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**ASSESSING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL
SECURITY FORCES**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

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ASSESSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
Washington, DC, Friday, February 12, 2016.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:32 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Vicky Hartzler (chairwoman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. VICKY HARTZLER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRWOMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Mrs. HARTZLER. Welcome. I am delighted to convene this hearing. This is a very important topic and one I know that Ranking Member Speier finds especially significant. I am happy to partner with her in exploring this subject.

I also note that the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Jones, is attending the hearing with us today. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Jones and any other committee members not assigned to this subcommittee be permitted to participate in this hearing with the understanding that all subcommittee members will be recognized for questions prior to those not sitting on the subcommittee.

Without objection, so ordered.

This morning, we continue the committee's oversight dialogue with the Department that began last week with the foundational testimony that General Campbell laid out before the full committee. General Campbell testified about the evolving security situation in Afghanistan, and the policy, strategy, and posture required from our Nation in order to develop, sustain, and support the people and unity government of Afghanistan well into the future.

The goal of our hearing is to learn about and assess the Department's efforts to train, advise, and assist the Afghanistan security forces as we and our coalition partners strive to build a capable and lethal Afghan security force. Afghanistan needs to maintain its sovereignty and protect its population. And for the benefit of Afghanistan, the United States, and international community, it must also deny terrorist safe havens.

In reading the recent Congressional Report submitted by our witnesses and listening to testimony from General Campbell, the subcommittee understands that the Afghan security forces are still in their nascent stages of becoming a professionalized, self-sustaining, and capable institution. But there is still various shortfalls and insufficient capabilities and important functions hindering these

goals. The Afghan forces do not have enough airplanes or helicopters, especially those capable of providing close air support.

While there clearly has been improvement, the ability to collect and disseminate ample intelligence is lacking, as is the ability to maintain and account for equipment. Even the bread-and-butter administrative issues such as paid leave and medical services for Afghan forces need attention.

According to last week's testimony, these challenges are compounded by the fact that 70 percent of the problems facing Afghan security forces result from poor senior leadership within the Afghan Ministries of Defense and the Interior. The Taliban are emboldened. The Haqqani Network continues to sponsor terrorist attacks, and there is a growing Islamic State presence in Afghanistan. Thus, it is essential that we ensure that the Afghan security forces and their civilian leadership are properly positioned on the critical path of success.

However, I am concerned that the President's current budget request for aiding the Afghan forces is \$200 million less than last year's amount. And the administration plans to withdraw U.S. forces down to 5,500 beginning as soon as April of this year. We must not prematurely reduce our commitment to the people of Afghanistan. All one needs to do is to look at the results of premature withdrawal in Iraq to determine what will happen if we repeat near history and prematurely leave Afghanistan.

General Campbell noted last week the devotion of the Afghan people in fighting for their country. This is a positive sign. While the material and support is something the American people can assist with, having the heart and willingness to fight is something the Afghan people must offer. He also suggested last week that the U.S. should begin instituting a 5-year planning cycle for the region instead of the unpredictable, 1-year-at-a-time approach that tends to foster instability, uncertainty, and insecurity.

General Campbell also readily acknowledged that our sustained engagement in Afghanistan will continue through 2024, further strategic partnership agreements signed by the Governments of Afghanistan and the United States. We must also ensure there are appropriate mechanisms and governance structures in place that provide for effective insight in order to oversee, account for, and safeguard the security assistance the U.S. and our international partners are contributing to the Afghans.

We need to limit, as much as possible, opportunities and activities or operations that would encourage or enable individuals to exploit or conduct any fraud, waste, or abuse activities. Activities of this nature can undercut the trust of the American people, impedes morale of our troops, and fuels skepticism that we are not seriously committed to effective and efficient use of our resources.

I look forward to discussing the Department's strategy for addressing the issues I have outlined, and to hear from some who have conducted their own assessment of these activities.

But before I introduce the witnesses, I turn to the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee ranking member for any opening remarks she would wish to make. Representative Speier.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JACKIE SPEIER, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thank you for joining me in seeking this particular hearing.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for appearing today.

Our troops are in Afghanistan performing an important mission, which includes training, advising, and equipping the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces [ANDSF] so that they can sustainably defend themselves against insurgent groups, such as the Taliban. Having said that, I am concerned that our strategy hasn't yield the positive results that would inspire confidence that the Afghan security forces can go it alone any time in the foreseeable future, which leads to the obvious question, Will we ever leave? Can we ever leave? I am not convinced that our existing plan is one that we can take to the American people and assure them that our presence in Afghanistan is worth the cost in money and in lives.

By many accounts, 2015 was the worst year for security instability in Afghanistan since 2001. 2015 was the first year that the Afghan forces took the lead, meaning some level of instability was expected, but it was alarming, nonetheless. And I am not convinced that 2016 will be any better. Is there a clear strategy to support our troops and accomplish our goals? Or are we just moving chess pieces around the board because we are forced to make a move? Underpinning these concerns, I don't get a sense that we are, frankly, addressing the fundamental challenges we face in Afghanistan. Corruption, weak Afghan military leadership, and a tenacious insurgency, which seems to be only getting stronger, are undermining our efforts there, and I would like to know how these issues get resolved in a way that allows us to leave in a timely manner without creating a security vacuum.

Again, the question is, do we ever leave? The American public has a right to know. One thing is for sure, Congress needs high-quality information to understand the situation we are confronting, and effective oversight from inspectors general is essential to our ability to understand these issues.

Some might argue that this is one of the world's greatest producers of sheep. I just want to make sure we are not getting the wool pulled over our eyes.

We need to make sure that the information we are receiving is reliable, that we are asking the right questions, and are able to travel the country to assess the conditions.

Here are some bedrock issues that require far more clarity. We need to know how the Afghan forces' progress is being measured, what we have learned from the challenges of the last year, and how gaps in the ANDSF capabilities will be addressed going forward. Are the Afghan forces on a positive trajectory for meeting and sustaining their capability objectives? For now, it is apparent that our assistance is still needed to build and sustain ministerial institutions to lead the Afghan forces. They also need a capable Air Force and other key enablers, including sound operational planning, logistics, and maintenance systems. Just this week, it was reported that the U.S. military advisers are being sent to southern Afghanistan to give additional support to the Afghan National Army in

that region. In short, the Afghans are not yet ready to secure their own country without assistance from the U.S. and our coalition partners. And if recent experience is any indication, it could be years until they are.

We need to be clear-eyed and better informed about the Afghan forces' abilities, now and in the future, to secure the country and to reliably prevent extremists from, once again, using Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists to threaten the United States. We need to make sure we have realistic goals and a plausible strategy that fits our goals. Above all, we need to make sure we are telling ourselves the full story about our situation so that we could figure out where to go next.

I look forward to all of your testimony and assessments about the developments of the Afghan forces, which, I hope, will provide us a fuller picture of the forces' progress, performance, and capabilities.

And with that, I yield back.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Ms. Speier.

I am pleased to recognize our witnesses today, and I want to thank them for taking the time to be with us.

We have Ms. Christine Abizaid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia from the Office of the Secretary of Defense; Colonel Stephen Michael, Deputy Director for the Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Transregional Threats Coordination Cell from the Office of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Mr. Kent Breedlove, Senior Defense Analyst for Afghanistan with the Defense Intelligence Agency; the Honorable John Sopko of the presidentially appointed Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction; and Mr. Michael Child, Deputy Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations from the Department of Defense.

Thank you, all, again, for being with us today. And we will now begin with our opening statements.

Ms. Abizaid, we will begin with you.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE S. ABIZAID, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA

Ms. ABIZAID. Thank you very much.

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, members of the subcommittee, Congressman Jones, thank you for your steadfast support for our efforts in Afghanistan, and for inviting me to discuss the Department of Defense's efforts to develop the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, the ANDSF.

I am honored to have the opportunity to update you alongside my colleagues from the Joint Staff, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Office of the DOD [Department of Defense] Inspector General [DOD IG], and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction [SIGAR].

All of the witnesses before you today take very seriously our responsibility to ensure that U.S. personnel in Afghanistan have the resources, authorities, and guidance they need to accomplish their mission.

I would also like to acknowledge the 2,236 U.S. service members who lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan, the 20,115 military personnel who have been wounded in that country, and the thousands of families who have also sacrificed for this important mission. Their efforts represent a strategically significant contribution to the security of our homeland.

Now, within the Department of Defense, my office provides overall policy guidance for and oversight of the mission in Afghanistan, including DOD-funded security assistance for the ANDSF. We have daily contacts with key theater and person—key personnel in theater at the Combined Security Transition Assistance Command, Afghanistan, or CSTC-A, which has primary responsibility for the execution of the DOD security assistance mission.

We also work closely with other offices within DOD, the intelligence community, and the Department of State, as we continually assess the status of our efforts in Afghanistan.

My office also supports the efforts of the DOD IG and those of SIGAR, ensuring they have the information and, importantly, the context required to fulfill their mandates to review our efforts.

Now, our priority in Afghanistan remains to prevent it from, once again, becoming a safe haven from which terrorists can plan attacks against the United States homeland, U.S. interests abroad, and our international partners. In pursuit of this objective, we are conducting two complementary missions in Afghanistan: our counterterrorism mission against the remnants of Al Qaeda and other extremist groups that threaten the United States, such as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province; and the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]-led train, advise, and assist mission with the ANDSF, known as Resolute Support.

In October 2015, following a comprehensive review of the mission, President Obama announced that we would retain up to 9,800 U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan throughout most of 2016, drawing down to 5,500 personnel by January 2017. Importantly, this presence will not just be based in Kabul, but also in other locations, including Bagram Air Base, Jalalabad, and Kandahar. This decision provides U.S. forces with sufficient capabilities to continue the development of Afghan ministerial capacities, along with key ANDSF capabilities in aviation, intelligence, special operations, logistics, and maintenance.

This presence will also allow the United States to both pursue counterterrorism targets, and to assist the ANDSF in further developing those critical counterterrorism capabilities that we know are critical to our mutual security interests. The financial support of the United States and the international community is critical to sustaining the ANDSF. Over the last decade, congressional appropriations for the Afghan Security Forces Fund, or ASFF, have been key to the development of Afghan security forces responsible for the security of Afghanistan. As we develop the ANDSF, our support is focused on ensuring that they are able to counter and degrade the Taliban, and establish a baseline level of security that benefits not only the Afghan people, but also the international community.

For more than a year, the mission of providing security for all of Afghanistan has been the sole responsibility of the Afghan Government. While the security situation remains fragile and Afghan

forces will continue to require U.S. and coalition assistance for many years, we have witnessed important progress in their development over the years.

As General Campbell noted in his testimony last week, the ANDSF have demonstrated the ability to conduct effective, large-scale, multi-pillar clearing operations against the country, and when insurgents attempted strategic advances in places like Kunduz, Ghazni, and elsewhere, the ANDSF proved able to rally and recapture those areas.

Significant challenges do remain, and our train, advise, and assist mission is focused on helping the Afghans overcome them. And it is notable that even in the midst of fighting a war, the ANDSF and Afghan security ministries continue to develop their capacities to manage complex tasks such as budgeting, personnel management, and to address key capability gaps in aviation and intelligence.

Now, U.S. taxpayers have been generous and patient with the ANDSF's development, and it is our responsibility to review carefully how best and most efficiently we can assist our Afghan partners. Finding the right balance between the effectiveness and affordability of the ANDSF is a key effort of this Department.

I would like to highlight a few areas where we think progress is being made. First, we continue to focus on the development of the ANDSF's aviation capabilities, including by addressing their critical close air support needs as well as their long-term lift requirements. This is very complex, and represents a significant portion of our investment in the ANDSF now and going forward. Of note, in 2016, the Afghan aerial fires capability will nearly triple compared to last year. Second, we are spending a significant amount on ground forces equipment, which has relatively high sustainment costs. We fielded significant numbers of up-armored Humvees and other vehicles to the ANDSF to improve combat survivability.

Third, Afghan security ministry pay and personnel expenses are a major cost driver, about 20 percent of the roughly \$5 billion total costs for the ANDSF. DOD funds the majority of this cost for the Afghan Government, and we have been working with their security ministries to develop an integrated pay and personnel system that will ensure we can verify that we are paying the right people for the right jobs.

And, finally, corruption is a critical issue, and President Ghani is a great partner in addressing its impacts. He has made procurement reforms to address corruption in MOD [Ministry of Defense] and MOI [Ministry of Interior], and after we helped him identify corruption in fuel contracting processes, he fired those responsible, and now new contracts are in place. He also pulled up responsibility for procurement to a national level authority, demonstrating the seriousness with which he takes these issues. In each of these areas, as well as many others, DOD IG and SIGAR have helpfully informed our efforts to protect taxpayers' money and ensure we can achieve our goals in developing the ANDSF.

In closing, I want to, again, thank the subcommittee for this opportunity to discuss our efforts to develop the ANDSF, and to ensure that we are doing so responsibly.

The Afghan Government will continue to rely on large amounts of financial assistance to the ANDSF until such time as fighting significantly diminishes. We are in the process of working with our allies and partners to extend international funding commitments through at least 2020, and we look forward to working with Congress to ensure effective oversight of these efforts to achieve our national objectives in Afghanistan. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Abizaid can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you.
Colonel Michael.

**STATEMENT OF COL STEPHEN MICHAEL, USA, JOINT STAFF J5
TRANSREGIONAL THREAT COORDINATION CELL**

Colonel MICHAEL. Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, I am grateful for this opportunity to, you know, talk to yourself and this subcommittee and provide you information on the development of the ANDSF. I would ask that you submit my full statement to the record, and I would like to focus on some key and essential points.

The first bit is talking about the Chairman's perspective. So as the Chairman [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] looks at Afghanistan, he looks at it through a couple lenses. First of all, Afghanistan is important to us, because it intersects vital national interests, and the key one, as we highlighted, is ensuring that nothing that happens there, nothing that emanates from Afghanistan, threatens the homeland or threatens our interests. And that is really one of the primary lenses that the Chairman views this mission.

The second, he looks at the ANDSF, the resiliency of the ANDSF in its leadership. Is this—is this force well led? Are they willing, you know, to do what it takes? Are they willing to sacrifice? Do they want this more than we do? Do they understand that they serve the people, that they serve the civilian government? Do they understand that you cannot harm the people, you know, whom you are trying to protect? Do they understand how to lead, you know, how to lead, you know, a force? So the resiliency of the ANDSF, the ability to fight back in adversity, the ability to lead the—you know, at the appropriate level, the ability to make the right decisions, those are all critical to him. So he assesses whether we should be committed to Afghanistan or not. Those are the questions that he consistently asks of us.

The second bit that the Chairman looks at is the viability of the government. Now, the military—the military mission sets the conditions, you know, for everything else. So all we do is set the conditions for the political piece, for the whole of government pieces to work.

So from the Chairman's perspective, understanding whether this government is viable or not, the same thing, are they well led? Are they corrupt? Is this government that the people believe? And those are all the questions that he consistently asks himself to inform his best military advice. And his current assessment is that the ANDSF leadership is resilient. This is a force that we should partner with. This is a force that deserves our support. And, likewise, he sees in President Ghani, you know, partner for the nation. So

as we look at Afghanistan and the region, the Chairman's assessment is a stable Afghanistan meets and supports our interests, and a stable Afghanistan also lends, you know, to stability in the region.

As we look at the ANDSF development, so, really, beginning in 2013, the ANDSF were in the lead, but in 2015 is the first year they were fully responsible for the security. Our strategy is focused on they own the tactical fight, and we are focusing on the things that really guarantee, you know, long-term sustainability, long-term viability to the force. So the institutional level, do they have the ability to man, train, and equip, and field a professional force? Do they have the ability to sustain that force, direct that force in the counterinsurgency fight? The tactical fight, they own. And this has been a pretty tough and contested year.

Probably the biggest difference is they are operating in areas that cater to the areas that the coalition has been operating in. So they are fighting all across the country. And across the board, they are doing well. They are getting their noses bloodied, but they are also—they are also doing a great job in securing Afghanistan. And as we look at it across the board, we can clearly say that most of the major population centers are secured and controlled by the ANDSF, and that there are some rural areas that are either controlled by the Taliban and the insurgency or under the influence of the Taliban and the insurgency. There are a total of 407 districts, and eight of those, about 2 percent we can say is under the insurgents' control, and about 18 of those, or 4 percent, we can say is under the influence of the Taliban.

This year has also seen an increased amount of casualties in the ANDSF. And as we look at the numbers, it is probably about a 26 percent increase. Much of that is felt by the police. And also, as we look at the numbers, most of the increases came in some of their directed multi—multicorps operations, much of it down in the south in their operations in Helmand, and then there was multicorps operations further to the north, in Zabul and Ghazni, then in the east, and also centrally in support of securing the capital in Kabul.

The other impact of their operations is that there is also an increased amount of casualties that the Taliban has taken. By conservative estimates, the conservative estimates are that the Taliban has sustained some of their highest casualties since their high point in 2011, casualties at a rate two times of that of the ANDSF.

Our assessment is they own the tactical fight. Our job is, really, to support and enable them in the tactical fight. But really we have to focus on the pieces that will sustain us long term, their leadership, their ability to man, field, and equip this force and direct this force. The gaps that you highlighted, close air supports, ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance], and things that are essential to keeping this force, you know, viable in the long term.

As we look at—you know, at fighting season—at this current fighting season, as Ms. Abizaid says, we have a dual focus to train, advise, and assist, and separately, our counterterrorism mission. Both of those are tied to our interest. Training this force and making sure they can secure Afghanistan is critical to securing our in-

terests, and then, separately, the counterterrorism mission gives us the ability to do things that the Afghan force has not—doesn't have the capability or the resources to do or things that we see that directly impact our interests.

And as we look at the—at kind of the long term, so the President made the decision about 5,500 footprint going forward, and that decision was informed, you know, by the best military advice of the Chairman, of, you know, the CENTCOM [Central Command] commander, of the commander in the field, and that mission, and the critical thing about that mission is one of the first times the decision was made to where it was really not necessarily tied, you know, to timeframe. It is an enduring mission. It is tied to our enduring partnership in Afghanistan, and to cover and address our strategic interests in the region.

Additionally, as you all know, you know, we are going through the leadership transition in Afghanistan. General Nicholson was confirmed by the Senate, and over the next period of months, he will transition into Afghanistan. And as he said in his testimony, as he comes in, he will do an assessment, and then based on his assessment, he will recommend, you know, his best military advice. And both the outgoing Chairman, General Dempsey, has said he has access and influence in his ability to present his best military advice to the Secretary of Defense and the President and, likewise, General Dempsey has said the same thing. So as we transition leadership, if General Nicholson, you know, assesses any requirements or any adjustments that are needed to be made, he has the latitude to bring that forward and for the Chairman to present that as his best military advice.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Colonel Michael can be found in the Appendix on page 50.]

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you.

Mr. Breedlove.

STATEMENT OF KENT A. BREEDLOVE, SENIOR DEFENSE ANALYST-AFGHANISTAN, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Mr. BREEDLOVE. Thank you. Madam Chair, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to discuss this important topic. My comments this morning will be brief and build upon my written statement and the previous opening statements from my colleagues.

Afghanistan continues to face a diverse collective of threats from insurgent groups to extremist networks, and from terrorist groups to narcocriminal networks. This includes names we are familiar with, like the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and Al Qaeda, as well as the emergence of groups like the Islamic State-Khorasan Province, or IS-K, and Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, or AQIS. This menagerie of insurgents, terrorists, and criminals constitute a resilient and persistent threat to Afghanistan's stability and general stability in the region.

Their activities range from opium trafficking, extortion and kidnapping that fuels the insurgency to high-profile attacks in populated areas and improvised explosive attacks along road networks

that both typically result in high Afghan civilian casualties. Rural areas of Afghanistan and the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions remains a sanctuary for these various groups, and the remote and rugged terrain of these areas only adds to security challenges they pose.

In the first fighting season against an Afghan-led counterinsurgency, Taliban-led insurgents remain resilient. Fighting has been nearly continuous since last February, resulting in increased casualties among both Afghan security forces and insurgents themselves. The Taliban have proven capable of taking rural ground and contesting key terrain in areas such as Helmand and Kunduz provinces while continuing to conduct high-profile attacks in the capital city, Kabul.

These high-profile attacks, in particular, achieve one of the Taliban's main objectives of garnering media attention and creating a sense of insecurity that undercuts perceptions of the Afghan government's ability to provide security.

Following Pakistani military operations in north Waziristan last year, many out-of-area fighters, to include some Al Qaeda leaders, were displaced in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda activities remain focused on survival, regeneration, and planning future attacks. The organization has a sustained presence in Afghanistan, primarily concentrated in the east and northeast of the country.

Other groups involved in Taliban-led insurgency, the Haqqani Network remains the greatest threat to the U.S. coalition and Afghan forces, particularly with the demonstrated capacity and intent to support and launch these high-profile, complex attacks across the country, and in particular, the Kabul region. Haqqani Network leader Siraj Haqqani's elevation as the new deputy for the Taliban leader, Mullah Mansour, has further strengthened the network's role in the insurgency.

