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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CONTENTS

Page

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services 1
Thornberry, Hon. William M. "Mac," a Representative from Texas, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services 1

WITNESSES

Campbell, GEN John F., USA, Commander, Resolute Support and United States Forces–Afghanistan 2

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:
Campbell, GEN John F. 53
Thornberry, Hon. William M. "Mac" 51

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:
[There were no Documents submitted.]

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:
Ms. Sanchez 75

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:
Mr. Hunter 79

U.S. STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, Thursday, October 8, 2015.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:32 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William M. "Mac" Thornberry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

The committee meets today to hear testimony from General John Campbell, our commanding general in Afghanistan, about the situation there. And we are going to have a hard stop at 12 o'clock. So I am going to ask unanimous consent that my full opening statement be made part of the record, without objection.

And just to expedite things, I would say, General Campbell, we very much appreciate having you here. My view is we are in Afghanistan today for the same reason we were in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, to prevent it from becoming a safe haven for terrorists for attacking us. Afghanistan is always going to be attractive for terrorism because of its history, because of its ungoverned spaces, because of its narcotics, and the financing. And so without us there until the Afghan Government is able to provide for its own security, we have a lot at stake there. We also have a government that is willing to work with us. And we haven't always had that. But they have challenges, and I know we will talk more about those as the day goes.

So I think this is an important time in Afghanistan's future, and important for us to hear from you. So thank you for being here.

I will yield to Mr. Smith.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thornberry can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

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

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I will also ask that my full statement be submitted for the record without objection and follow——

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. The chairman's lead and try to move quickly.

And I agree with everything you said. It is a very, very difficult part of the world. I would include Pakistan in that conversation as

well. And I have often said that I wish that we didn't have national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a very, very difficult place to work with. But we do have national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and they are precisely the ones the chairman said.

Many different terrorist groups, not just Al Qaeda [AQ], would love to make a safe haven out of the ungoverned spaces and the difficulties that are there. So trying to maintain some stability in Afghanistan, and it is, as the chairman said, good that we have a partner in President Ghani, that we did not really have for a long period of time, that gives us some hope. But the challenges are enormous. As the general knows only too well in terms of having any sort of, you know, overall control of the country, it is still very fractious and still very difficult.

The only thing I would conclude with is a couple things that I would like to make sure that we hear from the general on is, one, his view of going forward what our troop levels should be. And what the utility of that is. What do we need them for, what is going to be critical in the next year, two or three, and how many troops do you think we and our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies must have there to achieve those goals?

And then also the issue of the bombing of the Kunduz hospital. You know, it has definitely, you know, set us back and it is the kind of thing that we don't want to see happen. Would like to learn more about how it happened, what we are going to do to prevent that type of thing in the future.

And with that I will yield back and look forward to the testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

General Campbell, again, welcome. The floor is yours. Without objection your full written opening statement will be made part of the record, and the floor is yours for any comments you would like to make.

STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA, COMMANDER, RESOLUTE SUPPORT AND UNITED STATES FORCES–AFGHANISTAN

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you. Good morning, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to lead and represent the service men and women of the United States Forces–Afghanistan that have been there for the last 14 years. And I have been in Afghanistan for this tour for the last 14 months.

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for your steadfast support of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians, and due to your leadership and commitment, they are the best trained, equipped force our Nation has ever deployed. Their outstanding performance bears testimony to your backing and the backing of the American people.

I am also profoundly grateful for your continued support of the Afghan Security Forces Fund [ASFF]. Our ongoing efforts to build the Afghan National Army [ANA] and the police could never have been possible without your financial commitment and your trust.

Every day we strive to be good stewards of the American taxpayers' money to ensure that our efforts result in increased security.

Members of the committee have also been staunch supporters of women in the Afghan Security Forces [ASF]. Your efforts are making a difference. An integrated force is better and a more effective force. And you deserve to be proud of the advances that the courageous Afghan women are now making in the Afghan National Army and Afghan police.

I would also like to pay tribute to our military families. They are the unsung heroes of the last 14 years of conflict. In many ways, our frequent absences from home are harder on them than they are on us. And without their love and support we couldn't succeed.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and honor the over 2,200 service men and women who have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001, and the over 20,000 who have been wounded. Tragically we lost 14 personnel, to include 6 airmen and 4 U.S. contractors last Friday in an aircraft mishap. And we always remember the Afghan and our own fallen and the loved ones that they have left behind. Every day we honor their memories by assisting the Afghans to build a stable and secure country, and by protecting our own homeland.

Over 14 years have passed since the 9/11 attacks, and we haven't forgotten why we first came to Afghanistan and why we remain. Since 2001, the exceptional efforts and courage of our forces have ensured that another terrorist attack originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland has not occurred.

Seven months have passed since I last appeared before this committee. And much has changed since then. Afghanistan, its government, security forces, the enemy, and our other coalition have undergone tremendous transitions. These changes have ensured that this fighting season has been fundamentally different. It can't be compared to previous years. I would like to emphasize how political, military, economic, and social transitions are affecting the operational environment in order to place our campaign in context.

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture. And so is our campaign. But before I further explain the formidable challenges and opportunities before us, I would like to address a few topics that have been in the headlines lately.

First, I would like to discuss the tragic loss of lives on the strike on the hospital in Kunduz. By way of background, the U.S. Special Operations Forces have been providing training, advice, and assistance to Afghan Security Forces who have been engaged in a tenacious fight with the Taliban. On Saturday morning, our forces provided close air support to Afghan forces at their request. But to be clear, the decision to provide aerial fires was a U.S. decision made within the U.S. chain of command. A hospital was mistakenly struck, and we would never intentionally target a protected medical facility. I must allow the investigation to take its course, and, therefore, I am not at liberty to discuss further specifics at this time. However, I assure that the investigation will be thorough, objective, and transparent. And I will get those results back to this committee.

I would also like to remind the committee and the American people that we continue to make extraordinary efforts to protect civil-

ians. No military in history has done more to avoid harming innocents. We have readily assumed greater risk to our own forces in order to protect noncombatants. To prevent any future incidents of this nature, I have directed the entire force to undergo in-depth training in order to review all of our operational authorities and rules of engagement.

Our record stands in stark contrast to the actions of the Taliban. They have repeatedly violated laws of war by intentionally targeting civilians. The United Nations [U.N.] attributes more than 70 percent of noncombatants killed and wounded in this war to the Taliban.

Second, I would like to discuss the sexual exploitation of children by some members of the Afghan Security Forces. All of us consider it reprehensible. This criminal practice is entirely unacceptable to the Afghans as well. President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah have reiterated that they will not tolerate violations of their policies and the Afghan law. And they are committed to strict enforcement within their security forces. We will do everything within our power to defend and protect human rights. That is our moral obligation to you, the American people, and ourselves.

I have ordered 100 percent training of the force to ensure that they understand our human rights policy, which has been in place since at least 2011. And this policy requires that our personnel report any suspected human rights violations committed by the Afghan Security Forces, to include any sexual abuse of children. Whenever and wherever our personnel observe human rights abuses, they will be conveyed through our chain of command, and in turn, to the Afghan Government. Perpetrators must and will be held accountable.

With so many weeks left in the traditional fighting season, intense combat continues in many parts of the country. The Afghan Security Forces have been severely tested this year. But they continue to fight hard.

In the wake of the coalition's redeployment, the Afghan Security Forces and insurgents both accepted that this fighting season could be pivotal. There was no winter lull, and since February, the fighting has been nearly continuous. Casualties on both sides have risen. And the violence has moved beyond the traditional insurgent strongholds.

Pakistan military operations this year moved foreign fighters into eastern and northern Afghanistan. The emergence of Daesh or the Islamic State-Khorasan Province, IS–KP, has further complicated the theater landscape and potentially expanded the conflict. More recently, the Taliban increased the tempo of their operations following the announced death of their spiritual leader Mullah Omar.

We are also now seeing how our redeployment and our transition from combat operations to an advisory role has really changed the battlefield dynamics. Only a few years ago our coalition numbered over 140,000 military personnel. Now our forces comprise of fewer than 14,000, of which approximately 10,000 are U.S. service men and women.

In years past, our aircraft provided responsive and often decisive close air support to coalition and Afghan troops in contact. This is

no longer the norm but the exception. Collectively the Afghan Security Forces are adapting to these changes, and in some places they are struggling. Within this context, the fluidity of the current security situation is not surprising. This fighting season started well for the Afghan National Army and the police as they successfully conducted multi-corps cross-pillar operations in Helmand, Zabul, and Ghazni provinces, and in the southern approaches into Kabul. In April, they fought back significant Taliban pressure in the north. And in August and September, they reversed almost all of the Taliban gains in the northern Helmand, but after considerable effort.

Yet there have been setbacks, and most recently the Taliban overran Kunduz City. Still the Afghan National Army, the police, and the special forces rallied, and they have regained control of most of the city. Just as they have successfully retaken other ground temporarily lost through this fighting season.

The Afghanistan Security Forces' inconsistent performance in Kunduz underscores several of their shortcomings. They must improve their intelligence fusion, command and control, and utilization of their forces. They don't possess the necessary combat power and numbers to protect every part of the country. This makes it very difficult for the Afghan Security Forces to counter the Taliban's ability to temporarily mass, seize an objective, and then blend back into the population. Ultimately, the Afghan Security Forces and their leaders need to discern better when to fight, when to hold, and where to assume risk.

Despite these shortcomings, however, the Afghan Security Forces have displayed courage and resilience, and they are still holding. The Afghan Government retains control of Kabul, of Highway 1, its provincial capitals, and nearly all of the district centers. The Afghan Security Forces are effectively protecting the principal population centers.

It is also apparent that our advisory support and financial backing are strengthening their resolve and building their systems and processes for the future.

The Afghan National Army and police have repeatedly shown that without key enablers and competent operational level leaders, they cannot handle the fight alone in this stage of their development. Ultimately I am convinced that improved leadership and accountability will address most of their deficiencies, but it will take time for them to build their human capital.

The Afghan Security Forces' uneven performance this fighting season also underscores their shortfalls that will persist well beyond this year. Capability gaps still exist in fixed- and rotary-wing aviation, combined arms, intelligence, and maintenance. One of the greatest tactical challenges for the Afghan Security Forces has been overcoming the Afghan Air Force's still extremely limited close air support capability.

Despite a myriad of challenges, the fundamental partnership between the coalition and the Afghan Government remains durable. The difference between the Ghani administration and the previous administration is like night and day. And at every level the coalition of Afghan leaders continue to work together in pursuit of shared strategic objectives. The Afghan Government, civil leaders,

and military commanders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the coalition's efforts.

President Ghani has asked NATO and the U.S. to provide some flexibility in our planning to account for the fact that his government remains in transition while the threats it faces are changing. He has asserted that a sustained coalition and a U.S. presence provides actual and psychological stability to the country as a new government solidifies. He recognizes that his new administration must invest considerable time and effort to address the challenges of systemic corruption. He has also acknowledged that while the Afghan Security Forces are better equipped and trained then ever, much work remains to build their systems and processes and improve their leader development.

I have offered my chain of command several options for a future laydown in 2016 and beyond. It was envisioned in mid-2014 that we would transition to a normalized embassy presence by January 2017. That remains our planning assumption. Since that time much has changed. We have seen the rise of Daesh [Arabic acronym for ISIL] or ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant], an increased Al Qaeda presence in Afghanistan due to Pakistan military operations, and now we have a strong partner in President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah. And as a result, I have put forward recommendations to adjust to this new environment while addressing our core missions of train, advise, and assist the Afghan Security Forces, and to conduct counterterrorism operations to protect the homeland.

An upsurge in the insurgent violence in northern Helmand and Kunduz shows that Afghanistan is at a critical moment in their history. President Obama is well aware of the tenuous security situation. And I also appreciate that he has many other global issues to weigh as he considers my recommendations. My role is to provide him my best military advice based upon my assessment of conditions on the ground, weighed against the risks both to the force and to the mission.

I am unable to discuss further details on the options I provided to the President. In the past, when flexibility has been requested of him, he took it under serious consideration and made his decision. He provided flexibility this year. The same decision process is being worked through now for 2016 and beyond.

In closing, the challenges before us are still significant. In an extremely tough fight, the Afghan Security Forces to continue to hold. They have remained resilient and they haven't fractured. Fully supported and led by an engaged commander in chief in President Ghani, embraced by the Afghan people, and backstopped by our military advisors, our resources, and our enablers, the Afghan Security Forces' future and Afghanistan's prospects for an eventual peace still remain promising. If we fail in this worthwhile mission, Afghanistan will once again become a sanctuary for Al Qaeda and other terrorists bent on attacking our interests and citizens abroad and at home. Likewise, if we withdraw from Afghanistan, a security vacuum will arise, and other extremist networks such as Daesh could rapidly expand and sow unrest throughout Central and South Asia, and potentially target our homeland.

The hard work and sacrifices of countless coalition military personnel and civilians over the last 14 years have created the conditions in which the Afghans can and are taking responsibility for their own security and governance. The Afghans welcome the opportunity to share their destiny, but they still desire, need, and deserve our assistance. Our support cannot and should not be indefinite or unconditional.

The Afghans must continue to do their part. And if they do, we should continue to exercise strategic patience and sustain our commitment to them. Working together we can be successful. A proactive, cooperative Ghani administration, a committed Afghan Security Force, offer us a unique opportunity to further develop a meaningful strategic relationship in a volatile but vital area of the world. Our continued efforts to stabilize Afghanistan will benefit the entire region, and in turn offer greater security for the U.S. homeland and Americans abroad and here at home.

Thank you, sir, again for the opportunity to testify before this committee. Thank you for your steadfast support of our campaign. I look forward to your questions, and, sir, as you already said, request that my remarks—written statement be taken for the record. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of General Campbell can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

The CHAIRMAN. Great. Thank you, sir.

General, there were two statements you made in the early part of your testimony that jumped out at me. One was, and I will read the sentence back, "Since 2001, the extraordinary efforts of both our conventional and special operation forces have ensured that another terrorist attack originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland has not occurred."

You know, I think there is a lot of frustration when you read the news from day-to-day about the ups and downs. But I think it is really important for all of us to keep that basic fact in mind. For 14 years there has not been another attack from there directed against our homeland. And I got to tell you, on the morning of September 11, 2001, I would have never expected us to go 14 years without another attack. And the reason it hasn't is because of what you say, extraordinary efforts, heroism by men and women who have served there, including some members of this committee who have served there. So I think it is important to just keep in mind the broader accomplishment.

The other thing that jumped out at me was your comment about Afghan casualties. When I was there a month ago, I stood next to you at a ceremony where we remembered and honored the Afghans who lost their lives. All of us get frustrated when we are there to try to help somebody who is not willing to stand up and fight for themselves. My impression is, and you can correct me if I am wrong, the Afghans are willing to stand up and fight for themselves. And they have lost a lot of lives in doing that, which is part of the reason that our partnership is working better.

If you want the make a comment on that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, you are absolutely right. I mean, the Afghan Security Forces, the Afghan people in general, are warriors. They want to protect their homeland. The Afghan people absolutely

think that the Afghan Army, the police, they rate them as their number one institution in the country. But there is no doubt in my mind that they have the resilience, they have the will of character to continue to stand and fight to protect their homeland.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. General, I just want to ask some numbers right quick. I understand you have made recommendations to the President. You cannot talk about those. But today we have about 9,800 American service members in Afghanistan. Correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. About how many of them are involved in the counterterrorism efforts?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if I could take that for record, I could get you the exact number.

[The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

General CAMPBELL. But roughly we are talking probably 1,300 of those 9,800 directly day-to-day tied into train, advise, and assist [TAA]. It takes a lot to continue to support that, but at least 1,300 are everyday what we call level one TAA.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I am sorry. So about 1,300 of them are involved in day-to-day training and assisting the Afghan forces. Does that include the people who are helping the bureaucracy inside Kabul?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is inside Kabul and outside Kabul. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Do you have any estimate, and I realize I am stretching you, but do you have any estimate about how many people are in day-to-day contact training and advising Afghan forces outside of Kabul?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that number is probably about 500.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. So about 500 American service men are really doing what I see as the train and equip. About how many are involved in the counterterrorism mission, you reckon?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would rather cover that in a closed hearing with you if I could.

