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AFGHANISTAN: THE RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC REVIEW, PART I

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
DECEMBER 3, 2009

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AFGHANISTAN: THE RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC REVIEW, PART I

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, December 3, 2009.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:05 p.m., in room 210, Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Our hearing will come to order.

I might state first that we have some votes that may come up very quickly. I hope we can get them over with and back here just as soon as possible, and I ask our witnesses to bear with us. We have no control over those.

I would also urge our members to strictly follow the gavel on the five-minute rule so as many people can ask questions as possible.

Today, the House Armed Services Committee meets to receive testimony on "Afghanistan: Results of the Strategic Review." Our witnesses are the Honorable Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense; Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Honorable Jacob Lew, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

We welcome each of you, and thank you for being with us today.

Let me begin by commending the President for his decision to commit an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to carry out a strategy for success in Afghanistan. In a lengthy letter and in private conversations, I urged the President to listen to our military leaders, and he did. I am pleased that the President agreed to provide General McChrystal with the time and resources needed to get Afghanistan right.

Al Qaeda was and continues to present a serious threat to the United States. Their most egregious attack was September 11th, but it was hardly the only one. While the threat posed by al Qaeda has been lessened by our actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it has hardly dissipated. In the long term, I do not believe that we can disrupt and defeat al Qaeda if we cannot deny them the use of Afghanistan as a safe haven.

Unfortunately, shortly after deposing the Taliban regime and forcing al Qaeda out of Afghanistan in this war we were forced to wage, the previous administration took our eye off the ball, choosing to invade Iraq. Due to the preoccupation with Iraq, the war in

Afghanistan was under-resourced, with essentially no strategy for seven years. Unsurprisingly, the threat came back.

President Obama's decision to deploy another 30,000 troops in addition to the troops he ordered to Afghanistan earlier this year demonstrates that he understands the seriousness of the threat and the importance of the mission.

In January 2009, there were about 33,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. In about seven months, there will be three times that. Media reports have focused a lot on these numbers, but more important than numbers is strategy. As General McChrystal pointed out, without a change in strategy, all the troops in the world won't matter.

President Obama conducted a rigorous review of the situation in Afghanistan, and it resulted in a realistic strategy designed to seize the initiative from the insurgency, build the Afghan capacity, and ultimately to allow the Afghan government and security forces to take the lead in fighting this war.

The President has appropriately called for additional troops from our allies. This is not just America's war, and we must not allow it to become that. Perhaps more importantly, the President has put the burden of reform squarely on the Afghan government, laying out clear expectations of performance and promising support for those ministries and local leaders that perform.

The President has also rightly acknowledged the importance of Pakistan. That country remains a challenge, playing a key and often contradictory role in the region. Pakistan, by assisting in the pursuit of the al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban leaders, could help bring the war in Afghanistan to an end. Conversely, if Pakistan were to return to its old habits of supporting the Afghan Taliban, the war may be almost impossible to win. More concerning, the continued ascendency of militant movements in the region could destabilize Pakistan, a country with nuclear weapons. This could be a disaster for all of us.

I believe that we have a good strategy, but we must be mindful that implementing this counterinsurgency strategy will be extremely complex and far from easy. Just the task of deploying an additional 30,000 troops will be difficult. Supply lines to Afghanistan are long and difficult. Bases are austere, and there is a shortage of every sort of infrastructure. And the job our troops will have to do once they get there will be even harder.

Every member of this committee will have questions about the strategy and how it can be accomplished. For my part, I have numerous questions: What do we believe must be accomplished in the next 18 months? How will we move this substantial number of troops so quickly? How will we mitigate strains on the force? How will we convince the Pakistanis that their interests lie with us? How will we measure progress over time? And how will we help the Afghan people build the sort of legitimate government that can end the insurgency?

But while I do have questions about implementation, I do not have any doubt that we must succeed in Afghanistan, that the President is right to order the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops on top of the troops he has already approved, and that the new strategy provides a good path for success.

I hope our witnesses today can help us fill in the details of how the difficult but realistic goals of the strategy can be accomplished. At the end of the day, I believe we are all working for the same thing: the safety of the American people and the end of the threat from al Qaeda.

Now I turn to my good friend, the gentleman from California, Buck McKeon, the ranking member, for comments he might care to make.

STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, after months of waiting for a decision on Afghanistan, I am hopeful we have finally turned the corner and have a strategy in place to succeed in Afghanistan.

On Tuesday night, the President agreed to provide General McChrystal most of the forces he needs to execute a counterinsurgency strategy. This is a positive step, particularly the President's commitment to deploy these forces as fast as possible. This will assist General McChrystal to take the fight directly to the Taliban in southern and eastern Afghanistan, while helping train and mentor the Afghan national security forces at the same time.

Yet, the President's speech left me unconvinced that his plan goes far enough to ensure victory. I worry that our enemies will see the President's announced date for withdrawal as more of a commitment to leave Afghanistan than a declaration that al Qaeda will be defeated and the Taliban routed. Certainly this is what our allies in the region believe. Today's headline in *The New York Times* reads, "Afghans and Pakistanis Concerned Over U.S. Plan."

All Americans want to see our troops leave Afghanistan as soon as possible, but only after successfully completing their mission. In our view, any redeployment should be based on the events and conditions on the ground, not the Washington political clock. Setting a date certain to begin withdrawing U.S. forces, I believe, risks undermining the very mission the President endorsed on Tuesday night. This deadline seems to fly in the face of basic counterinsurgency doctrine. I think Senator McCain said it best yesterday: "Success is the real exit strategy."

Admiral Mullen, when you testified before the Congress in September, you said, "The Afghan people are waiting on the sidelines for how committed we are." I fear that the President may have deepened the doubts of the Afghan people.

My other concerns reside more in what the President did not say on Tuesday night, so I would like our witnesses to address the following questions over the course of this hearing: First, are 30,000 additional forces enough to win decisively? As General McChrystal stated in his assessment, resources will not win this war, but under-resourcing could lose it. Given the many leaks that General McChrystal requested, at a minimum, 40,000 additional forces, I would like our witnesses to explain why the President is not under-resourcing his own strategy.

The President should be commended for expediting the deployment of these forces. Is it our position that it is better to get 30,000

troops to Afghanistan as soon as possible than to get 40,000 spread out over the next 15 months? When do you expect these forces to arrive in theater?

While we have heard top line numbers, we have not heard discussion of the composition of these forces. How many combat brigades will deploy? How many will be trainers? Will each combat brigade receive all its enablers?

As we learned in Iraq, effective counterinsurgency requires effective host-nation partners. With all the talk of an exit date, the only credible narrative for redeployment is the effective buildup of Afghan National Security Forces. According to General McChrystal, a fundamental pillar for achieving success is developing a significantly more effective and larger Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF), with radically expanded coalition-force partnering at every echelon.

Both the President's speech and your testimony today do not address the requisite size of the ANSF. Do you believe we need to double the size of the Afghan National Security Forces in order to transition security responsibility to the Afghan government? General Caldwell and others have the number at 400,000. Do we need to have this force in place before we begin transitioning?

Finally, I think one of the costs of the three-month deliberation was the absence of a strong voice promoting our mission and our strategy. While the executive huddled, public opinion and support lagged. This needs to be corrected. I hope the President will travel to communities throughout the United States to rally the American people and Congress behind his strategy, much as he has done on health care and other issues.

I thank you for being here today. I know that you have had a busy last couple of days, and I appreciate your patience and appreciate your being here. And I look forward to a candid discussion on these important issues. Thank you again.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Again, I urge everyone to heed the five-minute gavel. We will, as you know, break for votes and get back just the minute we can.

As I understand it, our witnesses have a drop-dead time at 4:30, and we will do our very best to abide by your schedule.

With that, we call on Secretary Gates. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT M. GATES, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Secretary GATES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. McKeon, members of the committee, thank you for inviting us to testify today.

By now, you are aware of the details of the President's announcement of our renewed commitment and more focused strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I would like to provide an overview of the strategic thinking and context behind his decisions, in particular the nexus among al Qaeda, the Taliban, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and our objectives and how the President's strategy aims to accomplish them.

As the President first stated in March and reemphasized Tuesday night, the goal of the United States in Afghanistan and Paki-

stan is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its extremist allies and prevent its return to both countries. The international military effort to stabilize Afghanistan is necessary to achieve this overarching goal.

Defeating al Qaeda and enhancing Afghan security are mutually reinforcing missions. They cannot be untethered from one another, as much as we might wish that to be the case. While al Qaeda is under great pressure now and dependent on the Taliban and other extremist groups for sustainment, the success of the Taliban would vastly strengthen al Qaeda's message to the Muslim world that violent extremists are on the winning side of history.

Put simply, the Taliban and al Qaeda have become symbiotic, each benefiting from the success and mythology of the other. Al Qaeda leaders, in particular, have stated this explicitly and repeatedly. The lesson of the Afghan Taliban's revival for al Qaeda is that time and will are on their side. With a Western defeat, al Qaeda could regain its strength and achieve a major strategic victory as long as its senior leadership lives and can continue to inspire and attract followers and funding. Rolling back the Taliban is now necessary, even if not sufficient, to the ultimate defeat of al Qaeda.

At the same time, one cannot separate the security situation in Afghanistan from the stability of Pakistan, a nuclear-armed nation of 175 million people, now also explicitly targeted by Islamic extremists. Giving extremists breathing room in Pakistan led to the resurgence of the Taliban and more coordinated, sophisticated attacks in Afghanistan. Providing a sanctuary for extremists in southern and eastern Afghanistan would put yet more pressure on a Pakistani Government already under attack from groups operating from the border region.

Indeed, the Pakistan Taliban, in just the last year or so, has become a real threat to Pakistan's own domestic peace and stability, carrying out, with al Qaeda's help, escalating bombing attacks throughout the country. Failure in Afghanistan would mean a Taliban takeover of much, if not most, of the country and likely a renewed civil war. Taliban-ruled areas could in short order become once again a sanctuary for al Qaeda, as well as a staging area for resurgent military groups on the offensive in Pakistan.

Success in South and Central Asia by Islamic extremists, as was the case 20 years ago, would beget success on other fronts. It would strengthen the al Qaeda narrative, providing renewed opportunities for recruitment, fundraising, and more sophisticated operations.

It is true that al Qaeda and its followers can plot and execute attacks from a variety of locations, from Munich to London to Denver. What makes the border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan uniquely different from any other location, including Somalia, Yemen, and other possible redoubts, is that this part of the world represents the epicenter of extremist jihadism, the historic place where native and foreign Muslims defeated one superpower and, in their view, caused its collapse at home. For them to be seen to defeat the sole remaining superpower in the same place would have severe consequences for the United States and the world.

Some say this is similar to the domino theory that underpinned and ultimately muddied the thinking behind the U.S. military esca-

lation in Vietnam. The difference, however, is that we have very real and very recent history that shows just what can and will happen in this part of the world when extremists have breathing space, safe havens, and governments complicit with and supportive of their mission. Less than five years after the last Soviet tank crossed the Termez Bridge out of Afghanistan, in 1993 Islamic militants launched their first attack on the World Trade Center in New York. We cannot afford to make a similar mistake again.

The President's new strategic concept aims to reverse the Taliban's momentum and reduce its strength, while providing the time and space necessary for the Afghans to develop enough security and governance to stabilize their own country.

The essence of our civil military plan is to clear, hold, build, and transfer. Beginning to transfer security responsibility to the Afghans in the summer of 2011 is critical and, in my view, achievable. July 2011, the time at which the President said the United States will begin to draw down our forces, will be the beginning of a process, an inflection point, if you will, of transition, where Afghan forces assume greater responsibility for security.

The pace and character of that drawdown, which districts and provinces are turned over and when, will be determined by conditions on the ground. It will be a gradual, if inexorable, process. It will be similar to the gradual but steady conditions-based drawdown that began to take place in Iraq about 14 months after the surge there began.

As with so many issues in the national security and defense arena, the real challenge in Afghanistan is finding the right balance. The prompt dispatch of some 30,000 U.S. combat troops on top of the 21,000 already ordered by President Obama earlier this year sends a sure message of the President's resolve to both our partners and adversaries in Afghanistan and Pakistan. When this buildup is complete, total U.S. force levels in Afghanistan will have more than doubled under President Obama's orders, to 100,000 troops. Whether you agree with what we are doing or not, there should be no doubt at home or abroad about this President's commitment to the success of this mission.

On the other hand, we need to send an equally strong message to the Afghan Government that, when all is said and done, the U.S. military is not going to be there to protect them forever, that the Afghans must step up to the plate and do the things necessary that will allow them to take primary responsibility for defending their own country, and do so with a sense of purpose and urgency. This is the balance we are trying to achieve, and I believe the President's plan provides both the resources and flexibility to do so.

Making this transition possible requires accelerating the development of a significantly larger and more capable Afghan army and police through an intensive partnering with International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), especially in combat. Even after we transfer security responsibility to the Afghans and draw down our combat forces, the U.S. will continue to support their development as an important partner for the long haul. We must not repeat the mistakes of 1989, when we abandoned the country, only to see it descend into chaos and then into Taliban hands.

Let me offer a couple of closing thoughts. The President believes, as do I, that in the end we cannot defeat al Qaeda and its toxic ideology without improving and stabilizing the security situation in Afghanistan. The President's decision offers the best possibility to decisively change the momentum in Afghanistan and fundamentally alter the strategic equation in Pakistan and central Asia, all necessary to protect the United States, our allies, and our vital interests.

As always, the heaviest burden will fall on the men and women who have volunteered and re-volunteered to serve their country in uniform. I know they will be uppermost in our minds and prayers as we take on this arduous but vitally necessary mission.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, we thank you.

Admiral Mullen.

STATEMENT OF ADM. MICHAEL G. MULLEN, USN, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Admiral MULLEN. Mr. Chairman, Congressman McKeon, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for your time today.

In September of 2008, I testified here and said in Afghanistan we are doing what we can. I believe in November of 2009 in Afghanistan we need to do what we must.

I support fully and without hesitation the President's decision, and I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to what I believe was a healthy and productive discussion. I have seen my share of internal debates on national security issues over the course of these last two years, and I can honestly say that I do not recall an issue so thoroughly or so thoughtfully considered as this one. Every military leader in the chain of command, as well as those of the Joint Chiefs, was given voice throughout this process, and every one of us used it.

We now have before us a strategy more appropriately matched to the situation on the ground in Afghanistan and resources matched more appropriately to that strategy, particularly with regard to reversing the insurgency's momentum in 2010. And given the stakes in Afghanistan for our own national security, as well as that of our partners around the world, I believe the time we took was well worth it.

Secretary Gates has discussed many of the larger policy issues in question, and I will not repeat them. But from a purely military perspective, I believe our new approach does three critical things.

First, by providing more discrete objectives, it offers better guidance to commanders on the ground about how to employ their forces. They will still work to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven. They will still strive to protect the Afghan people, who remain the center of gravity. They will still pursue major elements of the counterinsurgency desired and designed by General McChrystal, which, as we all know, involves at least some measure of active counterterrorism operations.

But now they will tailor this campaign and those operations by focusing on key population areas, by increasing pressure on all of al Qaeda's leadership, by more effectively working to degrade the Taliban's influence, and by streamlining and accelerating the growth of competent Afghan National Security Forces.

At its core, our strategy is about providing breathing space for the Afghans to secure their own people and to stabilize their own country. It is about partnering and mentoring just as much, if not more so, than it is about fighting. Where once we believed that finishing the job meant to a large degree doing it ourselves, we now know it cannot truly or permanently be done by anyone other than the Afghans themselves. Fully a third of the U.S. troops in theater today are partnered with Afghan forces, and I expect that number to rise significantly through 2010.

Secondly, but not insignificantly, this new strategy gives the commanders on the ground the resources and the support they need to reverse the momentum of the Taliban insurgency and to accomplish these more limited objectives. I have said it before and I believe it still today: This region is the epicenter of global Islamic extremism. It is the place from which we were attacked on 9/11, and, should we be hit again, it is the place from which I am convinced the planning, training, funding, and leadership will emanate.

Al Qaeda may, in fact, be the architect of such an attack, but the Taliban will be the bricklayers. Though hardly a uniform body, Taliban groups have grown bolder and more sophisticated. We saw that just a few months ago in the Korengal Valley, where Taliban forces attacked coalition outposts using what I would call almost conventional, small-unit tactics. Their fighters are better organized and better equipped than they were just one year ago. And that trend, which started in 2006, has continued through today.

In fact, coalition forces experienced record-high violence this past summer, with insurgent attacks more than 60 percent above 2008 levels. And through brutal intimidation, the Taliban has established shadow governments across the country, coercing the reluctant support of many locals and challenging the authority of elected leaders and state institutions. Indeed, we believe the insurgency has achieved a dominant influence in 11 of the 34 provinces.

To say there is no serious threat of Afghanistan falling once again into the Taliban's hands ignores the audacity of even the insurgency's most public statements. And to argue that, should they have that power, the Taliban would not at least tolerate the presence of al Qaeda on Afghan soil is to ignore both the recent past and the evidence we see every day of collusion between these factions on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The cost of failure is, then, very grave. That is why the President's decision for an extended surge to Afghanistan of 30,000 additional forces is so important. It gets the most U.S. force into the fight as quickly as possible, giving General McChrystal everything he needs in 2010 to gain the initiative. In fact, it is everything he asked for.

It validates our adherence to a counterinsurgency approach, and it offers our troops in Afghanistan the best possible chance to set security conditions for the Afghan people to see our commitment to

their future; for the Karzai government to know our strong desire to see his promised reforms; for the Afghan Taliban to understand they will not, they cannot take back Afghanistan; and for those beyond Afghanistan who support the Taliban or would see the return of al Qaeda to realize the futility of their support.

I should add that these reinforcements come on top of the 21,000 troops the President ordered shortly after taking office, troops which have already made a huge difference in the southern Helmand Valley and in the training and partnering with Afghan security forces.

But, as I have testified before, Mr. Chairman, no amount of troops and no amount of time will ever be enough to completely achieve success in such a fight. They simply must be accompanied by good governance and healthy public administration. This, not troop numbers, is the area of my greatest concern. Like everyone else, I look forward to working with the Karzai government, but we must have the support of the interagency and international communities as well.

That brings me to my final point. The President's new strategy still recognizes the criticality of a broad-based approach to regional problems. He does not view Afghanistan in isolation any more than he views the ties between al Qaeda and the Taliban as superficial. He has called for stronger and more productive cooperation with neighboring Pakistan, which is likewise under the threat from radical elements and whose support remains vital to our ability to eliminate safe havens.

He has pledged, and we in the military welcome, renewed emphasis on securing more civilian expertise to the effort, more contributions by other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations, and a realistic plan to transition responsibilities to the Afghans. His is a more balanced, more flexible, and more achievable strategy than what we have had in the past, one based on pragmatism and real possibilities.

Speaking for 2.2 million men and women who must execute it and who, with their families, have borne the brunt of the stress and the strain of eight years of constant combat, I support his decision and appreciate his leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Mullen can be found in the Appendix on page 55.]

The CHAIRMAN. Admiral, we thank you.

I think, Secretary Lew, we can get your testimony in before we must break. A vote has been called, but I think we are in pretty good shape to make it.

Secretary Lew, please.

STATEMENT OF HON. JACOB J. LEW, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary LEW. Chairman Skelton, Congressman McKeon, distinguished members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify here today.

And I would begin by sharing Secretary Clinton's regrets that she was not able to be here at this hearing. As I think you know,

she is traveling right now to Brussels to join the NATO ministerial, which provides an important opportunity to further consult with some of our closest allies on a number of important topics, including allied support for the Afghanistan policy that we are here to discuss today.

Tuesday evening, President Obama presented the Administration's strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen have further testified on the details and national security importance of our revised strategy. I will try to limit my remarks today to providing additional details on the civilian components of our revised strategy and to augment those presentations.

As the President made clear, the duration of our military presence will be limited, but our civilian commitment must continue even as our troops begin to come home. Accomplishing our mission and ensuring the safety of the American people will not be easy. It will mean sending more civilians, troops, and assistance to Afghanistan and significantly expanding our civilian efforts in Pakistan.

In the past eight months, I have made two visits to the region, which provided me increased firsthand understanding of the challenges we face and a deep appreciation for our men and women who are carrying out our nation's policy. These brave men and women, civilians as well as military, are making extraordinary sacrifices on behalf of our security. I want to assure the committee that we will do everything we can to make sure that their efforts make our nation safer.

The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is serious, but there is reason to be hopeful. In his inauguration speech last month, President Karzai pledged to combat corruption, improve governance, and deliver for the people of his country. In his words, "Words now must be meshed with action." The Afghan people, the United States, and the international community will hold the Afghan government accountable for making good on these commitments.

The State Department, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other civilian agencies will help by working with our Afghan partners to strengthen institutions at every level so they are ready to take responsibility when our combat troops begin to depart. The President has outlined a time frame for transition to Afghan responsibility. As the President said, we will execute the transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground.

This time frame for transition provides a sense of urgency. It should be clear to everyone, unlike in the past, the United States will have an enduring commitment to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the region. Our resolve is reflected in the substantial commitment of troops and civilian resources that the President has made since taking office and will continue long after our combat troops have departed.

Our civilian effort is already bearing fruit. Civilian experts are helping build capacity in government ministries, providing development assistance in the field, and working in scores of other roles.

When our Marines went into Nawa this July, we had civilians on the ground with them the next day.

When I traveled to Helmand in September, I heard firsthand from local officials and U.S. and allied military personnel how our civilian-military coordination is growing stronger and stronger. We are on track to triple the number of civilians in Afghanistan to 974 by early next year. On average, each civilian leverages 10 partners, ranging from locally employed staff to experts with U.S.-funded non-governmental organizations.

As Secretary Clinton said yesterday, it is a cliche to say we have our best people in these jobs, but it also happens to be true. When the Secretary was in Kabul a few weeks ago, she heard from an American colonel that, while he had thousands of outstanding soldiers under his command, none had 40 years of agricultural experience or rule-of-law or government expertise like the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and State Department civilian experts serving alongside his battalion. He told her that he was happy to supply whatever support these valuable civilians need, and he said we need more of them. The President's strategy, with congressional support, will make that possible.

Not only do we increasingly have the right people to achieve our objectives, we also have a sound strategy. We are delivering the high-impact economic assistance and bolstering Afghanistan's agricultural sector, the traditional core of the Afghan economy. This will create jobs, reduce funding that the Taliban receives from poppy cultivation, and draw insurgents off of the battlefield.

We will support an Afghan-led effort to open the door to Taliban who abandon violence and want to reintegrate into society. We understand that some who fight with the insurgency do not do so out of conviction but due to coercion or the need for the money that they are provided. All Afghans should have the choice to pursue a better future if they do so peacefully, respect for basic human rights of their fellow citizens, and renounce al Qaeda.

Our regional diplomacy compliments this political approach by seeking to mitigate external interference in Afghanistan and working to shift the calculus of neighboring countries from competition for influence to cooperation and economic integration.

We also believe that a strong and stable democratic Pakistan must be a key partner for the United States. People in Pakistan are increasingly coming to the view that we share a common enemy. I heard this repeatedly during my visits there.