Over this past year, the Taliban-led insurgency remained determined, maintained or consolidated its influence in traditionally rural strongholds, dominated the information space, and carried out attacks with an increased frequency compared to last year.

These attacks range from small-scale checkpoint overruns to the temporary capture of Kunduz City, and their efforts forced Afghan security forces into a more reactive, rather than proactive, posture. However, I want to emphasize that the insurgency is not immune to its environment and faces similar challenges that my colleagues highlighted with Afghan forces. The announcement of former leader Mullah Omar's death last July, and the contentious accession of its new leader, Mullah Mansour, led to the emergence of a Taliban opposition faction in late 2015. Infighting between Mansour's supporters and this opposition is ongoing, and the Taliban has faced competition from the emergence of ISIL's [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] regional affiliate in the region, the IS-K.

While the insurgency mounted larger coordinated attacks, they were generally outmatched when engaged with Afghan security forces. They also could not capture or defend key targets they may have captured, and unable to hold some of these key areas of terrain for extended period of time, such as we saw in Kunduz. They also suffered high levels of reported casualties as well as resource shortfalls.

Let me close with a brief outlook to the coming fight this year. We expect the Taliban-led insurgency will try to build on its temporary victory in Kunduz last year by attempting to surround and pressure other population centers, exploit vulnerabilities in Afghan security force posture by conducting mass attacks against vulnerable checkpoints and district centers, primarily in more remote or isolated rural areas, and attempt to impede ground lines of communication ahead of these attacks in these population centers. They will also seek to continue high-profile attacks against government and civilian targets in key populated areas, such as Kabul.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Breedlove can be found in the Appendix on page 60.]

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Mr. Breedlove.

Mr. Sopko.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. SOPKO, SPECIAL INSPECTOR
GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION**

Mr. SOPKO. Thank you very much, and good morning.

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and members of the subcommittee, I am very pleased to be here today to discuss the development of the Afghan National Defense Security Forces, or ANDSF. SIGAR has produced a substantial body of work on the ANDSF over the past 8 years, and has more work in progress.

In addition to audits, inspections, investigations, and special project reports, SIGAR publishes a quarterly report that continues to be the single most comprehensive and detailed source of information on the ANDSF specifically, and on Afghanistan reconstruction in general.

To conduct this work, SIGAR has the largest single, investigative, and auditing presence in Afghanistan with more people on the ground than all other U.S. oversight bodies combined, and enjoys a unique, direct oversight relationship with the Afghan Government, and the personal support of President Ghani and CEO [Chief Executive Officer] Abdullah, who I meet with on a regular basis.

As we all know, Afghanistan is one of the most difficult places in the world in which to work and to do business. The dangers there are very real. And our military, civilians, and contractors—and we can't forget the contractors—have accomplished so much over the past 14-plus years that it is impossible not to be proud and humbled by their efforts and great sacrifice. Nevertheless, based on our work, we see five major challenges that could have a significant effect on whether the United States is able to achieve its strategic objectives in Afghanistan. We believe that the five questions provoked by these challenges should be at the center of yours and other policymakers' discussions.

The first challenge is that the drawdown of troops has imperiled the U.S. ability to monitor and mentor the ANDSF.

U.S. military advisers and their coalition partners now have little or no direct contact with ANDSF units below the Army corps and regional police headquarters level. This provokes the obvious question, is the current level of U.S. military personnel in Afghani-

stan adequate to ensure that the ANDSF do not fail in their mission?

The second question, the reported floor strength of the ANDSF is questionable. The U.S. now has no option but to rely on the Afghans to report on the number of troops and police in the field. Yet, SIGAR audits indicate that recordkeeping in the field by the Afghans is generally poor or nonexistent. We continue to see repeated reports of ghost soldiers, ghost police, as well as ghost teachers, ghost schools, ghost clinics throughout Afghanistan, and these are even reported by the Afghan leadership. This leads to the next question, does the United States have an adequate understanding of the number of ANDSF troops and police?

Thirdly, assessments of the ANDSF's capability and effectiveness have never been reliable, and appear to be getting worse. SIGAR audits show that over time, U.S. capability ratings of Afghan military units have become progressively less demanding and more vague. For example, only a few years ago, the top rating was, quote, unquote, "fully capable," which was later changed to, quote, "effective with ambassadors," and has now declined to, quote, "independent with advisers," the latter being something of a head-scratching oxymoron.

This leads to our third question, does the U.S. have a realistic understanding of the ANDSF's real capabilities?

Fourthly, the Afghan ministries of defense and interior obviously lack the capability to account for on-budget assistance, and this is important. Because since 2010, our government, as well as our allies, have gradually increased, based upon promises at international meetings, the level of direct on-budget funding to the Afghan Government. Yet, there is less U.S. visibility and control over those funds. SIGAR's work has uncovered several cases in which the MOD and MOI were incapable of properly managing on-budget assistance. The question, therefore, is if MOD and MOI lack the capability to manage on-budget assistance, does CSTC-A [Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan] need to resume more control of more assistance to the ANDSF?

Now, lastly, a year after the coalition drawdown, the ANDSF is still far from being sustainable. And remember, that is our goal, sustainability. The Afghan Government simply does not generate enough revenue to sustain the ANDSF, or even the rest of their government now, or at any time in the foreseeable future.

At the same time, SIGAR's work reveals that the accountability for funding is lacking in many areas. This leads us to our last question for you, is the U.S. Government conducting adequate oversight and management of the billions of dollars promised in the future to fund the ANDSF?

Now, in recent testimony just this week before the U.S. Senate, the Director of the National Intelligence predicted that, quote, "Fighting in 2016 will be more intense than 2015, continuing a decade-long trend of deteriorating security," unquote.

He went on to say that the ANDSF will, quote, "probably maintain control of major population centers; however, it will cede control of various rural areas."

He ended by saying, "Without international funding, the ANSF will probably not remain a cohesive or viable force," unquote.

Now, I think his statement highlights the importance of honestly answering these five questions and taking realistic action accordingly.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sopko can be found in the Appendix on page 63.]

Mrs. HARTZLER. All right. Votes are being carried out right now. We have 11 minutes left, so I am feeling like we probably ought to suspend the hearing at this point and go vote, it is supposed to take about 40 minutes, and then come back and reconvene for your testimony and questions, Mr. Child.

So I apologize for the delay, but thank you for understanding. We will look forward to hearing you soon.

Mr. CHILD. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much for your patience and for waiting until we got done with votes. So, Mr. Child, let's hear your testimony.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL S. CHILD, DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. CHILD. Chairwoman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss capabilities gaps in the Afghan National Security Forces. As the Deputy Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations, I manage DOD IG oversight for Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan. And as the chair of the interagency Southwest Asia Joint Planning Group, I help coordinate oversight among the several inspectors general in Afghanistan.

I serve a similar role for Operation Inherent Resolve, the Iraq-Syria counter-ISIL mission. And I describe that coordinating role in more detail in my written statement. Regarding Afghan security forces, my observations are based on our oversight work and recent published reports. We view the challenge of developing sustainable Afghan fighting forces as twofold, balancing the requirement to provide near-term fighting capability against a longer-term need to build the Afghans' capacity to sustain their fighting forces, and building effective national institutions where those have not previously existed.

Shortcomings in Afghan sustainment capacity are a recurrent theme in our oversight work. I would like to highlight three examples: supply and maintenance, property accountability, and key commodities. As the supply and maintenance for many years of Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. and NATO partners emphasized rapidly growing the army and police forces. And they robustly supported them in combat operations, and, therefore, pushed supplies to Afghan units rather than requiring units to pull supplies based on need and validated requirements. The result is, the Afghans have little experience with demand-driven support systems.

A recent DOD IG assessment found that the Afghan National Army was unable to properly forecast their material requirements.

Regarding property accountability, we reported in April of 2015 that the Ministries of Defense and Interior did not have effective controls to manage the 95,000 vehicles procured by the U.S. and coalition partners. The long-term solution to equipment readiness and maintenance should be the implementation of the Afghan national maintenance strategy. This strategy will place contractors at 23 key locations to maintain equipment and train the Afghans to conduct their own maintenance. The goal is to achieve full Afghan responsibility for maintenance by 2021.

Regarding key commodities, our oversight has found significant issues in the management of fuel and ammunition. In April 2015, we found a lack of adequate internal controls to manage both fuel and ammunition. Last month, we reported deficiencies in controls involving fuel procured for the Interior Ministry. We found that coalition advisers had no reasonable assurance that all U.S.-funded fuel, valued at \$438 million, was used for its intended purpose.

We will conduct a similar audit of fuel procurement for the Ministry of Defense later this year. Future DOD IG work in 2016 will include assessments of U.S. efforts to build an independent Afghan special forces and intelligence capability. We will soon evaluate the progress of U.S. Special Operation Forces in training, advising, and assisting the Afghan special forces.

And this month, we will send a team of intelligence specialists to assess progress in developing effective Afghan intelligence operations. Looking forward, my office is engaged in a review of current programs and operations to identify future oversight work as the lead inspector general for Operation Freedom's Sentinel. As you may recall, Congress created the lead IG (Inspector General) for Overseas Contingency Operations in the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. The IGs of the Department of Defense, Department of State, and United States Agency for International Development, execute the lead IG mandate which was enacted to provide improved, coordinated, whole-of-government oversight in overseas contingency operations. We appreciate the support of this committee, subcommittee as we discharge our oversight responsibilities. And I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Child can be found in the Appendix on page 80.]

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Mr. Child. I will start the questions. Ms. Abizaid, I was wondering, what is the rationale for beginning the drawdown before the upcoming summer fighting season, and before a new U.S. administration has an opportunity to conduct its own assessment of the mission and needed troop levels?

Ms. ABIZAID. So my understanding of the drawdown timeline is not that it will begin in the summer of 2016. The President has directed that General Campbell try and keep at the 9,800 level through as much as 2016 as possible so we can do what we can in both our train, advise, and assist mission and our CT [counterterrorism] mission to get the most out of our relationship with the Afghans as they improve throughout fighting season 2016. The rationale for the drawdown to the 5,500 is about how we set ourselves up for a future, sustainable presence in the country at key locations outside of Kabul.

The fact that we will maintain facilities in Jalalabad, in Kandahar, in Bagram, are key differences between the plan that was originally approved and the one that President Obama revised, that, I think, provide us the kind of flexibility we need to adjust the mission accordingly.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Very good. Thank you. Colonel Michael, Afghan security forces have capability gaps, as we have heard you testify, in helicopter/airplane capabilities. These include the essential foundational activities and missions that professional militaries need in order to be efficient, effective, and lethal. So what limiting factors are precluding the ANDSF from sufficiently and effectively establishing these capabilities?

Colonel MICHAEL. Ma'am, I wouldn't say that there's anything specifically that's limiting them. To build this capability just takes time. First is the time to get the material and then time in the training process. So we look specifically at the CAS [close air support], we're fielding the A-29s. There are four platforms that are already in country. There is four more that will be there by April. And then there is a total of six—correction, eight more that will show up after that.

So part of it is procuring the equipment on time. And then the other part is training that capability. As you know, developing pilots, you know, is something that takes, you know, it takes a lot of specificity and time.

Mrs. HARTZLER. How will the development of these capabilities be affected by the upcoming drawdown to 5,500 U.S. troops?

Colonel MICHAEL. Ma'am, as we—the 5,500 also has the capacity to maintain train, advise, and assist for the Afghan Air Force. And, in addition, we are also specifically focused on train, advise, and assist to the Afghan special security forces. So both of those components will maintain train, advise, and assist oversight.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Okay. Mr. Breedlove, in your professional opinion, how do you believe the Afghan Taliban would react if the U.S. and coalition forces were able to target the Afghan Taliban directly as part of the counterterrorism mission, and outside the commander's current ability in only extremis-type situations?

Mr. BREEDLOVE. I think the best way I would phrase it is, we saw—we have seen how the insurgents, and particularly the Taliban, do react when we were under the surge, when we had U.S. and coalition forces in the fight, backed up by their own air support, as you know. And we saw adjustments in how they approached their tactics. What your specific questions, I don't think we would see much of a change as far as the fight on the ground. I think the fighters on the ground will adjust. They are an adaptable enemy. They will adjust to their environment, as we saw this year, same as we saw them adjust when U.S. combat forces were much larger and much more aggressive than previous years. But it doesn't stop them from fighting.

So at best, we may see hesitation among some operations. We may see changes in how they maneuver. But I think at a tactical level, that would be the most we would expect to see. At a senior level, I don't think it would have much of an impact. Most of the senior leaders are not in the country anyways.

Mrs. HARTZLER. So would direct targeting bring the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table quicker and provide additional breathing room to the ANDSF and the Afghan unity government?

Mr. BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, in my opinion, I think that would be a—it could be a factor, one of many tools that could be applied, but in and of itself, I don't think that's enough. It would have to be one of many tools to help change their belief that they're still, they still have the time to win this fight.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Okay. Thank you. And Mr. Sopko and Mr. Child, in your professional opinions, has the Department of Defense made adequate progress in establishing sufficient oversight and accountability mechanisms within its command and governance architectures to minimize opportunities, or identify quickly, if they occur, fraud, waste, and abuse activities that have plagued certain aspects of the Department's mission execution over the recent years?

Mr. SOPKO. Very briefly, no. And part of it is because they don't have the resources for doing so. I think I noted in my longer statement, which I offer to be made part of the record, that we have even noted some of the task forces set up to fight and combat corruption have had to be abolished because there are no resources. So I would say no.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Okay. Mr. Child.

Mr. CHILD. Ma'am, I believe, from our oversight, that they have established systems. The challenge is properly and fully implementing the systems. And I would offer three examples: They have begun the process of moving the Afghans to electronic pay and information system; they have—the Department improved the process for identifying, training the proper, both military and civilian advisers to conduct the train, advise, and assist; and they have increased the enforcement of the commitment letters which apply conditionality to the funds that have been applied.

But, again, I would not say that they have adequately progressed in that. This is part of a process. And I think there are also complicating factors it is real important to consider. You have got illiteracy, endemic corruption. You have got the political tribal decisions for selecting commanders. General Campbell said that 70 percent of the problems that he saw was based on leadership. Both selecting and being able to relieve commanders and senior leaders is too often based on these other factors rather than competency. And I think for understandable reasons, we don't have the stability of advisers because the tours are 9 months to a year, it is very difficult to have that kind of relationship over time. Instead, the contractor force is really the institutional memory in Afghanistan. And that is a challenge.

And, finally, as Mr. Sopko very properly pointed out, the insecurity of Afghanistan to have both the Department and oversight agencies check, kick the tires, be downrange properly at the proper level to check, we really are dependent on the Afghans and their reporting. So without implementing those types of systems where we can better detect that the money is being properly used, there is not adequate progress. But I do believe the systems that have been identified and properly put in place will provide that kind of progress. Thank you.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you. Ranking Member Speier, questions?

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Chair, thank you. I want to apologize to all of the witnesses. Many of the members who were here earlier wanted to be able to stay. But because this is a getaway day, people's schedules are such that they have to make planes. I think this hearing is so important that it should be held as a full committee hearing.

We are spending so much money in Afghanistan. And from the testimony we have heard today, there is virtually no accountability. But let's get to a couple of the points that you have made. Colonel Michael, you said in your statement significant, long-term capability gaps remain in the areas of ANDSF leadership, rotary-wing aviation, combined arms operation, intelligence collection and dissemination, close air support, and maintenance. So that is a pretty significant indictment. If it is not improved in 2016, what are you going to do differently? Or what are you going to recommend that be done differently.

Colonel MICHAEL. Ma'am, the key thing to highlight is that it is a process. So we talk about, you know, there is capability gaps in leadership. But it is something that is being developed, you know, developed over time, both at the tactical level and the corps level. The main thing to reinforce, you know, we have really been building this force since 2009. Initially, when we started off, this was an American fight. We were in the lead. We were pulling—

Ms. SPEIER. I know all of that.

Colonel Michael. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. SPEIER. The question is, though, we have been there for a very long time now. At some point, if we don't put conditions on money coming in, the spigot always being turned on and never being turned off, then we are not going to get the kind of results we are looking for. And if you don't develop a plan and specific expectations that are going to take place in 2016, or else funds aren't going to be available in 2017, we will be there indefinitely with no success and with the American people literally pulling out their hair saying what are we doing here? That is more rhetorical than anything else. But I don't think your answer, frankly, is adequate. Let me ask all of the others of you: If 2016 is as bad as 2015, what would you recommend be done differently?

Ms. ABIZAID. Ma'am, first, thanks for the question. I would start by saying, you know, the capability gaps that you have identified, that we have all identified in our statements, are those capability gaps that are among the most sophisticated aspects of the force that we are still trying to build. We have always planned for those to be the focus of the long-term relationship with the Afghan Government and the ANDSF. And the President's decision to maintain a presence at 5,500 will allow us to really focus on especially the aviation, the special operations, the intel development.

So that is an investment that we think is really important for the long-term future of not only the ANDSF, but the partnership between the United States and the Afghan Government on key CT relevant capabilities in that force.

Ms. SPEIER. Do you anticipate there will be at least 5,000 troops in Afghanistan indefinitely?

Ms. ABIZAID. I wouldn't say indefinitely. I think that the plan is to ensure that they progress. And as they progress, we can have

more and more confidence in reducing our own troop level, which is part of how we got to the drawdown that we are currently planning on now. The 30,000 to 9,800 did assume that the Afghans could assume full responsibility for the security environment in 2015. And despite very real challenges that we mostly anticipated, they have performed as expected.

Now, the drawdown to 5,500 does anticipate that capability gaps will remain, but that we are going to be able to invest to make up those gaps over time. I don't have a good estimate for how much time that will take. But I do not think it is an indefinite investment.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Sopko, what do you think we should do differently in 2017 if 2016 is as bad as 2015?

Mr. SOPKO. Well, I think 2016 will be as bad as 2015. I support the judgment of the head of National Intelligence who predicted that. I would say if things look bad, and I think they do, I would have four suggestions to you. Number one, fully support and ensure that General Nicholson actually has the resources and the time to conduct that 90-day assessment, a true 90-day assessment of what is going on and what his needs are. And bring him back and have him explain to this committee and other committees as to what those needs are. He is the person who is going to be on the ground. He has got to get out there with his people and see what is going on.

The second thing is I think this Congress should require USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] and DOD and the Department of State to actually rate and rack and stack their programs as to what succeeded, what hasn't, and what do you want to get rid of in light of we have a fiscal crisis in the government. Why are we paying for some programs that make no sense anymore?

They have never really done that. You know, I sent a letter to the head of AID, State Department, and the Secretary of Defense after I was on the job for 1 year, that is 3 years ago, and asked them to rack and stack all of their programs; at a minimum, just give me some of your success stories and why. And they weren't able to do it. All I got back was, you know, balloons and kites and happy talk.

You know, we are helping the Afghan military. Well, great. What program helped the Afghan military? If you have an unlimited budget, you can fund everything, but if you have a limited budget, limited time, and limited security, which programs are the most important programs? I would think that is something Congress needs to do. And going into 2016, that is what you really need to do. And they have to come up with real measurements of success.

Right now, the measurement of success seems to be do you spend the appropriations? I am not seeing real measurements of success in the work I do not only with DOD, but with AID and State. And I think that is something Congress needs to hold somebody's feet to the fire on.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Child.

Mr. CHILD. Ma'am, I can't argue what Mr. Sopko has said, I think particularly in terms of the agencies. But I do believe it is beyond my expertise as an oversight organization to address the

actual policy and the prescriptions. When policy is decided and objectives are declared, I see it as our job as oversight to see how that is being implemented. But the idea of providing General Nicholson the opportunity to come back and to—after his assessment, to make clear what he thinks he needs to properly do his job, I think that is a proper way forward. And, likewise, I think it is very important that the agencies, as they discharge their responsibilities, they will assess what works. And they may then change their policy. When they do, I think it is my job, representing the oversight community, to see how that is being implemented. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. So there were two issues that were brought up this morning, one was ghost troops and fuel, that I would think we should be able to get our handle on; \$438 million being spent on U.S. fuel to Afghanistan. And, Mr. Child, you testified that there really is no accountability. Is this fuel being sold on the black market? Is that a potential effect of what is going on?

Mr. CHILD. Ma'am, to be precise, we found that there was no reasonable assurance that all of the fuel was being used for its proper purpose. We couldn't pin down more precisely. And as to the ghost soldiers, we have a direct funding audit that, in part, concerns the pay system. And that will address some portion of the concern that we are paying for troops that are not actually there.

Ms. SPEIER. So these troops that could be in provinces that we don't have the ability because it is so unsafe to send personnel to audit would suggest that we really have no way of knowing whether these troops exist or don't exist and whether they are functioning as members of the Afghan armed services, correct?

