in depth ultimately to be able to protect both the population in the east, but Kabul as well. But it's going to require probably more Afghan forces than we had anticipated. I'm not talking about a larger number of the army; I'm talking about more of the standing force than we would have anticipated to be disposed and deployed in the east, in order to defend Kabul over time, sir. But it remains a threat.

Senator LIEBERMAN. It remains a threat. So that the continued existence of these safe havens for our enemy forces in Pakistan obviously makes the fight that we have to fight more difficult.

General ALLEN. It does, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Can you conceive of any way we could convince the Pakistanis to take more aggressive action to close down those safe havens or to give us the opportunity to do so with them?

General ALLEN. I actually think there's significant opportunity, frankly, to work with Pakistan in this effort. It is often overlooked, the amount of military activity that the Pakistanis are dedicating to fighting, not the same necessarily insurgents that we are, but insurgents nonetheless in Pakistan. They've suffered over 3,000 dead in the last 2 years, some tens of thousands of wounded amongst the civilian population and their own military. So they have a heck of a fight going on in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as well.

There have been occasions in the past where General Kayani, where the Pakistani military, in cooperation with our forces across the border, have conducted complementary operations that have been valuable to both countries. Indeed, we seek in the aftermath, obviously, of the 26 November cross-border tragedy, the opportunity to begin those, to have those conversations again.

I think there is real common ground, where we can conduct complementary operations ultimately to the benefit of both countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and of course to accomplish our mission. So it will be my intent ultimately as COM–ISAF in meetings that I hope to have in the near future with General Kayani to seek opportunity for us to partner together across the border, not just for border coordination—that's a military necessity and I think we're well on the way to restoring that relationship—but to seek opportunity, where his military and the forces of Afghanistan and ISAF can partner in complementary operations to start to get at and to squeeze some of these organizations, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Dr. Miller, do you want to add? I wanted to say before I do that, though, obviously I wish you well in those discussions with General Kayani. I think that movement there would be very important. Of course I hope, and I know you do, I presume you do, that the agreement on a strategic partnership with Afghanistan may be an encouragement to Pakistan to help us close down those sanctuaries.

Dr. Miller?

Dr. MILLER. Senator Lieberman, I just wanted to, in fact, say something along the lines of what you just noted. That is, while,

as General Allen said, we've seen Pakistan taking on significant fight within their own borders, we've asked them to do more and we'll continue to do so.

We see hedging behavior in the region, and we see it because some people at this point are not 100 percent sure of the U.S. and coalition commitment to support the ANSF and to support Afghanistan beyond 2014.

The strategic partnership, the enduring commitment that President Obama has talked about——

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MILLER.—and the instantiation of that in plans, including at the Chicago NATO summit, are going to be important markers. Let me just say, the support of this committee and of Congress for this mission is an important indicator as well, because it will help send the message both to the American people, but internationally, that the United States is not going to make the same mistake that we made in 1989.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you. I couldn't agree more.

How about a quick word about Iran? You say they continue to support the insurgency and fan the flames of violence, General Allen?

General ALLEN. We've watched very closely the support that it has provided to the insurgents. It is relatively low level and measurable at this particular moment. We would gauge their presence and their commitment to supporting the insurgency by the appearance in the battle space of certain signature weapons: the Iranian-manufactured 122-millimeter rocket or the Iranian-manufactured explosively formed projectives, both of which we saw in large numbers in the battlefield in Iraq. We're not seeing those now. We are seeing some support to the Taliban. We are seeing some, not just training, but also logistics support to them as well.

So we're going to keep a very close eye on those signature weapons because we think that that will be an indicator of Iran's desire to up the ante, in which case we'll have to take other actions.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that.

Let me just ask you a few more questions, a couple of really factual questions about the ANSF, because there's been a lot of discussion about the policy judgments. I don't know that anybody's asked you to compare the cost per troop in the ANSF and in U.S. or ISAF. Is that a number you have?

General ALLEN. I don't have it off the top of my head. I do have it. I can get it for you, Senator.

[The information referred to follows:]

The annual cost to support an Afghan National Police member is nearly $30,000 and the annual cost to support an Afghan National Army troop is about $45,000, whereas the cost of an International Security Assistance Force or a U.S. troop is approximately $1,000,000.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Good.