We will significantly expand support to help develop the potential of Pakistan and its people, to bring our people closer together. Our assistance will demonstrate our commitment to addressing problems that affect everyday lives of Pakistanis, but it will also bolster Pakistan against the threat of extremism. A village where girls can get an education will be more resistant to extremism. A young man with a bright future in a growing economy is unlikely to waste his potential in a suicide bombing.

We share this responsibility with governments around the world. Our NATO allies and other international community partners have already made significant contributions of their own in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Secretary and Ambassador Holbrooke are working now in Brussels to secure additional commitments.

The task we face is as complex as any national security challenge of our lifetime. We will not succeed if this effort is viewed as the responsibility of a single party, a single agency, or a single country. We owe it to the troops and civilians who face these dangers to come together as Americans, and together with our allies and partners, to help them accomplish the mission.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, we thank you.

We will break for the votes. There could very well be another motion to recommit, so it will be a short while. We will recess.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order.

I will begin by asking a question or two, and hopefully we can proceed with everyone staying well within the five-minute rule.

Afghanistan, Mr. Secretary and Admiral Mullen, is undoubtedly the epicenter for terrorism in the world. So I ask you, are you fully comfortable with the President's strategy, including the target date to begin redeploying troops out of Afghanistan?

I ask each of you.

Secretary GATES. First of all, Mr. Chairman, I am very comfortable with the President's strategy.

I believe that each of these conflicts that we are engaged in needs to be assessed individually. There are some parallels, and there are some areas where they are different.

I have been adamantly opposed and continue to be opposed to deadlines, but I regard the July 2011 date as the beginning of a process. And it has required balancing between signaling our commitment, which certainly should be signaled by this President's approval of some 52,000 more troops this year, and lighting a fire under the Afghans to give them a sense of urgency that they have to be prepared and preparing to take over responsibility for the security of their country.

My hope is that, as that process goes forward and we draw down our troops, they can sustain the level of security that then allows us to continue a more purely counterterrorist mission until al Qaeda is defeated, as the President has said.

So it is a balance, but I think it is a good balance. I think it is important to see July 2011 as an inflection point, as the beginning of this process. And, for that reason, I am comfortable with it.

I would just add one other thing. When people say that it may embolden the Taliban, it is not clear to me what that means. It seems to me that the Taliban is pretty bold right now. They have been very aggressive over the last year or so, the last two or three years. It is not clear to me they could be any more aggressive than they are now.

And, frankly, if they want to lie low either in Afghanistan or Pakistan, I think that would give us a huge opportunity. Obviously, it would cut down on the number of innocent Afghans they are killing, and it would give us an opportunity to move forward with the Afghan security forces' growth and improvement in capability, as well as development in the country and governance.

So I think that—I mean, they read our newspapers. They read our newspapers on Iraq, when the surge started in Iraq, and they knew the pressures against continuing it for a protracted period here in Washington. So it seems to me that signaling a beginning of a process of transitioning, province by province, district by district, with a firm date, actually serves our interests.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I ask Admiral Mullen, can you honestly characterize that date as a goal?

Secretary GATES. I would tell you, Mr. Chairman, I think that date is fixed. I think the President is committed to that date. In theory, obviously, the commander-in-chief can always change his mind, but I would tell you he feels very strongly about it. And I think it is not, in his mind, a goal but, in fact, a fixed starting date.

The CHAIRMAN. Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. First of all, Chairman, I support the strategy wholeheartedly.

And then, secondly, the only thing I would like to add—I agree with Secretary Gates on the discussion around July of 2011. I just would like to add one comment about that.

It has been described by some as an arbitrary date. It is not an arbitrary date. In fact, those of us in the military believe that that date is a date where we will know certainly whether we are succeeding or not in Afghanistan with this strategy.

There is an assessment, a major assessment, which will occur about a year from now. That will start to look at, obviously, what has happened over the next 12 months and start to focus on what the changes or adjustments might be over the following year, which would certainly encompass July 2011.

But the reason that date was picked is because we added 10,000 Marines this year in Helmand; they immediately had a positive impact, particularly from the counterinsurgency standpoint. And so, in the middle of 2011, we will have had three summers, if you will, 2009, 2010, and 2011, where we have had those kinds of forces—or the Marines will have been there three years. And we will be able to assess—for three seasons, I mean—we will be able to assess how they are doing and where this is going.

That is, obviously, enhanced with the additional forces that the President has committed to. And I, too, believe that his decision to commit the forces is one of very, very strong resolve to turn this around. And, two, there needs to be a hook out there that incentivizes the Afghans that they have to take the lead in lots of areas—in particular, in the area of security.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Admiral.

Let me mention to the Members that, in case you don't have the opportunity to ask a question, questions can be submitted to the witnesses for the record.

Mr. McKeon.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it seems to me that the start of the drawdown now has been clarified. It is definite; the President set the date. No matter what, we are starting to withdraw in July of 2011. But the pace, the scope, the duration is uncertain or even conditions-based. Is that correct?

Secretary GATES. Yes.

Mr. MCKEON. If yes, who determined the July 2011 start date? Was it you or anyone in the military chain of command? And why does that start date make any sense? Or is it just semantics?

Secretary GATES. Well, we were—both I and Admiral Mullen, General Petraeus, General McChrystal were all involved in the discussions and the recommendations to the President that included this date. And the date was chosen essentially for the reasons that Admiral Mullen just described. It is two years after the Marines went into Helmand, three fighting seasons. And we will have a very good idea by that time whether this strategy is working and what successes we have been able to have.

I think something that is important to clarify is that this is going to be a gradual process of transition. And the transition to Afghan security responsibility will start, presumably, in the least contested areas, some of which, perhaps, could happen now. And it will involve not just the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, but local authorities, local police, tribal groups, and various other security units.

And it will be our commanders on the ground, in my view, who make the decision, who make the recommendation, that a district or a cluster of districts or a province is ready to transition to Afghan security responsibility, just as they did in Iraq.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Secretary, I think all of us say things, probably, that we would change given different circumstances, but let me just read a quote that you said on September 27th of this year.

"I think that the notion of timeliness and exit strategies and so on, frankly, I think would all be a strategic mistake. The reality is, failure in Afghanistan would be a huge setback for the United States. Taliban and al Qaeda, as far as they are concerned, defeated one superpower. For them to be seen to defeat a second, I think, would have catastrophic consequences in terms of energizing the extremist movement, al Qaeda recruitment, operations, fundraising, and so on."

Let me ask, based on what we just talked about, that we are going to have a review about a year from now, Secretary Gates, in the same exchange with Senator McCain yesterday, you indicated that in December 2010 the administration will conduct another review. And here is what you said: "The President has indicated that we will have a thorough review of how we are doing in December of 2010, and I think we will be in a position then to evaluate whether or not we can begin that transition in July."

Am I correct that the administration will conduct another review only six months or so after all the surge forces arrive in Afghanistan? In Iraq, the surge forces were on the ground for 12 to 18 months before we turned the tide. Why is this enough time in Afghanistan? Why do this review in December of 2010? Will this review also be one that could possibly take three months and once again put the entire strategy in question?

Secretary GATES. No. First of all, it won't. It won't do that.

The surge in Iraq lasted 14 months. The first troops went in in January of 2007, and I think General Petraeus would tell you that, by summer, six or seven months later, he had enough indications of things happening on the ground that he could tell that this effort was going to work, even though that was the period when we had

the highest casualties that we suffered over the last two or three years in Iraq.

I am adamantly opposed to deadlines, and I am opposed to a timeline in terms of completion of a withdrawal of U.S. forces, other than in general terms, of a period of three years or something like that. But I do not have a problem with setting a timeline for the beginning of a process.

Again, we had to balance the question of how do you signal resolve and, at the same time, signal to the Afghans that we are not going to be there to protect them forever. I think this is one of the differences between Iraq and Afghanistan.

Once it was clear the surge was working in Iraq, the Iraqis wanted us out as quickly as possible. There are some in Afghanistan, perhaps in the government, perhaps in the elites or whatever, probably not the general population, who would probably very much like to have the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps stay in Afghanistan indefinitely. They live in a rough neighborhood.

We need to signal that is not going to happen, and they need to buy into this war. They need to take ownership of this war in their country against somebody trying to overthrow them. And trying to incentivize them and get them to be more aggressive in recruiting and retaining their soldiers and police and getting them into the fight is very important to the success of this strategy.

Leaving it open-ended—we have not had any timelines or guidelines like this in Afghanistan for eight years. So the question is, how do you get them to take this seriously and that they are going to have to step up to the plate? I think this is the proper balance.

Mr. MCKEON. Both the President's speech and your testimony today do not address the requisite size of the Afghan National Security Forces.

According to General McChrystal, a fundamental pillar for achieving success is developing a significantly more effective and larger ANSF, with radically expanded coalition-force partnering at every echelon. His assessment also stated that coalition forces must provide a bridge capability to protect critical segments of the population.

General McChrystal's assessment recommended to grow the Afghan security forces to 400,000. Admiral Mullen, in your professional military judgment, do you believe that an ANSF of 400,000 is both necessary and feasible?

Admiral MULLEN. Sir, we spent a lot of time on this in the review, and I think it was time very well-spent. It is very clear in that examination that the highest-risk area is the development of the Afghan police. The Afghan army we evaluate as moderate risk, but key to local security is clearly going to have that police force.

We know how to do that. We recognize the challenges associated with that. And while that 400,000 is an aspirational goal out several years from now, the decision has been made to look at this literally year-to-year based on how we are doing.

Right now—and General McChrystal has fundamentally shifted how we do this since he has gotten there, into this partnership, this radically different partnership. Prior to his arrival, essentially what we did—and we weren't resourced well, but what we did was

we mentored or we had training teams. And it was just too small, it couldn't do that, which is why we are so far behind.

So, each year, we have a goal. And so, for instance, right now, on the army side, we are 96,000. Not enough of that 96,000 are in the field. We have to improve that from a reduction of overhead, get them out into the field and partner with them. And next year, by this time next year, about October first next year, that 96,000 will go up to 134,000. To achieve that, we have to reduce the attrition rate, increase the retention rate and the recruiting. And those are pretty strong goals, with respect to both the army and the police.

The analytical side of this, from what we have been able to do, is that aspirational goal looks about right, but it is also going to depend on how security is going. If we are able to turn this around from a momentum standpoint, that will provide the breathing space, the opportunity to recruit more, bring more in, train more, develop them more quickly. So it is all very much linked.

And I am confident this approach, as we go year to year, having that aspirational goal out there a few years from now, is the right approach. But right now we have to focus on what we have directly in front of us and make sure we succeed over the next 12 months.

Mr. MCKEON. The authorized force now is 134,000?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir, 134,000.

Mr. MCKEON. And that is the goal to be at a year from now?

Admiral MULLEN. Right. But, again, we will assess it and move it up each year, but generally on that glide slope out to 400,000. But we have to see where we are.

Mr. MCKEON. Could we maybe get from you what that goal would be, or should we ask General McChrystal that, what the goal would be a year from now? You say it is 134,000. What would the goal be by July of 2011?

Admiral MULLEN. Can I say, it is the thirtieth of September, 2011, for the army it is 171,000. I mean, we have each goal to get out there. But that 2011 goal, I think, will be tied to the realities of what we experience over the next 12 months.

Mr. MCKEON. Is it fair to say, do you have a target date set for what the date should be by the time we start the redeployment in July of 2011.

Admiral MULLEN. I think that is very much a part of the assessment. We know approximately what will be—where we will be based on the assumptions that I have talked about. But, again, we have got to have an impact on attrition, retention, recruiting. We have got to incentivize them to come in and to stay. We have got to raise their pay. And General McChrystal is doing that because the Taliban are making more money right now than the Afghan Security Forces.

We have got to get at the corruption side on the police side. So there is a significant amount of work right up front that we have got to get right that we just haven't had the people there for. And it is not just us; it is Coalition forces to train them and equip them and make sure they are qualified to assume the mantle of their own security.

Mr. MCKEON. What would the number be for the police at the same time, the goal?

Admiral MULLEN. I have got that in here. Roughly 130,000. I am at 92,000 today. So, in about another year, it is about 97,000. And in 2011, at the end of fiscal year 2011, so September of 2011, it is about 130,000.

Mr. MCKEON. So that, instead of 400, we are looking at 300 now?

Admiral MULLEN. That is what we think the goal should be for each year, and we are going to have to reassess that, and then to look at the longer-term requirements of what it needs to be.

Mr. MCKEON. I am just still kind of hung up on the number 400——

Admiral MULLEN. I understand.

Mr. MCKEON. General McChrystal said we needed, and we are talking about leaving or starting to leave when we are at about three-fourths of that.

Admiral MULLEN. I think you said it very well, starting to leave. Transition. No decisions yet on the size of that transition. If security is going really well, it will probably be bigger. If it is not, it will probably be smaller. From the challenges that we have in developing the security force itself, really, I think argue for these very near-term goals to see how well we can do.

Mr. MCKEON. One of the concerns I have is I am afraid that, in our rush to leave, we might adjust our goals downwards so that we can claim success and leave.

Admiral MULLEN. That is certainly not the intent that I see.

Mr. MCKEON. I appreciate that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

John Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Secretary, you testified yesterday that the build-up of 30,000 troops would cost an additional $30 billion to $35 billion, I believe.

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir.

Mr. SPRATT. I have a hard time on the back of my envelope trying to drive that figure. It seems to me to be awfully high for the 35,000 troops or 30,000 troops we are talking about. We will need to pay for these deployments, after all only part of 2010. If you assume a deployment of a brigade every two months beginning in late January until force levels increase to 30,000, the average level of boots on the ground for the year will be 17,500. Therefore, a cost of $30 billion to $35 billion would imply that the yearly cost to maintain each troop in Afghan is $1.7 million to $2 million, which is an awfully high figure. Could you explain to us what is in the 30 to $35 billion estimate that you gave? Does it include, for example, maintaining the Afghan army and police force? Are we going to be picking up a substantial part of the tab for these security forces, especially as they grow from their present size to 400,000 ultimately?

Secretary GATES. Since we only receive the President's decision on Monday, our folks with their pencils haven't sat down to go through the specifics. I would tell you that some of the upfront costs that we are looking at, for example, that go beyond the troop costs, is that right now we have the money in the budget, I believe, for 5,000 or 6,000 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) all-terrain vehicles. With the additional forces that are being sent in,

we are probably going to recommend increasing that number to protect those troops to about 10,000. So that is several billion dollars in and of itself just for force protection with the MRAPs. But we will certainly get you the specifics. Now that we know the numbers and we have a pretty good idea of the timelines of when they are going in, we can now refine the numbers and get those to you. The 30 to 35 billion was basically a ballpark figure, and we now need to get down and get the details.

Mr. SPRATT. Does it include a substantial payment, subsidy, in effect, of the Treasury, our resources, for the Afghan forces?

Secretary GATES. I don't think so, Mr. Spratt.

I think that there is money to help pay for the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army and police in the $130 billion Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) budget request that you already have, that the Congress has before it. I don't think there is additional money for that in the money we are talking about that would be on top of the 130.

Mr. SPRATT. Does the latest proposal, 18-month proposal, the change in time frame imply a change in tactics? Will there be an increase in ops tempo, an increase in certain commitments, certain forces as a result of this compressed time frame?

Admiral MULLEN. As far as our overall force levels, our deployed force levels, there is obviously a big piece tied to the drawdown in Iraq, which is still very much on plan and on schedule. We expect to start that in the March timeframe and come down from roughly 115,000 there to 50,000 or so by the end of August, and then complete that withdrawal by the end of 2011. So these forces won't—it won't pick up our overall op tempo period. We will still be able to have on the Marine Corps side dwell time move out towards two to one fairly significantly, a little more slowly on the Army side. So it hasn't increased our op tempo, based on where we are right now, dramatically. Clearly, adding these forces is going to impact the op tempo. But as far as where we are right now, overall, it will actually come down just a little bit for the Army.

Mr. SPRATT. Could I quickly ask Jack Lew, does the State Department have an interest in the $35 billion? Do you expect to get substantial, a significant sum of additional money for foreign aid and assistance?

Secretary LEW. Mr. Spratt, there will be additional requests on the civilian side, both for some additional civilians that will be deploying because there will be additional areas that we are going to be partnering for the civilian-military (civ-mil) plan, and also because there will be an increased amount of the country where we can be having our civilian program operate effectively. We are also working since Monday to put together the precise numbers, but there will be a civilian component as well.

Mr. SPRATT. If you could get us clarification along these lines, we would very much appreciate it.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

I know that, in the military, theirs is not to reason why; theirs is just to do and die. But, Mr. Secretary, when I stand by that cof-

fin with that young widow, I have to ask, why? And I feel compelled to voice once again the question of an increasing number of my constituents: Why is our involvement in Afghanistan not the ultimate exercise in futility? Since, sir, if we are successful in doing what no one else has ever done, the British Empire, the Soviet Empire, and we win, what will we have won? Since the bad guys will simply find refuge in Pakistan, and then if we invest who knows how many years and how much blood and treasure in driving them out of Pakistan, they will go to places like Yemen and Somalia; I am not sure, sir, that the American people can be convinced that denying them privileged sanctuary in Afghanistan when they can find sanctuary in places like Yemen and Somalia is worth the enormous cost in blood and treasure.

If the reason, sir, that we have to be there is because a destabilized Afghanistan would destabilize Pakistan and nuclear weapons would come loose, then, sir, we need to make that argument.

In this connection, let me ask you a specific question. Is the model of a national Afghan government, a national army, futile, since it is contrary to Afghan's 300-year history of a nation of tribes bound by social conventions? Under Karzai's three-time ratified national government army model, the Taliban now controls 11 of 34 provinces. The Afghan National Army controls one, I think. And I believe that the National Security Forces probably control none of those provinces. And they are seen as being ineffective, incapable of being effective for a number of years.

Secretary GATES. Mr. Bartlett, one of the concerns that I had after the President's decisions in March was that they were interpreted as the United States supporting a full-scale nation-building in Afghanistan and also the creation of a strong centralized government. As you point out, the latter has not existed in all of Afghan history. And one of the elements of the dialogue that we have had inside the administration for the last three months is, how do you narrow that mission and make it more realistic? How do you communicate that what this is all about is really our security, and what we are looking at is enabling the Afghan government and the local authorities to be able to reassert security control in their own areas?

One of the pieces of this that has not been discussed is the fact that about 60 percent of Afghanistan is not controlled by them, by the Taliban, or where they have no significant or they don't have predominant influence. What we have to do, and a piece of the President's strategy is, working with the subnational parts of Afghanistan, working with the tribal suras, working with the village elders, working with the district governors and leaders and as well as those in the provinces, and in fact a good bit of the security that may come as part of this transition will be local security, local police, as we have seen develop in parts of Wardak province. And so it won't be necessarily that we turn over security responsibility to the Afghan National Army but rather to local authorities who have established control, reestablished control of their own areas from the Taliban. So it is a combination of all of these things that we will work with. And I think that our view is that what we have to do is try and figure out—well, not try and figure out. But what we have to do is strengthen again the local and traditional govern-

ance systems in Afghanistan that in fact can reestablish local control and deny the Taliban the authority. So I think that—and I also would say that, as we partner with the Afghans, you get a mixed picture. But the reality is, for all of the comments about corruption and everything else, more than 2,000 Afghan police have died in the line of duty for their country. About 1,000 of their soldiers have died. And so I think that this picture is not focused strictly on creating something in Kabul that has never existed before, but also figuring out at the subnational level how to re-empower local authorities, because they will be perhaps our most essential partners in denying the Taliban control.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, thank you for taking the time to make this appearance before our committee. Though it is always a difficult decision to make putting our young men and women in harm's way, I feel that answering the much needed request of our commanders on the ground was the best response to the current situation in Afghanistan. I have a few questions that I will be asking of you gentlemen today and as we look forward to the movement of additional troops into Afghanistan.

First, I would like to see about, will forces be rotated directly from Iraq to Afghanistan? And, if so, how will the Department of Defense (DOD) ensure that they receive the training that they need, because, as we all well know, the environment is totally different?

And, second, what analysis has DOD done on its ability to provide the key enablers, such as support forces in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and which are already in high demand, to currently support the drawdown in Iraq and troop increases in Afghanistan? We are drawing down here and increasing there.

And, lastly, given the many logistical challenges in Afghanistan, how is DOD able to synchronize the arrival of the troops with their equipment? And the reason I ask is because we just made a little tour of some of our military and some of our young men and women who are deploying, and as I mentioned to you earlier, Mr. Secretary, you will probably be getting a letter from us about some of the equipment that they feel is inferior to what they need.

So maybe if you can answer those three questions, because I am concerned of putting somebody in harm's way if they don't have the—there are a lot of things that worry me. When we increase the troop levels from maybe, you were saying from 300,000 to 400,000 if we have to, are we going to have enough non-commissioned officers (NCOs)? Do we have enough captains? Are we producing enough of them to carry out these duties? I yield to both of you.

Admiral MULLEN. Sir, let me actually try to answer that last question first.

I see monthly from General Casey a lengthy report on the overall assessment of various measures of how the Army is doing in terms of things like that. And right now we are. So the retention of our captains, the retention of our majors, meeting the needs that we have, and, in fact, have seen over the last year the overall recruit-

ing and retention numbers for all our services, but particularly for the Army, go up. A great statistic as far as I am concerned is that a year, year and a half ago, the overall percentage of high school graduates that were entering the Army was about 80 percent, 81 percent, which is low. We like it in the nineties. Over this last year, it has been 95 or 96 percent.

There is nobody that has been more dedicated to making sure that our men and women in harm's way have the right equipment than Secretary Gates. And I can and I personally attest to that. I watch him do that all the time. And I know you have spent a great deal of time on this as well, and I really appreciate that.

With respect to your questions, largely, forces will not be moving from Iraq to Afghanistan. There are some enabling forces, critical enablers that we have moved in very small numbers literally on a deployment, but it is a very small number. There are forces that were headed for Iraq that are now being re-missioned to go to Afghanistan, first of all.

Secondly, we have recognized for some time that Afghanistan was coming, and so our training has been very focused on that in ways that we hadn't before. And, in particular, we are focusing on culture and language, things we learned in Iraq we had to get right. They are the same issues, but it obviously takes a different skill set, if you will, in Afghanistan. So we are very focused on that as we transition. But we have been in transition now for the better part of the last year, year and a half, the Marine Corps specifically, as the first ones that really put significant additional forces there.

We are very focused on the enabling pieces. This gets to your second question. We are short in some of those. In fact, I worry more about their op tempo, their dwell time staying at one-to-one than I do some of our bigger units. And we are very focused on both buying that, distributing it, and focusing on the fight. And General Odierno has been very supportive of this overall effort to give up some enablers that he had in order to support Afghanistan.

And then just lastly, logistically, focused on this for months. The unsung heroes, and many of them are in logistics and transportation, and they are performing magnificently. We know the challenge, and we think we are going to be able to support getting them there as fast as possible.

Mr. ORTIZ. I want to thank both of you for your service. Thank you so much.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, the press reports today indicate that you initially resisted a timetable; that it was the White House that came up with the idea of setting a date, but that you were persuaded once you got some additional flexibility to adjust it according to the situation on the ground. Is that true?

Secretary GATES. Well, not entirely. I think that all of us learned as part of this dialogue, it was also reported that—and accurately—that I am opposed to troop increase because I was worried about the footprint on the ground. I was, over this process, persuaded by General McChrystal that it is less the size of the foot-

print than what the soldiers are doing in terms of how the Afghans react to them.