Mr. CHILD. It is, it is certainly the fact that we can't properly assess. They clearly have troops in the roll, or on the rolls, because it has been a tough fighting year, and they were able to hold their own. So, in fact, they do have, the question is how many others are we paying for that are not on the rolls. And that is in part what the pay systems are designed to address. And as I was saying, I believe we have established, the Department has established that type of mechanism to address, but it hasn't been fully implemented.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Sopko is shaking his head.

Mr. SOPKO. Well, I mean, I think the, I think my colleague mentioned it, we have got a program out there. We have got a contract we have let. But it hasn't been implemented. I mean, we even tried, and I mentioned it in my statement, to ping the system, which is supposed to have all this great data now, and they couldn't give us any answers from it. So that is the big problem.

The ultimate thing is we are relying still on the Afghans who have an incentive to lie because they can collect the money to fill in the data cells. We don't have the people on the ground. Remember, we are at the level of the corps. We are not at the level of the brigade or the kandak or the Tooley. We have no visibility. So at the corps level, it may look good. I mean, that is like measuring our effectiveness by going over to the Pentagon or going over to Ms. Abizaid's office and understanding what is going on in Afghanistan. You have got to have people out on the ground. And that is the inherent problem with this.

I don't care how many IT [information technology] systems you put into place, if the data going in is garbage in, it is garbage out. And that is what we are seeing, particularly in a country, in Afghanistan, where there is an incentive. My concern is we saw in Iraq where there were paper divisions. And, apparently, if you listen to the reporting coming out of Helmand by Afghan officials, there were paper units in Helmand which may explain what the problem is. My concern is how many of those units are actually just paper units?

Ms. SPEIER. And we are paying for the salaries of each and every Afghan soldier. Is that correct?

Mr. SOPKO. We and our allies, yes. We are paying the bulk of it.

Ms. SPEIER. And the police force as well?

Mr. SOPKO. That is correct.

Ms. SPEIER. I have many more questions but I will yield back. Thank you.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Sure. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ma'am, gentlemen, thank you for your service. Colonel Michael, I know we are discussing Afghanistan today. But King Abdullah was here 1 month ago today and discussed that whole region of the world, if you will, including Libya and the Saudi and Iran situation. You are in charge of Pakistan as well as Afghanistan and the transregional threat. How do you assess the region as a whole right now? The threat level?

Colonel MICHAEL. I think if you look regionally, the threat level is fairly high. That is one of the reasons we are there. We are there to make sure that we set conditions so that what is happening there doesn't emanate and touch here. So from that perspective, the fact that we are present, you know, reinforces the threat level is high. As we look at IS-KP [Islamic State-Khorasan Province], and you heard Mr. Breedlove's assessment, and General Campbell himself said IS-KP was operationally emergent. And we have the, and he has the targeting authority to target them. And primarily looking at IS-KP from a global perspective, given the fact that we are fighting the core in Iraq and Syria, we are making sure we have the ability to engage and defeat them wherever, wherever they show up.

Mr. SCOTT. And today we are talking about an individual country, but it is a regional issue to me. And when you look across that whole spectrum, Libya, from what I understand, is in worse shape than Syria. It is just that there is not much reporting there because the press can't get in there. King Abdullah was pretty blunt with his statement that the volatility, I am paraphrasing a little bit, in that part of the world cannot be overexaggerated, and that the whole region is very close to, potentially, an all-out war. And that is very concerning to me. And we need to make sure that we keep our friends as strong as they can possibly be in that whole region, I would think, to hopefully bring about some stability.

Mr. Sopko and Mr. Child, this may be more of a statement than a question, but we talk a lot about individual things, but it seems we waste a lot of money on not just the process that seems to be broken, but a procurement system that seems to be broken. Colonel Michael mentioned earlier the A-29 program. I am somewhat familiar with that as they are trained at Moody Air Force Base in

my district. And if things had gone as planned, they would be in country right now. Is that correct? And so where we sit today, is that they should be there 3 years from now.

Ms. ABIZAD. Sir, there is four A-29s in country. The rest will wait until 2018 to be fully—

Mr. SCOTT. I am talking about the completion of the system, of the whole, they should all be there right now?

Ms. ABIZAD. Yes. Contract delays did delay the arrival of the A-29s.

Mr. SCOTT. And it will take 3 years from now, because of those contract delays, to get the rest of the pilots trained and the units actually in country so they can help carry out the fight. So that delay came as a result of a lawsuit from Beechcraft Defense, if I am not mistaken. Is that correct?

Mr. SOPKO. I think that is my understanding. It was a lawsuit. I believe that was the company.

Mr. SCOTT. In your—in the written statement, it names them in the footnotes. Is it possible to calculate how much that lawsuit cost us, cost the United States by delaying that program for 3 years?

Mr. SOPKO. You know, I would have to check on that. I assume there are some costs involved. But I really don't know. We could take a look at that if you would like us to, sir.

Mr. SCOTT. My point is the situation on the ground may be very different and may be very much more in our favor if we had been able to get the equipment in that our soldiers and our friends need to carry out the fight. And this isn't just with this situation. It is with situations all across the DOD where contractors are suing us. And those lawsuits are preventing us from getting the men and women that are out there carrying out the fight the equipment that they need. And Colonel Michael, if you had the A-29 that you are supposed to have today, would it change the fight?

Colonel MICHAEL. Sir, absolutely. The maneuver operations on the ground that the ANDSF is doing is greatly enhanced by close air support.

Mr. SCOTT. Is it possible that what happened on September 28 may have had a different outcome if we had been able to provide that air support?

Colonel MICHAEL. Sir, I couldn't necessarily, you know, guarantee the outcome. But the bottom line is that the maneuver operations on the ground is much better and enhanced with proper close air support.

Mr. SCOTT. So these lawsuits that are delaying our ability to carry out the mission are costing us more than the legal cost of the suit is my point. And it is costing us in lives as well.

One last question that I have, if I may, Madam Chair, before I turn it back over, when we pull down from approximately 10,000 troops to 5,500 or 6,000, whatever it may be, when we pull our soldiers out, are we, how many of those men and women are being replaced with contractors?

Colonel MICHAEL. Sir, it is not a one-for-one exchange. I think right now the level of contractors are almost about the same. I think when we go down to 5,500, there will probably be an increased number of contractors. But if you look at what they are

doing, they are not necessarily, you know, a lot of it is support capability.

Mr. SCOTT. Absolutely.

Colonel MICHAEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. SCOTT. Maintenance on aircraft, maintenance on helicopters. And my point is, it seems to me that we have this number that we say well, we are going to pull this down because we have this perception that as long as we have fewer men and women in uniform in the country, that we are not spending as much, and that we are not engaged as much. But when we pull down a maintenance unit, for example, and we turn around and we send contractors back in to do that exact same maintenance, and we pay those contractors three or four times as much as we are paying U.S. service personnel, we are not, we are not being honest, really, about the cost of things. And I would ask Mr. Sopko, is it possible to calculate how much more, I would think it would be, we are spending on contractors as we draw down than we were spending on U.S. troops?

Mr. SOPKO. We have not done that type of assessment. But I am certain we could test that. We could take a specific contract or a specific program that was run by the military and then compare the cost. That is something we could do. We have not done it.

Mr. SCOTT. If I could make one final point. Colonel, in talking with soldiers, it creates a problem when you have a United States soldier who is making a couple of thousand dollars a month sitting right next to a contractor who is making \$10,000 a month doing the exact same job. And the soldiers that I talk to, when you get to the point that you have enough trust that we are honest with each other, that creates some strife in an operation, because our soldiers are not treated as well as the contractors are if we are honest about it. And so that is more of a point than a question, but something that I am very concerned about and making sure that we take care of our soldiers.

Mrs. HARTZLER. That is very good point, gentlemen. Now, Ms. Speier, have some more questions?

Ms. SPEIER. I do. I think in the last round, Ms. Abizaid, you wanted to say something. Because I thought my time should be shifted to someone else, I did not give you the opportunity to speak. So if you have a comment on that last round?

Ms. ABIZAID. Sure. I appreciate the opportunity to come back to it. First of all, I think that the, the ghost soldiers problem, the problem with accountability for Afghan soldiers that we are paying for is a real problem and one that, you know, we worked closely with Mr. Child, Mr. Sopko to understand. We also worked closely with them to develop a comprehensive solution to address it. And while it is not fully in place yet, we are working toward an integrated pay and personnel system that will mitigate opportunities for corruption in the system.

I think it is a really important initiative that we are putting in place. It is one that we are focused on. And it has taken a while to develop, given the unique terrain that is Afghanistan. But it is something that we are absolutely focused on and think is an important aspect of the mission. In terms of what the difference between fighting season 2015 and fighting season 2016 and how we are try-

ing to account for those, I do want to assure you that General Campbell, in speaking with the Secretary of Defense, with the National Security interagency, has communicated the work that he is doing already to evaluate fighting season 2015, and what changes not only the Afghan National Security Forces need to make to improve for fighting season 2016, but that we need to make in our train, advise, assist mission.

So it is a clear focus that we are not sort of blindly following the template that we started with in fighting season 2015. We are actually looking to improve upon and progress in the development of the ANDSF, so we do set ourselves up for success in fighting season 2016 and set the conditions for the long-term mission in Afghanistan. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. So as it relates to ghost troops, can we be competent that by the end of 2016, there will be a system in place that will have retina detection or something so that we will have a confident understanding of how many troops the Afghan military service has?

Ms. ABIZAID. We will certainly have greater confidence. We are instituting a biometric ID [identification] card system and issuing those to all MOD and Afghanistan National Army elements.

Ms. SPEIER. So when will they all be distributed?

Ms. ABIZAID. I believe by the middle of this year. The integrated pay and personnel system will be fully implemented I believe for the MOI in the middle of this year as well. And by early 2017, we will be transitioning it to the MOD as well.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you. Mr. Breedlove, in terms of our intelligence capability there, we were surprised with the death of Mullah Omar, and didn't know that he had been dead for some time. Is that correct?

Mr. BREEDLOVE. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. SPEIER. So with that knowledge, what can you tell us about what we need to do to have better intelligence?

Mr. BREEDLOVE. Well, I think it is illustrative on that particular account that we need to keep in mind that somebody like Mullah Omar was basically in self-exile. He wasn't out there. He had always been that way. So trying to get at it from an intelligence perspective, that is going to be, if somebody wants to stay hidden, and he is surrounded by people that want to stay hidden, and he doesn't communicate, and he doesn't move, it makes it very difficult to try to find that needle in that haystack. And I think that was illustrative of this particular situation, as well as a conspiracy to perpetuate the fact that he was alive.

Ms. SPEIER. I guess my question, though, is, are you comfortable that we have enough resources being extended on intelligence in the region, particularly in Afghanistan?

Mr. BREEDLOVE. I am. It is never perfect. It is never enough. You are asking an intelligence professional if we have enough information. We can never have enough information. We are always going to want more information. Our gaps are always large. In this particular case, they have grown since we have reduced our footprint. But I think we are adequate to get after what we need to do. And speaking for my agency, I think we are sufficient in order to do our mission set, which is support the warfighter in theater.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay. Mr. Sopko, is it true that we just built a new headquarters facility for the Ministry of Defense?

Mr. SOPKO. That is correct.

Ms. SPEIER. What was the cost of that facility?

Mr. SOPKO. I think the project cost was \$155 million. It was \$100 million over budget, and completed 5 years late.

Ms. SPEIER. Who is the contractor on that?

Mr. SOPKO. I don't have that data handy. But I will have to get back to you.

Ms. SPEIER. \$100 million over budget?

Mr. SOPKO. That is correct.

Ms. SPEIER. And who was watching the store on that one?

Mr. SOPKO. Well, I think it was the, and I have to double-check, maybe Ms. Abizaid would know who was responsible. It was either an Air Force contract or the Corps of Engineers, I don't know who in the military—

Ms. SPEIER. Could you get back to us on that?

Mr. SOPKO. Oh, absolutely. Happy to do that.

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

Ms. SPEIER. The maintenance cost, is that going to be able to be supported?

Mr. SOPKO. Well, I wouldn't know since the Afghan national, I mean, the Afghan Government can't pay for their military, I don't know if they can pay for the O&M [operation and maintenance] costs which are about \$2.6, \$3 million a year to maintain that building. That is our best estimate.

Ms. SPEIER. So if they don't have the money to maintain that building, the building will be a white elephant in short order?

Mr. SOPKO. Well, we will pay for it, like we are paying for most of the other O&M.

Ms. SPEIER. How about the Ministry of Interior, did we just build them a new facility?

Mr. SOPKO. We are in the process of building them a brand new facility which I visited. And that should be completed soon, I think at the cost of about \$100 million.

Ms. SPEIER. And is that on budget?

Mr. SOPKO. No. But I don't have those exact figures since it is not finished.

Ms. SPEIER. So the ministries, the ministers want lavish facilities. And so we say, okay. And we build them. Do we condition the construction of these buildings on any accountability?

Mr. SOPKO. Not that I know of. And that is an issue. I remember having a lengthy conversation with General Semonite who ran CSTC-A, who said that prior to 2013, we did not have any conditionality on the money that CSTC-A was spending or giving to GIROA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. So I think basically 2013 and then he was a big advocate of conditionality. But I think these buildings, the construction started before he got there.

Ms. SPEIER. So moving forward, would you recommend that there be conditionality on the construction of any palace for—

Mr. SOPKO. I agree fully with that. And, again, this is something I have had long conversations with General Semonite who used to

run CSTC-A, he has now been replaced. And it was the whole issue he had, and I thought it was very good, called smart conditionality. You can't stop giving the Afghan National Security Forces guns or bullets because they will lose the war. But identify the shiny objects that the local official wants, and then focus on that as your condition. That was General Semonite's approach to smart conditionality. And I think it is something we should continue following.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay. Mr. Chairman, I don't know if you intend to do another round. I don't want to continue to ask questions without giving you the opportunity to—

Mr. SCOTT [presiding.] I have a couple brief ones, but I don't have anything long. I will be happy to go briefly and then turn it back over to you. And then we will close out.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Sopko, Mr. Child, this may be more along the lines of suggestions that you could make. But in most vehicles in America that you buy now, you can call the manufacturers, if the vehicle is stolen, and they can tell you exactly where it is. And they can actually shut the vehicle down so that it can be recovered. It seems to me that we could use the same types of technology in some of our military equipment, that if the equipment ends up in the hands of somebody we don't want to have it, that we can stop that equipment from being used against us with stuff that we have in every GM or Ford vehicle in the country right now.

Just a suggestion from someone it bothers greatly to see our enemies riding around in vehicles that the United States purchased. We are going to be pulling from 9,800 down to 5,500 uniformed personnel over the next 10½ months. That is the current plan. Is that correct?

Colonel MICHAEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. SCOTT. That is approximately 50 percent of the men and women that we have in uniform. I want to go back to the issue of the contractors. How many contractors do we intend to hire over the next 11 months to replace the work that our men and women in uniform are performing? And will those contractors be predominantly from the United States? Or will they be local?

Colonel MICHAEL. Sir, we don't have an exact number of contractors we are looking to hire. And it is not, you know, to replace, you know, the 5,500 is really designed to accomplish exactly what we need from our military. So as we draw down, we are not just increasing contractors to replace the fact that we have drawn down the military. The assessment is as we go forward, we need to focus on a regional counterterrorism platform, as you talked about, a regional threat. It has regional, is based out of Kabul in the south, in the east. And that gives us the capability to surge capacity if we need to. And it gives us the capability to address any threats.

In addition, it focuses advise and assist at the ministerial level and at the Afghan security institutions, that focuses advise and assist at the critical capabilities that we think we need long-term CAS, the Afghan Air Force, and then also the Afghan special security forces.

So the number of military is, the assessment is that is exactly what we need. Obviously, we will also be able to leverage contrac-

tors. But the intent was not to draw down military and just to replace them with contractors, the number of military's assessment of what we think we will need.

Mr. SCOTT. But you understand the point. I mean, soldiers that I talk with were like, you know, they say we are drawing down, we are losing uniform personnel. But in the end, we are putting other people in there doing the exact same job. And contractors aren't necessarily carrying rifles. Many of them are operating on the equipment, maintenance, and other things. But I think the soldiers who are flying the aircraft prefer to have the men and women that are taking care of them in the United States. And I would point out on the A-29 program, it is not just training the pilots. When they come to the United States, they bring the maintenance people as well. And so we are sending the whole crew back to take care of that system. I hope we get it to you sooner rather than later. I don't have any further questions. I will turn it back over to Ms. Speier if she has any.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Scott. One of the issues that many of you have raised, that General Campbell raised, was the fact that the ANDSF have fallen short in terms of their aviation capabilities. Part of it was referenced by Mr. Scott in terms of getting the actual platforms there. But it appears that part of the problem is that you are dealing with a population that, for the most part, is illiterate.

So I would like your thoughts on whether or not we are bringing in equipment that is too sophisticated for the population that we are trying to train in terms of the air force to be able to commandeer these aircraft.

Ms. ABIZAID. Thanks for the question, ma'am. Human capital shortages are significant when we talk about the aviation capability that the Afghan Air Force needs. And it is one of the drivers as we look at how we should build a force that the Afghan Government can actually afford. We do focus literacy training, we do focus technical training on those high-end skills that are associated with aviation maintenance, that are associated with the piloting of the aircraft to the key population that we think is going to be necessary for the Afghans to be able to operate the air force that they need. But in terms of the sophistication of the system, I think what we are trying to do is establish a contracted logistics support system that both incorporates, you know, contracted maintenance that we, the United States military, often uses for our own sophisticated systems; but also increases the training of Afghans to be able to increasingly do the maintenance on their own, so it becomes a more organic capability. We are aware, again, of those human capital shortages. And that is a key driving factor in how we balance and plan for the air force that is actually absorbable.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Sopko.

Mr. SOPKO. Congresswoman, I think you are raising a really critical point. And it goes beyond just literacy. It goes back to the sufficiency of our resources that General Campbell and General Nicholson have. Due to a lack of data, we do not know right now how many ANDSF personnel are literate. Our best estimate is it is less than 30 percent. And why? Because even though we spent \$200 million in literacy training, CSTC-A does not have the ability because they don't have the resources to measure the effectiveness of

the literacy program and determine the extent to which overall literacy in ANDSF has improved. Remember, we transitioned the literacy program to the Afghans. And once we did that, we lost all visibility. So we don't know how many people have been trained, but, more importantly, how many of those soldiers and police we trained are still in the military.

And we make, as you know, our quarterly report is the largest data call that goes out every year to the U.S. Government, or every quarter, on what is going on. And when we ask these questions, we are not getting answers anymore because CSTC-A, because our resources in the field are not there to answer them.

So you are on to a very important point that goes beyond just the literacy issue. It goes to the heart of the issue and that is, do we have adequate resources to understand the capabilities of the ANDSF?

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. Anyone else want to comment on that? All right. Compared to 2 years ago, I think the threat to our personnel who are serving in Afghanistan has grown. And I am particularly concerned about our embassy and the inability of our personnel to move around the city of Kabul or anywhere else. So my first question is, do you think that the danger there has increased? And what, if anything, can we do to mitigate those concerns?

Ms. ABIZAID. So since the drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces, the security environment in Kabul I think in general has decreased. Some of that is the withdrawal also came with it a lack of capital going into the city. And so some of the security environment is influenced not by the insurgent threat, but sort of the economic instability and, you know, increased threats of kidnappings and other things in country. So no question, the security environment is diminished in Kabul. There are different statistics that indicate that the high profile attacks are actually down overall from last year to this year. But, you know, what we are very focused on, from the DOD perspective, but I think it also affects State, is taking the precautionary measures to ensure that those that are serving in Afghanistan on our behalf are adequately protected.

There are different costs associated with ground movements that we can defray by doing more air movements. And so that is one of the calculations that we make in terms of how much access and how much freedom of movement we ask those personnel that are serving in country to sort of take when they are moving around the city. But no question, it is a difficult security environment and one that we are very focused, as a first order of business, on ensuring the force protection of those that are serving there.

Ms. SPEIER. Colonel Michael, are people in the embassy moving outside the embassy on foot at all?

Colonel MICHAEL. Primarily when they move, it is by vehicles. There are a couple spots close to the embassy where people walk. But for the most part, if you are moving out of the embassy or you are moving out of any military compound, it is by vehicles.

Ms. SPEIER. Is it by vehicles?

Colonel MICHAEL. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. ABIZAID. Ma'am, it is both vehicles and air movements, though the air movements have increased over the last year.

Ms. SPEIER. So the question becomes, what can they do if they are really isolated within the embassy compound? And are we placing them at risk by keeping them there?

Ms. ABIZAID. I would defer to State. They are going to be able to tell you the frequency of their movements. I would say they are not isolated. We at RS, in Resolute Support and USFOR-A [United States Forces-Afghanistan] are not isolated at Resolute Support headquarters. The embassy is not isolated at the embassy. A lot of the government facilities that they need to visit are within the Green Zone, the International Zone, where there is a good deal of safety and ability to move around, to go to the MOD headquarters building, to go to the MOI headquarters building. So our advisers are getting out and about. My understanding is that State Department employees are getting out and about and engaging with their Afghan partners on those aspects of our relationship that are most critical.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Sopko.

