

S. HRG. 114-354

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

FEBRUARY 11; FEBRUARY 12; OCTOBER 6, 2015



Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services

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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2015

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m. in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Senator John McCain (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators McCain, Sessions, Ayotte, Cotton, Ernst, Tillis, Graham, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, and King.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, good morning. The committee meets today to receive testimony on Afghanistan and United States efforts to sustain the gains that have been made over the past 13 years.

I want to thank each of our witnesses for appearing before us today: Ambassador James Cunningham, who was the United States Ambassador to Afghanistan until he retired from the Foreign Service last December; Ambassador Ryan Crocker, former United States Ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq and many other countries; Admiral Eric Olson, former Commander, United States Special Operations Command; and Mr. Michael Leiter, former Director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

All our professionals are—all our witnesses are national security professionals who have served loyally and with the highest distinction in both Democratic and Republican administrations, including the current administration. All of them also have years of experience working on, and often serving in, Afghanistan.

And, on a personal note, could I just say that I—I've had the great pleasure of knowing these four witnesses over the—many years. And I don't know of four more honorable witnesses who have ever appeared before this committee in the years that I've on it. So, I consider this committee honored by your presence today on an issue of crucial importance to our country, the future, and the men and women who are serving in the military.

More than 2,200 Americans have given their lives in Afghanistan, and thousands more have been wounded. And the progress they have enabled is extraordinary. The number of Afghan children in school has increased tenfold since 2001, from less than 1 million to almost 10 million today. Forty percent of these students are girls, and 40 percent of Afghan teachers today are women. Life expectancy has increased by over 20 years in less than a generation,

an achievement unheard of in modern history. Less than 10 percent of the Afghan population supports the Taliban, while over 70 percent express the confidence—express confidence in the Afghan military.

These gains and others are significant. But, as General Mattis testified last month, the gains achieved at great cost against our enemy in Afghanistan are reversible. Afghan National Security Forces are now leading the fight and responsible for safeguarding their country. They've made real progress as a fighting force. The Afghan army and police maintained their professionalism during the presidential runoff last summer, upholding security and allowing the democratic process to play out without armed intervention. And, while the casualty rates of our Afghan partners in their fight against the Taliban are high, there is no doubt—none whatsoever—about the Afghan willingness to fight and die for their country.

But, like the Iraqi Security Forces at the end of 2011, the Afghan National Security Forces are still developing some key enabling capabilities, the shortfalls sounding eerily familiar: intelligence, logistics, airlift, close air support, special forces, and institutional development. Our commanders on the ground in Afghanistan are developing plans to address these shortfalls, but they need the time, resources, and authorities to help our Afghan partners to develop these nascent capabilities.

As I've said before, wars do not end just because politicians say so. Indeed, in Afghanistan we've seen an initial emergence of ISIS as well as the residual capabilities of al-Qaeda wrapped in their support network of the Taliban insurgency.

The world walked away from Afghanistan once, and it descended into chaotic violence that became the platform for the worst terrorist attack in history against our homeland. The threats are real and the stakes are high. We can't let Afghanistan become a sanctuary for al-Qaeda or ISIS. Failure in this manner would destabilize the region, especially by undermining the security of a nuclear-armed Pakistan. Worst still, failure would condemn millions of Afghans, especially women and girls, to live again under the tyranny of violent radicals.

We can't turn the clock back in Iraq, but we can, and we must, apply the tragic lesson that we learned in Iraq to Afghanistan. To preserve the progress enabled by our troops and the Afghan people, President Obama must replace his plan for unconditional withdrawal from Afghanistan with a conditions-based drawdown and a clear commitment to maintain a limited residual force. If the President repeats his mistakes from Iraq, we can expect a similar disaster in Afghanistan: growing instability, terrorist safe havens, horrific human rights abuses, the rapid dissolution of the hard-won gains that our men and women in uniform purchased at such high cost, and, ultimately, direct threats to the United States.

I want to thank the witnesses again for testifying today, and we look forward to hearing the views that they have developed based on their many years of experience in the region.

Senator Reed.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Crocker, Ambassador Cunningham, Admiral Olson, and Mr. Leiter, welcome. This is an impressive panel, as the Chairman has pointed out, and I want to thank you for serving your country with distinction in so many different ways, and also thank you for your—the advice and the support that you have personally extended to me over many, many years. Thank you, gentlemen, for what you've done.

And thank you, Chairman McCain, for holding this hearing on the situation in Afghanistan ahead of tomorrow morning's hearing with General Campbell, our Commander in Afghanistan. The United States has devoted significant resources to the Afghanistan campaign, both in the sacrifices of our military and civilian officials and in America's financial resources. So, it is important that we get this mission right. And this hearing is useful for advancing that goal.

Afghanistan has successfully come through national presidential elections and formed a new National Unity Government with the leadership of President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah. The hard-won gains of the past decade are significant, but remain fragile. According to recent public opinion surveys, a significant majority of the Afghan people feel their country is moving in the right direction. Compared to a decade ago, millions more students are in school, about 40 percent of which are girls. Dozens of new universities are open. Health clinics are available to much of the population. And life expectancy is up. And women are participating in Afghanistan's political and civic life.

Afghan Security Forces have transitioned to having responsibility for securing Afghanistan even as United States and coalition forces have drawn down and shifted to the more limited train, advise, and assist mission and conducting counterterrorism operations.

Success in Afghanistan will depend on a number of factors, including our partnership with the new government in Kabul, the willingness of that government to improve governance and fight corruption, the development of leadership within the Afghan Security Forces, and the political support of the American people for the mission in Afghanistan.

I hope our witnesses will give us their recommendations for ensuring the success of that mission.

The President's fiscal year 2016 budget request includes funding for training Afghan forces and counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, yet it remains to be seen whether conditions on the ground in Afghanistan will improve sufficiently by the end of 2016 to warrant the pace of further reductions under the current plan.

During his nomination hearing, General Campbell assured this committee that, if confirmed, he would provide his best military advice on the requirements of the mission in Afghanistan. To the extent our witnesses are in a position to comment on the current conditions in Afghanistan or the mission requirements going forward, we would welcome your views.

Again, let me thank you and thank the Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Mr. Leiter.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL E. LEITER, FORMER
DIRECTOR, U.S. NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER**

Mr. LEITER. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, members of the committee—first of all, I would like to thank the committee for having us up here. And, as we face so many crises in the world, that this committee is maintaining the focus on Afghanistan, not thinking it is done, is greatly appreciated by those of us who have spent more than a decade focused on issues of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I'm going to speak, Mr. Chairman, from the perspective of terrorism and the homeland threat of Afghanistan and Pakistan. And I do think that what we've done over the past 13 years is a relative bright spot in the world of terrorism, especially as compared to issues in Iraq and Syria. And the way we accomplished that was from a cohesive effort between the United States and our allies on the diplomatic, intelligence, and military fronts to bring the fight to al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and the Pakistan border areas. And with that, I think we have seen al-Qaeda at its absolute weakest since September 11 in the region. With the death of bin Laden in 2011, Ayman al-Zawahiri took over the core of al-Qaeda. But, since that time, the U.S. military and Intelligence Community has continued to bring the fight to al-Qaeda and, again, although it still aspires to attack the West, is at its weakest position it has been in the past 13 years.

That being said, I think the drawdown of U.S. and allied forces, although not currently affecting al-Qaeda in a positive way, does pose a real pivot point, where there could be real danger. So, what you're obviously going to ask is, Will there be an al-Qaeda renaissance with a further drawdown of U.S. troops? And my short answer to this question, that, if done properly—and I stress “properly”—I believe that the United States can withdraw more, but it has to be done based on conditions on the ground. And in my view, we need to maintain sufficient military and intelligence presence, based on those circumstances on the ground, to support intelligence and Special Forces Operations in the region to continue to target groups that are organizing transnational plots and simultaneously to continue to fund, train, and support, with logistics and other specialized support, to the Afghan National Security Forces. If we do that, we can maintain the pressure on these groups and not allow them to actually spring back to where they once were.

But, this is obviously not just about al-Qaeda. A lesser U.S. presence will, of course, be greeted with significant satisfaction, if not joy, by elements like the Haqqani Network and the Taliban. Historically, the Haqqani Network has not focused on attacking the far enemy, they have focused on their interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. And I don't believe they will automatically revert to a transnational threat with U.S. withdrawal. But, the continued strength of the Haqqani Network and the Taliban certainly provide a potentially fertile ground for al-Qaeda to have some rejuvenation. Hence, my belief that we need to maintain sufficient resources there to keep pressure on those elements.

I think there is some possibility of violent jihadists continuing to be attracted to the region, but, although this isn't much of a silver lining broadly for United States national security, frankly Syria

and Yemen have become far greater magnets for jihadists around the world, and especially from the West, than had Afghanistan and Pakistan. And al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan have attempted to become and remain central, most recently with a 2014 magazine known as "Resurgence," which was focused on radicalizing Westerners and attracted them to Zawahiri and al-Qaeda and the region. But, frankly, it got very, very little attention in jihadi circles and was largely drowned out, again, by the propaganda, which is far more effective, emanating from Iraq and Syria.

Now, those are some potentially positive trends, but there is a second generation of violent jihadists in the region which is waiting for a U.S. withdrawal to release some of the pressure that they have felt over the past several years. And, although Zawahiri, I think, will remain largely incapable of capturing the Western imagination, there are sufficient numbers of jihadis globally that will still be attracted by his message.

So, in my view, we can't simply declare victory and move on. As I've said, it is a very fertile ground for transnational terrorism, and, in my view, we will need continued weeding. And that weeding has to be intelligence, special operations, and support to our partners in the region. And that will be increasingly difficult with a reduced footprint, because our footprint in Afghanistan has been critical, of course, not just to fighting these groups in Afghanistan, but also cross-border into Pakistan.

So, what is currently missing for new recruits for al-Qaeda in the region are new recruits, real operational sophistication, and room to train and plan in a manner that bred success in previous years. Now, these aspects are not in short supply because of a lack of attraction in the region to the ideology. They are in a lack of supply because of our U.S. counterterrorism operations and, to a lesser extent, the partnerships that we've forged with Pakistan and others.

So, in my view, a reduced U.S. presence in the region poses a real risk that the success we have seen will become harder to sustain. And, as a counterterrorism homeland guy, I can tell you that only playing defense in this world will not lead to continued success. We cannot stop all the shots if we are only in a defensive posture in this region.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for inviting me to testify, and I look forward to continuing to working with the committee and others on this very important issue.

Chairman McCAIN. Thank you very much.
Admiral Olson.

**STATEMENT OF ADM ERIC T. OLSON, USN (RET.), FORMER
COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

Admiral OLSON. Chairman McCain, Senator Reed, members of the committee, thank you very much for your expressed interest in the future of Afghanistan, and for convening this hearing.

And I'm proud to be here alongside such distinguished colleagues from the world of intelligence and statecraft.

I recognize that I'm here primarily as a former military planner and practitioner of the missions that are of special interest in Afghanistan as we look forward. They are commonly known as train, advise, and assist, and counterterrorism. I should probably ac-

knowledge that these are the two mission areas in which Afghan National Security Forces need comprehensive and enduring support.

I didn't submit a written statement, so I'll speak briefly about each of these in some detail.

For the train, advise, and assist mission, I'll emphasize that it is far more demanding than it may first appear. The forces to be trained must be carefully selected, vetted, matched to the appropriate skill areas, and prepared to receive the training. In many cases, this requires such basic programs as reading and physical readiness. And the scope and pace of the training must be tailored to each of the trainees. The concept of "training the trainers" is certainly appropriate, and, if given enough time, it will raise Afghan National Security Force instructors to a level where they can conduct much more self-training. But, this must be carefully evaluated, skill by skill, if we are to hand over responsibility with full confidence that it will be sustained.

Current assessments are that the Afghans are ready to teach themselves certain individual and unit-level skills, but it will be some time, perhaps some years, before all necessary soldier tasks and higher-level disciplines can be fully handed over.

And training soldiers, policemen, and intelligence specialists does not, by itself, create a meaningful operational capability. Without corresponding quality in the higher leadership skills, logistics, combat, administrative, and communications support, the tactical units are placed at higher risk of increased casualties and failed missions.

And, in any case, the train-and-equip mission is never "once and done." The high attrition and casualty rate in the Afghan National Security Forces means that, I believe, at least 30,000 new troopers enter the force each year, so it requires not just sufficient capability and capacity to train, but an acknowledgment that the task is never complete.

Before I go on, though, I do want to pay tribute to the Afghan soldiers. The country has been at war for more than 30 years. They live in an atmosphere of poverty, corruption, and dissension. In a tribe- and family-based culture, they are far away from their roots for weeks or months on end. Some of them are undermotivated, undisciplined, and even violently traitorous, but many—most—are fierce and courageous, with an admirable patriotism and enviable fighting spirit, and they are suffering casualties at the high rate of close to 90 killed in action per week.

As for the counterterrorism mission, it is a most complex undertaking that requires a sophisticated choreography of intelligence collection, information analysis, policy development, operational capability and flexibility, specialized equipment, and tactical proficiency. The counterterrorism forces must be especially adept at offset insertions, long-range foot patrols, achieving surprise on the objective, instinctive target discrimination, adjustment to counter-surprise, site and document exploitation, treatment and evacuation of casualties, monitoring the operation using remote and overhead platforms and assets, and returning to base through a hostile and now energized environment. So, the Afghan counterterrorist forces must be extremely good, well led, properly equipped, and thor-

oughly trained. And I'm told that certain elements of the Afghan National Security Forces are up to an acceptable tactical standard, but, absent continued support and more experience in the advanced tactics and techniques of this dangerous and demanding mission, the overall counterterrorism capability in Afghanistan will be quite limited. And if the enemies, such as the Haqqani Network, still have safe havens across borders that allow them to enter and leave Afghanistan at will, the operational challenge is enormously more difficult.

Before I close, I'd like to share a couple of my fundamental beliefs as they relate to Afghanistan:

First, surprise is an essential element in any competition or conflict. Camouflage and concealment, deceit, deception, and even denial, protection of exploitable information are historically very basic to military operational planning. The Russians call it "maskirovka," and they used it very effectively in seizing Crimea and occupying eastern Ukraine. It's a military reality that exposure of units, locations, intent, timelines, and force size and capabilities puts people and missions at risk. And, in this regard, I applaud General Campbell's recent decision to classify previously unclassified information about the status and posture of United States and Afghan forces in Afghanistan.

And, second, I am one who believes in developing as many military options as possible, and keeping them open as long as feasible, so the plans and operations can adjust to evolving situations and conditions. The crafting of doctrine, templates, and timelines is useful, but mostly for the purpose of carefully thinking through a problem. They rarely apply directly to any specific circumstances, but I think that we still tend to fall too much in love with them as expedient solutions. Actual war is too dynamic to accommodate fixed models. So, I would urge strategic and operational flexibility as we move forward in Afghanistan.

And I'll conclude by acknowledging that other emerging crises may require additional U.S. troops, so I'm not advocating a large and open-ended commitment to Afghanistan. I simply believe that a total drawdown on a pre-stated timeline is worth reconsidering so that we can reduce the odds of losing the significant progress that has been achieved at such cost.

With that, I'll pass the microphone to my colleague on my right and look forward to your comments and questions.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you, Admiral.

Ambassador Crocker.

STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN C. CROCKER, DEAN AND EXECUTIVE PROFESSOR, THE GEORGE BUSH SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY; AND FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, Senators. Thank you for convening this important hearing on Afghanistan and its future. To a marked degree, that future touches on the future of U.S. national security interests and goals.

I'm going to start by looking back. I spent almost 40 years in the Foreign Service, almost all of it in the greater Middle East. During

those 40 years, I learned maybe two things—sort of, one thing every couple of decades:

First thing I learned is: Be careful of what you get into. Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan. It's an away game. We're playing on somebody else's field and by somebody else's ground rules. We'd better understand what they are and be prepared for the advantages that do fall to the home team.

The second thing I learned was: Be at least as careful over what you propose to get out of. The consequences of disengagement can be as great or greater than the consequences of engagement, intervention in the first place. I saw this in Lebanon, back in the '80s. I am afraid we're seeing it now in Iraq. I certainly don't want us to see it in Afghanistan.

Actions have consequences. We all know this. And I'd like to just spend a minute on what you alluded to, Mr. Chairman, in your opening statement: the Soviet experience in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and, more particularly, what came after their withdrawal in 1989. We withdrew, too. We weren't there militarily, but we were certainly there in strong support of the Mujahideen in their fight against the Soviets. We were there as a major ally of Pakistan, where we staged, with their cooperation, most of our support for the Mujahideen. But, once the Soviets were gone, so were we. It didn't matter that we could see the civil war coming, as the seven dominant Mujahideen factions looked around and realized, well, they had gotten the Soviets out, now it's a time for the run for the roses, "Who's going to control Kabul?" And in the space of just a few years, the Mujahideen factions did more damage to Afghanistan, took more Afghan lives, than the Soviets and our allies ever did. But, more fundamentally for U.S. security, that vicious civil war opened the way for Taliban to take over the country, which they did, of course, as we all remember, in the mid-1990s.

Pakistan supported the Taliban. I was Ambassador to Pakistan, and I heard it over and over and over for my 3 years there, "Well, you're back after 9/11. It's nice to have you. We'll get what we can, but we're going to hedge our bets, because we know how you operate. You'll be here for a while, and then you'll leave. We live here. So, we're going to look to our long-term needs, our own vital interests. And, where they coincide with your short-term interests, that'll be great. Where they diverge, we'll follow our own way, because we've learned that what you lack is strategic patience."

And so, I'm afraid we do, Mr. Chairman. I use it in a different sense than the recent national security strategy does. What our adversaries have learned to count on with United States engagements in the Middle East, is that it won't be for all that long. Apply some pain, extract a cost, and we'll go home. Our allies have come to fear it, whether in Lebanon, in Iraq, or Afghanistan.

So, moving very briefly to the present, my two colleagues to my left, geographically speaking, have spoken to that. And Ambassador Cunningham, who served a remarkable 3½ years in Afghanistan, will address it from a political and diplomatic perspective.

It is a long game, a long war. We have to understand that wars don't end when we withdraw our troops. That is what our adversaries are waiting for. Admiral Olson, Mr. Leiter, have both referred to that in different ways. Al Qaeda is at a low point, but

they are not defeated, just as al-Qaeda in Iraq was not defeated at the time I was there, 2007 to 2009. Badly degraded, but not defeated. And now they're back. Version 4.0, with the Islamic state. The Islamic state seems to be in Afghanistan. We all saw yesterday's reports of the killing of a former Guantanamo detainee, who, because of the splits within the Taliban, has thrown—had thrown his lot in with the Islamic state. I'm glad we got him. I hope we continue to get them. And I hope that we maintain the requisite force levels to ensure that we are supporting the Afghan military and police in their development efforts, that we are supporting the Afghan state as it seeks to assert a credible and more effective level of governance and tackle, as you alluded to, Senator Reed, in your remarks, problems of endemic corruption. All of these can lead to state failure. What they need is time, and they need our support.

And again, to give this perspective, in the roughly 100 years of the existence of the modern Afghan state, from the ascent of Amanullah Khan in 1919, that state has always required outside support—not necessarily boots on the ground, but it has required train-and-assist for its military, it has required economic support. This is, again, a long game and a long war.

Our support and our leadership, going forward, are vital. We cannot turn our backs on what happens in Afghanistan. We paid the price for this before. We should not do so again. This is America's national security.

It is also America's values, something I feel very deeply about. My colleagues have alluded to the enormous progress that young Afghans have made. Both you and Senator Reed have alluded to the extraordinary increase in Afghan students in school. I have seen the progress Afghan women have made. A precipitate U.S. departure, military and political, could put all of those gains and all of those lives at risk. That is not the set of values that this country stands for.

So, in addition to the fundamental issues of national security, Mr. Chairman, we have issues that touch on who we are as a people. I hope we will take the right decisions on force levels, going forward, based on conditions, not on calendars, that will ensure we meet all of these American goals.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you very much, Ambassador.
Ambassador Cunningham.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM, FORMER U.S.
AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN**

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, Senators.

Let me start by just saying how much I appreciate the invitation to meet with you today, how much I appreciate the many members of this committee who have come to see us in Afghanistan; and, for those you who haven't, please do.

Chairman MCCAIN. Did you always appreciate it, Ambassador?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I always did.

[Laughter.]

Always. Even when there were some testy questions.

[Laughter.]

The United States has led the international community and our Afghan partners in implementing a strategy that puts the responsibility for securing the Afghan people where it properly belongs, with the Afghan Government. The challenge now is to afford the Afghan people and their new government the time and space to cement the progress that's been made in preparing the Afghan National Security Forces so that they can continue to protect the country from the Taliban and violent Islamist extremism.

It's that violent extremism embodied in a network of groups operating in both Afghanistan and Pakistan which threatens both countries and, ultimately, the United States and our partners. That threat, first and foremost, to America is why we are there: to protect Americans. An increasingly stable and secure Afghanistan is the best way to do that.

We've made a tremendous investment in preventing the international terrorist threat from reconstituting itself in South Asia and in degrading al-Qaeda. Afghans now have a historic opportunity to continue, with international support, to build a better future, to contribute to stability and progress in their region, to combat the Taliban, and to seek peace for their country. With the agreement on the Government of National Unity, which the United States played a major role in forging in the Bilateral Security Agreement, which I was privileged to sign, Afghanistan now has a chance to open a new chapter in its history. It will be manifestly in our interest if it is able to do so.

It was not at all preordained that we and the Afghans would reach this point. And no one can guarantee the outcome over the next several years. The performance of the Afghans themselves, and particularly the Afghan political class, will be critical and essential if Afghanistan is to earn the continued support which is on offer from the international community. But, there are certainly realistic prospects for continued progress. This will also require the sustained support of this committee, the Congress, and the American people, whose commitment has already been extraordinary.

I am concerned when I hear suggestions that we have lost in Afghanistan or that our continued support is unnecessary, too expensive, or futile. Continued engagement is necessary in order to protect the investment and the significant gains we have already made and for Afghanistan to play its role in contributing to the development of a sustained and effective counterterrorism strategy, which must be global, multifaceted, multinational, and, unfortunately, as others have noted, long term.

This critical time in Afghanistan's history will determine whether it becomes a positive element in defeating extremism or a negative and dangerous one. With Islamist extremism now morphing and moving across borders, it seems clear what the future in Afghanistan will be if we do not make the effort. And yes, it is expense, and the—but, the challenge is historic. And we have many partners in sharing the burden, including new Afghan leadership. Rather uniquely, we also have a common understanding with our partners and with most Afghans about what is required. Continued United States commitment is an insurance policy at much lower cost against the harm that might ultimately come from an Afghanistan once again open to hostile actors.

From our long conversations, especially over the past year, I believe President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah, and many Afghans understand the unique opportunity which exists for their country, and they understand that this will not come again if they get it wrong. Afghans are undergoing unprecedented security, political, and economic transitions that would sorely stress any country, let alone one with Afghanistan's difficulties and struggling institutions. The elections and the ensuing long and difficult political debate created massive uncertainty and the drift which is still felt today.

But, Afghanistan is not a failed state. Its people are resilient and proud and desirous of protecting what they have achieved. Afghanistan democracy is imperfect, but last year millions of people cast valid ballots twice, at personal risk. The Afghan Security Forces have been tested, they fight and will only get better, as long as they continue to receive the support they need. In my view, under today's circumstances, the goals of ensuring ANSF capability, maintaining an effective counterterrorism effort, and of bolstering Afghan confidence in this period of massive transition are more likely to be achieved by a longer presence of the resolute support mission and a longer regional presence of U.S. and partner forces than is currently planned.

I hope Americans will have the foresight to view Afghanistan in the context of the broader struggle against violent extremism. As some of you know, I was the acting U.S. Representative to the United Nations on September 11. I told my staff, the next day, that history had changed and would demand of us a generational struggle against ideological international terrorism. I still believe that to be the case. And, as we are seeing, we and our partners must learn to deal with the threat on multiple fronts simultaneously, with multiple instruments.

In Afghanistan, we have entered a new phase of the conflict against terror. We have a new government, an Islamic partner eager to provide for its own security and committed to working with us. It would be regrettable and very risky not to maximize the prospects for the success of that partnership when we, the Afghans, and the international community have sacrificed so much and worked so hard to counter the negative forces which will continue to challenge all of us.

Thank you for your time.

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, I thank you all for the important statements.

Could each of you give your views on the potential consequences of the announced calendar-based plan, which is to reduce to 5,500 troops before the end of 2015, and to a "normal embassy presence" in Kabul at the end of 2016?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. As I said in my statement, Senator, I think that, under the circumstances, that timeline is probably too short and the rate of withdrawal is too steep. What those dates really mean is that, in order to withdraw forces, you need to begin well before the time that's indicated for the endpoint, which detracts from the missions that are being undertaken, whether it's train, advise, and assist, or counterterrorism. I know that my col-

leagues in the administration are aware of this. And, as Secretary-designate Carter said the other day, there is a plan, but it's a plan that can be reviewed as circumstances change. And I think it should be reviewed.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

Ambassador Crocker.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have believed, whether in Iraq or in Afghanistan, that our force levels and drawdowns, or plus-ups, have to be conditions-based, not based on a timeline. I clearly remember, in testimony with General Petraeus in 2007 before this committee, among others—many others—trying to make that point, that conditions are what count out there, not calendars.

I would be further concerned, Mr. Chairman, that, as I tried to suggest in my opening statement, that, by fixing a date certain to draw down to a certain number, and then to drawn down to, basically, an office in an embassy, simply tells our adversaries how long they have to hold out before they have the field to themselves. You know, I'm a diplomat, not a warrior, but that never seemed to me particularly good strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

Ambassador—Admiral?

Admiral OLSON. Mr. Chairman, I agree that it does our force a disservice to announce too precisely in advance what the timeline for the drawdown will be. And, in any case, I—my sense is that, in—2016 is too soon to assume that we—that the Afghan National Security Forces will be capable enough that we can afford to withdraw all of our forces from the field, from training, mentoring, advising, supporting the Afghan forces at a time that I believe they will still need the help.

Mr. LEITER. Mr. Chairman, I concur with all of my colleagues. I'm not in a good position to judge whether it should be 5,500 or 8500 immediately, but I absolutely agree that simply an embassy force in 2016 will not be sufficient to provide the intelligence, the direct action, and the advise-and-assist to the ANSF to make sure that we are detecting and disrupting transnational plots in the region.

Chairman MCCAIN. And I think you would all agree, probably there's many individuals and entities to rely on to make that assessment, but the Ambassador in Kabul and the—our military commander there are probably two of the people we would rely on, obviously, the most.

I don't want to take the time of the committee. I know the witnesses very well. I'll turn to Senator Reed.

Just to say, Ambassador Crocker, I will probably forget many of the hearings that I've attended over the many years that I've been a member of this committee, but one I will never forget is yours and General Petraeus's appearance before this committee in 2012—2007. I think it literally changed the course of history.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your—again, your service to the Nation and your excellent testimony.

As you've all pointed out, this is a combination of military capacity and political capacity, on both sides—the United States, NATO, and the Afghans. It strikes me there's three factors, here in Afghanistan, that were not present in Iraq. One is, there is a Bilateral Security Agreement that allows our forces to stay. So, we have the legal ability to pull up or bring down our forces. Second, we seem to have a government—a new government that is much more cooperative with, and consistent with, our views and values, even though they represent very staunchly the people of Afghanistan, as they should. And then, third, we have a NATO element, also, too. This is not a—just a U.S. mission.

So, can you, sort of, comment, Mr.—Ambassador Cunningham and Crocker, on these three factors and how it sort of—it supports or helps us to make the case, or not make the case, with respect to increased forces or continued forces?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I'll be glad to, Senator.

I think that this time in the history of Afghanistan and our engagement in Afghanistan this—for the next couple of years is really pivotal on both fronts, on the second front and on the political front. As you know, I spent hours and hours of—in discussion with Dr. Abdullah and President Ghani after the elections, and then in the discussion that—in which we were trying to help them form the National Unity Government. This really is a fundamental shift in Afghan political life, having created a Unity Government which really does effectively represent the vast majority of Afghans, whatever happened in the elections. It's going to be difficult, politically, for this government to function. We all knew and understood that as we were going through the process.

But, it—a page has turned in Afghan history now. They have to decide whether to take advantage of that opportunity. I think there's good—a good chance that they will. The instruments are in place. The elections were held, a new government has been established or is being established. We have the Bilateral Security Agreement finally signed, a year later than we originally thought it would be, but it is signed. It reflects the will have the Afghan people. There's no huge movement in Afghanistan that wants the United States out of Afghanistan. And, indeed, to the extent that there is concern, it's mostly over whether the withdrawal will take place, and under what conditions.

I think that affords both the Afghans and us a great opportunity, over the next 2 to 3 years, to cement this relationship, this partnership in which the Afghans now have the lead and are fighting and dying for their country in providing security in a way that serves our interests because it will contain the violent extremism that we're all concerned with.

Senator REED. Ambassador Crocker, any comments?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator.

Just very briefly. The three factors you note are very important. I associate myself completely with Ambassador Cunningham's remarks. This new government, in spite of the difficulties it's faced—even because of the difficulties it faced, because it is overcoming them—is an extraordinary step for the Afghan nation and the people.

In terms of governance, the fight against corruption, I am heartened, both by the President himself, with long experience in financial matters from his time at the World Bank. He knows how the world works, how nations succeed or fail. And I'm very heartened by his choice of Ambassador Eklil Hakimi, who many of you know, still, I guess, Ambassador to Washington for Afghanistan, but who understands us and the world of finance very well. They need our support in order to succeed.

I have spoken to senior Afghan officials over the last week. Many of you have done the same. They all say the same thing to me, "Please continue your support. We know what we have to do. We need you, to get it done." I haven't talked to anybody out there who doesn't want us to stay, to stay militarily and to stay at or near our current force levels, for all sorts of reasons.

The final point I'd make, because you mentioned NATO, NATO will stand, both as a military component of a force and in providing critical economic backing and financial backing for the Afghan National Security Forces, as long as we stand and as long as we lead. It was our leadership, in May 2011 at the NATO summit, that produced out-year commitments of financial support to the Afghan National Security Forces. It was our leadership, at the Tokyo Economic Ministerial, that produced international pledges in excess of \$16 billion for economic support in the out years. Without us, that evaporates. Without us, the Afghan leadership, off to a very promising start, is going to have increasing difficulty in overcoming the many hurdles they will face, now and in the future. Our leadership is key, whether military or perhaps as, or even more, important, politically, to be engaged is crucial.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Thank you, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you very much.

And Senator McCain has had more experience than anybody in the White House and most other places in this government in dealing with this. He was right about Iraq. And I believe he's calling us correctly, and the warnings he's given about Afghanistan are correct and should be heeded.

Let me just briefly ask this. This is one thing I think that worries the American people. Is this a hopeless effort? Or, if we have a reasonable, smart application of American assistance, can Afghanistan achieve, let us say, modestly, a decent government that functions and that creates a nation that's not a haven for people who would threaten us?

Just briefly—maybe, Ambassador Cunningham—do you—is this a hopefully situation, or not?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. No, Senator, it's not hopeless. Indeed, after 3 and a half years of experience there, I think it's finally possible to see a future for Afghanistan that is both possible and promising. Much will depend on what the Afghans, themselves, do. And they provide their security, they run their government, they are in charge of their politics. And life is difficult there. There's no denying that. And they're having a great deal of difficulty setting

up the new government, as one would expect, because they also have a parliament that they need to deal with.

But, the elements are there for Afghanistan to continue down the positive road that we've been helping them create over the past several years. If the Afghans will seize the opportunity and if our—by—and, by “our,” I mean international support, not—we have to remember, there are many nations who are contributing to Afghanistan, both militarily and economically, not just the United States, although we are, obviously, the leader, in every sense, as Ambassador Crocker said. And that support will not be sustained without our leadership and our commitment.

But, the road is there—you can see it—on security, on economic development, even on relations with their neighbors, where there is—are new opportunities for a better dialogue with Pakistan, and better cooperation. So, I am actually hopeful. As I said in my statement, I can't guarantee the outcome, but I'm hopeful that the right outcome can be achieved.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, the rest of you basically share that view? I understand that from your testimony.

So, Ambassador Crocker, you're correct that we need to be careful what we get into. And I, for one, am going to be more humble about my understanding of what we can achieve in the world. But, we've invested a tremendous amount in Afghanistan. We have stood shoulder to shoulder in Afghanistan, and in Iraq. And, in my view, this is—and we are at a point where I think, with a modest additional commitment of resources over a period of time that creates confidence in the Afghan people and their military, we may have a very good result in that area of the world. It would be good for the world and good for us and good for the people there.

Admiral Olson, you—you know, I know that Afghanistan has to stand up, but, in my view, you can't ask them to do more than they can do. Kabul has never ruled that country. They've always had corruption. To expect it's going to be a perfect government anytime soon is unrealistic.

Now, Admiral Olson, would you tell us what a lot of military people have told me about why even a small amount of American presence—embedded Special Forces, for example, with Iraqi or Afghan military—why they can make an incredible difference in their ability to be effective, their ability to fight? Just give us some of your insights. You mentioned several complex things that a good military has to have to be successful. Give us your thoughts on that and why even a small amount of forces can make a difference.

Admiral OLSON. The forces that have the greatest impact are the ones who have some experience, typically older than the average soldier in the U.S. Army, who have more deployments, typically, who have operated on teams with each other for longer periods of time, and who then can help gel those around them into more coherent, effective kind of units. The forces that do this best have a cultural appreciation, maybe a minor language capability so that communication is not always through an interpreter, and they are willing to fight alongside the forces that they are mentoring, when that's necessary.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, you commanded the——

Admiral OLSON. And so, I think——

Senator SESSIONS.—you command our Special Operations Command, and that's the kind of forces you're talking about. Is that correct?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. But, not only Special Operations Forces. I mean, there are elements within the U.S. military who have stepped up to that task and performed very well.

Senator SESSIONS. But, will it make a difference in the outcome? Is it a significant factor, that deployment of a limited number of Special Forces? And—

Admiral OLSON. Sir, the evidence to date is that it does. The Afghan National Security Forces are far more capable than they were just a few years ago, when these kinds of efforts began in earnest, to put small numbers of United States troops at remote locations, where they were a daily presence, a daily part of the lives of the Afghan units. And it's not just the training. Much of it is just sort of the example that they set in how to think about conflict, how to prepare for a fight. And that just can't help but rub off on the Afghan forces.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, if I could, very quickly. You've asked the question, Should the American people think this is hopeless? The last 13 years have showed us that the counterterrorism fight and protecting the homeland in this region is not hopeless. We've been very successful at stopping attacks from the region.

And I would flip it around: From a homeland security perspective, I think it is close to hopeless to think that we can have that same success without some ongoing presence in the region.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank all of you for your service and for being here today.

And Afghanistan is a troubling place. And I hear a lot from the constituents, back in West Virginia. You know, we have an awful lot of military, and we've rotated many, many times. And I've been there a few times, myself. But, you know, people have said, "No one in history has had success in Afghanistan. Why do we expect to be any different?" So, you hear that playing out. But, on the other hand, it's much different. We've been attacked by people who planned and plotted from that part of the world. And we try to explain that and try to get support from the public.

I think I'm going to—I need—some questions, if you can help me, on what size of support levels will be needed in Afghanistan. Is it 5-, 10,000? What type special types? Is it Special Ops, Black Ops? And also, Bagram Air Force Base, I see that as a great asset. Are we determined to keep that as our asset, or do you see any—I mean, as we've given everything else away, are we planning on giving that away, too, to somebody, whatever?

And I just—I'd like to know about the morale with the training mission, with green-on-blue attacks. One of the most atrocious things I've ever attended was a Wounded Warriors dinner one night, and had a few of them tell me the horrific stories of the attacks that they've seen and the attacks that they were subject to from people they were training and had to trust. So, I know that takes a toll on them.

And just really the developing economy. Is there ever going to be an economy based on anything other than U.S. military presence?

So, I—that's a big plate, and I would just—I know we are limited on time, so—I guess we'll start with the size of support you think we need.

And I agree with our Chairman, you know, Iraq didn't work. So, if we learn from past mistakes, what—and I think the people in West Virginia will support—we will maintain to make sure that we're able to prevent that from happening again from that part of the world. What does it take to do that?

Admiral?

Admiral OLSON. If—that's a question for me, Senator? I mean, I don't claim to be "the" expert on precise force levels. I think that that's better addressed by General Campbell in tomorrow's hearing. But, having seen how this has developed, now, for so many years, I've held the opinion that somewhere around 10,000, plus or minus—

Senator MANCHIN. Are they—

Admiral OLSON.—is probably—

Senator MANCHIN.—going to be combat? I mean—or are they going to be basically training strategic personnel?

Admiral OLSON. It will be a split between those who are in the field conducting the day-to-day training, mentorship, advising, supporting—

Senator MANCHIN. So, we'll say approximately—

Admiral OLSON.—providing the logistics support and the other support that it takes. I mean, airspace—

Senator MANCHIN. Sure.

Admiral OLSON.—management, medical care, those sorts of things.

Senator MANCHIN. So, we're talking around 10,000. And right now, we're—what's our level right now in Afghanistan?

Admiral OLSON. We—that's about where we are now, I think.

Senator MANCHIN. But, we're supposed to go down to 5 by the end of the year?

Admiral OLSON. Sir.

Senator MANCHIN. So, you think it'll be of critical mass, if you will, going that low.

Admiral OLSON. I won't say "critical mass." I'll just say that we ought to really very carefully—

Senator MANCHIN. I got it.

Admiral OLSON.—get through all that.

Senator MANCHIN. Can anybody speak about the economy over there, if you see any economy?

Ambassador?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Yes. I'll address that. Let me just add to your—to the point that Admiral Olson just made, though.

It's important to remember that the U.S. mission and force level and our partners—our NATO allies and other partners' presence and force level are organically connected. And that's one of the—and that—as things now exist, that enables the resolute support mission force to be present in Kabul and Bagram and other parts of the country. As—if the U.S. forces draw down to the—to 5,500 by the end of this year, that presence won't—that regional presence

will no longer be possible, because our partners won't have the support and connectivity to our forces that they would wish to have. So, that's another factor to be looked at as this process goes forward.

On the economic side, the economy last year took a huge hit, both from the withdrawal of the international forces as they drew down to their present levels, but also, very importantly, from the political uncertainty that was created by the elections, in the aftermath, and concern, among Afghans as well as foreign investors, about what the outcome of that was going to be and whether there would be a workable dispensation, ultimately, that would allow economic activity to resume, and, indeed, encourage it. That's now coming into place.

The removal of uncertainty is a huge goal for the new Afghan government. As Ambassador Crocker said, President Ghani, Dr. Ghani, is very experienced and well versed in economic matters and finance, as are other people in his government. And, again, from my conversations with him and with Dr. Abdullah, they understand clearly that a high priority for this new government has to be the regeneration of economic activity within Afghanistan, by Afghan investors. There's a lot of money available in Afghan hands to be used in business activity, but it's been held or it's—or used outside the country because of uncertainty inside the country. So, they need to find ways to stimulate that activity, as well as ways to improve trade in the region, which they are working on, and to encourage foreign investment. So, that's as high on their agenda as anything, I think it's safe to say.

Senator MANCHIN. Mr. Chairman, if I can just have one second to just make one comment.

I have a hard time—you know, with the dependency they have on the United States and our presence there, whether it be in Afghanistan or in Iraq, and allow a person like Karzai or Maliki to destroy that type of a relationship, and we're—take us that far backwards—what's any assurance for us that we wouldn't—I mean, we have—right now, we have a better—let's say, a better relationship. We have people we have confidence in, in Iraq and Afghanistan. But, it seems that we have no large input and assurances that could continue.

Ambassador Crocker?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator.

It—for me, it comes down to U.S. engagement and leadership as a key determinant. During my years in Iraq, 2007–2009, it was the same Prime Minister, Maliki, and many of his colleagues from other communities could be every bit as difficult. But, we were constantly engaged, at my level, at the level of the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, at the level of the President. I think that engagement is absolutely crucial.

These people, whether in Iraq or Afghanistan, have been through a type of hell that's very hard for Americans to even imagine. It reduces them to core identities and zero-sum thinking, "If you're not part of my clan, my party, my tribe, I can't trust you. And not being able to trust you doesn't mean losing an election, it means maybe losing my life."

We can be the essential middleman. We did play that role in Iraq, for a time. We are playing that role now in Afghanistan. Ambassador Cunningham and Secretary Kerry, of course, were the ones who essentially brought that compromise into place that led to a National Unity Government between Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah. I would be as—so bold to suggest, I'm not at all sure they could have done that without us. But, we were there, we got it done. And the Afghan people now have a hope they didn't have before. It takes our leadership.

Finally, because I do care very much about this, I got to Kabul, on my first assignment, about 10 days after then-Chairman Karzai arrived in Kabul from the Bonn Conference that placed him as Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority. I worked closely with him during those initial months, when he had nothing—no government, no police, no army, no resources—absolutely nothing. I worked with him again when I returned to Afghanistan in 2011. Yes, it was difficult. He had been through a lot. We had been through a lot. But—Ambassador Cunningham was with me—it was President Karzai who put the final seal of approval on our Strategic Partnership Agreement that President Obama came to Kabul to sign. We had that engagement.

So, you know, we all look for the day, whether in Iraq or Afghanistan, when these peoples, these governments, are able to stand on their own, dispensing good governance and justice under law. They're not there yet. And our role, politically, I think, is absolutely crucial to helping them get there.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ernst.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today. I do appreciate your service.

I apologize. I think there are several hearings going on this morning.

Admiral Olson, you have mentioned, a couple of times, the need for our combat troops, more counterterrorism, train-and-assisters, to stay on beyond 2016. And I appreciate the fact that you have also mentioned—I made note earlier—you mentioned logistics, and you mentioned equipping the men and women that we have serving over there. And I would like to focus a little more on that, because I—I do believe—I am hopeful—that we will be able to train the Afghani Security Forces to continue with operations in Afghanistan, hopefully after we have exited theater, whenever that point is. But, we do need to know, beyond that, beyond any kinetic operations that are going on, Will they be able to logistically support themselves? Will they be able to maintain their equipment? What do we have in place to make sure that they will continue in a support role, also? What are those plans, if you know of any, Admiral?

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, Senator.

I'm not expert on the current plans. And again, I think that will be a question better asked of General Campbell tomorrow.

But, our experience so far has been that, absent a continued U.S. engagement in the nonkinetic sort of disciplines—in the intelligence, in the administration, in the logistics and the communications—then the capabilities do tend to deteriorate. Those don't all have to be supported by U.S. Active Duty soldiers. There's room for

others to provide that kind of training and support so that the soldier population can be in the field, supporting the more direct fight.

But, I do think it is essential—I mean, I'll repeat myself just a little bit—in that great shooters don't make a great army. We—it takes much more than that. In fact, we saw, in Iraq, in fact, a quite capable army that, absent the political, logistics, et cetera, support, was unable to sustain the fight.

Senator ERNST. Thank you. I believe it's imperative that those warfighters need to be supported, whether they're United States forces, whether they are Afghani forces.

Do you see that this is a role that contractors could fill? Or do you believe that it is better supported by a U.S. military standpoint during any sort of transition period before the United States hands off to Afghani forces?

Admiral OLSON. Well, we already have a history of certain contractors performing some of those roles. And we have a generation of veterans, from Iraq and Afghanistan, many of whom are willing to go perform those sorts of roles. So, I think there is potential. I'm not, again, the expert on that. I think it's a case-by-case evaluation. But, I do believe there's room to reduce the active Duty presence by replacing some of them with private contractors who would not be expected to be in the fight.

Senator ERNST. Okay.

Any other thoughts, gentlemen, in that area? Okay.

Yes, Ambassador.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. If I just could add, briefly.

There's actually a very detailed plan for what the train, advise, and assist process will consist of, with multiple lines of effort, that General Campbell can outline and provide you in writing. And most of that is built around things like logistics and the nuts and bolts of how you run and support a military force. And much—actually, most of it is on intel and logistics.

Senator ERNST. Great.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. A very small part has to do with the actual war—what we would think of as warfighting.

Senator ERNST. Great. I appreciate that.

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all, both for your service and for being here today.

I have had the opportunity to work with Senator McCain on the Special Immigrant Visa Program, trying to extend the number of visas that are available for Afghans coming to the United States. I wonder, Ambassador Crocker, if you could talk about why this program is important.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you very much, Senator, for your support for the Special Immigrant Visa Program, and for the question.

This is something I feel passionately about, whether in Iraq or in Afghanistan. I worked very hard, in both countries, to do everything I could to see that we did the right thing by those who supported us and whose lives all too often were at risk because of that support. We ramped up considerably in both countries. In both

countries, I think we have now fallen short, not only of what I believed was the right thing to do, but what, again, this Nation stands for.

These people stepped up to serve us, whether the civilian presence or the military presence, not for a paycheck, but because they believed it was the right thing to do. Almost all of them had qualifications that could have landed them probably better-paying jobs with substantially less risk. They believed that we were there to help pull their country out of a dark hole, and they wanted to support that effort. They run enormous risk, and many of them have paid for their—paid for that with their lives.

And I would just urge this committee, the Senate, the Congress, to do everything they can to ensure that processing is expedited and that the resources are available, once they get to the United States, to support them. I have heard too many stories of Afghan and Iraqi immigrants or refugees, depending on the program, who have come here and have had to go back to very uncertain fates because they simply could not support their families. That is just wrong.