General ALLEN. It is significantly different.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right, much less expensive.

General ALLEN. Much less expensive, yes, sir, by factors.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Then the second is, I know you know this, but just for the record: The ANSF are not just what we would call

the army or the marines. They're also the police and other specialized units. So how does that break down, roughly speaking?

General ALLEN. Ultimately the army will be 195,000 at 352,000, and then the air force will be about 8,000. The remainder will be MOI forces in various forms.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General ALLEN. There will still be 30,000 ALP in addition to the 352,000. The newly formed Afghan Public Protection Force will have some numbers of tens of thousands of forces as well, but they'll be largely in support of the development of Afghanistan.

Within the Afghan military, the army, it's X numbers of brigades. We can get you the specific numbers, but the special operators come in the army in the form of nine kandaks, or battalions, of commandos, ultimately 72 special forces teams. Within the MOI, the SWAT-type, high-end police units are very capable. Those are in the General Directorate of Police Special Units, GDPSU.

So there's significant special forces capabilities and there is a growing ground force capability within the ANSF. But we are still not recruited to 352,000. We will be by October, we think within the next couple months. But we'll still be building the 352,000 force out through December 2013. So much work still remains to be done, not just in recruiting but equipping and fielding support.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Okay. The last question is this. I appreciate very much what you testified to the House and again here this morning, that you're not really going to be in a position to make a recommendation to the President about whether the United States should draw down beneath the 68,000 troops that will be there, our troops, after the surge troops are removed, until later in the year.

General ALLEN. Yes, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that, because it seems so logical to me. The only calendar that matters to the fight in Afghanistan and to you, of course, is the calendar on the ground there. So it seems to me that what you've said is very compelling. You have to wait until this fighting season is over——

General ALLEN. That's right.

Senator LIEBERMAN.—see what the impact of the drawdown of the surge troops has been, and then make a recommendation.

But let me ask you generally, what are the kinds of factors you'll be considering in reaching your judgment on the pace of the drawdown in 2013, if any?

General ALLEN. Senator, the steady pace construct is a decision that's made elsewhere. I'll just make the recommendation on the amount of force, the combat power, that I will need.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General ALLEN. There are a number of things that will be occurring in 2013 that will, I believe, dictate both the tempo of the battle, the progress of transition, and the amount of combat power that's going to be necessary. For example, we will have in 2012 inserted our advisors into the ANSF. So most of the advisory teams will have been in place by the end of 2012.

We're going to need some conventional forces to be able to provide cover for them in the short term until we really begin to see their effects start to take hold within the ANSF. We will also see,

I think very importantly, the progress of transition in the Lisbon summit context. We'll probably see the fourth tranche of transition occurring the latter part of 2012, early part of 2013, to be determined at this point. President Karzai, of course, will make the final call. But we're going to see the fifth tranche occur, probably be announced the mid to latter part of the summer of 2013, to be implemented in the latter part of the summer or early fall.

Those are going to be almost certainly the most challenging of the provinces, the provinces that are up against the Pakistani border. The ANSF technically goes into the lead for security of the populations in those areas with the progress of each tranche. But that doesn't mean the ANSF isn't going to need help. I anticipate that in those areas the ANSF is still going to need some help and we'll need to support them in their counterinsurgency operations, and we're going to need some combat power to be able to do that.

So those are factors that weigh in my thinking with respect to how much combat power I would recommend to the President ultimately and the drawdown conceivably that we could undertake to support that. Of course, we'll have the almost certain continued presence of the safe havens, which will have a regenerative effect for the insurgency.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yes, exactly. That says it. That's why they trouble me and I know they trouble you as well. We can hurt the enemy, we can convince Taliban to reintegrate and yet they can regenerate right next door in Pakistan.

I appreciate what you said. I think in that answer you clarified something, and I hope there's no misunderstanding generally about this, which is that, though the Afghan security forces will be taking the lead in combat in Afghanistan, that doesn't necessarily mean that we can precipitously cut our troop presence. This is one factor, correct? Because, just as you said, we're going to have a backup role. We still may well need to be involved in combat behind their lead.

General ALLEN. That's correct, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Dr. Miller, do you want to add anything on that, particularly with regard to the impact of our drawdown on our allies in ISAF and their commitment to stay there?