Mr. SOPKO. I would beg to differ a little bit with my colleague in one respect. They are getting about but it is very limited. And we don't really have an embassy presence to a great extent outside of Kabul. We used to have senior civilian representatives located around the country. We no longer have those people there. We still may have a military presence in some of these bases. But we don't have the civilian presence.

I go there on a regular basis. And I talk to my colleagues, not only my staff, we have about 50, but also talking to State and AID officials. And they are not getting out. There are people who are assigned to our embassy who never leave the embassy, except to go for R&R [rest and recuperation] because they can't get out.

The last time I was in country, went over to the ministry of narcotics. And the State Department officials from I&L [Installations and Logistics] have never gotten to the ministry of narcotics because of the security situation. Now, I don't want to criticize our security people. As Ms. Abizaid has said, they are very concerned about the safety of our American troops, our American civilians, our American contractors. And I defer to them on security.

So I am not questioning these security things. But the reality of the situation is you can get assigned to Afghanistan in the embassy or AID, and you never leave the embassy. Now, that doesn't mean we should shut down, because doing diplomacy is not risk free. Just like a soldier takes a risk when he puts that uniform on and goes overseas, the same thing for AID and State employees, and DOD IG people and my staff, it is not risk free. You want to try to measure that risk. But the risk is taking its toll on the ability to advise and assist, to train, and to get out and oversee the money. That is the reality of the situation there.

Ms. SPEIER. I really appreciate your candor. Because I think for many of our colleagues, there is an expectation that there is movement and that it is less dire, frankly, than I think it is. And the fact that so many of our personnel there are really not able to move outside of being transferred by air is, should be of deep concern to us. Mr. Child, do you have any further comments on that?

Mr. CHILD. I think Mr. Sopko explained it very well. That has certainly been my experience and our staff.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, I have one last question but it is a big one. I would like to ask each member of the panel to give me two examples of success in Afghanistan, and two examples of failure.

Ms. ABIZAID. I will start.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay.

Ms. ABIZAID. So two examples of success, first of all, I think that this fighting season, we have talked a lot about the problems that we are seeing in Helmand with the 215th Corps. We have talked a lot about the concerns that we saw in Kunduz when it temporarily fell to the Taliban. What we talked less about is the successes that we have seen from other elements of the Afghan National Security Forces. The 203rd Corps, importantly, one of the corps that we don't cover in as a matter of sort of daily contact—

Ms. SPEIER. Could you repeat that again? What is it called?

Ms. ABIZAID. The 203rd Corps, which operates in eastern and southeastern Afghanistan, did a very good job this fighting season addressing what is a dynamic security environment. They had ISIL threats to deal with, Al Qaeda threats to deal with. They had Taliban threats to deal with. They conducted a number of clearing operations that were multi-pillar, you know, cross, across multiple different aspects of the complicated force. And they did quite well—in Operation Iron Triangle, specifically.

I would also say that the special operations capability that the Afghan National Security Forces are displaying and, in particular, their aviation capability that supports it has been a critical aspect of this fighting season, and the one place where we are sure that that investment is paying off. They have, they were critical in retaking Kunduz after it temporarily fell to the Taliban. And they have been critical in partnered operations like that, which we partnered with them in Kandahar to disrupt a very significantly sized Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent training facility.

So showing the investment in that partnership, we really do see that displayed by that core capability and the special operations capability and the aviation capability in particular. Now, I have mentioned some of the difficulties that we experienced this fighting season. I think that other aspects of what we do in Afghanistan are also a mixed bag.

There have been very big successes, I think, in our relationship with the Afghan Government to counter corruption. I think we have a partner in President Ghani who is very focused on being able to have control over those aspects of the government that are prone to corruption. And he wants us to work together to figure out how to discipline the system.

That being said, as we have seen in places like Helmand, corruption is a significant problem. As we see with things like ghost soldiers, that is a problem. And so we are all focused together and I think for the first time in a very real way with our Afghan partners in addressing that challenge.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. Mr. Breedlove.

Mr. BREEDLOVE. It is a great question, ma'am. Thank you. I would keep this very simple. So two examples of success, I will take this at a strategic and a more operational level. At the strategic level, I think a measure of success would be seeing the frac-

ture of the Taliban leadership. And that may also be precipitated, for example, by peace talks or negotiations between Afghans. Operationally, it would be a very public, or publicized operational defeats of the insurgency in the field by Afghan security forces.

My two examples of failure would just be the exact opposite of those two coins I just highlighted to you. So at the operational level, that would be the capture, or multiple captures of several provincial capitals inside Afghanistan. And at a strategic level, that would be seeing the fracture of the political elites, that destabilizes the government, and may be a presage to civil conflict again. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. Colonel Michael.

Colonel MICHAEL. Ma'am, as soon as we look at successes, I would say one success is just the ownership that the ANDSF has taken. As we said, this is a force here that is fully responsible. You know, the primary land force and the ownership that they took, I think, and effects that they have had this year. Not a key success, I would say, would be the ALP [Afghan Local Police] program. Even though it is not perfect and there are areas of the ALP program that we have to work, we have seen some key successes there. One of the things that is significant about the ALP program is that the folks are from the local area.

So wherever you find ALP, they are properly secured and tied in with the rest of the Afghan security. You almost find green bubbles are created because they know who should be there, who shouldn't. And it displaces the enemy. The enemy is no longer [able] to hide in plain sight.

One of the things I think that, failures and things that they have got to work on, you know, the ability to maintain some of the small persistent operations that is required to put pressure on the Taliban.

So to do well in the big multicorps operations, but the ones that are really, that have the most impact are the ones that are really being done at the district level by kandak and the ones that are not telegraphed. In big operations, a lot of times the enemy can understand that it is coming and have the ability to shift.

And then the final thing, I think, that they need to—that they can improve and do better is anticipating where the enemy is going to be. So, for example, you know, we do well by typically defending in the east and the south. What we saw this year, you know, some attacks in the north, Kunduz was an example and some attacks in the west. So being able to anticipate and then responding and reacting a little bit quicker, you know, when the enemy does something that is not telegraphed or unexpected.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Mr. Sopko.

Mr. SOPKO. I would like to follow up on Assistant Secretary Abizaid's comments. And I think the two successes that I would like to highlight actually deal with the cooperation with the new, or national unity government. And one has to do with conditionality. General Semonite, General Davis, and General Campbell have insisted upon conditionality. They have worked very closely with the new unity government. And I actually met with President

Ghani, and he says, I accept conditionality. I want conditionality. Let's work together. And I think that is a great success.

The prior regime wasn't interested in conditionality, but the new regime is. And so General Davis, General Semonite, and General Campbell have really stepped up to the plate and hit a home run on that. The second success is along the same line, and I think it is when we work together, we really do succeed. And that is when my agents uncovered the price-fixing for the \$1 billion MOD fuel case, we immediately went to General Campbell, we went to General Semonite, we explained what we had uncovered, because we actually had information of the conspiracy in Dubai to rig the price, which was going to cost the Afghans an extra \$250 million, which means it was going to cost the U.S.

They went over as a team. General Semonite and my investigators briefed the President. The President merely shut down the contract, fired some generals, did an investigation, and then set up a procurement commission that they are looking at other questionable direct assistance contracts, and that is fantastic. That is a success.

On the failures, Madam Congresswoman, there are so many. But I think one we have ignored up to now and is the 800-pound gorilla in the room, and that is the \$8 billion we have spent on counter-narcotics, and it has been a total abject failure. The only reason the amount of narcotics coming out of Afghanistan are lower this year than last year, has absolutely nothing to do with any of our programs or that \$8 billion. It has to do with disease and weather.

And that is the 800-pound gorilla. If we ignore that, what will happen is what Ashraf Ghani warned us about years ago, Afghanistan will become a narcoterrorist state. And I have not seen anything announced by the embassy that would somehow stop that.

The other issue, which I think is an abject failure, and that is, we really don't know what capabilities are of the Afghan National Security Forces. We are guessing. And those are two serious failures and serious concerns.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Mr. CHILD. Ma'am, I would discuss as success the intersection of what I think is a strategic improvement based on oversight, and that is beginning with Major General Michael Williamson, as to CSTC-A, sought out from our organization a look, a hard look, at both the NATO trust fund and the initial direct funding challenge. And the surprising thing, he was able to see, and General Dunford as well, President Ghani has said, the Taliban is not an existential threat. What is an existential threat is a loss of confidence by the contributing nations. And General Williamson took our report, which was quite negative, identified many, many problems, but the fact that the United States has a system of an independent IG outside the chain of command reporting only to the Secretary of Defense and to Congress that could, therefore, independently assess the problems, General Williamson took that to NATO and met with contributing nation partners, and it had an impact that they could then feel at least there is some independent look, and despite the fact that it was bad, it would mean some attempt at improvement, and that has continued.

And Mr. Sopko is a very big part of that, but it has continued to the extent of translating our reports into the languages—the language of the Afghans, so that they would be outbriefed along with the command, and is not simply the command saying, this is a problem, and it has to be improved, but this is a report that is going to the United States Congress that appropriates the fund. So we have had several reports like that. We continue the direct funding. That is what I would say, two positives.

I would speak only to one negative, and I think it is dramatic. It is an example of the tragedy there, all the attempts to do good things and to improve.

On August 5, 2014, I was serving in Bagram and learned that Major General Harold Green had been killed. He was trying to demonstrate his confidence in the Afghans, did not wear the protective equipment. He was meeting with Afghan officials. He was a follow-on to General Williamson, who was followed by General Semonite, and now to General Davis. And so attempting to make a big difference, and he was, in trying to place beginning conditionality on matters, he lost his life.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. Thank you, all, very much for your testimony.

I yield back.

Mr. SCOTT. Ma'am, Gentlemen, thank you for being here. I can't speak to everyone that we are training, but I can speak to the men that we are training in the A-29 mission. I have been down there. I have met with them. I can assure you that people that are coming through there that are vetted, they are educated, and they are capable of carrying out that mission. That is one mission.

But I will speak for that one. And one other suggestion might be working with the people in that country, the leadership of that country, the drug—the best way to handle that drug issue is probably to get some crop dusters over there and to spray the crops. And if we want to be careful about how much we spend, come to south Georgia. We will sell you one and ship it over there at the right price.

Thank you for being here and for your service.

[Whereupon, at 1:07 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

**Testimony of
Christine Abizaid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia**

**House Armed Services Committee
Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee Hearing on “Assessing the
Development of Afghan National Security Forces”
February 12, 2016, 10:30 am
2118 Rayburn House Office Building**

Chairwoman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to discuss Department of Defense (DoD) efforts to develop the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). I am honored to have the opportunity to update you alongside my colleagues Colonel Stephen Michael from the Joint Staff and Mr. Kent Breedlove from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), as well as Mr. Michael Child, Sr., from the Office of the DoD Inspector General (DoD IG) and Mr. John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

I also want to thank the members of this Subcommittee and other members of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) for your steadfast support of our efforts in Afghanistan. All of the witnesses before you today take very seriously our responsibility to ensure our DoD personnel—military and civilian—as well as our diplomats and other U.S. Government personnel in Afghanistan, have the resources, authorities, and guidance they need to accomplish their mission. We are

forever grateful to and honor the more than 2,200 U.S. service members who lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan, the more than 20,100 military personnel who were wounded, and the thousands of families who have sacrificed for this important mission. Their efforts represent a strategically significant contribution to the security of our homeland.

Within DoD, my office is responsible to provide overall policy guidance for and oversight of the mission in Afghanistan, including DoD-funded security assistance for the ANDSF. We have daily contact with key personnel in theater at the Combined Security Transition Assistance Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which has primary responsibility for the execution of the DoD security assistance mission. We also work closely with the Joint Staff, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), DIA and others in the intelligence community, and the Department of State as we continually assess the status of our efforts in Afghanistan. My office also supports the efforts of the Office of the Lead Inspector General (IG) for Afghanistan – the DoD IG – and those of the Office of the SIGAR, ensuring they have the information and appropriate context required to fulfill their respective statutory mandates to conduct audits and investigations of our security assistance efforts and other oversight issues.

Today, I will discuss the policy framework in which DoD conducts the overall mission in Afghanistan, provide a brief assessment of the ANDSF, and

discuss key aspects of the execution of DoD's security assistance mission. In doing so, I will also describe our dedication to accountability and transparency in how we spend U.S. taxpayer dollars in support of the ANDSF.

As you are aware, our priority in Afghanistan remains to prevent it from once again becoming a safe haven from which terrorists can plan attacks against the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests abroad, and our international partners. In pursuit of this objective, DoD is conducting two complementary missions in Afghanistan: a counterterrorism mission against the remnants of al Qaeda and other extremist groups that threaten the United States – such as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (IS-KP) – and a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led train, advise, and assist mission with the ANDSF, known as Resolute Support.

In October 2015, following a comprehensive review of the mission and the opportunity for its continued progress, President Obama announced that, rather than continuing to draw down to a Kabul-only U.S. military footprint in 2017, the U.S. military would instead retain up to 9,800 personnel in Afghanistan throughout most of 2016, eventually drawing down to a steady-state presence of up to 5,500 personnel by January 1, 2017. This presence will be based not only in Kabul, but also other locations, including Bagram Airbase and in Jalalabad and Kandahar. This decision provides U.S. forces with sufficient capabilities to continue the development of Afghan ministerial capacity, along with key ANDSF capabilities in

the critical areas of aviation, intelligence, special operations, logistics, and maintenance. This presence also enables a robust platform that will allow the United States both to pursue counterterrorism targets and to assist the ANDSF in further developing their special operations capability, which has proved increasingly critical to U.S. counterterrorism and broader security interests.

The financial support of the United States and the international community is critical to sustaining the ANDSF. Over the last decade, congressional appropriations for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) have enabled the development of Afghan security forces who are capable of assuming full responsibility for the security of Afghanistan, which in turn allowed U.S. and coalition partners to end the combat mission at the end of 2014. NATO Allies and operational partners have also contributed to the development of the ANDSF through multi-lateral trust funds. During the last week of January, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Commander General John Campbell, Ambassador Richard Olson, other Department of State and USFOR-A representatives, and I briefed NATO Allies and operational partners in Brussels on anticipated ANDSF requirements through 2020. I am encouraged that international donors recognize the significance of their continued support for the financial sustainment of the ANDSF.

This is particularly critical because the ability of the ANDSF to provide security for their country enables our broader counterterrorism objectives for the region. The difficult human and geographic terrain along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border provides opportunities for extremists to exploit limited government capacity and sympathetic networks to maintain a presence in the region. As a result, the border region remains an extremist safe-haven for various elements of al Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, the Islamic State-Khorasan Province, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and other extremist groups. Given this environment, the United States' ability to monitor and address threats that could emerge from this region is critical to our national security. We remain committed to doing so in partnership with a still developing ANDSF that is working to secure Afghanistan from both internal and external threats.

In particular, our support is focused on ensuring that the ANDSF are able to counter and degrade the Taliban to force the Taliban to choose between continuing to fight a war it cannot win or joining Afghan-led negotiations about what voice it will have in Afghanistan's future. Even as the ANDSF take on the significant challenge of a robust counterinsurgency mission against the Taliban, we recognize they do so in a dynamic threat environment that requires a strong partnership with the United States and coalition presence. Our efforts to assist the ANDSF in their

combat mission against the Taliban and to continue to develop their capabilities are a prudent investment in both regional and international security.

Indeed, for more than a year, the mission of providing security for all of Afghanistan has been the sole responsibility of the Afghan government. Yet the security situation remains fragile in Afghanistan, as the ANDSF seek to improve their capacity while facing a continuing threat from extremist networks. Afghan forces will continue to require U.S. and coalition assistance for many years. The Afghan government is determined to remain a close partner with the United States and our allies and partners to prevent the re-emergence of terrorist safe havens in Afghanistan and threats to the survival of the Afghan government. This partnership is key to avoiding new commitments of large U.S. and coalition ground forces.

During this first year after the coalition's combat mission concluded, the ANDSF faced a number of difficult tests, and the results have been mixed. We are working with the ANDSF to make adjustments and to continue to help to develop their capabilities – an effort further enabled by the President's October decision. So as not to overlook the successes we witnessed this past year, I want to echo some of the key points General Campbell made in his testimony to the full House Armed Services Committee on February 2, 2016, and focus on some key areas of ANDSF development. As General Campbell noted in his testimony, over the last

eight years, the ANDSF have made remarkable advancements and are developing into a modern security force with many of the systems and processes of an advanced military. They have demonstrated the ability to conduct successfully effective, large-scale, multi-pillar clearing operations across the country and, when the insurgents attempted strategic advances in areas such as in Kunduz City, Ghazni, and elsewhere, the ANDSF proved able to rally and re-capture those areas.

In the midst of fighting a war, the ANDSF and the Afghan security ministries continue, with coalition assistance, to develop their capacity to manage complex tasks such as budgeting, force generation, personnel management, national-level maintenance, logistics, and procurement, and to address key capability gaps in aviation and intelligence, while continuing to enhance their already very capable special security forces. These efforts will remain the focus of our enduring DoD mission in Afghanistan, and we anticipate needing up to 5,500 U.S. military personnel in 2017 to support these activities.

As we work together to close key capability gaps, a key challenge will be ensuring the ANDSF are not only effective, but also are affordable and sustainable. In this regard, we realize that U.S. taxpayers have been generous and patient with the ANDSF's development and that it is our responsibility to review carefully how best – and most efficiently – we can assist our Afghan partners. Finding the right balance between effectiveness and affordability is a key focus for the Department,

which I will illustrate by outlining our efforts in a few areas that represent the major cost drivers of the ANDSF. In some of these areas, the work of the DoD IG and SIGAR has helpfully informed our effort to protect taxpayers' money and to ensure we can achieve our goals for developing the ANDSF.

The first is our on-going efforts to develop the ANDSF's aviation capabilities, including by addressing their close air support needs as well as long-term lift requirements. This is a very complex undertaking and represents a significant portion of our investment in the ANDSF. The concerted effort to rebuild the Afghan Air Force – which began in 2007 – has faced a number of setbacks, including a delay in fielding the principal close-air platform – the fixed-wing A-29 Super Tucano. If our original plans had gone as expected, the A-29s would have been fielded beginning in 2013 before the U.S. combat mission ended, but procurement delays pushed the delivery and pilot training timeline. As a result, the first four A-29s were not fielded to Afghanistan until last month.

To mitigate the impact of these delays, we took important steps in 2014 to implement bridge solutions, including configuring a portion of the Mi-17 transportation fleet with weapons and delivering armed MD-530 helicopters in 2015 to help with the close air support capability. In 2016, with the fielding of 8 of a total of 20 A-29s and all 28 MD-530s, the Afghan aerial fires capability will nearly triple compared to 2015. The close air support gap is not the only ANDSF

aviation challenge; we also are assessing the sustainability of the Mi-17 fleet, which is operating at a higher tempo than expected as the fighting intensified this past year.

Ground forces equipment also has relatively high sustainment costs and is a continued focus of our efforts to balance effectiveness and affordability. We have fielded more than 15,000 up-armored High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) to the ANDSF as well as tens of thousands of other types of vehicles. This fleet has seen a lot of combat, particularly in the last year, is beginning to age, and will require recapitalization. We have begun to procure replacements for some of the HMMWVs, and we, together with our Afghan counterparts, are reviewing long-term requirements as well as reset options that will result in a more affordable and predictable long-term plan for these mobility and combat requirements.

As is the case with DoD personnel accounts, Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) pay and personnel expenses are a major cost driver—about 20 percent of the roughly \$5 billion total cost for the Afghan security forces. DoD funds the majority of this cost for the Afghan government, although other partner nations fund a substantial portion of police salaries. For many years, Afghan pay and personnel systems have been paper-based, which have had limited accountability and traceability of funds. SIGAR’s audits of ANA

and ANP pay have significantly informed our efforts to automate this system, which have accelerated over the past year. Most notably, we have been working with the MoD and MoI to develop an integrated pay and personnel system that will ensure we can verify that anyone receiving a salary or incentive payment is on the rolls and authorized to receive those payments, which will reduce opportunities for corruption. We are also making accurate entry of personnel information into automated databases a key condition of security assistance funding.

Finally, I want to highlight the procurement reforms that President Ghani has made to address corruption in the MoD and MoI. The immediate need for procurement reform became apparent about a year ago when our advisors presented information to President Ghani about corruption in fuel contracting processes. President Ghani fired those responsible, and now new contracts are in place. He also pulled responsibility for procurement up to a national-level authority, creating a new procurement agency. Most ministries have adapted to this new process and both the MoD and MoI are six months further along in the new process than they were last year. It also allowed us to influence new procurement law which was passed on January 12, 2016.