So, again, thank you, Senator Shaheen, for being our conscience on this.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much. I certainly share your view that we should do everything possible to make sure that those people who helped our men and women on the ground have a safe future and can come to the United States. And we'll continue to work on that. And appreciate all of the support from so many men and women who served with these Afghans and Iraqis, because they've been the cheerleaders for making sure that this program goes forward.

Ambassador Cunningham, you talked about the hours that you spent with Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah. And one of the questions that I have is looking at the partnership government that has been formed, the potential challenges to that. As we all know, it's always hard to have more than one person in charge. And I wonder if you could give us some insights on how they're dividing up responsibilities. I was curious to see that Dr. Ghani, despite his understanding of economics, is really focused more on the international aspects, the defense aspects of things, and Dr. Abdullah is more focused on domestic. So, I wonder if you could talk about how that partnership is working and how you think it will continue to work in the future.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Senator.

I think the best way for me to respond to that is to describe the National Unity Government as a work in progress. This is a unique phenomenon in Afghanistan, which is much more prone to a winner-take-all way of doing business and way of doing politics, which is part of what led to the civil war that Ambassador Crocker referred to.

One of the driving forces behind the effort to create the National Unity Government was the realization that everything that the Afghans had accomplished in the past decade was at risk if they didn't figure out a way to overcome their very bitter feelings about the elections, bitter feelings on both sides. And that's one of the factors that is—that will make the government a difficult propo-

sition. The two leaders and their teams fought a very bitter political competition in which both sides sincerely believed that they had won. So, overcoming that division, turning the page, as we kept saying, “You know, you have to turn the page. The political competition is over. You have to realize that. Somebody’s going to be named President. That person needs to figure out a way to govern the country under today’s circumstances.” That’s what the National Unity Government is an attempt to do.

I believe firmly that Dr. Abdullah and Dr. Ghani are both committed to making it work. That doesn’t mean it’s going to be easy. And they don’t have many members of—they don’t have many members of the government named yet, because—they’ve made presentations to the parliament. Some of those people have withdrawn their candidacies because of treatment that they received in the parliament. Others were rejected. So, it’s a back-and-forth proposition. This also was to be expected. It took President Karzai, who was completely in charge of his government and his political affairs after the last election—after his last election—it took him months to form a government, just doing it by himself. Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah are trying to do this in a collaborative fashion, so it’s taking long—the whole process is taking longer than anybody wants or would like, but it is moving forward. And I think there is a real drive, on both sides, to make this work, but we’ll have to see.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

My time is ended, but thank you all, also, for your continued support for a secure Afghanistan.

Chairman MCCAIN. And I thank Senator Shaheen for her efforts on behalf of these individuals, as Ambassador Crocker described them, who virtually risked their lives on behalf of the freedom of their country. And if there’s additional measures that need to be taken on this issue, we would be glad to take it up in the defense authorization bill, Ambassador Cunningham or Ambassador Crocker, if we need to take additional measures to help these people come to the United States, if necessary.

Senator TILLIS.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, thank you for your past, current, and continued service.

Admiral Olson, you mentioned that surprise is an essential part in playing out any strategy over in that area. The only thing I find surprising about the President’s strategy is how transparent we’ve been in announcing timeline and definitive troop withdrawals. It seems—I think Ambassador Crocker mentioned—now that’s sort of what our adversaries are waiting for.

So, in the context of the current strategy, I’m also concerned with this withdrawal creating a new place for terrorist organizations to train and potentially develop a capability that threatens the homeland. But, based on your perspective of the terrorist threat, what kind of counterterrorism strategies should we be thinking about or putting into place to make it less likely that we go back to a pre-September 11 threat in Afghanistan?

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, Senator.

The counterterrorism strategy has, in my view, got to be some centralized command capability, with pods of forces that are prepared to move on to terrorist targets as they develop, with enough striking power to resolve that situation and keep those terrorists from taking the actions that they intend to take. Very much—very important that that’s done in concert with Afghan partners and colleagues, depending, in part, certainly on Afghan-sourced intelligence, but it is still sophisticated enough an operation that, in my view, it will require some external support for some time.

Senator TILLIS. And, Admiral Olson, I know that the—at least some spokesman for the President characterized the Taliban as an insurgency. Do you think that there is a potential transition back to, once again, considering the changes that will go on in Afghanistan if the current administration’s policies are carried forward, to where they are actually viewed as a part of the terrorist organizations that we may have to look at in Afghanistan?

Admiral OLSON. I’m sure my colleague on my left, Mike Leiter, will appreciate me passing this question to him, because that’s really more of an intelligence-based question than a military question.

Senator TILLIS. Mr. Leiter?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I do think that the Taliban has some appreciation that their willingness to allow al-Qaeda to launch transnational effect—attacks around September 11 were a very bad thing for the Taliban. So, I think there is some appreciation on their part that they would prefer al-Qaeda not to do that.

Do I think that there are elements—not just in Afghanistan—in Pakistan and elements within the Taliban that are more open to that sort of training and launching attacks? Absolutely. I believe the Haqqani Network is extremely problematic.

And the only thing I would add to Admiral Olson’s wise vision on what those counterterrorism operations need to be to protect the homeland, we need to continue to have the deep engagement and strategic patience that Ryan Crocker talked about with regards to Pakistan. You cannot separate these two nations out yet. We have to understand that our presence is required, not just to combat these forces in Afghanistan, but continue to work with the Pakistanis and pressure the Pakistanis to target those same groups.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

Ambassador Crocker—again, I mentioned earlier that you said that—I think, that the current timeline and troop withdrawal is now something that some of our adversaries are waiting for. And I know that you’ve dealt with the effect—or the influence of Iran and Iraq and Afghanistan. If we follow through with the current strategy, what different strategies do you anticipate Iran may—or role may they play in Afghanistan?

Ambassador CROCKER. It’s a very important question, Senator. We don’t share very much in common with the Islamic Republic. For most of the last 13 years, I would suggest that we have objectively, on a very broad level, sought similar outcomes in Afghanistan. Iran and Afghanistan almost went to war, in the late 1990s, under Taliban rule. This is an existential issue. There can only be one faith-based theocracy in Islam. The Iranians claim it, and so

do the Taliban. And it was an existential fight. They do not want to see the Taliban back.

That said, I would be concerned that, if they see us as leaving the field, militarily and politically, they will ramp up their own game. They have allies among some of the minority groups in Afghanistan. The Northern Alliance was closely tied to Iranian support during the Taliban years as a means of keeping them—keeping the Taliban from running over the whole country. Those linkages are still there.

So, if we pull out, I don't think we would see an Iraq-type situation, but we would see more Iranian involvement. And, based on the pattern of Iranian involvement in other countries, I'm not sure we would like it.

Senator TILLIS. Mr. Chair, if I may, the—just a followup question. It's a little bit off the subject, but—with the ANSF being an all-volunteer force, and with the current strategy publicized by the administration, do we have any sense of what effect that could have, in terms of their continued recruiting and buildup of that force? Or is it even material to their recruiting efforts?

Ambassador?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Well, one of the good-news items with regard to the ANSF is, as you said, it is a volunteer force. And, despite the high level of casualties that they are taking, levels of casualties that need to be reduced, and I think will be reduced as the leadership gets better and better, but there's no—they are not having any difficulty in recruiting people to join the military or the police. I expect that will remain the case.

As both institutions mature and continue to get better, they will become more attractive. They're both making efforts to recruit women, by the way, which is a very difficult proposition. They are both doing that.

The determining factor in all of this is the sustained international funding that's required. As part of our plan for funding the ANSF, the Afghan government is committed to, over time, increase its share of its own defense budget, with a view, ultimately, to becoming self-sufficient. That's going to take a while—quite a while. And, for the foreseeable future, they will be highly dependent on the international funding that we and our NATO and other allies have committed to provide. That is the determining factor that makes everything else run.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

Senator REED [presiding]. Senator Donnelly, please.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all. I apologize for having to step out for a few minutes.

And this may have been asked, and I'm sorry if it has. In regards to Pakistan, how big a percentage of getting Pakistan right is getting Afghanistan right?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. That's—I'd like to ask Ambassador Crocker also to respond to that—that's a very difficult question. But, as Mr. Leiter said, the two are inextricably linked. They have their own history that they need to overcome, and the phenomenon that we're trying to deal with both the Taliban and the—what I call the network of Islamist extremism—exists on both sides of the

border, and moves back and forth across the border. That includes al-Qaeda, but it also includes a host of other folks.

A long-term solution has to include dealing with the presence of those folks on the—in the Pakistani side of the border. For both countries. There's evidence that the awareness of—a realistic awareness of that is growing in Pakistan. We have been encouraging that relentlessly over the past couple of years. And I hope the Pakistanis will come to realize, genuinely, that they need to act in their own interests, as well as in the regional interest.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you for that question, Senator, because it is central to the long-term stability of that region and to our own long-term security.

Afghanistan is not just about Afghanistan. As both Mr. Leiter and Ambassador Cunningham said, it's also about Pakistan, and vice versa. The border between the two states is an artificial one, drawn by the British at the end of the 19th century, deliberately to divide the Pashtun community. There are tribal and familial affinities that cross that border that make this an extraordinarily complex situation.

As I noted in my opening remarks, the Pakistanis have hedged their bets, based on their experience in the 1990s. They supported the Taliban then as a vehicle to put an end to the Afghan civil war and produce a government in Afghanistan that, again, would stabilize the situation and with which they had some purchase. That, over time, I think, has led them to some strategies that I would hope they regret, like support for the Haqqani Network.

Senator DONNELLY. Right.

Ambassador CROCKER. You know, going back almost 10 years, I remember discussions with the Pakistani leadership—intelligence, military, and presidential—that the Haqqanis were really dangerous, not just to us, not just to the Afghan state, but to the Pakistani state. Well, so it's proved. But, it does raise a question, given the current challenges Pakistan faces, whether they could really subdue the Haqqanis, or not.

And, you know, that is why long-term U.S. engagement and leadership is so critical. It's 185 million people, with nuclear weapons, that is facing a set of insurgencies that could grow to threaten the state. Some of these, insurgencies of their making that got out of control. But, the threat, nonetheless, is there.

Senator DONNELLY. I am—I apologize—I'm running out of time. I just want to ask one other question, and that would be: In places like Kunar and Nuristan and Helmand and Khost, as we look forward to the next few years, how successful do you think we'll be in those areas? And will the core—the Kabul area, those areas—will it be a solid core, with continued challenges in those areas, or how do you see this, if we work in a flexible and conditions-based way?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. All of those—all of the areas that you mentioned are already under—well under the responsibility of the Afghan Security Forces, who are being tested—were tested last year by the Taliban, particularly in places like Helmand. They had some difficulty, but, where the Afghans lost ground, they've quickly recovered it, recovered themselves and then recovered the territory, and held their own last year. I don't see any reason to think that

the—that they will be less effective this coming year and in the future. So, while they will continue to be contested by the Taliban, I think they will more than hold their own.

Kabul is, and has been, under Afghan security control for—as far as I know. And that will remain the case. A critical factor in all this is the continued counterterrorism effort that some of our forces will continue to be involved in directly in mentoring the Afghan Special Operations Forces, who are already very good and, again, getting better all the time.

So, the—there will continue to be conflicts in the countryside, and even parts of the countryside that the Taliban controls but don't really matter very much, but I think the main effort to secure most of the population as it is now will be successful.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN [presiding]. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to all of you.

A stable Afghanistan is desired, not just by our country, Pakistan, but apparently now China is stepping up in a much more overt way. So, there was an article in a recent Wall Street Journal talking about what China has been doing, and in discussions with us, also. Would you all share what you think about China's growing interest in the security of Afghanistan, what you see as the positives, what concerns you think are raised by their involvement?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I'd be glad to, Senator.

I and a number of my colleagues in the administration have felt for some time that the Chinese had a positive role to play in Afghanistan, that their interests in Afghanistan and in the region were coincident with ours, in both the stability of the region and in stimulating economic activity and investment that they could make on their own. So, we have been in discussions with the Chinese government for some time about this, about how we could better work together and how China could be a more active and positive participant. And I think it's basically a good thing that they are now slowly moving into a more forward-leaning posture, both politically and economically, because stability in that part of the world is in their interest, as well as it is in ours.

Ambassador CROCKER. I certainly would endorse Ambassador Cunningham's remarks. I would note just a couple of additional points.

I am not a huge supporter of Chinese activism outside its borders, except maybe in this case, where there are, indeed, common threats. The Chinese are worried about radicalization of their Muslim population, primarily the Uyghurs, that can flow through Afghanistan and Pakistan. They have a very close relationship with Pakistan. I understand—I'm not sure how valid it is—that the Chinese are now beginning to use that relationship with Pakistan to get the Pakistanis to ensure that there is not infiltration from Afghanistan through Pakistan up into western China.

The Chinese have substantial economic interests in Afghanistan, in the mineral sector. Ambassador Cunningham and I both have argued that, well, if they're reaping the benefits, they need to step up to help the state ensure security. I understand they are now looking at police training. I'm not sure that is the model I would

uphold for the world's police forces, necessarily. But, to the extent it suggests that the Chinese are now engaged in trying to support a viable and stable Afghanistan, then I think it gives us something to work with.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. And if—Admiral and Mr. Leiter, if you basically agree that this is a—this could lead to a fruitful kind of an approach to civility in Afghanistan, we—I can go on to my next question.

So, all of you have said that our withdrawal—our drawdown in Afghanistan should be based on conditions rather than a calendar. So, my question is, you know, What kind of conditions do you—do we want in Afghanistan to enable us to draw down? And do we have an agreed-upon, articulated goals between us and the Afghans as to what should be—what kind of conditions would occur, should occur, from our end, from their end, to enable us to withdraw from Afghanistan?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Senator, I think the discussion about conditions and the timeline is something that not—is not only a matter for us, it's also a matter for—of discussions with the Afghans—

Senator HIRONO. Yes.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM.—themselves. And that—

Senator HIRONO. That is—that was my—

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM.—that has been happening. It's been part of—a regular feature of the transition that's taking place over the past several years has been to do a—I don't know, every couple of months, an assessment of how the transition was evolving and what the status of the Afghan Security Forces was, as going forward. That's the kind of process that I think—not that I think—that will continue with the new Afghan government and the new leadership. And it's on the basis of that process and assessment of Afghan Security Force capabilities, what they can do and what they need and what kind of assistance they still require, that the timeline and the drawdown should be measured against.

Senator HIRONO. So, do the rest of you agree that it's basically the capability of the Afghan Security Forces to defend their own country that should be the primary basis on which we withdraw?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I think it's potentially the most important, but I would put right up there, as well, the potential for the Afghans not just to secure their own country, but target terrorist networks which have transnational aspirations. And this is something that I think is going to be as hard as anything else for the Afghans to develop and maintain, as compared to what we are used to after the past 14 years. And we will be critical in both informing them as to the threats we see and also maintaining some of those high-end capabilities which have been so critical beyond securing Kabul and elsewhere into areas where the transnational threats have tended to hide over the past decade.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to go over my time.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Cotton.

Senator COTTON. Thank you all again for your service to the country, which I know has been long and distinguished, and par-

ticularly in a tough and difficult place like Afghanistan and, more broadly, in the Middle East and Central Asia.

I'd like to start out by asking a question about ongoing political developments in Afghanistan. Obviously, we have new partners at the senior levels of the government there. I—last month, I think the parliament confirmed about a third of the nominees for the new cabinet that President Ghani proposed. Could I get your quick perspective on the prospects for further confirmations so there would be a full working leadership at the senior levels of the Afghan government?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Senator, I know that President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah are quite focused on filling out—fleshing out the rest of the leadership positions in the government. I'm not directly involved in conversations with them, but I know that they are working hard to present both another list of candidates for positions, as well as doing the necessary work that needs to be done with the parliament, itself, to obtain confirmations of their ministers.

It's to be expected that this is a difficult process. It's a unique arrangement that they now have, working together on the government and cooperating with each other as a collaborative effort in identifying people for positions, as well as trying to set the bar for capability higher than it may have been in some cases in the past. So, it's taking longer than anybody wants. It's certainly taking longer than either of them want or the Afghan people want. But, they're working hard at it, and I'm confident that they will succeed.

Senator COTTON. Ambassador Crocker?

Ambassador CROCKER. Again, Senator, I look at this over a longer timeline, having been in Afghanistan shortly after the fall of the Taliban and seeing how little there was, including any real basis for political understandings among factions who had been on opposite sides of the fight in many cases. So, I perhaps see more progress than those who are looking at snapshots today.

The fact that Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah can sit down and thrash through a slate of ministerial nominees, to me is the important point, not that some of them ran into trouble with the parliament, not unexpectedly. And we're now going through, again, a second round, as Ambassador Cunningham said, as they try to get nominees identified, vetted. Financial disclosure statements do have their use, I can now acknowledge, no longer having to do them. But, this is a slow, painful process. But, it is a process that is working—frankly, far better than many would have expected.

Senator COTTON. Does the Government of Afghanistan still—the President still appoint the provincial and district governors? That was the case when I was there on Active Duty in 2008 and 2009.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Yes, that's still the case.

Senator COTTON. Have you seen the—have we seen the quality of local government services and responsiveness increase over what I saw in 2008–2009, when governors were understandably responsive to their constituency of one in Kabul, as opposed to the local population?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I'd say it's mixed bag. The provincial and district government works when there are good people there and when they both know how to work Kabul and they know how

to cooperate with their security and other partners at the provincial and district level. And there are places where it still doesn't work very well. It's a high priority for both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah to improve the operations of the Kabul/provincial/district relationship, both in terms of the people who are appointed and in terms of reforming how business is done. This is, again, one of the several reform items that's being delayed by the delay in setting up the new government. But, they and the people around them are aware of the problem. And one of Ghani's driving principles, which Abdullah has bought into quite completely, is, they need to have better people in government.

Senator COTTON. Good.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Period.

Senator COTTON. Good.

If I could squeeze in one more question. Admiral Olson, could you give us your thoughts on the practical effect on our counterterrorism efforts if we follow one course of action, which is essentially to shut down every installation in Regional Command East and Bagram Airfield and retrench back to Kabul Airfield?

Admiral OLSON. Effective counterterrorism requires a rapid response capability. And I think withdrawing to a single location in central/south-central Afghanistan will reduce the capability to respond rapidly to emerging situations. And so, I think that there would be—it would have a detrimental effect.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to compliment you for the series of very thoughtful hearings that you've had early on in this Congress. It's been very, very helpful.

Ambassador Crocker, I want to go to the subject of Syria. I understand that you support the training of the Syrian opposition and removal of Assad. Would you share with us your thoughts?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator.

I certainly would like to see a trained, effective, well-equipped, moderate Syrian opposition force that could replace Assad. However, I—admittedly some vast removed now from what's going on, I don't think that either are very likely.

The Islamic radicals, be that al-Qaeda in Syria, the Nusra Front, or even worse, the Islamic state, clearly have the ascendancy in Syria now. I would be concerned that weapons be very, very tightly controlled, lest they wind up in the hands of these groups that clearly are our mortal enemies.

I have also said, and I have said it for some time, I don't think President Assad is going anytime soon. I will spare this committee yet another history lesson, but this has its roots in the Hama rising in 1982, when Hafez al-Assad and his brother Rifaat slaughtered the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and somewhere north of 15,000 Syrian Sunnis. You know, that is why you have a radicalized Sunni community in Syria. That is why you have a regime that was ready for a day of reckoning.

You know, Assad should go. Okay. And what army is going to remove him? If you set a policy, you'd better have the means to carry it out.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator NELSON. Thank you.

Mr. Leiter—

And, by the way, thank all of you for your public service. It's extraordinary. And it's good to see you, Admiral, again.

Mr. Leiter, you have expressed the concern that we exchanged the Taliban five for Bergdahl. You want to elaborate?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I was concerned. First, I think it—I hope that everyone who needed to be involved in that discussion about the potential consequences was. I was not in the administration, so I can't say it. But, I hope that there was a full conversation about the consequences.

Second, there was much commentary as to whether the Qataris would, in fact, control these five. I think there's some reporting that at least one may not be under control. Frankly, I was less concerned with that question and more concerned with the timeline we put on the Qatari control of them, which I believe now—I apologize—I believe it was only 2 years, or potentially 3 years. It was not an extended period. And I thought that was problematic, because it starts to undermine—again, I think, a phrase that Ambassador Crocker brought up, which I think is exactly right—that people in the region, our allies and our enemies, must understand that we will have deep engagement and strategic patience. And putting relatively short timelines on controls of people who really have been central to transnational threats, in my view, is deeply problematic and shows a lack of patience, which our adversaries absolutely love in the United States at times.

Senator NELSON. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Let's continue the discussion. It's a good discussion.

Do you think, if you were negotiating, you might have could have gotten the Taliban to take three instead of five?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I apologized. I understand the—

Senator GRAHAM. All—yeah—

Mr. LEITER. I think—

Senator GRAHAM. My point is that they probably—what if we insisted they take five?

On a scale of 1 to 10, what's the likelihood of these five going back to the fight at the end of the 1 year in Qatar, not 3?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I actually—I tend to think the Qataris have been a reasonably good partner in some ways.

Senator GRAHAM. At the end of the year, these people can go anywhere they want to go.

Mr. LEITER. I think, in some foreseeable amount of time, where we still have very important strategic interests in the region, they will be back in the fight.

Senator GRAHAM. Is that within a year of when they can go back?

Mr. LEITER. I think we have strategic interests within the region for far more than a year.

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah.

Mr. LEITER. So, anything even beyond a year—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Mr. LEITER.—I'm still worried about.

Senator GRAHAM. I couldn't agree with you more.

To the Ambassadors, we don't have a medal for dealing with Karzai, but we should create one. I don't know where it would fit into the scheme of medals, but, to all of you who have had to deal with this problem in Afghanistan all these years, God bless you. And I think each one of you, in your own way, did a terrific job.

What happens, Ambassador Cunningham, if—well, what would be losing in Afghanistan, very briefly? If you and Ambassador Crocker could take a shot at describing, in a—just a little bit of time, what losing would be, in your mind.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. In my mind, losing is the collapse or incapacity of the Afghan state and the ability of the Afghans to control security for most of the country, which leads to Afghanistan again becoming a place where people whose interests are hostile to ours return and begin to operate again. That's what affects our interests. There are many other negative implications of that, including for other countries in the region and Pakistan. But, that's the main feature of loss.

Senator GRAHAM. What about you, Ambassador Crocker?

Ambassador CROCKER. I would fully endorse that. We—Senator, as you know, we've seen this movie before, in the early 1990s, up through September 11. We have enemies that would, I am convinced, like to bring us another September 11. And if they can get strategic space and depth, they will go to work planning it. They may already be doing so, in the form of the Islamic state that now doesn't have to worry about day-to-day survival in large swaths of Syria and Iraq.

Senator GRAHAM. So—

Ambassador CROCKER. They and al-Qaeda would love to have Afghanistan back.

Senator GRAHAM. So—

Ambassador CROCKER. We've seen what happens when they got it.

Senator GRAHAM. Sure. So, let's talk about how to prevent that. A counterterrorism platform in Afghanistan would probably be in our National security interest, to make sure they don't regenerate. Does that make sense to both of you, all of you? Yeah. A robust counterterrorism program.

Supporting the Afghan Security Forces to make sure they don't fail makes sense, in terms of preventing the outcome you both described? We're going to have to pay for their army, at least in part, for a long time to come, because of their budget problems. Do you all agree with that? Okay.

What's the likelihood of losing if we stick with the current plan, which is to go down to 1,000 United States soldiers, Kabul-centric, in a security cooperation agreement environment? What's the likelihood of us losing if we follow that plan, versus, say, keeping a force of around 10,000, based on conditions-on-the-ground withdrawal? Could you start, from Ambassador Cunningham, and go through the whole panel and give me your evaluation?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Senator, I've—as I've said, I think the current projected timeline for the withdrawal and for the—the timeline for withdrawal and the rate of withdrawal is—under cur-

rent circumstances, isn't the way to maximize the prospects for success. I don't know at what point mission failure kicks in.

But, there are two elements, as you've said and others have noted, that need to be maintained. And they're related, but they're different and have different functions. One is the train, advise, and assist, which goes to ensuring that the Afghan Security Forces remain capable of securing the country and the Afghan people. And the second is the counterterrorism mission, which also has an intelligence component, as well as a military component. Both of those need to be effective until such time as the Afghans are capable of doing more and more on their own. And they are.

So, there will be—there will be periods when it is safe to further withdraw U.S. support and resources and soldiers. American forces are basically—they're not doing combat operations now in Afghanistan. They haven't, for a while. Mostly, they are doing counterterrorism and force protection, and the train, advise, and assist, and occasionally helping the Afghans, themselves. But, it's a question of—

Senator GRAHAM. But, we're doing unilateral counterterrorism operations today.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Yes. But, the Afghans are also increasingly developing—

Senator GRAHAM. So, that's—

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM.—their own capability to do that. And many of their operations are supported by us, but conducted by them.

Senator GRAHAM. Absolutely.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. So, that's the balance that needs to be maintained in a way that is—provides the effect that needs to be provided.

Senator GRAHAM. I'm sorry, I'm over my time. Does—do the rest of you generally agree with that statement? Anything you would like to add? Okay.

Thank you all.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to join in thanking you for this series of very thoughtful hearings, which have been, I think, a great advantage to us in drawing a perspective for the rest of the congressional session and the tasks that we have ahead.

And thank you, to our panel, each of you, for your extraordinary, distinguished, and lengthy service to our Nation, and, in particular, to Ambassadors Cunningham and Crocker for your hospitality and graciousness to me on my trips, which I was privileged to do three times, two of them with our Chairman, and for your insight and information, then and now.

I think that one of the points that is most important for us and the American people to understand is how inextricably bound, as you've said—I think, all of you, but, most recently, Ambassador Crocker—Afghanistan and Pakistan are in their futures, their pasts, and their fates come. And I know that one of my areas of interest, on my trips and since then, has been the flow of bombmaking materials from Pakistan into Afghanistan, and the manufacturing of those fertilizers and other bombmaking materials

in Pakistan, which has been to their sorrow and destruction as well as our troops and the people of Afghanistan. So, I wonder, Ambassador Cunningham and Ambassador Crocker, whether you can give us some idea of what's happening on the ground. Has that problem been successfully addressed in Pakistan, or even measurably addressed?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. To my knowledge, Senator, there hasn't been any major progress in dealing with that particular phenomenon up to this point, but there may be an opportunity for doing so, now that the Pakistanis are embarked on a—their own campaign to address the extremists that are operating in northern Pakistan, and also to get them engaged in a—in more practical cooperation. But, as I said, for a—at least as far as I know, there hasn't been any major progress in that area, so far.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Because, in a certain way, for me at least, apart from its very practical destructive effects on both sides of that border, it's also been a barometer of whether the Pakistanis really are serious about combating extremists and terrorists, in their own country, that do such ravaging harm to their own people.

Admiral Olson, I wonder if there are, broadly, lessons that we've learned from our very successful special operations in Afghanistan that we could apply now to the fight against ISIS and the state that, as you or others have said, now occupy such large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria.

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, Senator.

Certainly, there are some. I think the lessons we've learned about locating and tracking our adversaries, about precision strikes on them when we do have that sort of opportunity, the lessons we've learned about developing counterpart counterterrorist forces and working with our allies who have capable forces, all may apply at some level in the fight against the Islamic state.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Is there the possibility of doing in Iraq, do you think, what apparently is ongoing fairly successfully in Afghanistan in having special operators trained and then operating with the advice of American special operators?

Admiral OLSON. You mean Iraqi special operators operating with the advice of Americans?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Correct.

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. We've been there before, and it—several years ago, I would have told you that the Iraqi Special Operations Forces were really quite capable and were performing complex operations at a very high level.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And that's not so now.

Admiral OLSON. I'm not there now, so I don't have firsthand knowledge. I—if it doesn't exist, I do believe that, at some level, it could be regenerated.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

My time is expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator King.

Senator KING. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity.

Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony. I apologize, I had to attend another hearing. I suspect that all the questions have been asked and answered.

I heard your opening statements, to the effect that it would be a grave mistake to withdraw from Afghanistan on an arbitrary timeframe not based upon conditions on the ground, that we would lose the benefits, the progress that's been made in that country, and, at a modest additional investment, we could achieve significant long-term success. And I would just like to ask each of you to confirm. Is that an accurate statement of your position?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Yes, Senator, it's an accurate description of what, I think in my statement, I called—I called our continuing presence an insurance policy, at relatively—it's—it will still cost, but at relatively low cost, compared to the effort that we've made. And I think it's one that we need to continue to make.

Senator KING. I like the “insurance policy” image. Mine is, “Let's not fumble the ball on the 5 yardline.”

Ambassador Crocker?

Ambassador CROCKER. That's—Senator, that was an excellent summary. It reflects exactly what I believe. I, too, have used the term “insurance policy.” You know, I think a—“let's not fumble” and “let's not throw an interception” are just as good.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Admiral?

Admiral OLSON. Senator, I believe that continuous evaluation of the status and conditions on the ground is essential to making the right decisions. And I also believe that, once those decisions are made, we ought to hold them a little more closely to our vest.

Senator KING. I would agree with that. And it seems to me that the length of time it took to get through the Afghan elections and the long period between the elections and the installation of the President and Chief Executive give us a readymade, perfectly defensible reason and rationale to extend the clock, if you will. And I think that's just part of the reality that we face there. Plus, we have—for the first time in, I don't know, living memory, have a real partner that we can work with who has a chance to make Afghanistan work. And to pull the support out that they need at this moment would be ironic and tragic, in my opinion.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I think you captured my position well. And I would just say, historically, although not perfect analogies, we've seen this before. We have done it well after World War II. We did it well after Korea. We made investments to remain in those places where we were victorious to support a long-term transition to other capabilities and security.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MCCAIN. Ambassador Crocker, I'd like to ask one additional question. Just this morning, I received a copy of the administration's proposal on the AUMF, and the title of it is “Authorization for Use of Military Forces Against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.” Now, we are presently setting up training for—in Saudi Arabia and other places, to train and equip the Free Syrian Army to fight against Bashar Assad. Have you got a view that this resolution makes no mention whatsoever of Bashar Assad, who has slaughtered well over 200,000 people? You know the statistics. Does—do you have a view on that aspect of this request? And could

it possibly mean that we are not going to use any force to stymie Bashar Assad's behavior?

Ambassador CROCKER. It would seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that implicit in an effort to train and equip a moderate Syrian opposition is that that opposition will go into a fight against the forces of Bashar al-Assad, as well as, if they can handle it, also to blunt the expansion of gains by the Nusra Front and the Islamic state. Whether they're going to be able to do that or not is another matter. But, certainly the effort is worth making, as long as, as I said earlier, we can have reasonable assurance that, when we get to the equip part of training Syrian opposition, that that equipment will not wind up in the hands of either the regime or forces that are our avowed enemy.

Chairman MCCAIN. But, does it strike you that there is no mention of Bashar Assad or an authorization to do anything in opposition of Bashar Assad? In other words, isn't it conspicuous, by its absence in the title of this authorization?

Ambassador CROCKER. As I said in my earlier comment, if you're going to have a policy, and you're going to articulate a policy publicly, you'd better be sure you have the means to carry it out. I think we articulated a policy, back in 2011, that was based on a misreading of reality in Syria. Where we will go—where the administration—

Chairman MCCAIN. In other words, we articulated we were going to get rid of Bashar Assad.

Ambassador CROCKER. Without having the means to do it, and without—

Chairman MCCAIN. Yes.

Ambassador CROCKER.—understanding that he was not Mubarak, he was not Qaddafi, he was not bin Ali of Tunisia. He was an Assad of Syria with an entirely different lineage and a ruthless commitment to the endurance of his regime.

Chairman MCCAIN. And with assistance from the Iranians, of 5,000 Hezbollah, arms supplies, equipment from Russia and from Tehran, which then swung the momentum on his side.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM, do you have a view on this?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I have a personal view that's not informed by any particular knowledge. But, I agree with Ambassador Crocker, that we need a clear understanding of what the realistic possibilities are and what the means are to carry it out. And it doesn't seem very likely, to me, that a moderate and effective Syrian fighting force is going to be able to be constituted quickly or easily. But, if it is, it's also going to require outside support, which doesn't necessarily have to be just American; it probably—may not desirably be American. But, they will—one of the things that we need to do in that region, I think, is also broaden the effectiveness of the coalition and the others who are participating in this. And, to do that, you need clear goals and objectives.

Chairman MCCAIN. Ambassador Olson or Mr. Leiter, do you have a comment?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, not specific to Bashar al-Assad, but I know, with several of the colleagues here at the table, I sat through too many meetings in the White House Situation Room discussing whether or not a terrorist group fit under a very precise definition

within an authorization of force. Frankly, I thought some of that time could have been put to better use.

I understand the risk of having an overly broad authorization, but I think any authorization limited to a single group or a single name runs a real risk of not keeping up with time as a terrorist threat morphs.

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I would agree with Mr. Leiter, as well as the Ambassadors. I think that, in general, the AUMF authorizations ought to be more generally written. We did spend much too much time parsing who fit within specific authorizations, which delayed the decision to take some sort of action—in some cases, costing us an opportunity.

Chairman MCCAIN. Do you agree with that on the overall authorization, Ambassador?

Ambassador CROCKER. I certainly do. The broader they can be written to allow their application to emerging threats without having to drag through the whole process again, I think is very important.

I would like to make one other point, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my former profession, the Foreign Service. I do believe, and I have said so on a number of occasions, that there was a period after 2011 in which, if we had chosen to send in, not boots on the ground, but wingtips and pumps on the ground, in the person of language-proficient, area-familiar Foreign Service officers, we could have done, at that time, under conditions of reasonable security, working with the Turks and others, to make on-the-ground liaison with the non-Islamic opposition, to evaluate them, to influence them, to assess them, and to make cogent recommendations back to Washington. I think of all the gaps that we may have in our Syria strategy, not deploying Foreign Service officers into an admittedly risky environment, but a manageable environment at that time, may be our most egregious.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Are there going to be any more questions or is this—

Chairman MCCAIN. No.

Senator REED. I just—I want to follow up with one question, the Chairman's very thoughtful discussion about the issue of the Authorized Use of Military Forces (AUMF), Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and Syria. Ambassador Crocker and Ambassador Cunningham, do you feel that ISIL is an imminent threat to the United States, in terms of what they could do or what they might be planning to do?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. One of the principals that I've brought to this kind of work, and especially dealing with groups like that, is that, when they say they're going to do something, you ought to think that they're serious about it. In the case of ISIL, they've demonstrated that they'll do what they say they're going to do.

Whether the threat is imminent, or not, I don't know. I don't have access to intelligence. But, there's no doubt in my mind that, over the long term, if they succeed in establishing themselves, that they will both seek to expand to other parts of the world, which they've said they will do, and they will seek to take on us and our

European allies directly—or, not just the Europeans—others who are engaged against them.

I know it's difficult. I've been asked by my friends, "Why don't we just go away and leave them alone, let them fight it out? Why make this our fight?" I firmly believe we don't have that option. We can decide not to do anything about it. That's a policy choice. And you—we should have that debate. The American people should understand what the choices are and what the options are, and also what the likely outcomes are going to be. But, we don't have the option of saying, "The problem doesn't exist." We can say, "We're not going to deal with it," and then we can absorb the consequences of that later on, sometime—who knows how long. But, there will be consequences.

Senator REED. Would you say the same thing about imminent threat with respect to the Assad government, given their history, given the experience that you've both had dealing with them?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I have had not very much experience dealing with the Assad government, but my guess would be that there—a line has been crossed in the region that is not going to be easy to repair soon or if ever. And that will also have consequences for our interests in the region. Negative consequences.

Senator REED. Ambassador Crocker, your comments on both, sort of, the potential threats.

Ambassador CROCKER. On the Islamic state, ISIS, ISIL, I believe there is an imminent threat. I just saw the news report this morning. I believe it was an NCTC estimate of 20,000 foreign fighters in ISIS ranks. A number of those—I think the report I saw said 150—are American passport holders. Several thousand others hold Western European passports. They don't need visas. If they're not on a watch list, they just get on a plane and they're here. That is an advantage al-Qaeda didn't have. So, I know our security agencies are hard at work at this, as they should be, but I think that danger is very, very imminent.

I have had long experience—too long—with the Assad regime, either as the recipient of their favors in Lebanon over a 6-year period or in Damascus as Ambassador. Father and son, it is an evil regime. And that evil could not be more manifest than it is in the recent fighting with the barrel bombs, deliberate attacks on civilians, over and over and over again.

Do they constitute a direct threat to American security? At one point, they did. There was a Syrian hand behind the marine barracks bombing of 1983 and, 6 months earlier, the American embassy bombing. I was in it. The Syrian regime was tied to an effort to blow up an El Al plane out of the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s. We withdrew our Ambassador over that.

Are they still in that business? Certainly not now. Have they been in that business? Not directly or, I think, even indirectly, for some time. Might they go back to it? As Ambassador Cunningham said, the region, for better or worse, is never going to be the same again after what is happening in Syria. And, while the Assad regime may endure in some form or another, I don't think they're going to have the luxury to plan outside operations anytime in the foreseeable future. That doesn't mean you don't watch them.

Senator REED. Right. Okay.

Ambassador CROCKER. But, I would put them pretty far down on the threat list.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Would you also agree that it's accurate to depict Bashar Assad as the father of ISIS?

Ambassador CROCKER. You drag me back into history, Mr. Chairman.

[Laughter.]

I would say that the father of Bashar al-Assad, Hafez, is the father of ISIS, or was the father of ISIS. What he did to the Sunni population of Hama in 1982 is something no American really remembers and no Syrian will ever forget.

Chairman MCCAIN. And also, isn't there a principle about the requirement to protect, when people are being slaughtered—in this case, well over 200,000—150,000 in his prison, millions of refugees that are destabilizing Lebanon, as well as other countries in the region? I don't think there's—if you ask the King of Jordan, I think he would say, absolutely, that they have posed a threat to the stability of his country because of Bashar Assad's actions. And also for—whether he's right or wrong, or not, the President of Turkey views Bashar Assad as a greater threat than ISIL.

So, my point is, to make no mention in this authorization whatsoever of Bashar Assad, and, at the same time, training young Americans to go in and—young Syrians to go in and fight him is a contradiction and, in a way, immoral, if we're going to subject them to being barrel bombed by Bashar Assad. And that—the point that I was trying to make, here. And if were Bashar Assad today, and I looked at this resolution, which says only ISIL, I think I'd be pretty pleased this morning.

I thank the witnesses—

Senator COTTON. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Cotton.

Senator COTTON. I'd like to ask a specific point about this draft use-of-force resolution, that goes to the broader point we've been discussing about deadline-driven operations.

The resolution also has a 3-year expiration date on it. Are any of you aware of past use-of-force resolutions or declarations of war, going back to the start of our country's history, that had an explicit expiration date?

Ambassador CROCKER. Senator, I am not—flipping through my depleted memory banks in 30 seconds, cannot be considered the definitive statement on that subject. But, I would just offer the opinion—and I have not seen the draft authorization. It goes back to our earlier conversation about calendar- versus condition-based timelines. I—you know, in the world that I have spent so much of my life in, it's all about conditions, it's not about calendars. You all know the hackneyed mantra attributed to the Taliban, "You Americans may have the watches, we have the time." Calendars work for our adversaries more than they work for us. And again, I haven't seen the language of the authorization, so I can't comment on it. In the world that is the Middle East, having arbitrary timelines generally does not serve U.S. interests.

Senator COTTON. And can you—you've all said that you take the view that, in Afghanistan, we're sending the wrong message by having a deadline-driven policy rather than a conditions-driven policy. Would you agree with Ambassador Crocker's statements that, more broadly, if we have deadline-driven policies, if we pass resolutions authorizing the use of force with explicit authorization dates, we're sending the same signal to different adversaries all around the world?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I think the issue is what—the issue will be, What is the rationale behind having the deadline? Again, I don't know if there's been any precedent for that, or not. There may be. I don't remember what the Patriot Act said, for instance. I remember it was repeatedly debated and updated over the years.

If the purpose of this is to signal that that's only as long as we're willing to make the effort, then I think that's the wrong signal, because I think we're—as I said earlier, before you came, Senator, this whole complex of issues, I believe to be a generational challenge that we will be dealing with for a long time. And we need to get smarter at dealing with them.

But, if the purpose is to signal the importance of maintaining political control in updating the provisions of the use of force—and there will be a debate about that in the Congress, I know—then that is—I think that's entirely appropriate.

Chairman MCCAIN. We can't close the hearing without an Independent question.

Senator KING. You mentioned that you hadn't seen the authorization. I think it's important, in light of Senator Cotton's questions that—it says, "This authorization shall terminate 3 years after the date of the enactment of this joint resolution, unless reauthorized." In my view, this document is trying to strike a balance between presidential authority and congressional authority in the area of, particularly, warmaking. And so, it's not—if it didn't say "unless we—reauthorized," I think your point would lie. But, I think the fact that it leaves it within the discretion of Congress to determine, in 3 years, whether it's in the National interest to continue this legal authority of the President—I mean, I find it somewhat ironic that we're all—you know, I'm the one talking about asserting congressional and constitutional authority, because I think there is a question, here. If it's entirely open-ended, in terms of time, in terms of enemy, in terms of geography, then we've written the war power out of the Constitution, as far as I'm concerned, and the Congress has no role.

The question that we're going to be wrestling with, Mr. Chair—and I think it's going to be a vigorous debate—will be, Where's the balance between the Commander in Chief and the power to declare war? The framers clearly believed that there was—the President did not have the unfettered power to commit the Nation to war. They talked about it at the convention and in the Federalist Papers. So, I think that's the—that's the debate that we have to engage in.

And I haven't yet taken a position on this document. I probably won't, for some time. But, I understand—I think it's important that the Presidents come to us and ask for an authorization. And it's

now up to us to determine what the nature of that authorization should be.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Is a question in there somewhere?

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. I'm sure the Chairman can find one, Senator. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Chairman MCCAIN. Could I say, this has been extremely helpful.

I thank these great and outstanding Americans, who have devoted their mature lives in service of the country. And I'm honored and humbled to be in your presence.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:59 a.m., the committee adjourned.]

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2015

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator John McCain (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Graham, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman MCCAIN. Good morning. The committee meets today to receive testimony on Afghanistan.

I want to thank General Campbell, the Commander of the Resolute Support Mission in United States Forces-Afghanistan, for appearing before us today about security conditions on the ground, the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and the way forward.

General, we've been blessed by a series of great military leaders of our forces and allied forces in Afghanistan, and you are a worthy successor to those outstanding leaders, in my view.

According to a recent media report, the troop drawdown in Afghanistan is now, "under White House review." But, as the White House deliberates, the current plan is set to reduce the number of United States troops in Afghanistan to about 5,500, beginning in the middle of this year's fighting season. The plan was first announced by President Obama in May 2014, before it was known that the Afghan presidential transition would require almost 6 months to conclude, before the appearance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) on the Afghan battlefield, and before Pakistan military operations sent 200,000 refugees from North Waziristan into Afghanistan. These unforeseen circumstances illustrate the major liabilities of a calendar-based approach, and highlight the need for a conditions-based approach.

Like our national military strategy written in 2012, President Obama's calendar-based troop drawdown planned for Afghanistan no longer accurately reflects the facts and conditions on the ground. Like the President's policy against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the President's Afghanistan policy wrecks of strategic disconnect, providing a list of goals or preferences, but precluding the means necessary to achieve them. Perhaps it is time

for the President to exercise strategic patience, not in the sense that he has used the phrase, but as our witnesses yesterday unanimously agreed. Former United States Ambassador to Afghanistan, James Cunningham, having just served in Kabul, and left in December, said, "I think that, under the circumstances, the timeline is probably too short and the rate of withdrawal is too steep."

Former Ambassador to both Iraq and Afghanistan, Ryan Crocker, said, "I hope we will take the right decisions on force levels, going forward, based on conditions, not on calendars."

Former Commander of Special Operations Command and the first Navy SEAL to achieve the rank of four stars, Admiral Eric Olson, said, "Actual war is too dynamic to accommodate fixed models, so I would urge strategic and operational flexibility as we move forward in Afghanistan. At a force size of 5,500, our presence in Afghanistan will essentially be reduced to Kabul. Presently, in only one location, one that retreats from the north, east and south of Afghanistan, we'll relinquish Mazar-e Sharif to the drug runners, yield Herat to Iranian influence, and abandon Kandahar to the Taliban. The lack of presence creates a vacuum, and we've seen what fills that vacuum in Syria and Iraq. The ungoverned spaces will allow terrorists to foment the same disaster in Afghanistan as we have seen in Iraq: growing instability, terrorist safe havens, and direct threats to the United States."

I think our former national counterterrorism director, Michael Leiter, put it into perspective how we should look at Afghanistan. I quote, "Should the American people think this is hopeless? The last 13 years have shown us that the counterterrorism (CT) fight and protecting the homeland in this region is not hopeless. We've been very successful at stopping attacks from the region. I would flip it around: From a homeland security perspective, I think it is close to hopeless to think that we can have that same success without some ongoing presence in the region."

Reducing to a "normal embassy presence" at the end of 2016, and announcing it to the enemy, gives terrorists breathing room to plot against the West. As Ambassador Crocker put it, "By fixing a date to draw down to a certain number, and then to draw down to, basically, an office and an embassy, simply tells our adversaries how long they have to hold out before they have the field to themselves." By the way, I know of no man more respected than Ambassador Ryan Crocker. "If we've learned anything from Iraq, it should be that wars do not end just because politicians say so. We cannot let the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and ISIS conquer Afghanistan. Failure in this manner would destabilize the region, especially by undermining the security of a nuclear-armed Pakistan."

I want to thank General Campbell for testifying today. I thank him for his leadership. I look forward to hearing his assessment of conditions on the ground, development of Afghan forces, and the plan for the way forward.