As I said earlier, I have in the past been adamantly opposed to deadlines. And I think that, and where I was persuaded in this case, was the importance of incentivizing the Afghans and finding the right balance, and my concerns were mitigated by, frankly, our military's view of when they were convinced they would be able to say with some confidence whether the strategy was working. So I would say that most—I would say virtually everybody involved in this dialogue in front of the President learned something, changed their positions, adjusted their positions, and at the end of the day all came out unanimously supporting the recommendations that went to the President and that he decided on.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Have you heard any evidence, or is there something that you think is particularly persuasive that says setting this date will be effective in getting the Afghans to do something that they would not do otherwise?

Secretary GATES. Well, again, I go back to what I said a little earlier. We had eight years without any timelines, without any pressure on the Afghans to perform. And it seemed to me that, you know, as we go into this and with this size of American commitment, and don't forget, we are talking about really a two-year period starting last July when we began to put additional resources into Afghanistan beyond what had been approved in the last administration. And I was persuaded by—I have been persuaded by General McChrystal and by General Petraeus and others that this beginning of a period of transition on a date certain will in fact incentivize the Afghans. And this is one of the things that we will be watching.

Mr. THORNBERRY. A few weeks ago we had General Keane here testifying. He testified that it is critical that tribal insurgent leaders sense our commitment to see this through to the end. War is always about breaking the will of your opponent.

That seems to resonate with me, I guess. You talk about this balance between sending a message to the Afghans and sending a message to adversaries and friends about our commitment there. I guess my thought is, the more important conveyance is to make sure that tribal sheik in Afghanistan and that Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officer in Pakistan has no doubt that we are going to stick with this through thick and thin; otherwise we won't get the information, we won't get the loyalty and so forth, that we need to be successful. Are you concerned about today's reaction in Afghanistan and Pakistan that seems to question, I guess, somewhat this date where the troops are going to be there for such a short time before the withdrawal is required?

Secretary GATES. First of all, it is up to us to sit down with them, as we have in the course of our discussions over the last several months, and explain what we are talking about. Again, I think the important aspect of this is that July 2011 is the beginning of a process, and the pacing of that process and where it will happen will be conditions based on the ground, as the President said.

But the reality is, look, another audience here is the American people. And we have been at war for eight years. This is the longest war in our history. And the American people, I think—and you

all are the elected representatives. But it seems to me the American people, American people want to know that this isn't going to be just another 10 years of commitment at $100 billion a year and with our troops committed to the degree that they are now. I think there is plenty of flexibility in this process in terms of the pacing of the drawdown and the conditions based that it certainly has left our military commanders feeling comfortable about it.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Gates and Admiral Mullen.

Let me start by saying our Nation is very, very lucky to have both of you where you are. If I ask you tough questions, it is because I think it is my job.

In Colombia, we have spent billions of dollars and over the course of the past decade sent thousands of advisers to help the Colombians keep their nation from turning into a narco state. It is common knowledge that Karzai's brother is one of the biggest narcotics dealers in Afghanistan. It is common knowledge that a lot of the warlords on our side are in the narcotics business. The testimony before this committee said that if we went after the narcotics trade, those warlords would turn against us.

And I realize that you have been dealt a tough hand, and I am not trying to make it any harder, but I think this is a fair question. Why do we spend billions in Colombia and risk the lives of thousands of Americans trying to keep that from becoming a narco state when we are apparently willing to accept the fact that the Karzai government is a narco state, and in Iraq, at some point, the oil revenues paid the sheiks to get people to quit shooting at us. And I am glad that happened. That started about last April.

But all I can see in Afghanistan is a future where the major source of revenue is narcotics. And do we really want to establish a government with American dollars and, more importantly, American blood that is just nothing more than a narco state because they are not the Taliban?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think Secretary Lew probably has some things to say on this, but I would make a couple of points. First of all, ISAF changed its strategy with respect to the narcotics trafficking about a year ago and aggressively began to go after labs, drug lords, and the traffickers. The eradication——

Mr. TAYLOR. Does that include the president's brother? I want to make it clear, President Karzai's brother.

Secretary GATES. I understand. Let me just say that, as Secretary Clinton testified in the last day and a half, we understand the importance of this corruption and how corrosive it is. And the truth of the matter is there is a heck of a lot more money going into corrupt pockets that is coming from us and the international community than is coming from the narco traffickers. We are putting tens of billions of dollars into Afghanistan, and too much of it is ending up with sticky fingers along the way. And so we are putting in place some procedures in terms of certifying ministries, certifying ministers, governors, and others that we have confidence are not corrupt. And we won't do business with the ones that are

corrupt at the same time that we are going after the narcotics guys.

So we do understand the nature of this problem. We do believe it is a serious problem. Narcotics, we think, represents about a quarter of the $12 billion gross domestic product (GDP) of Afghanistan at this point.

And the good news is one of the big pieces of this program is, frankly, our agriculture program to give these guys an alternative. I mean, for the farmer, the poppy is not a particularly great crop. He has got one customer who doesn't negotiate on the price, and you can't feed your livestock these things or your family. So we have some pretty expansive programs as part of the strategy going forward to try and deal with this and give them an alternative. And the truth of the matter is there was a significant reduction in narcotics production this year in part because the price of wheat became competitive.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Secretary, what about President Karzai's brother?

Secretary GATES. I am just not going to talk about that in an open session. We are dealing with a sovereign government.

Mr. TAYLOR. Someone from our State Department before this committee admitted that it was true.

Secretary GATES. Well, we have problems with him. There is no question about that.

Mr. TAYLOR. But, again, don't you think it ought to start with the president's brother abiding by the rule of law? Is that not one of the things——

Secretary GATES. We understand the problem.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Secretary, again, we as a nation are lucky to have you where you are. You have got a tough job.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And, gentlemen, thank you for being here and the leadership to our country that you provide. The day that the President made his announcement, in the Jacksonville paper, which is the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base, the heading of the local article, "Obama Expected to Send 30,000 More Troops to Combat." In the introductory of the article, I will just read this part: Local military are reacting to the news with skepticism and concern. The article interviews three Marines and one Navy corpsman.

Mr. Secretary, you have tried for many years, and I applaud you for this effort, to get North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to understand that this war in Afghanistan is their responsibility as much as it is ours. My question to you would be, if NATO is counted on to provide, I was thinking the number of 7,000 troops, more troops, would these troops be trigger pullers? Would they be involved in combat with the Taliban and al Qaeda?

Secretary GATES. Our hope and expectation is—what we would like to do is have our ISAF partners, other than those who are partnered with us in the Regional Command South, basically take total responsibility for the north and the western parts of the country so that we could concentrate our forces in the south, in the southern and eastern parts of the country. So our expectation is

that the additional forces, as with many of the forces they have there now, would in fact be prepared to engage in combat as necessary.

Obviously, the security situation in the north and the west is not as difficult as it is in the south and the east, and we think that they should be able to take responsibility for that. And we have some commitments that give us confidence that we are in fact going to get another 5,000 to 7,000 troops. And I would point out that, as we have increased our numbers, so have our ISAF partners. When I took this job, there were 17,000 Europeans and other ISAF partners in Afghanistan. If we get this additional 5,000 to 7,000, there will be about 50,000. So they have tripled the number of troops that they have. And I would say, also, they have removed a lot of the caveats that used to limit what their troops could do.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, Admiral Mullen, I have this second question.

Again, I like many on this committee, maybe all on this committee, worry about the stress on the force and how many times we can continue to ask these brave men and women to keep going back and back.

And I do want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, and Admiral Mullen, for taking the time you did to try to figure out what is the right policy for Afghanistan.

The question is, of the 30,000 that will be going to Afghanistan, how many of the 30,000 can you give us, if not today, maybe to the committee, the number of deployments that each one of the 30,000 have been on? Do you know now how many deployments the 30,000 have been on? Has it been half the 30,000 have not been to Afghanistan or Iraq and the other half a number of times? Can you answer that, or would you like to submit that to the committee?

Admiral MULLEN. Mr. Jones, let me take a shot at it. I can't give you a complete answer, but I think it is an important question. On the Marine Corps side, I think nobody knows this better than you, we have rotated basically every seven months with respect to deployments. And the expectation is, for the major units, that will continue in the Marine Corps even as we shift from—as we have shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan. What I can't tell you is, for these units—there are sort of two measures—for these units, how many deployments this unit, a unit, has been on. And then, in that, how many deployments on average have the individuals in that unit seen? And that is what I would need to get back to you for.

Although the Marine Corps has managed this in a way—and the growth of the force to 202,000 has been incredibly important here, so that actually General Conway, even with these deployments, is going to get over the next year to twice as long at home as deployed. And, as you may remember, it wasn't that long ago we were at one-to-one.

The Army is more challenging. And the major units, the brigade combat teams for the Army, typically a unit is on its third or fourth deployment. There is plenty of change-out in the units between deployments, and the Army is going to get to its two-to-one goal in a couple of years as opposed to the Marine Corps.

I just want to tell you that it is something the Secretary and myself, the service chiefs, General Casey and General Conway spend

an awful lot of time on, recognizing the stress that they have been under. But that is where we are right now.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Reyes.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, gentlemen.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here. I know it has been a tough several days. I just want to go on record as supporting the President and his decision, and particularly the thoughtful process that he used to come to that decision. And I know he stated the other night that we are not alone in this effort in Afghanistan. I believe he said 43 other nations are involved.

My question—and I will ask it to Secretary Lew. My question is, I know we have ongoing efforts to try to elicit additional cooperation from other nations besides the 43. If you can give us a status report on that, how successful are we?

And the other question I have for any or maybe all of you is the following: How are we working to ensure that developmental funds will reach the intended recipients? Because one of the—I think one of the critical issues here is reassuring the nations we are trying to recruit to help in addition to the 43 to support in an effort that is going to be successful. So how are we doing that? How well are we doing? And what is your anticipated success?

Secretary LEW. Mr. Reyes, the partners are participating in different ways. Some are providing troops; some are providing development assistance. Part of the President's plan called for allies to provide troops. The responses have been very positive. Secretary Clinton is in Brussels, and we are confident that we are going to get commitments that will be very much in line with what was expected.

On the development side, our partners are doing the same kind of work we are doing. They are doing the kind of development work in agriculture and rule of law, and we are working very cooperatively both to provide programs in the areas that we control, to share best practices, and to work with the Afghan ministries to build capacity.

The very important question you ask on how to make sure the money gets to where it is intended, that is a challenge, and we have made it clear that it is not something that has just one answer. We are going to work with Afghan national ministries that have the capacity to get the money where it goes. Some of them have done very well.

In the agriculture area, which is central to the issue that Mr. Taylor was asking about, we have a lot of confidence that the agriculture minister has a plan, that the money is getting to the areas, to the farmers to give them seeds to plant legal crops. And for most Afghan farmers, if they can plant and sell legal crops, they don't want to grow poppies. So it is part of the counternarcotics policy as well as the general development policy.

We have to work at the subnational level. We need to work with provincial governors. We need to help build governance in areas where it hasn't been. When I was in Helmand right after our military moved in to make that area a place where we could do development work, it was almost overnight that we had development

workers helping build an air strip so that farmers could get their crops out of Helmand, giving them seeds so they can plant legal crops, and working in communities to try to get local leaders to meet with their people sometimes for the first time. I know the governor of Helmand has said that it was incredibly important that the civilians were there with the military from day one.

Secretary GATES. Part of what I think is important in this is that we not take the Soviet approach and focus too much on big signature projects that take years to complete. What we need are, I think, principally small-scale efforts that reach individual Afghans pretty quickly and where they see their lives change for the better almost immediately after U.S. forces and our partners and the Afghans clear an area. And I think you can find ways through using these provincial reconstruction teams and the other civilians that are with our troops to do that. And I think that a one-room school, an all-weather road, a small bridge, a well, these are the things that matter to the individuals and that will make them want to be our partners in this.

And I think that, frankly, one of the things that Secretary Clinton and I talked about in the House Foreign Affairs Committee yesterday is that the State Department and AID and our civilians out there need the same kind of flexibility in terms of the way they are able to commit funds for these kinds of things that our commanders have with the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds so that they can be there the next day and commit and provide some dollars for people to do that work.

Mr. REYES. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And as Congressman Taylor said, I am going to ask some tough questions, but I do appreciate you being here.

There was a time in our country when words mattered, when laws and statutes mattered.

Mr. Secretary, Title X, Section 231 of the U.S. Code required that you submit to us, to this committee, a shipbuilding plan when you sent your budget over so that we would know where the money was going to be spent on our ships, and that you certified that the budget you sent over complied with that shipbuilding plan. You just refused to do it this year.

Title X, Section 231(a) required that we have an aviation plan sent over to us and that you certify or have an assessment that the budget comply with it, and you just refused to do it.

House Resolution 477 was unanimously approved by this committee on both sides of the aisle requiring that you would submit to us that shipbuilding plan that the law required by September 15. You just refused to do it.

H. Res. 478 required an aviation resolution, and that assessment that you would just comply with the law and submit it to us by September 15. You just refused to do it.

Title 50, Chapter 15, Subchapter one, Paragraph 404(a) required that we have a national security strategy submitted to us by the President within 150 days after he took office. We didn't get it.

The Guantanamo Executive Order issued on January 22, 2009, said that Guantanamo Bay would be shut down no later than one year from the date of this order, which would have been January 22, 2010. We know that is not going to happen. I disagreed with that order, but that is what it said.

So my question, Mr. Secretary, to you today is this: If we are not going to comply with Title X, Section 231; Title X, Section 231(a); H. Res. 477; H. Res. 478; Title 50, Chapter 15, Subchapter one, Paragraph 404(a); Guantanamo Executive Order, what confidence do our allies and our troops and our citizens have that the words we are hearing now are words that have meaning and are not just semantics?

And as you think about that question, Admiral, I would ask you this question. You testified earlier today that General McChrystal got all he wanted, everything he wanted when he asked for 30,000 troops. And the question I would ask you—I have never known a general to get all he wanted. I have known them to get all they formally requested but not all they wanted. And I would just ask you, are you saying to this committee that all General McChrystal ever wanted was 30,000 troops to wage the war that he is having to wage now?

Mr. Secretary, I give you that time, and then Admiral Mullen.

Secretary GATES. First of all, with respect to the 30-year aviation plan and shipbuilding plan, it was important for us to be able to get a five-year defense plan from the administration so that we had some predictability, and we are in the process of doing that. The five-year defense plan has been put forward. It was not for fiscal year (FY) 2010.

I can provide you that kind of—I can provide you a list. It will be meaningless, because we don't know. We don't know what the resources will be until we get the five-year plan.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Secretary, and again, I don't mean to interrupt you, but that is not what the law says. And the law says that you submit whatever plan you are working on. If we have no plan, we need to know it when we are voting on budgets, that we have don't have a plan. We are waiting for it.

But the reason that the law requires it is because it is important that we know that, one, we have a plan, and what this budget is trying to reach in that plan. So, with all due respect, I would have appreciated and I think this committee would have appreciated at least some response back as to why we weren't complying with the law on doing that.

And I yield back.

Admiral MULLEN. What I thought I said earlier about General McChrystal, what I meant to say, was that the strategy that the President has executed and made the decision on with respect to the 30,000 troops is, General McChrystal is going to get what he asked for in 2010. He is going to get those troops in some cases more quickly than he had originally asked for them. And, to me, that is significant, because that will give him the thrust to turn the momentum around, turn this insurgency around, which is his number one concern. And outside that, longer term, there——

Mr. FORBES. And I appreciate that. I only have got eight seconds. And I will just say this. It is a difference to us when we say he got all he wanted than all he officially requested.

Admiral MULLEN. I would agree there are very few, if any, commanders that have ever gotten everything that they wanted, myself included.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, as we anticipate this influx of troops into Afghanistan, the normal flow and plan that goes on with moving large numbers of troops around, there are some pretty good restrictions set in law by Congress on the role that women can play. I am not asking for an administrative position. But would it be helpful if those restrictions, those legal restrictions, were removed so that you were free to move troops around better, given the nature of counterinsurgency in both Iraq and Afghanistan?

Secretary GATES. I think Admiral Mullen is probably more familiar with these restrictions than I am. But certainly, on the logistics side of it, I am not aware of any restrictions with respect to moving the troops to Afghanistan and out of Iraq and so on.

But, Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. I guess, Mr. Snyder, where I would go with that is I am not aware of any major restrictions which are really hurting us in terms of constraining our ability to do that.

But I do think it may be worthwhile, on a little larger level, to look at what we have learned over the last seven or eight years of war and assessing that. In fact, I have talked specifically with General Casey about maybe it is time for us to review that to see if there are some changes that we should make that may not be applicable directly to what we are doing right now or that could be in the next couple of years but would be applicable based on what we have learned in the long term.

Dr. SNYDER. Secretary Gates, over the last few years, you have had some pretty strong statements about some of the difficulties we have had on the civilian side of government, of having the civilians following the surge into Iraq. Are you confident that we will be able—that the civilian side of government will be able to do what Admiral Mullen needs it to do to accomplish the missions in both Afghanistan and Iraq?

Secretary GATES. This is clearly not a problem that can be solved in the short term. I think that—I have confidence that every effort possible is being made to get more civilians into Afghanistan. And there have been a lot of changes in policies and practices at the State Department. Secretary Lew can talk to that.

But the problem overall is that the State Department—and this is my old song. The State Department, AID, other civilian agencies involved in national security have been starved of resources for decades. You can't turn that around overnight. When I left the government in 1993, there were 16,000 people working in AID. They were deployable. They were expeditionary. They had the languages. They were prepared to live in rudimentary conditions and even dangerous conditions. AID, when I came back to government, had 3,000 people, and they were mainly contracting people.

So building that cadre of people, building a larger cadre of Foreign Service officers, getting the kind of agricultural experts that we need for this task is something that where the groundwork laid today may not pay dividends for five years or more, but it is important to start.

But as I say, just to repeat, I think everything that can be done right now to get people into the field as quickly as possible, civilians, is being done. And, frankly, it is a whole of government effort, as Jack would tell you. They have got people from the Department of Agriculture and the Justice Department and various other departments of government participating in this.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Chairman, I have about a minute and a half left.

Mr. Owens of New York, if you would like to ask one question, I would be glad to yield the remainder of my time to you.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you very much.

I do have a question. Early in the testimony there was a reference to the fact that if we pulled out now, we would likely see a civil war occur in Afghanistan. What do you believe will cause that not to occur as we begin the pullout in 2011 given the history in that region?

Secretary GATES. The key is reestablishing traditional forms of governance at the local level in the districts and the provinces. It is having a credible government where we have at least been able to strengthen the capacity of key ministries, such as defense and interior, where we have high-quality people in charge of them.

The thing to remember is that a very high percentage of the Afghan people, based on all the polling and all the information available to us, like 80 to 90 percent of the Afghan people do not want to see a return of the Taliban. But the Taliban intimidate. They murder. And until we can provide a security environment where people know that they will not be subject to that kind of retribution, we will have the danger that the Taliban will be able to continue the kind of momentum that they have had for the last year or two.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Before I call Mr. Miller, let me ask you a quick question. Has it been made known as to what troop increase, if any, the NATO countries are willing to proffer?

Secretary GATES. A number of countries are talking about making commitments. We have received some firm commitments in two telephone calls. Day before yesterday, I received firm commitments of upwards of 2,000 troops. But these countries haven't announced their willingness to do this to their own people, so we can't preempt them. I also think that a number of countries will wait until after the London conference in January that Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Brown have called on Afghanistan, and I think that some countries will wait until then.

But the efforts that Secretary General of NATO Rasmussen and the rest of us have made, Admiral Mullen, the Secretary of State, National Security Adviser, and so on, I think give us pretty high confidence that we will meet the numbers that we have set forth.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, one of you in your testimony just a few minutes ago—and I don't recall which one it was, but both of you can respond, if you would. I think the comment was that there has been no pressure for the Afghans to perform over the last eight years. Is that a true statement?

Secretary GATES. I think that there has been—there has been verbal pressure, but I think there has not been a serious exercise of leverage.

Mr. MILLER. You were Secretary of Defense. I mean, you didn't pressure the Afghan people to perform?

Secretary GATES. Every meeting that I had with the minister of defense, every meeting that I had with President Karzai, the subject of recruitment, retention, strengthening their military capabilities came up.

But the leverage is more in the kinds of assistance that we have been offering, not military assistance but civilian assistance, subsidies and so on. And I think there is some real opportunities for that leverage.

Mr. MILLER. Well, and is part of that leverage bypassing the Karzai administration with the funds and going to some of the local provinces and areas instead of giving them the money?

Secretary GATES. Well, I will defer to Secretary Lew.

But I think that—as I said earlier, I think that we are in the process of developing some procedures in terms of trying to tackle this corruption problem where we will not deal with ministers and ministries that we believe are corrupt. We will not deal with agencies or organizations that we believe are corrupt. And, as I said just a few minutes ago, I think that the more we can get the money directly to villages and local authorities, the more successful we are likely to be.

Mr. MILLER. And to Mr. Taylor's point earlier, I hope that also means that we will not deal with governors or mayors that are corrupt, either, even if they are the brother of the president of the country.

Secretary GATES. I think that we have to make very—there are certain provinces and certain ministries that are critical to our success, and I think we have to be willing to use whatever leverage is at our disposal to ensure that the people who lead those ministries and who are the governors of those provinces are competent, honest people we can work with.

Mr. MILLER. Yesterday you had an exchange with Senator McCain where you explained how the U.S. forces would begin withdrawing in July of 2011, and this was your response: I think it is the judgment of all of us in the Department of Defense involved in this process that we will be in a position in particularly uncontested areas where we will begin to transition by 2011.

Is that a correct statement?

Secretary GATES. That sounds right.

Mr. MILLER. So if this is correct, the drawdown occurs only when the areas are uncontested. So, in other words, we redeploy when we have accomplished clear holds and build. Correct?

Secretary GATES. Correct.

Mr. MILLER. Can you name one province in Afghanistan where we have U.S. forces or intend to send U.S. forces that is currently uncontested?

Secretary GATES. I would have to look at the intelligence reports and get that back to you.

Mr. MILLER. Admiral Mullen.

Admiral MULLEN. General McChrystal's plan overall is to send the bulk of U.S. forces to the east and to the south, which are very contested. We have got forces out in the west where there well could be—where there is not that significant of an insurgency, for instance, some forces out there and coalition forces as well.

Mr. MILLER. I think it is safe to say that we have very few troops, if any, in places where they currently are uncontested. And so I guess what I am driving at is that 2011, it is going to be very, very difficult to find an area where our troops are going to be that is uncontested, thereby beginning the withdrawal process.

Admiral MULLEN. I mean, we see in Helmand right now in some of the districts or provinces, you know, it is pretty Helmand quiet in a place called Nawa where it was really tough before the Marines showed up. Now, we have got to build and transfer after the clear and hold, which is where we are right now. And by quiet, I mean the bazaar is open and there is a significant amount of economic activity there in a place that a few months ago there was virtually none. So what we have got to do is connect that with the rest of Helmand. For example, that is going to take additional troops.

So would you say that is contested or uncontested? I mean, right now we have got—right now, it isn't. But we have got to be able to assure that we can build and transfer it so that that can be sustained, and that is where the Afghan Security Forces come in.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you.