I should note that although some of our Afghanistan Security Forces Fund appropriation goes directly to the Afghan government, mainly to pay for military salaries, incentive pay, and supplies, such as fuel, the majority of it is spent

through the foreign military sales (FMS) system using DoD contracts on U.S.-made equipment. We have used the FMS system to procure the A-29s, MD-530s, up-armored HMMWVs, and the M16-A4s that we are buying to replace the AK 47s now used by Afghan police. We also use the FMS system to provide contracted logistic support to ensure the \$15 billion of equipment we have already fielded is properly sustained.

In closing, I want to again thank the subcommittee for this opportunity to discuss our efforts to develop the ANDSF and to ensure we are doing so responsibly. The U.S. presence of up to 9,800 military personnel through most of 2016 and a sustained presence of up to 5,500 by the end of 2016 will allow the United States to tailor train, advise, and assist efforts to continue developing key ANDSF capabilities in critical areas such as aviation and special operations while also maintaining a U.S. capability to deter threats in the region. Since the President's October 2015 announcement, coalition partners have similarly signaled their commitment to support the Resolute Support mission. Their continued support will help ensure we have enough advisors to continue to develop critical Afghan capabilities and gradually close gaps in those capabilities that are most important to our collective success in Afghanistan.

Regardless of our force presence in Afghanistan, the Afghan government will continue to rely on large amounts of financial assistance to the ANDSF until

such time as fighting significantly diminishes, perhaps as a result of the reconciliation process taking hold. We are in the process of working with our allies and partners to extend international funding commitments to 2020, and we look forward to working with Congress to ensure effective oversight of these efforts to achieve our national objectives in Afghanistan.

CHRISTINE S. ABIZAID**Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Afghanistan, Pakistan & Central Asia (Asian and Pacific Security Affairs)**

Christine Abizaid was appointed Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia in July 2014 and later appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in December 2014.

Prior to joining the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Ms. Abizaid served on the National Security Council Staff as both a Director for Counterterrorism and Senior Policy Advisor to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism. She also served for seven years with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Joint Intelligence Task Force Combating Terrorism as the Senior Intelligence Analyst in the Afghanistan- Pakistan Division and the Iraq/Middle East Division. During this time she deployed several times throughout the Middle East, including a tour as the senior DIA counterterrorism representative in Iraq.

Ms. Abizaid holds a B.A. degree in Psychology from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and an M.A. degree in International Policy Studies from Stanford University. She has received the Office of the Director of National Intelligence Award, the National Military Intelligence Association John T. Hughes Award, and DIA Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

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Statement for HASC Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee Hearing on**“Assessing the Development of Afghan National Security Forces”****Colonel Stephen Michael, U.S. Army****Joint Staff J5 Transregional Threat Coordination Cell****February 12, 2016, 10:30 am****2118 Rayburn House Office Building**

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and other distinguished members of this subcommittee, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here and provide you with information regarding the current status of the development of the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Before I provide you with an update, I'd like to thank the committee for your support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and civilians. Our military operations in Afghanistan - over the past 14 plus years – have helped to ensure that there has not been another major attack against the U.S. homeland since September 11, 2001. Yet this effort has also highlighted the profound cost of war - a cost that has been paid by the 2,235 men and women in uniform that have died in Afghanistan and additional 20,115 wounded defending the freedoms we all enjoy.

Our primary objective in Afghanistan is to ensure that another terrorist attack-originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland-will never happen again. The United States and the international community have a continuing core interest in strengthening Afghanistan's ability to secure its territory and deny safe-haven for terrorist and violent extremist organizations.

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We have a partner in the Afghan unity government that recognizes these threats as their responsibility to address but they continue to need our help.

Our counterterrorism mission and the train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission focused on building a sustainable Afghan security force are mutually reinforcing efforts integral to achieving U.S. counterterrorism goals and overall mission success. As part of the TAA mission, our special operations forces continue to help develop the Afghan Special Security Forces. In addition, U.S. Counterterrorism operations are conducted primarily in partnership with Afghan Special Security Force units to address shared counterterrorism objectives, as demonstrated by the partnered raid in October 2015 on the al Qaeda training camp in Kandahar Province. The U.S. military mission in Afghanistan is a vitally important part of our national effort to protect our homeland from terrorist threats, and to enable a sustainable Afghan capacity to secure their own country.

Fighting Season Update

The Commander of U.S. Forces - Afghanistan (USFOR-A), General Campbell, has described the performance of the ANDSF during the 2015 fighting season as uneven and inconsistent. The ANDSF control all of the major population centers, lines of communication, and areas required for governance, where the Taliban have influence and freedom of movement of in some rural areas. The ANDSF have demonstrated resilience and progress during this difficult, extended fighting season. Their steadfast willingness to stand and fight insurgent forces is admirable, as is their continued development into a more modern military. The ANDSF have taken the operational burden for all security operations during the last fighting season, with a greatly

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reduced U.S. and coalition footprint and resources. They significantly increased their operational tempo during the last fighting season, almost double from the previous year, which resulted in increased ANDSF casualties and overall attrition. But equally as important, it also led to even greater insurgent casualties.

Through this harsh and extended fighting season, the Afghan government and the ANDSF have struggled and have had uneven performance but I believe they are learning the lessons necessary to do better in the coming years.

One example of a tough lesson learned can be seen in the fighting that took place in Kunduz, which was heavily reported in the news. The fall of Kunduz - although only temporary - identifies several shortcomings in the ANDSF that include poor integration of intelligence, lack of cross-organization coordination, and poor force optimization. Although these events led to a brief insurgent information operations victory, they also revealed the Taliban's incapacity to hold terrain. Ultimately, the ANDSF were able to take back the territory within several days.

In contrast, in August 2015, the ANDSF demonstrated increased capacity in its conduct of Operation Iron Triangle. This joint, multicorps operation in Nangarhar province involved elements of the 201st and 203rd Corps, the 111th Capital Division, the Afghan Uniform Police, Afghan Local Police, Afghan Air Force, and Afghanistan Special Security Forces, among others. Positive aspects of this operation included effective shaping operations by Afghanistan Special Security Forces in advance of the main effort, the solid tactical performance of ANDSF units, the effective use of their own armed MD-530 helicopters as a close air support platform, and the

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successful conduct of meetings with local Afghan villagers by elements of the 201st Corps in order to generate local support and recruit Afghan Local Police members to assist in holding cleared areas in the wake of the operation.

The Afghan Special Security Forces represent some of the most elite and brave fighting forces in the ANDSF and in the region. They continue to demonstrate their ability to conduct independent operations throughout Afghanistan and, when engaged, win decisively. Nearly all battalion-sized Special Operations Kandaks are conducting independent company-level operations, and several Special Operations Kandaks have conducted unilateral missions driven by Afghan intelligence gathered without the assistance of U.S. or coalition special operations forces.

We recommend that the ANDSF maintain its current authorized end strength of approximately 352,000 personnel, with an additional authorized 30,000 Afghan Local Police, for the immediate future in order to maintain a stable environment. Monthly attrition rates of approximately 2 percent are indications of poor leadership, training cycles (effects on training tempo, leave, and rest), quality of life (soldiers' comfort, entitlements, leave, facilities, and personal equipment), and welfare (activities, recreation, leave transportation issues, education, self-improvement, and cohesiveness). The ANDSF are focused on decreasing attrition by strengthening recruitment efforts; increasing leadership skills through the development of professional military education; establishing re-contracting rate goals for corps commanders; and updating policies for absences, incentive pays, promotions, and leave.

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During 2015, the ANDSF demonstrated increased capabilities in intelligence, aviation, sustainment, and special operations; however, they still also struggle and have gaps in these same areas. Despite these challenges, the Afghan government and its security ministries repeatedly marshaled the necessary resources and political will to respond effectively to insurgent offensives and retake key territory overrun by the Taliban.

ANDSF Development

Significant long term capability gaps remain in the areas of ANDSF leadership, rotary-wing aviation, combined arms operations, intelligence collection and dissemination, close air support capability, and maintenance. Our TAA efforts will remain focused on these areas to enable the ANDSF to become increasingly self-sufficient, professional, and effective. While working to improve performance throughout Afghan security ministries, U.S. and coalition advisors focus their efforts on building a self-sustainable, effective, affordable, and credible ANDSF that is capable of maintaining security in Afghanistan under responsible and efficient Afghan security ministries. These efforts are focused at the ministry and corps level for the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police and at the tactical level with the Afghan Special Security Forces and the Afghan Air Force.

The NATO-led Resolute Support mission focuses on developing eight essential functions and associated sub-functions in order to develop capable and sustainable Afghan security ministries and forces. These critical functions include: planning, programming, budgeting, and execution; transparency, accountability, and oversight; civilian governance of the Afghan security

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institutions and adherence to rule of law; force generation; sustainment of the force; planning, resourcing, and execution of effective security campaigns; the development of intelligence capabilities and processes; and strategic communication capability.

Briefly, I would like to highlight some success and continued areas of weakness within the ANDSF and what we believe is the way ahead: In budget and execution, for the first time, the Ministries of Defense and Interior, the coalition, and the international donor community participated in an integrated Afghan fiscal year program and budget development process. As part of this process, the team conducted a thorough current year budget execution review to assess resource optimization and prioritize next year's needs. This resulted in successfully creating a prioritized list of requirements and critical funding realignments to higher priority Ministries of Defense efforts within the next fiscal year. Challenges remain in their ability to execute on-budget international community funds, due in large part to the overhaul of the procurement system. U.S. and coalition forces will continue to mentor and assist our Afghan partners to develop well-informed and executable financial plans conduct budget program workshops to increase budgeting capability.

The current ANDSF personnel and pay systems are manually tracked, stove-piped, manpower-intensive systems prone to human error and corruption at many points. We have helped them begin to implement an Afghan Personnel and Pay System that will increase accountability and reduce the opportunity for corruption. We anticipate that ANDSF payroll and personnel records will be centrally managed and auditable at the ministerial level by June 2017. Additionally, pay and personnel records will be consolidated in an electronic database to make them much more

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manageable, auditable, and accurate. A biometrically matched identification card will ensure only those who are supposed to be paid are entered in the system and "ghost" personnel are removed and not paid. Payroll for some ANDSF is now generated through electronic funds transfer to each individual's bank account and a notification will be sent to their mobile phone or email to ensure they understand how much they are paid and what was deducted.

In the area of sustainment, the coalition advisors are assisting the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior to build capability to sustain force structure with procurement, warehousing, materiel management, asset visibility, and transportation. Across both security ministries, the value of understanding and training personnel to track and maintain accountability of repair parts is taking hold. Managing and maintaining key systems such as communication devices, the Mobile Strike Force Vehicle, the D-30 artillery howitzer, and small arms have seen marked improvement.

Lastly, in anti-corruption reform, the security ministries have several efforts underway to identify and mitigate opportunities for corruption. A formal Ministerial Internal Control Program is being implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness through detailed assessments to prevent fraud, waste and abuse.

ANDSF Cost and Cost Drivers

The total annual cost of the ANDSF at an authorized force level of 195,000 Afghan National Army and 157,000 Afghan National Police personnel, plus 30,000 Afghan Local Police has been

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steadily decreasing over time. This occurred, in part, due to the transition from the initial fielding of major equipment and a substantial investment in infrastructure construction to a more sustainment-focused steady-state. Additionally, over the past year, the United States, the Afghan government, and international partners have worked together to further reduce ANDSF costs through the use of funding conditionality, divestiture of excess facilities, and a limited transition to Afghan-led "on-budget" contracting. While modest in scale, these efforts have decreased the total cost of ANDSF without diminishing its effectiveness in a challenging security environment.

The ANDSF budget has two major cost drivers: personnel sustainment (primarily salaries) and non-personnel sustainment, which includes expenses such as fuel or equipment maintenance and repair. A third significant cost driver, sustainment of Afghan Air Force assets, is a subset of Afghan National Army non-personnel sustainment. Addressing these cost drivers, as well as evaluating ANDSF platform and program costs at the end of the 2016 fighting season, will be critical to identifying other opportunities to reduce the total cost of the ANDSF without reductions to force size that might otherwise diminish ANDSF effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The President's announcement in October 2015 to keep 9,800 troops in Afghanistan through most of 2016 and to retain 5,500 troops in 2017 signals the continued U.S. commitment to Afghanistan and supports our military efforts towards the national security interests we have in the region. This decision reflects the best military advice of our senior commanders, and

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reinforces our commitment to regional stability. The international coalition continues to support Afghanistan and welcomes our continued commitment.

Thank you for your continued support of our military and our families. I look forward to your questions.

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Colonel Stephen L. A. Michael
Deputy Director, Pakistan Afghanistan and Transregional Threats
Coordination Cell

COL Steve Michael was born in Guyana, South America in 1964, immigrated to the United States in 1979 and was commissioned into the Infantry in 1988. His military education includes the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced courses, the Combined Arms and Services Staff School, and the US Army Command and General Staff College. He holds a Bachelors of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from the United States Military Academy; completed the Operations Research Systems Analysis (ORSA) Military Applications Course at Fort Lee, VA; and was the Senior Service College Fellow to Columbia University for FY11. Prior to serving as the Columbia Fellow, COL Michael was the Regimental Tactical Officer for the 4th Regiment United States Corps of Cadets at West Point

COL Michael began his career at FT Drum as a Rifle Platoon Leader, Mortar Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer and BN S4 in 2d Battalion 87th Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. Immediately after the Career Course, he served as the BN S3 for the Columbus Recruiting Battalion in Columbus Ohio. Next he served as the Battalion S4 and Charlie Company Commander for 2d BN 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division. He then served as the S3 for 2d BN 503d IN (Airborne), 173rd Airborne BDE. Later he commanded 2nd Battalion 12th Infantry Regiment at FT Carson and 1st BCT 10th Mountain Division (Light) at FT Drum.

COL Michael has a diverse operational background; while at Fort Drum, he took part in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, as the Battalion Logistics Officer for 2-87 Infantry. Next as the Commander for Charlie Company 2d BN 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, he deployed as part of Operation Desert Focus to Dhahran Saudi Arabia to help secure American Citizens and forward deployed units in response to the Kobar Towers Bombing. As the Operations Officer for 2d BN 503d IN (Airborne), 173rd Airborne BDE in Vicenza, Italy, he deployed on two back-to-back operational missions; Operation Rapid Guardian in Kosovo and Operation Iraqi Freedom I, where the battalion conducted a night combat parachute assault onto Bashur Drop Zone, in Northern Iraq, and helped secure the city of Kirkuk. Next as a Ground Planner in the Southern European Task Force's Joint Planning Group with the responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa, COL Michael deployed to Ghana and Nigeria as part of Joint Task Force Liberia, to help the Economic Community of West African States stabilize Liberia as President Charles Taylor was exiled to Nigeria. He then served as the Aide de Camp to Lieutenant General Kip Ward, then the Deputy Commander for United States Army Europe and 7th Army; with Lieutenant General Ward COL Michael deployed to Israel for ten months as part of the Israeli-Palestinian Security Coordinator Mission, to help prepare the Palestinian Authority to take control of Gaza. As the Commander of 2-12 IN, COL Michael deployed for 15 months to Al Doura, Baghdad as part of the historic surge. Recently, COL Michael deployed as the 1st Brigade Combat Team Commander to Regional Command - East on the Security Force Advise and Assist mission in order to enable the Afghan National Security Forces to stand up, fight, and win in Ghazni Afghanistan.

COL Michael is married to the former Sandra Stanford of Georgetown Guyana, and they are proud parents of Vaughn, Shane, Sean and Chanel.

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to provide the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA) assessment of the threats we are facing in Afghanistan and the capabilities of the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF). Afghanistan remains a complex environment that DIA is closely monitoring.

In 2015, the ANDSF took primary responsibility for security in Afghanistan for the first full year. The Afghan National Army conducted several independent multi-corps operations against the insurgency in diverse regions of the country. Security forces also successfully secured almost all provincial capitals and national lines of communication, to include major highways. A positive development in the evolution of the ANDSF is the use of special operations forces to effectively respond to terrorist threats and to deny safe haven to networks across the country, albeit with coalition support.

Despite these increased capabilities, the ANDSF is still facing significant challenges in leadership, combat enablers, logistics and sustainment, and ministerial capacity. The ANDSF cannot manage the insurgency and ensure security across Afghanistan without further improvement in these key areas and the development of human capital. The 2015 fighting season highlighted these shortfalls and a security posture which is overstretched and ineffectively utilized. The temporary fall of Kunduz City in September 2015, the result of Taliban efforts to expand operations in north Afghanistan and exploit ANDSF capability gaps, illustrated these deficiencies. Despite the Afghan Army's ability to mount effective

counterattacks to regain lost terrain – as in Kunduz – the force is challenged to effectively employ organic aerial and ground fire enablers in support of reactive operations.

The late July announcement of former leader Mullah Omar's death, and the contentious accession of new leader Mullah Mansour, led to the emergence of a Taliban opposition faction in late 2015. Infighting between Mansour's supporters and the opposition has occurred, and the Taliban have faced competition from the ISIL's emergent regional affiliate. The Taliban and ISIL are focused on countering the international presence and expanding territorial footholds in Afghanistan. In the 2016 fighting season, we expect the Taliban-led insurgency will try to build on its temporary victory in Kunduz by attempting to surround and pressure population centers. They will also seek to make incremental gains in rural areas and conduct high-profile attacks against government and civilian targets in key cities, particularly Kabul.

KENT A. BREEDLOVE
Senior Defense Intelligence Analyst for Afghanistan
Directorate for Analysis

Mr. Breedlove was appointed to the Defense Intelligence Senior Level in January 2012. In his current position, he serves as the Senior Defense Intelligence Analyst for Afghanistan, advising DIA leadership on the full spectrum of defense intelligence issues relating to Afghanistan, maximizing defense intelligence relevance to customers and posturing defense intelligence to meet future requirements. He provides direct support to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, military departments, combatant commands, and other U.S. government departments and agencies.

Mr. Breedlove joined DIA in June 2010 and until his current appointment, he served as the Deputy Defense Intelligence Officer for South Asia where he collaborated closely with Service Centers and Combatant Commands to represent defense intelligence interests and equities with respect to South Asia. In this capacity, he oversaw defense input to several National Intelligence Estimates and other IC products and advanced analytic engagement with foreign partners. He deployed to Afghanistan from December 2011 to July 2012, where he served as the Senior Advisor for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) CJ2 and Senior Analyst for the Commander ISAF. From 2007-2010, he was a Deputy National Intelligence Officer for Military Issues on the National Intelligence Council. As a member of the Director of National Intelligence's body of senior substantive experts, he helped lead and coordinate IC analysis and advised senior IC officials and policymakers on military and security related issues for Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iran, Central Asian states, and the Caucasus. He also served as a senior analyst in the private sector supporting research on the Indian military for DIA's Military Forces Analysis Office from 2006 to 2007.

Mr. Breedlove was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in 2006 after 15 years of active duty service as an armor officer and South Asia foreign area officer. His Army service included overseas assignments in Bangladesh and Germany, and a joint duty posting with U.S. Pacific Command. He is the recipient of the DIA Civilian Combat Support Award, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the U.S. Army Ranger tab, and the U.S. Army Basic Parachutist badge.

Mr. Breedlove was raised in Arizona and Texas. He has a Bachelor degree in Criminal Justice from Arizona State University and Master's degrees in South Asian Studies from the University of Texas and Defense Studies from the National University in Bangladesh. He resides with his wife Shehzi in Vienna, Virginia.

March 2013



SIGAR

Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives

Assessing the Capabilities and
Effectiveness of the Afghan
National Defense and Security
Forces

Statement of John F. Sopko,
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction
February 12, 2016

Chairwoman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and Members of the Subcommittee,

I am pleased to be here today to discuss SIGAR's completed and ongoing work examining U.S. efforts to build, train, equip, and sustain the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Since SIGAR was created by Congress in 2008, the capability and effectiveness of the ANDSF has been one of our main concerns. Today's hearing could not come at a more important time or cover a topic of more relevance to the future success of the U.S. mission in Afghanistan.

Establishing security is essential not only for the survival of the Afghan state, but for the success of the reconstruction effort. Congress clearly holds the same view: 61% of the \$113 billion in U.S. reconstruction funding appropriated for use in Afghanistan has gone toward building self-sufficient Afghan security forces. To date, Congress has appropriated more than \$68 billion for this purpose.¹

My testimony today is based on SIGAR's substantial body of work on the U.S. effort to build, equip, train, and sustain the Afghan security forces. Since 2008, SIGAR has released 74 reports examining how funds appropriated for the ANDSF have been used and directed 167 recommendations to the Department of Defense (DOD) to improve U.S. efforts to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANDSF.

Deteriorating Security

We agree with the U.S. forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) and Resolute Support (RS) commander General John F. Campbell that Afghanistan is at an inflection point. As General Campbell said, "if we do not make deliberate, measured adjustments, 2016 is at risk of being no better, and possibly worse, than 2015." From all indications, the security situation is still deteriorating.² National Intelligence Director James Clapper testified this week that the intelligence community assesses "fighting in 2016 will be more intense than 2015, continuing a decade-long trend of deteriorating security."³ According to the United Nations, Afghanistan experienced record-high civilian casualties in 2015. The United Nations also says that 2015 may have been the worst year for conflict-induced displacement in Afghanistan since 2002. In September, a provincial capital, Kunduz, fell to the Taliban for the first time since 2001. According to news reports, Helmand province has come close to falling in recent months and Baghlan province is in danger. According to USFOR-A, nearly 30% of districts are outside of the government's direct control or influence.