[The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I guess what I am trying to think is, if we have some reduction in the 9,800 that are there now, we will be able to do less, right, of something?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it would limit our ability to train, advise, and assist. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Can you talk to us a little bit, General, about the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the various groups that are involved there? And I guess related to that is the conversation about reconciliation talks between the Taliban and the Afghan Government. You know, first of all, what hopes do you have for that? Second of all, no matter what comes out of that, there will always be groups on both sides of the border that aren't part of it.

What is sort of your—can you tell us a little bit about the groups that would be involved, who might be reconcilable, who we might

still have to fight, and how the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan factors into those negotiations?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. Sir, as you know, very complicated between Pakistan and Afghanistan. I do try to maintain ties with Pakistan. I talk to General Raheel Sharif, the chief of the army in Pakistan, probably once a week. I try to get to Pakistan once a month. We really work hard to make sure that the Afghans and the Pakistan military conduct mil-to-mil discussions to continue to improve upon their ability to fight the same common enemy on that border.

Reconciliation is going to take time, sir. It is going to take both Afghanistan and Pakistan working together, although President Ghani has said many times that reconciliation will be Afghan-led. And he and the rest of the government there continue to work that very hard. They have had at least one really sanctioned talk on reconciliation that has been out in public, and that was back probably in the June timeframe, facilitated by Pakistan to bring some Taliban to the table to talk.

Working toward a second talk, but that happened the same week that the announcement of Mullah Omar's death. So that kind of stopped that talk. I think reconciliation talks will continue, but it is going to take some time to bring the right people to the table to do that. The Taliban currently are a little bit in disarray based on who is in charge. Mullah Mansoor is trying to take charge from his perspective, but there are a lot of other fragments of the Taliban because they do fight really decentralized. But a lot of other factions of the Taliban are trying to not follow Mansoor.

So I think it is going to take a good couple of months before we see them coming back to any kind of peace negotiations. But Afghanistan and Pakistan both realize that there has to be a political solution to this problem, that they are not going to kill everybody. I think Afghanistan and President Ghani especially has expended a lot of political capital the last 6 or 7 months to try to work that with Pakistan. He has not seen a lot in return. Therefore, it has taken, again, a lot of challenges from within his own government, but I think he has been very courageous in how he has reached out. I think General Raheel, the same way with his leadership, is trying to work that very hard. But, sir, this is years and years of mistrust that they are trying to work through. But they know that they have to get there to come to the solution.

Your question on who would reconcile and who wouldn't. Sir, the estimates that I have heard both from an Afghan perspective and probably from the intel community [IC] is anywhere between 60 or 70 percent is potentially reconcilable. On the Taliban side, you probably would not have Haqqani who continues to be a very, very—an enemy that is dangerous to both the coalition and the Afghan civilians, because they attack civilians. They are the ones that are responsible for the high-profile attacks in Kabul for the VBIEDs, the vehicle-borne IEDs [improvised explosive devices]. Haqqani probably would not reconcile. And there are probably members of AQ that would not reconcile. But 60, 70 percent is kind of the number that is out there, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and, General Campbell, thank you and all of our men and women in uniform for the responsibility and also the dedication. You all are very special to all of us in America.

In March when you were here, I asked you a question, and this will not be my question. But it leads up to a question. My question was, Will there ever be anyone in the diplomatic corps or the military who will say to the President: You know, we have done about all we can do. And one of your answers back to me was this, "For very little continued investment, we can make this," meaning Afghanistan, "the shining light of Central Asia and that part of the world."

We have spent about $686 billion there since the year 2001. You have already mentioned the number who have been killed and wounded. Then, recently we had in the newspaper, and you have acknowledged one of these, these titles "U.S. Wasted Billions of Dollars Rebuilding Afghanistan." That was in the papers back in September. Then in October, "Afghan Forces on the Run." This was in the New York Times. Also in the New York Times, which you have acknowledged, "U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Military."

You know, you, I think, are number 15 or 16. I have been here 20 years. A general, Marine and Army, sitting right here telling us what you have told us. And I believe you. There is no question about that. I believed the other 15 who sat where you are today. Then I go back to an email that I got from the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, Chuck Krulak. A few years ago I asked him, I said, "General, I don't have the military background. How successful can we be in training the Afghans to be soldiers and policemen?" And of course we realize there is a problem with education in that country, and I understand that. But let me read what he said very quickly. "Get real in training an army and police force. All we are doing is training eventually new members of the Taliban. Trainers are doing a wonderful job, but we don't have the time to make—we don't have the time to make an Army." And he closed by saying, "Every day somebody dies."

My question to you, we are faced with a debt of $18 trillion. We are going to be debating in about a month a debt ceiling increase so we can borrow more money from foreign governments primarily to pay the bills for last year. The American taxpayer has got to know at some point in time there is going to be an end to this investment. Money, blood, there has got to be an end to it.

And I heard something you were saying a while ago, and this is going to lead to the question. At some time I have been hearing for 15 years from the generals like yourself that training the Afghans to be policemen and security forces, it is going pretty well. It is a little fragile, but it is going pretty well. It has been going pretty well for 15 years. That is not a criticism. I am just making an observation. We at some point in time as a Nation and Members of Congress have got to understand that we cannot continue to, as John Sopko says, waste, fraud, and abuse is worse today than it was 15 years ago. That is not your responsibility. I understand that.

But this thing has got to have an end to it. Is that when the security forces can say: We don't need any advisors from the coalition forces or the American military? Will you give me some idea of how this thing is going to end the best you can?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. Sir, if I could correct the record first, you said I acknowledged that we ignored the abuses. And that is not what I said. We do not—I do not—and in my statement I said that we have policies to say you do not ignore the abuses. You report the abuses through your chain of command. So I would like to correct the record there if I could for what you just said.

Sir, again, on the financial piece and the continued support to the Afghan Security Forces and to Afghanistan and the people, you know, yesterday was 14 years. So it has been a very, very long time. But as the chairman said, we have not been attacked. Sir, we live in the world we have. Maybe not the world we want, but it is the world we have. And this world is going to continue to be a very dangerous world. We are going to have people that want to continue to do harm to the men and women here back in the United States. And I think, as I said earlier, and I would say for a modest continued investment, and we can protect not only our homeland but continue to build——

The CHAIRMAN. General, I apologize for cutting you off, particularly after a 4-minute question. But we have limited time and numerous members. If you ever want to extend your answer in writing, please feel free to do so. But we are going to have to try to keep to the time limits today.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Chairman, I for one appreciate the 4-minute question. Thank you, Mr. Jones, for reminding this committee what is happening in Afghanistan. So it has pretty much been a failure.

General, do you know how many people we have recruited and trained over the years for the Afghan Army and police forces?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, currently today we are authorized to have 352,000. That includes the army——

Ms. SANCHEZ. No, no, no. I am not asking you what you are authorized as far as billets. I am asking you how many people have we paid on the payroll to be, over these 14 years, in the Afghan Army and police?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I will have to take that for the record. I don't have that answer. The army really——

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 75.]

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. You can stop. I have only got 5 minutes. So I have plenty of friends in Afghanistan who have gone over there. You know, we have phantom people on the rosters. We have 60-year-old men, uneducated, signed up for these Afghan forces. We have tons of people we are paying that aren't even showing up for work. This has been going on and on and on.

Of those 360,000 billets that you say we have, how many are filled today, General?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, the police are authorized 157,000. They have about 156,000 that are filled today. The army are au-

thorized 195,000. There is probably in the area of 173-, 174,000 that are filled today.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. I think it would be important to get that number of how much we have spent training these people.

You said in your testimony, "I remain concerned about the long-term viability of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces." Succinctly, Afghanistan cannot afford its security forces. You mentioned that 90 percent of paying for these forces are from the coalition, and the majority of the money is coming from the U.S. So within your own current testimony, let alone the testimony that Mr. Jones brought before you from before, you basically are saying: I don't know that there is a long-term viability for these security forces. We are paying the majority of that. How much is the—how much money does that mean to have a force that you don't believe has a long-term viability?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am——

Ms. SANCHEZ. How much? How much? That is the question. How much?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. Today for calendar year 2015, United States put $4.1 billion to build the Afghan Security Forces. For 2016——

Ms. SANCHEZ. $4.1 billion.

General CAMPBELL [continuing]. $3.86 billion.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you. $4.1 billion.

General CAMPBELL. Every year we will continue to reduce that by gaining efficiencies. We are not providing——

Ms. SANCHEZ. General, I have heard this. I have heard this for 14 years. We are going to get better. It is going to be more efficient. We are getting there. You know, the reality is that we are not. We are not. I mean, Mr. Jones was right.

My next question for you is, operationally, what is our strategy in Afghanistan? What is our strategy? I heard the chairman, we haven't had 14 years of attacks coming out of Afghanistan. I will remind the chairman, instead they went to Somalia. Instead they went to Yemen. Instead they went to Iraq. Instead they went to Syria. Instead they went to Libya. So, you know, we can say we have concentrated our forces and our monies in one place. But the reality is, and you and I both know this, they move. So what is the plan for Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. And the plan is to continue to build the Afghan Security Forces so they can protect the Afghan people, to have a stable government so they can provide for the Afghan people, so the Afghan people can have jobs, their kids go to work, that they can be a viable country and——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you. Thank you. So $4.1 billion this year. You don't believe it is a long-term viable strategy. Let me ask you one last question before my time is up, General.

Oh, and by the way, I just want to say I just have a son who will be full-time in the U.S. Infantry. We just found out. I love our forces. I think they are doing a good job. I am talking about what we are doing as policymakers. Did we ever find out how much money Karzai and his cronies stole, and put in Swiss banks?

The CHAIRMAN. General, if you want to provide that for the record. Again, we are going to try to keep to the time limits.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 75.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, thank you for this hearing. General, thank you for your service. You were educated at one of the best military academies we have in the world, West Point. You have not just served, but you have commanded for 35 years, leading men and women defending this country. You have commanded in Germany, Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the United States. You get to see with a set of eyes that few of us ever get to be able to look through. It is very easy for people to come in here and recount the price tag we paid in Afghanistan. That is pretty easy. And there are people across America who ask what Mr. Jones asked: For what?

What I am going to ask you today is if—because as I look at your testimony, you have told us kind of what would have happened if we hadn't have been there. And you said in 2015 Al Qaeda has attempted to rebuild its support networks and planning capabilities.

Could you paint two pictures for us today? One, taking all that experience you have, give us in your best professional military judgment the danger to the United States homeland and the risk of loss of life in the United States had these individuals not made the sacrifices that you talked about and that we as a Nation not made those sacrifices. And then also in your best professional military judgment, paint a picture for us of the danger to the United States homeland and the risk of loss to the life in the United States if we pull out and do not continue to make those kinds of investments and sacrifices.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you for the question. Sir, again, we have been so fortunate in our country we have brave men and women that continue to join an organization that is not about them but about the greater good. I think all of our men and women understand that piece of it. Without their great sacrifice and the sacrifices of their families, the people back here in the homeland, the people in Europe, would be at much greater risk of terrorist attacks. I mean, there is—I don't think there is any doubt about that. I think in the future as we move forward, you know, we have a lot of talk about ISIL in Syria and Iraq. We have a lot of talk about Daesh growing up in Afghanistan. If it is not Daesh in 2 years, it is going to be something else. This is a generational issue. Terrorism knows no boundaries. So if we think that this is going to be cleared up in a couple years, we are fooling ourselves. And we have to position ourselves to ensure that we can do everything we can to mitigate this impact. And the way to do that is continue to apply pressure with the great special operating forces [SOF], the great men and women that we have in all of our services, and also to build the CT [counterterrorism] capability of Afghanistan and the other countries in the region so they can take that on themselves. And without that, the homeland would be at much greater risk.

Mr. FORBES. And, General, if you could, give me a little specificity. When we talk about a greater risk of terrorism that can be kind of a general term. But if we hadn't had been in Afghanistan, if we hadn't had done this, how would it have strengthened their

hand? How would they have had a greater opportunity to strike the United States and to do harm to us here at home?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, they would have had sanctuary to continue to plan and devise ways that they could attack the homeland, they could attack Europe. There is no doubt, I think, in anybody's mind that there are people out there that want to do harm to people throughout the world. And this terrorism will continue for years to come. And we have to continue to do everything we can to prevent that. And the way to do that is to continue to keep pressure on it.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, General. Thanks for your service and for the sacrifice that the men and women under you have made throughout the years.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, General Campbell, thank you for your invaluable service to our country, and all your sacrifices.

You mentioned in your testimony that our support is not unconditional. And I wonder if you could tell us within the context of the relationship that you have built with President Ghani, which is really a quite extraordinary one, and in some ways I guess you would say you are fortunate that you have a willing partner. Tell us more about what we could, should—where have we actually put—used our leverage, and, clearly, you know, the fact that they can't really afford their own military and we need to be there on their behalf, what could we be doing, what have you seen that has helped to direct, to provide the impetus to move forward in governance that is really important?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I have seen it really at my level through MOI and MOD, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, where everything that we do is based on conditionality. They sign letters of commitment because we appropriate and move the money around based on different conditions. So we asked them—there are certain gates they have to be able to do. And if you don't do this, we are going to hold this. If you don't do this, we are going to do that. And what that is, is a change of behavior. You know, for many, many years, if the Afghans needed this, we would provide that to them. And what we need to do now to make sure they are not very, very dependent upon that, we have to break that. We have to change behavior. And I think by putting conditionality on the money at the MOI and MOD level we are able to do that. At the presidential level, and we are very fortunate we have President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah in a unity government that wants to work not only with the U.S. but the entire international community. The conditionality of getting after corruption. So President Ghani personally chairs a national procurement meeting every week that he looks at contracts and he has a board that does that to get after corruption. And we have asked him to go after that. We have asked him to make some tough choices as he and Dr. Abdullah work on governors and provincial police chiefs and in naming the right leadership and picking leadership based on merit, not based on pay patronage or who they knew. And so those are ways we can help with

the governance level as well to put those kind of conditions as we move forward.

If I could add, ma'am, President Ghani welcomes conditionality.

Mrs. DAVIS. Has that been effective in just moving some discussions as well with even Pakistanis as we move into, you know, negotiations at some point with the Taliban? I mean, is there anything that we have seen with that conditionality that has kind of pushed that situation along?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. On the Pakistan side I think it was noted a couple months ago that both State Department and Department of Defense work every day with Pakistan to look at how they can continue to do more to fight terrorism and how they can go after Haqqani, how they can do things that enable their forces and their people to be safe, but at the same time not destabilize Afghanistan. And so I think there are conditions that we can use with Pakistan there.

Mrs. DAVIS. Are we able to do that as well in talking about the constitution and the ability to not withdraw, I guess, from that human rights issues? How have we been effective with that? And what—I guess what else needs to be done as we move forward to ensure that those issues are dealt with?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think if I saw that we needed to apply conditionality to something like that I would absolutely do that. When I went to President Ghani on the abuse of sexual children, he absolutely got that and said: We have a law. Our constitution covers that. But I will reinforce that. I will make sure that all of my security forces understand that. And if he didn't do that, that would be something I can go back and say: Mr. President, if you don't do this, we need to look at that. But I didn't see that in that case. And we will continue to work very hard. But, again, President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah welcome the conditions. It makes them tougher. It makes them accountable. And they understand that the money, not only the money, but the blood, sweat, and tears, the ultimate sacrifice that all the nations have provided, that is special to them. Not only their own that have been lost, but the international community. So they welcome conditions and they want to make sure that we understand that they are very appreciative of that. And so unlike where we were, you know, over a year ago without the national government, we are in a completely different place.

Mrs. DAVIS. And you have all the authorities that you need or no additional help from the Congress to do that.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I am comfortable with the authorities I have today. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. DAVIS. Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, in 2014 a decision was made to have a troop level of 9,800. And my question I think is simple, but it may not be. And the question is, is the security situation in Afghanistan better or worse today. And if it is not better than it was then, how in the world could we even entertain talking about troop levels of 5,000 or 1,000?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, in 2014, the number of U.S. forces, coalition forces, we had verse what we have today is different. So the security on them, I think, is one thing because unfortunately we have lost some great men and women over the last year, even with Resolute Support. But I think we have balanced that based on the number of people we have had there and the security and looking at the force protection.