I have got five seconds left. Can either of you tell me why the President did not use the word "victory" in his speech the other night?

Admiral MULLEN. He writes his own speech.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, again for being before us today.

Let me just paraphrase something that the last time I was in Afghanistan, which was less than a year ago or sometime earlier this year or late last year, that one of our people on the ground said to me. They said, we give dollars to the Afghanis to do something, to build a school, make a community center, et cetera, and then we check in with them, and nothing is done. And we say to them, you know, what happened to the school you were supposed to build, or what is going on? And they say to us, yeah, we need a school. You build it. Meanwhile, all the money is gone. And what this gentleman was saying to me was basically, if we want something done, we are building it for them. And, secondly, we are paying for it twice. This was the comment he made to our group.

So my question for you is that, despite eight years of combat and billions in foreign aid and investment, the situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated to a point where President Obama has already ordered troop increases that have almost doubled the size of the U.S.

force there in the first 10 months of his presidency, a 100 percent increase in force levels.

And yet, Admiral, you just testified that the Taliban has dramatically increased in size and tactical proficiency in the past 12 months. And apparently nothing we have done so far has prevented the Taliban from growing back in strength and effectiveness.

So I have no doubt that we will have a new campaign plan for the military operations and that additional troops will actually increase our tactical effectiveness against the growing Taliban threat. But, Admiral, you also testified that increasing the size of our force is an exercise in futility unless corruption is eradicated in the Karzai government. You stated that no number of troops will ever win this war unless the Afghani people have better government and less corruption.

And, for example, it was said that the American forces in Vietnam won every tactical battle, and yet we lost in part because the South Vietnam had plagued and weak and corrupt governments. So there are a lot of parallels to Vietnam; some substantiated, some not. But one lesson that I think we learned is corruption and bad government is bad government.

So I believe that we will lose this war and that the deployment of these additional troops will be in vain unless and until we have a strong and respective government in Kabul.

So, why should any of us believe that Karzai will fight corruption or significantly improve the effectiveness of his government? Karzai has been in power for five years. He just got another five years. I want to know from you what changes he has actually implemented this year that would persuade you that he has the will and the capability to eliminate corruption and improve governance there. And I am not asking what he has promised to do. I am not asking what we intend to do. I want to know what he has done, and I want specific examples, concrete evidence. Corruption prosecutions, increased transparency, high-level firings, putting his brother in jail.

What good governance has happened in the last 18 months? What makes you think that he is going to change his stripes and that things will turn around?

I would like the evidence because, as you know, hope is not a strategy.

Secretary LEW. Ms. Sanchez, I think if you look, there is clearly a lot of work to be done.

Everyone in the administration from the President on down has recognized that we need to keep the pressure on the government of Afghanistan to deal with the problem of corruption.

But there has been progress. You look at the ministries in the government. They are not all great. I am not going to sit here and say that they are all where they should be, but there are quite a number of them which have tackled corruption in terms of firing people, in terms of trying to instill a different kind of culture in their ministries. We work closely with those ministries, ministries like the ministry of finance, the ministry of agriculture. We have to recognize that that is significant progress.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Well, I would like a report on the specifics of what has happened, actually, because I haven't seen much change.

Secretary LEW. And we are happy to provide additional information.

And at the inaugural, I think it is important to note that the idea of tackling corruption, naming a major crimes task force, is an action. We have to keeping pressure on to make sure that that is followed by further actions. But it was a different message than had been the message before.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Talk is cheap, as they say in this town.

Secretary LEW. The major crimes task force is not just talk. It is putting in place a mechanism to do something. A lot of work to be done.

Ms. SANCHEZ. I will just remind you, we have had task force after task force about changing Social Security in this city, and nothing has been done. So a task force sounds good, but I want concrete examples.

So if you will please send that to me in writing, I would appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank all three of you for being here this afternoon.

Admiral Mullen, in order to win in Afghanistan, I believe withdrawal of troops must be based on conditions, not an arbitrary date. What conditions do you hope to achieve by July of 2011, and what will be the course of action if we do not meet those victory milestones? Which is most crucial, conditions or an arbitrary date?

Admiral MULLEN. This is not an arbitrary date. It is a date actually that those of us in the military looked at what we need to do over the next couple of years, from summer 2009 to summer 2011. General McChrystal specifically has said that we have to turn this thing around in the next two years or we very possibly can't win under any circumstances. We will have had, as I said before, the Marines there for three summers at that point in time. We think it is the right strategy. We think the force levels are about right, and we think we can succeed with respect to that.

So it is a date at which we will start to transition. There is no size associated with that. There is no deadline. There is no withdrawal date associated with that. And it is important—and I believe this. It is important that the Afghan Security Forces recognize they have got to grab this as well, so that they are both motivated to train and equip as rapidly as they possibly can. And that decision, the decisions that surround that, where, how much, will be done, one, responsibly, and, two, based on conditions.

Mr. WILSON. And I want to thank you. I think that is reassuring to our troops, to military families, and also our Afghan allies and other coalition forces. So thank you for your response. I think that was very clear.

And, General, Secretary Gates, it is hard to imagine, but you are getting to the point of your second anniversary of being in service. December 18 will be——

Secretary GATES. Third.

Mr. WILSON. Oh, my God. Well, anyway, this is good.

Secretary GATES. That is exactly what I would say.

Mr. WILSON. Well, thank you. I believe you are placing troops where they should be.

Under your watch, there has been over a 90 percent reduction in the number of attacks in Afghanistan. There were 1,400 when you came in to office; now, there are significantly—almost to a 100. Sadly, in Afghanistan, you are placing more troops because there has been an increase to nearly 200 attacks a week. But I believe that you are placing the troops where they are needed.

In terms of training, I know what can be been done with the Afghan forces. My former National Guard unit, the 218th Brigade of South Carolina led by General Bob Livingston, worked with the Afghan police and army units. They developed a close relationship with their Afghan brothers, and they saw the capabilities of the Afghan Security Forces.

With that in mind, I understand that the training program for the Afghan National Police is being transferred from the State Department to the Department of Defense, which will involve a transition on the ground. How confident are you that the training program will not be disrupted? Does this transfer put the mission of the Afghan Security Forces at risk?

Secretary GATES. No, I don't think it does. And I think that, as Admiral Mullen has testified and I would invite him to comment, we have put new people in, in all of these training programs.

But the reality is, both with the police and the army, that working together and partnering is the key to their effectiveness. They can go through basic training, but what we found in Iraq and what General McChrystal is intending to do in Afghanistan is, once those people get out of basic training, once those units show up, that they will live together, work together, plan together.

That hasn't happened before, and that is how you build trust between these people. But it also is the way you give them competence and confidence. And we saw it in Iraq, and that is certainly General McChrystal's approach on all the security services on the Afghan side.

Mr. WILSON. And actually, I have seen it myself in visiting in Kabul—I have been there nine times. Visiting with the 218th Brigade, it was always extraordinarily encouraging to me that they were not just at Camp Phoenix; they were spread throughout the country in a mentoring program. And it is and can and shall be successful. And I want to thank you for your service. All of you. And I just appreciate your efforts to protect American families by defeating the terrorists overseas.

And I yield the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to all of you for being here. We certainly appreciate, I certainly appreciate the deliberate process that you have used. And I know that it has been difficult. It is difficult for us, too. I feel quite conflicted around this.

Could you help us understand how you won over some of your own skepticism and others in looking at a few issues? And I guess I have a—Pakistan, for example. We have made the assumption that adding 30,000 troops in Afghanistan and partnering with a

new, hopefully more, Afghanis in the services and in the law enforcement will make and help stabilize Pakistan. And yet, we read in the press and we know that in many ways there will be a flow of Taliban likely into Pakistan. How does that help to stabilize Pakistan?

I think the other assumption that is being made is that we will be able to recruit the number of Afghanis that are required through their tribal leaders. And I am wondering, where do we see that happening in such numbers that you have the confidence to believe that that is the case? I haven't seen that indication.

And then I think, finally, the whole issue in terms of the civilian, quote, surge that we have talked about, and yet I think, Secretary Gates, particularly you said that, I mean, that is going to be years before we really have the kind of a force that is required to do that. And I am wondering, are there plans already to have the civilians partnering and training with our military that are going over there together?

And then, finally, are we focusing largely on our reserves and our National Guard as well as our active duty troops that will be deployed to Afghanistan?

Secretary LEW. If I could start with the civilian question that you asked. Secretary Gates' comments about the long-term need to rebuild USAID and State, we all believe that.

But notwithstanding that, there is a very large effort under way to get civilians to Afghanistan. We are tripling the number of civilians in place. By early next year, we will have almost 1,000 people on the ground. They are leveraged ten to one because local nationals are hired either directly or through contract or non-governmental organization (NGO) arrangements. So that is a fairly substantial number of people. You are talking about 10,000 civilians. Civilians don't come in battalions; they come in ones and twos. You have a half a dozen civilians in a district, and they are able to—U.S. civilians—and they can organize an awful lot of activities. They can handle the disbursement of monies. They are on the ground, and they can deal with some of these corruption issues because they are there to supervise the way the monies are being given out in terms of the projects being funded.

This is very hard work. I wouldn't sit here today and say that it is going to be easy to get enough civilians in to do all the work that we have to do in Afghanistan. But we are getting the numbers there with the specialization that we need, with agriculture specialization, with rule of law specialization, for each of the functions that are identified by military and civilian planners working together.

Mrs. DAVIS. And just, do they have the staying power? How long are they required to stay? And when will you know that perhaps you are not going to have those?

Secretary LEW. When we started at the beginning of the year, there were just over 300 people, most of whom had commitments that were less than a year, three months, six months. We are bringing a thousand people in, the vast majority of who are making the commitment of a year or more. That is a very big difference and a very important difference and one of the major changes that we have had made.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Admiral MULLEN. Let me first quickly piggyback on Secretary Lew. He would never say this, but I have watched him work this problem over the last many months, and he personally and his people have had a huge impact on getting the right skilled people there; not just a body, which is a problem we had in Iraq, but the right skilled people into the right job.

And the multiplier is just huge. Because I was with the Marines right after they went into Helmand, and the one civilian that rolled in with them literally the next day had a huge immediate impact. And so the leverage that he talks about just, you can't say enough about that. And I really appreciate that effort.

With respect to Pakistan, an awful lot of work going on with Kayani and the Pakistani Military (PAKMIL). Kayani—and I give General Dave McKiernan credit for this. He started, we started this tripartite, Afghan, Pakistan, as well as ISAF U.S. meet, that continues, and General McChrystal has met with General Kayani several times. We are working to synchronize the campaign, if you will, so that we don't have the kind of impact. We sent the Marines into Helmand. Not that many insurgents went back across the border.

And then, lastly, just very quickly, we recognize the recruiting, retaining and retention problems that we have on the ANSF. And not unlike we have to incentivize that, we also have to create a security environment in which they can be recruited, trained, and sustain that environment over time.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I appreciate all of you for being here today. I think one of the things you can tell is that members of this committee are struggling, and they are struggling because they are hearing a lot of things that are contrary to policies that we have heard before. You, yourself, had said that in the past you were adamantly opposed to deadlines, and yet today we are dealing with a July 2011 deadline that, Admiral, you said: By then, we will know whether or not we are succeeding or not by that date. We will know whether or not we are succeeding by that date.

But there is no trigger with respect to the date. It doesn't matter when you get to that date how you are doing. There has been a date set for drawdown. This is not a date for assessment. This is not a date to determine whether or not this strategy that you are currently implementing is something that needs to be changed. This is the beginning of a drawdown.

Now, Secretary Gates, you tell us, well, but it is how the drawdown is done that will be the evaluation. But nonetheless, it is a date where we are saying, July 2011, whether or not we are succeeding, as you have said, Admiral, that we are going to begin to draw down.

And I am really troubled, Mr. Secretary, by your statement of, for over the past eight years, we haven't exerted enough leverage. And you acknowledge that three of those eight are your own. And I am not comfortable with your conclusion that setting that date,

which is an arbitrary date of July 2011, is going to provide you with that leverage.

And you turn to us and you said, well, you know, I think that the American people want to know that there is going to be an end, having eight years of this. Mr. Secretary, I think what the people want to know is, are we going to be safe? I mean, the reason why we are in Afghanistan is because we were attacked on 9/11, and we lost the World Trade Center from perpetrators that originated from Afghanistan. This isn't an issue of whether or not we want an end. It is how we want an end.

And that is really what I was looking for today, was some answers as to how we are going to get that end, not an arbitrary deadline. And what concerns me, again, with arbitrary deadlines, I mean, you look to Guantanamo. This is an administration that said, we are closing Guantanamo in 12 months, which is something I opposed. But now we are going to be drawing down from Afghanistan in 18? We couldn't accomplish closing Guantanamo, where there are a handful of terrorists and we have complete control, but in Afghanistan, where there certainly is an innumerable amount, and we are going to begin a drawdown in 18 months.

Now, Admiral, you said that—I believe I got this right—that the Taliban are making more than the Afghan army. Several members have asked you questions about the drug trade, and I have a chart I want to hold up, Mr. Secretary.

This is looking at the drug trade from 1995 to 2009. I think this is important for us to look at, because every time we take up the issue of, what are we going to do, how is the Taliban being funded, how is al Qaeda being funded, and we talk about the drug trade, it should not be an issue of this esoteric concept of drug trade. It is actually the increase from the drug trade.

Now, this chart goes from 1995 to 2009. I am going to fold it back so that we look at the highest numbers going away since 1995. And what do we find? We find the last four years being an astronomical amount that is off the charts with respect to what has occurred in Afghanistan before. Three of those four, Mr. Secretary, as you just said, are the time periods where you have served as Secretary of Defense.

Now, we all know that the Afghan National Army is competing against the Taliban, from which this funding is coming from. Now, I, like other members of this committee, I am a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). And in their last meeting, they had a resolution that was brought up with respect to addressing the drug trade, and actually, the Russians came forward with a resolution calling on NATO and the NATO PA as a policy perspective to address the issue of the drug-related illegal activities. There were members of parliament from NATO who said that it wasn't NATO's responsibility to address the drug trade.

Now, again, we know that there has been in the last four years an astronomical increase, and we know that it is funding what we are fighting. I would hope that your strategy includes addressing this issue. And perhaps you could give us some information today that would give us confidence that this, which is funding what we are fighting, might be something that you can address.

Secretary GATES. You are correct about the reluctance of other ISAF nations to tackle this problem. I would tell you that NATO's policy on this, the ISAF policy, to which the governments have acceded—I wouldn't say they supported enthusiastically. But the ISAF rules of engagement in terms of going after drug traffickers, drug lords, and the drug labs was changed about a year ago. And so ISAF, the commander of ISAF now can deploy forces and engage forces in trying to deal with these groups.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen in his testimony says that South Asia is the epicenter of global Islamic terrorism. And I think this decision will have tremors well beyond that epicenter. My friend from Ohio just mentioned Guantanamo. I would want to ask Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates if they would still stand by their earlier statements, which I believe are correct, that closing Guantanamo removes a symbol that is a valuable recruitment device for the jihadists whom we are fighting; would you still agree with that?

Secretary GATES. Yes, I do.

Admiral MULLEN. I said that in 2005, and I believe it today.

Mr. ANDREWS. And so the relationship of the Guantanamo question to this one is it makes it more difficult for those whom we are fighting in Afghanistan otherwise to recruit those to fight against us.

I wanted to ask you about Pakistan and the tremors that it involves in relationship to this. If we are successful in this military mission in substantially degrading al Qaeda and the Taliban in and near the Afghan-Pakistani border, what impact do either of you think or any of you think that that would have on the stability of the Pakistani government?

Admiral MULLEN. I think it would have a significant impact. I think the Pakistani government and the Pakistani people pay an awful lot of attention to their neighbors, and their strategy is designed around what kind of governments and what kinds of threats they have next door. So I think a stable, supportive Afghanistan would have a significant impact on how Pakistan would look at its future. And I think the opposite is true as well.

Mr. ANDREWS. To what extent is the rising tide of terrorist violence against civilians in Pakistan attributable to the resurgent Taliban?

Secretary GATES. I would say that it is a result of the growth in the last year to 18 months of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, the TTP, the Taliban in Pakistan, or the Pakistani Taliban, I should say. We have evidence that al Qaeda is helping them pick targets, do operational planning, helping them in their effort to try to destabilize the Pakistani government.

The other piece of this that does not include the Taliban or that is apart from the Taliban is we also know that al Qaeda is helping the Lashkar-e-Taiba, the terrorist group that carried out the bombings in Mumbai. Al Qaeda sees using the Taliban in Pakistan and groups like LET as ways to destabilize Pakistan and even try to provoke a conflict between India and Pakistan that would inevitably destabilize Pakistan. So this is all tied together.

Mr. ANDREWS. I think Admiral Mullen implicitly answered this question. But if the opposite were true, if we were either to fail in this offensive mission against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan or not embark upon it, what would the impact then be on the stability of the Pakistani government, in your opinion?

Secretary GATES. Well, let me comment and then just ask Admiral Mullen. First of all, we have seen what happens. When the Pakistanis made deals with the tribes and various groups on its northwestern frontier, it created a sanctuary and safe haven in which Taliban, which had been knocked back on its heels and nearly destroyed in 2001–2002, had the space in which it could reconstitute itself to the point where it could become a major problem for the United States and a number of our allies.

If, given the same kind of space in eastern Afghanistan and southern Afghanistan, the TTP in Pakistan could use it to strengthen itself and expand its ranks and be even more effective in its efforts to destabilize the government.

Admiral MULLEN. I have spent a lot of time in Pakistan, and each time I go, I learn how much I still have to learn. And one of the messages that comes from there is a message of lack of trust. And that is based on not just what happened in 1989 but in fact what happened as early as the 1960s. They recall we have betrayed them three times. The question is, are we going to do that again?

Mr. ANDREWS. I certainly hope not.

Admiral MULLEN. And I think the worst case is that that government does get destabilized; they are nuclear capable.

Mr. ANDREWS. If we may, we certainly I think have a consensus that we don't want a nuclear weapon Iran. If, God forbid, we had one, what is the greater threat to the United States, a nuclear weapon Iran or a nuclear weapon Pakistan under a jihadist government?

Admiral MULLEN. I think they are both pretty, I mean, dramatic threats to us and to other nations in the world.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here and for your service.

Admiral Mullen, in response to a couple of questions, you have affirmed that the 30,000 troops is what General McChrystal wanted for 2010. I guess we don't know what he wanted in total, and perhaps when we see him next week, we can see what that total number is, unless you can tell us what his total request was. But, in the meantime, we have 30,000 that we are looking at.

Can you help us understand what the makeup of that 30,000 is? How many combat brigades? How many people will be trainers? What kind of enablers are going with it? And particularly, because you have already talked about the stress on enablers and the difficulty of moving some from Iraq to Afghanistan and their quick turnaround, can you give us some idea of the makeup of that 30,000? Is the strategy complete enough for that?

Admiral MULLEN. Actually, with the decision as recent as it is, the details out through the 30,000, the further you get to the right in the timetable, we have got some more precise work to do. But

up front, it is clearly a regimental combat team from the Marine Corps specifically that would be at the front end of this. There is also a package in there similar to the Fourth, B–82nd that is a training brigade. So focused exclusively on training, although in a combat environment, and this goes to the partnership piece, we have got one we sent in; we are going to send another.

With respect to the enablers, we are looking at other brigade combat teams. And, actually, one of the things that the President gave General McChrystal was the flexibility to put together the forces as he best sees fit. And so we are working with him now to really look at the details of that, and we just don't have that at this particular point in time. I would expect certainly at least one more brigade combat team, if not a second one. Everybody has got a training mission and a partnering mission as they go in.

And then we are very concerned about the enablers, the kinds of things the Secretary talked about earlier, those that protect our people. It's medical. It's ISR. It is helicopters, engineers, improvised explosive device (IED) related. And we are focused—we have been focused on that for many, many months now to do two things: One, make sure we can get as many of them there as possible, and they are a significant part of the 30,000. And it is not just having them in the 30,000; it is, where do we get them, to your point, Mr. Kline, because they have been turning pretty quickly. And we are very aware of that as we look at their turnaround ratios.

But all of it—I believe all of it is doable in terms of what he needs, what he has asked for, what he needs and our ability to get them there, particularly over the next six, eight, six to eight months.

Mr. KLINE. Admiral, I am a little bit concerned that we don't have more clarity into what the makeup of this would be, because we have set on 30,000, but I don't know how we got the 30,000 if we don't know how many of those are going to be combat teams and how many of those are going to be enablers. It seems to me that that 30,000—I hate to use the word arbitrary again, but I don't understand how we know what that number is if we don't know what the makeup is going to be.

Admiral MULLEN. It is not arbitrary. And I would only repeat, since that word keeps coming up, that July 2011 is not an arbitrary date, either. I mean, we certainly have a broad view of what this should be. The closer that they will deploy, the more specific it is. General McChrystal has some flexibility that is tied to that, and we are working the details of how those packages get put together.

Broadly, they are brigade combat teams. They are enablers. They are trainers. They are the kinds of things that we know we will typically need. It becomes a question of identifying them, making sure they are available, and then literally putting ourselves in a position to be able to deploy them in a timely way.

Mr. KLINE. All right. Admiral, we will be looking forward, I am sure, in this committee to those details, and of course, we are anxiously awaiting General McChrystal's arrival to testify here. I am very concerned about those enablers. I am very interested to see what kind of medical support we are going to have for this, how much increase there is going to be. Are we going to build a hospital? There are a number of issues in terms of the force makeup

that I am really looking forward to getting details on, and I know that other members of the committee are.

Just one other point. I think my colleague from Florida asked why the President didn't use the word "victory." And, as you said, you didn't write the speech. Are we looking for victory in Afghanistan?

Admiral MULLEN. And I, certainly in our discussions—and we believe that this strategy is a strategy that will allow us to succeed.

Mr. KLINE. Is that victory?

Admiral MULLEN. And that is to allow us to succeed. To get us to a level where we can turn this over to the Afghans.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Before I call on Mr. Langevin, let me make an observation. In both Iraq as well as in Afghanistan, we have Navy and Air Force personnel doing virtually Army type of work, is that not correct?

Secretary GATES. Correct. Some of these enablers, very important enablers, are from the Navy and the Air Force.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, is that part of the 30,000?

Secretary GATES. I don't know the answer to that.

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I mean, I don't know specifics, but, certainly, I think it would be. They have been a significant part of what we have done in Iraq and Afghanistan and will continue to be.

Secretary GATES. And, particularly, I would say the Air Force, in terms of the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentleman, I want to thank you for being here, for your testimony. I know you have had a busy week, but we are certainly appreciative to have you here today to clarify some of the issues surrounding the President's decision to increase troop levels in Afghanistan.

We all recognize, obviously, that there are serious security challenges ahead, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. And I am certainly glad that the President's new strategy was really developed after thorough deliberation and careful assessment of the conditions on the ground.

And, while the President has answered many of the questions on Tuesday night, there obviously are many that remain, some of which are going to require time and patience and others that are going to require deeper investigation and continued oversight by Congress as the war moves on.