However, it can be difficult to accurately describe the security situation quantitatively. While many figures and numbers used to describe the situation in Afghanistan have the outward appearance of quantifiable data, they are more often than not qualitative assessments using questionable definitions. As Dr. Anthony Cordesman at the Center for Strategic and

¹ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, 10/30/2016, Appendix B.

² Congressional Quarterly Congressional Transcripts, *House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Situation in Afghanistan*, 2/2/2016, (Statement of U.S. Forces and Resolute Support Commander General John F. Campbell.)

³ Senate Armed Services Committee, Statement for the Record, James R. Clapper, "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Committee," 2/9/2016, p. 26.

International Studies (CSIS) has pointed out, “there is no way to be sure of any figure like 70% [government controlled territory], or even to accurately estimate the size and location of the Afghan population.”⁴

The fall of Kunduz surprised some observers. However, in January 2014, the Center for Naval Analyses released a DOD-funded report that predicted the Taliban would keep pressure on the ANDSF, expand its influence in areas vacated by Coalition forces, encircle key cities, and conduct high-profile attacks in Kabul and other cities.⁵ These predictions, unfortunately, seem to have been prescient. The Kunduz attack also laid bare troubling gaps in the capabilities of Afghan security forces. While Afghan forces, aided by U.S. close-air support, were eventually able to clear the city of insurgents, the fact remains that the Afghans needed help from U.S. forces to retake Kunduz only 10 months after the end of U.S. combat operations.

The extremely precarious situation of the ANDSF in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan is another worrying development. In late December, Helmand’s deputy governor claimed that Taliban fighters were positioned to take control of the province. British forces were rushed to assist the Afghan Army in the crucial district of Sangin, which insurgents reportedly seemed close to taking over.⁶ In addition, U.S. air support was necessary to help clear a town in Helmand of insurgents just last month. Recognizing the mounting problems in Helmand, the incoming RS commander, General John W. Nicholson, said the ANDSF has begun to replace failed leaders, provide reinforcements, and dedicate other resources such as armed aircraft to the province.⁷ And now it is being reported that a battalion-sized contingent of U.S. soldiers are being sent to Helmand to bolster the Afghan National Army’s efforts.⁸ Coming so soon after the fall of Kunduz, news of the ANDSF’s problems in Helmand does not bode well for the future.

Along with the Taliban stepping up attacks this winter, long after the period in which fighting has typically declined, other groups, such as al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)—a relatively new offshoot of al-Qaeda that operates primarily in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India—and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-K) have also expanded their presence in Afghanistan.⁹ In October of last year, General Campbell said a multi-day operation in Kandahar Province targeted what was “probably the largest” al-Qaeda training camp ever found in Afghanistan, a sprawling complex that covered over 30 square

⁴ Email from Dr. Anthony Cordesman, sent to SIGAR on 2/3/2016.

⁵ Center for Naval Analyses, “Summary of Independent Assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces,” 1/24/2014, p. 19.

⁶ *New York Times*, “British Forces Rush to Help Afghans Hold Off the Taliban in Helmand,” 12/22/15.

⁷ Advance Policy Questions for LTG John W. Nicholson, USA, Nominee to Commander, Resolute Support Mission and Commander, United States Forces Afghanistan, 1/28/2016.

⁸ *New York Times*, “U.S. to Send More Troops To Aid Afghan Forces Pressed by the Taliban,” 2/10/16.

⁹ State, “Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation of ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K),” 1/14/2016; *Washington Post*, “‘Probably the largest’ al-Qaeda training camp ever destroyed in Afghanistan,” 10/30/2015.

miles.¹⁰ On January 8, a provincial council official warned that the ISIL-K presence in five Nangarhar districts may lead to the provincial takeover if the insurgents are not stopped.¹¹

To give you an example of the worsening security situation drawn from our own experience, when SIGAR began staffing its office at the Embassy in Kabul in 2009, our personnel could access many areas of the country and city, drive themselves in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, meet Afghans in their workplaces and take ground transportation from the airport to the Embassy. Now, nearly seven years later, Embassy personnel, including SIGAR and other oversight agencies, are largely restricted to the Kabul embassy compound and the few remaining RS bases, and, for nearly a year now, must take helicopters to and from the Kabul airport because of the growing security risk.

The lack of security has made it increasingly difficult for many U.S. and even some Afghan officials to get out to manage and inspect U.S.-funded reconstruction projects. Notwithstanding these obstacles, SIGAR, the largest U.S. oversight organization in Afghanistan, has managed to continue its work of overseeing U.S. programs and projects, partly through the creative use of local Afghan staff and civil-society organizations, and with the assistance of the U.S. military when available. SIGAR work to date has saved over \$2 billion for the U.S. taxpayer. In addition, we have built strong, cooperative working relationships with the RS and the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which has primary responsibility for the training and development of the Afghan security forces. Indeed, CSTC-A has agreed with and accepted many of SIGAR's recommendations. We continue to work with RS and CSTC-A to improve matters in many areas.

To be sure, the United States and its Coalition partners have accomplished much over the course of the past 15 years. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan had no formal military or police forces. Now it has a well-equipped and well-staffed army, air force, and police force who report to a democratically elected government. And while those forces continue to face a determined insurgency, they have been fighting hard and taking significant casualties.

However, if recent developments are indicators of what is to come, we may not be on course to achieve and sustain for the long term the U.S. national security objectives which are to "deny al-Qaida a safe haven, deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the government, and strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future."¹²

Before I begin talking about some of the problems SIGAR has found over the years, I think I should remind people that Afghanistan is one of the most challenging places in the world to work and do business. The dangers we all face there are very real and our military as well as civilian employees and contractors have accomplished so much that it is impossible not to be proud—and humbled—by their efforts and great sacrifice.

¹⁰ *Washington Post*, "'Probably the largest' al-Qaeda training camp ever destroyed in Afghanistan," 10/30/2015.

¹¹ *The Independent* (UK), "Helmand governor takes to Facebook to warn Afghan president of Taliban threat," 12/20/2015.

¹² The White House, National Security Strategy, 5/2010, p. 20.

Key Challenges Facing ANDSF Development

I wish I could tell you today that U.S. funding to build, equip, train, and sustain the ANDSF has always been of good value to the U.S. taxpayer. However, SIGAR has found many instances when U.S. funding dedicated to the ANDSF was wasted, whether inefficiently spent on worthwhile endeavors or squandered on activities that delivered no apparent benefit.

Based on SIGAR's completed and ongoing work, we see five major challenges confronting U.S. efforts to develop the ANDSF:

- 1) Limited oversight visibility
- 2) Questionable force strength numbers
- 3) Unreliable capability assessments
- 4) Limited On-budget assistance capacity
- 5) Uncertain long-term sustainability

Limited Oversight Visibility

With fewer forces in theater, the United States military has lost much of its ability to collect reliable information and data on ANDSF capability and effectiveness. For years, U.S. and Coalition forces maintained a presence as high as 130,000 troops. There are now less than 13,000 U.S. and Coalition troops there as part of Resolute Support's train, advise, and assist mission. In SIGAR's latest quarterly report, USFOR-A reported that U.S. advisors have little or no direct contact with ANDSF units below the army corps and regional police headquarters level.¹³ This situation contrasts dramatically with the previous International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission (the predecessor to the RS mission), where many Coalition advisors were embedded with ANDSF tactical units, enabling them to offer real-time advice and make detailed observations of performance.

However, while such high-level assessments of ANDSF capabilities at the headquarters and corps level are still possible, assessments below those levels—for example at the brigade or battalion level—are beyond the capability of the United States and its Coalition partners. They simply do not have the presence to conduct such assessments. This is a serious concern because SIGAR and other U.S. oversight agencies have long questioned the reliability and accuracy of ANDSF assessments, at a time when those assessments had far more granularity than today.

With the greatly reduced Coalition troop strength, RS mission advisors rely almost exclusively on data provided by the Afghan ministries to evaluate the operational readiness and effectiveness of the ANDSF. In some ways, this is like the fox guarding the hen house, and, in this case, the hen house is billions of dollars in U.S. funds appropriated for the ANDSF.

¹³ USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/4/2015.

SIGAR has seen the effect of the drawdown first hand as the quantity and quality of the information we receive—especially regarding the capability and effectiveness of the ANDSF. The data is less detailed and has less analytical value. For example, in response to a recent SIGAR request for information, USFOR-A gave a general assessment of the ANDSF performance as uneven, with numerous, high-profile tactical and operational setbacks detracting from its overall success in preventing the Taliban from achieving its strategic goals. ANDSF capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, logistics, maintenance, operational planning, and leadership persist. DOD assessed that the ANDSF continued to improve integration of indirect-fire and close-air attack capabilities, but that the ANDSF's capacity to hold areas after initial clearing operations is uneven: they remain in a primarily defensive posture that limits their agility across the country.¹⁴ I worry that as the U.S. military draws down in the future and can only advise at the ministerial level, our ability to know what is happening in the field will be further degraded.

The fall of Kunduz after 14 years of U.S. support for the ANDSF deserves serious examination by the U.S. military. Yet, SIGAR was disturbed to learn that, according to a USFOR-A response to a SIGAR request for information, the RS mission did not conduct a comprehensive review of the Kunduz incident separate from that conducted by the Afghan government. With billions of dollars still in the funding pipeline, it is troubling to learn that the RS mission has not conducted its own independent review to consider whether our current “train, advise, and assist” effort is as effective as it should be, or whether changes need to be made.

Possible questions for Congress and U.S. policymakers include:

- Is the current level of U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan adequate to ensure that the ANDSF do not fail in their mission and to mitigate the risk to our substantial investment?
- To what extent can the U.S. military rely on the veracity and accuracy of the information it receives from the Afghan security ministries about ANDSF performance?

Questionable Force Strength Numbers

SIGAR has looked closely into the actual strength of the ANDSF. For years, the authorized strength of the ANDSF has been 352,000 soldiers and police officers.¹⁵ However, SIGAR's work shows that while the ANDSF's actual strength has approached the goal of 352,000 authorized personnel, it has never been fully achieved. Indeed, our work shows that neither the United States nor its Afghan allies truly know how many Afghan soldiers and police are available for duty, or, by extension, the true nature of their operational capabilities.

The importance of reliable Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) personnel data to the U.S. and Afghan governments, RS, and other donor nations supporting

¹⁴ USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/4/2015.

¹⁵ DOD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 12/2012, p. 56; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/14/2015.

the ANDSF cannot be overstated. Every professional standing military, security force, and police force begins each day identifying how many personnel are present for duty and what abilities they have, such as trained infantry, patrolmen, medics and mechanics. This data enables the commanders of these forces to determine their operational capabilities.

In his testimony before the full House Armed Services Committee last week, General Campbell gave an estimate that 70% of the problems facing the ANDSF result from poor leadership. But even the best military leaders in the world cannot do their jobs without a clear understanding each day of how many personnel, and with what skills, are present for duty.

In 2006, before SIGAR was created, the DOD and Department of State Inspectors General warned of inflated numbers among the ANP. A subsequent attempt by CSTC-A to verify the Ministry of Interior's payroll records by conducting a physical count of police personnel was unable to verify 20% of Afghan Uniformed Police and 13% of Afghan Border Police carried on the rolls.¹⁶

In 2009, GAO found that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and U.S. contractors were unable to validate the existence or active status of 29,400 MOI and ANP personnel—representing more than a third of both groups at that time—due to a lack of cooperation from ANP commanders.¹⁷ At that time, GAO reported that a State Department cable said that police chiefs were inflating their numbers by “creating ghost policemen” in order to obtain illegal payments for those “ghost” personnel.¹⁸

During our 2011 audit of ANP personnel systems, SIGAR was unable to conclusively determine an accurate total for ANP personnel. In our report, we found that various sources of personnel data showed total reported numbers of ANP personnel ranging from 111,774 to 125,218, a division-sized discrepancy of 13,444 personnel.¹⁹

Since that time, DOD and CSTC-A responses to SIGAR requests for information on ANDSF numbers have raised even more questions. Over the course of several quarters, ISAF told SIGAR that ANDSF personnel numbers sometimes included civilians and sometimes did not. Moreover, large quarterly changes in the numbers of Afghan Army personnel at the headquarters level, as well as discrepancies in the data, further raised concerns.

A January 2015 SIGAR audit found that more than \$300 million in annual, U.S.-funded salary payments to the ANP were based on data that were only partially verified or reconciled. In other words, there was, once again, no assurance that personnel and payroll data were accurate. In fact, SIGAR found that nearly 20% of Afghan police personnel were at

¹⁶ SIGAR, *Afghan National Police: More than \$300 Million in Annual, U.S.-funded Salary Payments Is Based on Partially Verified or Reconciled Data*, Audit Report 15-26-AR, 1/2015.

¹⁷ GAO, *Afghanistan Security U.S. Programs to Further Reform Ministry of Interior and National Police Challenged by Lack of Military Personnel and Afghan Cooperation*, 3/2009.

¹⁸ GAO, *Afghanistan Security U.S. Programs to Further Reform Ministry of Interior and National Police Challenged by Lack of Military Personnel and Afghan Cooperation*, 3/2009.

¹⁹ SIGAR, *Despite Improvements in MOI's Personnel Systems, Additional Actions Are Needed to Completely Verify ANP Payroll Costs and Workforce Strength*, Audit Report 11-10-AR, 4/25/2011.

risk of not receiving their full salaries because they are paid in cash by an MOI-appointed “trusted agent,” a process that lacks documentation and accountability.²⁰

In an April 2015 audit, SIGAR found that there is still no assurance that ANA personnel and payroll data—which are tracked by the Ministry of Defense and the Afghan Army—are accurate.²¹ Instead, CSTC-A, and later the RS mission, relied on the Ministry of Defense and the ANA to collect and accurately report ANA personnel and payroll data. However, the ANA’s process for collecting unit-level attendance data, upon which all ANA personnel and payroll data is based, had limited oversight and weak controls, and was not consistently applied across ANA locations. There are no requirements that supervisory ANA officials verify attendance in lower-level units. U.S. and Coalition officials are not present during the attendance process, and command officials told SIGAR that they have limited knowledge of or influence over the process.

The only control in place at the unit level to ensure accurate ANA attendance reporting on a day-to-day basis—a roster each soldier is required to sign daily—was not consistently used across ANA locations. For example, officers used the roster, but enlisted personnel did not. This lack of verification of enlisted-personnel attendance provides minimal assurance that unit commanders are accurately reporting personnel attendance. These weaknesses in the ANA attendance data-collection process could result in personnel being paid for days not worked, either with or without knowledge of supervisory personnel.²²

Sadly, I was not surprised to read an Associated Press report just last month alleging that the actual number of ANDSF security forces in the embattled province of Helmand is far less than the official count because the rolls are filled with “ghost” soldiers and police officers.²³ The AP reported that a provincial council member estimated 40% of the security forces reportedly in Helmand do not exist, while a former provincial deputy police chief said the actual number in Helmand was “nowhere near” the 31,000 police on the registers. Most troubling was the AP’s report that an Afghan official estimated the total ANDSF number at around 120,000—less than half the officially reported 322,638 assigned personnel.²⁴

While I cannot verify these assertions—and I only mention them as troubling if they turn out to be true—SIGAR has long questioned the ANDSF’s actual personnel strength. The very real possibility of ghost soldiers in the ANDSF compromises their readiness, the perception of the ANDSF, and the Afghan government’s credibility.

Possible questions for Congress and U.S. policymakers include:

- Does the United States have an accurate understanding of the number of ANDSF troops?

²⁰ SIGAR, *Afghan National Police: More than \$300 Million in Annual, U.S.-funded Salary Payments Is Based on Partially Verified or Reconciled Data*, Audit Report 15-26-AR, 1/2015.

²¹ SIGAR, *Afghan National Army: Millions of Dollars at Risk Due to Minimal Oversight of Personnel and Payroll Data*, Audit Report 15-54-AR, 4/2015.

²² SIGAR Audit 15-54.

²³ Associated Press, “Afghan forces struggle as ranks thinned by ‘ghost’ soldiers,” 1/10/2016.

²⁴ Associated Press, “Afghan forces struggle as ranks thinned by ‘ghost’ soldiers,” 1/10/2016.

- Does the U.S. military have the ability to collect or verify the data that is needed to ensure that the number of personnel in the ANDSF is accurate and the money we are spending on their salaries and sustainment is not at risk to waste or fraud?

Unreliable Capability Assessments

While the personnel strength of the ANDSF is important, SIGAR is also concerned that other measures of ANDSF capabilities and effectiveness have never been very reliable and are getting worse. The RS mission's predecessor, ISAF, used several different assessment tools to measure ANDSF capability at the unit-level in areas such as leadership, command and control, equipment levels, and attrition. These assessments provide both U.S. and Afghan stakeholders—including the American taxpayers who pay the costs of recruiting, training, feeding, housing, equipping, and supplying Afghan soldiers and police officers—with updates on the status of these forces and the effectiveness of our \$68 billion investment in them. However, over the years, the amount of detail provided in these assessments has declined.

For example, in 2010, SIGAR released an audit in which we found that top-rated ANDSF units—units deemed capable of operating independently—could not sustain the gains they had made. The system used to rate the ANDSF overstated their operational capabilities and, in fact, created disincentives for ANDSF improvement. SIGAR auditors found significant levels of regression, or backsliding, in the capability levels of army and police units, due, in part, to the fact that once a unit achieved a top rating, Coalition forces withdrew assistance, such as force protection, supplies, and expertise.²⁵

Following SIGAR's audit, ISAF Joint Command (IJC) changed its system for rating the ANDSF. The previous system's top rating was "fully capable," but the new system top rating changed over time from "effective with advisors" to "independent with advisors."²⁶ Unfortunately each new system seemed to provide less detail than the one before and lower thresholds for determining the success of Afghan units.

In July 2012, the GAO raised concerns that the change of the title of the highest rating level from "independent" to "independent with advisors" was, in part, responsible for an increase in the number of ANDSF units rated at the highest level—suggesting that achieving independence proved too difficult whereas achieving independence but *with advisors* was an attainable goal.²⁷

In February 2014, SIGAR again audited the system used to assess ANDSF capability and, once again, found that the assessment tool used to rate the ANDSF was inconsistently applied and not useful. At that time, SIGAR found that the rating system's standard operating procedure did not provide clear guidance on the level of detail that was necessary to support a team's rating or what the team's subjective assessments should contain. This

²⁵ SIGAR, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, Audit Report 10-11-AR, 6/29/2010.

²⁶ SIGAR, *Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts*, Audit Report 14-33-AR, 2/2014.

²⁷ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Afghanistan Security: Long-standing Challenges May Affect Progress and Sustainment of Afghan National Security Forces*, GAO-12-951T, 7/24/2012.

unclear guidance led to disparities in the quantity and quality of information across assessments, and to inconsistencies in the evaluations of ANDSF units' capacity to man, train, and equip its forces.²⁸

Another example concerns the Afghanistan Human Resources Management Information System (AHRIMS). AHRIMS is a database that is intended to be the one-stop-shop for information on ANDSF personnel. CSTC-A has told SIGAR repeatedly of the progress the MOD and MOI has made in adding information to this database with 90% filled. In order to understand the state of recruitment and attrition, SIGAR asked DOD for reports from AHRIMS with the province of origin and education levels of ANDSF recruits and those who have left. Both these fields exist in the AHRIMS database. We wanted to see if the data could help tell what types of people were joining and leaving the ANDSF. When we asked for this information, however, DOD said the data we requested was unavailable. In this case, DOD appears to be failing to exploit the potential of the AHRIMS database.

As we are seeing now in Helmand province and in other areas where the ANDSF is struggling to maintain security, it is critical that we—both the United States and our Afghan partners—have a sound understanding of ANDSF capabilities. It is for this reason that the recent press statement by Resolute Support's deputy chief of staff for communications, Brigadier General Wilson Shoffner, is so profoundly disturbing. On January 19, he told reporters that one of the major efforts that will occur over the winter “is the rebuild of the Afghan national army's 215th Corps.” The 215th Corps is dedicated to securing the hotly contested province of Helmand and the province of Nimroz.

What was more troubling was his statement that the 215th “is not one of the corps where we have a permanent [train, advise, and assist mission], but it's one of the areas where we do the expeditionary advising.”²⁹ According to General Shoffner, “expeditionary advising” involves RS sending out teams to advise ANDSF corps “on-site for a period of days or a period of weeks.”³⁰ The arrival of the new U.S. forces in Helmand province may resolve this situation for now, but the results of the “expeditionary advising” have not been encouraging.