From an Afghan perspective, you know, again, this has been a very, very tough fighting season, and they knew it was going to be a very tough fighting season, and the Taliban knew because we were redeploying, because our numbers were going to go down, because they didn't have the same amount of close air support, they would try to send a message. And so not having close air support like we had it in the years past emboldened the Taliban in some places to go ahead and attack in large numbers that we hadn't seen before. But, again, the Afghan forces I think have stepped up for the most part. They have made corrections.

They are resilient. There have been some setbacks like in Kunduz and Northern Helmand. But unlike Iraq, and people try to compare Iraq and Afghanistan, and they are not the same, the Afghans have planned, have reorganized, have resupplied, have put the right leadership in place and continue to fight and protect the people, but overall if you take the number of security attacks and then compare it from 2014 to 2015, it is very, very difficult because, again, we are not out there in the numbers we were before. But it has been a very tough fight, sir, on both sides.

Mr. MILLER. And I will yield the balance of my time to Mr. Turner. But I have one comment to make. And it is a plea. And I know you can't discuss the gunship incident in Kunduz, but I would plead with you, sir, please don't let the crew of that aircraft nor those Americans that were on the ground that guided that fire where they did become scapegoats.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I will look—we have an investigation, sir, as you know, and the investigation will give me the facts. And I will make sure the committee has all of that as we learn more.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, sir. To Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Miller. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to echo Mr. Miller's comments. I think everyone is very concerned about that investigation and how it—and that those who certainly had no involvement in a mistake, no culpability in mistake not have consequences.

General, you and I had a conversation about the 9/11 Commission Report. When we first got the 9/11 Commission Report delivered to this Congress, it had a chapter in it, chapter 12, that detailed what we needed to do in the future and what we shouldn't do. It specifically said that our fight was not against Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden solely. And if we viewed our fight as that, that we would lose. That it was Islamic extremism and worldwide terrorism. When we look at Iraq, it is clear that we have not heralded chapter 12 because we have seen ISIS take hold and now threaten our homeland. You have made recommendations that we continue to hold troops in Afghanistan. You have both ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and Daesh—ISIL and Daesh now there.

Could you tell us if you did withdraw our troops down to the level of 1,000, its effect on both the safety of our troops and the ability of our effectiveness for counterterrorism actions in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if we came down to 1,000, the embassy presence as you just discussed, there is no counterterrorism structure force in those numbers. And then if you draw down to that size in one location, you are solely dependent upon the force protection for that particular site by, with, and through outer layers that we would not have that we have had in the past. I am not sure if that answers your question.

Mr. TURNER. It does, which it totally cripples our ability to undertake those actions. Now also when you withdraw to those level of forces, aren't the forces that are left behind at a greater risk without a larger footprint?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, they are in one location. The enemy would know where they are at. But we would do everything we can to make sure we mitigate, again, force protection number one concern for me. As we continue to draw down, every commander would make sure they do everything they can to ensure the right force protection. It would be higher risk.

Mr. TURNER. Isn't it a fact that they entered the country, the effects of your ability to counter Daesh as they entered the country?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, at the thousand number, at an embassy presence, there is no CT allocation in that.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Miller.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General, for your service and testimony here today. You have probably one of the most complex missions, I think, almost you could possibly even imagine. So, again, we really appreciate your efforts.

And, again, I want to associate myself with Mr. Miller's remarks about the investigation. I think it is also important to underscore, when you are talking about Doctors Without Borders, I mean, it was almost exactly a year ago that they were working hand in hand with our military in Africa taking on the Ebola challenge. They are a valuable international resource. And that is why I do think this requires the absolute top level of scrutiny and independence in the investigation.

I would like to just turn for a moment again on your comments regarding the Afghan Security Forces which at the end of the day I really do think is the kind of the, you know, the linchpin in terms of a strategy to hand off, you know, power and security in that part of the world. In particular, the ALP [Afghan Local Police]. You made sort of an interesting comment in your testimony about how they were misemployed. And clearly when we are talking about corruption issues and the need to sort of root out corruption, I mean, they frankly have been a big topic of conversation, again, not with just sort of knee-jerk critics of U.S. forces over there, but frankly even people who want to help the mission.

Can you talk a little bit about where President Ghani is in terms of the ALP, and, you know, because, again, the criticism is they

have kind of gone rogue out there a lot. And there has been complaints within the civilian population about how they operate.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. We have looked at the ALP or the Afghan police very hard here the last several months. They are authorized about 30,000 in 174 different districts in Afghanistan. And they belong to the Minister of Interior on the police side. What Minister Ulumi has done here recently is assigned a new directive to go back out to all the provincial police chiefs to make sure that they have done all the right vetting, all the right training, they have got the right leadership in place. And that they don't misuse them.

So in some places ALP even put out in smaller checkpoints 5, 10 kilometers from a village. And what they were designed to do is be sort of that village security, that stabilization there, and when they get taken out 5 kilometers, 10 kilometers without any mutual supporting fires, without other support, reinforcing support, then they become easy targets for the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

So not only because of that and the casualties they have taken, not only that because they do have potentially some issues with leadership taking advantage of that, he has done a holistic scrub of the ALP, and he has continued to try to force the provincial police chiefs to meet all the same standards that we have had in place. And in some places they haven't done that well. So he has re-energized that. We are working hard with him to do that.

This past weekend he had all the provincial police chiefs back into Kabul, and the entire conference was on ALP and how to make sure we don't have some of the issues that you just talked about, sir.

Mr. COURTNEY. I mean, I think that would send a powerful message that there is real change happening if there is reforms that the government can really talk about.

General CAMPBELL. And, sir, as Ms. Davis talked about, one of the things on conditionality, we have really put conditionality on the ALP. So if they don't get through with the reforms, they don't abide by all the vetting procedures, then we don't pay. So that is a condition that we put on them.

Mr. COURTNEY. Seems like a pretty good leverage. So thank you, General. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am very grateful to see largely general bipartisan support of your efforts.

I have had the great opportunity 12 times over the years of my service in Congress to visit. I have seen a civil society develop. It is just so inspiring to go along streets and see little girls with white scarves going to school, carrying books. It just warms your heart, and then to see little guys with baseball caps. That is not indigenous to Afghanistan. These are people who are truly working to develop a civil society, and I just want to thank you.

It is also very personal, my appreciation of your service. My youngest son, Hunter, served as an engineer for a year in Afghanistan, and I just know he was making a difference by helping build that country, rebuild—begin from the beginning, to protect American families at home, and you have.

Additionally I am very grateful as a veteran. My unit, the 218th Brigade served there under General Bob Livingston, our adjutant general. It was the largest deployment from South Carolina since World War II, 1,600 troops, and they were spread all over the country. And they were helping train forces, and they were so inspired. These are lifelong friends of mine, and they would really let me know what they think; and they think and know that they were working with who they identified as their Afghan brothers.

And I regret so much that—hey, I can remember the first time I went to Afghanistan with Sheila Jackson Lee. She pointed out that bad news has no feet—excuse me; what is it—good news has no feet and bad news has wings. And wow. But the good thing is that extraordinary progress has been made. And I agree with the chairman, too, that success in Afghanistan is to deny terrorists safe havens, which protects American families.

And that we cannot forget it was September 11, 2001, the attacks on our country, they were actually originated, planned, and culminated from caves in Afghanistan. So I am just very appreciative of your efforts and the largely bipartisan support we have here. With that in mind, with the special operations reliance of support from conventional forces, if conventional forces are reduced as has been called for, how can special operations fill in this gap?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, today we continue to tactical level train, advise, assist with special operating forces. They continue to build the Afghan capacity, and they do a tremendous job. We don't have the conventional forces at the battalion or brigade level. I only have them at the corps level, four of the six corps and at the ministry level, so we are not really doing that much with the conventional side. But our special operating forces continue to do great, great work every single day, sir.

Mr. WILSON. Well, with your leadership. I appreciate it. Additionally I am concerned about the information intelligence sharing between the U.S. and Afghan national defense and security forces as it leads to operations in Afghanistan. Can you speak of whether it is necessary to improve the coordination cells and advise and assist cells throughout the country?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we have a dedicated effort, what we call an Essential Function 7, which is strictly intelligence and how we work with the MOI and MOD to not only share intelligence, but at the same time build their intelligence capability, their enterprise. I think we have made some great strides there. This year they have recently established what they call the Nasrat Center, which is basically a national intel fusion cell that brings in intelligence from the MOI, the MOD, the NDS [National Directorate of Security], their intel organization. It has produced national level targets. They never had that before, and the difference that that is making is pretty huge. But I think we continue every day to build upon their capacity, and we have seen some great, great progress in some of the operations based even at the tactical level on the intelligence structure, and not only in the hardware side, but also in the human capital side for intelligence.

Mr. WILSON. And that is so important to prevent collateral damage which, of course, is your goal. As I conclude, again, I am just so grateful for your service, for the service of American military

personnel. I having been there, have seen, my first visit there, the country was totally destroyed. It was the consequence of a 30-year civil war. There was nothing really to see except rubble, and then to see the rubble removed, the streets paved for the first time, to see little shops develop, to see opportunity for schools, for bridges to be built, and we sent units to work on agriculture to advance. Thank you very much. I yield my time.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General, for being here today. I appreciate very much your testimony, and like so many, all of us here, and like many Americans, I was so alarmed to learn of the tragedy at the Doctors Without Borders facility in Afghanistan, and I look forward to your investigation and a hopefully very transparent one but appreciate how serious you are taking this.

But I wanted to go to a different place in questioning. As you are wrestling, General, with how best to enable Afghans to secure their country and what kind of support is necessary to aid them in that effort, I'd really like to hear more about what you are doing to ensure that Afghan women, 50 percent of the country's population is part of your process?

I have been part of a delegation, at least six trips over that focused on one visiting with our women who have so ably served us and for whom we are all so grateful, but also with an emphasis on learning more about the changes that our presence has wrought in the lives of Afghan women. And it has been very promising.

Over and over again we hear the real differences that have taken place, and I remain concerned that whatever our way forward may be, how best we secure those gains, that we don't trade them away in a reconciliation process. That we don't adequately train Afghan national security forces, whether it is the local police, the national police, whatever it may be, because it obviously requires a culture change, and that culture change has begun, but it is very fragile.

So I would like to hear in your work with the train, advise, and assist, with the security forces, how you address the rights of women so that the security forces who hopefully will remain in place to secure the future life of their country also are committed to securing the lives of the women who are very much a part of their country?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am thank you. Thank you for the question. Every day President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, they speak of this. I think with their leadership and our continued train, advise and assist, that the future for engaging women in the military both on the police side and the army side continues to improve, and they put more of a spotlight on it, and we continue to assist. And this committee with some earmarked money has helped us really emphasize not only infrastructure to house, to take care of women in the military, to protect them, I think it has been pretty critical. So we are very thankful of that. I have a women's advisory committee that I co-chair with Ms. Ghani that meets quarterly to talk about different issues. At my level, her level we meet quarterly, but the committee meets probably weekly. In fact, Ms. Ghani over the last month or so has been meeting weekly to really push some issues

with the army, and that is very, very good. As you know, for the police it is a little bit easier as you recruit women into the police. They go through training. They can serve from where they are at.

Ms. TSONGAS. But General, the question I am asking really, yes, I think it is very important that the security forces, the local police, whatever, reflect the population. And I appreciate the efforts, especially Congresswoman Davis, in terms of making sure that we at least provide some element, female presence in the Afghan national security forces. But the reality is most of those forces are men, and they have had a certain cultural—historic approach to women; so it is really about how we train the men to protect the rights of women, and I am curious as to how that piece is moving forward.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, they do some of that in their session training, their officer training, their basic training, about rights of not only women, but men. So I think they are continuing to work that. It is about education. It is about training. It is holding people accountable, and I think they continue to get after that. I think as they see more women in positions of increased responsibility, they see more women that are tied in with the special operating forces which they have women that do that with them to help go on objectives, to search other females, it is actually pretty incredible.

When the other men see this and how that they contribute, I think it does have a change in attitude. But as you know, the army, the police, have only been around for a couple of years. It is going to take time as we move forward. We do put conditions as well on recruiting women, how they do that, and I think it will continue to improve. But as you said, it is going to take time. And it took time for the United States Army that has been around for 240 years to get above 15, 16 percent at West Point. This is something they are focusing on and with the leadership of President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, I see good things for it.

Ms. TSONGAS. And you have spoken of conditionality, how you use that as leverage to achieve certain goals that there may be some resistance to. Is that a tool in your tool box as you move forward?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you. General, thank you for being here. You mentioned in your opening remarks about your families and the role they played. You thanked them, and I want to make sure they hear that same kind of thanks and heartfelt admiration for what they have done and how steadfast they are in allowing you and your team to do what you do. So thank them very much on our behalf.

The recent experience in Kunduz with the attack, the Taliban, what can we glean from what the Taliban did, what tactics and procedures, TTPs, they used, and then the Afghan response, was it all, you got to give a grade for that. Walk us through that, and what kind of advice and assistance did we provide them in that response, or was it all organic?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks. Thanks for the family piece as well. In Kunduz, quite frankly, the Afghan Security Forces were surprised. President Ghani has directed a commission to take a

look, sort of an after-action, to figure out exactly what happened. They are continuing to work that now. But in a nutshell, Kunduz has about 250,000 people in it. Predominantly inside the city is police. Outside the city there are pockets of the army.

Over the period of Eid, a holiday, many of the senior leadership of the police and some of the army were not present. The Taliban probably had a lot already inside the town, but right after that time period, they attacked from within the city. The police fought, although they did not take a lot of casualties, and when they didn't see reinforcements from the army, they kind of melted out. I don't think the Taliban had any intentions to continue to hold Kunduz, but they got a great IO [information operation] victory going in there, raising their flag. The difference though here I think is that the Afghan Security Forces responded very quickly. They got the right forces up there. They moved a lot of logistical resupplies up there.

They changed some leadership out, and once they got right back into the city, the Taliban for the most part left. There are and today continue to be isolated pockets of resistance and fighting. A very small group inside of an urban area can hold up battalion's worth of people, but they continue to work that very hard. I talked to Minister of Defense Stanekzai this morning right before I came over here. He was in Kunduz earlier today and told me that he sees great progress as they move forward. He still said fragile in Kunduz, but he is very confident that all the major areas of Kunduz they own.

What did we provide, sir? For the most part this was Afghan-led. They got themselves back into the city. I had a couple of special operating teams that were south of the city that provided some planning, training advice for the special operating forces. And then I also put in what we call an expeditionary advisory team into an airfield south of Kunduz so they could provide the corps-level headquarters some logistical planning capability to oversight the Afghans.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you. Ghani and Abdullah have been in it for about a year now. What kind of marks would they get for running the trains on time, water, electricity, all the kind of things you expect in governmental services, and what does that tell us about the conversation that is out there that it is a fragile government, that it is likely to not be able to be resilient? Can you talk just about those two issues?

General CAMPBELL. I think if you are in Kabul, for the most part you would give them probably a C. Although with high-profile attacks inside of Kabul that would be lower. I think if you are on the outskirts, you are in a faraway province, faraway district, your grade would be much lower because they haven't seen some of the governance they need at that level. But, again, they have been, the national government on the 29th of September—that was a year. They continue to move forward. It is a very, very tough environment, but they continue to improve. They have made change in almost all the ministers. They have changed out most of the governors. They have some key positions that they have to continue to work on together.

On strategic level policies that Afghanistan has tied into, both Ghani and Abdullah, I think there is no daylight between them. I think the issues they have is when they come to picking people and who is going to be the minister, who is going to be the potential police chief. They understand how important that is, and I think they will continue to do everything they can to make this work, but they do have to engage better with the Afghan people, not only in Kabul, but outside the city, much better.

Mr. CONAWAY. From the time we have got left, can you give us from your perspective, the international community's continued financial support is going to be key obviously. It has already been said: they can't already afford the forces they have got. Can you talk to us about the expected or what you see as the international community's heart to stay in the fight?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks. Sir, I don't think right now we have donor fatigue. I think that the international community understands how important this is. Next year at the Warsaw Summit, I think July of 2016, they will look at funding for 2018, 2019, and 2020, so that will be critical.