Senator Reed.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me join you in welcoming General Campbell.

Thank you, General, for your service to the Nation, beginning in the 504th and continuing today.

General Campbell, since you took command of the United States Forces in Afghanistan last August, Afghanistan has entered what Ambassador Cunningham yesterday called “a pivotal period.” The emergence of a National Unity Government under President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah has had an immediate impact on security in Afghanistan with the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Status of Forces Agreement.

In a recent public opinion survey, two-thirds of the Afghans polled want United States and coalition troops to stay to train the Afghan Security Forces. Your challenge is to successfully lead the United States and coalition effort to train, advise, and assist (TAA) Afghan Security Forces and conduct counterterrorism operations even as United States and coalition forces have drawn down to post-combat levels in Afghanistan. We would be interested in your assessment whether you currently have the forces you feel you need to carry out these two missions.

We are also seeking your best military judgment this morning on what further reductions, if any, you would recommend for United States forces in Afghanistan, and under what condition. At yesterday’s hearing, referring again to Ambassador Crocker, he warns that the consequences of disengagement can be as great or greater than the consequences of engagement, our intervention in the first place. I share the concern of many on this committee that any future reductions in United States force levels in Afghanistan should be based on the security conditions at the time of the proposed reductions, taking into account the capabilities of the Afghan Security Forces and the status of the counterterrorism fight.

We would also be interested in your views on the full range of challenges you face, including the progress of the Afghan Security Forces in building key enablers, such as logistics, special operations forces, intelligence, and airlift, the Afghanistan/Pakistan security relationship, including border coordination and counterterrorism efforts, and the reports of a growing ISIS presence in Afghanistan.

Again, thank you, sir, for your service to the Nation.

Chairman MCCAIN. General Campbell.

STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA, COMMANDER, RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION, COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES-AFGHANISTAN

General CAMPBELL. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I’m honored to lead and represent the service men and women of the United States Forces-Afghanistan.

I’d like to begin by thanking the committee for your steadfast support of our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, our marines, and our civilians. Due to your leadership and your commitment, they’re

the best-trained and best-equipped force our Nation has ever deployed. Their outstanding performance bears testimony to your backing and the backing of the American people.

I'd like to pay tribute to our military families, who are the unsung heroes of the last 13-plus years of conflict. In many ways, our frequent absences from home are harder on them than on us. Without their love, strength, and support, we couldn't succeed.

I'd also like to recognize the over-2,200 service men and women who have been killed in action in Afghanistan, and the over 20,000-plus who have been wounded. Each day, we strive to bring meaning to their sacrifices. We honor their memories and their loved ones by continuing to build a secure and stable Afghanistan, and by protecting our own Homeland.

Over 13 years have passed since the September 11 attacks, and we haven't forgotten why we first came to Afghanistan, and why we remain. Since 2001, the extraordinary efforts and courage of our forces have ensured that another terrorist attack originating from Afghanistan and directed against the United States Homeland has not occurred.

It's been 7 months since I appeared before this committee, and much has changed since then. Afghanistan, the region, the enemy, and our coalition have undergone tremendous transitions. Most of these have been extraordinarily positive for us. I'd like to emphasize a few of these today in order to place our current campaign in context and to reaffirm that the conditions exist for us to achieve our strategic objectives.

In September, Afghanistan completed the first peaceful democratic transition in history. Although prolonged, this transition was still a monumental achievement. It represented the Afghans' commitment to a democratic, open society. The difference between a new National Unity Government and its predecessor is night and day. President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have embraced the international community, our coalition, and the Afghan Security Forces. Our partnership is strong. We now have a ratified Bilateral Security Agreement and a NATO Status of Forces Agreement, which grant us the necessary authorities to continue our mission.

Dynamics within the region continue to evolve, as well. President Ghani has made regional engagement a top priority in order to address the shared security and economic interests for his country. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Pakistan-Afghan relationship. The Pakistan Taliban's murderous attack in Peshawar on 16 December may prove to be their September 11 and a gamechanger for our future. Senior Pakistani officials recognize that they can no longer make the distinction between good and bad terrorists. In the wake of this tragedy, the blame game between both countries has stopped.

I've witnessed, firsthand, substantive changes in the interactions between the Afghan and Pakistan military leadership in just the last couple of months. They're now talking. Positive exchanges between corps commanders recently occurred in Kandahar and Jalalabad. Last week, six Afghan army cadets are now attending the Pakistan military academy. This wasn't happening before.

We're doing everything we can to promote their closer cooperation, particularly to address extremist sanctuaries on both sides of

the border. While we must temper our expectations, I remain optimistic that both countries are working towards a more productive relationship.

The enemy remains in a state of flux, too. The Taliban failed to achieve any of their stated objectives in 2014. Constantly pressured by the ANSF, suffering from dissension within their own ranks, and lacking popular support, they turned to high-profile terrorist attacks, particularly against soft targets inside of Kabul. In their desperate attempt to remain relevant, they're failing to win over the Afghan population. They're killing innocent civilians and their fellow Afghans, and it's now time for them to lay down their arms and heed President Ghani's call to rebuild an Afghan nation.

The possible rise of Daesh, or ISIL, is also a new development. Thus far, we believe that the nascent Daesh presence in Afghanistan represents more of a rebranding of a few marginalized Taliban, but we're still taking this potential threat, with its dangerous rhetoric and ideology, very seriously. We're working closely with the ANSF to evaluate and understand the dynamic nature of this fledgling network.

The potential emergence of Daesh represents an additional opportunity to bring the Afghans and the Pakistanis together to confront this common threat, and we will continue to engage with leaders from both countries on ways we can collaborate to meet this challenge. We're all driven to prevent Daesh from establishing a meaningful foothold in Central Asia.

United States Forces-Afghanistan and our coalition have undergone tremendous changes, as well, since I assumed command. On January 1, 2015, United States Forces-Afghanistan formally ended its combat mission, Operation Enduring Freedom, and we commenced with our new mission, Operation Freedom Sentinel. We've also ended all detainee operations. Simultaneously, troops from over 40 nations, which comprise the new NATO mission, Resolute Support, began executing their TAA mission in order to build the capabilities and long-term sustainability of the ANSF.

On January 1, 2015, the ANSF also assumed full security responsibilities. They're ready, and it's time. In their second fighting season in the lead, the ANSF were challenged and tested, but they held their own against a determined enemy. On the battlefield, the ANSF fought tenaciously and demonstrated their increasing capabilities. Today, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan remains firmly in control of 34 potential capitals and all of its major cities. The ANSF successfully protected 8 million Afghans who courageously defied insurgent intimidation and voted in two rounds of elections. The ANSF's professionalism and their non-partisanship enabled them to remain cohesive in the face of an extended political impasse after the elections. All portions of the Afghan Security Forces continue to respect and obey Afghan authority.

The ANSF Special Forces, in particular, have proven to be the most proficient in the entire region. They're consistently executing unilateral direct-action missions against insurgent leaders and facilitators. They're leveraging their own intelligence, using their own special mission-wing helicopters to carry out long-range inser-

tions in low illumination. These are a pretty remarkable capability for any military.

For both the ANSF and the coalition, Afghanistan continues to be a dangerous place. Casualty rates for all the ANSF increased in 2014, roughly 5 to 7 percent higher. However, this must be viewed in light of the fact that their operational tempo was four times greater in 2014 than it was in 2013, and that over 100,000 coalition forces were no longer on the battlefield.

Even considering these higher casualties, the ANSF attrition rates, which account for all losses to the force, have not impacted combat readiness too severely. The army and the police recruiting has not been a problem. Afghan youths continue to join the ranks of the ANSF. Service in the security forces is widely respected and viewed as an honorable, patriotic profession. The Afghan National Army remains the most trusted institution in the country and the Afghan shield and sword of an exceptionally proud people in a fledgling nation.

On balance, after watching the ANSF respond to a variety of challenges over the past 6 months, I don't believe the insurgents represent an existential threat to the Government of Afghanistan. However, the ANSF still need a great deal of help in developing the systems and processes necessary to run a modern professional army and police force. They also need sustained support in addressing their capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, and special operations.

To address these gaps, our TAA mission and mentorship will be vital. Our advisors at the security ministries, army corps, and police zones are now our main effort. Although clear challenges exist, I do believe that the ANSF capabilities or capacity and the morale will be sufficient, backstopped by our advisory efforts and limited enabler support. This will provide Afghanistan the long-term security at the end of the Resolute Support Mission.

President Ghani recently remarked, "Compelled by tragedy and cemented by mutual sacrifice, the partnership between Afghanistan, NATO, and the United States has entered a new phase." I believe that we're at a critical inflection point in our campaign. Many challenges remain before us as the new Afghan government forms. It's still finding its footing, and it must do so while contending with a security threat, corruption, and economic challenges. Yet, the myriad of changes and transitions over the last 7 months offer us a tremendous opening.

The Ghani administration offers us an extraordinary opportunity to develop a meaningful strategic partnership that will stabilize Afghanistan and, in turn, offer greater security for the region and the United States Homeland. There's a new spirit of cooperation in Kabul, something we didn't have before. I firmly believe that our concurrent CT and TAA efforts will reinforce and deepen our strategic partnership, and shape conditions for a favorable outcome to this conflict. We could offer no greater tribute to the American people, our fallen, and their loved ones than by finishing this mission well.

If I could, I think the members have charts at your tables, there. I'd like to just show you a couple of statistics. I'm asked, what does progress mean? Have we had success? Has it been worth it? I'd just

offer you these two slides that lay out 2001 and 2014. Every measurable statistic, from roadways, cell phone usage, schools, teachers, females in schools, literacy rate, on and on and on, continues to go up. The one that's quite striking is the life expectancy, on the bottom-right, there. 2001, it was 43 years. Today, it stands at 64 years. If you multiply that by about 35 million—we haven't had a census in a while—that's 741 million life years of hope that the coalition and the American people have provided to the Afghan people.

The bottom two charts show Kabul, then and now—2001, 2014. Scott (aide to General Campbell), if you can raise those up. Then, on the right is present-day Kabul at night, the fifth fastest-growing city in the world.

That's progress. That's success, and that could only happen with the coalition and the security that is provided.

[The charts referred to follow:]



NATO
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Changing the Narrative






"I just cite these public opinion polls-- Americans- 65% or 70% think we haven't achieved anything. In Afghanistan, it's 70% or 80% think we have. How does that happen--that the people who are in the middle of that war think we've really done some good, and the people who are 7,000 miles away think we haven't?"

*-Senator Carl Levin (Retired)
Former Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee*



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NATO OTAN		Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (1 of 2)		Updated on 11 Feb 15	RS
Infrastructure/Communications					
	Taliban: 2001	Now			
Roadways/Paved Roads	18,000km/60km	42,150km/12,350km			
Access to Reliable Electricity	6%	28%			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000,000+ Afghans use Facebook • 100% of the country will have cell phone coverage within 3 years
TV/Radio Stations	None/3	50/150			
Internet Users	None	6,000,000+			
Cell Phone Subscribers	25,000	22,000,000+			
Education					
Schools	1,000	14,000+			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Afghan literacy rate is predicted to reach 90% by 2040
Teachers	20,000	186,000+			
Students Enrolled in Primary & Secondary Schools	<900,000	8,000,000+			
% Who Are Females	Almost None	36%			
Students Enrolled in Universities	UNK	150,000+			
Literacy Rate	12%	39%			
<small>Sources: CIA World Fact Book 2014; internetstatistics.com/Asia; GiRoA Ministry of Communications & Information Technology; Afghan Central Statistics Organization 2014; World Bank Development Indicators; Afghan Energy Information Center; International Airline Industry Directory; 2014 UNHCR Country Profile-Afghanistan 2014; UNICEF; "Realizing Self-Reliance"-GiRoA Publication; 20 Nov 14</small>					
<p>By almost all metrics, progress in Afghanistan has been <i>significant</i> in the last 13 years; the Coalition and ANSF have provided the necessary security to enable these advancements</p>					
UNCLASSIFIED					

NATO OTAN		Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (2 of 2)		Updated on 11 Feb 15	RS
Economy/Politics					
	Taliban: 2001	Now			
Size of Economy	\$4 Billion	\$20.6+ Billion			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Afghan economy continues to grow (albeit unevenly) - 2011: 6.1% - 2012: <u>14.4%</u> - 2013: 3.7% - 2014: 1.5% - 2015: <u>4.0%</u> Forecast
GDP (USD per Capita)	\$186.00	\$688.00+			
Access to Clean Water	22%	64%			
Passenger Cars (per 1,000 people)	0.5	20			
Commercial Overflights & Landings (Daily)	None	756			
% of Women in Labor Force	UNK	24.4%			
% of Women in National Parliament	None	28%			
Population/Health					
Refugees	>3,500,000	<2,700,000			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health improvements have raised life expectancies by 21+ years • ~35.3 Million Afghans X 21 Years = <u>Gift of >741 Million Years of Life</u>
Population of Kabul	<500,000	>3.5 Million			
Infant Mortality (Children Dying Before Age 5)	26%	9.7%			
Maternal Mortality (Women Dying from Childbirth)	1.6%	0.33%			
Healthcare Access/Facilities	9%/498	60%/2,507			
Life Expectancy	43	64			
<small>Sources (Continued): Afghanistan Mortality Survey; Ministry of Public Health; UNDP Human Development Index; World Bank; TOLO News Research; USAID Survey; Asia Foundation; MOBY Research-Yaaneey.Torbati@moby-hq.com; UNICEF</small>					
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Current Afghan Popular Opinions

RS

Updated on 11 Feb 15

- 77% of Afghans express confidence in their new government
- 87% of Afghans approve the political agreement between President Ghani & CEO Abdullah
- 78% of Afghans believe the security situation in their district has improved or remained steady in the last 6 months (since June 2014)
- 81% of Afghans say their government has more influence in their district than the insurgents do
- 87% of Afghans express confidence in the Afghan National Army (ANA)
- 59% of Afghans believe that the ANA is capable of defeating the insurgents
- 76% of Afghans express confidence in the Afghan National Police (ANP)
- 82% of Afghans believe that GIRoA is leading the effort to improve security (vs. the Coalition)
- 77% of Afghans want the Coalition to remain in the country to assist the ANSF, at least until the Afghan military and police can stand alone
- <10% of the Afghan people support the Taliban
 - <30% of Afghans in Kandahar Province (the heartland of the Taliban) support the insurgents
 - <2% of Afghan women desire a return to Taliban rule
- 64% of Afghans believe that it is unlikely that the Taliban will return to power
- 55% of Afghans believe that their country is heading in the right direction

Sources: Agence France-Presse; BBC; NBC; ABC; Asia Foundation-Afghan Survey 2014; Afghan Ministry of Communications Internal Report; MOBY Research-Yaganeh.Torbati@moby-hq.com; Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR) Survey Report, Wave 26; Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR)

In general, Afghans are far more optimistic about their country's future than outsiders are.

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Kabul: Then and Now

RS



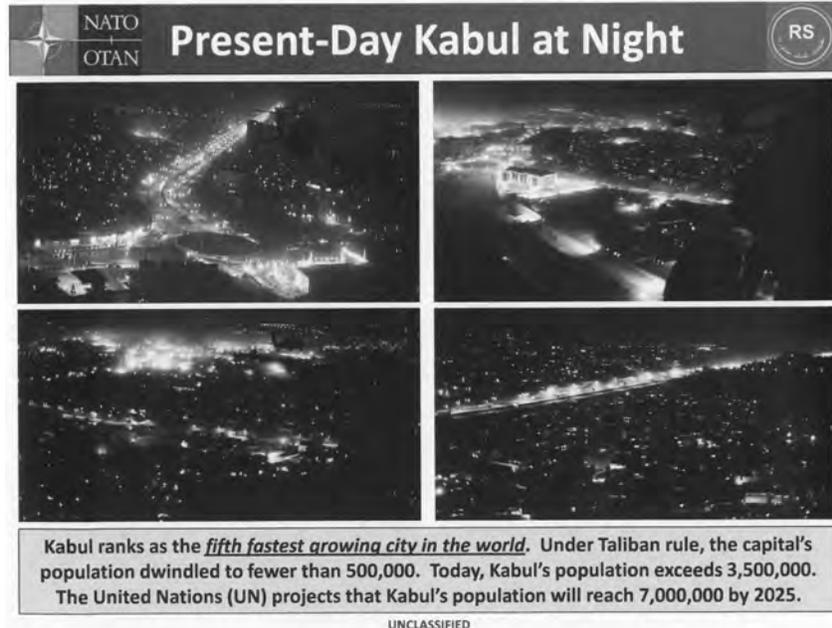
2001

Maiwand Circle



2014

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General CAMPBELL. Finally, let me conclude by stating that United States Forces-Afghanistan is currently involved with a winter review of the Afghanistan campaign. This review is looking at all of our lines of effort in Afghanistan, not just the military. As I stated, President Ghani is a credible and effective partner. He has asked for NATO and the United States to provide some flexibility in our planning to account for the fact that his government remains in transition. I have provided options on adjusting our force posture through my chain of command. The issue is how long we stay engaged at the regional level in the transition year of 2015.

Once again, I express my profound gratitude to all the committee members for your unfailing support of our mission and our troops in Afghanistan. I'm humbled, and I'm privileged to lead the men and women of their caliber and their courage. Every day, they make us all proud.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Campbell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY GEN JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA

AFGHANISTAN: WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED

I. WHERE WE ARE—STATE OF THE CAMPAIGN

In the wake of the tragic September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States Homeland, United States military forces promptly deployed to Afghanistan with the objective to eliminate the international terrorist threat emanating from there. We were soon joined by our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and other international partners. Over 13 years later, we have not forgotten the motivations for our mission in Afghanistan and why we remain. Our primary focus continues to be on preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven again for al-Qaeda and other international extremist groups. Since 2001, the extraordinary efforts of both our conventional and Special Operations Forces have ensured that another terrorist

attack originating from Afghanistan and directed against the United States Homeland has not occurred. Today, United States Special Operations Forces, alongside their Afghan counterparts, continue to impose considerable pressure on the remaining fragments of the terrorist networks that attacked us. Significantly, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have also assumed full responsibility for securing the Afghan people. Our Afghan partners have proven that they can and will take the tactical fight from here. They are ready, and it is time.

On 1 January 2015, United States Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) formally ended its combat mission, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and commenced its new mission, Operation Freedom's Sentinel (FS). Simultaneously, troops from over 40 nations, which comprise the new NATO mission, Resolute Support (RS), began executing their Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) mission in order to build the capabilities and long-term sustainability of the Afghan Security Institutions (ASI) and ANSF. U.S. Forces are now carrying out two well-defined missions: a counterterrorism (CT) mission against the remnants of al-Qaeda and the RS TAA mission in support of Afghan security forces.

Our CT and TAA efforts are concurrent and complementary. While we continue to attack the remnants of al-Qaeda, we are also building the ANSF so that they can secure the Afghan people and contribute to stability throughout the region. Both of these efforts will contribute to a more secure and productive Afghanistan and prevent the re-emergence of terrorist safe havens.

In spite of considerable progress, it is clear that our campaign will remain a challenging one. Last year's political impasse, delay in signing the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), and setbacks in forming a new cabinet, have created a period of comparative stagnation in ANSF institutional development. In this environment of uncertainty, some incumbent Afghan leaders have been hesitant to make necessary decisions. Many Alliance members and operational partners understandably delayed fulfilling their RS force commitments until a new administration was installed and the BSA and SOFA were signed. Their deferrals resulted in advisors and other forces either arriving just in time, or late, for the start of RS.

The new Afghan National Unity Government will have to overcome considerable political pressures and obstacles as President Ghani and CEO Abdullah determine how they will distribute power and responsibilities. Thus far, both leaders have demonstrated an admirable willingness to cooperate and address these challenges. Both have elevated the Afghan people's interests above their own.

The ANSF will surely be tested in Fighting Season 2015 as well. It will also take time for us to evaluate the efficacy of our TAA efforts and our regional approach at the Train, Advise, and Assist Commands (TAACs). We will inevitably have to make adjustments. Additionally, we will need to balance our short and long-term efforts and weigh potential operational gains against U.S. strategic objectives in Afghanistan. We will do all of this as we manage considerable risks to our mission and force and contend with a myriad of lethal threats. Due to all of these factors, we must be prepared and adapt as needed. Likewise, we will need to evaluate and prioritize our efforts in light of restricted resources and the limited time available to accomplish our mission.

The next 2 years of the RS campaign will play a crucial role in cementing our gains. While we strive to improve ANSF capabilities and sustainability, we will continue to re-posture our forces and adjust our footprint. As in the past, our drawdown will occur under enemy pressure. We will need to manage our efforts to maximize the effects of our TAACs and our continued consolidation toward a Kabul-centric posture in 2016.

Historical Context & Framework for New USFOR-A/NATO Mission

Our transition to RS represents the natural evolution of our maturing partnership with the increasingly capable ANSF. Back in 2011, more than 140,000 coalition troops were distributed over 800 sites. Our forces were then heavily engaged in combat and tactical-level advising. We have now reduced our forces and footprint to about 13,000 coalition troops at 21 bases throughout Afghanistan. With only a few exceptions, we are no longer engaged in brigade-level and below advising. Instead, we are now mentoring our Afghan counterparts at the corps headquarters and security ministries. This significant shift in our mission-focus has been complemented and driven by the rapid expansion and development of the ANSF into a skilled and courageous force of approximately 350,000. During the past two fighting seasons, the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) have repeatedly shown that they can win battles on their own. When they work together, they have also proven that they can overmatch the insurgents wherever and whenever they challenge them.

RS is not a continuation of the ISAF mission on a smaller scale. While RS shares some similarities, it represents a significant paradigm shift. In contrast to a few years ago, our Afghan partners are at the forefront of combat operations and they are now bearing the brunt of enemy attacks. Accordingly, U.S. and coalition casualties have significantly dropped with combat fatalities in 2014 less than half of what they were in 2013.

The designation of RS as a non-combat mission does not eliminate the fact that we will still operate in a combat environment—our personnel will be exposed to risks in 2015 and beyond. Afghanistan remains a dangerous place. Even though U.S. and NATO personnel will support combat operations indirectly, we can anticipate that we will be targeted, and we will suffer casualties. Therefore, force protection remains my priority concern, and we have the necessary authority to take adequate measures to protect our forces.

The tragic death of Major General Harold Greene last August stands as testament to the risks that our advisors continue to be exposed to every day. Although insider attacks against U.S. and coalition forces declined again in 2014, they remain a focus area of force protection. Fortunately, these attacks have not significantly affected the strong relationship between coalition and ANSF personnel. We continue to implement mitigations to avoid patterns and prevent complacency. These measures have reduced, but not eliminated, the threat. We will remain vigilant to prevent future insider attacks.

Functionally-Based Security Force Assistance (FBSFA) will be the cornerstone of RS and represents our unified effort to generate, employ, and sustain the ANSF and ASI. FBSFA encompasses all RS activities required to develop ANSF operational effectiveness and includes partnering, advising, and supporting the ANSF at the corps-level and above. The FBSFA framework concentrates on eight Essential Functions (EFs):

EF 1: Plan, Program, Budget, and Execute (PPBE): generate requirements, develop a resource informed budget, and execute a spend plan

EF 2: Internal controls to assure Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight (TAO)

EF 3: Civilian governance of the ASI, including adherence to the Rule of Law (RoL)

EF 4: Force generate: recruit, train, retain, manage, and develop professional ANSF (FORGEN)

EF 5: Sustain the force through effective facilities management, maintenance, medical, and logistics systems (FORSUST)

EF 6: Plan, resource, and execute effective security campaigns and operations (C2):

Inter-ministerial and joint coordination
Command, control and employ Ground, Air, and Special Operations Forces (SOF)

EF 7: Sufficient Intelligence capabilities and processes (INT)

EF 8: Maintain internal and external strategic communications capabilities (STRATCOM)

The execution of RS is based on a limited regional TAA approach and located at the “four spokes” in coalition TAACs in the north, south, east, and west, with one central “hub” in Kabul City. I view our TAACs as the critical component of our FBSFA efforts in 2015. They serve as our principal connection and touch point between the ministries and fielded forces. Hence, they play a central role in our ability to assess the efficacy of our ministerial efforts and how well they support ongoing ANSF security operations.

II. WHERE WE ARE—STATE OF THE ANSF

2014 Fighting Season

In their second fighting season in the lead, the ANSF proved proficient at securing the Afghan people, fighting their own battles, and holding the gains achieved by ISAF over the last 13+ years. On the battlefield, the ANSF fought tenaciously and demonstrated their increasing capabilities. They independently planned, led, and executed numerous combined-arms operations. Both ANA and ANP units demonstrated increased tactical flexibility and endurance as well.

Of note, ANSF operational tempo (OPTEMPO) was four times higher in 2014 than in 2013. Not surprisingly, and regrettably, ANSF casualty rates also increased last year. The combination of an increased OPTEMPO; assumption of greater security responsibilities; the drawdown of coalition forces; and the aggressive pursuit of the enemy, all contributed to a moderate increase in casualty rates. This uptick was borne primarily by the Afghan Local Police (ALP) who generally operates in isolated

areas and are not as well equipped or trained as other ANSF. The insurgents also target the ALP more frequently because the ALP are not centrally garrisoned and instead live in their villages, among the Afghan people. Therefore, they present the most immediate threat and challenge to insurgent efforts to control and intimidate the populace.

A high ANSF attrition rate, which accounts for casualties and all other losses to the force, has had an impact on combat readiness. If present rates continue, it will pose challenges to force development over time. The main causes of ANSF attrition are assessed as poor leadership; high operational tempo; inadequate soldier/police care; and poor force management. We continue to help the Afghans reduce combat casualties and address systemic causes of attrition in order to ensure the long-term viability of their forces.

The ANSF successfully maintained control of all key terrain and populated areas in 2014. The insurgents were only able to temporarily overrun four district centers in isolated portions of the country. Within 96 hours, the ANSF retook all of them. In sum, the insurgents could not hold ground anywhere when challenged by the ANSF in force. Today, the Afghan Government remains firmly in control of its 34 provincial capitals and all of its major cities.

Perhaps most importantly, the ANSF stayed above the fray throughout the election dispute last summer. They maintained political neutrality and exhibited no evidence of fracturing along ethnic or tribal lines. They provided seamless security for two national elections and a lengthy Independent Election Commission audit process. In spite of expansive Taliban threats and determined efforts to disrupt the democratic process, the ANSF provided superior protection for nearly 8 million Afghan citizens who courageously chose to defy insurgent intimidation tactics and voted. ANSF professionalism and non-partisanship stand in stark contrast to their Iraqi counterparts. Regular polling reveals the vast majority of Afghans hold a favorable view of their soldiers and police. The Afghan National Army (ANA) remains the most trusted institution in the country with an approval rating that regularly exceeds 85 percent.

The ANSF special operations forces, in particular, have demonstrated improved proficiency. Their commando units are now conducting night raids independently using their own intelligence to drive their operations. The Special Mission Wing (SMW) is also executing long-range, full-mission profiles in low illumination. Working together, the commando units and SMW are consistently executing unilateral direct action missions against insurgent leaders and facilitators. These are remarkable achievements, which reflect the maturation of their formidable capabilities.

While the conventional ANSF still have capability gaps and shortfalls, they do possess significant assets to fight the insurgents—e.g. heavy mortars, D-30s howitzers, armed Mi-17s, armored vehicles, etc.—and dedicated training with these platforms. The insurgents have none of these. However, the ANSF would greatly benefit from improved leadership and increased confidence; ANSF soldiers and police perform well when they are well led. “There are no bad soldiers, only bad leaders.” That is why our insistence on sound leadership and strict accountability remains our most important guiding principle. Fortunately, the Afghan senior leadership concurs. Change in Afghanistan comes from the top-down. President Ghani and CEO Abdullah are the driving force behind meaningful transformation and merit-based appointments in the ASI and ANSF. However, both must navigate a political labyrinth as they move forward with their reform agenda.

On balance, after watching the ANSF respond to a variety of challenges over the past 6 months, I do not believe the Taliban-led insurgency represents an existential threat to the Government of Afghanistan. The ANSF require less coalition assistance to conduct security operations, but they still need support to develop the systems, processes, and institutions necessary to run a professional, self-sufficient, and self-sustaining army and police force.

ANSF Capability Gaps

ANSF performance in 2014 and early 2015 highlighted capability gaps and shortfalls that will likely persist for years. Their most critical gaps are found in aviation, intelligence, special operations, and the ASI's emerging ability to conduct tasks such as planning, programming, budgeting, and human resource management. At the security ministries, our advisors are focusing on building ASI systems and processes. They are also working to improve integration between the different security pillars—army, police, and intelligence services. At the corps-level, our advisors are concentrating on developing ANSF planning capacity, command and control, and operational capabilities. Additionally, they are addressing developmental shortfalls in the areas of logistics, medical, and counter-improvised explosive devices (IED). At

all levels, our advisors continue to emphasize and enforce Afghan financial transparency and accountability of donor resources.

Although clear challenges exist, I believe the ANSF's capabilities, capacities, and morale will be sufficient—with our advisory efforts and limited enabler support—to provide for Afghanistan's long-term security. Our collective efforts are hardening the Afghan state and giving it needed time to develop and mature. By improving security conditions, we are also reducing the operating space for insurgents and incentivizing their participation in the reconciliation process.

It is important that we continue to exercise strategic patience with the ASI and ANSF. The U.S. Armed Forces have contended with challenges such as force sustainment for 250 years. In contrast, the ANSF have only existed for 13 years.

III. WHERE WE ARE—STATE OF THE THREAT

With security responsibilities fully transitioned to the ANSF, al-Qaeda, its Affiliates, and Adherents (AQAA), Taliban, Haqqani Network (HQN), and other insurgent and extremist groups will undoubtedly attempt to reestablish their authority and prominence in Afghanistan. Collectively, the enemy will continue to present a formidable challenge to the Afghan Government, USFOR-A, and the coalition in 2015. Nevertheless, it is important not to view the enemy as a monolithic entity. They represent disparate factions with different motivations and capabilities. At times they may collaborate, and at other times they may work against each other. One of our persistent challenges is to identify these fissures and exploit them.

In 2015, AQAA will likely attempt to rebuild its support networks and planning capabilities with the intention of reconstituting its strike capabilities against Western interests. AQAA activities are now more focused on survival than on planning and facilitating future attacks. It will be critical that, in coordination with our Afghan partners, our comprehensive CT efforts continue to apply pressure against the AQAA network in order to prevent its regeneration.

The Taliban are also in a period of transition. They begin 2015 weakened, but not yet defeated. Politically, they have become increasingly marginalized. However, the Taliban remain a resilient, lethal force in spite of the fact that they accomplished none of their major strategic or operational objectives in 2014 and suffered considerable casualties. We see dissension within the movement. Senior Taliban leaders disagree on how to prioritize their political and military efforts. Many Taliban tactical units also continue to suffer from acute resource shortfalls. Numerous junior Taliban fighters are becoming increasingly resentful towards their leadership as they continue to fight and die at high rates while their senior leaders remain in safe havens in Pakistan.

The absence of coalition combat units on the battlefield has also weakened one of the principal justifications for the Taliban armed struggle: to rid Afghanistan of "malevolent foreign influences." Now they are fighting against and killing almost exclusively their fellow Afghans. They will certainly feel emboldened by the coalition's transition from direct combat operations to our TAA role and an accompanying reduction of our combat enablers. As a result, the Taliban will likely test the ANSF aggressively in 2015 as they did in 2014. Taliban threats from indirect fire, insider attacks, and complex attacks are projected to increase in the next fighting season.

It is unlikely that the Taliban will be able to overmatch the ANSF on the battlefield in 2015. Nonetheless, the Taliban will still endeavor to frame localized, tactical successes (albeit temporary) into strategic victories through the media. The Taliban will most likely be willing to absorb considerable casualties and physical losses in order to gain psychological victories. They will maintain an adaptive propaganda apparatus, which they will leverage to influence the Afghan people, the international community, and their supporters. As we saw in 2014, the Taliban will strive to shape perceptions in the information space, despite their mixed military performance and continued political failures.

The Taliban have recently shifted their tactics to High Profile Attacks against soft targets—especially in Kabul—in order to undermine popular perceptions of improved security and increased public confidence in the Afghan Government. These strikes garner considerable media attention, while requiring minimal resources and entailing little risk. What is not captured in the media, however, is that these tactics reflect the bankruptcy of the enemy's message and strategy. They continue to target innocent civilians and alienate the population with their indiscriminate attacks. These are not the tactics of an insurgent movement capable of overthrowing the Afghan Government.

The HQN remains the most virulent strain of the insurgency. It presents one of the greatest risks to coalition forces, and it continues to be a critical enabler of al-Qaeda. HQN shares the Afghan Taliban goal of expelling coalition forces, over-

throwing the Afghan Government, and re-establishing an extremist state. They lead the insurgency in several eastern Afghan provinces and have demonstrated the capability and intent to launch and support high profile and complex attacks against the coalition. In response to several dangerous threat streams against coalition and Afghan personnel—particularly in Kabul, ANSF and U.S. Special Operations Forces have stepped up security operations against HQN. These operations have successfully disrupted several dangerous threats streams that sought to inflict significant casualties on the force.

We are also keeping our eye on the potential emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Afghanistan. This has become one of my Priority Intelligence Requirements. Thus far, we have seen some evidence of limited recruiting efforts, and a few Taliban have rebranded themselves as ISIL. This is most likely an attempt to attract media attention, solicit greater resources, and increase recruitment. The Taliban networks are well established, and significant ideological and cultural differences exist between the movements. The Taliban have already declared that they will not allow ISIL in Afghanistan, but the potential emergence of ISIL has sharply focused the ANSF, National Directorate of Security (NDS), and political leadership. All are collaborating closely in order to prevent this threat from expanding. Additionally, the budding presence of ISIL in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas also offers another opportunity for both countries to work together. For now, we assess that there is only a low probability that ISIL can establish a large, credible presence in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, we remain cognizant of this latent danger and we will continue to monitor it.

While insurgent and terrorist networks have proven to be resilient and adaptive, coalition and ANSF operations have kept these groups at bay. Continued pressure on core al-Qaeda and its supporters will be required to prevent them from regenerating. Ultimately, the long-term solution to extremists remains a capable and sustainable ANSF that can secure the Nation.

IV. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Partnership with GIROA

All aspects of Afghan society remain in a state of flux as we start 2015. Political and security transitions continue to occur simultaneously. Last year's political uncertainty caused considerable anxiety and threatened to undermine the progress made by the ANSF in the security domain. Economic growth was similarly stymied by lack of investor confidence in the Afghan Government and its prospects for the future.

The National Unity Government presents both significant promise and peril. On the positive side, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have proven to be amenable to working with the International Community, NATO, and the United States. Both are also committed to addressing the challenges of corruption and nepotism. Both are supportive of women's rights and their empowerment in Afghan society, and most importantly, both are committed to achieving an enduring peace for Afghanistan and the region.

We now have a golden opportunity to deepen our partnership with Afghanistan. However, the forward momentum of our campaign continues to be stymied by delays in forming a new cabinet. We anticipate that President Ghani and CEO Abdullah will contend with a few challenges as they delineate their respective responsibilities. We will need to weather any resulting uncertainty in the ensuing months as the two resolve how they will address their respective supporters while still promoting meritocratic governance. However, the very characteristics that threaten gridlock in the current Afghan Government also promise that, when policies are set, the vast majority of legitimate Afghan political interests will be committed to support them.

Despite myriad challenges, the fundamental partnership between the coalition and the Afghan Government, to include ASIs and ANSF, remains strong. The difference between the Ghani administration and its predecessor is night and day. I have personally developed close professional relationships with nearly all senior Afghan leaders. At all levels, coalition and Afghan leaders continue to work together in pursuit of shared strategic objectives. Moreover, Afghan Government, civil, and military leaders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the coalition's efforts. Afghan leaders are genuine in their gratitude for our shared sacrifice. I have also seen our Afghan partners develop a sense of ownership and pride in their army and police force. Afghans realize and appreciate that they now have credible, professional security forces that can protect them.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Military to Military Relationship

The role of Pakistan remains critical to stability in Afghanistan. Suspicions and competing interests have historically characterized Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, and these are most likely to persist in 2015. However, recent high-level engagements between Afghan and Pakistani leaders since President Ghani's election represent one promising sign for regional security. The common threat of violent extremism may serve as a catalyst for improved cooperation between the two countries, and we have already seen progress in the Afghanistan-Pakistan military-to-military relationship. Pakistan, just like Afghanistan, has suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists and violent extremists. The recent Pakistani Taliban attack on a school in Peshawar could mark an important shift for bilateral relations. Senior Pakistani military officers have said that they can no longer discriminate between "good and bad" terrorists. It is important that their words are followed by action.

Taking advantage of this window of opportunity, RS plays a key facilitator role in pursuit of a constructive and effective relationship between the Afghan and Pakistani militaries. We continue to actively encourage and enable the Afghan and Pakistani officers to meet and coordinate their security efforts. Recent consultations between Afghan and Pakistani corps commanders showed great promise. However, it will take considerable time and effort to convince the Afghan and Pakistani people to support this new spirit of accommodation. Afghan/Pakistani political and military relations are likely to improve incrementally and on a transactional basis. Ultimately, we will still need to manage our expectations.

Other Regional Actors

Other regional actors such as Iran, India, China, Russia, and the Central Asian States have a shared interest in supporting the continued security and increased stability of Afghanistan. President Ghani has shown true leadership and vision by engaging with regional leadership and on the wider global stage. While many of these countries will continue to compete both openly and covertly with one another for increased influence within Afghanistan, all will benefit from a more secure and stable country. President Ghani appreciates that Afghanistan needs regional support in order to realize his vision of transforming Afghanistan into a vital transportation and commercial hub in Central Asia.

Stewardship of U.S. Resources

Stewardship of U.S. taxpayer dollars remains a top priority for USFOR-A. It is our obligation to protect the trust and confidence of the American people. Yet, war is an inherently inefficient and challenging endeavor, and despite the dedicated efforts of many, cases have unfortunately occurred over the years in which American resources were not spent as efficiently as possible. We are working hard to ensure both prudent spending and the identification of areas for cost savings. USFOR-A has also welcomed and incorporated into our processes the recommendations of independent agencies and various inspectors general, which have proven most helpful when released in time to effect change. USFOR-A will continue to scrutinize every dollar spent to ensure it is necessary to mission success.

I would also like to commend to the committee the sterling work of our Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A). This subordinate command continues to implement a comprehensive financial strategy to build Afghan fiscal discipline through budget compliance. CSTC-A has, and continues to play, an outsized role in our campaign. In spite of their small numbers, these highly talented individuals have provided rigorous oversight of billions in expenditures. Their enforcement of greater financial transparency continues to build international donor confidence and encourage sustained foreign investment in Afghanistan.

CSTC-A has also implemented several initiatives, many based on Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction recommendations, to establish greater accountability in ANSF and ASI processes. CSTC-A has placed conditional controls on U.S. funding provided to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. These conditions are intended to ensure the proper implementation and integration of financial accounting, payroll, human resources, and real property systems; and provide mechanisms to prevent funds from being misappropriated or otherwise misused. CSTC-A directly supports an average of over 30 ongoing external and internal audits of the coalition, ASI, and ANSF at any given time throughout the year, and has already started to see positive results. It will continue working on implementing systems and processes for effective ASI/ANSF internal control programs that will not only identify corruption, but dissuade it.

I would specifically like to thank members of this committee for their support of the Vendor Vetting Task Force, also known as Task Force 2010. This effort has proven to be very effective in preventing U.S. money from going to insurgents. I am

convinced that this task force has saved American lives by identifying high risk vendors who support the enemy.

I also appreciate the Senate's support for United States efforts to improve the Afghan justice system. President Ghani and the Afghan Government have recently made great strides in improving their processes to detain, investigate, prosecute, and incarcerate insurgents and extremists. The Afghans are also in the process of developing legal statutes that will ensure thorough investigations and trials for suspected terrorists, in order to uphold the rule of law and promote greater legitimacy for the Afghan judicial branch. Through our mentorship, the Afghans are now taking the initiative to centralize the detention and incarceration of all national security threats at the Parwan Detention Facility, which is now run entirely by the Afghans. Our continued support for the Afghan justice system and responsible application of Afghan laws will greatly enhance efforts to defeat the insurgency and reinforce the legitimacy and credibility of the Afghan Government.

V. DESIRED CONDITIONS FOR THE END OF 2015

Considering the dynamism of the operational environment and the players within it, we will not pursue, nor hope to achieve, a static "endstate" for 2015. Our campaign will evolve and adapt. What we will pursue, however, is a general improvement in security conditions and ANSF capabilities. In order for the insurgents to reconsider their goals, the ANSF will need to demonstrate resilience and progress in 2015. If the ANSF are able to achieve this goal in their first year with full security responsibilities and with decreasing U.S. and coalition enabler support, then the momentum should be considerable going into 2016 when the ANSF will be even more experienced and capable.

The following conditions are desired at the end of 2015:

- ASI/ANSF increasingly capable of protecting the population and securing a legitimate Afghan Government with limited U.S. and coalition support
- ASI/ANSF confidence is increased
- ASI/ANSF are increasingly sustainable excepting aviation and the intelligence enterprise
- ASI/ANSF increasingly capable of neutralizing terrorist networks and denying terrorist safe havens with limited U.S. and coalition support
- ASI progress promotes continued U.S. and international funding commitments
- USFOR-A/RS forces retain sufficient regional access, Freedom of Movement, and Freedom of Action ASI/PAKMIL relationship is constructive

If these conditions are achieved, then we will consider our campaign to be on track.

VI. METRICS OF PROGRESS

By almost all metrics, societal progress in Afghanistan has been significant in the last 13+ years. United States and coalition forces, along with an increasingly capable ANSF, have provided the necessary security to enable these improvements. Much of this progress has been paid with American blood and treasure. The following two charts highlight the tremendous improvements made since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001:

NATO OTAN		Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (1 of 2)		Updated on 11 Feb 15	RS
<u>Infrastructure/Communications</u>		Taliban: 2001	Now		
Roadways/Paved Roads		18,000km/60km	42,150km/12,350km		
Access to Reliable Electricity		6%	28%		* 2,000,000+ Afghans use Facebook
TV/Radio Stations		None/3	50/150		
Internet Users		None	6,000,000+		* 100% of the country will have cell phone coverage within 3 years
Cell Phone Subscribers		25,000	22,000,000+		
<u>Education</u>					
Schools		1,000	14,000+		* The Afghan literacy rate is predicted to reach 90% by 2040
Teachers		20,000	186,000+		
Students Enrolled in Primary & Secondary Schools		<900,000	8,000,000+		
% Who Are Females		Almost None	36%		
Students Enrolled in Universities		UNK	150,000+		
Literacy Rate		12%	39%		
<small>Source: CIA World Fact Book 2014, internetstatistics.com/Asia, GIRA Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Afghan Central Statistics Organization 2014, World Bank Development Indicators, Afghan Energy Information Center, International Airline Industry Directory, 2014 UNHCR Country Profile-Afghanistan 2014, UNICEF, "Realizing Self-Reliance"-GIRA Publication: 20 Nov 14</small>					
By almost all metrics, progress in Afghanistan has been <i>significant</i> in the last 13 years; the Coalition and ANSF have provided the necessary security to enable these advancements					

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NATO OTAN		Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (2 of 2)		Updated on 11 Feb 15	RS
<u>Economy/Politics</u>		Taliban: 2001	Now		
Size of Economy		\$4 Billion	\$20.6+ Billion		* The Afghan economy continues to grow (albeit unevenly) - 2011: 6.1% - 2012: <u>14.4%</u> - 2013: 3.7% - 2014: 1.5% - 2015: <u>4.0%</u> Forecast
GDP (USD per Capita)		\$186.00	\$688.00+		
Access to Clean Water		22%	64%		
Passenger Cars (per 1,000 people)		0.5	20		
Commercial Overflights & Landings (Daily)		None	756		
% of Women in Labor Force		UNK	24.4%		
% of Women in National Parliament		None	28%		
<u>Population/Health</u>					
Refugees		>3,500,000	<2,700,000		* Health improvements have raised life expectancies by 21+ years **35.3 Million Afghans X 21 Years = <u>Gift of >741 Million Years of Life</u>
Population of Kabul		<500,000	>3.5 Million		
Infant Mortality (Children Dying Before Age 5)		26%	9.7%		
Maternal Mortality (Women Dying from Childbirth)		1.6%	0.33%		
Healthcare Access/Facilities		9%/498	60%/2,507		
Life Expectancy		43	64		
<small>Sources (Continued): Afghanistan Mortality Survey; Ministry of Public Health; UNDP Human Development Index; World Bank; TOLD News Research; USAID Survey; Asia Foundation; MOBY research@agencyforaids.com; UNICEF</small>					

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It is important to emphasize that these extraordinary advances in Afghan society have stabilized the country, promoted popular support for the central government, and inspired confidence in the future.