Dr. MILLER. Senator, let me say three things. The first is that there have been speculation and reporting in the press that there are options being developed for reductions lower than the levels, lower than the 68,000. That is not the case.

Second, President Obama is going to make a decision about the size and the scope of the drawdown following getting the force to the 68,000 at the appropriate time, and right now it looks like that appropriate time is going to be in the fall after these reductions are taken, after General Allen makes an assessment. If he were to come earlier and say he's ready, he's seen something that makes him want to make adjustments, frankly, it could be in principle in either direction. I would want to ensure that that got up the chain of command and that was considered.

Then third, it is very much the case that our coalition partners look to what we're doing and look to our sustained commitment as they think about what they're going to do and as they, frankly, consider how they make the case to their publics for sustaining their

presence in Afghanistan to the end of 2014 and then an enduring commitment beyond that.

When I was in Afghanistan, I came back through Brussels. I had a chance to talk to the 13 largest contributors of forces, and this was a message that they gave very clearly: They want to not just have the conversation with us in general; they want to understand where we are in terms of our plans. That is a critically important conversation for the Chicago summit, the Chicago NATO summit.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much. I thank you for your testimony, which has really been extraordinary and I think convincing. You two know better than I the lesson that history teaches us, that a military in a democracy can be winning a war on the battlefield and lose it on the political battlefield at home. I think your testimony today and the earlier testimony before the House has given me confidence anyway that that's not going to be the case here, that the political decisionmakers are going to be guided by what's happening on the battlefield.

Thanks to your leadership, General, and the extraordinary effort being made by the men and women in our military, we're winning on the battlefield and I think the political leadership is going to give you the support to carry that to the finish.

So God bless you in your work. Thank you very much. The hearing is adjourned.

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

SCREENING APPLICANTS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

1. Senator WICKER. Dr. Miller and General Allen, regarding the issue of the screening and training of the Afghan Security Forces (ASF), in fiscal year 2011 Congress provided $11.6 billion to the ASF fund which funds the manning, training, equipping, operations, and sustainment of the ASF. Building the capacity of the ASF is a key element of our Afghanistan policy. I believe a successful Afghan security infrastructure will rely in part on two critical pillars: (1) the trustworthiness and loyalty of personnel; and (2) their capacity to adequately execute their job functions. I fear that if left unaddressed, the intake of rogue and incompetent personnel into the Afghan military and security services could have a catastrophic impact on Afghanistan's viability as a secure and stable state. How are we screening applicants for our training programs?

Dr. MILLER. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in coordination with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), has implemented the use of our eight-step vetting process to mitigate potential insider threats within the ANSF. The eight-step process is consistent with cultural practices and, to reduce infiltration, enhanced with modern technology. The eight-step process consists of:

(1) Valid Tazkera (Afghan identity card);
(2) Two letters from village elders or other guarantors;
(3) Personal information, including name, father's name, village, and two photos;
(4) Criminal records check through the Ministry of Interior, supplemented with an Army G2-record check by the Ministry of Defense;
(5) Application with validation stamp from recruiting authority;
(6) Drug screening;
(7) Medical screening; and
(8) Biometric collection.

Biometric collection was initiated for all ANSF recruits in September 2009. Once collected, the data is downloaded into the Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) to vet against all criminal records.

The ANSF vetting process is also supported by information-sharing. ISAF and ANSF biometrics data is shared to help identify potential threats. Coalition mentors also provide oversight to the vetting process. The eight-step process is applied to new ANSF recruits at the point of entry. As a result of the comprehensive vetting

process, the ANSF typically denies approximately 12 percent of all recruits entry into the ANSF every month.

General ALLEN. Applicants are screened using an eight-step vetting process. This process is Afghan-owned, designed to ensure the quality and protection of the force and to be compatible with existing Afghan cultural practices. Recruiters work closely with village elders and mullahs to validate the authenticity of each candidate's application, which includes personal identifying information, photos, Tazkera (Afghan ID card provided by the regional Population Registration Department), and two recommendation letters from village elders or guarantors. ANSF recruits are then interviewed at local recruiting centers and undergo criminal background investigations. Following these initial steps, the recruits are transported to their respective training center for medical/drug screening and biometric enrollment/collection. The biometric data is used as an extension of a recruit's criminal background investigation, which prevents disqualified candidates from returning or AWOL personnel from joining another branch of the ANSF.