I think Afghanistan has to continue to show progress as they move forward so they keep donor support, but that donor support is absolutely crucial because Afghanistan cannot afford what they have now. They are working it very hard. President Ghani is the right guy to do that with his experience, but the economic environment is going to be very tough.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, General.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Rourke.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, first I want to thank you for your service and your leadership, and through you I want thank all the men and women who are currently serving in Afghanistan and who have served in the past.

I want to ask you a couple of questions about the bombing in Kunduz, or the attack on the hospital in Kunduz, and I recognize that there is an investigation ongoing, but I want to ask you per your knowledge why the Afghanistan National Army called that strike at that location?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, that is a question that we are asking, sir, in the investigation. I wouldn't want to get out in front of the investigation. I need to learn those facts from the investigation. There is a DOD [Department of Defense] investigation, a NATO investigation. The Afghans are doing an investigation. It will be very thorough, very transparent, and as soon as I get those details, I will make sure the committee has those.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Is there ever a scenario where it is okay to strike a hospital?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, a hospital is a protected facility. We would not target a hospital. If I can go back maybe to the first part of your question and maybe get at what you are talking about here. When the Afghans call for fire, that is not an automatic response. Every day the Afghans ask me for close air support, and we just don't go fire someplace. It has to go through a rigorous procedure to put aerial fires on the ground, a U.S. process under the U.S. authorities. And so we have got to figure out what happened in that case. I don't want the people to think that just because the Afghans

call fire, that there is automatic fire anywhere they want it. That is not the case.

Mr. O'ROURKE. My last question on this is, are you aware of press reports within Afghanistan that that hospital was treating Taliban and non-Taliban combatants alike, which raised the ire of the Afghan national forces who had conducted a raid at that hospital days before or weeks before that strike?

General CAMPBELL. I have seen the reports about Taliban treating in the hospital but that is——

Mr. O'ROURKE. That would not be a justification for a strike on the hospital?

General CAMPBELL. No.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Okay. A related question and one that I think you can speak openly about, can you talk about the terms of our security agreement with Afghanistan and under which conditions we can use lethal force? And I understand there are exceptions for counterterrorism activities. There are exceptions for when U.S. forces are under attack, and there are exceptions for urgent situations. Can you characterize our involvement in Kunduz under those exceptions or others that we may not be familiar with?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again I am not going to talk about Kunduz or what happened in Kunduz, and any time we talk about in detail on authorities or rules of engagement, I would not do that in a public hearing. I would be glad to discuss that with you in a closed hearing, sir.

Mr. O'ROURKE. This might be my last question. How do you balance the need to ensure that we are adequately supporting the Afghan Army, not abandoning them, and continuing with the train, assist, and advise operations, and not at the same time creating a prolonged moral hazard where they know that U.S. support will be there year in, year out, and they may not make some of the difficult political decisions, investment decisions, in their own armed forces and capabilities, decisions with accountability for their leadership, that otherwise might be made?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is a great question. And I think we work that very hard every single day. We do—they know, and that is why fighting season 2015 was completely different. I said up front you can't compare it with other fighting seasons. The number of forces we had, the level that we had people at, where we do train, advise, and assist, made this very different. The ability for us to provide close air support like we had in the past was very different, so there is no doubt in my mind.

There is no doubt in the senior military that I deal with on the Afghan side that it is different, and they have to pick up the fight. They have to want this more than we want it. So I have seen a change in behavior on that. I don't see that as an issue. What I think they are looking at now is how long will our continued support from the international community and the U.S. be there, and a decision to continue to provide support would make a huge impact in supporting President Ghani, supporting the Afghan people, supporting the Afghan Security Forces. The impact that would make on the Taliban and the message it sends to them, the message it sends to Pakistan, and the message that it sends to NATO

I think are pretty huge as well, so decisions here upcoming as we look forward would have an impact on all of those audiences.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Quick question. When will we likely get the results of your investigation of the Kunduz attack?

General CAMPBELL. I talked yesterday with the investigating officer. He is working it very hard. I should have some preliminary investigation results here in the next—yesterday I was asked, and I said within about 30 days. I don't have an exact date, but as soon as I get those I will make sure I get that to this committee.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, thank you for being here. Just a couple of quick questions. Then I want to specifically get to the close air support capabilities. But Harry Reid has promised earlier this week to uphold the President's veto of the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act], and the President has not vetoed that legislation yet. I wonder if you and the other leaders of our military have had the opportunity to speak with the President about the importance of the NDAA since it has passed? And how do you assess the additional risk if that bill is vetoed and the veto is upheld by Senator Harry Reid as he has promised to do?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, to be candid with you, I have not talked to the President on the NDAA, and for the last several weeks I haven't had time to think about the NDAA. I have been focused on Afghanistan, so I couldn't give you a good answer there.

Mr. SCOTT. We ask you to do an awful lot on this end. With no NDAA, no budget, and certainly you and your men and women are being judged to a standard of perfection and that is kind of an unfair scenario that I think that we put you in an extremely important mission.

I represent Moody Air Force Base, home of the 81st. We are training the Afghan pilots to fly the A–29 light air support aircraft. One of the key aspects of the mission, one of the key capability gaps you said is the close air support. You are expecting these aircraft in theater pretty soon. We originally planned for 40 of them. We are now expected to deliver 20. How many do you expect to see delivered? How many do you need? And could you speak to just that issue generally?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we are looking forward to getting the Super Tucano. I will get about six in December timeframe. I will get more in 2016, more in 2017. We don't close out the program of record I think until mid to late 2018. It will bring a great capability that the Afghan forces are lacking. I have asked for a holistic study to take a look at the close air support capability of Afghanistan both in a rotary-wing and a fixed-wing capability. Until that goes through, sir, I couldn't make a call on numbers, but right now we are looking at 20. But again, I don't get the first five or six until the end of this year, and we will get them in the fight as soon as we can, and we look forward to that. The Afghans look forward to that, yes, sir.

Mr. SCOTT. And you think that they have enough impact to change the fight?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if they would have had the A–29 this summer, it would have been a game changer in some locations, yes, sir.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, General, for your service and what you and your men and women do. I yield the remainder of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, I want to thank you for your testimony here today and most especially for your service to our Nation, which is invaluable, and I hope you'll pass our appreciation on to the men and women under your command.

First of all, General, again, I'd like to better understand the current situation in Afghanistan, and I hope that today's discussion will continue to not only inform our overall strategy but will also serve to better protect our men and women in uniform and our coalition partners on the ground. We have seen too many lives lost in this conflict obviously, like Master Sergeant Andrew McKenna from Bristol, Rhode Island, who very recently was killed in a terror attack in Kabul. We obviously have to do everything we can in our power to ensure that our policies in Afghanistan maximize our strategic gains while minimizing the tragic loss of lives that we have seen too frequently across the headlines.

Make no mistake about it, General, the work that you and the men and women in uniform there who are serving in Afghanistan are doing vitally important work, and I know that they are defending us here at home in preventing those who would plot and plan against us from coming here. At the same time there is still a big frustration on the part of the committee and certainly on the part of my constituents that the Afghan forces are not further along in their training and where we need them to be. I would like to begin with a New York Times article from yesterday in which a senior Afghan military officer blamed the lack of coordination among Afghan units for recent Taliban advances. This relates to your mention of the need for improved leadership and accountability of ANDSF [Afghan National Defense and Security Forces] in your testimony.

So I would like to ask you directly, how do you explain to the committee, how do I explain to my constituents back home, as to why after the 14 years of effort and training and presence there and the billions of dollars that we have spent, lives that have been lost, the people that have been injured, why the Afghan forces are not further down the pike in their training, and why are they not where we need them to be? And I'd also like to ask you directly what you need with regards to time and resources in order to help build strong leaders ANDSF are missing to sustain themselves beyond our eventual withdrawal?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. I think, very quickly, where the Afghan forces—where they plan, where they preplan, where they work together, both the cross-pillar organization, the police and the army, they conduct operations that they work together and preplan, they do very, very well. Where they don't, where it is kind of crisis mode, that is where they continue to need help in working that. When they don't work together, you are right, sir; they don't do well.

But, again, I would say we have been there for 14 years, but this army continues to be very, very young. We have just started their air force the last 3, 4, 5 years. The army has really only been around for about 8 or 9 years, the police about the same timeframe.

So it continues to be a work in progress, but I would tell you, they can do a lot of things very well; but the areas that they have issues in are the areas that any army in a time of war would have problems. So in logistics and sustainment, maintenance, intelligence, close air support, special operating force capability, those are all very tough pieces for a U.S. Army to do. They have been fighting at the same time they have been trying to build this army, so I see continued progress. I have been there three times, the first time in 2002, 2003 timeframe; and where they are today is just light years from where they were then, so I do see progress. Their special operating capability, I mentioned probably the last time I was here a story where you took four Mi-17s [transport helicopters] flying version 5 flying from Kandahar into Helmand at night, very low visibility, going into a small landing zone, special operators coming off the back, a little iPad device talking to an Afghan PC–12 [signals intelligence aircraft], giving them full-motion video moving to a high-value target.

I told that story and asked people to close their eyes and think about it. Open your eyes and think if that was the Rangers, that was the SEALs [Sea, Air, Land forces], that was Delta. That was the Afghan special operating forces. So they have that capability today, and they continue to get better and better. But they do have gaps and seams that we knew they would have that we have to continue to train, advise, and assist on.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, General. With respect to our drawdown, can you talk about NATO's willingness to step up and add additional forces there to supplement our drawdown?

General CAMPBELL. From my discussions with senior members of the partner countries, we have 42 right now with pledged support. Most of them will continue to support, but it is going to take a U.S. decision first before they do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, thank you for being here today as always. You know, on September 11, 2001, an attack was launched on America from a place that most Americans never heard of and by a person that most persons had never heard of. And when I think about the freedom that we enjoy in this country that came flying in our face that day, that it was at risk, I am reminded of what was etched in a wall of an isolation cell that Congressman Sam Johnson spent time in in Hanoi Hilton that said those that have fought and almost died experience the taste of freedom the protected will never know.

And I think sometimes your accomplishments and the accomplishments of our military now and throughout history and the freedom that we enjoy are often taken for granted in America, and I think that that needs to be recognized. I think that many in America, and some in this room don't fully understand the effort and sacrifice that went behind every one of those ribbons and pins

that you wear and so many in our military wear, and I want to thank you for that and all those that serve us in that regard.

One of the things that you said today that really stuck out to me, and I think you know why as a veteran of Iraq, what stood out to me is when you said we honor their memory by building a stable Afghanistan. I think there is a lot to be said for that. I think history has shown, and I believe that the greatest chance for peace on this Earth comes from a strong U.S. military that can be reactive, can be postured well, and can serve as a deterrent to evildoers. I think that is really what we are after. I think that is what we want to see happen.

So my question today is what do you think would be the barebones level that we can maintain in Afghanistan to prevent a vacuum like we have seen in Iraq, and what level gives you the most comfort or most assurance that that won't happen? And also I want to get some of your thoughts on the benefits of the idea that even if we had a stable Afghanistan that was able to stand on its own two feet, would there be benefits to us still being there in a postured position like we do in other parts of the world?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. And thank you for the thanks. Sir, I don't want to go into details on numbers and level. Again, I have provided options to the senior leadership. I feel comfortable within those options that I have laid it out in terms of risk. Higher is less. Less increase is at risk in general terms.

But I feel comfortable in those options, and I know that senior leadership will continue to look at those and weigh those, and I have provided pros and cons of all of that. But it is based on capability as we look forward. It is not numbers but what capability is needed based on Afghan capability and as you said, have a U.S. CT mission as well, and we took a hard look and included that in there. I do think presence equals influence, and if you have people on the ground, you have influence.

If we are not there to provide influence, somebody else is going to be there. Whether it is Russia, China, Iran, you name it, the U.S. and having people on the ground provides influence.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Long-term benefits from even a stable Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, Afghanistan lives in a neighborhood that doesn't follow the rules. You take a look at the countries around it. Very, very tough neighborhood. Again, presence equals influence. Building a stable Afghanistan to provide stability in that region, having a partner that wants to partner not only with the U.S. but with the other coalition nations is key. We haven't had that the last several years, and I think we have an opportunity today to take advantage of that for a very modest continued investment in both money and personnel.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you very much, General. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Gabbard.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General Campbell, for being here with us today. You talked about presence equals influence and other members have mentioned the instability and the threat of this same brand of Islamic extremism in other countries around the region. Would your recommendation, your strategic recommendation, be to maintain or deploy a U.S. presence

and military service members to other countries in the region such as Libya and Yemen that are facing similar threats and far greater instability than we are seeing in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. I think Chairman Dempsey before he left talked about a regional presence throughout different areas of the world, and I would concur with that.

Ms. GABBARD. How long do you suggest that given the track record for the last 14 years in Afghanistan, that we continue to ask our service members to deploy to Afghanistan on this similar train-and-equip mission given the lack of progress that we have seen and given the failures that we have seen in Iraq and in Syria?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I can't talk Iraq, Syria. I would disagree a little bit on lack of progress again in Afghanistan. I think there has been great progress. I think this fighting season has been very tough and I would probably say uneven progress. But there are areas and capabilities that they continue to have issues with that take any army a long time. Building a pilot takes 2 or 3 years. Building a maintainer takes 2 or 3 years. We started that late in Afghanistan, so that is one area we have to continue to train, advise, and assist on for years to come. They want to take this on; and they have an attitude, they want to do this by themselves.

They welcome, I talked about conditionality, so we have an opportunity here where we have a willing partner where they want to continue to improve on their own capabilities so they can be a productive country in that part of the region, not only provide for stability and protection for their own homeland and the people there, but also for the region.

Ms. GABBARD. So you are seeing an open-ended commitment from the United States military to maintain a presence there?

General CAMPBELL. I think we have to continually assess that, and as we have done over the last several years, we have gone from 140,000 down to less than 10,000. The amount of money continues to go down, so I think we have been very good in continuing to assess that to bring that commitment down.

I said in my opening remarks this is not without conditions and it can't be unlimited forever and ever. But I think we have to continue to assess that and make those calls as we go, and I have been asked to lay this out for this period in time where the Afghan Security Forces are, and that is what I have attempted to do.

Ms. GABBARD. Given the corruption that we have seen though in all levels of the government there in Afghanistan, but including at the lowest levels, and it has been talked about a lot recently given what happened in Kunduz with the Taliban's taking over that city for a short period of time, but also people saying that it is likely that that was kind of the first volley, and that one reason that they were able to do so is that the local communities there, and we have seen this in other parts of Afghanistan, because of corruption by the Afghan local police and by local government.

People are getting shaken down multiple times and see perhaps the Taliban as the lesser of evils in their daily life and in their challenges. What is being done about stemming out and getting rid of this corruption so that the Afghan folks who you have been training can actually do this without us?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you for the question. Again, I think President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the MOI, the MOD, the senior leadership I deal with every day tries to get after corruption. They understand that is a huge issue. It has been there for years and years. They are trying to get at it by picking the right leadership, holding them accountable. They are trying to get at it by looking at procurement. They are trying to get at it by providing the right education for the leadership and for the folks that join the army and the police.

I think if you ask most Afghans, they would tell you they don't want the Taliban. The Taliban target—the Taliban kill innocent women and children. The Taliban put suicide vests on little kids and walk them into marketplaces and hold their mother or father hostage and say you are going to blow yourself up. I don't believe the Afghan people want that. I know the Afghan people don't want that. They want to secure Afghanistan, and they have that hope because of the Afghan Security Forces and because of the great work that our men and women have done.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you. Thank you. Just in closing, Mr. Chairman, I think it is deeply concerning to consider the idea that we would ask our service members to go on this nation-building mission across the region and it is something we have got to look at carefully. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate the comments of the gentlelady. I just want to highlight for members that week after next we are going to spend a week in this committee looking at train and equip around a variety of countries and what has worked and what hasn't. Are there lessons to be learned, because I agree with the gentlelady. This is a very important issue that we need to dig down deeper on because there are a number of instances where it has not worked very well. We need to understand that. So I appreciate the comments.

Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and first of all, I want to thank the General for your leadership to our troops, your service. But as we move forward with the Taliban, what are their abilities to recruit and train? Do we see an uptick in that, or has that stayed level, or has it dropped off?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think at least it has stayed stable, or at least it has stayed level. Again, they have surged really this fighting season because they know that this is an opportunity for them because we don't have the coalition out in the numbers we have had. They want to make a statement. They want to remain relevant. They want to show as potentially it moves to discussion of reconciliation that they can operate from a position of strength. They have continued to be able to recruit.

When you have somebody there that has no job, no money, no future, and somebody comes and offers you $100, $200 to plant an IED [improvised explosive device], that is pretty easy to do. So I think what we have to continue to do is show the people of Afghanistan that they have hope in a better future if they continue to support their Afghan Security Forces and the government. But for the most part, what I see is the Afghan people do not support the Taliban.

Mr. NUGENT. So if they don't support the Taliban, where are they recruiting from? Are they recruiting within?

General CAMPBELL. Both. They recruit from within Afghanistan, and there is also reports of foreign fighters that come in that assist the Taliban as well.

Mr. NUGENT. And how are they trained? Do we have a metric on how they are trained or where they train?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think there are areas inside Afghanistan that they have potential training areas. There are areas outside of Afghanistan that have sanctuary that provide them the opportunity to train. When they conduct attacks, sir, it is not something that you would see from a large, modern technological force command and control move. This is counterinsurgency; one or two people put an IED out there, one or two people killing a few people here, suicide vests going on.

They don't follow the rules. All they have to do is go out there and cause fear in the people, and that is what they want to do, and so fear to make the government seem as though they can't provide security for the people. So it is going to take everybody in Afghanistan to fight this piece here, but I do not believe the Afghan people support the Taliban for the most part.

Mr. NUGENT. And that is good to hear. I was there in 2011 and was struck with—I was in Iraq and Afghanistan—actually struck with the security level in Afghanistan versus Iraq in 2011 when we were withdrawing troops. We had more freedom of movement within Afghanistan. We had less restrictions on movement in Afghanistan at that point in time, and now I wonder where we are as compared to 2011?

Like I said, when I was in Iraq in 2011, everywhere we went was fast, quick, with ballistic protection; and it was just the opposite in Afghanistan. Has that changed? If I go to Afghanistan today, will I see the same type of movements available to us? I got to visit with the Afghan police training facility.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, quite frankly, where we were in 2011 to where we are today in 2015, we don't have that many areas, so most of the areas that you would have to go to you would probably travel by helicopter to it and you would land in a small location just based on the downsizing, the number of people we have.

So we don't have a lot of folks that end up driving throughout Afghanistan at all, just based on location, based on the density of people that we have there. As far as the Afghans, I think they continue to have, as I said, freedom of movement on Highway 1, which is a ring road, throughout Kabul.

Mr. NUGENT. General, I don't mean to interrupt, but one last question. In 2007, 2008, my older son was in Afghanistan for 15 months. He said, Dad, a lot of folks talk about just going back into the Stone Age. He said the problem is they are already in the Stone Age. Has that changed at all?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. I think, especially in the cities at least; in the outer parts of Afghanistan, you are still going to see people that are living in very limited, primitive housing, but inside the city, cell phones, business, Internet, you name it, as was mentioned earlier today.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you again, General. My time is expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moulton.

Mr. MOULTON. General, I want to thank you again for your service, and also specifically for your courage, your willingness to come to Washington and say candidly when you disagree with the policy that we are sending your way. So thank you for that. As an Iraq war veteran, it was hard for me to return to Iraq this winter, disheartening to say the least to see so much of what my colleagues and I had fought for and frankly achieved during the surge gone to waste. And so, I am particularly interested in how you are learning from that experience to make sure we don't repeat the same mistakes in Afghanistan.

One thing I think that stands out in particular to me is that it was not just our rapid withdrawal of troops, but our failure to continue to support and influence the Iraqi government that ultimately led to it falling apart. In many ways what happened in Iraq was not just the failure of our train-and-equip mission as far as our troops go. The Iraqi Army just put their weapons down and went home because they had lost faith in a government that had rotted from the inside. And so it was pulling those advisors out of the ministries, out of the prime minister's office. We disdain Maliki, but we forget he was in power during the surge when we actually made a lot of progress and had a relatively stable government.

But it was because of our influence. So who are you talking with from the Iraq experience to make sure that you don't repeat those same mistakes? And can you give us some examples of things that you are notably doing differently than what we did in Iraq?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. In Afghanistan, we have a lot of Iraq veterans. Thank you for your service. So all of them, I think, feel as you do there and want to make sure that we learn from our experience, and so as we do different plans, as we have taken a look at the security cooperation office in particular of what would remain in Kabul, how they did that in Iraq versus how they did that in Afghanistan, planners got together with planners that had done that in Iraq.

They talked. They worked through that, and we made adjustments based on that kind of discussion. I feel confident that we have been able to take a look because as you know, the military does AARs, or after action reports, on everything we do, and so we have to learn by that. I think we have done that in that particular case. We have also taken a hard look at how we do set up advisor teams, how we can take expeditionary advising teams as we continue to downsize and provide some level of expertise in particular areas, and I think that has helped us.

I think what you said is key, though, the fundamental difference for me between Iraq and Afghanistan is that you have a government that is a willing partner here, that wants to continue to have a presence from the international community, that favors that, that wants it, that asks for it, and wants to continue to grow a professional army, a professional police, different than what you saw with Maliki.

Mr. MOULTON. I have heard some reports that that government is suffering from a serious brain drain right now, where a lot of talent is leaving. Are you seeing that? Is it a concern?

General CAMPBELL. It is a concern; the overall refugee piece where young people are leaving Afghanistan is a concern. It is a concern for both President Ghani and Abdullah. They have both spoken about that. But at the same time I see great potential with the army, the police, and young men and women that have been trained in the U.S. and the U.K. and Germany and other countries as they continue to move up and increase responsibility in leadership positions. I see there is some really good talent there. We just got to get them into the right positions.

Mr. MOULTON. Now from the outside we are seeing cooperation between President Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. Are they actually sharing power, or is that an area of concern as well?

General CAMPBELL. I mean, the national government is hard, and I think they have to continue every single day to work at it. The President is the President. There is no doubt, I think, in his mind or Dr. Abdullah's mind who the President is, but I think again on policy matters they continue to work very close on that. There is no daylight between them on that. They work together in national security councils. They work together in the cabinet meetings, but they know there is no other choice there as they move forward.

Mr. MOULTON. General, one last question following on Mr. Scott's question earlier. Both the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense have testified before this committee that using OCO [overseas contingency operations] funds to fund the budget of the Department of Defense is not a satisfactory way to ensure our national security. Do you agree with that position?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, what I agree with is I have been very fortunate to have the resources that I need. I have had the right people trained and equipped, and that is because they have done it by OCO; but as I think everybody has mentioned, it is very hard for any of the services to continue to plan when you go year by year.

Mr. MOULTON. I think it is important for you to understand that that is the rationale the President has given for voting against the NDAA. It is the rationale that myself and others who have taken that tough vote have used as well. We hope that we can change that situation by forcing the issue. It is in no way a reflection of our lack of confidence in you and the troops on the front lines. Thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Walorski.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, General, I again want to thank you for being here; and I so much, to my colleague's comments, I so much appreciate your candor. It is just a fresh moment to have a bottom-line general come in and basically say here is what I think to the President. And I guess a couple of comments that I have is that I think—and I appreciate the gentleman's questions and opinion, but I happen to have the opposite opinion—I think that we are talking about symptoms in here.

And I think that we need to remind the American people that over the last 3 years, certainly in my short tenure in Congress, there really has been a vacuum of foreign policy, and there has been a lot of reactionary things happen. There hasn't been a whole

lot of support that I have seen from this administration, and I think that when you have a President that stands up and is willing to volley back and forth politically the entire defense budget, which absolutely has everything to do with the allocation of the good people. You get the money to support them.

I think it is very, very dangerous, and I think the American people understand that. And I do appreciate so much your not being able to talk to us specifically about the troop drawdowns. The things I have seen in the media have been anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 to 8,000, and I guess I really appreciate your comment where presence equals influence. I just want to make sure that we are talking about, for the record, when there is less presence, there is less influence, there is greater risk. And that counts across the board. So that would count with counterterrorism, train, advise, assist, and force protection, and missions. Is that not correct? Isn't that what presence equals influence means? The less presence, the greater the risk?

General CAMPBELL. I wouldn't argue with that statement, ma'am.

Mrs. WALORSKI. And then my other question, General, nobody has really talked about; but I am concerned because, and some of my other colleagues talked about policy, that you are just implementing the policy that we are sending. Well, again, I think it is not we are sending policy. There is an administration sending a policy that many times can't be understood, has created a vacuum for the enemy, and the American people certainly don't understand, as the losses in Iraq, as the presence of Russia right now in Syria, and I think certainly with the Iranian proposal that was signed. Do you detect currently, are you concerned about increased Iranian presence and what that means as you share a border now that we are venturing in by the administration's desire to sign this agreement with Iran?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I won't go into policy, but I will tell you, I talked in the SASC [Senate Armed Services Committee] as well about Iranian influence on the Taliban and providing Taliban the support to fight ISIL as they sought. So President Ghani, security forces are concerned and the impact that would have from Iran on its western flank.

If I could add, though, on not really policy but as I have gone forward and asked for flexibility for 2015, the administration gave me that flexibility. As I asked for enablers, a bridging strategy and authorities, I was able to get that as well. So, again, I am very comfortable as I provided options to my senior leadership, that they put due diligence and scrutiny on that, and that is what I would expect. I think that is what the American people would expect.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Sure. And just a further question on Iran and the forces that you are suggesting, does that take into account a new level of activity with Tehran and Kabul?

General CAMPBELL. Maybe not specifically, ma'am, as we looked at that. Again, we have seen reports of that. I have talked with the Minister of Defense and the impact that would have in Herat, specifically on the west, led by the Italians out in TAAC-West [Train Advise Assist Command-West] that get some of those reports. I

don't think we looked at that specifically as we looked at the capabilities that are required.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Sure. And so I guess my final question is as we launch into uncharted waters with this agreement with Iran, and should you see the need for things going awry for additional training, help, forces, money, people, personnel, should anything happen on that border, do you feel like you have the flexibility with this administration to go back again until the administration tells the American people, hey, something is wrong here; we need help?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, whether it is on the west, the north, the south, or the east, my job is to provide the best military advice. If I see issues that I have concerns on force protection or the train, advise, assist, I would absolutely raise that to my leadership.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General Campbell, thank you for your service to the Nation. I think Americans are getting tired of being bogged down in Afghanistan. We have been there for 13, 14 years, and it seems that there is no end in sight. It seems like we are doomed to always maintain a troop presence there, and I don't think that that is something that is good for our country for us to be nation-building forever in Afghanistan. That is exactly what the future holds for us.

There is no point in our plans or in the plans of those who want to build the nation of Afghanistan. There is no stopping point. Because whenever you do stop, there is going to be some adjustments that have to be made, so why not make the adjustment now? Why not draw down our troops?

If the Russians or the Chinese want to come in and be players over there, good for them. I would think that they would not want to embroil themselves over there. They would probably want to see the locals work everything out. What do you say to that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would say that we have continued to redeploy and draw down our forces. We have continued to—you know, we had that 300 or 400 different outposts when I was there in 2010, 2011. We are down to less than 20 today, so we have continued to draw down both our forces, and I think we have drawn it down responsibly. I am thankful that we have had the ability to do that. I think as we look forward, what we are trying to do is make sure that we continue to provide the Afghans support where they need it, and we can do that reasonably and responsibly as we continue to draw down. But in the areas that are very tough for them, in the close air support and other areas, having a stable government, having a stable Afghanistan is not only good for Afghanistan, it is not only good for the region, but it is also good for the United States.

Mr. JOHNSON. I understand that, but it just seems like stability is not there, and there will be no stability in the short term or in the foreseeable future. There won't be any stability with the U.S. presence there with our 10,000 troops. I mean, do you believe that we should just maintain that force level for the foreseeable future, or should we think about drawing down even further?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I said earlier, I have provided options to the senior leadership that weighs pros and cons of different force

levels based on different risk, and I said up front, I don't believe it should be unconditional and it should be forever and ever. We have to continue to work through that. If you look at Korea, if you look at Germany and the amount of forces that we continue to have in those countries 70 years later, would Korea or Germany be as stable as they are today?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, that is exactly what the American people are looking forward to with Afghanistan, is a multi-decade presence over there. And if we do maintain ourselves as targets over there, as long as we are supporting the Afghan government, a corrupt government, which does not have the full allegiance of the people, that is highly factionalized over there, if we maintain our presence over there and being a target for those who just simply want to drive us out, then we are just stuck, and I don't believe that is a good thing for America.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I am not sure of the question, but I don't think they are trying to drive us out. The government wants us there.

Mr. JOHNSON. I think we are getting sick and tired of being sick and tired of the same thing happening over and over again in Afghanistan, and I think it is time for us to look at closing up shop. And with that I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General Campbell, for your testimony today, for your service, and for your family's support over your decades of service to our Nation.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to participate in a delegation visit to Afghanistan with Mr. Wilson, Mr. Moulton, and Mr. Ashford, my colleagues on this committee. And in addition to meeting with our troops deployed, we also visited with President Ghani. One of the issues that President Ghani raised was the threat of Daesh within Afghanistan. And in your written testimony today you state, quote, "Daesh has grown much faster than we anticipated, and its continued development in Afghanistan presents a legitimate threat to the entire region. In the last year we have observed the movement's increased recruiting efforts and growing operational capacity." I wanted to see if you could elaborate on specifically what you are seeing on the ground in terms of that increased recruitment efforts, their operational capacity, and their presence in the 34 provinces in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am. I am sorry I wasn't there when you came through. In fact, I was back here, I think, testifying. Thank you for taking the visit. Daesh, or ISIL–KP, continues to be a concern to President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the security forces. Pakistan has issues with Daesh as well. I have talked to General Raheel about that. I think if you talk to President Ghani about it in terms of recruiting what he would have told you was Al Qaeda was Windows 1.0, Daesh is Windows 7.0 in their ability to use social media to get out and recruit. Having said that, Daesh and Taliban ideology, they are different and so they continue to fight each other specifically in the province of Nangarhar in the east. That is where we have seen the biggest presence of Daesh. There are reports throughout the different provinces upward of probably 25-plus provinces we have had reports of Daesh; but the

significant presence is really in the east and Nangarhar. It is down in northern Helmand a little bit and probably in Sar-e Pol and Herat and Ghor in the west.

I don't believe today—you know, when I was here in February, March, I would have said it was nascent. Today I would say it is operationally emergent. So we have to continue to watch, and we have to continue to make sure that the Afghans apply pressure on ISIS or Daesh to make sure that it doesn't continue to grow. As you know, they are very barbaric, brutal, and they've shown instances of that in Afghanistan as well by cutting off heads of captives, by kidnapping, by taking men and women, throwing them on a pile of IEDs and blowing that up. So, again, the Afghan people have no time for Daesh there. And the Afghan Security Forces want to continue to go after that.

Ms. STEFANIK. What is your assessment of Afghanistan's approach to countering recruitment efforts? You talked about Daesh's successful social media which we are seeing throughout the Middle East today. And, frankly, globally. What is your assessment of what President Ghani and his administration are doing in countering that?

General CAMPBELL. I think a lot of it is the educational piece. They are trying to work that in the universities. They are trying to work that through radio, TV campaign ads, and showing the benefits of having a unity government supporting the Afghan Security Forces. You know, I don't think for the most part they have to—well, they show a video of how brutal Daesh is. You know, that really just turns the people away. So they have to continue to work that very hard. I think they have done a good job at that. And they will continue to try to work together, both with the [Operation] Resolute Support forces on the ground, and the neighbors in the region.