Current Afghan Popular Opinions (Updated on 11 Feb 15)

- * 77% of Afghans express confidence in their new government
- * 87% of Afghans approve the political agreement between President Ghani & CEO Abdullah
- * 78% of Afghans believe the security situation in their district has improved or remained steady in the last 6 months (since June 2014)
- * 81% of Afghans say their government has more influence in their district than the insurgents do
- * 87% of Afghans express confidence in the Afghan National Army (ANA)
- * 59% of Afghans believe that the ANA is capable of defeating the insurgents
- * 76% of Afghans express confidence in the Afghan National Police (ANP)
- * 82% of Afghans believe that GIRoA is leading the effort to improve security (vs. the Coalition)
- * 77% of Afghans want the Coalition to remain in the country to assist the ANSF, at least until the Afghan military and police can stand alone
- * <10% of the Afghan people support the Taliban
 - <30% of Afghans in Kandahar Province (the heartland of the Taliban) support the insurgents
 - <2% of Afghan women desire a return to Taliban rule
- * 64% of Afghans believe that it is unlikely that the Taliban will return to power
- * 55% of Afghans believe that their country is heading in the right direction

Sources: Agence France-Presse, BBC, NBC, ABC, Asia Foundation-Afghan Survey 2014, Afghan Ministry of Communications Internal Report, MOBY Research-agency@moby-hq.com, Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR) Survey Report, Wave 26, Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR)

In general, Afghans are far more optimistic about their country's future than outsiders are.

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Dramatic, but fragile developmental advancements in Afghan society have also directly contributed to an improved security environment. The fragility of these gains reinforces the need for both our continued security efforts and civilian assistance programs. While sustained United States security and development assistance to Afghanistan is intrinsically beneficial to the Afghans, it also contributes substantively to United States national security by ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists.

VII. CONCLUSION

The hard work and significant sacrifices of countless United States and coalition military personnel and civilians over the last 13+ years have created the conditions where Afghans can now take responsibility for their own security and governance. The Ghani administration offers us an extraordinary opportunity to develop a meaningful strategic partnership that will stabilize Afghanistan, and in turn, offer greater security for the U.S. Homeland. Political progress in Kabul demonstrates the return on United States and international investments in the future of Afghanistan and the Afghan people. President Ghani recently remarked at the NATO Foreign Ministerial, “Compelled by tragedy and cemented by mutual sacrifice, the partnership between Afghanistan, NATO, and the United States has entered a new phase.”

I firmly believe that our combined CT and TAA efforts in support of the ANSF and ASIs will reinforce and deepen our strategic partnership with the Afghan Government and shape conditions for a stable, secure, and prosperous Afghanistan. We could offer no greater tribute to the American people, our fallen, and their loved ones than by finishing this mission well.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you very much, General.

In an address to the Nation on May 27, 2014, President Obama said about Afghanistan, “We will bring America’s longest war to a responsible end and then announce calendar dates for our withdrawal. At the beginning of 2015, we’ll have approximately 9,800. By the end of 2015, we’ll have reduced that presence by roughly half, and we will have consolidated our troops in Kabul and on Bagram. We will have consolidated our troops in Kabul and on Bagram. One year later, by the end of 2016, our military will

drawn down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul, with a security assistance component”—and I’m not making this part of his statement up—“just as we’ve done in Iraq.”

General, we are worried about it being “just as we’ve done in Iraq.”

I guess the fundamental question I have for you, in light of the fact that there is a 6-month transition of the Government of Afghanistan, ISIS is now locating there, and other things have happened since the President made this statement. Do you believe that our troop presence schedule in Afghanistan should be adjusted in light of ensuing events since the President made his statement on May 27, 2014?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you for the question.

Sir, as I mentioned in the oral statement, I have provided options to my chain of command to take a look at, as we do this winter update, for additional options—

Chairman MCCAIN. You’ve provided those options. Do you favor those options?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely.

Chairman MCCAIN. I thank you.

Are you worried about a lack of United States military presence in Kandahar, the spiritual home of the Taliban, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), air power capability, and advisors there?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, currently, with the forces that we have in Kandahar, I’m comfortable where we are through 2015. They provide us the opportunity to continue to do our mission of TAA down in Kandahar. That’s with the 205th Corps, with the police, with the special operating forces, and with the Air Force. We have the requisite ISR to be able to continue that mission through 2015.

Chairman MCCAIN. Those options that you’ve provided to the President, does that mean that the options that you support would not draw down to a “normal embassy presence in Kabul”?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the options I presented to my chain of command were several options to make sure that we can continue with our mission of TAA. I’m particularly concerned about the summer of 2015. That will be the Afghans’ very first fighting season completely on their own. They’ve had the lead for 2 years. They’ve done quite well. But, this is the first one at the current force levels that we’re at. As you mentioned upfront, the current plan brings it down to Kabul-centric by the end of 2015. President Ghani has asked for some flexibility, and, in my options, I think I provide some options both for President Ghani and for my senior leadership here to take a look at, that would allow us the flexibility to continue to get after the TAA mission and the CT mission.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

A group of us met with President Ghani over the weekend, and he was very strong and adamant that this current plan will put the Nation in danger. I hope that our leadership will pay attention to him when he comes for a visit here, I believe in March.

Senator Reed.

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

Thank you, General.

You have two distinct missions. One is train, advise, and assist Afghan National Security Forces. The other is the counterterrorism mission, and those two missions require different footprints, in terms of where you've located in the country. Is that being considered by you in your recommendations to President Obama? I mean, that sort of dichotomy between the two missions? Does that shape your recommendation, in terms of what sort of locations that you must hold? Some you might hold simply for counterterrorism, others you might be integral to training. Is that accurate?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. Both counterterrorism and train/advise/assist are complementary missions. They complement each other to lead toward force protection. So, I have to take a holistic look at both those as we provide options to the senior leadership.

Sir, I might add that we have been showing great flexibility in the past. In the October timeframe, we came forward for some flexibility on authorities, enablers, and people, and the President granted some great flexibility that enabled us to continue with the Resolute Support Mission after January 1, 2015.

Senator REED. There's another aspect of the counterterrorism, which was alluded to by our panel yesterday. That is, regional threats, not just solely located within Afghanistan itself. Is that something you're considering, too, in terms of recommendations to President Obama?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would tell you that both United States Forces-Afghanistan, U.S. Central Command, my higher headquarters, President Ghani, as he's reached out to the region, take a look at this regional approach all the time. As I mentioned up front, what's different in the last 6 months is the reachout that President Ghani's had, especially to Pakistan, and the military-to-military, economic-to-economic, people-to-people, intelligence-to-intelligence, those areas that he continues to look at very hard. I've seen change in the attitude. I've seen military-to-military talking together. This hasn't happened since about 2011 to 2012, and that's quite good. I think if they continue to work very hard and understand they have a common enemy to face—they have to get rid of the sanctuary on both sides—that that'll lead to a positive outcome. We do look at a regional approach, yes, sir.

Senator REED. Let me go to an area that is sometimes not highlighted. That's the Afghan National Police, because the responsibility to train and also to create a justice system overlaps not only with yourself but with many other U.S. agencies and international partners. You've talked, I think, in general terms about the status of the Afghan National Army, and particularly their Special Operations Forces, but what about the police? They're ultimately long gone, and it will be the police and the villagers that will make sure the country is stable.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. The police are about 157,000 strong, plus another 30,000 Afghan local police, which receive a little bit different training than the army, a little bit differently equipped. However, they continue to do some of the same type of missions that the army has to go through. When they work together, the army, the police, the Afghan Local Police (ALP), they're quite good. This is what we call "cross-pillar coordination." I tell

people, with the changes in leadership, having confidence, holding people accountable, working together, that the Taliban cannot defeat them. The Taliban doesn't have the D-30 Howitzers, they don't have the uparmored Humvees, they don't have the Mi-17s, they don't have the intelligence fusion, none of that.

But, the police continue to work that very hard. They are working through a holistic review on a force optimization piece on the army and the police. President Ghani and the senior leadership have looked at some changes to the police and how they're organized and how they work more toward the community policing piece of it. I know that's where they want to get to. We do advise, at the ministerial level, the Ministry of Interior (MOI), and then at the senior police level. Sir, we'll continue to work that very hard.

Senator REED. Finally, there are requirements that the Government of Afghanistan has asked us to fulfill. Are there any outstanding requests that we have to the Government of Afghanistan that they must fulfill that will ensure our mission is successful?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, you're talking in terms of troops, equipment, or—

Senator REED. Troops, equipment, reform of their systems, it is a partnership and we're focusing on what they are asking of us. I know, under the previous presidency, there was a long list of things we asked, and were not particularly successful in getting. You seem to imply, I think quite accurately, that with President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah, there is a new sense of cooperation, et cetera. But, are there some significant issues out there that they must deal with and we must be aware of?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah continue to work very hard, one with the National Unity Government, they're working on the corruption piece. We've asked them to look at that very hard. They continue to work at that. They've embraced the international community. Everywhere I go, every event I've seen both Dr. Abdullah and President Ghani, first thing they do is thank the international community, thank the American people for their sacrifices for the last 13+ years. You didn't hear that before. President Ghani is the Commander in Chief, and he's embraced the Afghan Security Forces, both the army and the police. You haven't seen that before. In fact, the Afghan Security Forces were probably handcuffed the last 3 or 4 years on what they could and couldn't do. We'd be in a different place if President Ghani had been in position there the last couple of years. But, I think, sir, everything that we talk about with MOI, Ministry of Defense (MOD), and ask President Ghani to take a hard look at, he absolutely gets on that.

Senator REED. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, and thank you also for the time that you spend with us personally on these issues.

Senator Reed brought up the police versus the army. Give us a general idea of the size of each. I mean, the army is much larger than the police. But, tell me, is it a 10-to-1, or what is it? I should know, and I don't.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, 352,000 is the Afghan Security Forces; 195,000 for the Army, 157,000 for the Afghan Police, and then there's an additional 30,000 that are the Afghan local police.

Senator INHOFE. Yeah, I understand that one. Thank you very much.

I took a very personal interest as far back as 2003 in the training of the Afghans. One reason is, the Oklahoma 45th played a very significant role, not just in 2003, in the early years, but also 2006 and 2007. I spent quite a bit of time over there. I watched what they were doing. I was there when they opened up the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). I even commented that it reminded me, when I looked at it, of Fort Sill. It's really state-of-the-art.

Now, you talked about Kabul. It's the fastest-growing city and all that. Has the training center remained as effective as it initially was, or is it growing? What's the capacity there?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the KMTC continues to be a bright spot, a training place that absolutely embraces, the last several years, what we've put into that. But, each of the corps have their own regional training centers, as well. The Special Operating Forces have the equivalent of a Center of Excellence, like we have at Fort Bragg. It's very good. I was out west, in Herat, about a week and a half ago, and told the corps commander I wanted to go look at his training. This was unannounced. He took me out there, walked through their medical training, walked through their marksmanship training, walked through how they cleared buildings, and all of those things unannounced.

Senator INHOFE. Yes.

General CAMPBELL. All Afghan-led. It was pretty remarkable, and I came away refreshed that all of that training that goes on, for the most part, is Afghan-led—had been with our help several years ago—

Senator INHOFE. Yes.

General CAMPBELL.—but I feel very confident that they continue to do that.

Senator INHOFE. I have to tell you, I was really impressed, in those early years. I was there because we were participating in that in a very personal way. Then, the expressions on the faces of the Afghans, I thought they really wanted to train, they were very proud of the accomplishments, particularly at the Training Center. I never dreamed, at that time, we'd be back here, 10–12 years later, talking about it.

This has been asked before, but for a different reason. Let me just reflect back on what's happening right now. We had the administration talking about 5,500 troops, then we had President Ghani wanting us to reexamine that; and then, just yesterday or the day before, we agreed, or the administration talked about doing it. What concerns me is, if we're at 10,000 troops now—and we had General Mattis tell this committee, just a short while ago, that we should be looking at approximately a recommendation of 20,000 troops, and you're readjusting from 10,000 troops, is that implying that we're going to make an adjustment from the 5,500 troops, but it's not going to be up anywhere close to what General Mattis said we needed?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, none of the options recommend an increase like that. Most of the options I'm discussing with my senior leadership includes allowing more flexibility on glide slope, allowing more flexibility on locations.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. Does it bother you that we're talking publicly about what we're going to be, when we're going to withdraw, and when we're going to be downsizing and all of that? Because, obviously they know everything we know. Does that concern you?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think General Dunford put it best when he testified last July and he said he hoped that there would be more ambiguity here. Sir, it's out in the open. We are where we are. We'll continue to work that and mitigate—

Senator INHOFE. I know we are where we are, but do we have to continue being "are where we are"? I mean, when do we go and start making our own plans, exclusively us, looking after our own defense? Hopefully, that time will come. I won't ask for an answer.

The last thing I'd mention, when you talk about having to do something on the size of the force, right now we have Afghanistan, we have Iraq, we have Syria, Africa, and we have problems there, Jordan, of course, we talked about that last week, and, just yesterday, introduced legislation to try to get more of our help to our very great ally, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and those in Ukraine. Now, do you look at the overall picture and talk to the rest of them as to what our capacity is with all these things going on? Is that factored into any recommendation you're going to have, in terms of changing our structure in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, when I look at the options I present to my senior leadership, I'm cognizant of what else is going on in the world and the requirements that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) have to deal with. But, I particularly focus on Afghanistan, the impact it has there. I'm not looking at what United States Africa Command has, United States European Command—

Senator INHOFE. Sure. Appreciate it very much.

General CAMPBELL. I provide those options, then the Joint Chiefs of Staff, OSD, will work through that.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. But, I know that in making recommendations, in terms of overall force strength and all of that, I'm sure that will factor into it.

Thank you very much.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Gillibrand.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for hosting this hearing. I appreciate it very much.

General, what should the role of Afghanistan's neighbors, particularly Pakistan, be in the reconciliation process? Do you have concerns about the role that Afghanistan neighbors are currently playing? What do you see our greatest challenges being?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, Senator.

President Ghani said this several times, that he wants to lead reconciliation. This is an Afghan process, an Afghan-led process. He wants to take charge of this. This is very important to him. He knows it's going to take some time. He's also reached out to Chief of the Pakistan Army, General Raheel Sharif and said, "You know,

I need some help, here. We have to work this together.” I think that dialogue continues between them.

I was in Pakistan last week, and had these conversations with General Raheel. I talked to both President Ghani and General Raheel yesterday morning. They continue to dialogue. Neither one of them wants to let the other one down. I think Pakistan, for years and years, has been an issue. We’ve always said, “You can’t talk about Afghanistan unless Pakistan is in that equation.” I think, with General Raheel, he’s moving in a different direction than we’ve seen in the past. Again, I’ve been there four or five times in the several months I’ve been on the ground there. I met with him. I met with him and the President, together. I think that there’s very good dialogue as we move forward.

I think General Raheel understands that he has a big piece to play in this, and his leadership will make a difference as he works with some of the internal issues he has in Pakistan. If you’re in Afghanistan, you think everything bad comes out of Pakistan. If you’re in Pakistan, you think everything bad comes out of Afghanistan. They have to work through that piece of it together to fight this common enemy. I think, in the last 45 to 60 days, I’ve seen that more than I have ever seen before in Afghanistan. We have an opportunity now, if we work very hard, to make this reconciliation piece a potential reality, where it hadn’t been before.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Are there particular challenges with regard to the border?

General CAMPBELL. As far as cross-border? There always is, ma’am. Up in the Hindu Kush, up in Paktia, along Kunar, Nangahar, I mean, there’s nothing that says, “This is the border.” So, people have families that live on the Afghanistan side, have families just right across the border, continues to be that.

There is more cooperation now between the Afghan Border Police and the Frontier Corps on the Pakistan side. Again, about 2 weeks ago, the 201st Corps and the 203rd Corps met in Jalalabad and met with the 11th Corps commander, who’s in Peshawar. They talked about borders. Last week, Lieutenant General Fazli, who is the Afghan Border Police’s senior border policeman for Afghanistan, went to Pakistan for a week and toured different spots on the Pakistan side. So, they continue to talk.

We’re building back the coordination center that we used to have at Tourk. That should open up very soon. Used to have United States, Afghan, and Pakistan, will now have Pakistan and Afghan. I was up there probably 4 weeks ago with the Chief of Staff of the Afghan National Army, General Sher Mohammad Karimi. But, this will put Afghans and Pakistanis together in a coordination center at a key point on the border. We’ll put another one down south, just south of Kandahar. We’ll continue to work that. I think they’re working this very hard.

Senator GILLIBRAND. I’m very grateful for all the work you’ve done to protect women’s rights and to educate girls. What are we doing now to ensure that progress on women’s rights will be protected as we transition into a more advisory capacity? Is the Afghanistan Government capable of sustaining the progress that you’ve made?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, they work this very hard. Thank you for the question. I have a gender advisor that works that with the senior people in the Afghan Government. We continue to see change in the number of women that join the police, that join the army. They have some very tough goals to try to get to over time, but they're working very hard toward that. I think the police and MOI are doing a little bit better than the army, but they understand how important it is.

President Ghani has made this one of his priorities. He spoke about this to all the senior leadership in both the MOI and the MOD, in meetings that I've been in. He's also trying to incorporate more civilian and women into the ministries of both MOI and MOD. Again, MOI is a little bit better than MOD. Their goals that they have, of about 10 percent over the next several years, is going to be very tough, just based on the culture. But, I think all of them that I talk about really want to get after this, and I do believe they're very genuine about this.

Senator GILLIBRAND. What's the status of terrorism attacks specifically against schools with girls?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I don't have those statistics. I can get those—

Senator GILLIBRAND. But, is it rising or falling, or is it the same, I just don't have a sense of it today.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I can tell you it's probably about the same. Again, I think wherever there are soft targets that the Taliban and other insurgents can go after, they're going to try to do that. If they go to a school, if they go inside of Kabul, it gives them more of a strategic impact, because the media will pick up on that, just like they did this tragic incident in Peshawar on December 16, 2014. They hit a military-type school and killed all those children. The Afghan people understand that they want their kids to go to school, to continue to have this education. But, I haven't seen a spike in those numbers at all, ma'am.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

General Campbell, thank you for your testimony and your service.

Just on that question, to follow up, if the Taliban are victorious, this would be devastating, would it not, for the rights of women in Afghanistan? They've made a great deal of progress in recent years.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely.

Senator SESSIONS. General Campbell, Ambassador Cunningham told us yesterday, as did all the panelists, that the rate of withdrawal is too high or too steep in Afghanistan. I tend to agree with that. I think that's very difficult for anybody to dispute, if you analyze it. I believe our Congress, in a bipartisan way, is open to having a more robust assistance to the Afghan forces. I feel it, in talking to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I think the American people are willing to stay the course and help in not an out-front way, but in a supportive way, more than a lot of people think, if we articulate that. I believe it's important for President Obama to articulate that. He's the Commander in Chief, and I think it's

important for you to be clear to him, and the Defense Department to be clear, to help alter the present course we are on.

Second, I'm really pleased that you have gone even further than our panelists yesterday in saying that this is not a hopeless case. A lot of progress has been made. We just don't want to let it slip away.

I do not see this, in any way, that we're starting a new war. We have been partners with Afghanistan for 13+ years. We've stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them. We've lost, as you said, over 2,000 servicemembers, 20,000 wounded. It needs to end successfully.

I just hope that somehow we don't make the mistake that Senator McCain has so wisely warned us of, in Afghanistan, to rush out when just a little more presence and a little more support would be there. I encourage you to speak out on that. I assume that your report, from what I hear you say, your advice, calls for a stronger presence there.

I appreciate the optimism that you have. You've said there's a new spirit there. It does appear that President Ghani is much more attuned with the challenges than President Karzai was, and that a lot of progress is being made. But, I have to tell you, we've heard that before. We've been hearing this for a long time, "There's a new spirit there." I think there's truth to it. But, isn't it true that, in a combat situation involving, say, Iraqi or Afghani soldiers, that if just a few United States forces, with communications ability, the ability to call in air strikes, can embolden and encourage them to a remarkable degree, and help them to be successful in a way that, if they are out under attack and they don't have that kind of support and confidence, they are not as effective fighters? I've heard lower ranking and high ranking officers say that's true.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, our men and women of our Armed Forces are incredibly gifted. They're bright. They're intelligent. When other forces are around them, they learn through osmosis. I mean, it's pretty incredible. Anytime we're around Iraq or Afghan forces, in my experiences, they continue to get better. I would not argue with that.

Senator SESSIONS. I was talking to an experienced officer in Iraq last week. Been there a number of times. He said the Iraqis will fight, and they fight so much better and so much more confidently if just a few Americans are embedded with them. It creates a confidence that goes way beyond the numbers. Do you agree with that general philosophy?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I've spent about 19 months in Iraq. I've spent three different tours in Afghanistan. I would tell you that the Afghan fighters have been fighting for 35+ years. There's no doubt, with the proper leadership, they will continue to fight. The difference between Iraq and Afghanistan, what I've seen now, is that the Afghans have a nationalist pride about being, "I'm for Afghanistan. I'm not Sunni, I'm not Shi'a, I'm an Afghan. So, I'm not a Pashtun, I'm not a Tajik, I'm an Afghan." They have this pride, and they're very proud that they stood firm during the political instability. They didn't break underneath ethnic lines. With the right leadership, they can carry the day, here, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. We're moving to no troops outside of the capital, it appears, to a ministerial force and advisory—a normal State

Department relationship with the Afghan Government, soon. Less than 2 years. I just think that's taking a risk, and I hope that you will make clear your view, from a military point of view, I think the American people will support it. I think President Obama will listen, and I think we can have bipartisan support here for a more realistic approach to the drawdown in Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator McCaskill.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

Thank you, General Campbell. I really appreciated the time we spent together yesterday going over a challenging problem, and that is how we do the requisite oversight of what we're doing in Afghanistan, and how, at the same time, as we pull into the back and allow the Afghan forces to take the lead, how you protect data that could make them more vulnerable once they are in the lead and once we are in a—just a supportive role. I completely understand the tension there.

I just wanted to put on the record that I think you have worked very hard to reverse some of the confusion that existed around the special—Inspector General's report as to what should and shouldn't be classified. I know you've taken steps to declassify a wide swath of that information. I think the commitment you made to me, that we'll continue to work on what you feel strongly about, in terms of unit data and some of the other data that could, in fact, put people at risk if it were continued to be unclassified. I just want to thank you for your attention to that. I think you understand that the oversight is important. I think you also are very cognizant of the risks associated with some of that data getting into the wrong hands. So, I appreciate your help on that.

I want to express my sympathy for the deaths, not just of Kayla Mueller, but of the other contractors, that have occurred. This has been a theme of mine for years, and that is, How do we manage the contracting force in theater? How do we oversee the contracting force in theater? How do we protect the contracting force in theater? I am worried about that.

We put into the—last year's National Defense Authorization, a prohibition against funding any projects that we can't inspect because of security reasons. I want to get your take on where we are, in terms of protection of the contracting force. I mean, we have contractors that are going to have to maintain some of these systems, because Afghanistan is not ready to—they don't have the technical capability of maintaining some of what we have equipped them with. Contractors are going to be a reality in that space for a long time. I think we need to discuss that protection, not just force protection, but, obviously, contractor protection.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much for the question.

Absolutely concur with you that force protection, both for our service men and women and our contractors or other civilians in Afghanistan, is utmost on my mind. We do absolutely everything we can to make sure we give them the right resources. We provide them what we call "guardian angels" to provide that force protection support. Without going into our tactics, techniques, and procedures of how we would do that, that could potentially put them

more at risk, I would just tell you that this is utmost on my mind, of all the men and women, of all the leadership. We'll continue to watch that very closely.

I do agree that, as we downsize, we can't just say we're taking the military out. We have to add another contractor in there. We have to take a holistic look at what the requirement actually is. There are some places where we'll say, we're not going to put a military, we're not going to put a contractor there, as well. We'll just have to mitigate that a different way. So, we look at it very hard.

It was a very unfortunate incident, about 2 weeks ago, with Kayla, where we did have three of our contractors killed by an Afghan soldier. We've learned some lessons from that. The Afghans continue to learn lessons from that, as well. Our green-on-blue incidents have gone way, way down. We want to continue to keep it that way. But, a lot of that is because of the procedures we put in place, the procedures that the Afghans have put in place, as well, to help vet their security forces.

But, ma'am, we'll continue to look at that very hard.

Senator MCCASKILL. If you could speak briefly to—President Bush was the first one who spoke out about the propaganda tool that Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) represented, the recruiting tool that it represented. It continues to be, we're aware, a recruiting tool. Could you speak to the issue of GTMO as it relates to what is maybe the biggest threat we face, and that is the recruitment worldwide of terrorists to join the fight, particularly the fight that ISIS is conducting in a barbaric fashion that has nothing to do with conventional warfare?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am.

I think there's a lot of things out there that—a lot of things out there that would incite people to attack Americans already, that they're already preconceived to attack Americans. I can't tell you how much GTMO does or doesn't do that, or impact on their recruiting piece of it. But, my experience tells me that there are people that want to do harm to people both in Afghanistan and back here in the United States, and any number of things can make them do that. But, many of them are preconceived to do that. We can—what I have to do is continue to work that hard on my force protection inside of Afghanistan, and worry about that piece of it. I don't go out and look at different pieces and how they recruit. I look more at the force-protection piece inside of Afghanistan.

Senator MCCASKILL. That makes sense. Thank you, General.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. I want to thank you, General, for your tremendous service to the country and for your family and for all those that serve underneath you. I think we're very fortunate to have your leadership.

I wanted to follow up to understand, just in terms of where we are in the current plan, and in the consequences of it. Just so we understand, if we keep the current timeline that was proposed by the administration, and they don't adopt some of the options that you've proposed to them, what does that mean, in terms of when the withdrawal would have to start, in terms of the fighting season? So, logistically, what would that mean for you?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I—a military guy would never use the term “withdrawal.” We're going to transition as we continue to work that piece of it.

The current state of play is, we have 9,800 U.S. I have about 12.9-, with the total NATO force. We're centered in Kabul and Bagram. We have tactical advise-and-assist commands in Mazar-e Sharif in the north and Herat in the west and Kandahar in the south, Jalalabad and Gamberi in the east, and we have several special operating camps at our—or Special Operating Forces used inside of Kabul and other places in the country. To be able to get down to the numbers that we're at, we'd have to go to Kabul-centric by the end of the year. So, I would have to work that glide slope.

Senator AYOTTE. But, would that also require you to move out of places during the fighting season?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, part of that is physics—

Senator AYOTTE. Right. Meaning logistically.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. So, that would have to be done while you're in the middle of the fighting season.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, part of that, we would de-scope and try to mitigate that as much as we could so that we didn't impact on the fighting season. But, just based on physics, you'd have to come out—

Senator AYOTTE. Just based on physics. That's something that we hope the President will take into consideration as he looks at your options. Because it's an important matter of physics to not—

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. I mean, we wouldn't normally pick to have to do this in the middle of a fighting season. Is that true, General?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, we'd like to have every opportunity to make sure we provide the right training, advising, and assisting to the Afghans. It's very important, as I said up front, for this fighting season 2015. We're doing everything right now in the winter campaign to get them ready to do that. Again, we're advising at the ministerial level, MOI and MOD. We're advising at the corps. We're not on combat operations every day with the brigades. We do advise—train, advise, assist at the kandak level, or the battalion level, tactical level with the Special Operating Forces. So, it would have an impact, but we would continue to work through that. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. Appreciate it, General.

General, last march, you testified before the Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee, and you had called the A-10 a game changer. You had said, “what I think the soldiers on the ground, both the special operators and the conventional force, would tell you, it's a game changer. It's ugly, it's loud. But, when it comes in and you hear the 'bvrrrr,' it just makes a difference. So, it would be a game changer.” Do you still believe that? How has the A-10 performed during the conflict in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I currently do not have any A-10s in Afghanistan. But, in my experience, the A-10 has been a superb

close-air-support platform. The comments I made back in March, to include the sound effects, I would still stand by, yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. Excellent.

So, you would agree, certainly with what General Odierno has said, that the A-10 is our Nation's best close air support platform.

General CAMPBELL. Well, ma'am, I would tell you that the Air Force does an incredible job of providing the close air support that I have in Afghanistan today. They're not doing that with A-10s today, and I—so, I would tell you they continue to provide me the best I can have. I appreciate that, and I ask, "I need this," and the Air Force picks that platform to do that.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

Let me ask you about "no contracting with the enemy." That's something—legislation that Senator Brown and I—Scott Brown, when he was here—we had pushed before the committee. Then, now it's been expanded, the authorities, beyond Department of Defense, but also to the United States Agency for International Development, State Department. How has that worked in Afghanistan? When we—I know that Senator McCaskill had asked about the issue about contractors, and we had money going to our enemies. We had money going to people who were misusing our funds to work against our interests. So, how has that and the task force to implement that been working in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, in that lane, it's been an absolute game changer, as well. So, probably about 780-plus different contractors since 2010, we've taken a look at and vetted those, and only probably 100-plus have been able to—we've been able to contract through, based on some ties there. It's denied insurgents probably \$9.8 billion in money that we haven't put toward those kind of contracts, where the enemy would have access to that. So, that's been a game changer there. We continue to work that. Most of that, for me, is what we call "over the horizon," so I don't have them on the ground. But, we can work—reach back very quickly with that. Then, based on that success, NATO has also adopted that methodology to work the contracting piece.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, General.

Chairman McCain.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Donnelly.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I appreciated your time.

I agree that there is a need for more flexibility to do what's needed, that we should look at the situation on the ground and determine from that the decisions that we make. When we do—you had mentioned before, Kabul-centric, that we might at some point—if we found ourself in a Kabul-centric situation. What would that do in areas like Helmand and Nuristan, Nangahar, Kunar, if we wound up in that situation?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the plan is that, in the other—when we go Kabul-centric, that we would have sufficiently worked the corps through our TAA at the corps level, that they have the capacity to be able to sustain the fight there, and then we would continue the TAA inside of Kabul, at the ministry level.

Senator DONNELLY. When you look at the numbers that we'll need—and there's—obviously, there's no exact number that you know. As you go, month-to-month, and take a look, you determine what you need. What are your—best ballpark, if you were being given flexibility, where we need to be, approximately, in 2015, 2016, 2017, U.S. forces?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I've provided those options to my senior leadership. I'd rather discuss that in a classified session, sir, if I could do that.

Senator DONNELLY. That would be fine.

As you look at a Helmand, and you look at a Nuristan, what is your definition of success in those areas, say, at the beginning of 2017?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think definition of success for Helmand would be that the Afghan Security Forces have sufficiently contained the insurgency, or that the governance and the district governors, provincial governor, they're providing the necessary governance to the people of that particular province. Sir, without going into great detail, I see great work happening in Helmand today. I was there Thursday. Again, I can discuss more in a classified hearing with you on what we intend to do with Helmand. But, I think that the cooperation between the police and the army that I saw Thursday when I was in Helmand is quite good and bodes well for the future of Helmand.

Senator DONNELLY. When you look at the Taliban and their goals and their aims, what are the things that give them hope, and how do we eliminate those things?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think I would tell you that even President Ghani has said probably 70 percent of the Taliban want to come back in and get in the peace process. They're tired of this fight. I've told you that a lot of their leadership is disenfranchised, they're away in sanctuary, they're not in Afghanistan. I think now, with a new National Unity Government that almost 85 percent of the people want in that country, there's no reason that the Taliban can't come to the table and talk and be part of the political process. President Ghani has reached out to them to be able to do that.

There's always going to be a small portion that will be irreconcilable, that would not want to come back into a talk like that. But, I think President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, continue to work this very hard. They're engaging with many of the tribal elders and elements, different parts of the country. They're showing them that the government can provide to the people. That's, I think, what the Taliban want, to have a government that will provide what they want to have, whether that's jobs, whether that's medical. I think President Ghani, the National Unity Government, is on the way to doing that.

Senator DONNELLY. Well, I want to thank you and your whole team, because, when I was there last year, there was real question as to—or I shouldn't—there was no question from the military as to whether the Afghans were going to hold. But, there was concern. From everything we've seen, the way it was laid out, we've hit our metrics and more. Would you agree with where we are in the metrics that we laid out?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would. Not these metrics, but the metrics we work with our Afghan partners and—

Senator DONNELLY. Right.

General CAMPBELL.—the police and the army, from the numbers, from the level of training—they've taken over all the training. Sir, I see that—again, I've been there three times, and this time there's just a stark difference in the motivation, in the leadership, their understanding that they don't have as many of the U.S. and the coalition forces there, they have to do this on, they want to take this on. So, I think they continue to get better and better.

I've talked before about their special operating capability. It's quite good. I've talked about four Mi-17 version 5s going from Kandahar to Helmand, 125 kilometers at night, at 3 percent illumination, going onto a very small LZ, guys getting out the back, they have a little iPad-type device, they're talking to a PC-12, which is Afghan flown, that has full motion video, and they tell them there's an insurgent, 200 meters, and they go. That's pretty remarkable capability that they have. The rest of the—that the Taliban ought to know about, because they don't stand a chance with that capability. So, sir, they continue to get better.

Senator DONNELLY. Thanks for your hard work on the Pakistan piece. I think it's absolutely critical. I know how hard you're working on it. As you continue to get that in a better and better place, I think the whole area becomes a better and better place.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for being here. I appreciate your service. I appreciate your frank conversation that you had with me yesterday in my office.

To follow up on Senator Donnelly's comments on the Taliban, do you think that they will make significant movements to reassert control over certain territories? How important would be our CT mission there to counter that?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think the—again, the Taliban are a resilient force. They have the issue—they have issues, but they continue to hang on in certain areas. They do—they have changed their approach a little bit, as I talked about in the opening statement, inside of Kabul, some of the remote areas outside the cities, where it's very, very hard to have the Afghan Security Forces. They go after soft targets, whether it's the Afghan local police checkpoint with only two or three people on it, away from the village, not properly equipped or trained, don't have the right leadership. They see that, they attack that. There's reports that they will take over a district center.

When I was there before, they would take over a district center, and the Afghan Security Forces would not be able to take that back. Today, as I said up front, all the district centers are owned by the Government of Afghanistan. If the insurgents were able to attack a district center and take that over, the difference today is that the police and the army would get that back in 6 hours, 7

hours, as soon as they were able to get the forces there. So, there's no doubt they continue to work that very hard.

Our CT capability, without going into—in a classified hearing—ma'am, is the best in the world. We continue to have brave men and women that provide us a capability that's the number one in the world, and we continue to have that as one of our missions. I can give you more information, ma'am, if we go into a classified piece, on that.

Senator FISCHER. What does that mean for al-Qaeda (AQ)? Do you believe that they will see increased pressure?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think that you have to continue to keep the pressure on, on AQ. I think that, over the last several years, in the last 4 or 5 months in particular, that the pressure we've had on AQ has been quite good. Part of that is based on what Pakistan has done on the big operation they've had going on since June in North Waziristan. It has forced people into Afghanistan. I think that, again, our CT capability is quite good.

Senator FISCHER. Yesterday, we spoke a little bit about the capability gaps of the Afghan forces. Do you feel that that's going to have an adverse operational impact on them?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think we're going to continue to try to work that and close that gap. The places they have gaps are hard for any army, so logistics is hard for the United States Army, it's hard for the Afghan army. We've built in programs over the last several years now, as we kind of step back and take a look at it. In some places, quite frankly, we've provided them too much stuff or we've provided them a program that they're not going to get to. Now we're going to come back a little bit and say, "Okay, how can we adjust this, how do we modify this, what will work best for Afghanistan?" That's what I'm starting to see now, and a lot of that happens in the logistics realm. Again, very hard for us to do that for any army, for the Afghan army and the way they distribute equipment, very, very tough. But, we're working that very hard. They understand how important that is, so we'll continue to work that.

Intelligence, I see them continue to work in the intelligence realm very well. They're working more together. They're in stovepipes—MOI, MOD, their National Directorate of Security (NDS) or their intelligence agency. Today, they have many fusion cells that bring them together, like we've done in the past. So, I think that'll give them a greater capability as they move forward.

Their close air support continues to grow. Their air force continues to grow, and so the TAA mission, staying with them here, we'll continue to build that capability. It will allow us to be able to continue to transition out.

What President Ghani has told me, our most important legacy will be the systems and processes that we provide to Afghanistan. That's our legacy from the last 13+ years.

Senator FISCHER. Are there some missions that they just won't be able to do?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think there's—I think there are some areas that we have to continue to work with the Afghans to make sure they have the confidence. I have no doubt in my mind they have the capability to do all the missions that are required in

Afghanistan. But, sometimes it's the leadership, the confidence that leadership brings to be able to do that. They've had many people that have been around for years and years. President Ghani just retired 48 generals yesterday. What it's doing—and they had—you haven't had retired of generals in 4 or 5 years in Afghanistan. When he first took over, he retired 15 generals. What that does is open it up for some of these young, bright, energetic officers they have, the noncommissioned officers they have in the Afghan army that have been trained in the United States, in the United Kingdom, in Germany, to assume leadership positions now. They've been waiting for that, and I think President Ghani is enabling them to be able to do that, and with this infusion of new leadership, and then they hold them accountable, I mean, I think leadership makes a difference, and that's going to be a game changer, as well.

Senator FISCHER. Am I correct in saying that it's an all-volunteer army?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. That—and with the retirement of these generals, that should encourage more enthusiasm within the ranks, as well, wouldn't you say?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think they'll see that there is hope to continue to move up. They've been stymied a little bit the last several years. Now they see that there is room to move. That'll continue to energize some of the young lieutenant colonels and colonels. Again, it is a—a very good point—it is an all-volunteer army, like our Army. As I said in the opening statement, they do not have issues with recruiting. The issues they have is—they've only been recruiting in the winter, as opposed to 12 months in the year. That's what we're trying to get them to do, is recruit on a sustainable basis, the entire year, not just during the winter timeframe. They're working through that now.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir, very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Campbell, both for your service and for being here today.

I am struck by the tables that are provided in your testimony about both the changes in Afghan society as a result of the last 13 years and how Afghans feel about what's happening in the country right now. I think most of us, as politicians, would love to have some of these numbers: 77 percent of Afghans express confidence in their new government; 64 percent believe it's unlikely that the Taliban will return to power; 55 percent believe their country is heading in the right direction.

What—do you have a sense of what would happen to the way Afghans feel about the progress in their country if the United States withdrew all of our troops and support?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, the Afghans that I talk to continue to express their appreciation for the sacrifices of our men and women, express their appreciation for what the coalition, especially the United States, has provided to them over the last 13+ years. Again, the difference between Iraq and Afghanistan, here, is that

Afghanistan people and the government now do not want the coalition to leave. I think, to the average Afghan, if they see us continue to go at that pace, that it would lower the morale, it would give them a feeling that they were being abandoned.

But, again, I think the Afghan senior leadership continues to tell the Afghan people, "There are ways to mitigate, we're going to continue to get better, we appreciate the support. But, this is going to be an Afghan fight. We have to take this on." So, there's a balance there, I think. But, they absolutely do understand the sacrifices we've provided, and there's a difference, night and day, again, between this leadership we have today in the senior leadership in Afghanistan and where we were just a couple of months ago.

Senator SHAHEEN. You talked about the efforts of President Ghani and CEO Abdullah to reach out to the Taliban and to try and begin some sort of negotiations. Can you give us any insights into how far along that is?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I'd rather discuss that in a classified session, if I could.

Senator SHAHEEN. Okay.

To what extent are the Taliban—do we see signs that they're being influenced by what's happening with ISIL in other parts of the Middle East and the new reports that ISIL has begun to infiltrate Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. Well, ma'am, the Taliban and the ISIL are like this. They have different ideologies. They want to fight each other. So, you do have some Taliban that are—feel disenfranchised from the Taliban, potentially because the Supreme Commander of the Taliban Mullah Omar hasn't shown his face for many, many years. So, they see this ISIS, or Daesh, as another way to gain resources, as another way to gain media attention. So, you do have some of the Taliban breaking off and claiming allegiance toward ISIS. Part of that is happening in different parts of Afghanistan. A lot of what we get is through our Afghan partners, as they see that probably before we do. We have seen some of the recruiting, we have seen some night letters, we have seen some talk of it at some of the universities. It is a concern to President Ghani, therefore a concern to me. But, we continue to work that with our Afghan partners to make sure that we understand where this is going inside of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do we have any sense how the public in Afghanistan and Pakistan views ISIL?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think it depends on where they are and how much they read or hear about it. If you're inside of Kabul, and you have access to the communications and newspapers, radios, or TV, they're starting to get that media blast of that in some of the outward parts of Afghanistan where they may not have that communications, they may not even know that that's going on. But, again, it has come up quite a bit, here, in the last 45 to 60 days. President Ghani has talked to the Afghan people about it, he's talked to the Afghan Security Forces about it. I've made it a Party Information Requirement for my forces. So, we'll continue to work hard with our Afghan partners, here, to make sure we understand this network.

Senator SHAHEEN. A final question. You've—most of the discussion has been about how the National Security Forces are doing, but can you comment on what's happening with local police efforts and to what extent they are professionalizing their operations?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am, I can talk more about Kabul and the police. There are about 14,000 police inside of Kabul. Because I see them on a day-to-day basis. They continue to work hard on the training, and they continue to work hard on trying to do more community policing. These high-profile attacks inside of Kabul. What you did hear about in late December timeframe is an uptick. It is very, very tough to have—to stop one or two people from taking a magnetic improvised explosive device (IED) and sticking it on a bus, to take two or three people and stop them from having a suicide vest and attacking a nongovernmental organization. In a city of 3.5 million, again, very, very tough.

But, what you don't hear about are all the number of attacks, all the number of catches, all the number of people that have been arrested by the Afghan police inside of Kabul that didn't result in a high profile attack (HPA). What I would tell you is, that number, compared to the number of HPAs, is quite high. So I think one of the things that we can probably work better with Afghanistan is to make sure they publicize this, as well.

But, the police do quite well, because of their ability to work with the Afghan people and their human intelligence (HUMINT) networks to get after these threats. So, ma'am, I think they continue to progress, not only the Afghan police inside of the city, but some of the specialties in the forensics. I've visited one of their labs in Herat, sort of their crime scene investigation, where they do fingerprints, where they do explosives, where they take a look at rifle rounds that have gone off, to bring that together. They've gotten quite good at their technology on the forensics, and we'll continue to work that with them.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ernst.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, thank you so much for joining us here today. I know I don't need to say anything to boost your self-esteem or your ego, but I do want you to know, sir, how widely respected you are amongst the men and women that have served under your leadership. We greatly appreciate that and thank you very much for your service to our Nation. All of us here on the panel appreciate you being here. You are in a very difficult position at a very tentative time as we move forward in this transition.

One thing that has been of great concern to me is ensuring that, as our U.S. armed services are moving or transitioning—I don't want to say "withdrawing"—but, as they are transitioning out of the more leadership-type positions, that we do have the Afghan capability to back it up. Logistics is always a great concern of mine. I did ask the panel yesterday some thoughts on logistics, and a great comment that came from Admiral Eric T. Olson, former Commander, United States Special Operations Command, was that—as it applies to the Afghan Security Forces, is that great shooters do

not make a great army. There is a total army that needs to be out there.

I would just like to know that we do have plans in place, or that the Afghans are training to be logistical support, as well, whether it's the medical community, transportation, making sure that we have the maintainers for their equipment and their weapons. Do they have those capabilities without that United States support?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, Senator. Thank you for your service, as well.

We do, we continue to work the logistical piece. Again, we identify this as a gap that we would continue to have to do TAA on for a while. Maintenance in the U.S. Army, we continue to have contractor logistics support in many places. A lot of that in the aviation realm. So, we do have that in Afghanistan. We continue to work very hard to build the mechanics, to build the right level of personnel to take care of the Afghan equipment. So, that is moving along, but that will continue to take time, and we have to continue to do TAA to build that capacity for the Afghans.

I think they'll continue to have a small portion that will need contractors to work some of the very, very tough pieces of equipment in the aviation realm. But, for the most part, I do think they continue to grow that capacity.

Again, I said I went and saw some training in the maintenance area and went into one of their maintenance bays. They had—probably eight Humvees are up. They had several of the mechanics working. These were all Afghan army men working on these vehicles, and they were doing quite well. Their issue, quite frankly, was parts, not getting the right parts. So, as we did a deep dive on that one back to Kabul and looked at the warehouses, the parts are there. So, their issue really is how they distribute the parts from the warehouses, get them down to the corps, get them down to the brigades and the kandaks. So, we're working that very, very hard.

I went into eight warehouses inside Kabul. It was like a Super Home Depot. They had all the things that they needed in there, and it—so, I told President Ghani, "We've got to get the corps commanders in there to take a look at this." Once they got them in there, they talked to the senior logisticians, "You've got to move this stuff." Honestly, the culture inside of Afghanistan is to hoard, and so they get this in there, they hold on to it, they don't want to get that out. But, now they've worked that very hard, and they understand the impact it's going to have on the fight. I think the senior leadership has moved that quite well, here, in the recent weeks, and they're using the winter timeframe right now to make sure that all classes of supply continue to move out to the—where the units need it to build that readiness up for the fighting season.

Senator ERNST. Thank you.

As Senator McCaskill had mentioned, that—just the contracting piece, also, and any engagement. So, we see that the Afghans are picking up more of the maintenance. I'm pleased to hear that. I have been just very concerned about that particular piece of it.

But, will we see a transition, then, away from American contractors, more towards more national-type contractors within that region? One thing that President Ghani had made clear in his meeting with us this last weekend was that, if there were not United

States troops there, he would like to see more U.S. contractors. Do you have a feel for if it would be our contractors serving in nation, or would it be more of a local force?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, to give you rough figures, if we have 30,000—probably 34,000 contractors; out of that, 24,000 are probably a combination of United States and third-country nationals, and the other 10,000 are probably Afghan contractors. We continue to work that number. That number will go down quite significantly this year. We continue to try to make sure that we have Afghans tied into all these so they build that, not only for jobs in Afghanistan, but also to make sure they can sustain that over time.

Senator ERNST. Great. Thank you very much, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for your great service.

Senator King and I enjoyed being with you in Afghanistan in October, and learned a good deal. I'm incredibly heartened by the progress. We just have to tell this story. This is something that Americans should be proud of. We should thank those who have served in Afghanistan over and over, because this progress has been hard won, at a great cost.