Possible questions for Congress and U.S. policymakers include:

- Does the United States have a clear, accurate, and useful understanding of the ANDSF's capabilities?
- Can the U.S. military devise assessment tools that would be more useful and accurate?

²⁸ SIGAR, *Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts*, Audit Report 14-33-AR, 2/2014.

²⁹ DOD, Department of Defense Press Briefing by Gen. Shoffner via Teleconference from Afghanistan, 1/19/2016.

³⁰ DOD, Department of Defense Press Briefing by Gen. Shoffner via Teleconference from Afghanistan, 1/19/2016.

Limited On-Budget Assistance Capacity

SIGAR has long been concerned about the risk to U.S. funds provided to the ANDSF in the form of on-budget assistance, which include direct assistance (also referred to as bilateral or government-to-government assistance) and assistance provided through multi-donor trust funds before reaching the Afghan government. The major multi-donor trust fund for the ANDSF is the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan (LOTFA) managed by the United Nations Development Programme to pay police salaries. Since 2002, the United States has contributed \$1.5 billion to LOTFA.

Since 2010, the United States has been gradually increasing the amount of on-budget assistance to the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior. In 2015, DOD provided approximately \$2 billion in on-budget assistance to the ANDSF. On-budget assistance is intended to allow the Afghans more freedom to manage their own budget and to build their capacity for doing so. However, this commitment to increase on-budget assistance, whether directly or through multilateral trust funds, has led to reduced U.S. control and visibility over these funds.

In a review of DOD's safeguards for funds provided to the MOD and MOI, SIGAR identified a number of weaknesses that increased the risk that on-budget funds provided to the ANDSF through a Ministry of Finance account at Afghanistan's central bank were particularly vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse. At the time of SIGAR's review in November 2013, CSTC-A's process did not provide its trainers and decision makers with an overall understanding of each ministry's financial management capacity, or help them identify risks associated with capacity weaknesses.

According to CSTC-A, once funds enter the Afghan government's bank account, oversight becomes considerably more challenging. CSTC-A compares data reported on the Afghanistan Financial Management Information System (AFMIS) against approved amounts in its commitment letters with the ministries. CSTC-A also uses audits designed to detect and correct improper spending to monitor high-risk areas such as fuel and pay. Based on the results of those efforts, CSTC-A employs a process by which its financial contributions are withheld until Afghan ministries can demonstrate that they have corrected identified weaknesses. Nevertheless, SIGAR's work has uncovered several cases in which the MOD and the MOI were incapable of managing on-budget assistance.

In January 2013, a SIGAR audit found that CSTC-A lacked sufficient accountability in the process used to order, receive, and pay for petroleum, oil, and lubricants for Afghan Army vehicles, generators, and power plants. This lack of accountability increased the risk that U.S. funds and fuel will be stolen. Specifically, SIGAR found that CSTC-A records relating to fuel purchases paid for between March 2010 to February 2011 were missing; data on fuel purchases covering the period March 2011 to March 2012 was inaccurate and incomplete; and CSTC-A could not account for fuel that was spilled or lost. In addition, CSTC-A's processes for price approval, ordering, receipt, delivery and payment of fuel were beset by major vulnerabilities. For example, CSTC-A approved payments for fuel without verifying vendors' statements that they had made deliveries in full and of acceptable quality. In addition, fuel orders were not based on required consumption data and did not follow the

authorized process.³¹ This audit followed the work of SIGAR investigators who had previously found that CSTC-A's lack of record retention meant the U.S. government could not account for \$201 million in fuel purchased for the Afghan Army.³²

Despite these difficulties, CSTC-A has since turned responsibility of managing ANA fuel over to the MOD. Unfortunately, SIGAR's work has identified new problems with the MOD's ability to manage and account for on-budget assistance used to pay for fuel. In 2015, a SIGAR investigation uncovered corruption in the award of a nearly \$1 billion, multi-year Afghan MOD fuel contract.

This case is especially significant because it shows how much good can come when SIGAR, the U.S. military, and the Afghan government cooperate toward achieving a common goal. The breakthrough in this case came after SIGAR and CSTC-A briefed President Ashraf Ghani on February 1, 2015, that four contractors had engaged in price-fixing, bid-rigging, and bribery prior to the award of the MOD fuel contract, criminally increasing its cost to the Afghan government and the American taxpayer by more than \$214 million.

Following the briefing, President Ghani immediately suspended the MOD officials involved in the fuel contract award, cancelled the entire contract, warned the contractors involved of possible debarment, and assigned an independent Afghan investigator to look into the award of the MOD fuel contract, as well as that of an additional 11 MOD contracts for other commodities. Such rapid and decisive action sends a strong signal in a country routinely rated as one of the world's most corrupt.

And finally, in September 2015, SIGAR issued an alert letter to DOD warning that the ANDSF had been operating since 2011 with insufficient cold-weather clothing, which can impair effectiveness and downgrade performance. The shortages developed after CSTC-A transferred responsibility for ordering uniforms to the MOD and MOI. In 2013, CSTC-A refused to reimburse the ministries for purchases made that were not in compliance with U.S. law. Since then, the ministries have awarded no new contracts to buy winter uniforms.³³

Possible questions for Congress and U.S. policymakers include:

- Is CSTC-A doing as much as necessary to oversee the MOD and MOI's use of on-budget funding, especially in light of its own historic challenges in administering such programs?
- Are the MOD and MOI meeting the conditions required to receive on-budget U.S. funding? Are those conditions sufficient or are more—or more robust—conditions needed? Is CSTC-A actually enforcing those conditions and holding MOD and MOI accountable?

³¹ SIGAR, Afghan National Army: Controls over Fuel for Vehicles, Generators, and Power Plants need strengthening to Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse, Audit Report 13-4-AR, 1/2013.

³² SIGAR Investigative Report 13-1.

³³ SIGAR Alert Letter 15-86-AL.

Uncertain Long-term Sustainability

In his testimony, General Campbell said the authorized level of the ANDSF is going to need to remain at 352,000 at least through 2020. The estimated cost of such a force is \$5.4 billion per year. As Gen. Campbell pointed out, Afghanistan is nowhere near being able to pay for security forces of this size. According to DOD, while the Afghan government has increased its contributions to their security budget, the Afghan government has not even been able to make the contribution of \$500 million per year it agreed to at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago. Additionally, the Afghan economy is not expected to grow quickly enough in the next five years to cover a significantly larger share of ANDSF costs than it is currently paying. The United States and its allies plan to meet to discuss how to share the burden of financing the ANDSF in Warsaw this summer. But this year the United States contributed \$4.1 billion, and even with U.S. funding of this magnitude, SIGAR's work shows that the ANDSF is unable to sustain itself in many areas.

For example, the ANDSF relied for many years on the U.S. military for air support to its fighting forces. In 2016, the Afghans still lack the air assets they need to protect and support their own forces. The impact of the lack of a well-equipped and capable Afghan Air Force became all too clear on September 28, 2015, when the city of Kunduz fell to the Taliban. Despite the end of U.S. combat operations and a transition to a mission focused on training, advising, and assisting, U.S. forces were once again called upon to provide air support to Afghan forces.³⁴

Both the United States and Afghanistan have long recognized the importance of developing air power. However, despite the fact that this was pointed out as a critical capability gap, the Afghan Air Force is still far from fully capable, let alone self-sustaining.

One of DOD's plans to close the Afghan Air Force's capability gaps was to provide it with 20 A-29 Super Tucanos. The Tucano is a single-prop, aerial reconnaissance aircraft that can be armed to provide fire support for ground troops. While a contract was signed to build these A-29s in November 2011, a legal challenge from another company prevented the winning contractor from meeting their initial delivery date of April 2013.³⁵ Because of this, the first four A-29s were not delivered to Afghanistan until January 15, 2016—a year after the drawdown of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.³⁶ Another four are expected to be delivered by May—the last ones for this year. However, as General Campbell said recently, it will take three years before the Air Force is equipped and fully capable of providing close-air support. He also said that it takes about three years to train a pilot.³⁷

³⁴ *Washington Post*, "Obama apologizes to aid group for US attack on Afghan clinic," 10/8/2015.

³⁵ *Beechcraft Defense Company LLC v. United States and Sierra Nevada Corporation*, (United States Court of Federal Claims 2013).

³⁶ *United Press International*, "Afghanistan receives A-19 Super Tucano aircraft," 1/19/2016.

³⁷ CQ Congressional Transcripts, Senate Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Situation in Afghanistan, 2/4/2016.

On a positive note, I understand that the 14 MD-530 helicopters now in Afghanistan are being flown throughout the country in combat and show great promise in building the capacity of the Afghan Air Force.³⁸

SIGAR also has found significant instances of waste and squandered opportunities in the critical area building up the Afghan Air Force. One of the most egregious was DOD's \$486 million purchase of 20 G222 medium-lift cargo planes for the Afghan Air Force. Due to poor planning, poor oversight, poor contract management (including possible fraud), and a misunderstanding of aircraft capabilities, those aircraft could not even meet operational requirements in the Afghan setting. The program was ended in March 2013 after experiencing continuous and severe operational difficulties, including a lack of spare parts. Sixteen of those 20 aircraft were sold for scrap metal for six cents a pound or \$32,000 in 2013.³⁹ SIGAR is investigating this procurement.

Possible questions for Congress and U.S. policymakers include:

- Is the United States taking prudent actions to ensure the ANDSF is sustainable?
- If the United States agrees to provide upward of \$4 billion per year to support the ANDSF for the next four years, are we doing as much as we can to provide oversight of that funding?

Conclusion

Security is the most critical component of U.S. efforts to rebuild Afghanistan. Without good security, our \$113 billion investment in reconstruction—and our incalculable investment in the lives lost by American, Afghan, and Coalition troops—is at terrible risk.

These five challenges of limited oversight visibility, questionable force strength, unreliable capability assessments, limited on-budget assistance capacity, and uncertain long-term sustainability of Afghan forces identified through SIGAR's audit work, call into question the capability and effectiveness of the ANDSF—both now and in the future—and raise concerns about our efforts to give them the tools and resources they need to fight on their own.

U.S. military leaders have long suggested that the ANDSF will need significant help in the future if they are to succeed. While the United States and its allies have promised continued financial assistance for the ANDSF, under the current plan to continue cutting U.S. force strength in 2016, the ANDSF will be increasingly left without the ability to call on U.S. and Coalition military components for help. Furthermore, without the strong monitoring and

³⁸ CQ Congressional Transcripts, House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Situation in Afghanistan, 2/2/2016.

³⁹ SIGAR, *Scrapping of G222 Aircraft Inquiry Letter*, Special Project 15-02-SP, 10/3/2014.

mentoring arm of U.S. and Coalition troops to help, it is increasingly unlikely they will develop into a robust and sustainable force.⁴⁰

SIGAR has found that the capability of ANDSF units regressed when deprived of U.S. or Coalition assistance. This was highlighted in 2010 in one of SIGAR's first audits. And, as evident by the reintroduction of U.S. troops into Helmand, it may be happening now to the Afghan Army's 215th Corps. While it is vital that the ANDSF continue to receive financial assistance if they are to survive, they also need robust oversight—not only by inspectors general, but by the military personnel. For it is the U.S. military who can help them, as General Joseph Dunford put it, in "maturing the systems, the processes and the institutions necessary to support a modern national army and police force."⁴¹

As an Inspector General, my job is to give Congress and the Administration my unvarnished assessment of how we are progressing to meet our reconstruction goals. Although the ANDSF has fought valiantly this first year, the information we have suggests that Afghan forces are facing a crisis because they still lack the capability to effectively hold off the insurgency on their own. SIGAR's work provides little confidence that the ANDSF's capability and effectiveness will increase on its own without continued U.S. and Coalition assistance. As SIGAR's body of work demonstrates, the less oversight, the less likelihood of success.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to addressing your questions.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, "General Says 20,000 Troops Should Stay in Afghanistan," 3/05/2013; *New York Times*, "NATO Plans Assistance to Afghanistan After Combat Role Ends," 2/22/2013; *RS News*, "Troop Contributing Nations," 12/2015; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/4/2015.

⁴¹ SIGAR, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, Audit Report 10-11-AR, 6/29/2010; *Military.com*, "'Corrupt' Afghan Army Leaders Hinder Fight in Helmand Province," 01/20/2016; DOD, "Work Remains to Ensure Afghan Progress Endures, Dunford Says," 3/13/2014.

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General

John F. Sopko was sworn in as Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction on July 2, 2012. Mr. Sopko, appointed to the post by President Obama, has more than 30 years of experience in oversight and investigations as a prosecutor, congressional counsel and senior federal government advisor.

Mr. Sopko came to SIGAR from Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, an international law firm headquartered in Washington, D.C., where he had been a partner since 2009.

Mr. Sopko's government experience includes over 20 years on Capitol Hill, where he held key positions in both the Senate and House of Representatives. He served on the staffs of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Select Committee on Homeland Security and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

In his most recent congressional post, Mr. Sopko was Chief Counsel for Oversight and Investigations for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, chaired by Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), during the 110th Congress. There, he supervised several investigations focused on matters regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Energy, Department of Commerce, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission and Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Mr. Sopko also served as General Counsel and Chief Oversight Counsel for the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, where he focused on homeland security and counter-terrorism investigations and issues.

At the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations, chaired by then-Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), Mr. Sopko conducted investigations on a broad range of issues, from healthcare insurance to complex weapons systems. From 1982 to 1997, Mr. Sopko led investigations for the chairman and subcommittee members that included a multi-year investigation related to health insurance; union infiltration by organized crime; protection of critical infrastructure; the potential spread of weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere; enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act; cybersecurity; international drug interdiction programs; counter-terrorism policies and procedures; government procurement fraud and the illegal export of dual-use technologies.

After his work in the Senate, Mr. Sopko was recruited by the Commerce Secretary to manage the department's response to multiple congressional, grand jury and press inquiries. While at the Commerce Department, Mr. Sopko was named Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement for the Bureau of Export Administration, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

Mr. Sopko previously served as a state and federal prosecutor. As a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, he conducted numerous long-term grand jury investigations and prosecutions against organized crime groups. He was the lead attorney in the first successful federal RICO prosecution of the entire leadership structure of an American La Cosa Nostra crime family. In 1982 he received the Justice Department's Special Commendation Award for Outstanding Service to the Criminal Division, and in 1980 he received the department's Special Achievement Award for Sustained Superior Performance.

Mr. Sopko began his professional career as a state prosecutor in Dayton, Ohio, with the Montgomery County prosecutor's office. He served as an adjunct professor at American University's School of Justice, where he received the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Teaching Award in 1984 and the Professor of the Year Award in 1986. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1974, and his law degree from Case Western University School of Law in 1977. He is a member of the bars of Ohio and the District of Columbia.

February 12, 2016



Expected Release
10:30 a.m.

Statement of
Mr. Michael S. Child, Sr.
Deputy Inspector General for
Overseas Contingency Operations
Department of Defense Office of Inspector General

before the
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,
House Armed Services Committee

on

"Assessing the Development of
Afghanistan National Security Forces"

Chairwoman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the capability gaps in the Afghan National Security Forces, the sufficiency of Coalition forces providing assistance, and ongoing oversight by the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD OIG).

I am the Deputy Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations for the DoD Inspector General. My responsibilities include coordinating DoD OIG oversight in Afghanistan. Today, I would like to give the Subcommittee a brief overview of DoD OIG work and our responsibilities with regard to oversight of Overseas Contingency Operations, such as Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) in Afghanistan. I will then describe DoD OIG's role in joint planning activities with oversight agencies in the region and summarize our oversight as it has assessed aspects of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and the U.S. Train, Advise, and Assist mission. In addition, I will highlight our planned and ongoing oversight work concerning the ANDSF and the Afghanistan Ministries of Defense and Interior. Finally, I will provide the Subcommittee a brief overview of the Lead IG concept, and how it impacts oversight coordination on Overseas Contingency Operations, such as OFS and Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), the Counter-ISIL mission in Iraq and Syria.

COORDINATED JOINT OVERSIGHT

As early as 2004, the DoD OIG had begun audits of contracts supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the security force assistance mission that preceded OFS. During 2007, DoD OIG began to deploy permanent staff to conduct oversight in Afghanistan, consisting of criminal investigators, auditors, and evaluators, as well as short-term field work teams. Since 2008, DoD OIG has published more than 90 audits, assessments, and inspection reports

concerning procurement management; contract administration; controls over the use of U.S. direct assistance funds; military construction; weapons and property accountability; information operations; training, equipping, and sustaining the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP); ANDSF force generation and operational effectiveness metrics; retrograde of U.S. personnel and property; facility electrical safety inspections; and many other important areas involved in sustaining a U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and executing the security force assistance mission with the ANDSF.

In 2008, implementing direction from the Section 842 of the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act to improve oversight coordination and planning, the DoD OIG assumed responsibility for chairing quarterly coordination meetings of the many oversight agencies conducting audits, assessments, and inspections during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. These oversight agencies included the DoD OIG; Department of State IG; United States Agency for International Development IG; the Government Accountability Office; the Special IG for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR); the Special IG for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR); and the three military service Auditors General offices. DoD OIG has continuously served as the Chair of this Southwest Asia Joint Planning Group (SWA JPG), which also facilitates discussion of current and future oversight needs, de-conflicts duplicative oversight efforts, and identifies gaps in oversight coverage.

The DoD OIG also publishes an annual product resulting from the efforts by the SWA JPG, which is a compendium of all ongoing and planned oversight projects conducted within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. That publication was then known as the Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Southwest Asia and has since been renamed the Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations.

At the end of 2012, I assumed duties as the Chair of the SWA JPG, and in January 2016 conducted the 33rd quarterly SWA JPG meeting, my 13th as Chair. These meetings usually include a U.S. commander, general or flag officer, or senior civilian as guest speaker, in person or by VTC from Afghanistan or Kuwait, to inform senior oversight leaders about current programs, operations, activities, or policy changes in OFS or OIR.

In discharging my responsibilities as the Deputy IG for Overseas Contingency Operations, I meet periodically with senior DoD leadership, particularly in OSD Policy and the Comptroller's Office, to identify areas for strategic oversight coverage. Likewise, several times a year, I travel to Southwest Asia to meet with commanders and senior leaders to discuss our work and to identify areas that could benefit from additional oversight. In addition, on a rotational basis, I assign our DoD OIG senior representative for OIR (currently at Camp Arifjan) and OFS (currently at Bagram Airfield), to facilitate on-the-ground discussion of projects, information collection, and support for our TDY field oversight teams.

Since 2013, DoD OIG, SIGAR, and the other SWA JPG oversight partners have prepared a Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Afghanistan. The FY 2016 joint strategic oversight plan for Afghanistan, published in October 2015, meets the Lead IG obligation to publish a Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OFS. I discuss the Lead IG concept later in this statement.

OVERSIGHT IN AFGHANISTAN

From the broad base of DoD OIG oversight work that I described earlier, I will address our observations on strengths, weaknesses, capability gaps and shortfalls of the ANDSF, as well as the sufficiency of Coalition efforts to develop the ANDSF.

We view the challenges in developing the ANDSF as twofold:

- Balancing the requirement to provide near-term Afghan fighting capability against the longer term need to build enablers and support systems for the sustainment of the force.
- Building Afghan national institutions and capabilities where those have not previously existed.

The risk is that the pace of progress in developing the ANDSF may be insufficient to achieve our broad objectives in the time available. In his February 4, 2016, testimony to the SASC, General Campbell noted that the planned change from a 9,800 U.S. forces footprint in 2016 to a 5,500 footprint in 2017 was developed primarily around the counterterrorism mission and that the reduced number would only support a very limited train, advise, and assist capability. Further he assessed that 70 percent of the problems facing the Afghan security forces result from poor leadership and that military setbacks in Kunduz and Helmand provinces have, in ways, forced a greater sense of urgency on the part of the Afghan Government to make the changes required.

The shortcomings in building adequate systems to sustain a growing Afghan defense force is a recurrent theme in our oversight work and underlies many of the ANDSF capability gaps that we have identified. That is, the mechanisms to provide supplies, equipment, maintenance, and personnel to Afghan army and police forces remain immature and unreliable.

This situation is the result of the need to rapidly grow the ANDSF, directly assist the ANDSF in combat operations, and provide robust U.S. and Coalition logistical support. Only later, did the U.S. and Coalition partners turn attention to building ANDSF capability to independently sustain their Army and Police forces. As the outgoing Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, General John Campbell observed on February 2, 2016, before this Committee,

overcoming this sustainment gap while the ANDSF is simultaneously engaged in warfighting operations represents an enormous challenge. I would now like to discuss four areas where our oversight work has identified difficulties in building support for the ANDSF.

