

## HEARING TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON AFGHANISTAN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2009

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:35 p.m. in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Bill Nelson, E. Benjamin Nelson, Bayh, Webb, McCaskill, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Burris, Kirk, McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Chambliss, Graham, Thune, Wicker, LeMieux, Vitter, and Collins.

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

Majority staff members present: Howard H. Hoege III, counsel; Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; and Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Joseph W. Bowab, Republican staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Lucian L. Niemeyer, professional staff member; Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Dana W. White, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Paul J. Hubbard, Jennifer R. Knowles, Christine G. Lang, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: James Tuite, assistant to Senator Byrd; Vance Serchuk, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn A. Chuhta and Adrienne Healey, assistants to Senator Reed; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Christopher Caple and Greta Lundeberg, assistants to Senator Bill Nelson; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Patrick Hayes, assistant to Senator Bayh; Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Jennifer Barrett, assistant to Senator Udall; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Nathan Davern, assistant to Senator Burris; Bethany Bassett, assistant to Senator Kirk; Brandon Andrews, Anthony J. Lazarski, Mark Powers, and Jared Young, assistants to Senator Inhofe; Lenwood Landrum and Sandra Luff, assistants to Senator Sessions; Clyde A. Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Adam G. Brake, assistant to Senator Graham; Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune; Erskine W. Wells III, assistant to Senator Wicker; Brian Walsh, assistant to Senator LeMieux; Kevin

Kane, assistant to Senator Burr; and Rob Epplin and Chip Kennett, assistants to Senator Collins.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN**

Chairman LEVIN. Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome. Today the committee hears from U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry and General Stanley A. McChrystal, Commander of the NATO international Strategic Assistance Force. Let me begin by thanking you both on behalf of the committee for your repeated and continuing service to our country. Thanks to your families for their continued support of the task that you've accepted, and please also convey our thanks to the troops and the civilians that you lead and their families for their extraordinary service.

General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry, you're charged with executing a civilian-military plan of action to implement the strategy that the President announced last week. The President's plan emphasizes protecting the Afghan people consistent with the recommendations in General McChrystal's assessment, and includes military and civilian actions with the goal, according to Secretary Gates, to clear, hold, build, and transfer security responsibility to the Afghans.

Key elements of the President's plan for going forward in Afghanistan include: First, training, equipping, and partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces to empower them to provide for Afghan security.

Second, the President has called for rapidly deploying an additional 30,000 U.S. soldiers and marines over the coming months, likely to be joined by at least 7,000 additional soldiers from our NATO and other allies participating in the Afghanistan mission.

Third, the President has directed that a reduction of U.S. forces will begin in July of 2011, with the pace and location of troop reductions to be determined by conditions on the ground.

Our Achilles heel in Afghanistan, in the words of one Marine company commander, is not a shortage of U.S. troops; it's a shortage of Afghan troops. To succeed in Afghanistan, it is important that we have adequate Afghan partners in combat operations and that after a town or village is cleared of Taliban the security forces left to maintain order are Afghan forces.

In the key province of Helmand, the ratio of U.S. troops to Afghan troops is about five U.S. troops to one Afghan soldier. The desired ratio should be much different, one Afghan company to one U.S. company at the beginning of partnering, leading to three Afghan companies for every one U.S. company as training of Afghan troops progresses.

Currently, the 10,000 U.S. marines in Helmand Province have approximately 1500 Afghan soldiers and 700 Afghan police, just over 2,000 combined Afghan strategic forces, with whom to partner. Doubling the number of U.S. troops in the south without a much larger increase in available Afghan troops will only worsen a ratio under which our forces are already matched up with fewer Afghan troops than they can and should partner with.

The limited availability of Afghan forces to partner with raises a troubling question: Why aren't there more Afghan forces in the fight? By most accounts, Afghan soldiers are good fighters, are mo-

tivated, and are well respected by the Afghan people. Yet there were recent news reports that the Afghan Army soldiers in Helmand were declining to go on some missions because they said they were not there to fight, but to rest. Last week Secretary Clinton was reported as saying: "We've got to bring the Afghan security forces into the fight."

According to the latest numbers from the Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan, there are currently some 95,000 Afghan soldiers trained. Of this force, there are 80 combat battalions. About half of those are listed as capable of independent operations or of leading operations with coalition support. But last week the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Malawian, said in an interview that there aren't that many Afghan soldiers that are in the lead; there are very few.

I hope our witnesses this afternoon can give us the ground truth as to how many Afghan soldiers and police are present for duty and are now partnered with U.S. combat troops in the fight and how many Afghan units are in the lead in combat operations anywhere.

In addition to the Afghan National Security Forces, there is a community defense initiative, which appears to be an Afghan version of the Sons of Iraq. I hope our witnesses will describe this initiative and discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

I understand that the President has directed his military commanders not to begin clearing an area unless our troops will be able to turn that area over to Afghan security forces. What our witnesses could clarify is at what point in the "clear, hold, build, and transfer" process the Afghan forces will take over responsibility for an area's security. Is the plan that we hold? Do the Afghans hold? Do we hold together?