But, just two items. The increase in life expectancy of 21 years over the course of the last 14 years is just virtually unheard of. I mean, you could look across human history, nation to nation, you will not see a life expectancy increase of that kind in such a short period of time.

The second thing I'm interested in is women in the parliament, from 0 to 28 percent in 14 years. Our first woman came to Congress 99 years ago, Jeannette Rankin, 1917. We've gone from 0 to 28 percent in 100—0 to 20 percent in 100 years. They've gone from 0 to 28 percent in 15 years. That's pretty impressive.

I agree with, I think, a bipartisan consensus on this panel. We have to maintain this progress. Everything we do should be conditions-based, not calendar-based. I think it's okay to have a plan, but then you need to adjust it based on the reality. I know you had—you encouraged the White House to make some adjustments, in terms of the authorities granted to U.S. troops during calendar year 2015. After consideration, they did grant some changes in the authorities. That's good. We have to have a conditions-based approach.

Personally, I think this is important for Afghanistan. It's important because of the investment we've made. It's also important because I think there is a powerful narrative about the success in Afghanistan that we can apply around the globe. I view it as sort of a contrasting narrative, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Iraq didn't want us to stay. We're not occupiers, and so we didn't stay. They then ran a government of national disunity, where the Shi'as kicked around the Kurds and the Sunnis. The situation in Iraq went to hell in a handbasket, and the United States and others are playing a leadership role in now trying to rescue it.

Afghans want us to stay. Seventy-seven percent of the Afghan population, according to your statistics, think the coalition staying and helping is a good thing. These are people who chased the So-

viet Union out of that country, battled them to the death to chase them out. They want the United States to stay. They want the coalition to stay.

Afghanistan's success creates a powerful argument that the United States is the partner of choice in the world. We are the partner of choice. We're actually seeing that in some interesting places in the world today. India, which has had a transition of non-alignment or even tilting toward Russia, now does more military exercises with the United States than with any other nation. They are seeing us, whether it's joint exercises or training or purchase of military platforms, as a partner of choice.

I was on the phone with the Commander, U.S. Northern Command, Admiral William E. Gortney, yesterday. Mexico has had a military tradition of leaning a little bit toward Russia. But, they are now viewing the U.S. military as their partner of choice.

I think success in Afghanistan—and I agree with the Chair and all this committee—we have to make it conditions-based, we have to stay and harvest the value of the success, because every day we are showing that the United States is the partner of choice.

Couple of concerns. I was first in Afghanistan in 2006 to visit my Guard men and women who were there from Virginia, and then-Ambassador Newman said, "You've let Iraq take your eye off the ball in Afghanistan. Iraq pulls our attention away." When we were in Afghanistan in 2001, by 2002 we were in Iraq, too, and that pulled some attention away. At that point in time, in 2006, he was worried about the same thing happening.

I have been calling on Congress since June. We need to be in this battle against ISIL, and we need to be strong in it. I'm going to support strong military action against ISIL. But, I am nervous—and I think we do need to use history as our guide and not let the battle against ISIL deflect any attention away from the situation in Afghanistan and our continued need to harvest and accelerate the gains that we've made there.

So, that's just an editorial comment. As we get into the discussion about ISIL, I'm going to try to make sure that we're not taking our eye off the ball in Afghanistan and the great work you're doing.

You indicated—I thought it was interesting that you don't think the Taliban is now an existential threat to the Nation. We had testimony last year, I think from your predecessor, that corruption could be an existential to the Nation, because it weakens people's belief in the effectiveness of government, and it also can exacerbate sectarian divisions if people think one group of people is getting more than the other. Talk about the efforts of the new administration to tackle corruption.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you for your question.

I do agree that corruption is—and President Ghani agrees, too—that that could change the entire dynamic for him. So, he ran, and Dr. Abdullah ran, on the idea that we would have to get after corruption—they would have to get after corruption. One of the first things he did was reopen the Kabul bank case and really held people accountable there. He's taken a hard look at how they assign senior leadership in all of the ministries, and he's taken corruption into that. I think he and Dr. Abdullah, in everything they do, that's foremost in their mind as they select new leadership, as they en-

gage with new companies, on and on, they take in the corruption to understand how that has—how bad that has been and how that impacts the donor nations that they need so much for the next several years as he continues to work on his economy. He's told me, in private, that he's works—he works 20 percent security, 20 percent on the—I'm sorry—40 percent on security, 40 percent on the economy. I know, as part of that, the corruption piece comes on both sides. But, he worked very hard to make sure that he picked ministers that were not corrupt, didn't have bad influence. Dr. Abdullah did the same thing. I think they'll continue to work that very hard.

It is of concern to all of the army and the police senior leadership I talked to. They absolutely want to remain apolitical, they absolutely want to make sure that they can get anybody that is corrupt outside of their leadership. Even at that level, they continue to express their concerns and then work hard to make sure they can do everything they can to get rid of corruption when they see it.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Cotton.

Senator COTTON. General Campbell, first, thank you for your years of distinguished service and brave service to our country. I and the people I represent are all very grateful for all you have done.

You have a little over 10,000 troops left in Afghanistan right now. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. That is correct. The Statement of Requirements for the NATO mission is about 12,900.

Senator COTTON. Most Americans who didn't serve in the military, see it and experience it through movies, television, so forth. If you look at the recent popular movie, "American Sniper," where the Chris Kyle character is giving overwatch to marines going door to door in Anbar Province, kicking down doors, that's probably what they have in mind when they think about our operations, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. Do you have many, or any, infantrymen, dismounted tankers, or artillerymen conducting those kind of operations in Afghanistan today?

General CAMPBELL. I have men and women that continue to be able to provide for their own force protection. We do not do—we do not plan offensive combat operations at all. But, I have to make sure that the men and women that are on the combat outposts, the forward operating bases (FOBs), that they have the ability to provide for their own force protection. We do that mostly by, with, and through our Afghan partners, but they do have to have the ability to continue to patrol in what we call a Ground Defense Area (GDA) outside of those FOBs. But, it's for force protection.

Senator COTTON. Is it fair to say that you have more troops providing things like aerial support, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance support, brigade, division, corps-level planning support, things like that?

General CAMPBELL. As opposed to—

Senator COTTON. As opposed to going out and conducting dismounted or mounted combat patrols.

General CAMPBELL. Yeah, Senator, I don't know the—percentagewise, but I would tell you that I'm comfortable that we have the ability to provide force protection on our combat outposts and FOBs, and, at the same time, provide the requisite expertise to do the ISR mission, that kind of thing. That ties hand in hand with force protection. ISR is a great force-protection enabler.

Senator COTTON. I raise the distinction between those kind of front-line infantrymen who are doing the kind of missions that you typically see in Hollywood movies, because I think it's important for the American people to know, whether it's from people like us here or from yourself, that a lot of the missions that our troops are doing in Afghanistan right now truly are supporting the Afghan Security Forces. That helps build public support for our continued mission in Afghanistan, that this is not the kind of war that we were fighting in Afghanistan or Iraq, a decade ago. So, that's something of which we should all be mindful as we're trying to marshal more public support for this continued campaign.

Related point. If you could speak roughly, when would you say the 2015 fighting season would end in Afghanistan? When do the conditions in most of the country become too harsh for our adversaries to keep fighting?

General CAMPBELL. Well, again, I think, Senator, it depends on the season. This past year, the winter season has been very mild, so we haven't had a lot of snow, the passes haven't closed down between Afghanistan and Pakistan. I think there's many people that would say today, in fact, it's kind of a continuous season, and we'd—we wouldn't look at it as fighting season to fighting season. But, the Afghans continue to talk in those kind of terms. Fighting season is really tied around the weather. From about the April timeframe to the end of September timeframe are the traditional months that I think we've seen increase in enemy activity and operations.

Senator COTTON. How does that impact the timing of your decision point for whether you would recommend that we keep the current troop levels or we are able to reduce troop levels further? Is there a point on the calendar at which you can no longer wait to make a decision?

General CAMPBELL. Senator, as I talked about earlier, there is a point in physics when I have to start de-scoping and retrograding equipment, downsizing facilities, to be able to get to a number at a certain point in time. We would call those "decision points." We have those laid out. I feel comfortable, where we are right now, that I have flexibility in that plan as we move forward on this winter review, but there will come a point in time that I'll say, "Hey, here's a decision point. We've got to make a decision by X."

Senator COTTON. Okay. Well, I would encourage you, as I encouraged the Secretary of Defense nominee, to speak out, using your best professional military judgment. I think you'll find that there is a lot of members of this institution, the Senate and the House of Representatives, who would support you and support the decision of the President to keep at least 10,000 troops in Afghanistan until 2017 because it's in our vital national security interests. I know you know the risks that we face from leaving Afghanistan too early. This is not your first rodeo there or anywhere else. I would

say the risks are embodied in those pictures that you have over there, of the electricity in Kabul late at night. Those are great gains. We should be proud of that. We should be proud of all the efforts that our troops have put into it.

But, what I worry about is an American city that looks like that going dark because of a terrorist attack that is once again launched from Afghanistan, which is the land from which al-Qaeda attacked us on September 11, and it is the singular achievement in the war on terror, that we have expelled al-Qaeda from that safe haven and they have not returned. It is critical to make sure they don't.

I appreciate all of your efforts to make sure that doesn't happen.
Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join my colleagues in thanking you, General Campbell, for your extraordinary service to our Nation over many years, and your dedicated and diligent work in Afghanistan over a number of tours and following the very worthwhile work done by your predecessors there.

I want to cover some of the points that you and I discussed a little bit yesterday, when you were kind enough to visit my office.

First of all, on the relationship with Afghanistan, they've been a source of the IEDs, that so ravaged our troops in such large numbers. Yesterday, in the hearing that we had with Ambassador Cunningham and Ambassador—former Ambassador Crocker, they indicated that—or, I should say, more precisely, Ambassador Cunningham indicated that IEDs continue to be a problem in Afghanistan. In your view, do you agree with his assessment that they are a continuing military threat to the Afghanistan forces, as well as our own?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you for the question.

I would tell you that I think IEDs have become the weapon of choice, not only in Afghanistan, but throughout. Any insurgency or terrorist attack will tie to some sort of IED. So, that's something that started years ago, has been picked up, continues to move, and it's not only in Afghanistan, but will continue to be a threat to both the coalition forces and the Afghan Security Forces. We do, however, continue to work very hard at the counter-IED capability of our Afghan forces. Again, I don't have the—I can get you the statistics, sir, but the number of IEDs found, verse the number that went off on our Afghan forces, continues to get better and better. Again, the HUMINT and the Afghan that's been trained to be able to detect those gets better and better. I think that's really noteworthy as we've gone through the last couple of years, here.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Would you agree that the primary source of those ingredients continues to be Pakistan, and that they have done less than they could and should to stop the flow of those bombmaking ingredients across the border?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would tell you that there's ample material inside of Afghanistan to build IEDs. There are reports of portions of what it takes to make an IED that have come in from Pakistan. I know that—I've talked to General Raheel about that, as well. They continue to work that very hard. They have also been impacted by this threat of IEDs on their own forces, on their own civilians. They understand they have to go after that, as well.

But, Afghanistan members, I think, would tell you that some of the parts, some of the materials that come up, they would believe that have come in from Pakistan, yes, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. That perhaps is an area of focus where the coalition forces can even impose greater cooperation with Pakistan.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. I think one of the things that Pakistan has done for our Afghan forces—I don't think it's scheduled yet, but I know that General Raheel has reached out to General Karimi, the Chief of the Army in Afghanistan, and offered up counter-IED training inside of Pakistan for the Afghan forces.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. You and I spoke yesterday about the possibility of purchasing helicopter parts and components for the Mi-17s that Afghanistan now has, purchases from the Russians that were financed with American taxpayer funds from other sources, either in Europe or elsewhere in the world. Is that an effort that you're going to pursue; in other words, to stop any further purchases of, not only helicopters, but also parts and components for those helicopters for the Afghanistan forces?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as we talked about, the Mi-17 is a critical component for the Afghan Security Forces, for their air force, for their special mission wing. To be able to continue to keep them flying, to keep them in the fight, it'll be a continued piece on their maintenance and on their spare-part piece. We're going to continue to work very hard, as we talked about yesterday, to make sure that we do that within the authorities that I have to make sure that we acquire those parts in the right way, sir. So, absolutely.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. "In the right way" means other than Russoboronexport, the Russian export agency that has sold us so many—not us, but the Afghans—so many helicopters with our money.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, what we're trying to work, really, is to have the Afghans work through their process to make sure they can get those parts to build a sustainable capability within Afghanistan, so, once we are gone, they can do that themselves. We have to start that now, yes, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. One last question before my time expires. I know that you have focused on the healthcare needs, particularly the mental healthcare needs, of the very brave and dedicated men and women under your command. I want to thank you for that effort, thank the U.S. Armed Forces for their increased focus and attention to that issue.

Thank you, again, for your service.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Rounds.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your service to our country. We appreciate the comments that you've made so far today.

I have just a couple of questions, sir. First of all, last year was the deadliest in the war, with more than 5,000 Afghan soldiers and police being killed. You noted the ANSF were going out on four times as many operations last year than previously, so more casualties could be expected. How does the increase in the operations

tempo, up by four times, affect the complexity involved to train the ANSF in the capabilities that still need to be developed?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir. Are you referring to the capabilities for the medical piece so that we can reduce the number of casualties, or—

Senator ROUNDS. Basically, you're losing soldiers there right now, and yet, at the same time, you're trying to train them up. When you're losing them at this rate, how do you bring them in and get them set up and continue the training regimen that's necessary?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir, thank you for the question.

Sir, as I said, probably a 5- to 7-percent increase, from 13 to 14, four-times higher operational tempo. Most of those, and the higher percentage, was actually on the Afghan local police that are outside, in the far places of Afghanistan, that are designed to protect their individual villages. They're not equipped with the same type of heavy weapons, with the same type of training that the army and the regular police have. But, the Taliban have recognized that they are a threat to them because they're inside the villages and they're against the Taliban, they could attack them inside, so they've gone after those key targets, those soft targets.

As I said, sir, the ability to recruit and train the Afghans has not been an issue. They continue to bring in the numbers they need, both on the army side and on the police side. The one issue, as we brought up earlier, that they need to work on is the number of females that they continue to bring in. But, I think, for the most part, they don't have issues recruiting them.

What we are trying to do, though, sir, to continue to lower the number of "died of wounds," that kind of thing, is increase their capability in the medical arena, on their casualty evacuation on their medical evacuation. I've seen some great achievements, here, in the last—different operations that they've had, where they've been able to provide that service to their men and women that are out there fighting. All of them do some of the same things that we do. They carry tourniquets, they have combat lifesavers. The medics wear insignia that recognizes them as medics, they continue to put as many folks in the medical training that they can. They understand this is an issue for morale and also leads toward a readiness issue. So, everybody's working this very hard, sir.

I've talked personally to the Afghan Army Surgeon General, on a one-on-one session, to make sure that we can do everything we can do to help them build that capability. I've talked to the Chief of their Army, General Karimi. He's concerned about it, and he's increased the number of people that he sends to school and to make sure they continue to get all the medical training they can.

Senator ROUNDS. Is the coordination also there between Kabul and the local units of government, as well, with regard to where the casualties are at? Is there a coordination between the central government and those local units of government, when it comes to this training?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I'd have to come back to you on that, take that for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

Yes, the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) in Kabul and the provincial governments/corps coordinate the treatment and transportation of military and police casualties. The Afghan National Army (ANA) has seven Regional Medical Hospitals (RMHs). To facilitate medical evacuation and casualty evacuation movements, all RMHs have a helicopter pad either on site or within 5 km. RMHs in Kabul, Herat Mazar-Sharif, Shoraback, and Kandahar have airfields within 5 km that can accommodate the C-208 and C-130 for fixed wing movement of casualties. The Afghan National Police (ANP) has one hospital in Kabul. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between ANA, ANP, and the National Director of Security exists ensuring casualties are treated in each other's facilities regardless of affiliate in the outlying provinces. Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF) also has access to Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) facilities. Coordination between respective headquarters (HQs) in Kabul and the provinces/corps takes place as needed when casualties require a higher level of care not available in the province/corps. Capabilities in the capital often exceed the care available outside Kabul. For civilian casualties, MoPH, ANA, and ANP facilities will all provide care. If a higher level of care is warranted, the civilian patient will be referred, but transportation is not typically provided outside the province. Resolute Support advisors are working with GIROA to establish a National Emergency Medical Response Center to better coordinate both military and civilian casualties. In addition, advisors are steering GIROA to develop the Afghanistan Medical Council (AfMC) to assist in bridging gaps. AfMC is an independent, statutory governing body to oversee and regulate certification of medical professionals, medical practice, medical and graduate medical education, and development of a National Healthcare System to provide and standardize healthcare services throughout Afghanistan.

General CAMPBELL. I would tell you that there's—I can talk, as far as the military side. I can't talk to you as far as the civilian piece.

I have looked at Afghan hospitals inside of Kabul on the civilian side to make sure they can take some of the military casualties. The military have their own hospitals. We just finished a brand-new one out in the 201st Corps, out in Nangahar, that's actually quite good. So, I couldn't tell you that kind of coordination between them work. I know there are memorandums of understanding between the army, the police, the NDS, and the intelligence arm to make sure they share those facilities to bring the military folks in. They do bring in civilian casualties to the military hospitals, as well, and initially work them there.

So, if you're referring to that kind of coordination, yes, sir, they do do that.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir.

I yield back my time.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you, I'm so sorry I had other—I was in other meetings, there. But, I appreciate you being here.

We hear an awful lot about what's going on, what caused—in Iraq, we fell backwards. We lost Mosul, we lost a lot of our equipment. You would think all the money that we invested in training and equipping would have been put to better use than what it was.

Now we have Afghanistan, and we hear we're back down—going to be down, at the end of the year, to 5,500. Just really briefly, what do you think it will take us to maintain a presence so that we don't fall backwards in Afghanistan? What do you think is going to maintain to get Iraq back to where it can sustain itself?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think the key there, really, for Afghanistan, is to continue to build upon the capacity of the Afghan forces so that they have the requisite skill sets to make sure that they don't do what the Iraqi army did, and that's fall apart. They have

leadership, they have the right equipment, they have the right training. I just don't see that happening in Afghanistan.

Senator MANCHIN. But, General, it seemed like it takes our presence for that to happen. When our presence was gone—we should have seen Maliki falling apart and not having anything, as far as a contingency plan, if you will. I'm just saying that, back home in West Virginia, they want to know, "do we have to go back and re-buy it all over? Like we do in Iraq? Can we prevent that in Afghanistan?"

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I believe the Afghan Security Forces are not going to let Afghanistan go in the way that Iraq did.

Senator MANCHIN. I gotcha.

General CAMPBELL. They've told me that. I've seen the senior leadership in the army and the police tell me that. They believe that, strongly. They have a government now that wants to continue to work with the international forces, wants to continue to provide requisite resources and authorities for their leadership not to let them go down that route. As I told you before, they went through the election last year, people thought they would fracture among ethnic lines. They did not. They're very proud of that.

I just don't see that happening, sir, with continued training and they continue—

Senator MANCHIN. Sure.

General CAMPBELL.—to build that up on the Afghan forces, both the army and the police. I don't see that happening.

Senator MANCHIN. General, my other concern is the economy. I've always believed—and I've been there a few times, myself, talking to different people. Their economy in 2001, when all this began, was about \$4 billion. That was their economy, as far as in Afghanistan. That went from \$4 billion to \$20 billion, based on American input of money and the war effort that we put there. So, their economy was based or wrapped around us. That—it had continued to grow, and it was spiking up to 14.4-percent growth rate in 2012. Then it fell to 1.5-percent growth rate, as we started retracting. Opium cultivation was up by 7 percent, I think, last year. But—and production increased by 17 percent. It's been reported that opium traffic business makes up one-fifth of the size of the Afghanistan legitimate gross domestic product.

How will the country ever be able to stand up on its own? That's the only thing—when the drug trade is so profitable—how can we divert them from the drug trade? If they don't have the war effort and the amount of money we're pumping into it, and we try to get them off the drug trade, where can they stabilize that economy, sir?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, leadership's going to make a difference. I think, with President Ghani there, understanding the issues he has with the narcotics and the drug smuggling, going after that, provide the right leadership and the right resources to go after that, will continue to help.

He is going after this entire piece on the economy. I said earlier, he spends 40 percent of his time just on the economy, from a regional perspective. He knows he can't do it just within Afghanistan, although years and years down the road, with the minerals they have, the mines they have, with the agricultural base that they

have, they're going to get much, much better. But, he knows it's going to take years and years. He's going to be dependent upon the donor nations for the next several years. But, he's reached out to the entire region to help him on the economic realm. When he first visited Pakistan, he talked again about security, he talked about economics, he talked about sharing of intelligence, he talked about people-to-people. So, that is foremost on his mind.

Sir, he has a background from the World Bank. If there's anybody that can turn Afghanistan around and their economy around, it's going to be President Ghani. But, it's going to take considerable time, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. My time's just about up. I just would say that I'd like to talk to you more about that, as far as on the precious metals—extraction of precious metals. Who—what part of the world is getting those contracts? China has been a big player in copper. I don't think we have a United States corporation that basically has been a player over there, even though we're giving them the support and protection in order to harvest that. So, I—my time is up, sir, but I'd like to talk to you in more—

General CAMPBELL. Okay, sir.

Senator MANCHIN.—detail about that.

Thank you, General.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Tillis.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, thank you for your distinguished service.

I wanted to go back. To me, the humanitarian—positive humanitarian impact that we've seen in Afghanistan since 2001, I hope that the media and the American people understand the miraculous turnaround of this country. Just to go back and to note, the life expectancy you're talking about, from 43 years old to 64 years old; schools where you had fewer than 900,000 students, virtually none of them women, now we have 8 million, with 36 percent of them females. The numbers here are startling.

To a certain extent, we all know that what, first and foremost, have to do is implement a strategy in Afghanistan that prevents terrorists from preparing themselves to launch attacks like they did on September 11. That's very important. It should be the first priority. But, I also think that those who seem to want to have a precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan forget the tragic humanitarian crisis that would be created if we did that. I hope that we start weaving into the narrative, this is not only about our national security, but this is about a city that went from a city of ruin to a city of lights, fastest—fifth fastest growing city in the world. There's a lot of hope there, and I think that the Afghani people are looking to the United States to let them continue to make the progress that we think they're in a position to make.

My question relates to a—Chairman McCain mentioned that some of our members met with President Ghani, and he talked about flexibility. You talked about some changes that you've recommended to your leadership. Are the changes that you've recommended substantially aligned with what President Ghani is wanting, in terms of the current strategy for withdraw and reduction—a reduction of troops?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I've not specifically talked to President Ghani about the options, but I've been with him several times a week. We've talked about what it would take to continue to provide flexibility for me, as the ground commander, so he knows where I stand on that. But, I think he would support the options I've presented, yes, sir.

Senator TILLIS. How do you feel about how those options have been received by your leadership or the administration? In other words, to what extent do you think that they'll be acted on and then you'll be given the authority to act on the options that you've recommended?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we're in discussions right now. There is a process we go through, just like we did back in October, November, December, when I worked the enablers and the authorities and the bridging strategy that the President allowed, the 1,000 bridging strategy that he gave me to continue with the Resolute Support Mission. So, we're talking those now, and I feel very good about where we're at, sir.

Senator TILLIS. Would you characterize those changes or those additional options as minor course corrections or some fundamental shifts in certain areas, based on the current strategy?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I'd characterize it as—as I said to this committee 7 months ago, that, when I got on the ground, I would make continual assessments. I've had 6 months on the ground now to make those assessments of both where our forces are, where the Afghan Security Forces are, where the threat is, what has changed in Afghanistan, as I outlined in my oral statement, and, based on that, provided this flexibility that I think both President Ghani has asked for and that will stay within where we need to be to reach our strategic objectives inside of Afghanistan.

Senator TILLIS. General, the trajectories that you would create by looking at the Taliban in 2001 in Afghanistan, and the current situation, do you believe, if we stay on the current course, that we could expect these very positive trends to continue at their same pace, or will their progress, going forward, be impeded?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think, in some areas, we'll continue to have the same pace, or maybe increased pace, based on the capability the Afghans have been built up over the last 13 years in some of those areas. In some areas, it may stay the same. In some areas, it may go slower.

Senator TILLIS. Any particular areas where you think are at risk? Of those areas, are there any that you're in a position to say are at clear risk, current strategy?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, are you talking about the ones—

Senator TILLIS. Yeah, I'm talking more on the humanitarian side.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think—really, I feel very comfortable that the Afghans have worked with many of the Nations, to include the United States Embassy there, on many of those areas on the humanitarian side, to build their own capability and capacity. I'd really leave that to Ambassador McKinley and his folks to answer in great detail.

But, sir, I think they've built the capacity of many of those areas, and I would feel very comfortable that, in most of the sectors that

we showed up here, would continue to at least stay where they're at or continue to grow.

Senator TILLIS. Well, thank you. I just want to thank you and the men and women who have served over there. I hope that they realize that's why those pictures are looking the way that we're looking. We thank you and them for their service.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The charts that you provided are really, just, stunning returns on investment. The question for Americans is, what does it matter that young girls are going to school in Afghanistan? It matters a lot, because you just can't kill all the terrorists, but if you can allow young women and young people to see a better future, they're going to be more resistant to the Taliban. What does it matter that you have access to clean water? It means that you have something to live for, not die for. So, we're trying to build an Afghanistan where people will reject the call to death, as the President said, and accept the way forward.

Do you agree with me that most Afghans—90 percent, probably—have no desire to go back to the Taliban days?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely.

Senator GRAHAM. The only way they would go back to the Taliban days, if they lost the capacity to contain and defeat the Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think if they—if the Afghan Security Forces were not able to do that, that that would be the only way, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you support 352 Afghan Security Forces for the foreseeable future?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think the number 352,000, plus the 30,000 Afghan local police, for their army and the police, continues to be the right number, the right distribution throughout the country that we have, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. The cost to us would be what?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we're working very hard on the cost. It's around \$4.1 billion. This year came in a little bit less. We continue to work very hard to save, where we can. I think about \$3.8 billion is what I came in with for 2016.

Senator GRAHAM. So, you think it's in our national security interest to spend \$3.8 billion maintaining this force.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think the small investment for the Afghan Security Forces continues to provide them the ability to protect their country, to provide for a more stable Afghanistan. As I talked about in the oral statement, a safer Afghanistan is a safer United States.

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah, I don't know what \$3.8 billion is of the total Federal budget. It's probably not a whole lot. It's still a lot of money to me. But, a return on investment for that amount, I think, is enormous. It's just simple as this. We can keep their army intact, they'll do the fighting, and we won't have to. We'll do the supporting.

President Ghani, in Munich, suggested that, when he visited the United States, he would like the opportunity to thank the American people, and suggested whether or not a joint session of Congress appearance would be possible. Do you think that would help the overall relationship?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, President Ghani thanks the American people everywhere I've been with him. If he had the opportunity to do that with a joint session of Congress, I think that would be very good.

Senator GRAHAM. A lot of us who were on the trip in Munich, I think, will send a letter. I have enormous respect for the Speaker. This would be one appearance I think we would all support. I cannot tell you how hopeful I am, under President Ghani's leadership. If we're just smart enough to see this through, I think we'll get a good outcome, here. I will be sending that letter, along with my colleagues.

If we go to—down to 5,500, as planned this year, without some adjustment, are we out of Kandahar completely?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if we go to 5,500, as I said before, we go to Kabul-centric. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So, I just want the committee to understand that Kandahar is just not a spot on the map. That's the spiritual home of the Taliban. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that's correct.

Senator GRAHAM. If we hold Kandahar, there's no way they come back. Does that make sense to you?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if the Afghan Security Forces hold them—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

General CAMPBELL.—there, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. When I say "we," I mean them, too.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. So, if we begin to lose in the south, will it have a splintering effect throughout the country?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it would provide the Taliban some momentum. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. You believe, with a presence in Kandahar, relatively small, we can secure the gains that we've had, we've achieved, and it would be smart to probably keep that presence at least for a while longer.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think we need to continue to provide the Afghan Security Forces some TAA, especially on their air force and special operating—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

General CAMPBELL.—capability that they have in Kandahar.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, about us. Do you agree with me that this part of the world is a dangerous part of the world, and the counterterrorism platform that we enjoy today in Afghanistan is tremendously beneficial to protecting the Homeland?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I concur with that.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Do you agree with me that the Afghans want us to stay?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I'd concur with that, as well.

Senator GRAHAM. There's a debate about what happened in Iraq. There is no debate about Afghanistan. The only question is, Will we accept the invitation in the right format? So, let's end this discussion with the idea that the Afghan people, through their government, want us to stay.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the Afghan senior leadership on the military side have told me repeatedly that they appreciate our sacrifice and they would want us to stay. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. That's true of their political leadership, also.

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. It is in our national security interest to stay, wisely.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I talked about in the opening statement, a safer, secure Afghanistan provides for safety for our Homeland. We have not had another September 11 since we've been forward-deployed. The pressure that the brave men and women continue to apply to the terrorist networks inside of Afghanistan have prevented them from being able to come to the United States. I do believe that.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thank you very much, General Campbell, for being here. Thanks for all you do to protect our country and keep us safe.

The mission in Afghanistan that we have, as stated in the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force there, was, of course, to use force against all nations, organizations, and individuals deemed to have been involved in the planning, authorization, and commission of the attacks of September 11th, or to have perpetrated them, or to have harbored those who did. So, our goal was basically to punish those who perpetrated the attacks and to prevent future attacks against U.S. citizens.

Today, what can you tell us about what the capacity is of terrorist groups that may be operating in Afghanistan and in Pakistan to launch attacks against the United States? How have the capabilities and the ambitions of those groups trended over the last 5 years? How does it look today, as compared to 5 years ago?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I can give you a very general answer on that, and then would prefer to go in a classified session if you want to go into more detail on that. But, my read would be that, based on, again, our presence inside of Afghanistan, with a great counterterrorism capability, we've been able to continue to keep pressure on insurgents that would want to do harm to both Afghanistan and to other nations, to include Europe and the United States. I think, over the last several years, we've been able to keep that pressure down—or, keep that pressure on them, and that has limited their ability to plan attacks against our Homeland.

Senator LEE. You feel good about the improvement that's been made over the last 5 years on that front.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I do.

Senator LEE. Where—

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if I could rephrase—

Senator LEE. Yes. Yes, sure.

General CAMPBELL.—that, I feel very good about the last 6 months, in what I've seen on the ground in Afghanistan on that.

Senator LEE. Okay. So, more—you've seen more progress in the last 6 months than you perhaps saw—

General CAMPBELL. Well, I've been over there the last 6 months—

Senator LEE. Right.

General CAMPBELL.—so I can talk from a perspective of seeing that, myself. I can't talk about before that.

Senator LEE. Understood. Understood. Thank you.

Where are the insurgent groups fighting against the Afghan Government and coalition forces—where and how are they generating their funding, their weapons, and their recruits? What are we, as the United States—what are the U.S. Armed Forces doing to disrupt those networks of funding and the supply chains for their arms and so forth?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I'd rather give you a broad general answer and discuss a little more in detail in a classified hearing.

But, as we mentioned before, some of the funding comes from the drug trade, some of the funding comes from minerals, some of the funding is just from other Gulf nations, some of it is from weapons smuggling. So, there's a long list of things that provide insurgency funding with—inside of Afghanistan. I think that both President Ghani understands that, Dr. Abdullah, the Security Forces understand that, and they're continuing to work very hard on attacking the sources of that funding to limit what the insurgents can—could actually do.

Senator LEE. What's your assessment of the new Afghan government's attempts to form an inclusive government and the relationship between the civilian leadership in Kabul, on the one hand, and the Afghan National Security Forces, on the other hand?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah have worked very, very hard to maintain a National Unity Government, to form this National Unity Government. I've been with both of them several times. They both have given up a little bit to move Afghanistan forward as they went through this election. I think they complement each other.

I think President Ghani has taken on the role of Commander in Chief. We haven't seen that before. He's told all of the Afghan police and the army that their welfare is his welfare. He's personally involved in every facet of their leadership, of how they get resources. He continually goes out to different sites to show the Afghan army and the police that he is their Commander in Chief. So, sir, he is—he's gainfully employed to show them that he cares for them, and everything about them, which I had never seen before underneath President Karzai.

Senator LEE. Is the Afghan Government, in your opinion, on track to increase their level of burden-sharing in supporting the ANSF and becoming self-sustaining and self-governing?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, they're working it this year. I think they showed us that they could provide the requisite amount that we asked them to do. But, it's going to take continued time on their entire holistic economic approach. Again, President Ghani knows he can't do that just by himself, but he has to engage with the region to be able to do that. He's very dependent upon, not only the

United States, but the other donor nations. But, he's taken a hard look at how he can attack this problem by visiting, himself, several key leaders in the region. He talks about different agreements that he's making with other countries around to provide railroads, provide ways to transport agriculture outside of Afghanistan, to take a look at the mining industry, on and on. So, sir, he's engaged in this every single day.

Senator LEE. Thank you very much, General.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thanks again for your service, all your staff for your service.

Your opening comments, I think your themes about service and sacrifice and, importantly, success are very powerful, and I think they're important for the American people to know. I also appreciate your emphasis on military families and their sacrifice. Many ways, the unsung heroes of the last several years.

But, I think one of the general themes here that you're seeing is that people are applauding the success. But, we had General Mattis in here last week, talking about how it's clear that the successes that we've seen in a whole host of areas that you've listed could be reversed, that they're fragile in many ways. The broader issue that I think most of us are concerned about is a replay of what's happened—or what happened in Iraq.

As a military leader—Senator Kaine spoke eloquently about this a couple of minutes ago—do you think it's important to have condition-based withdrawal dates or transition dates based on success that you've been talking about, versus a calendar-based withdrawal?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question.

I think it's important that the military commander on the ground be able to provide his best military advice to his senior leadership as he takes a look at a whole bunch of different variables on the ground—the enemy, the situation of the Afghan Security Forces, those type of things. I've continued to do that for the last 6 months, and again, I've provided options, in this winter review process, to my leadership, that I believe allows us the flexibility to both President Ghani, the Afghan people, that will continue to keep us on a road to be successful like this.

Senator SULLIVAN. So, your approach is definitely conditions-based versus a date on a calendar that says we're leaving.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think there's a lot of different conditions that go into the recommendations that I provide. Time is one of those. Yes, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. So, I think—the other thing that I think is a big responsibility for all of us—for you, for us in the Congress, for the executive branch—is, when we're looking at our challenges—and there are many national security challenges—that we level with the American people. They want to know what those challenges are, they want to know we have a strategy. I appreciate your candor today. I think you're epitomizing that kind of straightforward leveling with the people that I think is so important as we address these challenges.

The President has already declared that the United States combat mission in Afghanistan has ended. Yet, a lot of the discussion today, we've been talking about a U.S. counterterrorism mission. So, he says "combat—the combat mission is over," but we've been talking about a counterterrorism mission. I think the counterterrorism mission is very important for, obviously, its broader strategic implications, in terms of protecting the Homeland, but isn't a—isn't the U.S. combat—isn't the U.S. CT mission a combat mission right now?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, there's no doubt that I have, with the United States Forces-Afghanistan and then with a NATO hat, a couple of different missions. One is TAA, and one is the counterterrorist mission. There's no issue about—from the President on down—that we have that mission.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, it just seems to be a disconnect. Again, I know this isn't where you're focused, but it does seem to be a disconnect between what the President's telling the American people, "We're done with combat operations in Afghanistan," and yet we have a robust, it sounds like—an important CT mission that we're still undertaking. Again, I think this goes to the leveling with the American people on what we're actually doing.

Do you have—in terms of a robust CT mission, can that be supported by the current troop levels contemplated by the President?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I don't think I used the word "robust," but I do have enough of the resources for the CT mission that I currently have right now. We have downsized our CT capability over the last several years. This, as we've downsized the other forces out there. But, I do believe I have the requisite resources to continue with the current CT mission that I have.

Senator SULLIVAN. Would you, in 2016, if we are on this trajectory that the President's talked about?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would have to go make sure that I had that flexibility within those numbers on the different missions that I would have. I think right now—I'd have to go back and make sure that was within those options that we provided to the senior leadership.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. General, we thank you for being here. I enjoyed our conversations and visit, Christmas-time, when I was with you in Kabul.

Every witness before this committee, and every retired or military man or woman, believes that we cannot have a calendar-based withdrawal from Afghanistan. We certainly don't want to see what the President described in 2014, "a normal embassy presence with a security assistance component, just as we've done in Iraq." We don't want to do "just as we've done in Iraq," obviously.

I'm keenly appreciative of your role in the decisionmaking process as a uniformed military leader, but it's very clear that, unless we change what is now the course we're on, then we are going to have enormous difficulties in Afghanistan.

By the way, I appreciate those pictures. It's also a fact that you can't go downtown Kabul, any American can't, without armed escort. You can't drive around Kabul unless you're in an armored ve-

hicle. The Ring Road that we thought was going to connect all of Afghanistan is not safe in many parts. The Taliban control it. So, yes, there has been a lot of progress, but there is a number of areas, including the fact that we still haven't gotten a handle on this terrible thing, where Afghans in uniform shoot American military members.

So, we have a long way to go, and you have to speak truth to power, not just because of the fact that the situation on the ground argues for conditions-based withdrawal, but I think you owe it to the men and women who are still serving over there. Because if you believe, from your assessment, that, if we go to a Kabul-based situation by the end of 19—excuse me—embassy-based situation by the end of 2016, a normal embassy presence, then you have to speak up, because too many young Americans have already lost their lives and their limbs in Afghanistan. I and others have been there since the beginning, and we can't allow their deaths to be in vain.

So, I strongly urge you, when you counsel the President, to do the right thing. We all know what the right thing is.

I thank you for being here today.

Senator Reed, did you have anything?

Senator REED. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. This hearing is adjourned. Thank you, General.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the committee adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES REQUIRED IN AFGHANISTAN

1. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, one of the two missions for the United States military in Afghanistan is counterterrorism. Former National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter said yesterday "I absolutely agree that simply an embassy force in 2016 will not be sufficient to provide intelligence, the direct action and the advise and assist to the Afghan National Security Forces to make sure that we are detecting and disrupting transnational plots in the region." How many United States Special Operations Forces do we have in Afghanistan now, and in your opinion, what capabilities and what number of troops do we need to maintain in Afghanistan after 2016 to ensure terrorist safe havens do not allow the growth of capability for terrorist organizations to threaten the U.S. Homeland?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

2. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, please describe the capacity and capabilities to launch attacks against the United States by terrorist groups that are operating in Afghanistan and in Pakistan and describe how capabilities and the ambitions of those groups trended over the last 5 years? In other words, how does it look today as compared to 5 years ago?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

MISSION AUTHORITIES

3. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, please define which authorities have changed in the transition of missions from International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Resolute Support Mission and from Operation Enduring Freedom to Operation Freedom's Sentinel, that is from 2014 to 2015, and explain how the new authority impacts and limits your operations?

General CAMPBELL. Under Operation Freedom Sentinel, we no longer target belligerents solely because they are members of the Taliban. However, to the extent that Taliban members or individuals of other groups directly threaten the United

States and coalition forces in Afghanistan, United States forces are authorized to take action in self-defense, in the defense of others (such as our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners), and to protect the force. United States forces also continue to target the remnants of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, to prevent an al-Qaeda resurgence or external plotting against United States targets or the Homeland. In order to protect and safeguard the progress we have made in building a stronger, more stable, and more resilient Afghanistan. United States forces, along with our NATO allies, also continues to train, advise, and equip the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF), and as part of this mission, may provide combat enabler support to the ANDSF in limited circumstances to prevent detrimental strategic effects to these Afghan security forces.

I am comfortable that we have sufficient operational authorities on both the U.S. (Freedom Sentinel) and NATO (Resolute Support) sides to perform my mission, which is primarily to conduct counterterrorism operations against remnants of al-Qaeda, to train, advise, and assist (TAA) Afghan forces, and to protect the force.

AUTHORITY FOR CLOSE AIR SUPPORT AND MEDICAL EVACUATION

4. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, the media reports that the United States can provide close air support to Afghan forces in extremis. When are you allowed to support Afghan operations?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

5. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, what do you consider “in extremis,” and can you give a few examples?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

6. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, when are you able to provide medical evacuation for Afghan forces?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

7. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, CBS reports that “If the United States detects a group of Taliban or Haqqani fighters preparing to attack American or coalition troops, the U.S. troops can go after them. However, United States troops can’t conduct offensive operations on any Taliban forces they locate. Those forces have to be threatening U.S. troops.” Is this true, and what determines what the policy is on what American airpower can be used against and what it can’t be used against?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

AUTHORITY FOR COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS

8. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, how does an announcement that we are only going after al-Qaeda affect the operational execution of the counterterrorism mission?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

9. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, do you have the leeway to go after other terrorists not a part of al-Qaeda, and if so, using what authority?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

10. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, in your opinion, what should be the defining characteristic of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan that United States Forces should be allowed to target?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

11. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, if the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq or another organization with global ambition arises, should we also target that organization?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

12. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, the media reported a drone strike in Afghanistan killed Abdul Rauf who was a militant commander who recently swore allegiance to the Islamic State. What authority allowed you to strike a target that was neither al-Qaeda nor Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

AFGHAN SPECIAL FORCES

13. Senator McCAIN. General Campbell, please describe the current size of the Afghan Special Forces as well as how much capacity and what key capabilities the Afghan Special Forces must develop to reach full operational capability. Additionally, with the current plan to draw down coalition troops, how long will it take for the Afghan Special Forces to reach full operational capability?

General CAMPBELL. The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) are composed of over 17,000 highly trained operators divided across the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Ministry of Defense (MoD), including the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC), the General Command of Police Special Units, the MoD Ktah Khas, and the Special Mission Wing (SMW). The ANASOC, the largest unit, is comprised of 10 special operations kandaks (battalions). The General Command Police Special Units includes 3 MoI National Mission Units (NMUs) and 33 Provincial Special Units (PSUs). NMUs conduct a range of policing functions from counter-terrorist operations to high-risk arrests and hostage recovery. The PSU provides a relatively sophisticated quick-reaction capability and special investigative element for the province. The Ministry of Defense's Ktah Khas is a battalion of highly-trained counterterrorism forces. The SMW is a special operations aviation unit that supports both MoD and MoI ASSF units with night helicopter assault capability and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

Current TAA priorities for developing the ASSF are focused on their ability to conduct mission command and operational planning, fuse intelligence with other Afghan security pillars, integrate with and receive support from the Afghan National Army (ANA), maintain sustainable logistics and budgeting, as well as manage human capital. The SMW must continue to expand nation-wide operational reach and improve their organic maintenance capacity.

Sustained effectiveness in these categories will likely require several more years of focused TAA support. Many other factors weigh on the ASSF progress rate including the overall economy and budgets for Afghanistan's security institutions, as well as political support for proper use of and leadership within the ASSF. Our estimates for future partnering demands will remain conditions-based, and we will track the performance of the ASSF closely in the coming fighting season.

AFGHAN AVIATION

14. Senator McCAIN. General Campbell, the Afghan Air Force (AAF) must be able to conduct air lift and air strike operations. Please describe the current size and capability of the AAF, what full operational capability means, and with the current plan to draw down coalition troops, how long will it take for the AAF to reach full operational capability?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

15. Senator McCAIN. General Campbell, as you look at Helmand, Kandahar, Nuristan, and Kunar, what is your definition of success in those areas at the beginning of 2017?

General CAMPBELL. These provinces are traditionally enduring operational and support zones for insurgent elements. While each area is characterized by unique threat dynamics and factors, the challenges they present to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), its authority and the integrity of Afghanistan, are broadly the same. These areas are seams through which insurgent elements stage, transit, and facilitate the personnel and material (i.e. weapons, explosives, narcotics, etc.) to attack GIROA and the ANDSF locally, as well as to impact areas in and around Kabul.

NATO has ended its combat mission and the United States has significantly reduced its military presence throughout Afghanistan. As a result, success at the beginning of 2017 in these specific areas rests with the efforts of GIROA and ANDSF for the following: transition to and maintain an offensive posture and mindset; place relentless pressure on insurgent forces and their support zones (aka safe havens); clear and hold many of these safe havens; capture and kill increasingly significant numbers of insurgent leaders and fighters; and reduce significantly civilian casualties which will demonstrate ANDSF's ability to protect the populace.

The intended overall effect of these ANDSF offensive operations is to force insurgents to expend increasing effort on self-defense and survival. This reduces their ability to maintain the initiative, attack outward and, critically, prevents them from

achieving their strategic objectives of overthrowing GIROA and ruling Afghanistan. Strategic communications will also be vital. If GIROA demonstrates to key audiences (Afghan population, Taliban, insurgency sponsors, international community) that the insurgency cannot achieve its goals, then confidence in the ANDSF and thus Afghan Security Institutions and GIROA will improve. This will set necessary conditions to achieve President Ghani's reconciliation policy.

RECONCILIATION

16. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, you talked about the efforts of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah to reach out to the Taliban and to try and begin some sort of negotiations. Please provide a description of how far along that is and your assessment of key factors required for reconciliation and the chances for success in the next 3 to 4 years.

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

TALIBAN RESOURCES

17. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, please describe the sources and rough order of magnitude of amounts of funding for the Afghan Taliban including your assessment of what percentage of their overall funding each source provides.

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

AFGHAN FIGHTERS IN SYRIA

18. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, there are reports that Afghan fighters, specifically Hazara, are supporting Hezbollah and Quds force efforts in Syria. Are you aware of any Afghans being recruited or trained to fight in Syria?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

COMBAT

19. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, although President Barrack Obama has declared the end of the U.S. 'combat mission,' it appears that the United States will still be conducting 'combat operations' including counterterrorism operations. As a warfighter, do you see a large distinction between combat 'mission' and combat 'operations'?