In addition, the Personnel Asset Inventory (PAI) that was initiated in March 2011 continues to enroll current ANSF members into the biometric database. As of January 2012, 132,553 out of 171,078 ANA (78 percent of the total force) were biometrically enrolled. 88,940 out of 135,029 Afghan National Police (ANP) (65 percent of the total force) were biometrically enrolled.

Increased biometrics capabilities and expansion of ANA counter-intelligence capabilities are helping to ensure the quality of the force and assist in the exposure of individuals who may pose a potential threat to ANSF and ISAF. The ANA currently maintains counterintelligence personnel at the National Afghan Volunteer Centers throughout the country. In addition, the Ministries of Defense and Interior have increased their counterintelligence tashkils, and National Directorate for Security (NDS) counterintelligence personnel are increasing their coordination with the Ministries for the purpose of countering inside the wire and insider threats.

2. Senator WICKER. Dr. Miller and General Allen, what tools do you utilize to ensure that prospective applicants are not members of the Taliban?

Dr. MILLER. As mentioned in the previous response, ISAF and the ANSF have implemented an eight-step vetting process for all incoming personnel. These steps include:

(1) Valid Tazkera (Afghan identity card);
(2) Two letters from village elders or other guarantors;
(3) Personal information, including name, father's name, village, and two photos;
(4) Criminal records check through the Ministry of Interior, supplemented with an Army G2-record check by the Ministry of Defense;
(5) Application with a validation stamp from a recruiting authority;
(6) Drug screening;
(7) Medical screening; and
(8) Biometric collection.

Several of these steps are put in place specifically to try to ensure that ANSF recruits are not members of the Taliban. These include the need for recommendations from elders, criminal records check, and a biometric collection, which is compared with a national database to match with potential insurgents.

Additionally, the ANSF has taken unprecedented action to counter the insider threat and to deny the insurgency the ability to infiltrate their units including embedding counterintelligence officers across the Services to reduce the insider threat.

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3. Senator WICKER. Dr. Miller and General Allen, are applicants literate and willing to learn?

Dr. MILLER. Afghanistan has an estimated literacy rate of approximately 28 percent, which is higher than the estimated literacy rate of the ANSF recruiting age population. NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan instituted literacy training programs throughout the Afghan National Army (ANA) and ANP. Literacy training is one of the greatest enablers to the development of the ANSF. Many new recruits join the ANSF in part because of literacy and training programs. They realize that training programs provide a great opportunity and are eager to learn. As a result, the ANSF are becoming one of the most educated and capable groups within the Afghan population. Fifty-eight percent of ANSF personnel have graduated from basic literacy programs and 20 percent have graduated from higher level literacy training.

General ALLEN. The exact literacy rate in Afghanistan is difficult to pinpoint, although data extracted from other sources (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Culture Organization) puts the literacy rate of the ANSF at approximately 14 percent. Currently, the literacy program has more than 118,000 personnel in training. To date, more than 26,000 ANSF personnel have graduated from the program and achieved a level of functional literacy that will enable them to meaningfully contribute to the ANA/ANP.

On average, 9 out of 10 recruits are illiterate and innumerate. All recruits who cannot prove they are literate upon enlistment take a placement test to check competency and placement at the appropriate level of training. Of these recruits, only 5 percent demonstrate functional literacy. Recruits are enrolled into literacy classes as part of Basic Warrior or Basic Patrolman Training and receive 64 hours of literacy training as part of this initial entry training. The training provides the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy to the first level of achievement; this is only a very elementary grasp of literacy, including numbers, letters, and some simple words. This is not a point of functional literacy and the remaining training (248 hours) is delivered in the fielded force or within branch training for specific career groups.

Qualitative evidence from the program demonstrates a high level of motivation among recruits. The importance of literacy is reiterated to recruits by the ANA/ANP chain of command, and the recruits' achievement rate (almost 100 percent) in the basic literacy program reflects this motivation. The program not only builds military and policing capability, but is the largest adult literacy program in the country and is having a positive impact on the overall rate of literacy in Afghanistan.

4. Senator WICKER. Dr. Miller and General Allen, how capable are current graduates of our training programs in Afghanistan?