I am struggling with a few things. As the President discussed in his speech, with the domestic challenges that we face at home, we simply can't commit our armed forces to a prolonged and costly attempt at nation-building. And, in terms of where we are right now and the way forward, I am struggling with a couple of things. One centers around the footprint; the other is the counterinsurgency versus counterterrorism strategy.

You know, clearly, the Taliban—and, Secretary, I probably am now where you were, and I haven't heard a whole lot to really convince me or move me yet. But, clearly, the Taliban are not over-

whelming us with their numbers or their firepower, but yet they have been able to increase their influence significantly in Afghanistan.

And I need to drill down more on that. Because what I see is that, as our troop levels have increased, we have been seen more by the Afghan people, perhaps, as occupiers. And that is the real nexus which has allowed the Taliban to increase their influence. So I need to have you drill down more on that and explain that a little more, in terms of how you got to where you are.

And on the counterinsurgency/counterterrorism strategy, after having reviewed the available options, I would like to hear a little more about what the President felt could be gained strategically from a counterinsurgency approach that couldn't be obtained by following a more counterterrorism-focused effort.

Secretary GATES. First of all, in terms of the footprint, the first point that General McChrystal made to me when I raised this concern is that it is not so much the number as what those troops do. And I think this also ties in with issues relating to civilian casualties. It ties in to the heretofore largely absent partnering with the Afghans, so that when we would go into a village, the person knocking on the door, or knocking the door down, was an Afghan and not an American.

These are all things that General McChrystal has changed, in terms of how he is going to use the forces he has been given, the ones that are already there and the ones that are coming in. And if the Afghans are truly partnered with us, as is his intention, the civilian casualties are dramatically reduced since he issued new orders on this, and that is having a difference.

The reality is, in part, the reason that the Taliban have been successful is that they are so ruthless and they intimidate a lot of people. As we have said several times, this has long been an underresourced effort on our part, and we haven't had the troops or the partnership with the Afghans to give Afghans in villages and rural areas, where most of the people live, the confidence that when they get a night letter saying, if you cooperate with ISAF or the Afghan Government, you will be killed and your entire family will be killed.

So the key to getting the Afghans who are hedging because they are not sure who is going to win is to give them the confidence that what we are trying to do is the winning side. But our behavior, the behavior of our troops, the way we use those troops, and the way we partner with the Afghans, I think, have a huge amount to do with this reducing-the-footprint issue.

The other side of it is, I think this is an area where people misuse history. The Soviets did get defeated in Afghanistan, but it is important to remember that they were trying to impose an alien culture and political system on the country. They murdered about one million Afghans. They made five million more into refugees. And they were virtually isolated internationally in that effort. None of those conditions apply to what we are trying to do in Afghanistan and where we are.

And with respect, very quickly, to counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterintelligence (CI), the reality is you cannot do—counterter-

rorism, rather—you cannot do effective counterterrorism unless you have a presence on the ground and are able to collect intelligence that informs your targeting. And the only way you can do that is to provide some minimum level of security for the population so that you can operate there.

So this is not a fully resourced COIN in the original sense. We have tried to narrow and refine the mission so there are major aspects of COIN associated with this but also major aspects of counterterrorism and, I would say, having forces also outside the protected areas, where we are protecting the population that are, in fact, out and about, disrupting the Taliban and making them feel very uncomfortable.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

We have time for one question from Mr. Rogers, and then the witnesses will turn to pumpkins.

Mr. ROGERS. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question deals with metrics. Mr. Secretary, you talked about transferring authority over, starting the process in July of 2011. And, in August of this year, you talked about beginning the process of building these metrics by which we are going to measure success over there.

Can you tell me where that process is now?

Secretary GATES. Well, we have a very detailed set of metrics that I think have been shared with the Congress that came out of the March endeavor. We have tried to narrow those and make them more precise in terms of our expectations of the Afghans, our expectations of the Pakistanis and of ourselves and our allies. And those have been worked in the interagency, and I will go back and see if we cannot provide those to the Congress.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I don't have a question, but if I could just reread back something, I think the most important point made by the Secretary, if I could just reread it again?

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Secretary, you said here today—I think this is the most important point today in the whole process. And you said, "This part of the world represents the epicenter of extremist jihadism, the historic place where native and foreign Muslims defeated one superpower and, in their view, caused collapse at home. For them to be seen to defeat the sole remaining superpower in the same place would have severe consequences for the United States and the world."

I think that is the point we all need to remember as we go forward here, and I appreciate your saying that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Let me first compliment and thank the members of the committee for staying within the time limits for questions.

And a special thanks to the witnesses for being with us. It has been very, very helpful. We wish you success in this most difficult endeavor. We couldn't have a better team, couldn't have a better team. And we know that, and you have our confidence.

Without objection, Members have five legislative days to submit their statements into the record.

And, with that, gentlemen, thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:34 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

December 3, 2009

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

DECEMBER 3, 2009

FOR SUBMISSION

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT GATES
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2009

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

Thank you for inviting us to testify today. On Tuesday night, President Obama announced a renewed commitment and more focused strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I would like to provide an overview of the strategic thinking and context behind his decisions, in particular:

- The nexus among Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Pakistan, and Afghanistan;
- Our objectives and how the President's strategy aims to accomplish them; and
- The military forces required.

WHERE WE STAND

As the president first stated in March, and re-emphasized on Tuesday, the goal of the United States in Afghanistan and Pakistan is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and to prevent its return to both countries. The international military effort to stabilize Afghanistan is necessary to achieve this overarching goal. Defeating Al Qaeda and enhancing Afghan security are mutually reinforcing missions. They cannot be un-tethered from one another, as much as we might wish that to be the case.

While Al Qaeda is under great pressure now and dependent on the Taliban and other extremist groups for sustainment, the success of the Taliban would vastly strengthen Al Qaeda's message to the Muslim world: that violent extremists are on the winning side of history. Put simply, the Taliban and Al Qaeda have become symbiotic, each benefiting from the success and mythology of the other. Al Qaeda leaders have stated this explicitly and repeatedly.

Taliban success in re-taking and holding parts of Afghanistan against the combined forces of multiple, modern armies – the current direction of events – has dramatically strengthened the extremist mythology and popular perceptions of who is winning and who is losing. The lesson of the Taliban's revival for Al Qaeda is that time and will are on their side. That, with a Western defeat, they could regain their strength and achieve a major strategic victory – as long as their senior leadership lives and can continue to inspire and attract followers and funding. Rolling back the Taliban is now necessary, even if not sufficient, to the ultimate defeat of Al Qaeda.

At the same time, one cannot separate the security situation in Afghanistan from the stability of Pakistan – a nuclear-armed nation of 175 million people now also explicitly targeted by Islamic extremists. The two countries, bound by ties of tribe and faith, share a porous border of more than 1,500 miles. Giving extremists breathing room in Pakistan led to the resurgence of the Taliban and more coordinated, sophisticated attacks in Afghanistan. Providing a sanctuary for extremists in southern and eastern Afghanistan would put yet more pressure on a Pakistani government already under attack from groups operating in the border region. Indeed, the Pakistan Taliban, just in the last year or so, has become a real threat to Pakistan's own domestic peace and stability, carrying out – with Al Qaeda's help – escalating bombing attacks throughout the country. It is these attacks, and the Taliban's movement toward Islamabad seven months ago, that largely motivated the current operations by the Pakistani army. And we know the Pakistan Taliban operate in collusion with both the Taliban in Afghanistan and Al Qaeda.

A related point with regard to Pakistan: Because of American withdrawal from the region in the early 1990s, followed by a severing of military-to-military relations, many Pakistanis are skeptical that the United States is a reliable, long-term strategic partner.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

Failure in Afghanistan would mean a Taliban takeover of much, if not most, of the country and likely a renewed civil war. Taliban-ruled areas could in short order become, once again, a sanctuary for Al Qaeda as well as a staging area for resurgent militant groups on the offensive in Pakistan.

Success in South and Central Asia by Islamic extremists – as was the case twenty years ago – would beget success on other fronts. It would strengthen the Al Qaeda narrative, providing renewed opportunities for recruitment, fund-raising, and more sophisticated operations. Aided by the Internet, many more followers could join their ranks, both in the region and in susceptible populations across the globe.

It is true that Al Qaeda and its followers can plot and execute attacks from a variety of locations – from Munich to London to Denver. But what makes the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan uniquely different from any other location – including Somalia, Yemen, and other possible redoubts – is that this part of the world represents the epicenter of extremist jihadism: the historic place where native and foreign Muslims defeated one superpower and, in their view, caused its collapse at home. For them to be seen to defeat the sole remaining superpower in the same place would have severe consequences for the United States and the world.

Some may say this is similar to the "domino theory" that underpinned and ultimately muddied the thinking behind the U.S. military escalation in Vietnam. The difference, however, is that we have very real – and very recent – history that shows just what can happen in this part of the world when extremists have breathing space, safe havens, and governments complicit with and supportive of their mission. Less than five years after the last Soviet tank crossed the Termez Bridge out of Afghanistan, Islamic militants launched their first attack on the World Trade Center in New York. We cannot afford to make a similar mistake again.

THE WAY AHEAD

A stable security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan – one that is sustainable over the long term by their governments – is vital to our national security. By the same token, the current status quo in Afghanistan – the slow but steady deterioration of the security situation and growing influence of the Taliban – is unacceptable. So too is the status quo ante – a largely ungoverned region controlled by extremists in which the United States had little influence or ability to gain actionable intelligence on the ground.

The president's new strategic concept aims to reverse the Taliban's momentum and reduce its strength while providing the time and space necessary for the Afghans to develop enough security and governance capacity to stabilize their own country.

We will focus our resources where the population is most threatened, and align military and civilian efforts accordingly – with six primary objectives:

- Reversing Taliban momentum through sustained military action by the U.S., our allies, and the Afghans;
- Denying the Taliban access to and control of key population and production centers and lines of communications;

- Disrupting the Taliban outside secured areas and preventing Al Qaeda from regaining sanctuary in Afghanistan;
- Degrading the Taliban to levels manageable by the Afghan National Security Forces;
- Increasing the size and capability of the ANSF and employing other local forces selectively to begin transitioning security responsibility to the Afghan government within 18 months; and
- Selectively building the capacity of the Afghan government, particularly in key ministries.

This approach is not open-ended "nation building." It is neither necessary nor feasible to create a modern, centralized, Western-style Afghan nation-state – the likes of which has never been seen in that country. Nor does it entail pacifying every village and conducting textbook counterinsurgency from one end of Afghanistan to the other.

It is, instead, a narrower focus tied more tightly to our core goal of disrupting, dismantling and eventually defeating Al Qaeda by building the capacity of the Afghans – capacity that will be measured by observable progress on clear objectives, and not simply by the passage of time.

The essence of our civil-military plan is to clear, hold, build, and transfer. Beginning to transfer security responsibility to the Afghans in summer 2011 is critical – and, in my, view achievable. This transfer will occur district by district, province by province, depending on conditions on the ground. The process will be similar to what we did in Iraq, where international security forces provided "overwatch" – first at the tactical level, then at the strategic level. Even after we transfer security responsibility to the Afghans and draw down our combat forces, the United States will continue to support their development as an important partner for the long haul. We will not repeat the mistakes of 1989, when we abandoned the country only to see it descend into civil war, and then into Taliban hands.

Making this transition possible requires accelerating the development of a significantly larger and more capable Afghan army and police through intensive partnering with ISAF forces, especially in combat. It also means achieving a better balance between national and local forces; increasing Afghan unconventional warfare capabilities; engaging communities to enlist more local security forces to protect their own territory; and bolstering Afghan-led reintegration and reconciliation efforts.

At the strategic level, the president's plan will achieve a better balance between investments in the central government and sub-national entities. At the national level, the focus will be primarily on reforming essential ministries and pressing for the appointment of competent and honest ministers and governors. At the local and regional level, there will be a shift to work through existing, traditional structures rather than building new ones. In all of these efforts, we must have a committed partner in the Afghan people and government. That is one reason why there will be very clear and definitive timeframes for reviewing our – and their – progress.

ADDITIONAL U.S. FORCES

As the president announced, the United States will commit an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan for an extended surge of 18 to 24 months. These forces – the U.S. contribution to this fight – will be deployed and concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the country. The first of these forces will begin to arrive in Afghanistan within 2-3 weeks.

FOR SUBMISSION

In all, since taking office President Obama has committed nearly 52,000 additional troops to Afghanistan for a total U.S. force of approximately 100,000. We are looking to NATO and our other partners to send a parallel international message of strong resolve. Our Allies must take the lead and focus their resources in the north and west to prevent the insurgency from establishing new footholds. We will seek some five to 7,000 troops from NATO and expect the Allies to share more of the burden in training, equipping, and funding the Afghan National Army and police.

CONCLUSION

Let me offer a few closing thoughts.

It is worth remembering that the security situation in Afghanistan – though serious – does not begin to approach the scale of violence that consumed Iraq and confronted our forces there when I was confirmed as secretary of defense three years ago this week. With all the resources already committed to this campaign – plus those the president has just announced – I believe the pieces are being put in place to make real and measurable progress in Afghanistan over the next 18 to 24 months.

The president believes, as do I, that, in the end, we cannot defeat Al Qaeda and its toxic ideology without improving and stabilizing the security situation in Afghanistan. The president's decision offers the best possibility to decisively change the momentum in Afghanistan, and fundamentally alter the strategic equation in Pakistan and Central Asia – all necessary to protect the United States, our allies, and our vital interests. So, I ask for your full support of this decision to provide both Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal the resources they need to be successful.

This is will take more patience, perseverance, and sacrifice by the United States and our allies. As always, the heaviest burden will fall on the men and women who have volunteered – and in many cases re-volunteered – to serve their country in uniform. I know they will be uppermost in our minds and prayers as we take on this arduous but vitally necessary mission.

Thank you.

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Statement of
Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Before the 111th Congress
House Armed Services Committee

Chairman Skelton, Congressman McKeon and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the subject of the President's newly announced strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The President's Tuesday evening announcement at West Point of our strategy and increased military resources for Afghanistan culminates a process of deliberate strategic review that began with the arrival of General McChrystal's interim assessment in early September. I believe this national-level review has been sober and essential. The challenges we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan are great, and our interests there are significant. This Administration needed to take the time to look at all the options and craft a balanced and sustainable approach. I believe that the review has met this aim.

I support fully, and without hesitation, the President's decision.

Refining the Strategy

The facts compel us to act. Our strategic review confirmed that the overarching policy goal remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies from either country in the future.

South Asia is the epicenter of global Islamic extremism; the location of al Qaeda's core leadership and the terrain that dozens of Islamic terrorist groups call home. It is the location from which the 9/11 attacks on America were planned and driven. If the United States should be hit again, I remain convinced that the planning, training and funding for such an attack will emanate there. It

is a region where a nuclear weapons state, Pakistan, is under direct threat from al Qaeda and affiliated Pakistani-Taliban groups that aspire to acquire and use nuclear weapons against the United States and our allies. Thus, it is a region with a unique – and deadly - combination of the most dangerous terrorists and the most dangerous technology in the world. Our actions in Pakistan and Afghanistan seek to prevent catastrophic outcomes from these toxic forces, and constitute a most critical national interest.

Our strategic review paid particular attention to Pakistan. The people of Pakistan are under as much, if not greater, threat from al Qaeda and Islamic terrorism than are we. We must encourage and aid the Pakistani military fight against these extremists in South Waziristan, in SWAT, and across Pakistan. We must also help Pakistan widen its aperture in seeking out and eliminating all forms of extremism and terrorism – those who threaten not only Pakistan, but also Afghanistan, the wider South Asia region, and the globe. We are deepening ties with the people of Pakistan as well as with their security forces. We see progress with our Pakistani allies as paramount to the way ahead.

In Afghanistan, we narrowed-in on a challenging, but attainable goal: to deny al Qaeda safe haven and the Afghan-Taliban the ability to overthrow the duly elected Afghan government. To achieve this refined strategic aim, we must continue to deny al Qaeda any Afghanistan toe-hold, reverse the momentum of the Taliban insurgency, and build sufficient Afghan government and security capacity to eventually defeat the insurgent threat. Our review also narrowed and refined the military objectives for General McChrystal's NATO-ISAF force – focusing it on security of key population areas while Afghan forces grow in size and capability, prioritizing a robust NATO-ISAF program of training and mentoring Afghan military and police, and establishing the conditions necessary for Afghans to assume their own security. Each of these objectives will hasten the day when we can begin thinning the U.S./NATO-ISAF security forces presence,

turning the internal security of Afghanistan over to the Afghans. This strategy provides the time and space for the Afghans themselves to build sufficient security and governance capacity to stabilize their country.

Our refined military objectives for Afghanistan complement those in the political and economic spheres. They also support diplomatic, political, and military programs that the President's strategy calls for us to undertake with neighboring countries – especially Pakistan – that increase pressure against al Qaeda's leadership; that expand counterinsurgency operations against Taliban insurgents who threaten Afghanistan, Pakistan and the wider region; and that help set the conditions for improved regional security and stability.

Matching Strategy and Resources

Throughout this strategic review, I advised the Secretary of Defense and the President that our commitment of military resources must match our strategy.

I am pleased to inform this Committee that the President's decision accommodates this advice. The strategy he approved commits 30,000 more U.S. forces, with some number of additional enablers, while calling for our NATO and non-NATO allies to generate additional forces. This rapid, Coalition-wide build-up of force aligns with General McChrystal's recommendations, even more so in light of the narrowing of objectives for Afghanistan that the President announced Tuesday night.

The President's commitment is to rapidly send these additional forces forward—to get as much force into the fight as fast as General McChrystal can absorb it. This allows Generals McChrystal and Petraeus to plan for cohesive logistics and transportation support over the course of the coming year. While there are no guarantees in war, I expect that we will make significant headway in the next 18-24 months. I also believe we could begin to thin our combat forces in about the same time frame. From a military standpoint, the President's

commitment to an increase in military force, especially backed by an increase in civilian resources, is much better than one featuring periodic assessments that trigger incremental force escalation.

The President's decision also supports accelerated expansion of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) -- a critical initiative. We simply must invest in the growth of an Afghan security force—through more radical and in-depth partnering. The additional U.S. and Coalition forces heading to Afghanistan will focus a great amount of time and energy toward empowering a strong and capable ANSF.

General McChrystal intends to use these additional U.S. troops to conduct more focused counterinsurgency operations that enhance population security against the Taliban in south and east Afghanistan. As in Iraq, our troops will live among the population. Thus – and as General McChrystal has successfully emphasized since his arrival as COMISAF last June -- we will continue to make every effort to eliminate civilian casualties, not just because this is the right thing to do, but because these casualties work against our goal of Afghan population security. Although we must expect higher Alliance casualties in coming months as we dedicate more U.S. forces to protect the population and mentor the ANSF, our extended security presence must – and will – improve security for the Afghan people and limit both future civilian and military casualties

Moving Forward - Conclusion

No commitment of additional force in the number we plan for Afghanistan is without risk. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and I assess the risks to our military forces and our military missions – at home and abroad – from this force deployment decision to be acceptable. We can continue to balance the additional force flow requirements for Afghanistan against those coming available from draw-down trajectory programmed for, and on track in, Iraq.

I believe that progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be gradual, and sometimes halting. Yet I believe we can succeed. The President's announced strategy and this force flow decision give us the best possible chance for success. We must exhibit vision, apply sufficient resources, and display endurance to realize our objectives for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Most challenges we now confront in the South Asia region are not military in nature. They require solutions from and led by national and local governments. Yet none of these solutions are possible in an environment of insecurity. Our role must be to fill the security gap for a short time, concurrently growing our partner government's capacity to self-secure. Pursued with resolve, our actions will send an unmistakable message that the U.S. remains committed to the common good, while steadily expanding the sets of partnerships available to address future challenges without a long-term need for large numbers of U.S. combat forces.

In providing advice to this President over the past 10 months, one important point I have made, consonant with other key presidential advisers, is that our military activities must support rather than lead our Nation's foreign policy. Our warfighting ability will never be in doubt. But we have learned from the past eight years of war that we serve this Nation best when we are part of a comprehensive, integrated approach that employs all elements of national power to achieve the policy goals set by our civilian leaders. This approach remains crucial in Afghanistan, Pakistan and across South Central Asia.

On behalf of our service members, I would like to thank the members of this Committee – and the Congress as a whole --- for the sustained investment in our brave young men and women in uniform, and for your unwavering support of them and their families as they continue to serve so magnificently and selflessly in this time of protracted war.

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

JACOB J. LEW
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON, DC
DECEMBER 3, 2009

Chairman Skelton, Congressman McKeon, and members of the Committee, let me first convey Secretary Clinton's regrets that she could not be here with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen in today's session. As you may know, Secretary Clinton is currently en route to Brussels where she will join the ongoing NATO Ministerial, which provides an important opportunity to consult with some of our closest allies on Afghanistan and Pakistan, maintaining the close cooperation which have marked the Administration's approach to this international effort.

Tuesday evening, President Obama presented the Administration's strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I look forward to providing you with additional details on the civilian components of our revised strategy, to augment the presentations of Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen.

In testimony before other committees yesterday, Secretary Clinton noted that among a range of difficult choices, this revised military-civilian strategy "is the best way to protect our nation now and in the future. " The extremists we are fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan have attacked us and our allies before. If we allow them access to the very same safe havens they used before 2001, they will have a greater capacity to regroup and attack again. Our civilian and military leaders in Afghanistan have reported that the situation is serious and worsening. We agree. We must not allow an entire region to be dragged into chaos.

THE MISSION

The case for action against al Qaeda and its allies has always been clear, but the United States' course of action over the last eight years has not. The fog of another war obscured our focus. And while our attention was focused elsewhere, the Taliban gained momentum in Afghanistan. The extremist threat also grew in Pakistan – a country with 175 million people, a nuclear arsenal, and more than its share of challenges. These are challenges I have had the opportunity personally to understand, having made two visits there over the last eight months.

It was against the backdrop of these challenges that the President called for a careful, thorough review of our strategy. Just as in March,

Secretary Clinton, Special Representative Holbrooke and other senior State Department officials were involved in all stages of this review.

Our objectives are clear, as is the civilian component of these efforts:

- To work with the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to eliminate safe havens for those plotting attacks;
- To stabilize a region that is fundamental to our national security; and
- To develop a long-term, sustainable relationship with Afghanistan and Pakistan so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

While the duration of our military presence will be limited, our civilian commitment must continue long after our troops begin to come home. Accomplishing this mission and ensuring the safety of the American people will not be easy. It will mean sending more civilians, troops, and assistance to Afghanistan, and significantly expanding our civilian efforts in Pakistan.

The men and women carrying out this mission – civilians, as well as military -- are not numbers on a PowerPoint slide. We are asking them – and the American people who support them – to make extraordinary

sacrifices on behalf of our security. I want to assure the Committee that we will do everything we can to make sure their efforts make our nation safer.

THE METHODS

The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is serious, but it is not as negative as frequently portrayed in public. The beginning of President Karzai's second term has opened a new window of opportunity. As Secretary Clinton has noted, we have real concerns about the influence of corrupt officials in the Afghan government, and we will continue to pursue them. But in his inauguration speech last month, President Karzai called for a new compact with his country. He pledged to combat corruption, improve governance, and deliver for the people of his country. His words must now be matched with action. The Afghan people, the United States, and the international community will hold the Afghan government accountable for making good on these commitments.