General CAMPBELL. Although the formal combat mission has ended, we are still operating in a combat environment. Whether conducting counterterrorism missions against al-Qaeda or tactical TAA operations with our Afghan partners, prudent military planning demands that we always prepare for the worst case scenario.

Regarding how we approach the fight, the fundamental difference between prior years and this current phase of the campaign is that the Afghans are truly in the lead both in the overall combat mission and other operations throughout Afghanistan. Limited U.S. and coalition presence on TAA operations is intended to provide over-watch during mission planning and execution.

20. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, as a military commander, how does that change your approach to the fight?

General CAMPBELL. Although the formal combat mission has ended, we are still operating in a combat environment. Whether conducting counterterrorism missions against al-Qaeda or tactical TAA operations with our Afghan partners, prudent military planning demands that we always prepare for the worst case scenario. When a mission requires putting our service men and women in harm's way, my duty as their commander is to ensure they have the necessary resources required to support our Afghan partners and to neutralize any force protection threat they encounter during execution of their mission.

FORCE PROTECTION

21. Senator MCCAIN. General Campbell, you've said that the Afghans provide an outer ring of force protection to United States and coalition forces. Can you describe how important Afghan capabilities are to the protection of U.S. Forces, and how many of your current number of coalition troops are primarily devoted to your own force protection?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

INSIDER THREATS AND AFGHAN HUMAN CAPITAL

22. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, on January 31, 2012, Lance Corporal Eddie Dycus, a constituent of mine hailing from Greenville, MS, was fatally shot in the head by an Afghan Army liaison officer embedded with his unit in Helmand Province.

On August 5, 2014, a self-radicalized Afghan military policeman fatally shot United States Army Major General Harold Greene and wounded over a dozen NATO personnel at a training center in Kabul. General Greene's death not only marks the highest-ranking casualty in the Afghanistan conflict—it is also the first time an Army officer with a major general rank or higher has been killed by enemy fire overseas since Vietnam.

Building the capacity of the Afghan security forces is a key element of our Afghanistan policy. I believe a successful Afghan security infrastructure will rely in part on two critical pillars: (1) the trustworthiness and loyalty of personnel; and (2) their capacity to adequately execute their job functions.

If left unaddressed—I fear the intake of rogue and incompetent personnel into the Afghan military and security services could have a catastrophic impact on Afghanistan's viability as a secure and stable state.

What is your current assessment of the "insider threat" facing our troops from rogue elements and individuals within the Afghan Security Forces?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

23. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, I believe we must do all we can to avoid a garbage-in/garbage-out situation with regard to our training programs in Afghanistan. How are we screening applicants for our training programs?

General CAMPBELL. In accordance with ISAF orders published in 2013 (which are still applicable) the eight-step vetting process which the Afghan General Recruiting Command (GRC) uses includes the following tools to ensure that Afghan National Police (ANP) recruits are screened prior to entry to the force: identification check, two guarantors of personal information verification (usually from tribal elders), criminal check, verification stamp, drug screening, medical screening, and personal data (biometric) screening.

In addition to this eight-step process, the Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF) implemented a counterintelligence vetting program for all new recruits (DOD 2013a, 24); and immediately started re-vetting all personnel as they return from leave. Once screened in accordance with the above process, ANP are allowed to attend training.

Each Afghan student is screened multiple times from several sources prior to travelling to the United States for training. The screening includes internal screenings from the applicable Afghan Ministry, Leahy Vetting for Human Rights Violations as well as the standard Non-Immigrant Visa application screening by the State Department. All candidates are also screened through the Biometrics Automated ToolsetSystem.

24. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, what tools do you utilize to ensure that prospective applicants are not members of the Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. In accordance with ISAF orders published in 2013 (which are still applicable) the eight-step vetting process which the Afghan GRC uses, includes the following tools to ensure that ANP recruits are screened prior to entry to the force.

In addition to this eight-step process, the ANDSF implemented a counterintelligence vetting program for all new recruits (DOD 2013a, 24); and immediately started re-vetting all personnel as they return from leave. Once screened in accordance with the above process, ANP recruits are allowed to attend training.

Each Afghan student is screened through their respective ministry, the Department of State's Leahy Vetting system, Non-Immigrant Visa Application screening, and through the Biometric Automated Toolset for any items in their past that would preclude them from travelling to the United States.

25. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, how capable are current graduates of our training programs in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Afghan graduates of U.S.-based Professional Military Education programs are able to perform the tasks for which they were trained, including pilots being able to fly, maintainers able to maintain aircraft, and Special Forces qualified individuals able to perform special operations.

Within the last 3 years, all U.S.-led training programs transitioned to the Afghans. They currently have control of the execution all training programs with the exception of specialized training programs which are not yet ready for transfer. Nevertheless, the United States and coalition advisors, as well as contractors and several International Community Law Enforcement Professional continue to advise the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) in the development of their courses, and continually conduct assessments of their training programs. These advisors report the training programs are of excellent quality, and graduates of these programs are capable of fulfilling their duties. Advisors consider the Afghan police instructors extremely capable and very experienced. An example of this is the firearms training that Afghan police provide to new Afghan police. Firearms instructors provide quality hands-on demonstrations and instruction, including a combination of classroom and practical exercises for a total of 40–60 hours. The instruction provided is on par with any U.S. police basic academy training.

Graduates of flying training and aircraft maintenance courses have proven capable but still require years of continued skills development and experience to become fully capable of operating rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft in combat operations. The average pilot requires 3½ years to become fully mission qualified in fixed wing or rotary wing aircraft. The average aircraft maintenance specialist requires approximately 7 years to become fully qualified as a maintenance supervisor. Train, advise, and assist command-air continues to see steady growth in aircrew advanced capabilities but Afghan aircrew and aircraft maintainers are generally slower to learn than their western counterparts and will take additional time to grow the confidence, situational awareness, and experience required to reach their full potential.

26. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, are applicants literate and willing to learn?

General CAMPBELL. All Afghan soldiers are required to be at a minimum educated up to a third grade level as defined by the Ministry of Education. If they are not already educated to that level or higher when they are processed into the military, they are identified for the Afghan Literacy program, which provides literacy training up to a 3rd grade level in both Pashto and Dari, and takes place at all their regional training centers, as well as at the Darulaman Literacy Center in Kabul. Up to this point, over 300,000 Afghan soldiers over 6 years have been trained through this program, and the classes that are offered are always filled to capacity, oftentimes with requests for additional classes.

All Afghans sent to the United States for training have at least a base level knowledge of English and are further trained to higher English level standards at the Defense Language Institute at Lackland Air Force Base. During the past 3 years, over 89.8 percent of the Afghans sent to training successfully completed their scheduled course of instruction.

AAF candidates come from the same pool of human capital that provides personnel to the ANA and other Afghan National Defense Security Force elements. With Afghans in general having an exceptionally low literacy rate, the AAF is challenged to find suitable candidates to meet the technical requirements needed to succeed in the aviation field. Additionally, English language requirements further decrease eligible candidates and greatly increase in-country, pre-training requirements (English) which directly increase timelines associated with individuals becoming mission capable. To date, we've seen that most applicants are very willing to learn and most are able to successfully complete training requirements.

27. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, are graduates of our training programs able to comprehend our military values which include respect for civilian authority and the rule of law?

General CAMPBELL. Each Afghan student graduating from Professional Military Education training meets all requirements for graduation in order to complete their course successfully. Most of these courses contain instruction on military values, the respect for civilian authority, and the rule of law.

For example, the Afghan 8-week Initial Police Course, noncommissioned officer courses (Satanman), and Officer Basic/Intermediate Command courses all have programs of instructions and contains the modules which relate to military values and/or paramilitary values as they apply to the police: Lawful use of Force (4 hours), Law and Ethics (11 hours), Human Rights and Gender Issues (18 hours), and Duty at the Police Station rule of law classes (8 hours).

The AAF legal department routinely provides airmen cadets with basic instruction on rule of law concepts, including the overall aim towards civilian governance even over acts of terrorism within the GIRoA. Based on the recent observations of the TAA-Air's Legal Advisor, the airmen cadets have displayed a level of understanding

sufficient to enable interactive discussions and intelligent questioning on the topic. For example, during a February 2015 briefing on the topic, airmen in a class of approximately 50 students debated the question of why the AAF should detain and turn over to the civilian authorities a captured insurgent, when killing him would provide a more efficient and “just” remedy to the overall fight against terrorism. The AAF Legal Representative guided the debate towards a final conclusion that extra-judicial killings were contrary to international norms and that the AAF’s and GIRoA’s legitimacy and respect in the international community hinged on its adherence to the rule of law.

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

General CAMPBELL. Yes, Afghan graduates of Professional Military Education programs are able to perform their duties and provide side-by-side training to their fellow soldiers, thereby improving their overall capabilities.

The U.S. and coalition forces have assisted the ANA and ANP to develop their instructional programs. Graduates of our training programs are able to apply the concepts learned in training to the field. Examples include noncommissioned courses. Graduates from this course have shown the ability to apply concepts learned in schools to a field environment. They are capable of performing their duties upon graduation with only local familiarization of their duty areas. Recent incidents involving insurgent attacks in Kandahar and other provinces, as well as prevention of attacks against Afghan National Defense Security Force (ANDSF) in other places, show the effectiveness of this training, as police have effectively repelled enemy advances.

The vast majority of AAF graduates are from basic pilot, maintenance, and officer training. They are all serving in entry level positions that do not require their leadership skills to be tested. Based upon the responsibilities given and performance required they are progressing as expected. A better determination on their leadership capability can be assessed in the coming years, as they progress in their weapon systems and assume more leadership responsibilities.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

WOMEN AND SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN

29. Senator BLUMENTHAL. General Campbell, Afghan women have made tremendous gains following the collapse of the Taliban regime. I understand that girls are now about 40 percent of elementary school students, 25 percent of high school students, and 20 percent of college students. Afghanistan once had one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Now, those rates have dropped dramatically from 1,600 to 460 deaths per 100,000 women. There is a network of women’s civil society groups throughout the country advocating for women’s rights and advancement in the economy and business. The Afghan Women’s Network has some 120 women’s groups from all 34 Afghan provinces. Does the current administration in Afghanistan have a plan to ensure Afghan women’s rights and security will be maintained, especially in urban areas, and if so, what is your evaluation of such plan?

General CAMPBELL. GIRoA has an entire ministry dedicated to this topic, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Oversight of human rights and human rights training is also provided by the Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs. Both security ministries have directorates dedicated to Human Rights and Gender Integration. GIRoA has developed a series of policies, plans, laws, and frameworks to ensure women’s rights and security. The ministries listed above are tasked to oversee the implementation of those policies, plans, and legislation.

The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan articulates the actions that Afghanistan will take to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, Women Peace and Security. It aligns with other national plans yet may be ambitious for Afghanistan to implement in totality. The empowerment of women within Afghanistan is aligned to cultural expectations, norms, ethnicity, and religious beliefs. It is most likely that major reform will be seen through generational change. Solid progress has been made in the past 10 years and will continue to be made if policies remain current and perpetrators of violence are held accountable. This is partially due to women being better educated and having an increased understanding of their rights and how to report such incidents. The number of incidents and gross violations of human rights reported will only reduce over time as a result of the will of the GIRoA administration to act and enforce the law. The Af-

ghan Security Institutions must enforce the law to better protect women within the Afghan society, including those serving within the security sector. The money allocated to the recruitment and retention of women in the security sector will aid in this agenda. It is important that women are empowered to protect women.

30. Senator BLUMENTHAL. General Campbell, what guarantee, if any, has the current administration made to ensure that preserving the rights of Afghan women will be a part of any attempted negotiations with the Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. President Ghani stated his commitment to advancing women's rights in Afghanistan. He ran on these principals and has governed so since becoming president. Although negotiations have yet to begin, President Ghani's leadership not only makes reconciliation possible but also the inclusion of women's rights more favorable. I remain committed in supporting President Ghani for reconciliation. This includes my support for preserving women's rights in Afghanistan.

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2015

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:28 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator John McCain (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Graham, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman MCCAIN. Good morning. As the committee convenes, I want to make it clear that I will not tolerate a disruption of the workings of this committee, and I will say that anyone who does will be arrested, not ejected, but arrested. I want to make that very clear. We will not tolerate disruption of the workings of this committee. They are too important.

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to receive testimony on the situation in Afghanistan. General Campbell, we thank you for appearing before the committee today, and we are grateful for your many years of distinguished service and your leadership of the United States and coalition forces in Afghanistan at this critical time. We ask that you convey the gratitude and appreciation of this committee to all of the brave men and women in uniform under your command.

Fourteen years ago, United States forces went to Afghanistan because that was where, under the sanctuary under the Taliban regime, al-Qaeda planned and conducted initial training for the 9/11 attacks that killed 3,000 innocent civilians on American soil. Our mission was to ensure that Afghanistan would never again be a safe haven for al-Qaeda or other radical Islamist terrorists to attack us again. As General Petraeus told this committee recently, that mission has been successful for 14 years.

American troops and civilians have made steady progress in supporting our Afghan partners to secure their country and dealt severe blows to al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups that want to attack the United States and our allies.

At the same time, we have seen a remarkable progress in Afghan society: more schools and more teachers; greater opportunities for women and girls in the classroom, in the workforce, and in positions of leadership; higher literacy, better roads and wider use of

cell phones. Life expectancy in Afghanistan has increased by 22 years in less than a generation, a feat unparalleled in modern history.

It is precisely because we are fighting for progress and fighting for our values that it has been so disturbing to read reports alleging that some of our coalition partners may be engaged in sexual abuse and other activities that contradict our values. This committee treats such allegations with the utmost seriousness, and we look forward to hearing from you, General Campbell, as to what actions have been taken and what processes put in place to address this situation.

Yes, we have made significant and steady progress in Afghanistan. But as U.S. military officials and diplomats have warned for years—I repeat, for years—these gains are still reversible, and a robust and adaptive U.S. troop presence based on conditions on the ground not on a calendar is essential to ensuring that these gains endure. Failure to adopt such a conditions-based plan, these experts have warned, would invite the same tragedy that has unfolded in Iraq since 2011. If we have learned anything from that nightmare, it is that wars do not end just because politicians say so.

The evidence of that is already clear in Afghanistan. Since President Obama hailed the end of combat operations in Afghanistan last year, ISIL [the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] has arrived on the battlefield and the Taliban have launched a major offensive to take territory across the country, as we saw most recently in the key city of Kunduz.

Meanwhile, just like the Iraq Security Forces at the end of 2011, the Afghan National Security Forces are still developing key capabilities. The shortfalls are hauntingly familiar: intelligence, logistics, air lift, close air support, special forces, and institutional development. Yet, the White House remains committed to its politically driven withdrawal of nearly all United States forces from Afghanistan.

It is not too late for President Obama to abandon this dangerous course and adopt a plan for U.S. troop presence based on conditions on the ground. But time is of the essence, and continued delays by the White House are hurting our national security interests and those of our partners in Afghanistan and beyond.

America's friends and foes alike are waiting on President Obama. The government and people of Afghanistan are waiting to see what kind of support and commitment the United States will make. Afghan Security Forces, whose morale has been tested by heavy casualties against the Taliban, are waiting to find out whether their American partners will remain at their side. Our NATO [the North Atlantic Treaty Organization] partners are waiting to determine their course in Afghanistan and need to begin generating forces now for an extended commitment. Pakistan is waiting for a United States decision while hedging its bets with individuals and groups that are hostile to our interests. The Taliban is waiting to see if it merely needs to wait until the United States draws down to an "embassy-centric presence" to have the battlefield largely to themselves.

Then there are the thousands upon thousands of American troops and their families who have served and are serving in Afghanistan who are waiting to see if their sacrifices will be put at greater risk because we abandoned Afghanistan by blindly following an inflexible timetable for withdrawal.

As the world waits, the consequences of the indecision and the wrong decision are beginning to merge: growing instability, terrorist safe havens, and an increase in direct threats to the United States. We cannot turn back the clock on decisions made four years ago in Iraq, but the decisions made now will determine the nature and scope of the future challenges we face in Afghanistan.

The world walked away from Afghanistan once before, and it descended into chaos that contributed to the worst terrorist attack ever against our homeland. We cannot afford to repeat that mistake, because the threats we face are real and the stakes are high for the lives of the Afghan people, especially women and girls, for the stability of the region and for the national security of the United States.

General Campbell, we thank you again for being with us this morning. We look forward to your testimony.

Senator Reed?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

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

General Campbell, welcome and thank you for your service. Please also pass along our deep appreciation to the men and women in uniform under your command in Afghanistan for their service.

General, you have been in command for over a year of the twin missions in Afghanistan: training and advising the Afghan Security Forces and counterterrorism operations. Your purpose and mission is to ensure that Afghanistan does not once again become a safe haven for terrorists aiming to attack the United States, its allies or their interests.

Your testimony this morning comes at a critical time. The administration is in the process of considering operations for the size and authorities for the United States military presence in Afghanistan in 2016 and beyond. I strongly believe that the United States force posture in Afghanistan going forward should be shaped and resourced to enable you, General, to achieve your missions' objectives based on conditions on the ground. We should also take into account our regional counterterrorism requirements, including against al-Qaeda and an apparent growing presence of ISIL in determining the long-term size and posture of the United States military presence in Afghanistan.

The news reports regarding security conditions in Afghanistan indicate a worsening situation over the past few months. Taliban forces continue to be formidable, despite the announcement of Mullah Omar's death. This year, casualties for the Afghan Security Forces have reached their highest level since the start of the conflict. The Taliban have expanded their control over some rural areas, closing schools, reducing the Afghan people's access to services, killing or intimidating government officials, reimposing restrictions on Afghan women and girls, and reversing the progress

of the past decade in these areas. Taliban attacks in southern and eastern Afghanistan have increased, and most recently they conducted a major operation to seize the provincial capital in Kunduz in the north.

This situation raises significant concerns. Yet, in 2015, Afghan Security Forces have repeatedly regrouped and retaken territory from the Taliban. It is notable that, in the past few days, Afghan forces, with enabling assistance from United States and NATO and advisors and airstrikes, have retaken central Kunduz from the Taliban. General Campbell, I hope you will give us your assessment of whether the Afghan army and police retain their will and capability to fight.

Security in Afghanistan depends not only on our training and advising the Afghan Security Forces but also on whether those forces believe there is an Afghan Government and leadership that they are willing to support and defend. In Iraq, we saw our training efforts catastrophically undermined when Prime Minister Maliki gutted the army's leadership and replaced competent leaders with his own crony loyalists, resulting in an army that melted away when ISIL seized the City of Mosul and suffered a number of other significant losses.

In Afghanistan, we have partners in President Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah. Yet, this unity government has struggled to stand up its cabinet, and there are reports of serious divisions at lower levels. General, we would be interested in your views on President Ghani's commitment to ensuring that the Afghan army and police have competent, non-corrupt leadership, and any insights you may have on how to maintain and promote the unity of the Afghan Government.

Our counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan have had a number of significant successes this year. This is due in part to an increased level of cooperation across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and active military operations by the Pakistan army that have driven al-Qaeda and other militants across into Afghanistan creating opportunities for targeting these extremists.

I am concerned, however, that our ability to execute successfully these critical operations will be reduced as a result of resources being redirected to support our campaign against ISIL in Iraq and Syria or a possible reduction in our counterterrorism footprint as part of the President's decision on the future size of United States forces in Afghanistan.

I would also be interested in your thoughts on the operational authorities you believe will be necessary going forward to target terrorist groups that would hope to capitalize on United States and international troop reductions to once again use Afghanistan as a safe haven from which to launch attacks.

Finally, our efforts to promote security in Afghanistan will be severely damaged if we are not perceived as upholding the highest standards for our forces and the Afghan forces that we train. Recent news reports alleging a policy of nonintervention when United States troops were aware of sexual abuse by Afghan commanders receiving training are deeply disturbing. General Campbell, I expect you to help this committee get to the truth regarding these allegations and to confirm for us that U.S. troops will not tolerate

human rights abuses by forces we are training or advising, including the sexual abuse of any civilians.

Additionally, U.S. forces must uphold the highest standards for the protection of civilians as they relate to collateral damage caused by military operations. The United States must do all it can to avoid incidents like the recent tragedy in Kunduz where, according to news reports, United States airstrikes damaged a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders killing more than 20 patients and staff and wounding more than three dozen. The Defense Department has announced that your headquarters will be conducting an investigation of this incident and this committee expects to be kept informed of the progress of that investigation to the maximum extent appropriate as it goes forward. General Campbell, I am interested in hearing from you what additional steps are being taken to ensure that our rules of engagement reinforce the importance of protecting civilians from harm and preventing such tragic outcomes in the future.

Thank you again, sir, for your service, and we look forward to your testimony.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you very much.

General?

STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA, COMMANDER, RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION; COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN

General CAMPBELL. Well, good morning, Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I have been honored to lead and represent the service men and women of the United States Forces-Afghanistan for the last 14 months.

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

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

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

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

Eight months have passed since I last appeared before this committee, and much has changed since then. Afghanistan, its government and security forces, the enemy, and our own coalition have undergone tremendous transitions. These changes have ensured that this fighting season has been fundamentally different. It cannot be compared to previous years. I would like to emphasize how political, military, economic, and social transitions are affecting the operational environment in order to place our campaign in context. Afghanistan is at a critical juncture and so is our campaign. But before I further explain the formidable challenges and the opportunities before us, I would like to address a few topics that have been in the headlines here lately.

First, I would like to discuss the tragic loss of lives in the strike on the hospital in Kunduz. By way of background, United States Special Operations forces have been providing training, advice, and assistance to Afghan National Defense Forces who have been engaged in a tenacious fight with the Taliban. On Saturday morning, our forces provided close air support to Afghan forces at their request. To be clear, the decision to provide aerial fire was a U.S. decision made within the U.S. chain of command. The hospital was mistakenly struck. We would never intentionally target a protected medical facility.

I must allow the investigation to take its course, and therefore, I am not at liberty to discuss further specifics at this time. However, I assure you that the investigation will be thorough, objective, and transparent.

I would also like to remind the committee and the American people that we continue to make extraordinary efforts to protect civilians. No military in history has done more to avoid harming innocents. We have readily assumed greater risks to our own forces in order to protect noncombatants. To prevent any future incidents of this nature, I have directed the entire force to undergo in-depth training in order to review all of our operational authorities and rules of engagement.

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

Second, I would like to discuss the sexual exploitation of children by a few members of the Afghan Security Forces. All of us consider this reprehensible. This criminal practice is entirely unacceptable and unacceptable to the Afghans as well. President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah have reiterated their policies and laws to enforce this with their Afghan Security Forces. We will do everything within our power to defend and protect human rights. That is our moral obligation to you, the American people, and ourselves. I have ordered 100 percent training of the force to ensure that they understand our human rights policy, which has been in place since at least 2011. This policy requires that our personnel report any suspected human rights violations committed by the Afghan Security Forces, and this is to include any sexual abuse of children. Whenever and wherever our personnel observe human rights abuses, they will be conveyed through our chain of command and

in turn to the Afghan Government. Perpetrators must be held accountable.

With still many weeks left in the traditional fighting season, intense combat continues in many parts of the country. The Afghan Security Forces have been severely tested this year, but they continue to fight hard. In the wake of the coalition's redeployment, the Afghan Security Forces and insurgents both accepted that this fighting season would be decisive. There was no winter lull, and since February the fighting has been nearly continuous. Casualties on both sides have risen, and the violence has moved beyond the traditional insurgent strongholds.

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

We are also now seeing how our redeployment and transition from combat operations to an advisory role have changed battlefield dynamics. Only a few years ago, our coalition numbered over 140,000 military personnel. Now our forces comprise fewer than 14,000, of which approximately 10,000 are U.S. service men and women. In years past, our aircraft provided responsive and often decisive close air support to coalition and Afghan troops in contact. This is no longer the norm but the exception. Collectively, the Afghan Security Forces are adapting to these changes and in some places they are struggling.

Within this context, the fluidity of the current security situation is not surprising. This fighting season started well for the Afghan Security Forces as they executed successful multi-corps, cross-pillar operations in Helmand, Zabul, and Ghazni Provinces and in the southern approaches into Kabul. In April, they fought back significant Taliban pressure in the north, and in August and September, they reversed almost all of the Taliban gains in the northern Helmand after considerable effort.

Yet, there have been setbacks, and most recently, the Taliban overran Kunduz, Kunduz City. Still, the Afghan Security Forces rallied and they have regained control of most of the city, just as they have successfully retaken other ground temporarily lost throughout this fighting season.

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

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

curity Forces are effectively protecting the principal population centers.

It is also apparent that our advisory support and financial backing are strengthening the resolve and building their systems and processes. The Afghan Security Forces have repeatedly shown that without key enablers and competent operational level commanders, they cannot handle the fight alone in this stage of their development. Ultimately I am convinced that the improved leadership and accountability will address most of their deficiencies, but it will take time for them to build their human capital.

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

Despite a myriad of challenges, the fundamental partnership between the coalition and the Afghan Government remains durable. The difference between the Ghani administration and the previous administration is like night and day. At every level, coalition and Afghan leaders continue to work together in pursuit of shared objectives. The Afghan Government, civil leaders, and military commanders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the coalition's efforts.

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

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

As the upsurge in insurgent violence in the northern Helmand and Kunduz shows, Afghanistan is again at a decisive point. The President is well aware of the tenuous security situation, and I also appreciate that he has many other global issues to weigh as he considers my recommendations. My role is to provide him my best military advice based upon my assessment of the conditions on the

ground weighed against the risks both to the force and to the mission.

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

In closing, the challenges before us are still significant. In an extremely tough fight, the Afghan Security Forces continue to hold. They have remained resilient and they have not fractured. Fully supported by an engaged commander-in-chief, President Ghani, embraced by the Afghan people, and backstopped by our military advisors, resources, and enablers, the Afghan Security Forces' future and Afghanistan's prospects for eventual peace still remain promising.

If we fail in this worthwhile mission, Afghanistan will once again become a sanctuary for al-Qaeda and other terrorists bent on attacking our interests and citizens abroad and at home. If a security vacuum arose, other extremist networks such as Daesh would also rapidly expand and sow unrest through Central and South Asia and potentially target our homeland.

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

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

Again, thank you for your steadfast support of our campaign. I look forward to your questions. I also request the committee to accept my written statement for the record. Thank you very much, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of General Campbell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY GENERAL JOHN F CAMPBELL

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Yet in spite of our considerable progress, it is clear that our campaign will remain a challenging one. The National Unity Government (NUG) and the enemy are still locked in a fierce struggle. While I do not consider the insurgency capable of overthrowing the NUG by force, the enemy remains capable and lethal. The ANDSF, in turn, have thus far proven unable to eradicate al-Qaeda entirely or compel the Taliban (TB) to negotiate a political settlement. In an ongoing, unstable security environment, other extremists groups are emerging to include Daesh, or the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (IS-KP). These nefarious elements continue to sow fear among the Afghan population. The insurgents also continue to inflict a serious, disruptive effect on the NUG's ability to govern. The war continues to undermine public confidence in the NUG and stymie economic progress, thereby prompting the exodus of tens of thousands of Afghans.

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

II. RESULTS OF THIS FIGHTING SEASON (FIGHTING SEASON) / STATE OF THE ANDSF

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

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

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

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

The fighting in Kunduz underscores several shortcomings in the ANDSF to include poor intelligence fusion, lack of cross-pillar coordination, and sub-optimal utilization of their forces. They do not possess the necessary combat power and numbers to protect every part of the country. This makes it very difficult for the ANDSF to

counter the Taliban's ability to temporarily mass, seize an objective, and then blend back into the population when confronted with an ANDSF counterattack. Hence, a reprioritization of the ANDSF's security efforts within the framework of their larger, multi-year campaign will be required at the conclusion of this Fighting Season. They also need to improve the responsiveness, flexibility, and preparedness of their forces at the tactical and operational levels. Ultimately, ANDSF leaders also need to discern better when to take the offensive, when to defend, and where to assume risk.

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

In general, *I would characterize the ANDSF's performance this fighting season as uneven and inconsistent.* They have learned some hard lessons from their mistakes. On the positive side, when the ANDSF seize the initiative, deliberately plan their operations, and coordinate their actions across the security pillars, they achieve notable results. When they execute deliberate, cross-pillar operations that are thoroughly planned and resourced, they are highly successful. On the negative side, when they act hastily and employ their forces in a haphazard, uncoordinated manner such as in Helmand, they are far less effective. They have also struggled to optimize their force laydown and employment. They remain tethered to isolated checkpoints and static defenses, which increases their vulnerability and reduces their ability to maneuver effectively.

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

The outcome in Helmand could have undoubtedly been much different. President Ghani responded decisively to the crisis, and after a frustrating start, senior ANDSF leaders took control of the situation. Our advisors and enablers provided invaluable support, without which, the ANDSF would most likely have suffered significantly more casualties and a strategic setback. These events underscore that *the ANDSF still require broad support.* They have repeatedly shown that without key enablers and competent, operational-level leaders, they cannot handle the fight alone in this stage of their development. Ultimately, I am convinced that improved leadership and accountability will address most of their deficiencies. ANDSF soldiers and police perform well when they are well led and appropriately resourced. That is why our insistence on sound leadership and strict accountability remains our top priority for our TAA programs and activities. However, it will take time for the Afghans to build their human capital.

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

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

ANDSF Attrition

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

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

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

Persistent ANDSF Capability Gaps

The ANDSF's uneven performance this Fighting Season underscores shortfalls that will persist well beyond this year. Capability gaps still exist in fixed and rotary-wing aviation, combined arms, intelligence, logistics, maintenance, and sustainment. Other needed areas of improvement include resource management, cross-pillar synchronization, and intelligence-based operations. One of the greatest tactical challenges for the ANDSF this Fighting Season has been overcoming the Afghan Air Force's (AAF) still extremely limited organic CAS capability. These shortfalls can be rectified over time if the appropriate time, money, and resources are allocated, and most importantly, ANDSF leaders continue to mature and develop sufficiently to implement these changes and needed reforms.

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

Advisory Efforts

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

Our advisors at the ministries and our regional Train, Advise, & Assist Commands (TAACs) continue to serve as important sensors and touch points that allow us to verify and validate Afghan reporting while reinforcing the use of organizational systems and processes. They enable the Afghans to see themselves and to understand that they possess adequate supplies and equipment. Our advisors routinely find that reported shortages in operational units are most often the result of failures in accounting and distribution rather than actual deficiencies. We are assisting the Afghans to break the culture of hoarding and eliminate false claims of shortages in order to garner more resources and assistance. At all levels, our advisors also continue to emphasize and enforce Afghan financial transparency and accountability of donor resources.

III. STATE OF THE THREAT

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

In 2015, al-Qaeda has attempted to rebuild its support networks and planning capabilities with the intention of reconstituting its strike capabilities against the U.S. homeland and Western interests. Due to our constant pressure, however, al-Qaeda

activities are now more focused on survival than on planning and facilitating future attacks. It will be critical that, in coordination with our Afghan partners, our comprehensive CT efforts continue to apply pressure against the al-Qaeda network in order to prevent its regeneration, and the corresponding threat it represents to our homeland.

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

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

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

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

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

The Emergence of the Islamic State in Afghanistan

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

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

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

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

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

IV. AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN (AF/PAK) RELATIONS & POTENTIAL RECONCILIATION WITH THE TALIBAN

The role of Pakistan remains integral to stability in Afghanistan. Historical suspicions and competing interests have long characterized Afghanistan/Pakistan (AF/PAK) relations. While difficulties are likely to persist past 2016, there are indicators that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan could potentially thaw despite ongoing terrorist attacks in both countries. Nonetheless, considerable obstacles persist. It is clear, however, that for GIRoA to reconcile with the Taliban, rapprochement with Pakistan will most likely have to occur first.

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

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

Resolute Support serves as a key facilitator and interlocutor for Afghan and Pakistani military officials. We continue to actively encourage and enable the Afghan and Pakistani officers to meet and coordinate their security efforts through key leader engagements and monthly, one-star meetings at the Resolute Support Tripartite Joint Operations Center (RSTJOC). We assess that AF/PAK political and military relations are likely to improve, albeit only incrementally and on a transactional basis.

V. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

All aspects of Afghan society remain in a state of flux as we approach the end of 2015. Challenging political and security transitions continue to occur simultaneously. The unstable security environment and lack of investor confidence continue to foil economic growth. The flight of foreign capital and sharp reduction in spending, which had occurred at artificially high levels since 2001, has also negatively impacted the Afghan economy. Significant social tensions also persist (e.g., urban progressives versus rural conservatives; former mujahedeen versus former communists; technocrats versus warlords, etc.) Perceptions of declining security amidst extensive political, economic, and social upheaval have induced tens of thousands of Afghans

to flee the country. The loss of talented human capital, or “brain drain”, is particularly worrisome as gifted, educated individuals are desperately needed to lead Afghanistan through this time of transition.

Within the context of these multiple transitions and turmoil, the NUG presents both significant promise and uncertainty. President Ghani and CE Abdullah have proven to be amenable to working not only with one another for the greater good of Afghanistan, but also with the international community, NATO, and the United States. Ghani and Abdullah have both declared the United States to be Afghanistan’s fundamental, foundational partner and its most critical relationship. Both are also committed to addressing the challenges of corruption and nepotism. Both are likewise supportive of the rights of women and their empowerment in Afghan society. Additionally, both are committed to achieving an enduring peace in Afghanistan and the region.

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

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

Despite myriad challenges, the fundamental partnership between the Coalition and the Afghan Government, to include ASI and ANDSF, remains durable. The difference between the Ghani administration and the previous administration is like night and day. Throughout USFOR–A, we have developed close professional relationships with nearly all senior Afghan leaders, who have welcomed United States support and assistance. At every level, Coalition and Afghan leaders continue to work together in pursuit of shared strategic objectives. Moreover, the Afghan government, civil leaders, and military commanders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the Coalition’s efforts. Afghan leaders are genuine in their gratitude for our shared sacrifice and commitment to their nation. I have also seen our Afghan partners develop a sense of ownership and pride in their army and police force. Afghan citizens realize and appreciate that they now have an increasingly credible, professional security apparatus.

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

VI. CONCLUSION

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

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

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

or unconditional. The Afghans must continue to do their part; if they do, we should continue to exercise strategic patience and sustain our commitment to them.

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

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you, General Campbell, and thank you for your continued great leadership in a very difficult situation. We are proud of your great leadership.

On the hospital issue, I know I speak for all members of the committee that our sympathy for those who were killed and injured in this tragedy is heartfelt and deep.

Is it true that the strike was requested by Afghan forces on the ground that struck the hospital?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I said yesterday in a press statement, yes, sir. The Afghan forces on the ground requested aerial support from our forces that were on the ground. But as I said in my opening statement, even though the Afghans request that support, it still has to go through a rigorous United States procedure to enable fires to go on the ground.

Chairman MCCAIN. But there was no American forward air controllers on the ground.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we had a special operations unit that was in close vicinity that was talking to the aircraft to deliver those fires.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

General Campbell, the President on May 27, 2014 made a long statement and said by the end of 2016, our military will draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul with a security assistance component. I am not making this up. He said, just as we have done in Iraq.

General, in your opinion do the conditions on the ground warrant a change to the current plan for the drawdown of United States troops in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question.

Sir, as I mentioned in my opening statement, when that decision was made in 2014, a lot has happened since then in transition, the growth of Daesh, we did not have a national unity government in 2014, the actions by Pakistan and the fight they have had to push additional insurgents inside of Afghanistan. Underneath that construct, it does not enable us to provide a CT [counterterrorism] component. So as I have talked about on the options, I provided several options to the chain of command and will continue to work with my chain of command and provide them my best military advice, the pros and cons of each of those courses action as we move forward.

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, could I respectfully ask again, do the conditions on the ground warrant a change to the current plan that calls for, by the end of 2016, we would be an embassy-centric force?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, based on conditions on the ground, based on the transitions I have talked about, I do believe that we have to provide our senior leadership options different than the current plan that we are going with. Absolutely.

The current plan, as envisioned right now, sir, as you know, and as you talked about in your opening statement, is an embassy-based presence. As I take a look at conditions on the ground, as we have to continue to provide TAA [training, advising, and assisting] to our Afghan partners, when the President made that decision, it did not take into account the change over the last two years. So the courses of action that I have provided to my senior leadership provide options to adjust that.

Chairman MCCAIN. Did the attack on Kunduz surprise—maybe the word is not “surprise,” but is it not an indication that the Taliban have significant strength, including in an area in the north where they generally speaking did not have very much capability, thanks to the makeup there in northern Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the Afghans, and quite frankly the coalition, were surprised when the Taliban were able to take over Kunduz City. A lot of reasons I think why. But the Afghans are taking a hard look as well to make sure they understand and do their own sort of after-action on this. Part of the reason, they did not have many of the key leaders in place, the city, for the most part, had police. The Afghan army was on the outskirts. They did not reinforce. Bottom line, the Taliban were able to come in, attack from within the city, and quite frankly surprised the police forces that enabled the Taliban to gain a great IO victory. I do not think the Taliban had intent to stay in Kunduz for very long, and as soon as the Afghan forces were able to bring additional forces in, logistically resupply that, the Taliban, for the most part, melted away, left the city. There are small isolated pockets that continue to fight.

Chairman MCCAIN. From a PR [public relations] standpoint, though, it was a rather significant victory for the Taliban.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely, yes.

Chairman MCCAIN. Finally, you said in your testimony we will need to help the Afghans address capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, and special operations. I would add logistics to that list.

Should it not be that you should be recommending not numbers of people to the White House but capabilities and then fill in the numbers after that? Is that the process you are using, or is it you are just giving them numbers?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I deal in capabilities, as you talk about. So I look at the requirement and really the needs assessment the Afghans would have and try to base the courses of actions based on those requirements.

Chairman MCCAIN. So their needs are aviation, intelligence, and special operations according to your testimony.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. Sustainment, logistics. The aviation piece we just, quite frankly, started late on their air force, building their close air support capability. Logistics and sustainment is hard for any army. For a United States Army that has been around for 240 years, try to compare that to an Afghan army that is nascent and maybe only 8 to 9 years old is quite tough.

Chairman MCCAIN. Aviation is one of the areas of most critical I would argue. I think they have two helicopters. Is that right?

General CAMPBELL. They have two functioning MI-35 helicopters. They have several MI-17's, and now they have the MD-530, which we introduced here. But as far as close air support helicopters, that is a key gap. As you know, sir, it takes two or three years to grow a pilot, two or three years to grow maintainers. We are doing that as fast as we can. They started out the season with five MI-35's. Today they have two just based on airframe flyability.

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, I thank you. Again, General, I would like to again express my appreciation for the outstanding job you are doing under extremely difficult constraints. I thank you, General.

Senator REED?

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for your testimony and for your service.

So this has been a long struggle, and every community in this country has seen the effects and just recently a brave, young Rhode Islander, Sergeant First Class Andrew McKenna, was killed in action in Kabul. So this is not just academic or hypothetical. This is very real for our country and for the men and women of this country and our armed services.

Let me ask you a question. You have two major missions, train and equip, together with counterterrorism operations. Just in the context of counterterrorism operations, do you need a physical presence outside of Kabul to do that effectively?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, to conduct counterterror operations effectively, it would have to be outside of Kabul, yes, sir.

Senator REED. So that would argue in terms of capabilities for a presence that is beyond the simple environment of Kabul.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Senator REED. There is new leadership in the Taliban. Mullah Mansour has taken control. His deputies include I think one principal of the Haqqani Network, which is located on both sides of the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan. All of this raises the issue of the role of Pakistan, which is consistent and a constant issue that comes up.

Just a few months ago, they were trying to broker peace talks. Can you give us some insight into the current position of the Pakistan Government with respect to what is going on in your AOR [area of responsibility]?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, as far as reconciliation and Pakistan's role, Afghanistan has said many times that this has to be Afghan-led on reconciliation. I think Pakistan understands that. President Ghani and the leadership inside of Pakistan have talked several times about reconciliation moving forward. I think both President Ghani and Pakistan understand that there has to be some sort of political resolution to this fight, and so reconciliation is one of those ways.

Right now, with the Taliban being fractured, with Mansour claiming that he is the head, other folks like Zakir, Manan, Yaqoub, Dadullah, other senior Taliban members are actually still trying to struggle to fight against that and do not believe that Mansour should be the head. I think that will work itself out, but I think there are opportunities for Afghanistan to take advantage of that as they move forward.

There was, I think as has been mentioned here, one peace talk. There was a second one that was on the table that was moving forward in just a day or so before when the Mullah Omar death was announced, and they kind of scrapped that.

I do believe—and I did have the opportunity to talk to General Raheel Sharif, the Pakistan chief of the army. I talk to him probably once a week. I try to get to Pakistan once a month. I did talk to him last Monday, and he is dedicated to try to move the peace process back. I know that he and President Ghani will continue to try to work through that. But again, sir, I think that is going to take time and a lot of effort by a lot of people. I do not think that we should expect that is going to happen here in the near future. But it will take concerted effort by all.

Senator REED. As you indicate in your testimony, both President Ghani and CEO Abdullah seem to be committed to not only a positive relationship with the United States but to create a professional military force. Is that again your consensus?

Also unlike, hopefully, Iraq, there does not appear to be any major sectarian divisions material, developing within the security force?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, you are right. I do believe that the Afghan Security Forces continue to be very resilient. President Ghani has taken on the role as commander-in-chief. He takes that very seriously. He visits training. He talks to his corps commanders quite frequently in person, on video teleconferences. So he takes on that role. I have seen the Afghan Security Forces under very, very tough situations continue to come together. I do not see—and I spent about 19 months in Iraq. I do not see the same decisive ethnic infighting that I saw in Iraq.

They have had some setbacks. We knew this was going to be a very tough season. Both the Afghan Security Forces and the Taliban knew this would be a decisive fighting season. I think over time, they continue to get better. So in northern Helmand where they had some issues, Musa Qala was taken over. It took a little bit of time, but the Afghan forces—although some of those had retreated out, the majority got back together, had a good plan, resupplied, and moved the right forces in to take back over Musa Qala. They did the same thing in Kunduz. Again, very hard to move that number of forces logistically, to plan that very quickly. So if you try to compare Iraq and Afghanistan, I see them as again night and day, two different things. The Afghans are fighters and, sir, they are warriors.

Senator REED. So both, from your perspective, operationally and politically, the Afghans are making a commitment that justifies continued support by the United States and NATO.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, without a doubt. Absolutely, yes, sir.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Could I mention the chart there, General? The shaded areas are the areas of Taliban activity. Is that an accurate chart in your view?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I got one right here.

Sir, if the red areas are active areas of Taliban, I think for the most part that is on target.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

Senator Inhofe?

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You have answered really most of my questions. Let me just ask for clarification. When Ghani last January and then again last week reemphasized that we may want to reexamine our withdrawal plan, I think, as I understand it, you have a list of options that you are prepared to give the administration to look at. Is that what you are referring to?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, President Ghani has asked on different occasions to continue to have coalition forces. I have already provided my recommendations for a force posture post-2016. Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. You are not in a position to share any of that.

General CAMPBELL. Say it again, sir.

Senator INHOFE. You are not in a position to share any of that with this committee at this time.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I said in my opening statement, I provided those to the leadership. I have to be able to give my leadership the opportunity to make those decisions without—

Senator INHOFE. I understand.

In February when you were before this committee, you outlined six criteria, six expectations. I would not expect you to have those in front of you right now, but can you recall any of those six that have not met your expectations? Then for the record, outline each one of them and how they are coming on that score sheet.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, like you, sir, I do not remember those six, but if I can take that for the record and reply back to you.

Senator INHOFE. That would be fine.

[The information referred to follows:]

The Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF) and Afghan Security Institution (ASI) conditions that must be met include the following:

Condition 1: Capable of protecting the population and securing a legitimate Afghan Government with limited United States and Coalition support. The ANDSF have made excellent progress protecting the population and securing the government. This is the first year ANDSF is in the lead without coalition forces in the field and with limited Close Air Support. Although the ANDSF performance has been uneven at times, I do not consider the insurgency capable of overthrowing the National Unity Government (NUG) by force.

Condition 2: Maintain confident forces. I characterize the ANDSF's performance as uneven and this has affected their confidence. When they deliberately plan operations and have the right leadership they succeed. When they act hastily or lack decisive leadership, they have struggled to maintain the initiative.

Condition 3: Maintain sustainable forces. The ANDSF attrition rate has impacted readiness and is a matter of concern. We have focused on helping the Afghans address the systemic causes to attrition ensuring their long term viability. Leadership is a primary reason for the poor attrition rate.

(U) *Condition 4:* Capable of neutralizing terrorist networks and denying terrorist safe havens with limited U.S. and Coalition support. The Afghan Special Security Forces are capable of conducting raids independently using their own intelligence and Special Mission Wing (SMW) to execute long-range infiltrations in low illumination and reflect the overall potential of the ANDSF. However, they are not ready to stand alone to deny safe-havens to potential terrorist groups without U.S. and coalition support.

Condition 5: Promote continued U.S. and international funding commitments. President Ghani's signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement and Status of Forces Agreement and public support for our continued Coalition troop presence warrants international donor and U.S. funding commitments. Without our presence, funding for the ANDSF will likely evaporate.

Condition 6: Retain regional access, freedom of movement, and action. Coalition Forces have maintained regional access, freedom of movement, and action through

a supportive government that wants our support as a regional counterterrorism partner.