Dr. MILLER. The greatest indicator of the capability of our graduates from ANSF training programs is the increased operational capacity of the ANSF. Over the last few months, 13 ANA units and 39 ANP units were assessed as "independent with advisors." The ANSF continue to move to the forefront of all operations and currently lead 40 percent of all operations. In transition areas, the ANSF continue to provide security for their population. Additionally, ANSF commanders conduct direct action missions across their country and have eliminated numerous insurgent threats.

Literacy training continues to be one of the greatest enablers within the ANSF. Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, with only about 28 percent of the population literate; and the estimated literacy rate of the ANSF recruiting age population is likely lower. The ANSF are becoming one of the most educated and capable groups within the Afghan population. Fifty-eight percent of the ANSF have graduated from basic literacy programs and 20 percent have graduated from higher level literacy training.

The ANSF's ability to assume a greater role in its nation's defense is a direct result of ANSF training programs supported by the United States and our partner nations.

General ALLEN. In Afghanistan, capability is relative to the maturity of our programs. Some, such as the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) graduates, are perhaps some of the most capable of graduates from any training/education program in Afghanistan, producing graduates who meet required standards and those graduates with previous military experience tend to be well above the standard. They are all literate, educated, and have been exposed to military, physical, and ethical education programs. The investment in these young leaders will ensure the ANSF has the high quality leadership that it requires to meet the challenges of the future.

Measuring the capacity and effectiveness of the ANP is difficult. There is only anecdotal data to date. NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM–A) is developing the Training Development process within the ANP–Training General Command, a process that includes validation and assessment of training. This validation will extend to the field once it has matured. NTM–A is also embarking upon a training needs analysis that will help to scope what the ANP career model should look like; this work is essential to building an enduring professional ANP institution.

ANA Special Operations Command (ANASOC) Commando and Special Forces soldiers must meet minimum qualifications for entry into the force, which far exceed that of the average ANA recruit. Most ANASOC soldiers are minimally literate; with Special Forces soldiers having at a minimum a seventh-grade-level ability. Additional courses taught by the ANASOC School of Excellence (SOE) further propel their already advanced soldiers to a higher level. Also, SOE's Programs of Instruction (POIs) have been adjusted to support Special Operations requirements, and incorporate values-based instruction with the ultimate goal of producing a professional force.

While measuring capability of the ANSF may be difficult, what can be measured is their performance in times of crisis. During the events of 13 September 2011 and the riots after the burning of the Qur'an, the ANP performed well and deservedly earned praise for their actions. During the Loya Jirga in 2011, the opening of Ghazi Stadium, and the recent Nowruz holiday celebrations, the security was planned by, and enforced through, the ANSF. At the Loya Jirga, the overall superb efforts and results of these security plans were commented on by many Mullahs and senior Afghan leaders who have, since the Jirga, advocated for their own family members to be part of the ANSF due to the positive image resulting from this event.

5. Senator WICKER. Dr. Miller and General Allen, are graduates of our training programs able to comprehend American military values of respect for civilian authority, rule of law, et cetera?

Dr. MILLER. Graduates from ANSF training programs are instructed on values consistent with the Afghan Constitution, such as respect for civilian authority and the rule of law. Training programs provide students with technical skills associated with their respective military profession, as well as literacy skills and classes focused on respect for Afghan civilian authority and the rule of law. Also, every recruit receives at least 32 hours of human rights training. In addition to these programs, our continued partnership with the ANSF provides additional support to ANSF development. Although we are trying to help build an ANSF that is committed to transparency, accountability, and human rights, we are not trying to build it to mirror the American military.

General ALLEN. NTM–A continues to increase its focus on professionalization of the ANSF as it reaches its growth targets. The ANA Company Commander's Legal Course focuses on the ANA's military justice system and the law of armed conflict. ANP training includes Afghan Law, Constitution of Afghanistan, Afghan Statutory Law, Sharia Law, Code of Conduct, and the Inherent Law of Officers and noncomissioned officers (NCO). Human rights are woven into all ANP training. While there is comprehension of these ideals, NTM–A has not quantitatively tracked their acceptance and application by graduates across the various Army and Police elements.

The Ministries of Defense and Interior have continued to improve and increase leadership development by focusing on increasing both the quality and the capacity of officer and NCO training. Both ministries have approved a respective Core Values Statement, a one-page document that identifies their core values under "God, Country, and Duty."