The State Department, USAID and other civilian agencies will help by working with our Afghan partners to strengthen institutions at every level of Afghan society so that these institutions are ready to take more responsibility at the point when our combat troops begin to depart.

The President has outlined a timeframe for that transition to Afghan responsibility. It will begin in the summer of 2011, when we expect Afghan security forces and the Afghan government will have the capacity to assume greater ownership for defending their country. As the President said, we will execute the transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground. This timeframe for transition provides a sense of urgency in working with the Afghan government. But it should be clear to everyone that -- unlike the past -- the United States and our allies and partners will have an enduring commitment to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the region. Our resolve in this fight is reflected in the substantial commitment of troops since the President took office and in the significant civilian commitment that will continue long after our combat forces leave.

That civilian effort already is bearing fruit. Civilian experts and advisors are helping to craft policy inside government ministries, providing development assistance in the field, and working in scores of other roles. When our Marines went into Nawa this July, we had civilians on the ground with them to coordinate assistance the next day. When I traveled to Helmand in September, I met with our civilians and heard first-hand not only from local officials but from U.S. and allied military officials about how our civ-mil coordination is growing even stronger.

We are on track to triple the number of civilian positions in Afghanistan to 974 by early next year. On average, each of these civilians leverages 10 partners, ranging from locally employed staff to experts with U.S.-funded NGOs. As Secretary Clinton is fond of saying, it's clichéd to say that we have our best people in these jobs -- but it also happens to be true. When the Secretary was in Kabul a few weeks ago, she heard from an American colonel that while he had thousands of outstanding soldiers under his command, none of them had the 40 years of agricultural experience of the USDA civilian serving alongside his battalion, or the rule of law and governance expertise of their civilian experts from the State Department. He told her that he was happy to supply whatever support these valuable civilians need. And, he said we need more of them. The President's strategy will make that possible.

Not only do we have the right people to achieve our objectives, we also have a sound strategy. We will be delivering high-impact economic assistance and bolstering Afghanistan's agricultural sector – the traditional core of the Afghan economy. This will create jobs, reduce the funding that the Taliban receives from poppy cultivation, and draw insurgents off of the battlefield.

We will also support an Afghan-led effort to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and want to reintegrate into Afghan society. We understand that some of those who fight with the insurgency do so not out of conviction, but due to coercion or money. All Afghans should have the choice to pursue a better future if they do so peacefully, respect the basic human rights of their fellow citizens, and renounce al Qaeda.

Our regional diplomacy complements this political approach, by seeking to mitigate external interference in Afghanistan and working to shift the calculus of neighboring countries from competition for influence to cooperation and economic integration.

We also believe that a strong, stable, democratic Pakistan must be a key partner for the United States, and an ally in the fight against violent extremism. People in Pakistan are increasingly coming to the view that we share a common enemy. I heard this repeatedly during both of my visits there. Our relationship is anchored in our common goals of civilian rule; robust economic development; and the defeat of those who threaten Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the peace of the world.

We will significantly expand support intended to help develop the potential of Pakistan and its people. Our assistance will demonstrate the

United States' commitment to addressing problems that affect the everyday lives of Pakistanis and bring our people closer together. But it will also bolster Pakistan against the threat of extremism. A village where girls have had the opportunity to get an education will be more resistant to Al Qaeda and the Taliban. And a young man with a bright future in a growing economy is less likely to waste his potential in a suicide bombing.

We will not be facing these challenges alone. We share this responsibility with governments around the world. Our NATO allies have already made significant contributions of their own in Afghanistan, and the Secretary and Ambassador Holbrooke are working now to secure additional Alliance commitments of troops, trainers, and resources.

The international community also is expanding its support to Pakistan, and we are in close touch with partners to coordinate assistance. We are also looking beyond NATO to build the broadest possible global coalition to meet this challenge. Our objectives are shared by people and governments from Europe to Australia, from Russia to China to India, and across the Middle East.

The task we face is as complex as any national security challenge in our lifetimes. We will not succeed if people view this effort as the responsibility of a single party, a single agency within our government, or a single country. We owe it to the troops and civilians who will face these dangers to come together as Americans – and come together with our allies and international partners – to help them accomplish this mission.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

DECEMBER 3, 2009

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. JONES

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, Admiral Mullen, I have this second question. Again, I like many on this committee, maybe all on this committee, worry about the stress on the force and how many times we can continue to ask these brave men and women to keep going back and back. And I do want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, and Admiral Mullen, for taking the time you did to try to figure out what is the right policy for Afghanistan. The question is, of the 30,000 that will be going to Afghanistan, how many of the 30,000 can you give us, if not today, maybe to the committee, the number of deployments that each one of the 30,000 have been on? Do you know now how many deployments the 30,000 have been on? Has it been half the 30,000 have not been to Afghanistan or Iraq and the other half a number of times? Can you answer that, or would you like to submit that to the committee?

Admiral MULLEN. Mr. Jones, let me take a shot at it. I can't give you a complete answer, but I think it is an important question. On the Marine Corps side, I think nobody knows this better than you, we have rotated basically every 7 months with respect to deployments. And the expectation is, for the major units, that will continue in the Marine Corps even as we shift from—as we have shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan. What I can't tell you is, for these units—there are sort of two measures—for these units, how many deployments this unit, a unit, has been on. And then, in that, how many deployments on average have the individuals in that unit seen? And that is what I would need to get back to you for.

Total Service—The Military Services have not yet identified all of the 30,000 Service Members as support for the plus-up. The remaining Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines will continue to be sourced as requirements are finalized and the full sourcing process is completed. As of 27 Jan 10, 26,470 of the 30,000 have been identified.

Of the people we have identified and can track their deployments (Army, Air Force, Marine Corps), 14% have deployed 3 or more times to Afghanistan or Iraq. 40% have not deployed to Afghanistan/Iraq; this would be their first deployment to one of these locations.

Army—The Army has identified 16,186 Soldiers as support for the plus-up.

Of that number, 10,627 have participated in one or more deployments:

Army

Afghanistan/Iraq	0 Deployments	1 Deployment	2 Deployments	3 or more Deployments
	5,559	6,010	3,150	1,467

Air Force—The Air Force has identified 393 Airmen as support for the plus-up. Of the 393 Airmen 144 participated in one or more deployments:

Air Force

Afghanistan/Iraq	0 Deployments	1 Deployment	2 Deployments	3 or more Deployments
	249	100	32	12

Navy—The Navy has identified 1,391 Sailors as support for the plus-up.

Navy is unable to provide requested data on individual OIF/OEF deployment history. The Navy does not have a corporate-level system in place to effectively track and report repeat deployments to a specific named operation.

Marine Corps—The Marine Corps has identified 8,500 Marines as support for the plus-up.

Of that number, 3,995 Marines have participated in one or more deployments:

Marines

Afghanistan/Iraq	0 Deployments	1 Deployment	2 Deployments	3 or more Deployments
	4,505	2,635	1,020	340

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SMITH

Mr. JONES. In your prepared testimony you stated: "General McChrystal intends to use these additional U.S. troops to conduct more focused counterinsurgency operations that enhance population security against the Taliban in south and east Afghanistan. As in Iraq, our troops will live among the population. Thus—and as General McChrystal has successfully emphasized since his arrival as COMISAF last June—we will continue to make every effort to eliminate civilian casualties, not just because this is the right thing to do, but because these casualties work against our goal of Afghan population security. Although we must expect higher Alliance casualties in coming months as we dedicate more U.S. forces to protect the population and mentor the ANSF, our extended security presence must—and will—improve security for the Afghan people and limit both future civilian and military casualties." How do you envision limiting civilian and military casualties? Can this be accomplished solely by a change in tactics? Or can technology assist us in achieving this?

Admiral MULLEN. With regards to limiting civilian casualties, the Tactical Directive issued in July 2009 states:

" . . . I expect leaders at all levels to scrutinize and limit the use of force like close air support (CAS) against residential compounds and other locations likely to produce civilian casualties in accordance with this guidance. Commanders must weigh the gain of using CAS against the cost of civilian casualties, which in the long run make mission success more difficult and turn the Afghan people against us.

. . . The use of air-to-ground munitions and indirect fires against residential compounds is only authorized under very limited and prescribed conditions."

The above quotes deal directly with ROE and troops using CAS in self-defense. The Tactical Directive does not prevent troops from protecting themselves as a matter of self-defense but makes them determine whether CAS is the only option available to them.

Limiting civilian casualties cannot be limited by changes in tactics or technology as separate entities. The changes in tactics are addressed in the Tactical Directive. Technology enhances the ability of the troops to determine appropriate levels of force and identification of hostile forces before engaging, thereby limiting the possibility of inadvertent civilian casualties.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SHUSTER

Mr. SHUSTER. I have concerns that the Administration approached the Afghanistan situation without putting the most robust effort forward. We have heard in the media report of low-, medium-, and high-risk recommendations. 1) Did General McChrystal request 30k? 2) Who provided that number to the President? 3) Based on all the options that were presented to the President, was that his lowest risk/highest chance of success option? 4) Are 30,000 forces enough to win decisively? Please describe those risks that this President is willing to take by going with a force package of 30k.

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The initial resource request remains a classified document, so we are unable to go into complete detail. However, we can cover the process undertaken by General McChrystal.

Once his initial assessment was complete, he developed a classified resource analysis. In that analysis, he identified different force packages with associated risks based upon his assessment. Following this process, a direct recommendation was submitted through the chain of command to the President.

The commitment of 30,000 additional U.S. forces, along with additional coalition forces and growing Afghan national security force numbers, is a significant step toward expanding security in critical areas and in demonstrating resolve. The President's force package provides U.S. forces as quickly as possible, giving General McChrystal the combat power he needs in 2010 to gain the initiative. In addition, our Allies and partners have committed to more than 7,000 additional forces through the NATO/ISAF Force Generation Process.

The President's decision rapidly resources our strategy, recognizing that the next 18 months will likely be decisive and ultimately enable success. Rolling back the Taliban is a prerequisite to the ultimate defeat of al Qaeda. The mission is not only important; it is also achievable. We can and will accomplish this mission.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. MCMORRIS RODGERS

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. It should be in our country's best strategic interest to protect Pakistan from al Qaeda. Reports indicate that these terrorists might be receiving money from members of the Pakistani Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Our country and the world cannot afford to have Pakistan taken over by terrorists due to its nuclear capabilities. What are we doing to protect the strategic interest in Pakistan? Will Pakistan fall if Afghanistan falls?

Secretary GATES. The core goal of the President's strategy is to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and to prevent their return to both countries. This strategy also recognizes that the security situation in Pakistan is inextricably linked to that of Afghanistan. Pakistan's security, especially along its Western border, cannot be separated from developments in Afghanistan.

Taliban sanctuaries in the south and east of the country would be profoundly disruptive to Pakistan, especially if the Taliban-ruled areas become a staging area for resurgent military groups to attack Pakistan. By deploying an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan, the President's strategy aims to deny such sanctuaries by degrading the Taliban's momentum and denying the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan government.

Another key part of the current strategy is reinforcing Pakistan's understanding that active opposition to extremist groups within its own borders is essential to its strategic interests. Recent military operations in South Waziristan, Swat, and other areas of Pakistan reflect Pakistan's increasing recognition of the extremist threat. We work closely with Pakistan on a range of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts, with a focus on strengthening its capabilities as it seeks to root out extremists in border areas and interdict terrorist attacks in settled areas. We also provide substantial resources—$1.5 billion annually for the next five years through the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 (the Kerry-Lugar legislation) for example—to enhance Pakistan's democratic institutions and encourage prosperity among the broader populace.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. The stability and security of Pakistan depends on the success in Afghanistan. Moreover, with the tensions high in India, the region is ripe for chaos. How does the President's strategy affect our relationship with Pakistan and India? Will this enhance stability?

Secretary GATES. As you note, the outcome of our efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan have serious implications for the entire region. The President's strategy aims to address the challenges we face on both sides of the border, because we cannot allow violent extremists to gain access to the very same safe havens they used before 2001. Al Qaeda continues to use extremist groups as a way to destabilize Pakistan and attempt to provoke a conflict between Pakistan and India that would inevitably destabilize the entire region. This is why the President is committed to long-term strategic partnerships with both Pakistan and India that benefit both parties. We recognize that long-term regional stability will be unattainable without a solution that involves both nations.

The President's new strategy recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to regional problems. This approach seeks to mitigate external interference in Afghanistan and works to encourage neighboring countries to shift their efforts from competition for influence to cooperation and economic integration. We have an array of programs that aim to achieve these goals through building and strengthening our relationships with regional actors. Ultimately, we will work diligently to encourage stability in the region, because doing so is fundamental to our national security.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. There are terrorists harboring in the northwest part of Pakistan. These Al Qaida members are slowly taking over this area. What are we doing to not have these terrorists take over the entire country?

Secretary GATES. As President Obama stated repeatedly, our goal is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda. In recent months, the Pakistani military has made significant efforts to address the extremist threat within its borders. We must encourage and aid Pakistan's fight against the extremists in South Waziristan and Swat, and across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Additionally, we must help Pakistan begin to expand its objectives to include seeking out and elimi-

nating all forms of violent extremism and terrorism—those who threaten not only Pakistan, but also Afghanistan, the wider South Asia region, and the world.

The U.S. withdrawal from the region in the early 1990s, followed by a severing of military-to-military relations as a result of Pakistan's test of a nuclear weapon, contributes to Pakistan's skepticism that the United States is not a reliable, long-term strategic partner. We are deepening ties with the people of Pakistan, as well as with their security forces, in order to overcome this "trust deficit." Our security assistance programs, such as the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund and the symbolically and tactically important F–16 program, are vitally important to this effort. We also provide substantial resources—$1.5 billion annually for the next five years through the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 (the Kerry-Lugar legislation) for example—to enhance Pakistan's democratic institutions and encourage prosperity among the broader populace. We must continue to make efforts to show that we view our long-term relationship with Pakistan as vital to our national security interests and to ensure Pakistan has the capability to defeat terrorists and insurgents.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. What role will the NATO forces play in this surge? What are you doing to get commitments from our NATO allies? What commitments have you already received? What limitations do you see NATO coming up with (where they will fight and how)?

Secretary GATES. NATO will play the same role that U.S. forces will play—to secure the country and train the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in preparation for the eventual assumption of responsibility by the Afghans themselves. We are working with NATO Brussels to reach out actively to all Allies and partners to seek to meet all requirements, and we are hopeful that contributing nations will announce their commitments at the upcoming International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Force Generation Conference on December 7, 2009, the London Conference on January 28, 2010, and the NATO Defense Ministers meeting in Istanbul on February 4, 2010. Since we just recently announced our Afghan strategy, we are working within NATO channels to secure commitments. Although some NATO nations do place limitations on national contributions, many do not. We are working with our Allies and other troop-contributing nations to seek the greatest flexibility possible in ISAF forces for General McChrystal's (COMISAF's) command and control.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Are we thinking of a plan to send more American troops if other countries do not live up to the President's request?

Secretary GATES. The President authorized 30,000 additional forces, in addition to granting me a modest amount of flexibility for an additional 10 percent. We will continue to assess conditions as we move forward.

The President has already welcomed the announcements of U.S. Allies and partners to increase substantially troop and training contributions to Afghanistan in 2010; approximately 7,000 additional forces through the NATO/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Force Generation Process, with more likely to come in tandem with the London Conference on January 28. These new commitments demonstrate strong support for the President's decision on Afghanistan and Pakistan and the firm resolve of NATO Allies and ISAF partners to succeed in our shared mission.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. After President Obama announced the deployment of 30,000 additional troops, the surge of forces bring the total American commitment to nearly 100,000. I understand most of these troops will come from the Army and Marines. Will the Navy and Air Force play a role in augmenting these taskings? How many brigades, trainers, and support troops do we expect to deploy during this surge? What impact will this be on the Guard and Reserves?

Admiral MULLEN. The composition of the entire 30K is still being determined by COMISAF. As of the 14 Jan 2010, 27,442 U.S. Service Members have been ordered against the President's additional authorization of 30K. Of these, the Navy and the Air Force are making contributions to the increased augmentation of Afghanistan Headquarters. The Navy is filling 129 positions and the Air Force is filling 240 positions.

The composition of the entire 30K is still being determined by COMISAF. As of the 14 Jan, 27,442 U.S. Service Members have been ordered against the President's additional authorization of 30K. Specific capabilities ordered include:

- One Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team (Full Spectrum COIN)
- Two Army Brigade Combat Teams (Full Spectrum COIN)
- One Army Brigade Combat Team
- One Combat Aviation Brigade
- One Division Headquarter
- 1,250 Joint Individual Augmentation Plus-up

Of the 27,442 ordered as of 14 Jan 2010, the National Guard is filling 3,489 positions and the Reserves are filling 1,390 positions.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CONAWAY

Mr. CONAWAY. It has been reported that the minimum number of troops General McChrystal had requested was 40,000. General McChrystal has said he will focus on the population centers. Can you tell us the population centers that will be left unprotected as a result of the reduced number of 30,000? And in addition, can you tell us the cumulative number of people (Afghan) that will be impacted by sending 30,000 instead of 40,000?

Admiral MULLEN. The President's decision deploys the combat brigades needed to achieve population security in all of General McChrystal's priority centers. The President's decision appropriately strikes balance between too many and too few forces, and provides what General McChrystal needs to achieve success. It provides the balance needed to avoid being perceived as occupiers. It also provides the trainers needed to support the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) growth plan and partnering. Importantly, it sets the conditions that will enable us to transition Afghanistan responsibly into the hands of an Afghan government capable of providing long-term security.

The force levels considered during the strategic review represented a range of options with associated levels of risk. The force commitments announced by the President, augmented by the expected contributions from NATO allies, fall squarely within the range of capability and risk that General McChrystal recommended. The additional 30,000 U.S. troops combined with the expected additional NATO commitments gives General McChrystal everything he needs to reverse the Taliban's momentum, and accelerate the growth and development of the ANSF.

General McChrystal has been given the flexibility to employ forces in the specific locations and sequence as he sees fit to best achieve his operational and tactical objectives. We are confident that the resources the President has committed to Afghanistan will enable the commander to achieve the campaign's objectives. General McChrystal's plan will protect all the key population centers necessary to reverse the insurgency's momentum and enable the ANSF to provide the long-term stability to prevent the return of al Qaeda.

Mr. CONAWAY. The Afghan government cannot or does not currently pay for the ANSF. With the increase in ANSF that is part and parcel to the President's Plan, can you tell us who will fund these forces for the near term and as well as the long term?

Secretary GATES. Currently the U.S. Government funds most of the expenses associated with the development of the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF). In accordance with the London Compact, the Afghans apply 34% of their GDP to security force development. In FY09, they contributed approximately $350 million. The United States continues to work with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) to increase its ability to generate revenue.

Additionally, we are pressing international Allies and partners to contribute to the development of the ANSF and its long-term sustainment. Allies and partners have pledged approximately $300 million to the NATO Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund. Regarding the police, the international community provided just over $600 million to the Law and Order Trust Fund since 2002. The international community also donated equipment to the ANSF.

Over time, we will continue to press the international community to fund more of the ANSF and to assist the GIRoA in increasing its ability to generate its own revenue. Still, the United States is likely to be the major funder of the ANSF for the foreseeable future.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN

Mr. WITTMAN. Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, thank you for the investment of your time on the second day of testimony on Capitol Hill. I'm pleased that the President has come to a decision on the future strategy of our forces in Afghanistan and I fully support the deployment of additional troops and resources to aid in the fight against extremists that continue to threaten our country and way of life. I do however remain concerned with the mention of any sort of hard and fast timetable. I hope that the tension generated by the articulation of a timetable generates the intended results. Secretary Gates, I understand that you're not necessarily in favor of the timeline and I can appreciate that. Admiral Mullen, I have full trust and confidence in our military leadership and our troops. I know that you will successfully

complete this mission and I hope that my colleagues here and in the administration will continue to fully resource your efforts. Admiral Mullen, I'd like your help on a somewhat separate issue. I'd like to get a clear understanding for what our Combatant Commanders (COCOMs) are asking for in terms of ships—aircraft carriers and amphibious ships specifically. Without discussing the assumption of risk, will you provide my staff with the raw COCOM numbers requested for aircraft carriers and amphibious ships over the last few years?

Admiral MULLEN. As of 21 Jan 10 the following requests for Navy Aircraft Carriers and Amphibious Ships have been registered in the last three years (FY 09, 10, 11)

1. USAFRICOM:
   - Three Amphibious Ships (1–FY09, 1–FY10, 1–FY11).
   - 1.92 Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG) (0–FY09, 92–FY10, 1–FY11).
2. USCENTCOM:
   - Three Amphibious Ships (1–FY09, 1–FY10, 1–FY11).
   - Three ARGs (1–FY09, 1–FY10, 1–FY11).
   - 3.55 Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) (1.2 –FY09, 1.2 FY10, 1.15–FY11).
3. USEUCOM:
   - 2.08 Amphibious Ships (.08–FY09, 1–FY10, 1–FY11).
   - Three ARGs (1–FY09, 1–FY10, 1–FY11).
   - Two CSGs (.5–FY09, .5–FY10, 1 FY11).
4. USJFCOM (Global Response Force (GRF), all contingency sourced upon SecDef order).
   - Two ARGs in FY11.
   - Twelve CSGs (4–FY09, 4–FY10, 4–FY11).
5. USNORTHCOM:
   - Four Amphibious Ships in FY10, all contingency sourced if required.
6. USPACOM:
   - 4.2 ARGs (1.4–FY09, 1.4–FY10, 1.4–FY11).
   - 4.5 CSGs (1.5–FY09, 1.5–FY10, 1.5–FY11).
7. USSOUTHCOM:
   - 2.13 Amphibious Ships (.5–FY09, .83–FY10, .83–FY11).
     - Includes 2 ARGs supporting Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE.
   - .22 CSG in FY10.
     - Includes 1 CVN supporting Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE.

Mr. WITTMAN. I'm not sure what type of force package fits squarely beneath the 30,000 number. Can you help me understand what we may see in terms of Brigades, Regimental Combat Teams (RCTs), and the required enablers?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The composition of the entire 30K is still being determined by General McChrystal, Commander, International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF). As of 14 January 2010, 27,442 U.S. Service Members have been ordered against the President's additional authorization of 30K. Specific capabilities ordered include:

- One Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team (Full Spectrum COIN)
- Two Army Brigade Combat Teams (Full Spectrum COIN)
- One Army Brigade Combat Team
- One Combat Aviation Brigade
- One Division Headquarter
- 1,250 Joint Individual Augmentation Plus-up

Mr. WITTMAN. I'm concerned that in an effort to maximize combat troops we may overly complicate the command and control, and supported/supporting unit relationships to where we actually reduce a unit's effectiveness. As we know, Marines fight as a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and come as a task organized warfighting package including sustainment capability. Should the Marines in Regional Command South (RC–South) expect to have to rely on perhaps an army sustainment brigade even though they fight most effectively as a MAGTF?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. General McChrystal and Lieutenant General Rodriguez are currently looking at the structure and command relationships throughout Afghanistan. The aim is to ensure unity of effort and unity of command that best support the combat forces on the ground. With the addition of 30,000 U.S. troops, it is crucial that these forces are employed to maximize their effectiveness. Specifically on RC–South, I am confident that General McChrystal and Lieutenant General Rodriguez will take a comprehensive look at the best way to employ forces in that area and ensure that each element in their inherent structure and maximizes each unit's effectiveness.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. COFFMAN

Mr. COFFMAN. I have read General McChrystal's Initial Assessment of August 30, 2009, both the redacted and the un-redacted versions. In neither version does he make a specific troop request. Open source documents (i.e. published newspaper stories) have stated that the request is 40,000. However, I have since learned that the 40,000 number was a midrange option and that there was also a low- and high-range option with commensurate probabilities of success associated with them. General McChrystal acknowledged to me that the three options exist but would not relay to me what the upper range was for obvious political reasons. The President has now selected a number that appears to be beneath the midrange option. How does that translate in terms of probability of success?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The initial resource request remains a classified document, so we are unable to go into complete detail. However, we can tell you that the President's decision to deploy an additional 30,000 forces provides the most U.S. forces as quickly as possible, giving General McChrystal the combat power he needs in 2010 to gain the initiative and succeed according to our Afghanistan strategy as outlined on 1 December 2009. In addition, our Allies and partners have committed to more than 7,000 additional forces through the NATO/International Assistance Force (ISAF) Force Generation Process.