Senator INHOFE. At our last hearing, you stated the Afghan army and national police have shown that they can win battles on their own, overmatching insurgents whenever challenged. You also estimated that it would be unlikely that the Taliban would be able to overmatch them on the battlefield in 2015. How has that estimate changed? Or has it?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think again that this fighting season we knew was going to be very, very tough. I still believe that the Taliban cannot overtake the government. They will not overthrow the Afghan Government. They will continue to challenge the Afghan Security Forces. As the Afghan Security Forces continue to grow, they have stretched the Afghan Security Forces. As you look at the map Senator McCain referred to, those areas up in the north or some areas up in Badakhshan and in the far northeast, Farah, Kunduz, are areas in the past that we had not seen as much insurgent activity. But, again, all the enemy has to do is go in and cause terror, fear, and then come back out, may not try to occupy or control, but they are really trying to stretch I think the Afghan Security Forces.

Their main goal continues, I believe, to be Helmand, Kandahar, the heartland of the Taliban. So as they pull forces from maybe the south or the east to the north, it could make the Afghan Security Forces vulnerable. In the south, the Afghan Security Forces understand this. They have a campaign plan for this fighting season. They have a campaign plan of what they want to do during the winter in preparation for the next fighting season. So I think they understand this and continue to work to try to improve.

Senator INHOFE. You know, I and probably every member of this committee have been over there and have observed the advancements that are made by the Afghans. I think they are real. Senator Reed in his opening statement said something about the will to fight. Has there been a deterioration in the will to fight on their behalf?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we have seen on two occasions, sir, in Kunduz with the police and probably northern Helmand with the police that you had some members lose that will. They are taking a hard look at why that happened, whether it was poor leadership, which I believe was a big part of that, whether they had just been in the fight too long and not been able to rotate. Again, that is probably two battalions' worth out of 100-plus battalions. For the most part, I see the Afghans continue to have the will to fight.

In the places that we have looked at that have come out, a lot of those have been actually police that were untrained police. They were hired, had not gone through the requisite training, had been put out very hastily out on the checkpoints. They may not have been supported by other forces. When they took fire, they felt they may not have been supported and they left. But, sir, that is not the majority. It is far from the majority of the Afghan forces, and I think they continue to learn from that and they have made adjustments.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, General.

Then lastly, you did already address the abusive behavior or the accusations over there. But the press reports also—they said, quote, they are happening also on our bases. You did not say anything about our bases. Is there anything that you would share with us as to whether or not—the accuracy of that accusation?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I think the thing that started this piece was a media article, and it was citing cases from 2010, 2011, and 2012. I have reiterated my policy in writing to all of my folks. I have not seen anything on our bases, sir. Absolutely not.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, General.

I want to dig into a piece of your testimony just to make sure we are all kind of on the page you are on. You talk about we all knew this fighting season would be tough. Talk about why this fighting season was particularly challenging.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we knew this was going to be tough, again because this was really the first year that the Afghans were going to be totally on their own.

Senator KAINE. So the Taliban would want to test that early.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. The Taliban knew that as well, and they also knew that if there was going to be some sort of reconciliation in the end, they wanted to operate from a position of strength. To get a position of strength, they got to fight and they got to go out and cause disruption with the Afghan Security Forces.

So I think everybody knew this was going to—the Afghans certainly knew this was going to be very tough. They tried to get out in front of this by conducting a multi-corps operation early on in the February time frame. So they actually started the fighting season—the Afghan Security Forces did—as opposed to waiting till the Taliban brought it on. There is usually about an April to October fighting season that people talk about. This year, as I said, there really was not lull. There was a continuous fight. The Afghans a lot of times take the winter time frame to regroup to do additional training. They did not have that opportunity.

Senator KAINE. They would love not only to be militarily successful in this fighting season, but they would love to destabilize the civilian government if they could if at all possible.

General CAMPBELL. The Taliban, yes, sir. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit about the Taliban post Mullah Omar. We talked a bit about this in my office yesterday. Sort of internal divisions and factions. We have also heard claimed ISIL affiliations in Afghanistan, but a lot of the reports have suggested that may be Talibanis who are not happy with their leadership. So they are claiming an affiliation with ISIL. Who is the Taliban today? Talk about that a bit.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks. Sir, again, the Taliban under Mullah Omar had a spiritual leader. He had been there for years and years. They did not see him for many years. In fact, for the last two and a half years, there has been a big lie out there that he had been passing on guidance, and many of the Taliban I believe now feel that they trusted somebody that was not there.

So they are disenfranchised. They want to do something about it. So they are fighting back against Mansour because they knew Mansour was the guy that had something to do with this. So there are fractures within the Taliban. Mansour, Yaquob, Manan, and many other ones, Dadullah. They are trying to take control of a piece of it.

The Taliban are very decentralized, and so they do operations that are very decentralized. But Mansour is trying to get a coalescent group there. He has named, I think as Senator McCain talked about early on and Senator Reed, but he has named Siraj Haqqani as one of his deputies. Zawahiri from AQ [al-Qaeda] has come out and said I pledge allegiance to the Taliban as well. So there seems to be some steam over the Omar piece to try to coalesce and get a group. But they have their own issues with funding, with being able to work together, leadership issues.

Up mostly in Nangarhar in the east, we have seen a rise of Daesh or ISIL-KP [the Islamic State in Khorasan Province]. It has been reported in a lot of different provinces, Sar-e Pol, Helmand. But Nangarhar is where ISIS, or the Daesh, have predominantly been, and that is where they want to set up and use Jalalabad as their capital of Khorasan Province and they want to try to recruit and they want to expand. This year, right now the Taliban and Daesh continue to fight each other, and so they are going at it inside of there.

A lot of the Daesh's we see continue to be disenfranchised Taliban that maybe see Daesh as a way to gain more media, more resources. So they kind of change T-shirts, raise a different flag. We see a lot of TTP [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan] that are Pakistani Taliban that have gone over to the Daesh as well.

So we continue to look at that. When I was here in February, I think I called it nascent. The term I would use today would be operationally emergent as they continue to try to build upon their capacity. President Ghani looks at that. I look at it every day as we move forward.

Senator Kaine. Let me ask you about one more topic.

Prior to this assignment, you were Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and one of your responsibilities was readiness. We are having an intense budgetary discussion here. How many of our military strategies around the globe are limited because of readiness deficits in the current budget environment?

General Campbell. Sir, all of the forces that I get in Afghanistan have the requisite training and they have gone through all of that. So I have not suffered that in Afghanistan. I do know that with all the services, they continue to have issues as we look toward the sequestration. I think over time they have been able to balance that based on priorities to provide Afghanistan the requisite forces with the right training. But as the budget will continue to have issues, hopefully that will not impact Afghanistan, but it certainly could as we move forward, sir.

Senator Kaine. General, I appreciate your testimony. As much as I agree with members of the committee that our strategy in Afghanistan should be conditions-based not calendar-based, I hope we will have a budget that is conditions-based, not calendar-based to

a decision that was made in August of 2011. We should be making budgetary decisions based upon the needs of today.

With that, Mr. Chair, thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. I agree.

Senator Cotton?

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

General Campbell, thank you very much for your service to our country and thank you for the service you represent of the many American men and women you have in theater with you.

I want to start with the Kunduz hospital bombing. So I understand that an American aircraft and American ground troops were involved in calling for fire that ultimately hit that hospital?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we have U.S. special forces on the ground. They are doing train, advise, and assist with our Afghan partners. Our Afghan partners called for fire. The U.S. aircraft delivered those munitions. Yes, sir.

Senator COTTON. There are three investigations underway?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have a DOD [Department of Defense] investigation. There is a NATO investigation, and the Afghans are doing an investigation and will be open and transparent. I have talked to investigating officers, Brigadier General Rich Kim. He is up in Kunduz today. I talked to him this morning. He is reaching out to all the folks that were involved there. He is reaching out to Doctors Without Borders to make sure that we have everything we can on this investigation as we move forward.

Senator COTTON. You conduct investigations like this anytime there is a similar incident?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we have to get to the facts. There are a lot of questions out here. Yes, sir.

Senator COTTON. Do you think there is anyone here who regrets this incident more than the pilots of that aircraft?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, everybody wants to make sure that we find out what happened. As you know, every soldier, sailor, airmen, and marine, if they are involved in something like this—that hurts.

Senator COTTON. Is there anyone that we are to blame for this incident other than the Taliban for going into a civilian area and fighting among civilian targets?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the investigation will tell me, as I get the facts on that. But as you mentioned, the Taliban did go into Kunduz. The Taliban did know that they were going to cause a fight inside a built-up area. As I talked about, you know, Taliban causes, based on the UN [United Nations], over 70 percent—I believe it is a little bit more—they target civilians. There is a difference between target civilians and what happened at the hospital.

Senator COTTON. The Taliban, like our enemies in Iraq, like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, intentionally target civilians and intentionally use civilians as shields. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Senator COTTON. I want to talk briefly about some of the stories about abuse of children among certain Afghan leaders. So you are a four-star general at the highest level of command in Afghanistan. I served there six years ago as a captain. There is a big gap between those two levels. Sometimes we see things differently. I re-

ceived training before I went, as did my soldiers, and in Afghanistan I received training. I provided training that said that such behavior was unacceptable. Nor did I ever see such behavior. Is that still the case today, training for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines throughout the country?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is correct. The Afghans have also incorporated this into their training, human rights training, under the basic training courses. In their officer accession training, they have incorporated this. They have also trained their JAG's [Judge Advocate Generals], or their lawyers, to be able to perform what we call mobile training teams to go out to the different corps to reemphasize the human rights training throughout. President Ghani has stated emphatically that he will prosecute anyone suspected of committing sexual assault upon children.

So as I said in my opening statement, we have looked at this very hard, and at least since 2011, I know that there has always been a policy out there that says you will report violation of human rights. I reiterated that in writing here recently based on the media reports, and I have also required that within 30 days all personnel in theater complete additional training on human rights abuse reporting requirements and that everybody new coming into theater complete training upon their arrival into theater to make sure that we get everybody there. The training very clearly indicates that sexual abuse by Afghan Security Forces is a human rights abuse issue.

Senator COTTON. Well, thank you.

You said that back to 2011. I can tell you that at least in my neck of the woods in Afghanistan, it went back to at least 2008. I suspect it went back to 2001 as well.

I would like to turn to your testimony about the differences in this fighting season from previous fighting seasons. You cited the rise of the Islamic State, the national unity government, Pakistan military operations in eastern and northern Afghanistan. But there is also the difference of our presence in the country. Your testimony on page three states, "In years past, our aircraft provided responsive and often decisive close air support to coalition and Afghan troops in contact. This is no longer the norm but the exception. Our force reduction, drop in enablers, and resultant close air support gap have created challenges for the ANDSF [Afghan National Defense and Security Forces]; they have understandably struggled at times to adjust."

It sounds to me like, General, that our unwise and precipitous drawdown in Afghanistan over the last couple years have contributed as much to the difficulty in the fighting season this year as anything that we have seen from enemy activity.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, what I would say is that we knew that we would have to continue to do train, advise, and assist in many areas that we talked about, logistics, intelligence, special operating forces. Close air support is the one that I get asked about from the Afghans every single day. It is an area that we started too late. We will continue to work that very hard. We are surging on building their pilots, building their maintainers. But as I put in my statement there, it has been slow coming. So what we have really worked with the Afghans is to enable them in every other way to

try to work through this with using their own QRF's [Quick Reaction Forces], using every indirect fire means that they have. So it is a balance and making sure that they can work through that.

Again, the Taliban do not have close support helicopters. The Taliban do not have up-armored Humvees. The Taliban do not have a lot of the sophisticated technical equipment that we have provided to the Afghans over the years.

I go back to leadership and leadership makes a difference. In areas that they have had problems, I think leadership has been the key.

But we have to be able to provide the Afghans with this ability to provide their own close air support, and that is going to take several more years to get there. If they would have had their own close air support at the levels that they probably wanted, maybe something like Helmand may not have happened. But as we go through and look at that—they are very committed to working through this piece of it, and they have made many adjustments as they go forward.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

You had said in response to Senator McCain that you deal in capabilities not personnel numbers. I hope the President does as well.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, thank you for being here this morning and for your service.

Thank you also for your forthrightness in talking about what happened with the bombing of the hospital in Kunduz. I know all of us looked at that horrific accident and want to know how that could happen. I appreciate your talking about the effort to investigate on our part what happened there.

But do you have any reason to object to having an independent investigation done by the UN or another independent body of what happened?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I have trust and confidence in the folks that will do the investigation for NATO, the folks that will do the investigation for DOD, and in the Afghan partners. So all the very, very tough questions that we are all asking—they will get after that. My investigating officer, again, is a brigadier general, Rich Kim. I have all the trust and confidence that he will get answers to all of those questions and he will continue to work that very hard and will continue to be transparent and provide all of that to this committee and to the American people as we move forward.

Senator SHAHEEN. But as I understand your answer then, you would not object to and would cooperate with an independent body other than NATO or our Department of Defense in doing that kind of an investigation?

General CAMPBELL. I would let my higher headquarters or senior personnel make that decision. We are reaching out, again, to Doctors Without Borders and the personnel that were on site and making sure that we get all sides of the story. I did talk again to the investigating officer this morning. He has done that. He has talked to a few. He is continuing to try to get out to locations where he

can talk to doctors, nurses, survivors of that to make sure he gets all that story. We will certainly share all of that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

There was a very interesting recent news article about the role that Afghan-trained special forces units played in regaining control of Kunduz and the role that female soldiers, who were part of those units, played. I wonder if you could share with us what you know about how those women who are trained to serve in the Afghan army are faring and the role that they are playing and the successes that they are seeing on the ground.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you for the question, ma'am.

I do believe that having the ability to have Afghan females embedded in the special operating units provide them a unique capability as they get on objectives to talk to females that are on those objectives. They use this quite frequently. Female Engagement Teams is what we used to call it. I think they call it the same thing. So that has been quite helpful to their national mission force, which is their equivalent of our Rangers, at Qatayhas. They have some of these females also inside of their commando unit. So this is quite good.

The MOI, the Ministry of Interior, with the police continues to do better and better on recruiting females as police, and the police can continue to come in and probably operate in their own hometowns. It is a little bit more difficult for the army to recruit females because most of them would have to come in and then deploy someplace throughout the country. So the MOD [Ministry of Defense] is a little bit farther behind, but we continue to work it very hard.

This committee has earmarked money for us on gender integration that we work toward recruiting methods. I have a gender integration advisor that reports directly to me that works with Ms. Ghani, that works with all the folks in Afghanistan to continue to look at how we can do better building this capacity. It has been slow. Culturally it is hard, but I think both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah really want to get after this.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I know that most people on this committee have talked about the importance of ensuring that women continue to have a place in Afghan society that gives them opportunities. So this is one of the ways in which we can see women advance that I think will have a trickle-down effect across other sectors. So I appreciate the efforts that you have undertaken.

I also want to thank you for supporting the Special Immigrant Visa Program [SIV] for those in Afghanistan who have helped our troops. As you may be aware, the Defense Authorization Act this year includes an additional 3,000 Afghan SIV's, and maybe you could just speak briefly to how important that is in terms of our dealings with Afghans and getting them to help us.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think as you know we have been dependent on some great Afghans over the years to provide interpreter/translation skill sets for us that we did not have. They put their life on the line with tactical units. They have done it for many, many years over and over. They put themselves at risk and their families at risk. I think anything that we can do to help mitigate the impact on them and the safety of them and their families is greatly appreciated. I know that I get asked all the time about

that. They work that through our embassy. Our embassy has a great program under Ambassador McKinley to work through that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, General Campbell, for your service to the country and your leadership.

I wanted to ask you about—right now the administration's stated policy in Afghanistan, as reiterated when President Ghani visited our country in March, is that we will be drawing down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul with security assistance, just as we have done in Iraq and by the end of 2016. If that remains our policy, in light of the capability gaps that you have identified in your testimony and have been identified many times before this committee, what would be the consequences of that in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, if we go to a normal embassy presence, as you stated there, we would have very limited train, advise, and assist capability from Kabul.

Senator AYOTTE. What do you think will happen to Afghanistan if we do that?

General CAMPBELL. Well, it will take much longer to continue to train in some of those critical areas that we need to train. So it would be very difficult, again, to do train, advise, assist.

Senator AYOTTE. So would we lose and would the Taliban gain territory?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think that the Afghan Security Forces, you know, where they are today, where they were two years ago, where they will be in another year and a half—they continue to improve. I do not believe that the Taliban can take over the government. I do believe the Taliban understand that they stress the Afghan Security Forces pulling out to the outer pieces of Afghanistan, cause casualties on some of the road checkpoints—

Senator AYOTTE. General, I guess the question I want to understand is without getting into numbers of troops or anything like that, do you think, based on your military advice being the Commander in Afghanistan, that we should revert to an embassy presence alone by the end of 2016? Do you think that is what we need to do to make sure that Afghanistan does not become yet again a haven for al-Qaeda?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. I understand the question. I have provided my chain of command options because I believe there have been a lot of different transitions over the last couple of years since that decision was made. If you go to just embassy-only, again, our ability to do TAA [train, advise, and assist] is very limited. Our ability to do CT is much more limited.

Senator AYOTTE. So your recommendations would be a presence beyond the embassy, without getting into what they are.

General CAMPBELL. The different options that we have laid out through the chain of command provides our senior leadership with options above and beyond a normal embassy presence based on changes that have happened over the last two years and changes on—

Senator AYOTTE. So here is what I want to make sure the American people understand. Why does this matter? Why does it matter that we continue to work with the Afghan Security Forces to en-

sure that Afghanistan does not go back to a place where it becomes a haven for a group like al-Qaeda?

General CAMPBELL. As I said in the opening statement, ma'am, Afghanistan continues to be a dangerous area. That region of the world, all of its neighbors do not play by rules. Areas in Pakistan, areas in Afghanistan, if not continue to have pressure on them—

Senator AYOTTE. Does it matter to our security?

General CAMPBELL. I think that as I said up front, we have not had another 9/11 attack on our homeland because we have had forces that have been forward deployed and have continued to provide pressure and have continued to train our Afghan partners so that they have this capability to take that on for themselves. But that is going to take some time.

Senator AYOTTE. I wanted to ask you about Iran's activities in Afghanistan. Can you tell us what Iran, if anything, is doing right now in Afghanistan in terms of supporting the Taliban or other groups?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. At this level, I can tell you that we have some reports that Iran has provided money, weapons mostly in the west in the Harat area to the Taliban to fight Daesh.

Senator AYOTTE. They are supporting the Taliban right now—Iran—with resources, money and weapons.

General CAMPBELL. Again, we have reports that they have provided money and weapons to the Taliban mostly in the west around the Harat area. I do not have numbers of how much, how much money, how extensive that is, but there have been reports, yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. How has cooperation been with Pakistan in dealing with the Haqqani network and what more should we be doing there?

General CAMPBELL. Well, as you know, Haqqani continues to be a big threat not only against the coalition but also the Afghan people. Haqqani are the ones that were traditionally responsible for the high-profile attacks, the VBIED's, vehicle-borne IED's, the suicide vests. Haqqani are the ones that attack innocent civilians.

So what I have stressed to Pakistan and I think at all levels of our Government from DOD all the way to the White House continue to express to Pakistan that they have to do more to not provide sanctuary to Haqqani inside of Pakistan, so we got to continue to keep the pressure on and make sure that Pakistan understands that there is a common enemy here that Afghanistan and Pakistan should work together. Terrorism knows no boundaries. So they have to work it out together.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, General.

Chairman MCCAIN. Has the Iranian assistance to the Taliban increased or decreased or stayed the same recently?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would have to come back to you on the record. I would tell you that we saw it a few months as there was increased fighting with Daesh and Taliban out in the west, but I could not tell you if that was more or less than from before.

[The information provided by General Campbell is classified.]

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Donnelly?

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your hard work in a very difficult place. One of the most expensive things has always been to have to take the same ground twice. You know, we want to look at things as they are and not as we hope. One of the main concerns I have is that it makes it more difficult for the American and coalition troops who are in Afghanistan and it makes it more dangerous for them if we are not able to fulfill each of the roles that the Afghan Government should in terms of security, in terms of air, in terms of intelligence, in terms of the logistics, that the weaker they are in those areas, it puts our men and women in greater danger.

So it is a long way of asking you, are we really in a South Korean type situation where we have to put significant numbers in for a long term to help create the stability that needs to be there? It seems from year to year to year we just kind of bounce along or it gets a little bit worse. Is it not more applicable to a South Korean type situation?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would not compare it to South Korea. What I would tell you is what we have been able to do over the last 14 years is provide the Afghan Security Forces—remember in 2001, they did not have an Afghan army. They did not have an Afghan police. So they did not have an Afghan air force. So the capabilities that they have today, because of the great work by many men and women—and many of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice. They are in a different place now. So they have a capability, and they want to be a partner in the region. They want to have their own CT capability to fight the terrorism that is out there. Everybody is working very hard to do that.

Force protection for the coalition, the U.S. forces, the NATO forces—I have that. That is my number one priority, to make sure that I do everything I can to mitigate where I would have issues with that. Today with the resources I have and the authorities that I have, I am comfortable where I am to be able to provide the right force protection for those forces.

Senator DONNELLY. We have come a tremendously long way, but we want to make sure it does not slip back. The worry is that if we just simply do numbers-based work, that it does not take into consideration what is going on in the field.

So one of the proposals, I hope and assume, is that you have given to the administration your best win scenario or the best Afghan Government stabilization scenario, that you say, look, here if I am not getting determinations on we want less people or we want this or we want that, here is the best plan for success. Is that going to be one of the things that is put forward?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as we talked earlier, the courses of action I provided to my senior leadership are based on requirements, based on the capabilities that we talked about. Of course, any military person on the ground wants to make sure that that end state, that outcome, is success. We are not going to put something forward that would not lead to that.

Senator DONNELLY. When you look at where we are, in terms of the village and tribal elders, what are the things we need to do to give them long-term confidence that they should be betting on our side as opposed to the Taliban? If you are in some of those outlying areas and you see things happen like what just happened in

Kunduz—what are the kind of things they are looking for that we need to be providing?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, what they are looking for is for the Afghan Government to provide them governance at the local and at the district level. I think if you are a tribal elder, if you are somebody on the outskirts, you are not thinking in terms of what can the coalition provide. You are thinking in terms of what can the Afghans provide, and so they look at the Afghan forces and want to make sure that they have the ability to have governance at that level.

President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the senior leadership in the MOI, MOD continually try to engage with the senior elders. They call them *shuras*, and so in Helmand, right after they had issues in Musa Qala, the senior military got on the ground. Major General Abdullah Khan brought in local elder leaders to work through that piece. They also try to engage local elders to build Afghan local police so that the villages can provide their own security. They will do that in Kunduz as well as they continue to move forward, and they will bring in the local leadership to make sure they understand what the Security Forces can provide and then what the Afghan Government can provide.

Senator DONNELLY. What was missed by the Afghans in Kunduz in terms of the infiltration of the Taliban and then coming in? What did we miss, or did we know and were not able to stop it? What happened?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we are still looking at that, sir. We have asked that question and the Afghans have asked that question. President Ghani has established a commission, for lack of a better term, to get up into Kunduz to give him a readout on why this happened, who was responsible. So he has a commission that is also doing that.

Senator DONNELLY. The reason I ask—not to interrupt you, General—is you wonder if there is another one brewing somewhere else and are we picking up on the signals, or are the Afghans picking up on the signals, and are we putting in place a way to stop it from happening?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is exactly the same question that President Ghani asked at a meeting of the National Security Council when he activated this commission. He said the exact same thing. I want to make sure I understand what happened, why it happened, and I want to make sure that it cannot happen again. So we need to get the senior police and army into Kunduz City to do that, and if you have people that gave up and walked off the job, then they need to be disciplined. If you have general officers that did not fight, then they should not be in those positions. So he has asked all those tough questions.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, General.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Rounds?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your service.

In an address to the Nation on May 27, 2014, President Obama said Afghanistan—and I quote—we will bring America's longest war to a responsible end and then announced calendar dates for the withdrawal. I will quote him again. At the beginning of 2015,

we will have approximately 9,800 U.S. service members. By the end of 2015, we will have reduced that presence by roughly half, and we will have consolidated our troops in Kabul and Bagram Airfield. One year later by the end of 2016, our military will draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul with a security assistance component, just as we have done in Iraq.

In looking at that, number one, from 9,800 down now—have we drawn from 9,800 down in a manner consistent with following that goal to its end as indicated on May 27?

General CAMPBELL. No, sir, because what happened is back in the February/March time frame, we asked for flexibility, and so President Obama provided me flexibility on the timing and the number. As you remember, 9,800 to provide train, advise, and assist through this very first fighting season. If I had to get down to the 5,500 number by the end of this year, I would have had to start closing bases like Jalalabad, Kandahar, and even Bagram. So I asked for, President Ghani asked for some flexibility, and currently that 9,800 number I still have and are not going to get down below that—required to get down below that until probably May of 2016 time frame as we move toward the current projection of this embassy-based.

But again, I have gone in with different courses of action that outline pros and cons of different locations and different force levels based on the capabilities that we need to continue to provide to the Afghans.

Senator ROUNDS. Based upon that, it is fair to assume that Bagram is not in the position of being closed down at this time.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the current plan would have Bagram closed by the end of 2016.

Senator ROUNDS. Have you made any movements toward that end yet?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, over the last couple of years, we have had to close hundreds and hundreds of bases, so every day we continually what we call “descope” and get rid of buildings, get rid of equipment to send back to the United States, turn over to the Afghans, other partners, and so every day even in Kabul we are on that. We continue to descope. We do that at Bagram. We do that at Jalalabad. We do that at Kandahar. So I am doing that every day, but I have not reached a point where if a decision is made to keep Bagram that is irreversible.

Senator ROUNDS. Okay.

With regard to Taliban funding, if you could look at it right now and determine where most of the funding is coming from, could you list out where the funding for Taliban is currently coming from in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, a lot of the funding comes from narcotics, from drug smuggling. It comes from kidnapping. It comes from other countries that support the Taliban. So there is a whole list.

Senator ROUNDS. Primarily local unit by local unit? I mean, are they doing it on their own, separate, or is there a grand plan in terms of all of them working together in a concerted effort?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think the Taliban is organized where they have committees. They have a political committee. They have

an operations committee, that kind of thing. But they are very independent—“decentralized” I think is a better word—as they conduct operations throughout Afghanistan.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

General Kim’s report, the one which he would be working on as we speak—is there a time frame for a release of that report?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have not determined that time frame. I want to make sure that he has the time required to talk to everybody that he needs to talk to. He has been up in Kunduz for the last several days. I have had the ability to talk to him each morning here. He is getting more and more people to talk to, but as he talks to one person, that leads to two more people to talk to. So I think this is going to take some time.

As soon as I can get a preliminary assessment out of this, I will go back to my senior leadership. Again, we want to make sure that we can be transparent, open, very candid about what happened here, learn from that, and make sure something like this never ever happens again.

Senator ROUNDS. Reasonable to expect at least a preliminary report within 30 days?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think so, yes, sir.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator King?

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to be very clear, General—and I think you have made this clear, but in your professional military judgment, conditions on the ground at the present time would require some revision of the withdrawal plan to a Kabul-centric 1,000 personnel by the end of 2016. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. I will stomp my foot. Yes, sir. The options I provided provide pros and cons of different levels of support above and beyond the 1,000, and I based that based on my experience on the ground and the conditions that I have seen as I have talked about Daesh, ISIL, what has happened in Pakistan, the National Unity Government. So all of those are factors and variables I considered as I worked on different courses of action. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. I am not asking you what you recommended. I am asking you for your professional judgment as you are sitting here today that there should revision to that plan.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. Thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Political questions. I am concerned about the Ghani-Abdullah relationship. I understand there are still some ministers not appointed. They are still in different buildings. They do not seem to be communicating effectively. This war is going to be impossible without some kind of unified government in Kabul.

How are the politics of the National Unity Government developing, and is there some role that we have to play to move that along?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question.

Again, sir, I think every single day both myself, my partner, Ambassador McKinley—we work this and we understand how important having a National Unity Government is. I think the Afghans understand this as well. To think that there are people that do not

want the national unity government, that are what I would call “spoilers” out there trying to disrupt that, I think we would be foolish. Sir, there are. I think both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah understand this as well, and they know that they have to do better to sync up where they are going.

I think on major policy issues, both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah—there is no daylight between them. I think they agree on those major policy issues on what is good for Afghanistan and its future. I think where they have issues is determining who is going to be this minister, who is going to be the provincial police chief, those kind of things as they go back and deal with their constituencies. But I think they continue to understand they have to make those tough decisions. On September 29th, they had a little over a year and they understand now is the time to do that. I have seen, over the last couple of weeks, an increased dialogue to make sure that happens.

But that is a continual issue, and I think—you know, again, the ambassador works that. I work that. All the other international community ambassadors that are in Afghanistan understand how important that is, and everybody consistently works very hard to make sure that both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah understand that.

As far as the ministers, the only one that I know of not appointed is the acting Minister of Defense, Stanekzai, who I think is very, very capable and it would be a big mistake and a tragedy if the parliament was to do something in Afghanistan to make sure that he was not the minister. But he is absolutely the real deal for Afghanistan as they move forward in the ministry of defense.

Senator KING. So finalizing that appointment would be a step forward.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it would. Right now, President Ghani has absolute trust and confidence in Mr. Stanekzai. He continues to work as the acting minister, and I think he is making decisions as the acting minister just as he would as a minister.

Senator KING. I hope you will maintain—I mean, we have a substantial role there. We are very important to them, and I hope we can use that influence to move this along.

I was disappointed, for example, when President Ghani spoke to the Congress. Dr. Abdullah was sitting in the front row. There was a great round of applause. That would have been a wonderful moment for President Ghani to call Dr. Abdullah up and receive the—it was a kind of symbolic gesture. It did not happen. I hope you will continue to encourage President Ghani to loosen up a little bit. He won. He could afford to be magnanimous. That is free political advice to the president of another country.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you. As you know, sir, Dr. Abdullah represented Afghanistan at the UNGA [United Nation’s General Assembly] in New York City here last week and took that on. I know that he and President Ghani continued to talk every day as they went through that. So I think that is a step in the right direction as well.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Another political question. What is the feeling of the population of Afghanistan about the Taliban? Is the Taliban gaining adher-

ence, losing adherence? Are they about the same? If there were an honest poll taken, do you not approve of the Taliban, what would the results be?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the people of Afghanistan understand that the Taliban attacks civilians. The Taliban kill innocent women and children. So the support that the Taliban have from the average Afghan is not favorable. In fact, that percentage over the years has continued to go down and down.

The Afghan people have great confidence, and the number one institution in Afghanistan is their army. They have issues, again, with the government. When they see terror, when they see something happen that frightens them, they are going to blame that on the government and on the Afghan Security Forces. But I think if you put them side by side and said you can pick the national unity government, you can pick the army, you can pick the Taliban, they absolutely would not pick the Taliban. The Taliban, again, go into many remote places. In some places, they may provide some sort of Sharia law or governance. But I think in the end, the people understand that the way of the future for Afghanistan is with the national unity government, having a very professionalized army and police, and so they do not support the Taliban.

Senator KING. Thank you. I am out of time.

Perhaps for the record, you could give us some of your thoughts on whose side Pakistan is on in this struggle and what role they are playing, just for the record. Thank you.

[The information provided by General Campbell is For Official Use Only.]

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Senator KING. Thank you, General.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, General. Are you keeping Captain McCarthy in check there?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I will take that for the record, sir.

[Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Could you very briefly describe what winning would look like in Afghanistan from an American point of view and what losing would look like?

General CAMPBELL. I think winning would have a stable Afghanistan, a stable government, would have a professionalized army and police that provided governance for the people of Afghanistan, that people could go to school, people could work. I think the opposite of that, an unstable Afghanistan would provide opportunity for insurgents to use ungoverned spaces to go after something like our homeland in the future.

Senator GRAHAM. If we had the right configuration in January 2017, what is the likelihood of winning over time?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think we have a great opportunity if we continue to support that Afghan Government and continue to work with the Afghan Security Forces. This is our best opportunity. We have not had a government like this that reached out not only to the U.S. but to the international community. We have not had a government that takes on its responsibility to professionalize the army and the police like we have. We have not had a government

that understands what the army and the police are going through. So this is our best opportunity.

Senator GRAHAM. Do the Afghan people want us to stay by and large?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the Afghan people that I talk to that I deal with—and I do bring in an advisory committee that is made up of different facets of Afghan life to talk to about every month. I do have a women's advisory committee that I bring in to make sure we understand gender issues. Overwhelmingly, the Afghans support the coalition and want to continue to have that continued support.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you agree with me if we go down to 1,000 forces, 1,000 people, Kabul-centric, embassy-centric, like 90 percent chance that the country falls apart?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I do not know if I would put a percentage on it. Sir, what I would say is our ability to provide train, advise, and assist and continue to grow the Afghan forces would be very limited.

Senator GRAHAM. What about the counterterrorism issue?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, just from Kabul, I cannot do a counterterrorism mission.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Now, tell the American people why it is in their interests for you to have a counterterrorism footprint in Afghanistan.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think two reasons. I think, first off, we need to continue to build the Afghan capacity for their CT element, and that takes our men and women to continue to work with them as they do today. Their special operating forces, their CTP's [counter terrorism police] are probably the best in the region and continue to get better. But it is going to take time to be able to raise that. So if we continue to build their capacity, they want to be a regional partner. They want to be able to handle those issues in that region. To have a CT capability to keep pressure on some of the ungoverned spaces—you know, we do have people that continue to want to do bad things to the people—

Senator GRAHAM. Let us dig into that a bit. A better trained Afghan counterterrorism force is good for the stability of Afghanistan. Do you agree?

General CAMPBELL. I agree, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. But there are no substitute for American counterterrorism forces that would protect the homeland. Does that make sense?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I believe that our counterterrorism forces are the best in the world.

Senator GRAHAM. But they would have a focus that the Afghans would not have.

General CAMPBELL. Again, we want to continue to build the Afghan forces, yes, sir. But our forces provide our best—

Senator GRAHAM. I am just trying to make the case, as well as I know how, that we would be nuts to not have a counterterrorism force inside of Afghanistan, United States presence counterterrorism folks, making sure that we never get attacked again like 9/11. Does that make sense to you?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think General Dempsey has laid out a regional CT piece to have regional CT throughout different spots in the world to——

Senator GRAHAM. But Afghanistan would be the centerpiece of that.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would concur with that, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. We are welcome there. They would welcome this presence.

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely.

Senator GRAHAM. The only reason we would not have a counter-terrorism force in Afghanistan is because we decided not to ourselves. The Afghans welcome that presence.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, they welcome us there. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Parwan Prison. Is that moving forward in an acceptable way to use it as a national security detention facility?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, Parwan is the gold standard for Afghanistan. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. This new president is willing to use that prison to take high-value targets, put them in jail so they cannot bribe their way out. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, he has moved high-value targets from other provinces into Parwan because, again, it is the gold standard. They have had some issues with some other prisons here lately but not at Parwan.

Senator GRAHAM. Just to end, one of my last questions. Do you see a commitment by President Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah to do things differently than Karzai that give you optimism in terms of the future of Afghanistan if we continue to partner?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, without a doubt.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator McCaskill?

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Campbell. Thank you to all that serve under you for really hard stuff that they are doing every day.

I will be looking forward to the investigation over the tragedy of the Doctors Without Borders as it develops.

Corruption continues to be a major, major challenge in Afghanistan. I know that Ghani made this a focus of his campaign when he ran to lead the government in Afghanistan. But I noticed the "New York Times" reporting last week that corruption played a role in the Taliban's recent success in Kunduz, saying that the local security forces were extorting money from the locals, which raised sympathy for the Taliban. They were being, in fact, hit up by the folks that we have been spending hundreds of millions of dollars to train, and obviously, that is unacceptable.

Could you talk about that, and what is your assessment of the risk right now of corruption as it relates to the work we are trying to do with the Afghan National Security Forces?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the question.

I think President Ghani has stated—many people say that corruption is the number one issue as they look to the future. President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah have really tried to get after this from a couple different levels.

One is he knows that contracting has caused a lot of corruption-type issues. So he has instituted a national procurement directorate or agency that looks at every single contract to make sure that those are valid, that he can get this corruption out of the contractor piece.

The other area he has looked at very hard is on leadership and trying to pick the right leaders based on their experience, based on the right skill sets. So like something that you referred to up in Kunduz where people are taking money, extorting from the local folks up there, if he had the right leadership in place, that would not happen.

So it is going to take time for him to get to all the right levels to make sure he breeds this culture throughout the Security Forces that corruption is not good and that if you are corrupt, that you are going to be removed. You are going to be held accountable. I have seen several instances over the last several months where they have had different cases where both in the MOI, the Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defense, where they have prosecuted folks that they found to be corrupt. But it is going to take time, ma'am. I know they are both committed to it. They both have worked very hard with their inspector general counterparts in both the MOI and MOD to try to help them get after the corruption. So I think they are both committed.

Senator MCCASKILL. You are confident in their sincerity.

General CAMPBELL. I am, yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. ISIL in Afghanistan. Obviously, this is a problem that we are seeing the Taliban turning. I mean, all the different factions in the Middle East are a challenge for us, but in some ways they are also an advantage because there is this fractionalization that keeps everyone from uniting in terms of effective forces. I am worried about the conversion of some of Taliban to an ISIS or ISIL loyalty situation and would like your take on that.

I noticed in your previous testimony, you indicated that you are seeing a switch of allegiance of the Taliban in Pakistan to ISIL. If that is the case, I certainly would like you to speak to that briefly because, obviously, Pakistan—that is a whole other bag of worries in light of the fact that they have nuclear capability.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am. If I could hit the Pakistan piece first because General Raheel Sharif and I have talked about that as late as last week here. He has emphasized that ISIL/Daesh has no place in Pakistan. So he absolutely believes that that will be a threat as he moves forward. He wants to make sure that that has no place. So I do not see Pakistan aligning with ISIL if that is what you were saying.

Senator MCCASKILL. You see their government committed to doing what is necessary without us having to prod, push, and pay for that effort.

General CAMPBELL. I have talked to General Raheel on that several times, and I do believe that he is genuine and he is pushing both his army and his intel services to fight Daesh. Yes, ma'am.

On the other piece as far as ISIL and Daesh, we have seen, as I said earlier, that—I would have called them nascent several months ago. We put them in the category of operationally emergent

as they continue to recruit to gain a base in predominantly Nangarhar in the eastern part of Afghanistan. They are fighting other Taliban because their philosophy there is a little bit different. We have not seen them reach outside of Afghanistan, but I think that would be a goal that they have if they have the ability to continue to grow.

President Ghani has said that al-Qaeda was Windows 1.0 and that Daesh is Windows 7.0 in their ability to use social media to recruit. So he is concerned.

I made it early on a priority information requirement, a PIR, for me, and I continue to look at that very hard. We have talked to all the intelligence agencies inside of Afghanistan. We are trying to partner Pakistan and Afghanistan up to look at ISIL/Daesh as well to make sure that we all have a common operating picture of what they are trying to do in the Khorasan Province.

Senator MCCASKILL. Are they helping us with intelligence on the ground, General, in terms of are they embedding effectively in terms of human intelligence for us in both Pakistan and Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Are you talking about the Afghan forces, ma'am?

Senator MCCASKILL. Yes.

General CAMPBELL. I mean, Afghanistan probably—well, not probably. Afghanistan has much better HUMINT [human intelligence] than I have.

Senator MCCASKILL. Obviously.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. But are they effectively putting enough resources behind that?

General CAMPBELL. They have a very good NDS [National Directorate of Security], which is their intel agency. They work very well with the other pillars of police and the army. I think what they have developed here in the last couple months, what they call the Nazarot Center, is a national joint fusion intelligence center where they try to take intelligence from MOI, MOD, and the NDS to fuse national-level target sets. That is something new and that is very good.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Fischer?

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for being here today.

To look further into that flow of the foreign fighters that are moving into Afghanistan, are we seeing more of a regional draw with ISIL? In February, you mentioned that a few of the Taliban seemed to be reflagging under the ISIS banner there. Are we seeing that regional draw or are they drawing from outside the region in north Africa, say? Then how does that compare to the Taliban? Are we going to have local versus foreign fighters? Is that going to continue to grow in Afghanistan, and will it be similar to what we see with al Nusra and ISIL that takes place in Syria?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am.

I think with ISIL, or Daesh, again particularly in the Nangarhar area, we have seen mostly internal Taliban that want to rebrand TTP, that want to rebrand. But there are reports of people, foreign

fighters, coming from outside of Afghanistan. I could not give you a good percentage or numbers, but we have seen increased reporting that there are some foreign fighters that come in that want to try to establish again a base there and try to bring in some sort of funding stream to build a base in Nangarhar. But I think they are a ways from that. Again, the Afghan forces, our forces continue to look at that.

I think the Taliban, if they have foreign fighter help, whether that is Uzbek, Chechen. We have seen pieces and parts of that up in the north. I think we have seen other reports from the Afghans that they see a lot more of the foreign fighters into the Badakhshan, into the Kunduz, into the Sar-e Pol area. But as far as numbers or an increase in foreign fighters, I do not think I could give that to you, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. What numbers are we looking at for ISIL right now and also with the Taliban? What numbers are in Afghanistan? Do you have any hard numbers on that? I know you said it is difficult to determine the number of recruits, but where are we?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, the numbers I would give you would be based on different reports I have seen. I could not give you how accurate that would be, but I think in open press what I have seen, anywhere between 1,000 and 3,000 on the Daesh. For years and years, the numbers of Taliban inside of Afghanistan has gone everywhere from 20,000 to 80,000. I think, hard to distinguish in there which people just sympathize with the Taliban and which ones are actually hard core Taliban, and the intel community continues to look at that.

But what I would say is that the Afghan Security Forces have really impacted the Taliban this year based on the number of casualties that I believe they have caused the Taliban.

Senator FISCHER. With the Afghan national police and also with the local police forces—we visited about that a little bit yesterday when you were in my office. What do you think are their biggest challenges, the biggest weaknesses that they have, and will they be able to become professional in moving forward as we assess what our position is going to be in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think for the police, again, the number one issue that I continue to stress with them is getting the right leadership. The police have several thousand that are untrained that provincial police chiefs have hired, and they have not gone through the requisite training. They are doing that to get them out on a checkpoint or get them into the fight because they believe they have been stressed in different areas. But they have got to get them into the right training to make sure they have that.

I think with the Afghan local police, these are the ones that have taken a lot of the casualties because they veered outside of what they were designed to do and that was designed to defend their local village. They were not designed to be 5 kilometers, 10 kilometers outside of that village to try to take on a lot of Taliban. They were not equipped and were not trained for that, but yet in some of the local areas, they have misutilized them by putting them on those checkpoints.

Again, I believe that training is the key for the Afghan police, but I think what we need to say here is that the police in many

cases are doing the same thing as the army. So in a counterinsurgency fight, they are fighting very, very tough like the army, and they are not manned and they are not equipped like the army.

Senator FISCHER. If the President would decide as one of the options out there to keep our forces in Afghanistan longer, what do you believe would be the reaction and the commitment of our NATO partners? Would they support that decision? Would they be able to maintain their contributions as well?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I think it would be country-dependent. We have 41 countries that are tied into a residence support right now. The ones that I have engaged with, for the most part, are very supportive and want to continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan either by contributing troops or providing financial support. But I think again once the United States makes the decision, we will see NATO come into that.

Senator FISCHER. So you believe there would be support from many NATO partners, also from the Afghan people if we would choose to remain and continue a mission to stabilize the country?

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely, yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Gillibrand?

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to continue the line of questioning about the incident we read about in the "New York Times" about young boys being abused by Afghan commanders, as well as women and girls. What is the military's policy when a service member becomes aware of an instance of abuse? There has been some discussion about what the policy actually is.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. What I said in a press release a week or so ago was that there is no policy that says disregard that. What our policy has said since 2011 is that you have to report instances of sexual abuse by the Afghan Security Forces up your chain command. So that is what I expect of all of our men and women serving in Afghanistan to be able to do.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So the article talked about service members who were disciplined who wanted to intervene or who reported up their chain of command. Have you investigated those instances?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, as I said earlier, those from the "New York Times" article—these are cases from 2010, 2011, and 2012 I believe. So, no, I did not have anything to do with those cases.

Any reports that would come to me I would make sure that we provided that to the Afghan Government as well. President Ghani has made it very clear that he has a policy that he does not tolerate that and he will prosecute that.

So the cases that you refer to are four or five, six years ago. I cannot speak to those.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So have you followed up, though, to see if those cases were handled properly?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I have not been involved in the 2010, 2011, or 2012 cases. No, ma'am.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So who should report to this committee about an investigation of those specific cases? Because if the policy

changed in 2011, then arguably the cases from 2011 and 2012, if true, were handled incorrectly. Who is doing that investigation?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I will have to take that for the record. I do not know.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Okay. Please report to the committee who is doing the investigation and when we will have the results because if those individuals did report this and were told to mind your own business, then obviously their commanders were not following the policy in 2011 and 2012.

[The information follows:]

Any suspicion of human rights abuses, including suspected sexual abuse of both adults and children must be immediately reported to the chain of command, regardless of who the alleged perpetrators or victims are.

The Department of Defense Inspector General may be best positioned to conduct such an investigation.