President Ghani is approaching this really from a regional standpoint and has said, you know, we are fighting Daesh. We are fighting this for the entire region. We have got to continue to reach out. And they will hold a conference here I think the end of October timeframe where they bring in all the operational and the intelligence arms of all the surrounding countries to talk specifically about Daesh and how they can combat that together.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you very much. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Aguilar.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. General, appreciate you being here. Can you give us a size, just as a follow-up to the last question, can you give us a sense of the size of Daesh and ISIS and their presence in the region?

General CAMPBELL. Are you talking about just a number, sir?

Mr. AGUILAR. Yes, sir.

General CAMPBELL. This would be, you know, a guess, but open source reporting would be anywhere between 1,000 and 3,000.

Mr. AGUILAR. And your best guess on what that will look like in the next few years if not managed or contained?

General CAMPBELL. Well, sir, they have a—you know, their stated goal is to build a Khorasan province that includes Afghanistan, parts of Pakistan. They want Jalalabad out in the east to be the capital of the Khorasan province. So they are going to continue to

fight hard in Nangarhar. They want to spread that north up into Kunar and Nuristan. And unchecked, I mean, they will continue to grow a base.

But I do believe the Afghan Security Forces understand this. There is operations ongoing today that are going after Daesh in Nangarhar by both the army and the police in the 201st Corps which is based in Nangarhar.

Mr. AGUILAR. You know, we understand and we have read that some members of the Taliban have gone over toward these networks because of the change the leadership. Can you give us any other discussion or comments about other reasons why they have made that transition?

General CAMPBELL. I think a lot of it, you know, there has been a lot of TTP [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan], Pakistan Taliban, that has switched over. There has been regular Taliban that has switched over, or have at least publicly expressed allegiance to ISIL, Daesh. I think some of it is they think they are going to get more resources. They look at it as maybe more media attention.

And so I think for a lot of these reasons you have some folks that don't want to come back into the government, that don't want to reconcile, that want to continue to fight, and they will join something new like Daesh that is coming up there. And they see what is happening in Iraq and Syria. And for whatever reason, why somebody would want to do that I couldn't tell you, but, you know, they see that as something they want to do and they continue to join that.

But, again, I think from a regional standpoint, President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, General Raheel, they want to fight this. They want to continue to get it now before it grows out of control as you talked about.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you, General.

Appreciate it, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Knight.

Mr. KNIGHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General, for your service.

I just had a couple quick questions. Can you give me an idea of the definition of train and assist? When we went to—I went over to Poland and some other countries with the chair and other members, and I was thoroughly impressed with the Polish soldiers and the interaction that we had with U.S. forces. So can you give me an idea what train and assist means for the Afghans? What is going to happen when they are done, when they are through with their training? What can we expect from them? How they are going to interact? Those types of things.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. Again, the numbers that we have right now, as the chairman asked me early on, we are really working on the ministerial level, and at the ministerial level we are focusing on what we call eight essential functions. So in the intelligence realm, in the planning, programming, budgeting, execution realm, transparency and accountability, sustainability, intelligence, strategic communications.

What we do at that area is our trainers are now really our new weapons systems, and we have much more senior folks. Where this

war would have been about privates and captains and sergeants, lieutenants, our advisors are more senior, generals and lieutenant colonels and colonels and great senior civilians. And they are trying to bring this technical expertise to build the capacity of the Afghan ministry.

So the Interior and the Defense. We don't have people at their basic training. We don't have people providing them, you know, marksmanship training. They do all that themselves. So the Afghans for the most part do all their own training. EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] training, all of that. The technical areas that they don't have the expertise, the maintenance areas and pilots, and growing their air force, that is where we continue to have to do the train, advise, and assist.

Mr. KNIGHT. Okay. Very good. And, you know, with the recent issues with Russia and their strikes in Syria, can you give me an idea of the level of maybe the weekly or monthly interaction that you get with, and I will use different terms than I am sure you use now, but maybe between you, sir, commanders, and people of that level that, you know, the four-stars are going to get together and talk about what is happening in the region. I know that this region is quite a bit to the west of you, but it is going to affect maybe what happens in Afghanistan, maybe what happens in—now that we are getting strikes from the Caspian Sea. I would expect that there are kind of connective interactions between the commanders between what is happening now.

General CAMPBELL. So I talk to General Austin, who is the CENTCOM [Central Command] commander, several times a week. I do have email and video teleconference and telephone conversations with General Breedlove, who is the SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe]. I have talked to General Rodriguez, the AFRICOM [Africa Command] commander. I know that AFRICOM, EUCOM [European Command], and CENTCOM talk quite frequently to understand. Because, as I said up front, terrorism has no boundaries.

Mr. KNIGHT. Correct.

General CAMPBELL. So a very good relationship between the combatant commanders there. But I mostly talk to General Austin through CENTCOM based on the region I am there. I did have the opportunity couple weeks ago to go to India to talk to some of the senior leadership in India to talk about Afghanistan, how that plays—how they are tied in with Afghanistan, what that means to China and Pakistan. Really quite helpful for me.

And also to explain how Afghanistan is tied into that. President Ghani, again, is reaching out to the entire region. I think is quite helpful. Last Monday, I was in Germany for a day with General Austin. We brought the chiefs of defense from five of the countries surrounding Afghanistan to bring them together to talk, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, all came together to talk about regional issues, border issues, drug smuggling, what they can do to enable each other to fight, you know, this common enemy. So, that was quite good.

Mr. KNIGHT. Very good. Thank you, General.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Mr. KNIGHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, thank you for being here. I want to talk a little bit about the capacity of the Afghan troops that we are training. From your testimony, you know, you characterize the security forces' performance at the end of—the Afghan National Defense Security Forces as uneven, inconsistent, required—still require broad support. You know, you talk about the fact that without key enablers and competent operational level leaders they can't handle the fight alone.

In contrast, you talk about the ASSF [Afghan Special Security Forces] and how they are actually able to mount operations and seem to be much more successful. What I am concerned is that we seem to be talking a lot in our metrics about our training the security forces in terms of numbers. How many do we think they need to accomplish the mission as opposed to the capacity or the quality of the forces? I just think that we are a little over-focused on building up troop levels in terms of quantity. You laid out a few significant threats that we face in Afghanistan and the region.

So as the President evaluates what right troop and advisor levels are, could you explain what the primary issues and variables are that continue to plague the security forces' ability to carry out its mission independently? And compare that to the ASSF who seem to be able to have the capacity to do this on their own.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am, for the question. Yeah. I was very tough on the Afghan Security Forces in my written comments there. And I have talked to the Afghan partners about all of those. And, again, you have to have that type of relationship to be able to continue to improve. And I value that with both the MOD and the MOI.

And, again, we are not at the levels of the Kandak Battalion Brigade. We are on four of the six corps, and we are at the ministry level. So some of those comments really focus at the senior leadership. And what I have told President Ghani is that if you pick the right leaders, you put the right leadership in place, and you hold them accountable, that is going to take care of about 70 percent of the issues that we see day-to-day out there.

One of the reasons that the Afghan Special Forces, the ASSF, are where they are at is because we continue to provide train, advise, assist at the tactical level with them today. We don't do that with all the conventional forces. They also have the ability, based on their size, much smaller, and the training that they go through, that they have a very good force generation cycle. So they are able to go training, they are able to take some leave, and then they know they are going to go into the fight.

For the most part, in the rest of the police, and the rest of the operational force, they don't have that. So if you are down in Helmand and you have been there for 3 years, you have probably been in a consistent fight for 3 years. And you have had very little opportunity to train. You have had very little opportunity to take leave. And they are really working hard at trying to figure out how they can work this force generation cycle into the conventional side. And they really want to get after that as one of their priorities if

they have sort of a winter lull after this fighting season. I think if they can get there, their performance would continue to improve.

They have some very good young leadership at the captain, the lieutenant colonel level. But they have got to continue to progress. They need more experience. So although I was very, very tough in some of the words there, I do believe that they continue to improve and that they are very resilient. And with continued time, it will get much, much better.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. So would one of key contributing factors to their high AWOL [absent without leave] rates be this lack of sufficient force generation level? And then I would just ask my second question. You can take the rest of the time to answer them. Since it is throwback Thursday, I am going to use an old-fashioned term.

I do feel like that there is a real lacking in the Green Tab leadership training that is going on here, that those frontline leaders who—and in your testimony you talk about the fact that when they do execute deliberate cross-pillar operations that are planned and resourced, they are actually successful. So what is going on there? We have the high AWOL levels at that Green Tab leaders, you know, the young—even more junior than your lieutenant colonels. But even younger than that. Is that what is going to company grade folk?

General CAMPBELL. Yeah, I think you're absolutely right. The attrition level or a lot of the reason because the attrition and the AWOL is because of poor leadership. They don't have sergeants, they don't have company commanders, platoon leaders that know everything about them and take their welfare into consideration like we do back in all of our services here. They don't have that non-commissioned officer corps.

We are trying to build that, that is the backbone of all our services, that would look after those type of things. So they are working on that. And then, as you said, the force generation cycle, if they got that better, that would reduce the level of attrition as well.

What we are trying to do on the leadership piece is, and I know you would be familiar with this, on pre-command course. We have initiated a pre-command course for their lieutenant colonels. Before you are a battalion commander, you have to go through a leadership pre-command course. Before you are a brigade commander, you have to go through the same thing. We have started, have not run yet, a capstone type course for their general officers, and that will get initiated. So their human capital and leadership piece we have to continue to work.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. It is year 14, though. We have—I don't know how many more years we can keep doing this. But thank you for your testimony.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Russell.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess as I look at these colors on the wall behind us, on them are 11 streamers from the Philippine campaign. And from 1899 to in the mid-1913 to 15 period is when those 11 streamers were earned. And we debated these same things in this Congress about the worthiness of can we train the Philippine constabulary.

Can we track down Emilio Aguinaldo and bring him to justice? Can we deal with the insurgents and the Moro warriors? Can we? Can we? Can we? And yet we did. We transitioned a government successfully. We did capture Emilio Aguinaldo and execute him, bring him to justice. And we saw our warriors achieve all of that despite what we here in the Halls of Congress often question.

I look back on 9/11; at that time two-thirds of the country was under the control of the Taliban. Very little of it was under the hands of anyone that had freedom. Girls weren't allowed to go to school; couldn't fly a kite. It was "haram" [forbidden] to play a radio or to play chess in Kabul. I remember it. We have seen successful elections and the transition of government successfully.

I remember working with the British 2nd Parachute Regiment and 3rd Special Forces when the Afghan National Army was nothing but 600 people that showed up. And now we see 150,000. And, Mr. Chairman, what strikes me is that isn't it wonderful that we are debating 150,000 troops in the field and their capacity for intelligence and command and control and complex operations in an urban and rural environment.

Thank God we have reached that point to get to that point, and that we are having the debate and these discussions. And it is due to warriors like this that are sitting before us that makes that possible.

General Campbell, thank you for your perseverance and patience and enduring our questions. The Status of Forces Agreement—often we saw that that was problems with the Iraq experience. And I know we are much further along with President Ghani.

And I know from having worked personally with Dr. Abdullah at a Afghan National Security Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2002 that we do have some capability there in Kabul with the leadership. Are there any limitations on the status of forces that you can see moving forward as we morph the troops, they are based embassy, not strike force, not train and assist, any shortcomings that we can assist you with on the Status of Forces Agreement.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have seen none. And if we have had issues, I have gone to President Ghani and we have worked through those. But absolutely none right now.

Mr. RUSSELL. That's very encouraging. And you also made note that the strength of the ANA [Afghan National Army] was that it was not fractured. I think that is an important point. They haven't broken. They have retaken ground. They have regrouped. They are determined to fight. They don't drop their weapons and run. Could you speak to that a little bit?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. And, you know, people try to compare Iraq and Afghanistan. I tell them it is absolutely different. In Helmand in July timeframe, Taliban took over District Center Musa Qala. It took the Afghans a little bit of time to reorganize. They changed out some leadership. They put a battalion commander in jail because he ran. So they did make the right corrections. They resupplied. They got back into Musa Qala, took over the district center. But it took them a couple of weeks to do that. They were very methodical as they went about that. They eventually got that done.

In Kunduz, they did that much quicker, and within a couple days they were back inside of the city. And they have taken a hard look just like all of our services will to figure out why that happened, to make sure it doesn't happen someplace else. And that is a sign of a professional army, a professional police, and a sign of a government that wants and cares for their security forces. Quite frankly, you know, President Ghani is a commander in chief. And that is different than what we have had there before.

Mr. RUSSELL. Well, I appreciate that. In fact, I think about our history in the United States Army. Forty years after our formation we broke and ran and left this capital exposed in 1812, and it was set on fire. I am glad that our Nation didn't give up on us at that time.

The authority to strike Daesh, are you allowed any independent or are there any prohibitions on your command level to strike Daesh independently, or does it have to go through the Afghan structure?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I can strike insurgents if force protection issue to our forces.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you. And thank you, sir, for your dedicated service to our Nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. McSally.

Ms. MCSALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Campbell, good to see you again. Thanks for your continued service to our country and everything you are doing in Afghanistan. It was great to see you in May when we were over there on the congressional delegation. I know the current situation with the hospital is under investigation, but I wanted to just ask about the targeting process in general. Since the last time I was over there in uniform with my A–10s, we were—and when my time in the Air Operations Center, we would usually strike under two different circumstances.

Either counterterrorism dynamic targeting in which case the decisions and positive identification and collateral damage, all that stuff was done back at the headquarters with approval to then strike. Or we were under a joint terminal attack controller's control, a JTAC, in close air support. And obviously we had U.S. troops very much deployed all over the nation at that time. But even sometimes the JTAC was back at headquarters and not, you know, in the fight that we were hitting, but they were still the ones that were, you know, calling the shots and making sure we had the PID [positive identification] and the collateral damage assessment.

Can you just walk me through what the—and maybe this is not in this setting, it may be a classified answer, what the targeting process is right now, both if it is just on the U.S. side but also if, you know, the Afghans are asking for support. How do we go through that and make sure we have PID and CDE [collateral damage estimation], and do you see any—I can imagine you see challenges as we have left forward presence and being able to get that PID and CID [combat identification] done correctly. So if you could just share that. And, again, if you need to talk classified, we can do that afterwards.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I would go to a classified session and give you that. I would say that we continue to ensure that we have PID. And we are very, very precise, and, you know, it is very rigorous. And so I can cover all those in a——

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. But, I mean, but is it safe to say that with the troops being pulled back more to centralized locations and less numbers that it is just more challenging for us to get that good intel in order to reach PID?

General CAMPBELL. It may be more challenging, but, you know, that means I would not——

Ms. MCSALLY. Absolutely. I totally agree with that. Great. So it just becomes more of a challenging situation. And what about if the Afghans ask for support? Again, we can—if you want to talk about that in a classified setting.

[The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

General CAMPBELL. As I said up front, if the Afghans ask for support like they do almost every day, then it still has to go through our processes.

Ms. MCSALLY. Okay. Great. Thank you.

When we talked to you in May, there was some setbacks, I would say, or delays in moving some of the things forward that we were trying to do with the ANSF because of the fragility of the unity government being formed and some delays in obviously setting a defense minister and a lot of that seemed to have brought some things a standstill.

Similarly, the uncertainty as to whether we were going to be there and how long we were going to be there and at what time we were pulling out was creating—when we talked to individuals in the Afghan Security Forces and parliament and others that uncertainty was creating a lot of angst and just delaying a lot things that we were trying to move forward. Has anything changed since we talked in May and have things gotten better?

General CAMPBELL. I think in some areas better, some they are about the same. I think on the Ministry of Defense, although Mr. Stanekzai is an acting minister, he has really taken charge. I've got great trust and confidence in him. He has got a great vision for the future of the Ministry of Defense. We all thought that he would be the minister, and on July 4 he didn't get through parliament, but has been in an acting capacity, and he is doing quite well. And I think it would do good for the parliament there to ensure that Minister Stanekzai continues to serve in that position.

In other areas, there have been some holdbacks waiting for—I mean, there is going to be people that are waiting to find out where the U.S. is going to go post-2016. I think they are pretty comfortable for 2015 into 2016. But after that we do get a lot of questions on that.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks. What else can we do to help build the Afghan National Air Force and the close air support [CAS] capability that they need? Is there something else you need from us, whether it is authorities, resources, platforms? I know you have touched on it in your testimony, but can you just share what else we need to do to be able to—because if they don't have CAS, then that is obviously that is a significant shortfall for them.