Planning and initial steps to incorporate the six values (Integrity, Honor, Service, Respect, Courage, and Loyalty) into all ANA training curricula is ongoing. Moreover, all National Military Academy in Afghanistan (NMAA) graduates are able to comprehend American military values and have been exposed to respect for civil authorities, rule of law, and ethics classes. However, though graduates might be well-

versed in such values, their practical and intellectual application is questionable, especially if it conflicts with cultural norms.

The ANASOC has its own comprehensive values campaign aimed precisely at professionalizing its force. Many of the topics covered in the Law of Land, Warfare, and Humans Rights already exist as core values within its campaign. Values such as respect, integrity, and duty are principal components of it. ANASOC fully embraced the ANA's six core values and also expanded upon them to address the challenge of developing a professionalized Special Operations Force. ANA leadership fully embraces ANASOC's values campaign and may institute it force-wide.

6. Senator WICKER. Dr. Miller and General Allen, are these graduates able to effectively lead their own forces and pass on knowledge obtained from American trainers?

Dr. MILLER. ANSF leadership programs are developing officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO) capable of leading and training their forces. Our continued partnership with the ANSF provides additional support to ANSF leadership development. This is evident in the performance of ANSF forces in transition areas. During recent attacks in Kabul, the ANSF responded quickly and repelled insurgents at multiple locations within the city. The Commander, ISAF, has stated that ANSF were well-led and well-coordinated in their operations.

The ANSF currently conduct basic training programs, are increasing their training capacity every day, and are becoming more capable of passing on to new recruits the knowledge obtained from U.S. and coalition trainers. The ANSF are on track to assume full responsibility for ANSF training by the end of 2013.

General ALLEN. One of NTM–A's top priorities and focal areas is the development of effective leaders and trainers. There are very capable senior leaders within the ANA, and together we are focused on improving the officer and NCO corps for the future through the NMAA, the Sergeants Major Academy, NCO professional development courses, and other institutional training programs. Graduates of these programs are then able to help train future ANA leaders. Some of the NMAA graduates stay at the Academy to serve as tactical officers. Additionally, the School of Excellence for the ANASOC is 95 percent run by Afghans with ANASOC force generation being wholly Afghan-run by mid-2013.

The overall effectiveness and efficiency of training the force and future leaders in the ANP continues to improve as well as the leader development process matures. Recruitment campaigns targeting NCOs are already paying significant dividends to close the leadership gap quickly, which is expected to be completely resolved by early 2013. These NCOs are better educated, more capable, and ready to assume leadership roles sooner due to their literacy levels and motivation to serve. Leadership programs such as the inaugural Future Leaders Program have been instituted within the Ministry of the Interior to ensure longevity of the force. The ANP have a robust train-the-trainer program that has resulted in over 95 percent of training in the field being done by Afghans, for Afghans.

GREEN-ON-BLUE INCIDENTS

7. Senator WICKER. General Allen, during today's hearing you stated that there have been 52 green-on-blue incidents since 2007. What is your current assessment of the insider threat facing our troops in Afghanistan from rogue elements and individuals within the ASF?

General ALLEN. Any loss of coalition troops is a significant loss to our forces; however, I assess the green-on-blue threat to be a relatively small fraction of coalition casualties. The insider threat casualties are relatively small given the overall numbers of ANSF that are partnered with coalition forces (95 percent of the ANA and 53 percent of the ANP). Although they are generally tactical events involving an individual attacker, due to their strategic impact, a single green-on-blue incident or casualty has the potential to create disproportionately more publicity than other types of attacks on coalition forces. We are taking concrete steps to prevent such attacks, including training coalition forces to be aware of potential warning indicators. For example, there is a comprehensive eight-step vetting process to include running criminal checks, having to receive two letters of recommendation from village elders, drug and medical screening, and biometric collection. We are also taking measures with our GIRoA partners to aggressively identify personnel who may pose a green-on-blue threat in order to help prevent attacks in the future.

8. Senator WICKER. General Allen, how many such attacks are still currently under investigation?

General ALLEN. There are currently five attacks under investigation; three are being investigated by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command (CID), one by the Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS), and two by Regional Command-East.