Mr. COFFMAN. According to open source media reports, U.S. and Afghan officials have begun helping several anti-Taliban militias that have independently taken up arms against insurgents in several parts of Afghanistan, prompting hopes of a larger scale tribal rebellion against the Taliban. When I was in Afghanistan last week I asked General McChrystal's staff about expanding this aid beyond supplies and training and utilizing these tribal militias as we had done in Iraq. The response was that the Karzai government was not in favor of the U.S. arming tribal militias. (The Maliki government in Iraq was equally opposed when the U.S. began arming former Sunni Arab insurgents through the Sunni Awakening program.) I believe Afghanistan has a warrior culture and many of the tribes have been fighting for the last 2,500 years. In 2001, the Northern Alliance defeated the Taliban on the ground with tribal militias and without the assistance of U.S. ground troops—only air, advisory, and logistical support. Shouldn't we be more focused on supporting Afghanistan militias in the manner that they are familiar with versus a conventional military organization that is alien to them?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. It is important to note that the United States is not backing tribal militias. There currently are several initiatives to promote community security and development. The major program is the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3), which is currently a pilot program in Wardak province. The program works with the village shura (i.e., meeting) to nominate personnel to provide security for the community. These personnel are representative of all ethnic groups and tribes in the community, and they receive three weeks of training as well as equipment. They are formally part of the Ministry of Interior Forces. Currently the pilot program has produced over 500 members of the Afghan Public Protection Force, and we have heard largely positive comments about their ability to improve security in the communities that they work in.

Additionally, the United States is working with the Government of Afghanistan on several Local Defense Initiatives. Through these programs, the United States is providing some development support and training to communities that have been willing to step up and provide additional community security, similar to a community watch program.

The United States' focus in terms of securing the population of Afghanistan is on developing the Afghanistan National Security Forces and growing them so that they can eventually take over the security of Afghanistan.

Our counterinsurgency strategy provides our forces in Afghanistan the best possible approach and resources to set the security conditions: for the Afghan people, to see our commitment to their future; for the Karzai government, to be supported as it seeks to implement promised reforms; for the Afghan Taliban, to understand they will not and cannot take back Afghanistan; and finally, for those beyond Afghanistan who support the Taliban or would like to see the return of al Qaeda, to realize the futility of their pursuit.

Mr. COFFMAN. A fixed schedule to begin the withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan seems ridiculous. There should be a flexible time schedule based on the conditions on the ground. Was there such fixed withdrawal schedule given prior to the surge in 2007 in Iraq? Or wasn't it only after the surge in Iraq was successful that a schedule for a drawdown of our forces was negotiated between Coalition Forces and the Iraqi government?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The circumstances in Iraq and Afghanistan are different. While the addition of more than 20,000 U.S. troops to Iraq announced in January 2007 did not include a withdrawal schedule, President Bush said, "America's commitment is not open-ended." The security situation produced by the surge's success enabled the U.S. and Iraq to jointly sign the U.S. Security Agreement, which required that all U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq no later than December 31, 2011.

For Afghanistan, the President has made it clear that July 2011 is when we will begin to transition to an Afghan lead. This date was not chosen arbitrarily, but is based on careful analysis of when we will be able to responsibly begin transitioning. However, it is imperative to understand that July 2011 is the beginning of a process. It is not when we rush for the exits; rather, the pace and character of that drawdown will be determined by conditions on the ground. There is no determination of how long this will take and there is no withdrawal date set for after July 2011. It is important to balance signaling resolve in the fight against al Qaeda and showing our enduring commitment to stability in the region with ensuring the Afghans take primary responsibility for defending their own country with a sense of purpose and urgency.

Mr. COFFMAN. Was the strategy of consolidating our forces around the population centers and the central river valley in Helmand Province envisioned before or after the development of General McChrystal's Initial Assessment of August 30, 2009? Does this strategy require fewer troops than he thought in that Assessment?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. As the Taliban resurgence gained momentum since 2003, most notably in the south, it became increasingly clear that the Coalition's efforts must be focused on addressing the insurgency where it lives and grows. Although the Taliban has been expanding its influence throughout the country, Kandahar is the Taliban's birthplace and Helmand Province lies at the intersection of the insurgency and the thriving narcotics trade. Therefore, the insurgency's roots are most deeply planted in the south. General McChrystal's initial assessment during his first months of command allowed him to closely examine the environment. His assessment confirmed that a population-centric approach that protects the key population centers and reverses the insurgency's momentum where the insurgency is most threatening would provide our best chance of success.

The force levels considered during the strategic review represented a range of options with associated levels of risk. Importantly, the internal deliberations considered many other aspects of the strategy, which involve much more than the application of additional resources.

The President's decision appropriately strikes balance between too many and too few forces and provides what General McChrystal needs to achieve success. It provides the balance needed to avoid being perceived as occupiers, and it deploys the combat brigades needed to achieve population security in all of General McChrystal's priority centers. It also provides the trainers needed to support the Afghan National Security Force growth plan and partnering. Importantly, it sets the conditions that will enable us to transition Afghanistan responsibly into the hands of an Afghan government capable of providing long-term security.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. LOEBSACK

Mr. LOEBSACK. What I believe our Service Members, military families, Iowans, and all Americans need to hear is a clear-cut description of the civil-military strategy that will be implemented to achieve that goal. Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, can you please provide me, in 50 words or less, a concise description of that strategy? As clearly and concisely as possible, how you will accurately measure the success of this strategy?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The overarching goal of the President's strategy is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future. This will be achieved by a civil-military effort to reverse the Taliban's momentum and increase the capacity of Afghanistan's government and security forces; a civilian surge that will work with the Afghan government to help consolidate security gains through governance and development; and a long-term, strategic partnership with Pakistan.

Success will be measured by progress towards a stable security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan—one that is sustainable over the long term by their governments. We will present a report to Congress in March outlining our metrics.

Mr. LOEBSACK. I have long been concerned about the impact that multiple combat deployments are having on our military readiness, our Service Members, and on our

military families. Will the deployment ordered by the President—and the pace of that deployment—affect our readiness to respond to emergencies at home and other contingencies abroad? Will it affect dwell time ratios and the overall health of the force? What will be the long-term impact of this deployment on our military and our military readiness?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. As we have reported in our quarterly readiness reports to Congress, our deploying forces' readiness for ongoing counter-insurgency mission is high; however, we lack the dwell time required to train ground forces for the complete range of military operations we may be asked to respond to. But as the recent deployments to Haiti have shown, we can still respond rapidly and professionally when our nation calls. The additional deployments ordered by the President, when viewed in light of force adjustments made in other ongoing contingencies, are not expected to significantly alter our readiness posture or health of the force. We must continue to balance the force for an uncertain future while remaining focused not only on dwell time but on restoring and repairing equipment to levels that support training and response capability for a full range of missions. We partially mitigate our ground forces' risk through investments in capacity and capability, as well as by the significant capability inherent to our air and maritime forces. Nonetheless, our limited ability to generate additional ground forces constitutes a concern that we continue to focus attention and resources on.

Mr. LOEBSACK. How does U.S. Central Command plan to meet the tremendous logistical, supply, and infrastructure requirements necessary to deploy 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan at such a rapid pace? How will the Afghanistan ramp-up be balanced with the complexity of simultaneously drawing down our troops, equipment, and infrastructure in Iraq?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. We have a large number of professionals who are balancing the demands of both operations. Their greatest challenge is overcoming the differences that exist between Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq's infrastructure is more accommodating and CENTCOM is leveraging the infrastructure and the drawdown from Iraq to help equip forces in Afghanistan. Additionally, CENTCOM is moving as much cargo as possible via surface modes and recently conducted an assessment of Afghan airfields in order to maximize throughput. I remain confident that our professionals will continue to adapt and execute the mission we have assigned them.

Mr. LOEBSACK. What are the civilian goals of this strategy? Does the President's plan include an increase in the number of civilian experts on the ground in Afghanistan beyond the number that was committed this past spring? How will the civilian goals be integrated and coordinated with the military goals?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The President's strategy is an integrated civil-military strategy. Both military and civilian efforts will support the President's core goal to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten the United States and our allies in the future. As Secretary Clinton described during her testimony, civilian efforts will include building the capacity of Afghan institutions to withstand and diminish the threat posed by extremism, and delivering high-impact economic assistance—especially in the agricultural sector—to create jobs, reduce the funding that the Taliban receives from poppy cultivation, and draw insurgents off of the battlefield. As Secretary Clinton also mentioned, the Department of State will be seeking additional resources, including additional civilian personnel in Afghanistan, in order to implement the President's strategy. The State Department, in coordination with our military commanders, is currently examining the requirements for additional personnel to complement our military force increase. I believe that an increase in civilian expertise is an essential element of this strategy's success.

In order to coordinate these civilian activities with our military efforts, Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal published an "Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan" in August 2009 that provides guidance from the U.S. Chief of Mission and the Commander of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan.

U.S. Government senior civilians have been established and integrated at each level of the military chain of command to serve as counterparts to military commanders and coordinate civilian efforts. This newly established U.S. Government integrated civil-military decision-making chain in-theater allows for planning and coordination of activities at all levels from the district/company level to the national/embassy level. Although new, this structure has already exhibited vast improvements in the coordination of civilian and military activities.

Mr. LOEBSACK. How does the President's strategy assure that military actions in Afghanistan will not further inflame or entrench al Qaeda and other extremist groups in Pakistan? The President's speech indicated that part of his strategy in-

cludes further engagement with Pakistan. Has a new assistance package or strategic plan been discussed with the Pakistan Government?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The President's strategy aims to address challenges we face on both sides of the border. Afghanistan and Pakistan, bound by ties of tribe and faith, share a porous border of more than 1,500 miles. The presence of extremist sanctuaries in Pakistan led to the resurgence of the Taliban and more coordinated, sophisticated attacks in Afghanistan. Permitting a sanctuary for extremists in Afghanistan would put even more pressure on Pakistan's government, which is already under attack from groups operating in its border region.

The President believes that a strong, stable, democratic Pakistan must be a key partner with the United States and an ally in the fight against violent extremism. People in Pakistan are increasingly coming to view that they share a common enemy with the United States. Our relationship is anchored in our common goals of civilian rule; robust economic development; and the defeat of those who threaten Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the peace of the world. We will significantly expand support intended to help develop the potential of Pakistan and its people. Last year, the United States committed $7.8 billion to support economic and social development, and our defense relationship has never been stronger. Our assistance will demonstrate the U.S. commitment to addressing problems that affect the everyday lives of Pakistanis and will bolster Pakistan against the threat of extremism.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Do the additional NATO troop commitments that have been reported in the press since the President's speech come in addition to already scheduled NATO troop increases? In other words, are these truly new additions from our NATO allies?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. Of the approximately 7,000 forces pledged by Allies and partners at the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Force Generation Conference on 7 December 2009, 35 percent of the offered forces were already in Afghanistan in a temporary capacity for election security. These forces were extended by the troop-contributing nations so they do in fact represent a new enduring commitment of forces, and thus all 7,000 forces should be considered new commitments. We are also hopeful that certain Allies and partners will use the London Conference on Afghanistan on 28 January 2010, and the meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in Instanbul on 4 February to announce increases in both financial support and additional forces.

Mr. LOEBSACK. What are the civilian goals of this strategy? Does the President's plan include an increase in the number of civilian experts on the ground in Afghanistan beyond the number that was committed this past spring? How will the civilian goals be integrated and coordinated with the military goals?

Secretary LEW. The civilian goals of our strategy are intended to advance the larger strategic goals of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qaeda by helping the Afghans develop effective governance and promoting sustainable economic development. Our goals are:

- Promoting good governance and connecting the Afghan people with their government by helping make Afghan government institutions more visible, effective, responsive and accountable at the local level. This includes capacity building programs at the national, provincial and district levels in the health and education sectors, and supporting programs that give Afghans a greater stake in their own government. A key emphasis will be assisting Afghan efforts to reduce corruption;
- Promoting the rule of law and justice delivery, consistent with the Afghan constitution, by strengthening the formal justice system across Afghanistan, and creating space for traditional dispute resolutions mechanisms;
- Assisting with reconstruction and development aimed at job creation, creating links to cross-border trade, and enhancing the Afghan Government's ability to secure its borders and increase customs revenue;
- Sapping the insurgency of foot soldiers and income from the narcotics trade by implementing a new civilian-military agricultural redevelopment strategy;
- Supporting Afghan government efforts to reintegrate Taliban and other insurgents who renounce al-Qaeda, cease violence and accept the constitutional system;
- Redoubling international efforts to target illicit financial flows to the Taliban;
- Countering al-Qaeda and Taliban propaganda, while also empowering Afghans to challenge the insurgents' narrative by improving access to mobile phones, radio and television;
- Improving the coordination of international assistance through regular consultations with Allies and partners to strengthen the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and to enhance civilian coordination among ISAF partners;

- Regional diplomacy aimed at shifting the calculus of Afghanistan's neighbors from competition in Afghanistan to cooperation and economic integration; and
- Advancing the rights of Afghan women and girls across all lines of effort, with particular focus on expanding economic opportunities, improving access to justice, improving basic service delivery in education and health, and increasing women's participation in the political process.

Accompanying an increase in civilian assistance will be a significant increase in civilian subject matter experts—beyond the tripling of deployed U.S. civilians that occurred over the past year, from 320 civilians on the ground in Afghanistan in January 2009, to nearly 1,000 on the ground today. We plan to increase that staff of 1,000 by another 20 to 30 percent by the end of 2010. These civilians will partner with Afghans to enhance the capacity of government institutions and help rehabilitate Afghanistan's key economic sectors.

The integration and coordination of civilian and military goals occurs at all levels in Afghanistan. At the Provincial and District level, we have civilian employees who work for USAID, USDA and the State Department on their agencies' respective governance and development projects. Based in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and District Stabilization Teams (DSTs), each team has a 'lead civilian' representative, who serves as the commander's civilian counterpart. The lead civilians coordinate closely with the military commanders of the PRTs and DSTs to ensure that civilian and military projects reinforce one another.

The net effect of this is that we have developed synchronized civilian-military chains of command, to ensure coordination at each level: district, provincial, regional, and national. At the national-level we have also created a dozen civ-mil working groups to improve coordination on key issues and to support work in the field. So far, our experience has been that this has promoted coordination on development and other issues. But as our military and civilian demands keep increasing over the coming months, we will need to further adapt our mechanisms to ensure our work is linked together across civ-mil and U.S.-Afghan lines, both at the Afghan national and sub-national levels.

Mr. LOEBSACK. How does the President's strategy assure that military actions in Afghanistan will not further inflame or entrench al-Qaeda and other extremist groups in Pakistan? The President's speech indicated that part of his strategy includes further engagement with Pakistan. Has a new assistance package or strategic plan been discussed with the Pakistan Government?

Secretary LEW. Our efforts in Afghanistan are inextricably linked to the situation in Pakistan. We remain committed to working with both the Afghans and Pakistanis to defeat violent extremism. As we disrupt and dismantle al Qaeda, we believe it will make other extremist groups less likely to carry out attacks within Pakistan. We have a robust security assistance program that promotes our strategic interests in Pakistan, fosters stability in civil-military relations, enhances U.S.-Pakistani military interoperability, and improves capacity in areas critical to COIN and counter-terrorism operations.

Ambassador Robin Raphel, the Coordinator of Economic Assistance at Embassy Islamabad, has held discussions regarding our civilian assistance strategy with the Government of Pakistan at the national, provincial and district level. At all levels, the Government of Pakistan has expressed support for the strategy, which aims to:

- Improve the capacity of the Government of Pakistan to address the country's most critical infrastructure needs, with an initial focus on energy and agriculture, to help Pakistan recover from its energy and water crises.
- Help the Government of Pakistan address basic needs and provide improved economic opportunities in areas most vulnerable to extremism.
- Strengthen Pakistan's capacity to pursue economic and political reforms that reinforce stability.

As is consistent with best practices in international development, U.S. assistance will be directed increasingly through a broad range of Government of Pakistan institutions, as well as local non-governmental organizations (including the private sector) with the capacity to implement programs effectively and accountably. This approach will help increase host country ownership, and U.S. commitment to building a long-term partnership with the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Do the additional NATO troop commitments that have been reported in the press since the President's speech come in addition to already scheduled NATO troop increases? In other words, are these truly new additions from our NATO allies?

Secretary LEW. While some of the approximately 7,000 additional forces pledged by Allies and partners at the ISAF Force Generation Conference on 7 December include the long term extension of troops that were already in Afghanistan in a temporary capacity, more than 65 percent of the offers were new additions. We are also

hopeful that announcements of additional troop contributions will follow the 28 January London Conference on Afghanistan and the 4 February NATO informal Defense Ministerial.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. GIFFORDS

Ms. GIFFORDS. Thank you all for your time and your service and for your deliberate attention to this process. We have a tremendous responsibility anytime we commit the young men and women of our country to war, to ensure they are properly equipped during the fight and taken care of when they return home, and those are the two areas I want to address today. As the only Democrat that serves on both the Foreign Affairs Committee and Armed Services Committee, I approach this new strategy from a unique perspective. First I want to talk a little bit about resourcing these new requirements and then about how we are planning to care for the Service Members and civilian support staff once they return home. Every day in my District in Arizona, I see the physical and mental stresses we put on our forces and their gear, specifically the low density–high demand specialties unique to this type of conflict. As we require more of these assets in-theater, what is the plan to fully resource them from both a manpower and equipment perspective? Specifically I am talking about ground intelligence, ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance), Combat Search and Rescue, UAVs and Electronic Warfare assets that are all stretched extremely thin across Afghanistan and at training locations here at home.

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. Taking care of our people is of the utmost importance to us. As you stated, we have placed our force under tremendous pressure in order to assure success. I assure you that the health of the force figures prominently in our calculus to develop a successful strategy in Afghanistan. You accurately touched on several essential warfighting areas and systems that are indeed in high demand and short supply. The Fiscal Year 2010 Overseas Contingency Operations Supplemental Appropriations request we are developing will fully resource the President's Afghan Strategy to include these low density–high demand assets. Secretary Gates and I look forward to presenting this request to the Congress in the very near future.

Ms. GIFFORDS. How do we plan to fund the specific equipment needs we will have in these low density–high demand specialties?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. Maintaining military equipment in good working order, whether it is for low density–high demand condition, or for other requirement, requires the Department to delicately balance a range of needs within the context of available resources. Depending on anticipated mission demand and tempo, specific equipment requirements are adjusted annually to compensate for operational changes which contributed to washouts, stress, or operational losses. These factors influence what particular items are to be procured in any given fiscal year. To do this, Military Departments maintain lists of equipment, along with inventory objectives, designed to fulfill the National military strategy. Those objectives are then reviewed in the context of whether the optimal solution would be to procure new equipment or refurbish what we already have. It is recognized that it is a delicate calculation to decide which critical item is put in the budget. I can assure you that when calculating our procurement funding requests, the Department takes into account, demand requirements, and how equipment inventories impact the total force.

Ms. GIFFORDS. What incentives will be sought to ensure we can retain the skilled troops in these areas where retention has been problematic in the last few years due to recurring deployments?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The low density/high demand skills that are constantly needed for operations are monitored at the Department through a formal balanced scorecard forum chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Through this process, the Department monitors critical skills personnel and recommends incentives to improve recruiting and retention. Some of these critical skills include explosive ordnance disposal, linguists, intelligence and counterintelligence analysts, para-rescue operators and contracting specialists.

The Department finds that the statutory authorities to encourage highly skilled and technical officers and enlisted personnel to remain in the Service are crucial to maintaining capabilities in these skills. The Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) and the Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) authorized by 37 U.S.C. 308 and 37 U.S.C. 355 respectively, are among the most effective incentive tools to attract

and retain qualified personnel in critical military specialties. The Department uses these authorities with appropriate oversight and rigor.

Despite the overall strength of enlisted retention over the last few years, there remain critical shortages in these skills and other "hard-to-retain" skills that justify the continuation and application of the statutory bonus authorities. Current bonus authorities, along with the special and incentive pay consolidation authority granted in the FY 2008 NDAA to be phased in over the next few years, give the Department ample monetary incentive flexibility and agility to retain skilled Service Members in critical areas.

Ms. GIFFORDS. On my second line of questioning, I am extremely concerned with our ability to care for our Service Members and civilian staff when they return home. How is the Department of Defense budgeting for the future care needs of returning Service Members?

Secretary GATES. Beginning with the development of our Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget request, I placed great emphasis on identifying and providing for future care needs of our returning Service Members. The Department has a well-established Wounded, Ill, and Injured Senior Oversight Committee, which is engaged with all emerging requirements. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, along with each of the Services, identified requirements in support of the future care needs of returning Service Members and we fully funded those requirements. The details of the FY 2011 Defense Budget will be submitted to Congress by the President.

Ms. GIFFORDS. On my second line of questioning, I am extremely concerned with our ability to care for our Service Members and civilian staff when they return home. How have efforts between the Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) progressed from the perspective of digital records transfer and continuity of care?

Secretary GATES. DOD and VA share a significant amount of health information and continue to spearhead interagency data sharing activities that deliver information technology solutions to significantly improve the secure sharing of appropriate electronic health information. These initiatives enhance healthcare delivery to beneficiaries and improve the continuity of care for those who have served our country. Today, VA has access to DOD electronic health information on more than 5 million individuals. Exchange of outpatient pharmacy data, laboratory results and radiology reports began in 2001, with more health data increasingly made electronically available to VA. VA and DOD are working collaboratively to upgrade and enhance the technical framework that supports data sharing, and improve that framework's capability to handle increasing amounts of shared data.