General CAMPBELL. Right. I think everybody back here, OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense], everybody is working very hard to get after that. So part of it is just going to take time. It takes 2 to 3 years to get a pilot through. Afghanistan understands they have to make some tough decisions, you know, kind of left of the boom.

So 2 or 3 years out they got to put the right number of people in with the right training to get through pilot training. And if they don't make those decisions now, you know, it is going to take longer and longer. So we work with them very hard on that. But I think everybody's working hard to get there. There are some restrictions that inhibit or have inhibited in the long haul on their Mi-35s [multi-role helicopter], Mi-17s [transport helicopter], we are all working through. Quite frankly, when they started the fighting season, they had five Mi-35s. Today they have two. And at the end of this fighting season, just based on structural integrity of the aircraft, they won't be able to fly and they will be down to Mi-17s, which are not designed to be a close air support platform.

We do have MD 530 Little Bird helicopters coming in, and as soon as we get the fixed-wing aircraft that we talked about earlier, the A–29 [Super Tucano aircraft], that will help. But we are taking a holistic look at what they really need based on the continued fight, wear and tear, the attrition level of the aircraft, that kind of thing.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks. And, again, thanks to you and your family for your continued faithful service to the country. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. General, appreciate you patiently answering all of our questions. More importantly, very much appreciate you and those who serve with you for what you do every day to protect the security of our Nation by working with the Afghans and in other ways. It is challenging circumstances.

Part of those challenges are external environment. Part of them are placed upon you by the chain of command. But I think it is clear to all of us that you are making the most of the situation for the country's security. And we are very grateful for your service.

With that, the hearing stands adjourned.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, Chairman.

[Whereupon, at 11:52 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

October 8, 2015

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

OCTOBER 8, 2015

Opening Statement of Chairman William M. "Mac" Thornberry
HEARING ON
U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan
October 8, 2015

Today we meet to discuss U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. I want to thank General Campbell for being here to talk about security conditions on the ground, the development of the Afghan National Security Forces, and the way forward.

Fourteen years ago, America's longest war began. Now, the results of America's sacrifice and the future of Afghanistan hang on crucial decisions President Obama is poised to make about how many troops will stay in Afghanistan through 2016. The extent of the ongoing terrorist threat to our homeland is also tied to these choices.

A lot has changed in Afghanistan. The new unity government is coping with the fallout of a Pakistani offensive that pushed militants across the border; the consequences of a power struggle resulting from Taliban leader Mohammad Omar's death; and the disturbing growth of ISIS. At the same time, international assistance has been cut and coalition forces withdrawn. Now Afghans face the prospect that no coalition troops will remain at the end of 2016.

When I visited the country last month, I found unanimous agreement that Afghan security forces have made enormous strides. But they are not yet ready to take on the national and international security challenges they face on their own; essential functions such as intelligence and close air support need more time to develop. And they are anxious for sustained U.S. advisory help.

In 2013, the U.S. military developed a plan to remove Americans from most combat operations in Afghanistan while still helping to develop the Afghan forces' security capabilities. The Obama administration disregarded the plan. Now, in addition to terrorist attacks, the Afghan military is in a tough fight without the key resources required to battle an insurgent campaign. Tragically, strategic territory that U.S. troops fought and sacrificed to secure may be lost.

The current plan is to end any meaningful U.S. military presence in Afghanistan by December 2016. Closing the few remaining U.S. bases deprives us of our ability to effectively advise and support the Afghan military and also eliminates much of the intelligence collection related to threats against the U.S. homeland.

The prospect of this serious gap in security is deeply concerning. Right now, we face the danger of repeating the mistake of Iraq, where a new, more virulent terrorist threat has grown after we left too soon. If we make the same mistake in Afghanistan, the danger to the homeland and to American citizens and interests around the world will grow significantly.

That is why I was encouraged to hear General Campbell's testimony earlier this week that he is recommending the Administration revise its plan to slash troop levels in Afghanistan at the end of next year. Here are some of the reasons why:

First, Afghanistan has been and will continue to be a crucial center for terrorist organizations. Only by staying engaged can we fight that threat at its source, rather than waiting for it to come to us.

Another reason is we have a motivated partner. Afghanistan's national unity government is anxious to work closely with the United States and has security forces willing and able to do the fighting. By providing modest financial support and a limited presence to advise and conduct counterterrorism, we will be in a solid position to take direct action against key terrorist targets.

A third reason is credibility. If we expect other nations to join the fight against terrorists, the United States has to prove we are reliable partner. That reliability is in doubt after our premature withdrawal from Iraq, the never-enforced red line in Syria, and a nuclear deal that does nothing to curtail Iran's malignant activities in the region. Complete withdrawal from Afghanistan would cause any country to question the wisdom of an alliance with the United States.

Fourteen years after 9/11, the United States faces many complex security threats. But Afghanistan remains a central node in the terrorism fight. It would be a tragic mistake for the United States to disengage from a fight where we have a willing partner and where so much can be accomplished at a relatively modest cost. We do not want to look back one day and wish we had chosen a different course.

STATEMENT OF

GENERAL JOHN F CAMPBELL, USA

COMMANDER

U.S. FORCES—AFGHANISTAN

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

8 OCTOBER 2015

Version 1.9_FINAL

I. Introduction

Over 14 years have passed since we commenced military operations in Afghanistan, and we have not forgotten the original motivations for our mission, and why we remain. *U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) remains focused on our most vital national security interest: protecting the U.S. homeland. In this all-important endeavor, we continue to be successful*. Through our continued presence, active support of the Afghan National Defense & Security Forces (ANDSF), and Counter-Terrorism (CT) operations, we are preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for al Qaeda, other international extremist groups, and their hosts.

Since 2001, the extraordinary efforts of both our conventional and special operations forces (SOF) have ensured that another terrorist attack originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland has not occurred. Today, U.S. SOF, alongside our Afghan counterparts, continue to impose considerable pressure on what remains of the terrorist networks that attacked us.

Simultaneously, U.S. advisors and their Coalition counterparts continue to provide invaluable support and oversight of the Afghan Security Institutions (ASI) at the ministerial-level, ANDSF units at the corps-level, and Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) at the tactical-level. Working by, with, and through our Afghan partners, our advisors serve as our primary means to improve the ANDSF's capabilities and build their self-sustainability.

Yet in spite of our considerable progress, it is clear that our campaign will remain a challenging one. The National Unity Government (NUG) and the enemy are still locked in a fierce struggle. While I do not consider the insurgency capable of overthrowing the NUG by force, the enemy remains

capable and lethal. The ANDSF, in turn, have thus far proven unable to eradicate al Qaeda entirely or compel the Taliban (TB) to negotiate a political settlement. In an ongoing, unstable security environment, other extremists groups are emerging to include Daesh, or the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (IS-KP). These nefarious elements continue to sow fear among the Afghan population. The insurgents also continue to inflict a serious, disruptive effect on the NUG's ability to govern. The war continues to undermine public confidence in the NUG and stymie economic progress, thereby prompting the exodus of tens of thousands of Afghans.

The ANDSF have had to adapt during a year of significant transition. There are still a few weeks left in the traditional Fighting Season, and intense combat continues in several parts of the country. Overall, the ANDSF have rendered a creditable overall performance for a young force that has been severely tested, but has remained resilient. In the wake of our drawdown since 2011 and drop in enabler support, the ANDSF have taken ownership of the fight. They have admittedly faltered at times; however, they continue to evolve, improve, and fight hard in spite of increased casualties. Significantly, they have demonstrated no signs of fracturing.

II. Results of this Fighting Season (FIGHTING SEASON) / State of the ANDSF

Before further evaluating the results of this Fighting Season, it is important to place this year in *context*. This year has been unique for many reasons. In the wake of the Coalition's redeployment, the ANDSF and insurgents both accepted that this fighting season could be decisive. There was no winter lull, and since February, the fighting has been nearly continuous. Casualties on both sides have risen, and violence has moved beyond the traditional insurgent strongholds.

Other factors are also contributing to the uptick in casualties and spread of violence. Pakistan Military (PAKMIL) operations have displaced foreign fighters into eastern and northern Afghanistan. The emergence of Daesh, or the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP), has further complicated the theater landscape, and potentially, expanded the conflict. Most recently, the Taliban have increased the tempo of their operations in order to reassert their prominence within the insurgent syndicate after the announced death of their spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar (MMO).

We are also now seeing how our redeployment and transition from combat operations to TAA have changed battlefield dynamics. Only a few years ago, our Coalition numbered over 140,000 military personnel. Now our force is comprised of fewer than 14,000 of which approximately 10,000 are U.S. servicemen and women. In years past, our aircraft provided responsive and often decisive close air support (CAS) to Coalition and Afghan troops in contact. This is no longer the norm—but the exception. Our force reduction, drop in enablers, and resultant CAS gap have created challenges for the ANDSF; they have understandably struggled at times to adjust.

Within this context, the fluidity of the current security situation is not surprising. This Fighting Season, the Taliban surged forces into northern Helmand. Most recently, they overran Kunduz. Nevertheless, the ANDSF rallied and regained control of most of the areas lost in Helmand, just as they have successfully retaken other ground temporarily lost throughout this Fighting Season. I am confident that they will regain control of Kunduz as well. Still, the Taliban achieved their aim in Kunduz.

The fighting in Kunduz underscores several shortcomings in the ANDSF to include poor intelligence fusion, lack of cross-pillar coordination, and sub-optimal utilization of their forces. They do not possess the necessary combat power and numbers to protect every part of the country. This makes it very difficult for the ANDSF to counter the Taliban's ability to temporarily mass, seize an objective, and then blend back into the population when confronted with an ANDSF counterattack. Hence, a reprioritization of the ANDSF's security efforts within the framework of their larger, multi-year campaign will be required at the conclusion of this Fighting Season. They also need to improve the responsiveness, flexibility, and preparedness of their forces at the tactical and operational levels. Ultimately, ANDSF leaders also need to discern better when to take the offensive, when to defend, and where to assume risk.

Despite these shortcomings, however, the ANDSF have displayed courage and resilience. They are still holding. GIRoA retains control of Kabul, Highway 1, its provincial capitals (with the exception of Kunduz for now), and nearly all district centers. The ANDSF are effectively protecting the principal population centers. It is also apparent that our advisory, resourcing, and contracting support and financial backing are strengthening their resolve and building their systems and processes.

In general, *I would characterize the ANDSF's performance this fighting season as uneven and inconsistent*. They have learned some hard lessons from their mistakes. On the positive side, when the ANDSF seize the initiative, deliberately plan their operations, and coordinate their actions across the security pillars, they achieve notable results. When they execute deliberate, cross-pillar operations that are thoroughly planned and resourced, they are highly successful. On the negative

side, when they act hastily and employ their forces in a haphazard, uncoordinated manner such as in Helmand, they are far less effective. They have also struggled to optimize their force laydown and employment. They remain tethered to isolated checkpoints and static defenses, which increases their vulnerability and reduces their ability to maneuver effectively.

The ANDSF's mixed performance underlines both their weaknesses and strengths. A closer examination of ANDSF actions and inactions in Helmand in August and September underscores this point. Elements of the 215th Corps and local police units responded poorly to the initial insurgent attacks on Now Zad and Musa Qala. To bolster the faltering ANDSF, I directed the immediate employment of our Advise & Assist Cell-Southwest (AAC-SW) and additional elements from NATO's Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A). We also provided CAS for ANDSF units in-extremis. Fortunately, the Afghans recovered and counter-attacked. While the tactical situation remains challenging in Helmand, it is clear that the reinforced ANDSF have blunted the Taliban offensive there.

The outcome in Helmand could have undoubtedly been much different. President Ghani responded decisively to the crisis, and after a frustrating start, senior ANDSF leaders took control of the situation. Our advisors and enablers provided invaluable support, without which, the ANDSF would most likely have suffered significantly more casualties and a strategic setback. These events underscore that *the ANDSF still require broad support*. They have repeatedly shown that without key enablers and competent, operational-level leaders, they cannot handle the fight alone in this stage of their development. Ultimately, I am convinced that improved leadership and accountability will address most of their deficiencies. ANDSF soldiers

and police perform well when they are well led and appropriately resourced. That is why our insistence on sound leadership and strict accountability remains our top priority for our TAA programs and activities. However, it will take time for the Afghans to build their human capital.

The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF), in particular, have demonstrated improved proficiency in the last year. Many military analysts consider them the best SOF in the entire region. Their commando units are now conducting raids independently using their own intelligence to drive their operations. The Special Mission Wing (SMW), recently aligned under the Ministry of Defense (MoD), is also executing long-range sorties in low illumination. Working together as envisioned, the commando units and SMW are frequently carrying out unilateral direct action missions against insurgent leaders and facilitators. These are remarkable achievements, which reflect the maturation of their formidable capabilities and the overall potential for the ANDSF writ large.

While the conventional ANDSF still have capability gaps and shortfalls, they do possess and are capable of leveraging significant enabling assets to fight the insurgents (e.g., heavy mortars, D-30s howitzers, armed Mi-17s, MD-530 attack helicopters, armored vehicles, etc. and dedicated training for these platforms.) The insurgents have none of these.

ANDSF Attrition

Of note, ANDSF operational tempo (OPTEMPO) has been twice as high in the first nine months of 2015 than 2014. Not surprisingly, ANDSF casualty rates have also increased this year. (The ANDSF have, however, inflicted far greater casualties on the enemy.) The combination of an

increased OPTEMPO, assumption of greater security responsibilities, rapid drawdown of Coalition forces and enabler support, and the aggressive pursuit of the enemy all contributed to a marked increase in ANDSF casualty rates. The ANP and Afghan Local Police (ALP) have borne a disproportionate share of these losses. The ALP are not as well equipped or trained as other ANDSF. They have often been misemployed as regular ANP in distant checkpoints even though they should only operate within their local villages.

A high ANDSF attrition rate, which accounts for casualties and all other losses to the force, has impacted combat readiness. Conspicuously, non-battle attrition, particularly unauthorized absences, have induced approximately 70% of the ANDSF's personnel losses. If present rates continue, attrition will pose increasingly significant challenges to force generation, development, and readiness over time. The main causes of ANDSF absenteeism are assessed as poor leadership, high operational tempo, inadequate soldier/police care, and poor force management. They have sometimes failed to relieve forces committed in combat areas for sustained periods. We continue to help the Afghans reduce combat casualties and to address systemic causes of attrition in order to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of their forces.

Persistent ANDSF Capability Gaps

The ANDSF's uneven performance this Fighting Season underscores shortfalls that will persist well beyond this year. Capability gaps still exist in fixed and rotary-wing aviation, combined arms, intelligence, logistics, maintenance, and sustainment. Other needed areas of improvement include resource management, cross-pillar synchronization, and intelligence-based operations. One of the greatest tactical challenges for the ANDSF this Fighting Season has been overcoming the Afghan

Air Force's (AAF) still extremely limited organic CAS capability. These shortfalls can be rectified over time if the appropriate time, money, and resources are allocated, and most importantly, ANDSF leaders continue to mature and develop sufficiently to implement these changes and needed reforms.

I remain concerned about the long-term viability of the ANDSF. Succinctly, *Afghanistan cannot afford its security forces—particularly at their present size*. Yet their current numbers are needed to contend with the scale of the threat. If we sharply reduce their forces now, it will have a detrimental effect. The international community currently funds over 90% of the ANDSF's operating costs. The U.S. covers the majority of this amount. We must assume that that the ANDSF will not be self-sustainable for several years to come. At this stage, without adequate international and U.S. funding support and an appropriate Coalition troop presence to oversee the proper expenditure of such funds, the ANDSF could potentially collapse.

Advisory Efforts

At the security ministries, our advisors continue to focus on building ASI systems, processes, and national ANDSF sustainment capabilities. They are also working to improve integration among the different security pillars: military, police, and intelligence services. At the corps-level, our advisors continue to concentrate on developing the ANDSF planning capacity, command and control, operational capabilities, unit logistics, and operational sustainment.