Senator GILLIBRAND. What was the policy before 2011?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, as I think Senator Cotton talked about—and I was there in 2002, 2003, 2010 myself. This is my third tour there. I have never seen a policy that did not report it. I would tell you that there has always been a policy that if you saw this, that you would report it. This is a fundamental value of our military to treat people with dignity and respect. So I cannot imagine somebody not doing that.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So why do you believe that the various troops have reported this were told it is their culture? Why is there an understanding by some troops that you do not intervene when it is their culture? Are they poorly trained or just unknowledgeable, or do you think commanders are getting it wrong in the field?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I cannot speak again for those individual cases, and I think those are disciplinary cases that are either completed or ongoing. I would tell you that all the forces I have been involved in absolutely understand what the requirement is. Again, as I reiterated earlier, I have asked all of our personnel currently in theater to go back and receive this training again to make sure that we have 100 percent so that we did not miss anybody.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So what would we do today? If it was reported that you hear screaming from Afghan military or Afghan troops, from commanders, from children, what would our soldiers do?

General CAMPBELL. Our soldiers should report that up their chain of command.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Then what does the chain of command do with that information?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, we would make sure that that information got to the right authorities within the Afghan Government, to the senior leadership in the Afghan—

Senator GILLIBRAND. So if the senior Afghan leadership said, yes, we are not going to do anything about it because it is our culture, what do we then do?

General CAMPBELL. The Afghan leadership that I deal with I do not think would say that. Again, I have talked to President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the senior MOI, MOD, the senior army and the police leaders. They absolutely understand this is not conduct. This

is criminal conduct and they understand that they have to do something about it and they want to hold people accountable. Are there going to be people that disregard that in Afghanistan just like you would have maybe in any other country, yes.

Senator GILLIBRAND. But you are saying then, though, that our policy is still not to intervene. What our policy is based on what you just said is we report it to the Afghanistan authorities, and if they choose to do nothing, we do nothing.

General CAMPBELL. No, I did not say that, ma'am.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So what do you do if they refuse to do something?

General CAMPBELL. Again, in the 14 months I have been there, I have not had a case come to me that I had to go back to the Afghan authorities and say you need to do something on this. I think that is a result of the Afghans understanding that they have to get after this. So I think they have improved in that area. So I have not had to go back and do that. But if something was brought through my chain of command to me that there was abuse of children—this is criminal conduct—I would make sure I went to the Afghans and said, you know, here is a report. You need to go check out this report. I would expect them to be able to do that. We work through our central function three and the rule of law folks that I have that continue to help provide train, advise, and assist in this area with our senior Afghans, with their military lawyers as well. So we would absolutely expect them to go do something. If they did not do something and there was credible evidence that something happened here, then I would raise that higher to the president, and I would demand that something has to be done or I will withhold this. There has to be conditions to this so that they understand that. Blaming it on culture is not the way that I think our forces have gone here.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So just to conclude, you are saying you would raise it to President Obama and try to make him engage.

General CAMPBELL. I would raise it to President Ghani.

Senator GILLIBRAND. President Ghani.

General CAMPBELL. I would raise it first to the Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior, the senior officials that I deal with. Again, as soon as this news article came out, I called President Ghani on this and said we got to make sure that—and before I even finished the sentence, President Ghani said that is absolutely criminal behavior. I will prosecute anyone that I find that has done this.

The very next day, I went to a National Security Council meeting. The president was there, Dr. Abdullah was there, the MOD, MOI, all the senior cabinet members were there. Before he started in his agenda of things that he had to get through, he raised this issue and he made sure that every minister understood that this behavior would not be tolerated. So I have no doubt that Afghans get this, and I have no doubt that our military personnel understand what is expected of them.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Tillis?

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General Campbell, welcome. The last time I saw you was in Afghanistan, and before that, it was before this committee back in February.

I do think that we have to go back and talk about a number of the positive things that have occurred as a result of our presence in Afghanistan. You did a great job of summarizing that back in February, life expectancies, the number of children in school, progress on protecting women and children. It is a great story, and but for America's presence, I do not think it would be a story that you would have been telling back in February.

I want to go back to this drawdown and something that I think you mentioned in February when we were talking with you earlier this year. You just do not wake up Monday morning and say I have got to bring down 1,000 troops and all the materials that go with them by the end of the month. It takes a lot of planning. I know that you have got a proposal to the President. He has given you flexibility, which is what has allowed you to keep the 9,800 there now. But at what point do you have to start taking actions for the material drawdown to hit the 2016 end-of-year target? I mean, we have got to be weeks or months away from you having to put a lot of those plans in place.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir. It becomes a matter of physics.

Senator TILLIS. How quickly do you have start—if the President does not make any change in decision, when do we start seeing material efforts to draw our troop forces down to the embassy presence in Kabul?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I said earlier, every single day we continue to descope all of our bases out there. So we are trying to get rid of unnecessary or stuff that was no longer required in theater.

Senator TILLIS. So you are effectively—I have got a couple of questions, so I apologize for being short.

So you are effectively drawing down based on—I mean, you are already taking the steps to draw down to something that we know will be less than 9,800. We just do not know what the number is.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I am. But I have also made sure that based on the courses of action that I have recommended, if we get a decision on that, it is not irreversible.

Senator TILLIS. Well, I think the administration needs to be crisp on this. I know you have provided it to your leadership, but this is not something that should take long. I think anybody who has followed the situation knows the President is going down a perilous path if he goes far off of what you already have in Afghanistan.

You mentioned something else, though, that I think is important that I have not heard you talk about. That is in 2017 the other funding streams that are at risk that are also an important part of the gains that we made and protecting those gains I think with other partners. Can you tell me about any progress or any concerns you have about that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think this is a very critical year coming up for 2016. They will meet at the Warsaw Conference the middle of next year, and that will determine all the donor nations for how much they will donate for 2018, 2019, and 2020 for Afghanistan.

Senator TILLIS. But that is critically—it is something that is still an open switch and something that is critically important if we are going to continue to build on our gains there. Would you agree with that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I do. I think again, having the international community have confidence in Afghanistan is important that we do not have donor fatigue there.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

You know, something else that I just want to reinforce that Senator Graham touched on—and he was trying to make the point that there was counterterrorism resources to help us do our job in the region. But what I think many of the American people do not understand is the value of the CT efforts with respect to threats in other areas of the region and potential threats to the homeland. This was the birthplace of the 9/11 attacks. There are bad people there who are trying to plot terrorist actions against Americans, whether it could be American installations abroad or right here in the homeland.

So getting down to an embassy presence only, we have heard you say that we would lose all of our counterterrorism presence in that region. Did I hear you correctly?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we would not have the ability to conduct counterterrorism as I do today if we were just based in Kabul.

Senator TILLIS. So based on the current plan, a plan that the administration is considering, we know it is going to be diminished, but it could almost all go away by the end of next year based on the current plans as you understand them today.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I said up front, the planning assumption in the current plan and glide slope that I am on is to go to about 1,000 by the end of 2016. Yes, sir.

Senator TILLIS. I think it is irresponsible and it is dangerous.

I appreciate the work that you are doing because I know that you probably have a different view. I respect the fact that you are going through your chain of command, but this President needs to understand he needs to be decisive and take different action or he is putting American interests at risk.

Thank you all for your service.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Manchin?

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General. I appreciate it.

I think what we are trying to get our hands around as far as should we stay, if we do stay, how many will stay, and what effect will that have. It goes back to the training and money we have spent and the amount of effort and time we have spent to train, how many people we have adequately to continue to retrain, or will they ever be able to take the training over themselves? Will ever trust them for that? How much money would that cost? It just goes on and on and on, as you know.

The bottom line is, do you think that Afghanistan is more stable and better prepared to take care of itself with our help or without our help and how much of our help than Iraq was? Because I think everyone is looking to the failed policies in Iraq and saying, okay, why would you repeat that? I think it is a different scenario as you said. The leadership in Afghanistan has a much more different

mindset and determined today than Iraq was when we made our decision to leave.

So if you can just give me just a little—I just heard you say about 1,000 is what you intend to recommend? Is that wrong?

General CAMPBELL. No, sir. A thousand is the current decision that we are on.

Senator MANCHIN. That is what we are on. We are on a glide path to 1,000 right now by 2016.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir, by the end of 2016. So that is the current plan. That is to go to a normal embassy presence that President Obama discussed back in 2014.

Senator MANCHIN. It would be hard to explain. Basically that would be the same glide path we had if not maybe a little difference than Iraq, and we saw the results of Iraq.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, Afghanistan is not Iraq.

Senator MANCHIN. I got you.

General CAMPBELL. You have a government that wants to have you there. You have a government that wants to have a counterterrorism capability. You have a fighting force that is very resilient. So I think there are so many differences between Iraq and Afghanistan.

Senator MANCHIN. Do you think that will change that recommendation of 1,000, that will be upped?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I provided courses of action and recommendations to my leadership that provides our President, our national senior leadership with options based on changes that have happened in the last two years.

Senator MANCHIN. The money we have spent right now—I mean, it is an unbelievable amount of money for training the Afghans. Do you expect that to continue, us pouring the money into there for them to be able to train their people?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we are working very hard to make sure we can continue to bring that money down.

Senator MANCHIN. Do they have any economy at all? Other than the war effort, is their economy sucking off the U.S. taxpayers? Do they have any ability to carry their own load financially?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, in the Chicago and the Tokyo Commitments, they are required to provide about \$500 million toward their national security, and each year we try to up that. Their economy is very, very tough, and President Ghani based on his background—and the World Bank is working that very hard. They had a very successful regional economic conference here two or three weeks ago in Afghanistan. There was just a Dubai conference where they had about 170- plus investors come to take a look at it the different airfields that we would leave. But it is going to take a long time to build their economy. We built an army in a place they cannot afford, sir. So they will be very dependent upon the international community to continue to provide that money for years to come.

Senator MANCHIN. General, finally, on the crash of the C-130, we had six service members. One was from Marshall County, West Virginia, Sergeant Ryan Hammond. I spoke to his parents and his wife. I told them I would try to get all the information I could of how this could have happened. We fly a lot of C-130's in our Guard,

as you know, and they are very capable, able aircraft. Do you have any information that you can share with me that I could share with the parents?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, my thoughts and prayers are with all the families. That very morning I went out to the crash site. Right after that, I went to Bagram and talked to all of our C-130 crews just to gather them in and talk to them. I did that. Again, an investigation is ongoing.

Senator MANCHIN. Was it on takeoff is when—the accident happened on takeoff.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir. Sir, I can talk to you one-on-one.

Senator MANCHIN. If you could, I would appreciate it, sir. If I could just give his family some relief and some closure.

General CAMPBELL. Okay, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sullivan?

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for your testimony. It is very enlightening and I know it is not easy to testify when you have options on the way forward and you are not sure the commander-in-chief agrees with you or not. So I think all of us appreciate your testimony.

I am going to follow up on a number of the previous questions you have been asked.

First, Senator Shaheen had asked about a UN investigation possibly into the hospital accident. Does the UN usually investigate major deliberate attacks on civilians in Afghanistan when they are conducted by the Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have not seen that in the past.

Senator SULLIVAN. I do not think they do typically.

So do you think it would seem fair or balanced if the UN conducted an investigation, which was clearly on something that was accidental—the hospital bombing—when they do not investigate deliberate Taliban killing of civilians? Do you think that would be viewed as fair, balanced, or something the command needs or would welcome?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I cannot comment on how the UN would do that. What I can comment on, as I said up front earlier, is I have complete trust and confidence in the team that we have to be thorough, transparent, and if there were mistakes made, we will make sure that those come out. If there are people we have to hold accountable, we will make sure we will do that. So I have every trust and confidence in the U.S. and the NATO investigation ongoing.

Senator SULLIVAN. I think most of us here do as well. I certainly do not think an additional investigation by the UN would be warranted or welcomed by this committee.

Let me ask the issue again—this is Senator Graham's and Senator Tillis' questions. You are very focused on managing risks. If we go forward with the current plan, does it increase the risks that the Taliban could take over the government in two or three or four years out?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I think we have another year and a half to continue to grow the Afghan Security Forces. If we went

down to 1,000 around Kabul, we would not have the ability to do train, advise, and assist—

Senator SULLIVAN. How about would it increase the risk that the homeland would be attacked? You know, Senator Tillis had some very good and direct questions that our CT capability would essentially end. Would that increase the risk—I am just talking incrementally increase the risk that the United States of America would be attacked.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, when the decision was made in 2014 by President Obama on the 1,000 going to a normalized embassy, CT was not one of the variables tied into that decision.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask just on the timelines. You know, I was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines a couple years ago. I was assigned to an OPT [Operational Planning Team] in Afghanistan by General Dunford. When they were looking at the force posture, our OPT was looking at the force posture that would take us from the OEF [Operation Enduring Freedom] mission to the Resolute Support mission. It was a little frustrating to be working on that because we had not gotten any guidance in terms of numbers from the senior military or actually senior civilian.

So you have said that you cannot talk about the options, but have you actually been given a timeline by which the White House is going to respond to your options and requests. As Senator Tillis mentioned, the clock is ticking. Have you either received information that you are going to be given guidance by a certain date or have you requested a certain date by which to be given guidance given that the clock is ticking on this very important issue?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as you know, on a planning perspective, as we lay out different courses of action, we have what we call DP's, or decision points. So in all of our courses of action, they would have a decision point of when that decision would have to be made—

Senator SULLIVAN. Are we approaching one—

General CAMPBELL.—so it would not be irreversible.

Senator SULLIVAN. Are we approaching one pretty soon?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I know that everybody in DOD, everybody in NSC [National Security Council] is working very hard to take a look at these different courses of action. As we have talked about, the retrograde and the time that it takes out, I think the senior leadership understands when those decision points are and when they have to get those out.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask a final question.

You know, having spent some time in Afghanistan and Pakistan, I know you would probably agree with this. There is a narrative in the region that in the 1980's we were very active there because of the Soviet invasion, and we were very helpful in terms of our assistance to people in those two different countries. There is a sense that in the 1990's we, quote, abandoned the region. I think that is a very powerful narrative. I do not know if you have seen it there, but I certainly have seen it there when I have been out in that part of the world.

You mentioned—and I think it is really important testimony today—that we are overwhelmingly welcome, as you mentioned, by the civilian population, by the Afghan leadership. Do you think if

we draw down to just an embassy force, which is kind of what we have in the rest of the world, that we would once again resurrect this idea of abandoning the region, of abandoning the people there, the governments there? If that were the case, how do you think that would impact America's national security if in the part of the world that is really the heart of the battle against al-Qaeda and other places, the heart of the world that brought us 9/11, that we were viewed once again as unreliable and having abandoned the region, which is a narrative that is very powerful still in that region? Do you think that narrative would be resurrected, and how do you think that would impact our national security?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have been tied up with Afghanistan for many years, and I think anybody in the military would tell you presence equals influence. So the ability to continue to provide train, advise, assist to our Afghan partners, to continue to improve upon their capability is what any military person would want to tell you. Again, I said that the Afghan people continue to want to have a coalition presence. They understand the impact that that has for them. So that is what they want. They will continue to want that I believe unless we do something that dissuades them from that.

But we have come a long way there, and a lot of this has to do with this new national unity government. Remember, they understand, different from where President Karzai was, that we have provided a lot blood, sweat, and tears here, that many of our men and women provided the ultimate sacrifice, we have expended a lot of money, and they want to make sure that they do not let us down here as well.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ernst?

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, General Campbell, for being here, and thank you for your outstanding service and that of your men and women as well. I do appreciate it very, very much, as do my constituents.

I am going to go back to a couple points. They have been talked about many, many times already this morning, General.

But going back to the sexual assault, the sexual abuses by the Afghan National Security Forces against the Afghans, particularly the young boys, it seems that many of the folks that I have talked to that have served in that region, American soldiers, it was common knowledge that this was happening. I do not believe that there was a DOD policy that we turn a blind eye. As a matter of fact, you have said since 2011 there has been a policy in place, educational materials, classes, so forth. But there may have been kind of an unofficial "do nothing" policy. We are starting to see that corrected as it comes to light. But it does affect the men and women that serve with us in our forces and how they operate with the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces]. I mean, that is an issue, a trust issue.

There was a 2011 report by Dr. Jeffrey Bordin. He was a Red Team political and military behavioral scientist. He supported half of the RC-East [Regional Command-East, Bagram]. He commented—and I am quoting—several United States soldiers re-

ported that they had observed many cases of child abuse and neglect that infuriated them and alienated them from the civilian populace, and that there were numerous accounts of Canadian troops in Kandahar complaining about the rampant sexual abuse of children they have witnessed ANSF personnel commit, including the cultural practice of bacha bazi, as well as the raping and sodomizing of little boys. End quote.

Has any service member or civilian under your command now or during your previous command of RC East reported up the chain an allegation of an ANSF sexual assault against Afghan children?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, on this current tour, I have not had any reports. I do not remember any specifically from 2010, 2011. I can go back and try to look at records for that.

Again, I cannot stress enough that this is about discipline. This is about discipline of our men and women understanding what right and wrong is, about treating people with dignity and respect. As I said, even the Afghans, President Ghani all the way down understand how important this is, and they have reiterated to me that this is serious and that if he knows of people that violate this, that conduct this criminal activity, they will be prosecuted. We have reiterated to our men and women again that if you see this, you have to report this.

What you are referring to again is 2010, 2011, maybe 2012 reports. I think a lot has happened in that time frame. I cannot comment on a particular company level or battalion level unit that within that unit that the members of that unit felt that it was okay to do some of that. Ma'am, I cannot comment on that. I do not know that.

Senator ERNST. General, do you know of any instances where an Afghan soldier was held accountable or an Afghan leader and any disciplinary actions on their behalf?

General CAMPBELL. I know that I have seen some disciplinary actions over the last year in gross violation of human rights when it has come to abusing of soldiers, abusing of other members in the command. I have not seen it with the sexual assault of children, though, in the last 14 months.

Senator ERNST. Okay. Thank you. I think it is important that we stress not only is it unacceptable amongst our own ranks, but also those that we are serving with from that region. So thank you for that.

Going back also to capabilities and conditions, I am glad we look at that rather than the time frame. If we look at keeping 10,000 troops on ground in Afghanistan, if there is a decision point where we keep 5,000 troops on ground or zero troops on ground, is there any way that you can just broadly describe the conditions that must exist on the ground before we get to those points? Do we leave it the same as we have now at 10,000? Or at what point could we get down to 5,000 and so forth? Just very broadly. Thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Again, ma'am, I think based on what has happened since the President made his decision in 2014 to go down to 1,000 around the embassy, we have taken a look at all the conditions, and based on those, I have provided options to take a look at the mission sets that we want to do in the future. I believe we

still have to do train, advise, and assist at certain levels for aviation, for logistics, for intelligence, for special operating forces. I believe that we have to have a counterterrorism capability and you need a certain amount of forces to be able to do that, so those are based on what has happened in the last couple years and as we look to the future, and so conditions on the ground have changed since 2014.

I am appreciative that the senior leadership both at Joint Staff OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] and I believe the White House are looking at these options, understanding that conditions on the ground have changed and we have to look at the pros and cons of this and move forward.

Senator ERNST. Thank you. My time has expired, but I do want to thank you for your valuable, no BS assessment of what is going on over there. We truly do need that. So thank you, General. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Blumenthal?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for your extraordinary service to our Nation and particularly in your present role.

I have a question about Daesh, as I think you have referred to it, interacting with the Taliban and with other factional parts of our opponents there. How real a threat do you regard Daesh as being compared to the Taliban, and could any sort of negotiated solution involving the Taliban also involve those other factions, including Daesh?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, I think Daesh, ISIL, Khorasan Province, ISIL KP, different names for—everybody is looking at this to make sure that it cannot grow, it cannot build to a level to do something like you have seen in Iraq and Syria. Daesh and Taliban have different philosophies. They are fighting each other. I do believe that within the ranks of the Taliban, that there are reconcilables that understand that the only way to end this is a political solution and they want to be part of that inside of Afghanistan. Inside of the Taliban, there will be a certain amount—I have upwards of 20 to 30 percent—that are irreconcilable, Haqqani probably being one. I do not believe from what I know of Daesh that they are in the reconcilable branch. They would be irreconcilable I would believe at this point in time.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Are you satisfied with the efforts that have been made toward reconciliation and negotiation so far?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I am not satisfied because we have not got to it. So I mean, I think there is a lot more that can be done by both Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Taliban, quite frankly. So I am not satisfied. We got to continue to move toward a peace process.

The first day that President Ghani took office in his inauguration speech, he talked about bringing in the Taliban, you know, that you have to be part of this peace process. You cannot continue to kill fellow Afghans. You cannot continue to kill fellow Muslims, and so be part of the peace process. I think he genuinely wants that to happen and is doing everything he can to try to push that, to include expending a lot of political capital on Pakistan throughout

the last several months to drive them to help on reducing the violence inside of Afghanistan to drive toward reconciliation.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Is that goal of reconciliation one of the factors you consider in your recommendation as to what size and scope the American presence there should be and over what period of time? I think Senator Graham asked you what victory would look like, what defeat would look like, but what your answers suggest is that there is some different kind of picture that it would look like.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think there are a lot of different audiences out there that understanding a continued presence by the coalition would have an impact on. It would have an impact on President Ghani. It would have an impact on the Afghan Security Forces and their morale. It would have an impact on the Afghan people. It would make a great impact on the Taliban. It would make an impact on Pakistan and it would make an impact on NATO. I think all of those audiences in differing levels would—a decision to continue to have a larger number of coalition forces, not only the U.S. but the coalition, would have huge impact there.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. You make reference in your testimony to two other trends that I think are concerning, the brain drain and the loss of economic resources, the drain on capital. Has that increased in pace and seriousness?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, there have been a lot of reports of a lot of Afghans that are trying to leave the country. As a lot of the countries in that area, the refugee issue is going into Europe. A lot of those are Afghans who are trying to leave. Both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah have reached out to the younger generation asking them to stay, to continue to work in Afghanistan, so there has been, for lack of a better term, a drain on the human capital piece here that I know they want to keep.

The future of Afghanistan is two things I believe. It is the Afghan Security Forces and then it is this younger generation of Afghans that are tired of 35-40-plus years of war.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. One can hardly blame them given the impact on their futures, economic and social and family. Longer term, the success of Afghanistan as a country is really dependent on the political factors and the social and economic factors that are hopefully supported and promoted by the American presence there as well.

Thank you very much, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sessions?

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Well, this is a very serious time for us. I would say to Senator Blumenthal's good remarks—I would note that it is also, in the situation we are in Afghanistan, a military situation also that can impact the outcome. Without it, it will impact the outcome. Is that correct, General?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, you are talking about the Afghan Security Forces?

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I am talking about our presence and Afghan presence. There are some battles to be fought. Military con-

flict is involved and is going to continue to be involved for some time. Is it not?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, Afghanistan will continue to be a very dangerous place, and the Afghan Security Forces will continue to be challenged in many areas. Yes, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, the President has said he would like to negotiate with the Taliban, and that has been attempted for a number of years today. Is it harder or easier to negotiate with the Taliban a reasonable solution and a peaceful solution to Iraq if we made it absolutely clear we have an irrevocable commitment to leave on a certain date?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the reconciliation piece again will be Afghan-led by the Afghan Government. But you absolutely want to operate from a position of strength as you do that. Yes, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. I know it is a difficult question for you, but I would just translate that to say you need to have a military strength, and if it is not there, it gives confidence to the Taliban to believe if they wait us out, then they can be successful militarily. Even though the people of Afghanistan do not prefer Taliban domination, we are setting this up, I am afraid, to allow that to happen. It is a very dicey thing.

In terms of going to 1,000 troops, well, this is really not a military presence. Is it? This is just simply an embassy security force essentially.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the goal right now or the intent is to have a security cooperation office. That would be a little bit more than just embassy force protection. It would also have the ability to provide oversight of foreign military sales, oversight of the money that will have to continue to come into Afghanistan as well.

Senator SESSIONS. It is essentially not a fighting force. It signals that we are completely out of the fight militarily, I would suggest. I think that is a dangerous signal to be sending.

So you are talking about we need to train, assist, and advise more. Is it your recommendation that that capability extend beyond the end of 2016?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have said that the Afghans will continue to need support in many areas that we have identified, that they will need continued help, aviation, logistics, intelligence. So, yes, sir, train, advise, and assist in those areas would require a little bit longer time.

Senator SESSIONS. To what extent do they have rotary aircraft, helicopter, capability for evacuation of wounded or resupplying remote forces or otherwise taking the battle to the enemy? Does that remain a problem?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, their close air support capability is just starting to grow. They have relied on MI-35. They only had five when we started the fighting season. They are down to two. They do have MI-17's that provide them the ability to move wounded, to provide resupplies. They have tried to put forward firing machine guns, rocket pods on those to give them a little bit better close air support capability. We have brought in an MD-530, a little attack bird, that operates in different areas of Afghanistan to give them a little bit better close air support capability. They will have a

fixed-wing capability starting at the end of this year but into 2017, 2018 before it is really online.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I am worried about it. In your best military judgment, what additional risk are we undertaking if our goal is, as you said it is, to create a stable environment in Iraq where people can go to school and have a chance for prosperity? What risks are we incurring by setting a firm date of ending by the end of 2016?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as I think it has been mentioned many times before—maybe not in this hearing today, but that whenever you put a time on something, that always gives somebody the ability to manipulate that, whether that is the enemy, whether that is the friendly forces. I think the options that we have provided to the senior leadership is looking at different outcomes that we want to have based on what has changed over the last two years.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, the President of the United States has made some very unwise decisions in this regard. He is complicating the life of the people in Afghanistan and certainly making your life a lot more difficult in my opinion. I do not want to make a partisan argument here. I am not saying that. We had a deep commitment to Afghanistan. We had an entire international coalition on that part, bipartisan. This was the good war. I think it is possible to achieve the goal you have stated. Do you believe it is possible?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would not be there if I did not think it was possible.

Senator SESSIONS. I agree. I think to completely move out and radically reduce our presence incredibly risk the gains our men and women have fought so hard for, and allies around the world have helped us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your leadership. I think we would do well to listen to your advice. We should have listened in Iraq, and we need to listen in Afghanistan.

Chairman MCCAIN. I thank you, Senator.

General, as I understand it, the present plan is that there would be increased reductions beginning in January. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, to get down to—

Chairman MCCAIN. The embassy-centric—

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. You would begin those withdrawals in January.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would have to go back and look at exact numbers.

Chairman MCCAIN. Roughly.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. So here we are in October, and the plan now is to begin so that by 2017 we are down to a, quote, embassy-centric force. That is the present plan. Right?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is the present plan. Yes, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. So here we are sitting here in October and you do not know whether to begin three months from now a rather significant withdrawal of troops, which requires a lot of planning, a lot of logistics, a lot of assets. Here we are sitting here in October and you have been asked to provide the White House with a, quote, series of options. Is that right?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I provided options, and in those options, I have accounted for the glide slope that I have to take to be able to get down to the required numbers there. Yes, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. In addition, you have not been asked for the best option, the one option, that would secure Iraq, succeed in a mission in the most effective and efficient fashion. Instead, you have been asked for, quote, options. Is that right? Most of us were taught to believe there is only one option for victory and success of a mission. But you have been asked for options. Dare I ask how many?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I am not sure I have been asked for options really. What I have done is taken a look since I have been on the ground, the last 14 months, and seen where the Afghans Security Forces are at in different metrics that we take a look at in order to ensure that they have the right capabilities—

Chairman MCCAIN. But is there only one option to achieve the most efficient, the most effective, least in danger of further casualties? I do not understand this. I thought that usually—my study of warfare is you develop a strategy and you implement the strategy with a plan. You do not say, hey, we are going to have five or six plans here, five or six options that we are going to pursue. Most Commanders-in-Chief that I have ever known of have called their military people together and said give me the best strategy that we can employ and what is necessary to achieve the goals of that strategy. Am I wrong somewhere? Am I getting something wrong?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I could not comment if you are getting something wrong. Sir, what I would say again is that I have provided some options to take a look—

Chairman MCCAIN. You have provided the options.

General CAMPBELL.—train, advise, assist and a CT capability in Afghanistan post 2016.

Chairman MCCAIN. So you have given them, quote, options, plural. Right? Not what most Commanders-in-Chief that I have ever experienced. Give me the strategy, give me the plan, see what it takes so that we can succeed in the best and most efficient way to accomplish our goal. We all know what a goal is. It is a free, stable, democratic Afghanistan.

Well, it is curious times. But, of course, those of us that make any criticism apparently do not know a lot of the things that the President of the United States knows.

So I thank you, General. You are doing as you were ordered, and I have observed firsthand your leadership in Afghanistan on several occasions, and I think it is outstanding. Obviously, I am not complaining to you because you are playing the hand you are dealt.

I just do not understand why this administration does not understand that if we do what is presently planned to begin in three months from now, that we will see the Iraq movie again. There is no doubt in anybody's mind about that. Now we see a burgeoning or embryonic ISIS. We see the Iranians providing weapons and more for the Taliban. We just saw an attack on one of the major cities in a part of Afghanistan that we up till now had believed the most secure. It seems to me that would lend some urgency to action which would reverse what is clearly a deteriorating trend.

Finally, General, we look forward to the results of your investigation of this terrible tragedy of the attack on the hospital. I want to emphasize—I know speak for all of my colleagues—that we deeply regret this tragedy. We do point out from time to time about the fog of war.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER WICKER

PAKISTAN

General Campbell, I wanted to ask you some brief questions about Pakistan—a partner in the region with whom we have a complex relationship.

First, let me touch on the increasingly positive working relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan:

One such example is President Ghani Pakistan Prime Minister Sharif to condemn the September 18 Taliban attack on Badaber Air Base in Pakistan that killed 29. According to press reports, President Ghani told Prime Minister Sharif that Afghanistan will “never allow its land to be used against Pakistan by anyone.”

1. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, what is your assessment of the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan now?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

2. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, is it fair to say that the relationship has improved since President Karzai left office?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

Second, let me ask you about terrorist groups that operate in and out of Pakistan: The Haqqani network maintains a safe haven in North Waziristan, Pakistan, across Afghanistan’s southeastern border. The Institute for the Study of War (Fred Kagan) refers to this Pakistani Taliban terrorist group as one that “has the backing of elements within the Pakistani security establishment.”

3. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, how would you assess the current state of the Haqqani network?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

4. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, are the Pakistanis doing enough against the Haqqani Network in your opinion? What more should they be doing?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

5. Senator WICKER. General Campbell, what is the level of cooperation between you and your counterparts in the Pakistan security apparatus?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KELLY AYOTTE

WITHDRAWAL/TRANSITION PLAN IN AFGHANISTAN

6. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in your prepared statement for today’s hearing, you wrote that the Afghans “still require broad support” and “cannot handle the fight alone in this stage of their development.” Do you believe that this will change by the end of 2016?

General CAMPBELL. By the end of 2016, the Afghan National Defense Security Forces will be much farther along than they are today. However, they will still require some level of support in developing their systems and processes necessary to run a modern, professional army and police force. The majority of that assistance will need to address the long term capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, and combined arms operations, and logistics, sustainment, and maintenance.

7. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, based on your multiple tours in Afghanistan and your current position as commander there, do you believe that the United

States can protect its interests in Afghanistan and the region if we drawdown to “a normal embassy presence in Kabul” by the end of 2016?

General CAMPBELL. I presented several options to my chain of command and the risks associated with each option. One of these options presented to my chain of command was “a normal embassy presence in Kabul” at the end of 2016. The normal embassy presence in Kabul option presented significant risks in terms of United States interests and Afghanistan’s long term security viability.

CAPABILITY GAPS OF AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES

8. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in your prepared statement for today’s hearing, you identify critical gaps in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. Are we making progress in rectifying those shortcomings? What are the primary obstacles to closing those gaps more quickly?

General CAMPBELL. The critical capability gaps in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) are in the areas of aviation, combined arms, intelligence, logistics, maintenance, and sustainment.

Yes, we continue to make progress in rectifying the critical capability gaps. The primary obstacle to closing these gaps more quickly is building the human capital required in the ANDSF. While Resolute Support will pursue limited equipment solutions, particularly in aviation; the primary tool for addressing these capability gaps is in human capital development and requires sustained Security Force Assistance.

Aviation. The primary obstacles to closing the aviation gap more quickly are the acquisition of the necessary aircraft and the human capital required to operate and sustain the aircraft. The train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission is critical to maximize the employment of limited assets and building human capital.

Combined Arms. Leadership is key to combined arms integration. Continued TAA to build the human capital and train the leadership is the most critical obstacle to improved combined arms operations and will take time.

Intelligence. By the end of 2016, additional Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) collection equipment and systems will be fielded to the ANDSF. Human capital remains the most critical piece to successful implementation and synchronization of intelligence networks and the primary obstacle to producing actionable intelligence for the ANDSF.

Logistics, Sustainment, and Maintenance. Resolute Support is improving logistics and sustainment management. Beginning in 2017, the National Maintenance Strategy will provide an enduring, affordable materiel readiness capability to build upon Afghan ownership of sustainment. TAA during this period is critical to developing the human capital necessary for managing these initiatives, augmented by embedding highly educated Afghan civilians in key sustainment organizations.

9. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, how much longer will the Afghans require assistance in those gap areas? Will those gaps be filled by the end of 2016?

General CAMPBELL. The critical capability gaps in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) are in the areas of aviation, combined arms, intelligence, logistics, maintenance, and sustainment. While we continue to make progress in rectifying the critical capability gaps, the ANDSF are projected to require assistance in some gap areas as far out as 2024. The primary obstacle to closing these gaps more quickly is building the human capital required in the ANDSF. Resolute Support will pursue limited equipment solutions, particularly in aviation; however, the primary tool for addressing these capability gaps is human capital development and requires sustained Security Force Assistance.

10. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in light of the continuing capability shortfalls, if the United States-led coalition withdraws or goes to a normal embassy presence in Kabul before those capability gaps are filled, what do you believe would be the consequence in Afghanistan—not only for the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan government, but for the United States interests there as well?

General CAMPBELL. The Afghans would face significant challenges if their key capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, combined arms operations, and logistics, maintenance, and sustainment were not filled before the United States reduced to an Embassy presence. Our objective is to develop the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) into a capable and reliable counterterrorism (CT) partner through the train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission. A critical part of that mission is to fill the key capability gaps. Removing U.S. and Coalition enablers without closing the ANDSF’s key capabilities gaps would erode the ANDSF’s ability to fight the insurgency. This may jeopardize the stability of the National Unity Government which would not be in the interests of the United States and the Coalition.

AL QAEDA AND THE THREAT TO THE HOMELAND

11. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in your prepared statement you write that “It will be critical that, in coordination with our Afghan partners, our comprehensive counter-terrorism efforts continue to apply pressure against the al-Qaeda network in order to prevent its regeneration, and the corresponding threat it represents to our homeland.” Given this reality, how important is it that the United States maintain a robust counter-terrorism capability in Afghanistan beyond 2016?
General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND WOMEN IN THE ANSF

12. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in your prepared statement you note that both President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah are “supportive of the rights of women and their empowerment in Afghan society.” From your perspective, why is it valuable to have more Afghan women serving not only as police, but also in the Afghan National Army?

General CAMPBELL. Having women serving in the Afghan National Army (ANA) as well as the Afghan National Police (ANP), but so is valuable to build professional forces by leveraging the entire population, increasing the end strength of the ANDSF, and providing better representation of the Afghan society as a whole. More women in the ANA would serve to balance the force and increase the opportunities for women in Afghanistan. Additionally, recruiting and training women in operational support roles will provide continuity and institutional knowledge in career areas such as finance, human resources, communications, logistics, and administration.

13. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in Afghanistan, can women play a unique and helpful role conducting searches and other activities in the police and Army that typically men can’t?

General CAMPBELL. In Afghanistan, women make up approximately 50 percent of the population; therefore, women can play a play a unique and helpful role in areas that men typically cannot. For example, cultural barriers that exist between men and women, prevent men from entering rooms of homes occupied by women and children. Women play helpful roles in both cordoning off the women and children and conducting searches. The ability of female Afghan National Defense Security Forces to question both women and children on the activities of male occupants at a residence often pays dividends that support the mission.

TALIBAN STRIKES

14. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, according to DoD’s June report to Congress, “United States forces no longer target individuals solely on the basis of their membership in the Taliban.” Is that statement correct?

General CAMPBELL. Yes.

15. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, if we became aware of a meeting of Taliban leaders tonight to plan attacks against Afghan forces and the Afghan military was unable to respond in time to mount a strike, is it United States policy in Afghanistan to not conduct a strike against that meeting?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

TALIBAN RESILIENCE

16. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, what is the primary reason that the Taliban-led insurgency remains resilient?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

17. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, after so much time and the investment of so much there, what does the resilience of the Taliban insurgency tell us about the success of our strategy?

General CAMPBELL. The U.S., as an external actor, cannot defeat the insurgency on our own. Rather, we must enable and empower the legitimate government of Afghanistan to fight on behalf of and with the support of its own population. The National Unity Government (NUG) is the willing partner we have lacked for so long. While the NUG and Afghan Security Institutions must continue to develop and grow; great strides have already been made.

This fighting season has been fundamentally different. A myriad of factors to include the sharp drop in our Coalition numbers and enabler support; the effects of Pakistan Military operations along the border; and the emergence of the Islamic

State-Khorasan Province (IS–KP) have all played a role in making this year an exceptionally challenging one for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Placed in this context, their overall mixed performance is understandable. Nonetheless, the ANDSF have still shown commendable resilience in the face of these challenges and the resultant increased casualties. They are still holding, and they have not fractured.

Despite the perceived resilience of the Taliban insurgency, the Afghans have demonstrated a willingness and ability to take the lead. Their security forces remain committed in the face of a determined enemy and they have shown that they still merit our support. We must demonstrate that the NUG has our full trust and backing. Maintaining our presence ensures our influence across all instruments of power (diplomatic, information, military, and economic).

“NORMAL EMBASSY PRESENCE” AND TRAIN, ADVISE, AND ASSIST MISSION

18. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, how important have the Train, Advise, and Assist commands (TAACs) been in carrying out the train advise and assist mission in Afghanistan that is critical to building independent Afghan military capabilities?

General CAMPBELL. The TAACs are critical in carrying out the train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission at the corps level by mentoring their counterparts as the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) have taken the lead and assumed full responsibility for their security. Their presence provides Resolute Support with necessary situational awareness across Afghanistan. The TAACs provide a robust advising capability to all of the required essential functions at the corps level; feedback to the senior leaders in the ANDSF; and linkages to the Afghan Security Institutions.

19. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, if the United States transitions to a “normal embassy presence in Kabul” at the end of 2016, would this end or dramatically reduce the size and effectiveness of the United States-led train, advise, and assist commands in Jalalabad and Kandahar? Would Italy in the west and Germany in the north likely follow our example and end their TAAC’s?

General CAMPBELL. A “normal embassy presence in Kabul” does not support the personnel needed for any Train, Advise, Assist Command (TAAC) including those stationed in Jalalabad and Kandahar. It is likely, but not certain, that Italy and Germany would follow suit without some of the support that the United States provides.

20. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, would a United States transition to a “normal embassy presence in Kabul” hurt our ability to build Afghan security force capabilities and assess and support the relationship between the ministries and fielded forces?

General CAMPBELL. A “normal embassy presence in Kabul” would significantly hinder the ability of United States forces to help build and assess the capability of Afghan security forces. There would be no Coalition regional presence to continue training, advising and assisting the Afghan fielded forces at the Afghan National Army corps or provincial police headquarters level. We would greatly reduce our situation awareness and limit the relationship building between the ministries and those forces.

DEFENSE MINISTER VACANCY

21. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, in your prepared statement, you note that the Acting Minister of Defense continues to serve in spite of the Afghan Parliament’s rejection of his candidacy. What has been the impact of not having a formal Defense Minister in place?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

ADVANCED PRECISION KILL WEAPON SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

22. Senator AYOTTE. General Campbell, I understand that Advanced Precision Kill Weapon Systems (APKWS) has performed well in Afghanistan against a variety of targets, both as a complement to and a substitute for Hellfire. How would you rate APKWS’ performance in the theater?

General CAMPBELL. A “normal embassy presence in Kabul” would significantly hinder the ability of United States forces to help build and assess the capability of Afghan security forces. There would be no Coalition regional presence to continue training, advising and assisting the Afghan fielded forces at the Afghan National Army corps or provincial police headquarters level. We would greatly reduce our sit-

uation awareness and limit the relationship building between the ministries and those forces.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM REDUCTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

23. Senator SULLIVAN. General Campbell, yes or no, will the lack of a forward-deployed United States counterterrorism presence in Afghanistan increase risk to the United States homeland over the next 2–3 years?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

24. Senator SULLIVAN. General Campbell, if yes, what specific ways and to what extent would the lack of a forward-deployed U.S. counterterrorism presence increase risk?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MIKE LEE

AFGHANISTAN THREATS

25. Senator LEE. General Campbell, over the last few weeks this committee has held several hearings on the United States' strategy to address various crises in the Middle East. These hearings have been very informative, but I have become concerned that senior civilian and military leaders are giving the impression that such strategies are more successful than facts on the ground would suggest.

We know that since 2014 the Taliban have made gains in several areas of southern and northern Afghanistan and has shown they have the capability to conduct major operations against regional capitals. On August 4 you stated at the Brookings Institution [QUOTE]:

"[The Taliban] are not taking territory or meeting any strategic goals that they set out for themselves initially. They are going to take a district and they are going to lose it. They are going to take another district center and lost it too."

This contradiction casts serious doubt over suggestions that our efforts to stabilize Afghanistan have been successful, as we have seen this borne out in places like Kunduz, where the Taliban captured the city then retreated, then captured another area in the span of one week.

Do you see an end to this trend, or is this a cycle that will continue to play out for the foreseeable future?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

26. Senator LEE. General Campbell, even if the Afghan Government is unable to completely secure the country from the Taliban as desired, and provide the services that you described to Senator Graham as what 'winning' looks like, can you compare our ability at this point to our ability in 2001 to detect and disrupt any terrorist organizations that try to establish a base in Afghanistan and threaten the United States homeland?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

27. Senator LEE. General Campbell, the original mission of coalition forces in Afghanistan, which started nearly 15 years ago, was to find and deny safe haven to those who planned and supported the September 11th attacks.

What is the current state of the Al-Qaeda organization that planned and carried out those attacks from their base in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

28. Senator LEE. General Campbell, what is the ability of Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda remnants to reconstitute themselves in Afghanistan if we remain on the timetable that President Obama has laid out? Specifically, do you think Al-Qaeda or any affiliated organization has the capability to develop a base in Afghanistan again?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

29. Senator LEE. General Campbell, in your assessment of the ANSF's capabilities and performance during the last fighting season, how do you measure and judge what General Martin Dempsey has called "the will to fight" in other foreign militaries that we have trained? More broadly, how do you assess the willingness and

commitment of the Afghan people to support the current political structure and avoid regressing into ethnic-based factions?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]

30. Senator LEE. General Campbell, despite billions of dollars spent on training, weapons, and the continued presence of air and ground support for the ANSF, our Afghan partners cannot seem to contain the Taliban, which has drastically less funding, no aerial capabilities, and no international coalition providing assistance. I understand what President Obama's ideal outcome is, but please give us a realistic picture of how many more years and how much more funding will be required from the United States military and American taxpayers before the Afghan government becomes self-sustaining?

General CAMPBELL. The Afghans will require United States funding for years to come. Since FY 2012, the total annual cost of the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF), at a force level has decreased from approximately \$12.3 billion to roughly \$5.0 billion for FY 2016. The United States Government, the National Unity Government, and international partners work closely together to reduce ANDSF costs through funding conditionality, the divestiture of excess facilities, and limited Afghan-led "on-budget" contracting where appropriate. These efforts have reduced ANDSF costs without diminishing its capacity to maintain its effectiveness.

The ultimate goal is a total ANDSF cost of \$4.1 billion as agreed upon at the 2012 Chicago Summit. Any move to reduce funding below \$4.1 billion will require significant cuts to ANDSF force structure. Barring a substantial improvement in the security situation, wargaming efforts predict that drastic cuts will negatively impact ANDSF effectiveness and increase risk to the enduring security and stability of Afghanistan. Striking a delicate balance between ANDSF effectiveness and ANDSF affordability will require close cooperation and collaborative planning moving forward.

The Afghan government committed to providing \$500 million in support of the ANDSF starting in 2015; however the 2015 Afghan national budget only allocates \$419 million against this pledge. Although short of its commitment, \$419 million represents almost 19 percent of the overall contribution to the Afghan budget—a large share compared to the funding most countries typically provide for national security. This is especially remarkable given that Afghanistan is currently in a precarious fiscal position further strained by stagnating revenues thus far this year. The country faces the dual challenge of restoring confidence in its economic prospects and addressing formidable mid-term development challenges. Ambitious economic reforms and implementation of measures to mobilize revenue and strengthen the financial sector will go a long way in bringing the country on a sustainable path for development. If security conditions should deteriorate, however, due to the government's inability to field the right force/force structure mix to meet the current or future threat, this could slow private sector investment, reduce the country's revenue base, and the subsequent gross domestic product needed to adequately fund the ANDSF. This would extend Afghanistan's reliance on international donor aid for an even longer timeframe beyond what was envisioned at the Chicago Summit.

31. Senator LEE. General Campbell, can you describe for the committee the strength, capability, and composition of the Taliban forces? How are they replenishing their force structure, weapons and equipment, and funding?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

32. Senator LEE. General Campbell, does the Taliban seek to divide and control parts of Afghanistan, retake power over the entire country, or come to some sort of reconciliation with the current government in Kabul?

General CAMPBELL. [For Official Use Only.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

HOSPITAL BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN

33. Senator GILLIBRAND. General Campbell, news reports suggest that the bombing of the hospital on Saturday was requested by Afghan forces. Do we verify requests for targeting by the Afghan forces to avoid tragic accidents like the one this weekend? If so, how?

General CAMPBELL. [Deleted.]