- Since 2001, DOD has provided VA with one-way historic information through the Federal Health Information Exchange (FHIE) for *separated Service Members.* On a monthly basis DOD sends laboratory results; radiology reports; outpatient pharmacy data; allergy data; discharge summaries; consult reports; admission, discharge, transfer information; standard ambulatory data records; demographic data; pre- and post-deployment health assessments (PPDHAs); and post-deployment health reassessments (PDHRAs).
  - As of November 2009, DOD transmitted health data on more than 5 million retired or discharged Service Members. Approximately 1.8 million of these patients have presented to VA for care, treatment, or claims determination. The number of individuals with data available to VA grows monthly as health information on recently separated Service Members is extracted and transferred to VA.
  - DOD also transmits data for VA patients being treated in DOD facilities under local sharing agreements. As of November 2009 more than 4.4 million health data messages have been transmitted to VA for patients treated in DOD facilities.
- For *shared patients* being treated by both DOD and VA, the Departments maintain the jointly developed Bidirectional Health Information Exchange (BHIE) communications system for transferring data for use in another's application. Implemented in 2004, BHIE allows DOD and VA clinicians to access each other's health data in real-time. Available information includes: allergy; outpatient pharmacy; inpatient and outpatient laboratory and radiology reports; demographic data; diagnoses; vital signs; family history, social history, other history; problem lists; questionnaires; and Theater clinical data, including inpatient notes, outpatient encounters, and ancillary clinical data such as pharmacy data, allergies, laboratory results and radiology reports.
  - As of November 2009, there are more than 3.5 million shared patients (including and more than 150,000 Theater patients) available through BHIE.

– To increase the availability of clinical information on a shared patient population, VA and DOD have further leveraged BHIE functionality, allowing bidirectional access to inpatient discharge summaries from DOD's inpatient documentation system. Access to DOD discharge summaries is operational at some of DOD's largest inpatient facilities, representing approximately 61 percent of total DOD inpatient beds.

- Since 2006, VA and DOD have been sharing *computable outpatient pharmacy and allergy data* through the interface between DOD's Clinical Data Repository (CDR), and VA's Health Data Repository (HDR). Exchanging standardized pharmacy and allergy data on patients enhances patient care and safety through the ability to conduct automated drug-drug and drug-allergy interaction checks using data from both repositories. As of November 2009, computable outpatient pharmacy and medication allergy data on over 47,900 patients receiving healthcare from both DOD and VA has been exchanged.
- To support our most severely wounded and injured Service Members transferring to VA Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers for care, DOD sends radiology images and scanned paper medical records electronically to the VA Polytrauma Centers.

Initiatives underway to further support and enhance the Departments' ability to share electronic health records include the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) and the DOD/VA Multiple Network Gateways.

- VLER: Sharing of electronic health information with DOD and VA private sector partners is the primary focus of the VLER and the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) initiatives. DOD, VA, and Kaiser Permanente (KP) began a proof-of-concept for the three-way exchange between the electronic health records systems of DOD, VA, and KP in the San Diego area in January 2010. The collaboration marks the first time a computerized patient-records system operated by a federal agency will be linked to one operated by a private organization.
- Network Gateways: In 2008, a DOD/VA team defined functional, infrastructure and policy interoperability requirements that yielded a DOD/VA Multiple Network Gateway concept of operation. The Departments developed and implemented an enterprise architecture infrastructure solution and established a series of strategically planned network gateways for secure, redundant connectivity between facilities and to facilitate seamless transfer of health data. DOD and VA have established four gateways to receive migrated network traffic for data exchange. The target for migrating all data existing is FY 2010.

Ms. GIFFORDS. On my second line of questioning, I am extremely concerned with our ability to care for our Service Members and civilian staff when they return home. When we talk about the costs associated with surging additional troops forward, are you also including within that figure the anticipated costs of future care?

Secretary GATES. Beginning with the development of our FY 2010 budget request, I placed great emphasis on identifying and providing for future care needs of our returning Service Members. We have a well-established Wounded, Ill, and Injured Senior Oversight Committee, which is well engaged with all emerging requirements. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, along with each of the Services, identified requirements in support of the future care needs of returning Service Members and we fully funded those requirements in our baseline budget request. During the FY 2011 Program Review process, we will continually assess our progress and resource implications.

Within our Overseas Contingency Operations request, we have included funding for the health care requirements associated with the increased forces, both Active and Reserve, for planned operations. The baseline budget includes funding for anticipated costs of future care for all returning Service Members.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. TSONGAS

Ms. TSONGAS. It seems to me that we can do everything right in Afghanistan but the success of our efforts greatly depends on the commitment from Pakistan. How does the current Pakistani offensive in Waziristan fit into our strategic plan? What is the desired end state of this offensive for both Pakistan and the U.S.? How are we able to verify Pakistani claims of success? Finally, as we approach July 2011, how will you take into account Pakistan's progress and how will this progress influence the 2011 assessment?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. Our success in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to our partnership with Pakistan. We share a common enemy and a common goal: disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda and its extremist allies in Af-

ghanistan and Pakistan. To accomplish this goal, we are working to strengthen Pakistan's capacity to target extremist groups that threaten other countries and have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists whose location is known and whose intentions are clear. The Pakistan military has been involved in sustained, committed, deliberate military operations against extremists in South Waziristan and Swat, and across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) for the last several months—its largest successive offensives in years. The goals of these operations are to eliminate insurgent-controlled safe havens, restore the writ of the State, and provide security to the Pakistani populace. Since 2001, Pakistan has lost thousands of its soldiers and civilians in this fight. We continue to interact constantly with the Pakistani military leadership to determine the efficacy of their efforts, and we agree that, although much remains to be done, their efforts in 2009 have reduced safe havens and degraded militant capacity.

Progress in both Afghanistan and Pakistan will be measured and assessed by the U.S. Government on a regular basis using a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, intended to capture objective and subjective assessments. This assessment will look at past progress and start to focus on changes or adjustments that might be made over the following year. A description and assessment of U.S. Government efforts, including those of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the USAID, and the Department of Justice, in achieving the objectives for Afghanistan and Pakistan is due to Congress in March 2010.

Ms. TSONGAS. If we do not see the desired results by July 2011, or even by December 2010, is there a scenario in which you would ask for more troops beyond the 30,000? Do you have an existing plan for a troop increase above 30,000 and what events on the ground would trigger this request?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The President has authorized 30,000 additional forces, in addition to granting us a modest amount of flexibility for an additional 10 percent. We will assess conditions as we move forward. Based on those assessments, the President will determine the scope and pace of a gradual and responsible drawdown of U.S. combat forces.

Ms. TSONGAS. What does the commitment of an additional 30,000 U.S. troops do to the support structure that is currently in place in Afghanistan? How many contractors will we need to send to Afghanistan to support the increase of 30,000 troops and the civilian surge? I believe that we will need more contractors and support personnel to provide life support for our troops. If this is true, is the President's estimated cost of 30 billion dollars to support this surge accurate?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. Contractors are a critical enabler in Afghanistan and will continue to provide a wide range of tasks essential for operations including logistics, maintenance, construction, transportation, security and base life support. There are currently 104,000 contractor employees supporting our forces in Afghanistan. Based on current troop-to-contractor ratios, we anticipate an additional 50,000 contractor employees will be required to support the troop increase. The President's estimated cost included the associated increase in contractor support, to include compensation, deployment and sustainment. More than 75 percent of the additional contractor employees will be Afghan citizens. Employing Afghan citizens in support of the surge provides a boost to the local economy, reduces labor costs, and will contribute to a stable, sovereign Afghanistan supporting the theater commander's counterinsurgency strategy. Hiring local individuals further mitigates the cost of increasing the number of contractors. As local hires, Afghani contractor employees do not incur the life support and sustainment costs of U.S. or third-country nationals. Lastly, contractors are a subset of the operational and maintenance costs necessary to support the force, which are included in the President's estimate.

Ms. TSONGAS. The $30 billion does not include costs of replenishing equipment and addressing long-term health and mental health care costs. Do you have or are you in the process of developing the long-term personnel and readiness costs of sending an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan? If so, please provide them to the Committee.

Secretary GATES. Beginning with the Fiscal Year 2010 budget request, we included funding for all requirements identified Department-wide to provide for long-term health and mental health care costs. We continue to refine requirements and are working to improve all health care processes related to long-term health and mental health care needs of our Service Members. This is one of my top priorities, and the Department will continue to include the necessary resources to provide the best possible health care for all of our Service Members, who deserve nothing less.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. NYE

Mr. NYE. America's key goal of disrupting and defeating al Qaeda in South Asia is largely dependent on the action of the Pakistani forces. What plans do you have to incentivize the Pakistani government to continue its counter-insurgent operations in the areas bordering Afghanistan and to expand their operations to excise al Qaeda forces from Pakistan? What are failback options if the initial plan does not succeed?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. As the President stated in his address on 1 December 2009, our core goal is to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan and prevent their return to both countries. In recent months, the Pakistani military has made significant efforts to address the extremist threat within its borders against extremists in South Waziristan and Swat, and across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)—its largest successive offensives in years. The goals of these operations are to eliminate insurgent-controlled safe havens, restore the writ of the State, and provide security to the Pakistani populace. Since 2001, Pakistan has lost thousands of its soldiers and civilians in this fight.

We must continue to encourage and aid Pakistan's fight against the extremists; we must also continue to make efforts to show that we view our long-term relationship with Pakistan as vital to our national security. To accomplish our objectives, we are strengthening Pakistan's capacity to target extremist groups, and have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists whose location is known and whose intentions are clear. We must also help Pakistan widen its aperture in seeking out and eliminating all forms of extremism and terrorism—those who threaten not only Pakistan, but also Afghanistan, the wider South Asia region, and the world. Pakistan's greatest incentive to accomplish this goal is its own security interests. We are deepening ties with the people of Pakistan as well as with their security forces. We see progress with our Pakistani partners as paramount to the way ahead. The United States is also providing substantial resources to support Pakistan's democracy and development to demonstrate that we are a reliable, long-term strategic partner. We believe, based on the significant incremental progress we have seen in 2009 with our Pakistani counterparts, that the President's revised strategy will succeed.

Mr. NYE. On the White House's website, in regards to the President's new plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan, it states: "The United States will focus on working with Pakistani democratic institutions. We have reaffirmed this commitment by providing $1.5 billion per year for five years to support Pakistan. This assistance addresses: Helping Pakistan address immediate water, energy, and economic crises; Supporting broader economic reforms; Helping Pakistan eliminate extremist sanctuaries." As you mentioned in your testimony, Pakistan is a nuclear-armed nation of 175 million people. A stable Pakistan is critical in its own right and for success in Afghanistan. However, there have been many examples of clear corruption and misuse of support funds in the Pakistani government. What mechanisms are in place to properly oversee the military funds Pakistan will receive as we escalate our support to the country?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. We are committed to a long-term strategic partnership with Pakistan that is built on a foundation of mutual interest, mutual respect, and mutual trust. For FY 2009 and FY 2010, DOD will execute the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund (PCF), appropriated to the Department of State and transferred for execution to DOD. This funding provides assistance to Pakistan's security forces to support train and equip programs and other enablers that enhance Pakistan's ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations that complement the U.S. Government's efforts in Afghanistan. Given the priorities of the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, the United States will ensure the delivery and integration of warfighting capabilities rapidly and efficiently, with appropriate attention and adherence to accountability and end-use monitoring (EUM) requirements. Proper financial management, fiscal controls, and accountability in accordance with statute and DOD policies, including the DOD Financial Management Regulation (FMR) and any additional guidance that the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) may provide, are being followed. Additionally, quarterly execution reports will be submitted to the appropriate Congressional Committees.

Mr. NYE. Pakistan all too often allocates vital defense resources on protection from India, instead of focusing on the Pakistani Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists operating in their country. How will you ensure U.S. dollars are not used to resource any kind of military defense operations against India but instead are utilized to fight Pakistani Taliban and al Qaeda factions? Do you intend to have U.S. military or civilian personnel on the ground in Pakistan to provide oversight?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. Although the Department of State is the lead agency for overall security assistance, the Office of the Defense Representative to Pakistan (ODR–P) in Islamabad oversees and monitors all military assistance provided to the Pakistani armed forces. The purpose of direct DOD assistance programs is to build Pakistan's counterinsurgency capabilities and to provide Pakistan with equipment that enables operations along its western border. ODR–P's security assistance team provides the oversight to ensure that DOD funding is used for the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism purposes intended.

Furthermore, we believe that Pakistan's ongoing operations on its western border and recent shifts in Pakistani public opinion show the degree to which the Pakistani people, their government, and the military take the extremist threat seriously. I believe that supporting the Pakistanis in their struggle against the extremist threat within their borders is in the long-term best interests of the United States. We will continue our oversight toward that end.

Mr. NYE. With the increase in troop deployments, our military personnel and their families will face an added strain. What steps is the Department of Defense (DOD) taking to prepare to meet the medical care, mental health, and transition needs of the additional personnel who will be deployed?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. A broad range of programs are in place to sustain the health and well-being of Active and Reserve Component Service Members and their families before, during, and after deployment.

The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy offers several state-of-the-art programs for Service Members and their families. The Military and Family Life Consultant (MFLC) and Military OneSource (MOS) programs offer confidential, non-medical, short-term counseling support to members of the Active and Reserve Components and their families to prevent the development or exacerbation of conditions that may detract from military and family readiness. These services are available throughout the deployment cycle.

MFLC services are flexible to meet emerging needs. MFLCs deploy to installations for up to 90 days to provide non-medical counseling support. In many locations installation MFLCs are embedded with units to offer counseling support specific to that unit. Large groups of MFLCs may also be mobilized and deployed to provide "surge" counseling support to Brigades returning from combat. Child and Youth Behavioral (CYB) MFLCs are assigned to child development centers, youth centers, DOD Education Activity, and military connected schools to support staff, teachers, parents, and youth confronting deployment-related issues and transitions. CYB–MFLCs also deploy to numerous summer program activities to support youth who have a parent deployed. Finally, the Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) augments existing family programs to provide a continuum of support and services based on Service Member and family strengths and needs and available resources. The primary focus of support is families who are geographically dispersed from a military installation. JFSAP specifically supports National Guard and Reserve members and their families. Services are delivered in local communities through collaborative partnerships with Federal, State, and local resources.

Once deployed, Combat and Operational Stress (COSC) teams support Service Members and commanders in theater. These teams are available 24/7 while Service Members are deployed. COSC promotes Service Member and unit readiness by enhancing adaptive stress reactions, preventing maladaptive stress reactions, assisting Service Members with controlling COSRs, and assisting Soldiers with behavioral disorders.

Additionally, the Services have each developed garrison and training programs to mitigate the effects of combat-related stress. The Army recently launched the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, the Air Force uses the Landing Gear Program, the Navy has an Operational Stress Control program, and the Marine Corps uses a program called Operational Stress Control and Readiness. Each of these programs seeks to prepare Service Members to cope better with combat and deployment stress.

To enhance access to mental health care, the Department has actively recruited new, qualified mental health providers, both to military treatment facilities and the TRICARE network. The Public Health Service is also providing mental health providers to work with the Department.

Each Service also has a comprehensive program to address the reintegration needs of the wounded, ill, and injured, including the Army Wounded Warrior Program, the Marine Wounded Warrior Regiment, Navy's Safe Harbor Program, and the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program. The DOD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program was established to address the needs of the Reserve Component members and their families, and facilitates access to support and reintegration services throughout the deployment cycle.

Mr. NYE. Much debate has been given to the number of, and timeline for, military personnel who will be sent to Afghanistan. What role will civilian agencies play and will they too be "surged"? Civilian-military coordination is crucial to the fight in Afghanistan and Pakistan. How will the President's surge affect this relationship? Will there be enough civilian personnel to support our warfighters on the ground?

Secretary GATES and Admiral MULLEN. The Department of Defense strongly supports civilian increases in Afghanistan as a critical element of our strategy and as an essential element to improve civil-military integration. In 2009, we saw significant improvements, including a substantial increase in civilian experts in-country (nearly triple from the previous year), and the establishment of a U.S. Government senior civilian structure, whereby a U.S. Government civilian counterpart is established at each level of the military chain of command to coordinate civilian efforts. We are aware that military force increases will likely require the deployment of additional civilian experts. Secretary Clinton and Deputy Secretary Lew testified that they expect additional civilian increases of 20 to 30 percent in 2010–2011. The Department of State and Embassy Kabul are working with our military commanders to identify additional civilian requirements. We refer you to the Department of State for further details.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. HEINRICH

Mr. HEINRICH. Thank you and the Administration's full national security team for conducting a serious and comprehensive review of the War in Afghanistan. In order to allow our troops to come home, I believe we need to aggressively pursue the training of effective Afghan Security Forces so that we can ultimately transfer this important responsibility; an immediate, increased U.S. and allied presence can make this possible. I am concerned, however, about a number of elements that complicate this strategy. Please expand on the following: The Afghan government has not been a reliable partner and I believe correcting this will be critical to our success. Please expand on what specifically we will be doing to combat corruption and ensure greater accountability from the Afghan government? How will we enforce such an approach? British Prime Minister Gordon Brown recently said the Afghan government "will be expected to implement . . . far-reaching reforms to ensure that, from now on, all 400 provinces and districts have a governor appointed on merit, free from corruption, with clearly defined roles, skills, and resources."

Admiral MULLEN. The United States has been working closely with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) on the issue of corruption, and we are encouraged by recent steps taken by President Karzai to ensure greater accountability. At the January 28 London Conference on Afghanistan, President Karzai announced to the international community that fighting corruption will be the key focus of his second term in office and that he will strengthen the High Office of Anti-Corruption through additional resources and new powers. I fully support these efforts to combat corruption and end a culture of impunity.

The U.S. is also taking steps to fight corruption. Currently, the State Department is working on a process to certify Afghan ministries to receive direct funding from the U.S. Government based on their financial and human resources management capabilities and transparency. The Departments of Defense and State are also reviewing our contracting processes to find ways to improve the responsiveness of our resources directly to the needs of the Afghan people, reducing avenues for potential corruption. This includes smaller contracts, more local procurement, and more contracting officers in the field to oversee contracts and partner with Afghans.

Mr. HEINRICH. Please expand on the following: Can you please elaborate on the enhanced "strategic partnership" with Pakistan—what does this mean specifically, and what will the United States be committing to ensure we have a critical ally to help eliminate terrorist cells inside Pakistan as well as within the mountainous Afghan-Pakistan border area?

Admiral MULLEN. The President's strategy recognizes that the security situation in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to stability in Pakistan. Action on both sides of the country's shared border is necessary to ultimately disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its extremist allies and prevent its return to both countries. As such, the President's commitment to a long-term, strategic partnership with Pakistan is a critical component to his overall strategy. As General McChrystal stated in his recent testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, "Our strategic partnership with Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan, I believe, is the critical long-term way to help reduce al-Qaeda."

By demonstrating our commitment to the region, recognizing our shared enemy, and providing significant resources for democracy and development, as well as

counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, the President's strategy enhances our ability to work with the Government of Pakistan and build Pakistani capacity to address the insurgent threat within its borders. The Government of Pakistan has already taken promising steps in this regard with the military operations that it has conducted over the past year against insurgent forces in South Waziristan, Swat, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. We must encourage and aid Pakistan's fight against extremists in these areas. Additionally, we must also help Pakistan begin to expand its objectives to include seeking out and eliminating all forms of extremism and terrorism—those who threaten not only Pakistan, but also Afghanistan, the wider South Asia region, and the globe.

However, this partnership with Pakistan will go well beyond military cooperation. It will be a whole-of-government approach focusing on the long-term security and prosperity of the country. For additional information on these efforts, I suggest that you contact our counterparts at the Department of State.

Mr. HEINRICH. Please expand on the following: In terms of developmental and civilian assistance, what has changed from the President's strategy announced in March 2009, and how will we encourage alternative agricultural products other than opium poppy?

Secretary GATES. This question is best addressed by the Department of State, which has responsibility and authority for coordinating our civilian efforts in Afghanistan. Since March 2009, the President has further underscored the need to focus civilian assistance on those ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver assistance to the Afghan people. The Department of State will certify ministries for assistance and align our assistance more closely with priorities outlined by the Afghan government. In addition, U.S. Government civilian assistance will be implemented through small and more flexible contracts, supported by more civilian expertise in the field to supervise and advise on our efforts. As for development priorities, immediate impact on the lives of the Afghan people is the critical consideration. Therefore, our top reconstruction priority is implementing a civilian-military agriculture redevelopment strategy to restore Afghanistan's once vibrant agriculture sector. This effort will also target key Afghan populations for assistance with alternatives to growing poppy, as opposed to a previous focus on eradication efforts. Although many of these changes were launched in March 2009, they have been further focused and refined following the President's decision in December 2009.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BRIGHT

Mr. BRIGHT. Providing the lift capabilities our soldiers require is of the utmost importance to me and I look forward to working closely with both of you on that issue moving forward. However, I'm also concerned about existing programs that have been used to procure Russian-made Mi-17 airframes for the Iraqi and Afghan militaries. Let me be clear: I personally believe that any American taxpayer dollars used to procure equipment for these militaries should be spent on American-made equipment. You may disagree with that point. But, at the very least, we should ensure that there is a full, open, and competitive process for procuring airframes in Afghanistan. Can you tell me if we are still purchasing Russian Mi-17s on a sole-source basis and whether you have plans to let American companies compete for these contracts?

Secretary GATES. The Department of Defense supports building partner-nation capacity in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq to meet strategic goals including host country participation in coalition stability operations and improvement of regional security.

There are no known plans for Iraq to procure additional Mi-17s. As the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and their sustaining institutions have grown more comfortable with U.S. equipment and the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, the Government of Iraq has expressed increasing interest in U.S. helicopters and, in fact, has already purchased 24 Bell helicopters.

The Commander of U.S. Central Command decided to continue to support the Mi-17 for the Afghan National Army Air Corps due to the Afghans' experience with the platform dating back to the 1980s, the operational suitability and reasonable cost, and the ease of maintenance. The Department is assessing the potential need to expand the fleet in Afghanistan in the short term, with an eye toward identifying alternative platforms in the longer term.

Subsequent to the date of this hearing, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics designated the non-standard rotary wing aircraft as a special-interest acquisition and designated the Army to set up a dedicated

project management office. The Department is committed to ensuring effective program management and oversight.

In this effort, an Office of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Staff-led study team has been formed to assess the Department's enduring requirements for rotary wing aircraft such as the Mi-17, as well as to develop a strategy for building partner-nation capacity that is less reliant on foreign sources of supply.

Mr. BRIGHT. Finally, I mentioned my concern about a sole-source procurement for helicopters in Afghanistan but I think we may end up considering a far more costly sole-source procurement here at home. The draft RFP for the KC–X tanker, as it is currently written, demonstrates a clear preference for a smaller, less capable tanker than the one the Department requested in previous rounds. We all know that this will ultimately favor one bidder over the other. We also learned on Tuesday that one of the bidders may decide that unless changes are made to the RFP, this company may not be able to make an offer.

Secretary Gates—This is a serious development and something many of us would like to discuss with you further. By forcing one bidder out of the competition, we risk jeopardizing a process that's supposed to ensure best value for our military and the taxpayer. No matter which tanker a Member favors, I can assure you that Congress has no appetite for a sole-source bid to the tune of $35 billion dollars. Secretary, what steps are you taking to ensure that we get a fair and impartial final RFP?

Secretary GATES. The Request for Proposal (RFP) requirements will clearly state the Warfighter's needs for a tanker that is ready to go to war on day one and will be a more capable tanker than our current tanker fleet. We believe the source selection strategy is crafted to favor no one except the Warfighter and taxpayer. The Department is committed to ensuring the competition is fair, open and transparent. We believe that both of the principal competitors are highly qualified, and we would like to see competition continue in this process. However, we cannot compel industry to participate.

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