Our advisors at the ministries and our regional Train, Advise, & Assist Commands (TAACs) continue to serve as important sensors and touch points that allow us to verify and validate Afghan reporting while reinforcing the use of organizational systems and processes. They

enable the Afghans to see themselves and to understand that they possess adequate supplies and equipment. Our advisors routinely find that reported shortages in operational units are most often the result of failures in accounting and distribution rather than actual deficiencies. We are assisting the Afghans to break the culture of hoarding and eliminate false claims of shortages in order to garner more resources and assistance. At all levels, our advisors also continue to emphasize and enforce Afghan financial transparency and accountability of donor resources.

III. State of the Threat

Throughout this Fighting Season, Al Qaeda, TB, Haqqani Network (HQN), Daesh, and other extremist groups have challenged GIRoA (and at times, each other) as they exerted their influence and vied for prominence. Collectively, these enemies will present formidable challenges to the Afghan government, ANDSF, USFOR-A, and the Coalition for the remainder of 2015 and beyond.

In 2015, al Qaeda has attempted to rebuild its support networks and planning capabilities with the intention of reconstituting its strike capabilities against the U.S. homeland and Western interests. Due to our constant pressure, however, al Qaeda activities are now more focused on survival than on planning and facilitating future attacks. It will be critical that, in coordination with our Afghan partners, our comprehensive CT efforts continue to apply pressure against the al Qaeda network in order to prevent its regeneration, and the corresponding threat it represents to our homeland.

The Taliban established ambitious goals for this Fighting Season in hopes of capitalizing upon our transition from combat operations to advising and exploiting ANDSF vulnerabilities in their first year entirely in the lead. Their stated strategic objectives were to seize at least one provincial capital and multiple district centers, and control and hold more territory. The Taliban have attempted to gain more control of the countryside in order to expand their freedom of movement and action. They have been at least partially successful in accomplishing these goals. In the absence of Coalition CAS, they have also been more willing to mass their forces. Their main effort has focused, as usual, on retaining and expanding their traditional strongholds in Pashtun-dominated areas in the south. However, as demonstrated by recent events in Kunduz, they have also extended their influence in the north, which has further strained the ANDSF by extending their lines of operation and ability to command and control their forces over long distances. Overall, the Taliban remain a resilient, adaptable, and capable foe in spite of markedly increased casualties this year.

The death of Mullah Mohamed Omar (MMO) has generated a critical juncture for the TB. It is still unclear whether his death will lead to greater cohesion or splintering within the movement. Moreover, it is uncertain whether current infighting among the Taliban will undermine or aid reconciliation efforts. For now, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the self-proclaimed successor to MMO, continues to exert considerable effort to legitimize his position and consolidate his power. The recent Taliban success in Kunduz may bolster Mansour's authority and potentially quell his rivals.

Al-Zawahiri, the leader of al Qaeda, recently announced their support of Mullah Mansour. He subsequently accepted their pledge of loyalty. Of note, he also named Siraj Haqqani, a known ally of al Qaeda, as one of his deputy emirs. Whether the TB's renewed partnership with al Qaeda will shift the TB's targeting efforts beyond Afghanistan has yet to be determined.

The Taliban maintain an adaptive propaganda apparatus, which they will continue to leverage to influence the Afghan people, the international community, and their supporters. Their adept use of social media to advertise their operations in Kunduz serves as a clear example of their capabilities. The Taliban will strive to shape perceptions in the information space, despite their mixed military performance, continued political failures, and moral hypocrisy.

Based in, and operating from Pakistan, HQN remains the most virulent strain of the insurgency. It presents one of the greatest risks to Coalition forces, and it continues to be an al Qaeda facilitator. HQN shares the Afghan Taliban goal of expelling Coalition forces, overthrowing the Afghan government, and re-establishing an extremist state. HQN fighters lead the insurgency in several eastern Afghan provinces, and they have demonstrated the intent and capability to launch and support high profile and complex attacks against the Coalition. In response to several dangerous threat streams against Coalition and Afghan personnel—particularly in Kabul—ANDSF and U.S. SOF have stepped up security operations against HQN. These operations have successfully disrupted several HQN attack plans that sought to inflict significant casualties on the force. It will take a concerted AF/PAK effort to reduce the effectiveness and capabilities of HQN.

The Emergence of the Islamic State in Afghanistan

Daesh remains one of my Priority Intelligence Requirements. In the last year, we have observed the movement's increased recruiting efforts and growing operational capacity. We now classify Daesh as "operationally emergent." Many disaffected TB, including Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) members, have rebranded themselves as Daesh. This rebranding is most likely an attempt to attract media attention, solicit greater resources, and further increase recruitment. We have not seen, however, a wholesale convergence of other insurgent groups collaborating with Daesh. Nor have we detected a large influx of foreign fighters joining the movement.

While they do yet possess the capacities or capabilities of the Taliban, Daesh's emergence has nonetheless challenged the ANDSF, National Directorate of Security (NDS), and GIRoA political leadership. We have not seen any indication, however, that Daesh is capable of waging a unified campaign to challenge GIRoA at this point. Notably, the ANDSF recently initiated its first named operation against Daesh. In the near term, we expect most Daesh operations to remain directed against the TB, although attacks against nearby ANDSF or other soft targets of opportunity are possible.

Of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan, a recent UN report indicates that Daesh has varying degrees of presence in all but nine. The majority of its fighters are located in the east, specifically Nangarhar Province. In the near term, we predict that they will continue to recruit and grow their numbers, using higher pay and small-scale, successful attacks as recruitment tools.

Perhaps the greatest threat that Daesh presents to the entire region is not its emerging combat power, but its virulent, extremist ideology. Daesh's success in the Middle East is beginning to attract new adherents in Central and South Asia. While many jihadists still view al Qaeda as the moral foundation for global jihad, they view Daesh as its decisive arm of action. Daesh's propaganda and recruiting efforts, furthermore, already demonstrate remarkable sophistication. President Ghani has remarked, "If Al Qaeda is Windows 1.0, then Daesh is Windows 7.0."

President Ghani has been very circumspect about the Daesh threat. While some have accused him of exploiting fears of Daesh for political aims, I do not believe these criticisms are warranted. Daesh has grown much faster than we anticipated, and its continued development in Afghanistan presents a legitimate threat to the entire region. Its adherents have already committed acts of brutality that have shocked Afghan sensibilities. Moreover, Daesh senior leadership has publically declared its goals of reclaiming Khorasan Province, which extends from the Caucuses to Western India, as its spiritual home. For these reasons, Ghani has sensibly used the evolution of Daesh as a pretext for regional engagement on a host of security and economic issues.

IV. <u>Afghanistan/Pakistan (AF/PAK) Relations & Potential Reconciliation with the Taliban</u>

The role of Pakistan remains integral to stability in Afghanistan. Historical suspicions and competing interests have long characterized Afghanistan/Pakistan (AF/PAK) relations. While difficulties are likely to persist past 2016, there are indicators that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan could potentially thaw despite ongoing terrorist attacks in both countries.

Nonetheless, considerable obstacles persist. It is clear, however, that for GIRoA to reconcile with the Taliban, rapprochement with Pakistan will most likely have to occur first.

To this end, there are ongoing efforts to strengthen ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yet for every two steps forward in AF/PAK relations, another is seemingly taken backwards. For example, Pakistan's emergence as a broker and arbiter in formal talks between the GIRoA and the Taliban in July brought all parties to the table. However, subsequent terrorist attacks in Kabul in August, which coincided with the emergence of new Taliban leadership, precipitated widespread Afghan backlash and stalled further talks.

The common threat of violent extremism can still serve as a catalyst to improve cooperation between the two countries. Pakistan, like Afghanistan, has suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists and violent extremists. The recent Pakistani Taliban (TTP) attack on a Pakistan Air Force base serves as a case in point. Senior Pakistani military officers have repeatedly declared that they can no longer discriminate between "good and bad" terrorists. They appear to be taking meaningful actions to back up their words. Aggressive PAKMIL operations over the last year have applied considerable pressure on extremists operating in the border region and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), although additional pressure must still be applied against HQN and the Taliban more broadly.

Resolute Support serves as a key facilitator and interlocutor for Afghan and Pakistani military officials. We continue to actively encourage and enable the Afghan and Pakistani officers to meet and coordinate their security efforts through key leader engagements and monthly, one-star

meetings at the Resolute Support Tripartite Joint Operations Center (RSTJOC). We assess that AF/PAK political and military relations are likely to improve, albeit only incrementally and on a transactional basis.

V. Challenges and Opportunities

All aspects of Afghan society remain in a state of flux as we approach the end of 2015. Challenging political and security transitions continue to occur simultaneously. The unstable security environment and lack of investor confidence continue to foil economic growth. The flight of foreign capital and sharp reduction in spending, which had occurred at artificially high levels since 2001, has also negatively impacted the Afghan economy. Significant social tensions also persist (e.g., urban progressives versus rural conservatives; former mujahedeen versus former communists; technocrats versus warlords, etc.) Perceptions of declining security amidst extensive political, economic, and social upheaval have induced tens of thousands of Afghans to flee the country. The loss of talented human capital, or "brain drain", is particularly worrisome as gifted, educated individuals are desperately needed to lead Afghanistan through this time of transition.

Within the context of these multiple transitions and turmoil, the NUG presents both significant promise and uncertainty. President Ghani and CE Abdullah have proven to be amenable to working not only with one another for the greater good of Afghanistan, but also with the international community, NATO, and the U.S. Ghani and Abdullah have both declared the U.S. to be Afghanistan's fundamental, foundational partner and its most critical relationship. Both are also committed to addressing the challenges of corruption and nepotism. Both are likewise

supportive of the rights of women and their empowerment in Afghan society. Additionally, both are committed to achieving an enduring peace in Afghanistan and the region.

We now have an opportunity with the NUG. However, Afghan leadership vacancies, which persist at the local, provincial, and national levels, continue to hinder the NUG's progress and the effectiveness of our supporting efforts. Afghan parliamentarians, unfortunately, have often vetoed qualified candidates for extraneous or simply political reasons. An attorney general has yet to be appointed, and the Acting Minister of Defense (MINDEF) continues to serve in spite of the Afghan Parliament's rejection of his candidacy.

While Ghani and Abdullah have developed an effective, trusting, and complementary relationship, their respective supporters often clash. Both leaders must resolve how they will address and placate their constituents while still promoting good governance and the fundamental pillars of their recently published National Security Policy. Fortunately, the very competitive political dynamics that often threaten gridlock in the current Afghan government also promise that, when policies are set, the vast majority of legitimate Afghan political interests will be represented.

Despite myriad challenges, the fundamental partnership between the Coalition and the Afghan Government, to include ASI and ANDSF, remains durable. The difference between the Ghani administration and the previous administration is like night and day. Throughout USFOR-A, we have developed close professional relationships with nearly all senior Afghan leaders, who have welcomed U.S. support and assistance. At every level, Coalition and Afghan leaders continue to

work together in pursuit of shared strategic objectives. Moreover, the Afghan government, civil leaders, and military commanders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the Coalition's efforts. Afghan leaders are genuine in their gratitude for our shared sacrifice and commitment to their nation. I have also seen our Afghan partners develop a sense of ownership and pride in their army and police force. Afghan citizens realize and appreciate that they now have an increasingly credible, professional security apparatus.

President Ghani has asked NATO and the U.S. to provide some flexibility in our planning to account for the fact that his government remains in transition while the threats it faces are diversifying. He has asserted that a sustained Coalition and U.S. presence provides actual and psychological stability to the country as the new government solidifies. He recognizes, moreover, that his new administration will require considerable time and effort to address the challenges of systemic corruption. He has also acknowledged the while the ANDSF are better equipped and trained than ever, much work remains to build their bureaucratic processes and systems as well as improve their leader development.

VI. Conclusion

In closing, the challenges before us are still significant. In an extremely tough fight, the ANDSF continue to hold. They have remained resilient and have not fractured. When properly led, they are a formidable force. Fully supported by a commander-in-chief who supports his forces, embraced by the Afghan people, and backstopped by our military advisors, resources, and enablers, the ANDSF and Afghanistan's future and prospects for an eventual peace still remain promising.

If we were to fail in this worthwhile mission, Afghanistan would once again become a sanctuary for al Qaeda and other terrorists bent on attacking our interests and citizens abroad and at home. Similarly, if a security vacuum were to emerge, other extremist networks such as Daesh would also rapidly expand and sow unrest throughout Central and South Asia.

The hard work and sacrifices of countless Coalition military personnel and civilians over the last 14 years have created the conditions in which the Afghans can and are now taking responsibility for their own security and governance. *The Afghans welcome the opportunity to shape their destiny, but they still desire, need, and deserve our assistance*. Our support, however, cannot and should not be indefinite or unconditional. The Afghans must continue to do their part; if they do, we should continue to exercise strategic patience and sustain our commitment to them.

Working together, we can be successful. A proactive, cooperative Ghani administration and committed ANDSF offer us a unique opportunity to develop further a meaningful strategic relationship in a volatile, but vital area of the world. Our continued efforts to stabilize Afghanistan will benefit the entire region, and in turn, offer greater security for the U.S. homeland and Americans at home and abroad.

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General John F. Campbell, USA
Commander, Resolute Support and United States Forces-Afghanistan

U.S. Army General John F. Campbell assumed duties as the Commander, International Security Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan on August 26, 2014; after serving as the 34th U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff.

The son of a U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant, General Campbell grew up on military bases around the world before attending the United States Military Academy at West Point. He graduated in 1979 with a commission in the Infantry. During his 35 years of service, he has commanded units at every echelon from platoon to division, with duty in Germany, Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan and the United States.

General Campbell served as the Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, KY, and led the division as Combined Joint Task Force 101 during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Additionally he commanded 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division and led the brigade during OEF; commanded 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division (Light); and as a junior officer, he commanded a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha in the 5th Special Forces Group and an Infantry company in the 82nd Airborne Division.

General Campbell served 17 months as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7 at Headquarters, Department of the Army. Other significant assignments include: Executive Officer to the 35th Army Chief of Staff; Deputy Commanding General (Maneuver), 1st Cavalry Division and Multinational Division Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom; Deputy Director for Regional Operations, J-3, The Joint Staff; Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps, and deployed in support of Operation Uphold Democracy; and Professor of Military Science University of California, Davis.

General Campbell holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from West Point and a master's degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College.

General Campbell's awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, two Legions of Merit, three Bronze Star Medals, two Defense Meritorious Service Medals, six Meritorious Service Medals, the Air Medal, the Joint Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Combat Action Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, the Ranger Tab, the Special Forces Tab, and the Army and Joint Staff Badges.

General Campbell and his wife Ann, of 30 years, have two children Jennifer and John Jr.

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING

October 8, 2015

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SANCHEZ

General CAMPBELL. Detailed records are not on hand to completely answer how many people have been recruited and trained over the 14 years in the Afghan Army and Police. Resolute Support staff was able to obtain records that show from 2009 to 2015 a total of 233,966 police were recruited and trained. From 2013 to 2015, a total of 97,051 army forces were recruited and trained. [See page 11.]

General CAMPBELL. Resolute Support does not have the authority to determine what, if any, amount was allegedly stolen by Mr. Karzai or his associates. [See page 13.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

October 8, 2015

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. HUNTER

Mr. HUNTER. General Campbell, I would like your assessment how the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) is impacting U.S. contractors' ability to support your mission. These contractors are a critical part of our total force and it is my understanding that they are being frustrated at every turn in their efforts to operate in compliance with Afghan laws. If these contractors can't perform the jobs we have asked them to do, we increase our odds of mission failure. General, resolving this problem requires a government-to-government solution, will you commit to engaging directly with President Ghani in an effort to remedy this problem?

General CAMPBELL. The BSA subjects contractors to Afghan law and policy. Prior to the BSA, contractors in Afghanistan were not required to obtain visas and business licenses. These requirements are now integral to Afghanistan's status as a sovereign nation. We have processes in place to help resolve most problems as they arise, including dialogue through a joint U.S.-Afghanistan commission established by the BSA. In areas we cannot agree, I will continue to work with Ambassador McKinley and President Ghani for constructive solutions to matters of common concern.