Supply and Maintenance

Our oversight work has identified the method by which Afghan forces received past support as a major contributor to the sustainability gap. Most often, equipment and supplies were “pushed” to Afghan forces from various commands and Coalition contributors rather than “pulled” in response to requests from Afghan operating units based on clearly identified requirements. The result is that the Afghans have little experience with the conventional demand-driven support systems used by U.S. and Coalition forces -- and are unfamiliar with the type of logistics planning that ensures equipment and supplies are identified, procured, and delivered when and where needed. For example, an assessment the DoD OIG completed in December 2014 found that the Afghan National Army had not yet developed the capability to forecast materiel requirements needed to sustain combat operations.¹

Further, in a later assessment, we found that because of extensive Coalition support, the establishment of Afghan-owned, demand-based support systems had not been treated as a critical requirement for building ANDSF combat capability. For many years, Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police units were able to obtain supplies, equipment maintenance, and other types of support from Coalition partners or Coalition-funded contractors.² However, that

¹ DoDIG, DODIG-2015-047, “Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Logistics Sustainment Capability of the Afghan National Army,” 12/19/2014. Available at www.dodig.mil.

² DoDIG, DODIG-2015-093, “Summary of Lessons Learned – DoDIG Assessment Oversight of ‘Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip’ Operations by U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan,” 3/31/2015, p. 19-23. Available at www.dodig.mil.

option is rapidly disappearing as Coalition presence below the Corps and regional levels is severely reduced and U.S. forces are no longer engaged in a conventional combat mission. Without adequate sustainment, any improvement achieved in Afghan fighting capabilities cannot be preserved.

In addition, maintaining accountability for equipment procured for, or transferred to, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces remains a critically important element of sustainment. For example, in April 2015 a DoD OIG audit found that neither the Afghan Ministry of Defense nor the Ministry of Interior had controls in place to effectively manage accountability of the 95,000 vehicles that DoD procured for the ANDSF since 2005. Additionally, the audit reported that Coalition advisors had no confidence in the ability of Afghan forces to independently maintain vehicles. The audit identified weaknesses in supply chain management and maintenance expertise as the leading causes of weakness in the Afghan maintenance capability. In response to our audit recommendations, Coalition advisors increased efforts to assist Afghan counterparts to improve the accuracy of vehicle records and strengthen their maintenance capability.³

However, information we received last month from the Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan (CSTC-A), the multinational command responsible for training, equipping, and developing Afghan security forces, indicates that the current state of materiel readiness in the Afghan National Army is “dire” for both vehicles and weapons. Long-standing problems – such as insufficient repair technicians, aged equipment, excessive variety of

³ DoDIG, DODIG-2015-107, “Challenges Exist for Asset Accountability and Maintenance and Sustainment of Vehicles Within the Afghan National Security Forces,” 4/17/2015. Available at www.dodig.mil.

equipment models, and lack of supply support – remain and will not be quickly remedied.⁴

These problems represent a serious vulnerability for the Afghan National Army as it anticipates an increased fighting tempo. To mitigate this vulnerability, CSTC-A reported that maintenance and maintenance training will be performed by experienced contractors for Afghan National Army vehicles in all six Army Corps in 2016.⁵

According to DoD, the long-term solution to Afghan equipment maintenance requires implementation of the National Maintenance Strategy, an Afghan devised approach that was developed with the assistance of Coalition advisors in order to address ANDSF sustainment gaps. The MoD approved the National Maintenance Strategy on March 12, 2015.⁶ The National Maintenance Strategy, projected to be in place by 2017, calls for logistics support maintenance contracts at 23 key national and regional nodes to conduct maintenance and supply chain management operations, while training and supporting the ANDSF leadership and personnel in the field to perform these functions. It is important to note, however, that contractor-conducted maintenance training of Afghans has been limited in the past. According to information we received from CSTC-A last month, the goal of the strategy is to enable Afghan security forces to maintain their combat power without contracted support by 2021. This will only be achieved by a gradual reduction of contracted maintenance and a corresponding growth in ANDSF organic capability over a 5-year period.⁷

⁴ CSTC-A response to DoDIG data call

⁵ CSTC-A response to DoDIG data call

⁶ DoD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 12/2015, p. 52]

⁷ CSTC-A response to DoDIG data call

For several years, Coalition advisors have also worked with their Afghan counterparts to implement a system known as Core-IMS – an inventory management system that provides country-wide tracking of items of supply. Yet, implementation of this system has been slow because of literacy problems, electrical outages, lack of connectivity, and bureaucratic delays. However, last month the Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan provided information to the DoD OIG indicating that senior Afghan leadership has begun to show increased interest in implementing Core-IMS. Over the past year, the Coalition hired 86 Afghans to train Afghan National Army personnel in inventory management and is currently installing 18 servers and 165 computers to augment the system.⁸

Overall Sustainment Challenges

A DoD OIG assessment in December 2014 identified challenges in developing an enduring logistics sustainment capability in the Afghan National Army and those challenges remain a focus of Coalition advisory efforts today. The assessment found that the Afghan National Army suffered from incomplete logistics guidance, limited expertise in requirements forecasting and contracting, and an ineffective information management system. Additionally, the assessment found significant issues with Afghan National Army equipment repair and disposal cycles and the failure to turn-in and reutilize excess material. We found these weaknesses were due, in part, to inadequate advisor support and recommended that action be taken to ensure Coalition advisors possess the skill sets and resources needed to effectively advise their Afghan counterparts.⁹ In response, the Deputy Secretary of Defense agreed to

⁸ CSTC-A response to DoDIG data call

⁹ DoDIG, DODIG-2015-047, "Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Logistics Sustainment Capability of the Afghan National Army," 12/19/2014. Available at www.dodig.mil.

establish a formal development program for Coalition advisors and take action to ensure that experienced logisticians of the appropriate rank and skillsets are assigned to advisor positions.¹⁰

A subsequent DoD OIG report, issued in January 2015, identified similar logistics sustainment challenges involving the Afghan National Police forces. The assessment found delayed obligation of funds for goods and services because of Afghan financial policies, outdated logistics guidance, noncompliance with existing guidance, inability to forecast supply requirements, failure to utilize automated processes, lack of vehicle maintenance planning, and insufficient numbers of skilled Coalition logistics advisors. Management officials concurred with 28 of our 29 recommendations for improvement, implementing 14 during the course of the assessment and the remainder thereafter.¹¹

Key Commodities

Our oversight has disclosed significant issues in the management of two key commodities critical to supporting Afghan security forces -- fuel and ammunition -- both of which transitioned to Afghan management as the U.S. combat role ended. In an assessment completed in April 2015, the DoD OIG found numerous deficiencies in the management of these commodities, primarily caused by the lack of adequate internal controls, which increased the probability for misuse, theft, and diversion to unauthorized purposes.¹²

¹⁰ Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum to DoDIG dated 14 Nov 2014 (response to draft report)

¹¹ DoDIG, DODIG-2015-067, "Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Logistics and Maintenance Sustainment Capability of the Afghan National Police," 1/30/2015. Available at www.dodig.mil.

¹² DoDIG, DODIG-2015-108, "Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Sufficiency of Afghan National Security Forces' Policies, Processes, and Procedures for the Management and Accountability of Class III (Fuel) and V (Ammunition)," 4/30/2015. Available at www.dodig.mil.

Among other recommendations, we encouraged U.S. advisors to enforce provisions of commitment letters that require Afghans to satisfy certain requirements in managing fuel or face limitations on financial or other assistance rendered. General Campbell discussed the emphasis on “conditionality” -- the enforcement of commitment letters -- before this Committee recently. Our future audits will consider commitment letter enforcement.

The backlog of procurement actions in the Afghan defense and interior ministries is another commodity-related sustainment weakness. A major fuel procurement scandal in the Ministry of Defense last February caused President Ghani to personally intervene, imposing a rigorous review process over Afghan procurement. This action demonstrates his seriousness in attempting to combat corruption, but it has also contributed to the procurement backlog and delay in receipt of critical goods and services. For example, we learned last month that the Ministry of Interior has yet to develop requirements documents for 87 urgent food procurements for Afghan police forces.¹³

I mentioned fuel procurement earlier. A DoD OIG audit of Afghan fuel management completed in January 2016 found deficiencies in controls over fuel procured for the Afghan National Police. In short, we reported that Coalition advisors had no reasonable assurance that all of the U.S.-funded fuel, valued at \$438 million, supported actual Afghan police requirements and was used for its intended purpose. We recommended that CSTC-A strengthen the reporting requirements for fuel consumption and provide clearer consequences for failure to comply with those requirements in the commitment letter with the Ministry of Interior concerning fuel

¹³ CSTC-A response to DoDIG data call

consumption.¹⁴ CSTC-A concurred and issued a revised letter incorporating our recommendations. However, reduced Coalition manpower and security concerns prevent Coalition advisors from physically inspecting Afghan fueling operations. Next quarter, the DoD OIG is planning a similar audit of management controls over fuel procured for the Afghan National Army.

Personnel

We have reported other problems in sustaining the Afghan security forces, notably difficulties in personnel management and pay systems.¹⁵ Improvements in these areas, as well as in logistics issues I described earlier, depend on the implementation of automated systems -- a process made more difficult and time-consuming because of low Afghan literacy rates, language translation requirements, and a reluctance to discard paper-based systems. Successful employment of automated financial, supply and maintenance systems will require continued Coalition advisor assistance.

LEAD IG OVERVIEW

At this point, I would like to provide the Subcommittee a brief overview of the Lead IG concept and the enhancement it brings to the oversight coordination process.

As part of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress amended the Inspector General Act of 1978 by adding a new Section, 8L, which creates a Lead Inspector General to

¹⁴ DoDIG, DODIG-2016-040, "Controls Over Ministry of Interior Fuel Contracts Could Be Improved," 1/20/2016

¹⁵ DoDIG, "Operation Freedom's Sentinel – Quarterly Report and Biannual Report to the United States Congress," 9/30/2015, p.37. Available at www.dodig.mil.

coordinate comprehensive oversight of new overseas contingency operations. Section 8L requires the Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) to designate the Lead IG from among the Inspectors General of the three agencies involved in overseas contingency operations: the Department of Defense, Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development. Under the Lead IG mandate, however, each IG retains statutory independence to promote the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of their agency's programs and operations, and to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

On April 1, 2015, the Chair of the CIGIE appointed Jon Rymer, then Inspector General of the Department of Defense, as Lead IG for OFS, which the Secretary of Defense designated as an Overseas Contingency Operation on January 1, 2015. Mr. Rymer had also been appointed Lead IG for OIR and for Operation United Assistance, which addressed the Ebola epidemic. In turn, Mr. Rymer appointed Mr. Steve A. Linnick, Department of State IG, as Associate IG for OFS and OIR. Upon Mr. Rymer's resignation on January 8, 2016, Mr. Glenn Fine, who was the Principal Deputy IG, became the Acting DoD Inspector General, and he was appointed by the Chair of CIGIE to assume the responsibilities and duties of Lead IG for OFS and OIR.

Specifically, Section 8L requires the Lead IG to "develop and carry out, in coordination with the Lead IG agencies, a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight over all aspects of the contingency operation and to ensure through either joint or individual audits, inspection, and investigations, independent and effective oversight of all programs and operation of the Federal government in support of the contingency operation." Section 8L thereby provides a new mandate for the three Lead IG agencies to work together from the outset of an Overseas Contingency Operation to develop and carry out joint, comprehensive, and strategic oversight.

Section 8L also requires the Lead IG to publish quarterly reports on the overseas contingency operation and biannual reports on the oversight work of the Lead IG agencies. DoD OIG, as Lead IG for Operation Freedom's Sentinel has published one quarterly report, one combined quarterly and biannual report, and we will soon publish the quarterly report for the first quarter of fiscal year 2016.

ONGOING AND FUTURE DoD OIG WORK

The DoD OIG continues to focus oversight on the two OFS missions: (1) training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF and (2) counterterrorism operations.

In an assessment that will address both missions, DoD OIG will assess the progress of the U.S. Special Operations Forces in training, advising, and assisting the Afghan Special Forces -- widely considered to be some of the best fighting forces in the region. These forces, which consist of both Afghan National Army and Police units, have experienced the highest operating tempo over the past year and continue to mature with Coalition assistance. However, we have previously reported that Afghan Special Forces encounter many of the same sustainment challenges faced by conventional Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police forces.¹⁶ To get a fresh look at Afghan Special Forces, the DoD OIG is sending a 5-person team to Afghanistan soon to determine whether ongoing training efforts for Afghan Special Forces are adequate.

¹⁶ DoDIG, "Operation Freedom's Sentinel -- Quarterly Report and Biannual Report to the United States Congress," 9/30/2015, p. 24. Available at www.dodig.mil.

In another area, the DoD OIG will examine progress being made to strengthen a key enabler of Afghan warfighting operations -- intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. With the reduction in the U.S. forces, Afghan security forces have assumed increased responsibility for counterterrorism operations that depend on a robust, integrated intelligence capability. The commencement of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, and the counterterrorism mission in particular, has generated a need for oversight projects that evaluate current intelligence capabilities, progress in training Afghan forces, and intelligence sharing.

In two weeks, we are sending three intelligence specialists to Afghanistan to evaluate progress in training Afghan security forces to become self-supporting in intelligence operations. Two follow-on projects are planned in 2016—an evaluation of the existing intelligence capability for U.S. counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and an evaluation of intelligence sharing between Afghan forces and Coalition partners.

We are also planning series of audits on direct funding provided to Afghan security forces to determine whether Coalition advisors are making good on their pledge to strengthen the enforcement of commitment letters. As part of that effort, a DoD OIG team will deploy to Afghanistan this month for 90 days to audit controls over contracts awarded by the Afghan government using U.S. funds.

In sum, our office has conducted and will continue to conduct oversight of critical programs and operations of DoD in Afghanistan. We appreciate the support of this Committee and Subcommittee as we discharge our oversight responsibilities in these important areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Subcommittee and I look forward to answering your questions.

Michael S. Child, Sr.
Deputy Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations

Mr. Michael S. Child, Sr., serves as the Deputy Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations.

Prior to his current assignment, Mr. Child served as Deputy Inspector General for Southwest Asia from October 2012 through December 2014. In that capacity he deployed to Afghanistan for 20 months, tasked with coordinating DoD IG activities there. Mr. Child concurrently served as Chairman of the Southwest Asia Joint Planning Group (SWA-JPG). In that role, he conducted quarterly meetings of SWA-JPG agencies, identifying duplicative projects and gaps in oversight coverage. He also published the Congressionally- mandated annual Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Southwest Asia, which indexed all ongoing, planned, and completed oversight projects conducted by SWA-JPG agencies. In his current capacity, Mr. Child will continue serving as SWA-JPG chairman and COPSWA publisher.

Mr. Child entered the Senior Executive Service on August 30, 2008, serving as Assistant Inspector General for Administrative Investigations. In May 2009, he was selected as Chief of Staff, serving in that position until he became the DIG-SWA.

Prior to working for the DoD IG, Mr. Child served as an Army Judge Advocate, retiring at the rank of Colonel. Significant Army assignments included: Chief, Criminal Law Division, Office of the Judge Advocate General; Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command; Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army Military District of Washington; and, Chief, Army Judge Advocate Recruiting. Mr. Child was also detailed to the U.S. Department of Justice for six years, prosecuting and litigating DoD procurement fraud cases. He first served as a criminal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, and later as a trial attorney at Main Justice, Commercial Litigation Branch.

Mr. Child earned his B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of San Diego, and his Master of Laws degree from the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Va. He also holds two Master's Degrees in National Security Studies and Public Policy Management from Georgetown University.

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Mr. SOPKO. Contract was issued on April 21, 2009 by the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC), previously the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, for \$48.7 million to Innovative Technical Solutions, Inc (ISTI). After 14 modifications, the contract cost was raised to \$107.3 million. Construction work was halted due to lack of funds on December 31, 2013.

On July 30, 2014, AFCEC awarded Gilbane Federal (the new name for ITSI) a second \$47.4 million contract for building completion by July 31, 2015. [See page 24.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. HARTZLER

Mrs. HARTZLER. In the funding we provide to Afghanistan, \$2.1 billion has been designated for Foreign Military Sales. Since American taxpayers are providing these funds, are there protocols or instructions which ensure these funds will provide opportunities for United States manufacturers and workers? What weapons platforms are being sold to the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces and how does the procurement process work?

Ms. ABIZAID. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) executes requirements to procure defense articles for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) using the Title 10 funds provided by Congress for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) in the annual defense appropriations bill. \$2.5B of the \$3.3B in ASFF available to the Department of Defense (DOD) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 is being executed by DSCA. ASFF procurements are accomplished primarily by the Military Departments and the Defense Logistics Agency. These procurements include defense articles as well as services such as training, advising, and maintenance, and are governed by the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS), which generally requires full and open competition for contracts.

Equipment procurements for the ANDSF using ASFF are largely for U.S.-made end items. For example, AM General is currently manufacturing new up-armored HMMWVs for the Afghan Army to replace battle losses and for the Afghan police to provide combat power; more than 300 have been delivered in recent months and at least 1,300 more will be delivered this year. Other US-made equipment procured using ASFF includes Navistar and Oshkosh trucks; Caterpillar tractors; Textron Mobile Strike Force Vehicles; MD Helicopters MD530s; Harris and Datron radios; uniforms; boots; M4 and M16 rifles; 60 and 81 mm mortars; Mk 19 grenade launchers; M240 machine guns; M203 grenade launchers; and ammunition for these weapons.

To clarify, DOD does not "sell" defense articles to the Afghan government. Instead, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), in coordination with the leadership of the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, identifies and validates ANDSF capabilities and requirements, which are transmitted to DSCA in a CSTC-A-endorsed Memorandum of Request (MoR). DSCA then assigns the MoR to the appropriate implementing agency to undertake contracting for the requirements by either using existing or awarding new DOD contracts. The items are then procured, delivered to Afghanistan, and transferred by CSTC-A to the Afghan government for employment by their forces in combat operations.

Mrs. HARTZLER. In light of serious issues concerning the abuse of children, there have been statements by DOD indicating protocols have been put in place for handling reports of child sexual abuse. Would you please explain the protocols and procedures which will prevent these incidents from going unreported in the future?

Does a soldier have the authority to help a child if they have direct knowledge abuse is occurring at the time?

Have incidents occurred on U.S. property?

Colonel MICHAEL. On September 22, 2015, General Campbell publicly stated that he expects that any suspicions of sexual abuse will be reported immediately to the chain of command, regardless of who the alleged perpetrators or victims are. He further directed that if there are any indications that the abuse involves Afghans, a report must be forwarded to him through operational channels and copied to the Staff Judge Advocate, so that the Afghan government can be advised and requested to take action to investigate the allegations. These policies and procedures will remain in place under the new Commander, USFOR-A, General Nicholson.

We continue to work to ensure that all U.S. forces in Afghanistan understand their responsibilities to report human rights violations, and that Afghan leaders understand their responsibilities to develop a professional force and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. DOD mandates training for U.S. service members to ensure that they clearly understand their obligations to respect human dignity and to take appropriate action when confronted with suspected violations of human rights. Under long-standing principles of law and policy, U.S. service members may choose but are not required to intervene in the commission of an imminent or ongoing

ing serious offense which they observe, including if they witness child abuse, as legally appropriate.

DOD has and continues to review historical reports to identify any allegations of sexual abuse by ANDSF personnel. In this review, DOD has not uncovered any alleged incidents that were directly witnessed by U.S. forces or had occurred on U.S. or coalition facilities.

Mrs. HARTZLER. In the funding we provide to Afghanistan, \$2.1 billion has been designated for Foreign Military Sales. Since American tax payers are providing these funds, are there protocols or instructions which ensure these funds will provide opportunities for United States manufacturers and workers? What weapons platforms are being sold to the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces and how does the procurement process work?

Colonel MICHAEL. The pseudo-Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process to procure defense articles for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) is governed by the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement, which generally requires full and open competition for contracts.

FMS cases are typically funded either with the participating countries' organic resources or by Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds that are subject to Title 22 requirements. Title 22 funding must be spent on U.S. materiel and services, with limited waiver authority, whereas host nations determine how their funds will be spent within the FMS process. Equipment procurements for the ANDSF using Afghanistan Security Forces Fund are largely for US-produced end items. Examples include AM General HMMWVs; Navistar and Oshkosh trucks; Caterpillar tractors; Textron Mobile Strike Force Vehicles; MD530s Helicopters; Harris and Datron radios; uniforms; boots; M4 and M16 rifles; 60 mm and 81 mm mortars; Mk 19 grenade launchers; M240 machine guns; M203 grenade launchers; and ammunition.

The pseudo-FMS process through which these procurements are made does not involve "selling" defense articles to the Afghan government. Instead, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A.) in coordination with the leadership of the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, identifies and validates ANDSF capabilities and/or requirements, which are transmitted to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) in a CSTC-A-endorsed Memoranda of Request (MoR). DSCA then assigns the MoR to the appropriate Service Component Implementing Agency to undertake contracting requirements. It is important to note that the pseudo-FMS process is not limited to the procurement of defense articles or end-items but also includes requirements related to training, maintenance, spare parts, and other long-term sustainment.

Since 2009, the Afghan security forces have spent almost \$1.5 billion in FMF funds, all of which were spent on U.S. defense articles and services. The Afghan government currently has \$25 million in uncommitted FMF funds available.