U.S. Army CID is currently investigating three green-on-blue investigations. The first case involves an ANA soldier opening fire on U.S. soldiers, killing one and wounding three others. The ANA soldier was killed during the incident. The second case involves the shooting of two U.S. servicemembers at the Ministry of the Interior. The third involved two ANA soldiers and one ANA teacher. The ANA members killed two U.S. soldiers, wounded one U.S. soldier, and wounded one ANA soldier. Close air support killed one of the attacking ANA soldiers and the ANA teacher. There is one open NCIS case concerning Lance Corporal Dycus.

Regional Command-East is currently investigating two green-on-blue incidents. One unit reported receiving small arms fire from Afghan Local Police (ALP) personnel while conducting a check on an ALP checkpoint. This incident resulted in one U.S. soldier killed in action and two ALP wounded in action. One later died of wounds. The second investigation involves two U.S. MEDEVAC helicopters observing tracer fire on them by ANP as they attempted to ex-filtrate an area after an operation. Two Air Weapons Teams returned fire. A battle damage assessment was not conducted, and there were no U.S. casualties. The local ANP Deputy Chief of Police reported that one ANP was killed and six wounded.

9. Senator WICKER. General Allen, what steps will you take to ensure that the Afghans do not intentionally or unintentionally release individuals accused of green-on-blue incidents?

General ALLEN. We continue to work closely with our Afghan partners to ensure justice and adherence to the rule of law. The ANA has successfully prosecuted cases of green-on-blue and green-on-green events in the past. Specifically, the ANA prosecuted an ANA soldier who shot a squad mate. The soldier was sentenced to 18 years in prison. Another ANA soldier who killed three ANA soldiers and five U.S. soldiers was sentenced to the death penalty. Finally, an ANA soldier that killed his senior officer was sentenced to 20 years.

Key to this process is the Government of Afghanistan continues development of its justice system and adherence to the rule of law. Our battle space owners continue to use key leader engagements and rule of law teams to encourage accountability, investigations, detention, and prosecutions.

10. Senator WICKER. General Allen, will your team at ISAF Headquarters keep me updated in writing on the latest developments on the Afghan soldier's case as it makes its way through the Afghan legal system?

General ALLEN. I will continue to provide you updates as significant developments in the case arise. Currently, the shooter is being held in pre-trial confinement at Pol e Charki military prison. The lead U.S. legal mentor to the ANA Judge Advocate Generals' Corps has been monitoring this case. The lead Afghan prosecutor has developed his prosecution plan and is currently waiting on the NCIS to turn over the remaining forensic evidence to include the ballistics, clothing, the weapon, blood tests, and video footage.

The ANA has successfully prosecuted cases such as this in the past. Specifically, the ANA prosecuted an ANA soldier who shot a squad mate. The soldier was sentenced to 18 years in prison. Another ANA soldier who killed three ANA soldiers and five U.S. soldiers was sentenced to the death penalty. Finally, an ANA soldier that killed his senior officer was sentenced to 20 years.

11. Senator WICKER. General Allen, you stated that ISAF started "the vetting process of individuals who are coming into the ANA and ANP with an eight-step vetting process which includes the requirement to have valid identification cards, letters of endorsement or recommendation from village elders and other aspects, criminal background checks, and so on" only months ago. If green-on-blue incidents go back to 2007, why did we wait 5 years before implementing this vetting process?

General ALLEN. In September 2009, the ANSF began actively collecting biometric data on all ANA and ANP recruits to vet them against criminal databases and thereby establishing what we know as the eight-step vetting process. While green-on-blue incidents go back to 2007, incident levels prior to biometric enrollment were minimal: there were two in 2007 and two in 2008. As the threat of green-on-blue attacks has increased, so have ANSF vetting procedures.

In March 2011, the Afghans initiated a 100 percent biometric enrollment as part of their PAI to ensure every member of the ANSF who had not previously been enrolled was included. The current eight-step vetting process is Afghan-owned, de-

signed to ensure the quality and protection of the force, while taking advantage of existing Afghan cultural practices. Both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense continue to enhance vetting procedures and have issued multiple directives to improve the security posture, reduce vulnerabilities, and raise awareness of infiltration threats. Recently, both Ministries of Interior and Defense have increased their counterintelligence tashkils and the NDS counterintelligence personnel are increasing their coordination with the ANA and ANP for the purpose of countering insider threats.

[Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the committee adjourned.]