As Marine Corps Commandant General Conway recently pointed out, "It isn't nearly as effective to have U.S. marines standing on street corners in Afghan villages as it is to have an Afghan policeman or a soldier." I agree, U.S. troops should not be left for months holding street corners in villages recently cleared of Taliban, waiting for Afghan security forces to take over that mission.

Increasing the number of U.S. forces acting without sufficient Afghan partners will feed Taliban propaganda that portrays U.S. forces in Afghanistan as occupiers and could lead to greater, instead of lesser, Afghan dependency upon us.

The President's strategy also makes clear that our commitment to the future of Afghanistan requires action on the part of the government of Afghanistan to fight corruption, deliver services, institute policies for reintegration of local Taliban fighters, and address other urgent problems. President Karzai has pledged to do these things and President Obama rightly insists on holding him to that pledge.

Setting the July 2011 date to begin reductions of our forces is a reasonable way to impart to the government of Afghanistan a sense of focus and urgency, something that has been lacking there up to now and is essential to success, theirs and ours. President Karzai has acknowledged the value of the July 2011 date, saying that "It's good that we are facing a deadline" and that the Afghan people "must begin to stand on our own feet." I'd like to hear from our wit-

nesses whether they support and agree with the President's decision to establish a July 2011 date to begin a U.S. troop reduction. Senator McCain.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry for joining us today. I want to thank you both for your many years of distinguished service to our country and I want to express my deep gratitude to the Americans you lead, both our civilians and our men and women in uniform, as well as their families, who are serving and sacrificing at this moment.

I want to reiterate up front that I support the President's policy for Afghanistan. I think he made the right decision, really a brave decision, against the objections of many in his own party, to reject half measures, to affirm a counterinsurgency strategy and to resource it properly. I think this policy can succeed and I think it deserves robust public support, both from Republicans and Democrats alike.

My main concern, as you know, is the decision to begin withdrawing our forces in 2011 regardless of conditions on the ground. We discussed this issue a lot last week and I appreciate the efforts of Secretaries Clinton and Gates and Admiral Malawian to try to clarify the meaning of this decision. I understand that this date marks the beginning of a process and that the pace of our draw-down will be condition-based. Still, the fundamental problem remains: We've announced a date, divorced from conditions on the ground, when we will start to withdraw our troops.

It doesn't matter whether we call it a cliff or a ramp or anything else. It's still an exit sign, and it sends the wrong signal to our friends and our enemies. On this issue, the administration and I will just have to agree to disagree.

It matters immensely what signals we send. That's why I was very pleased to see that Secretary Gates is in Kabul today and that the message he delivered was: "We are in this thing to win." I couldn't agree more, and we can win.

With this counterinsurgency strategy, plus the additional troops and resources we are committing, we can reverse the momentum of the insurgency. We can create conditions for the vast majority of insurgents to lay down their arms and reconcile with their fellow Afghans. We can train appropriate numbers of more capable and battle-tested Afghan security forces to lead the fight in time against a degraded enemy. We can isolate al Qaeda and target them more effectively, and we can create the time and space for Afghan leaders, with our support and pressure, to reform their government, to crack down on corruption, and to build a nation that will never again serve as a base for attacks against America and our allies.

That is our theory of victory. But we can only succeed if our civilian and military efforts are completely joint and integrated, beginning at the top with our distinguished witnesses today. We've all read the reports of differences between you gentlemen. I know you're both professionals and I trust that any tensions you may have had are now past and that you are now focused, as I am and

as I trust the President is, on the future, on your common mission, and on succeeding.

This requires a joint civilian-military campaign plan, which we were told last week that our civilian and military leaders are now in the process of drafting. We've heard a lot about numbers, both troop levels and civilian surges. We've heard a lot about dollar amounts and various programs. We've heard a lot about goals and aspirations.

I want to hear about strategy. What is our strategy for helping the Afghans build political and economic order after we clear and hold ground? What is our strategy for supporting Afghan leaders in reforming and strengthening their government? What is our strategy for working with President Karzai in getting the best performance possible from him and his government? I hope we can get greater clarity in this hearing today on the elements of our civil-military strategy.

We have questions, of course. But we cannot lose sight of one important fact: We now have an opportunity to build a bipartisan consensus in support of a vital national security priority: defeating al Qaeda and its violent, extremist allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan and ensuring that these countries never again serve as bases for attacks against us and our allies.

Americans need to know why winning this war is essential to our country's security. They need to know that things in Afghanistan will get worse before they get better; that, sadly, casualties will likely rise in the year to come, but that ultimately we will succeed. Americans need to know these things, especially those brave Americans who are leading this fight.

If you take only one thing back with you to our fellow citizens in Afghanistan, let it be this: America and this Congress is fully behind them. We believe in them. We believe in their mission. We believe they can succeed. And we in Congress will do all in our power to get them everything they need to win and then to return home with the honor they deserve and the thanks of a grateful Nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator McCain follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

General McChrystal, let's start with you.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL STANLEY A. McCHRISTAL, USA,  
COMMANDER, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE  
FORCE AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES AF-  
GHANISTAN**

General McCHRISTAL. Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, distinguished members of this committee: Thank you for the chance to appear before you today.

Chairman LEVIN. Is your mike on, General?

General McCHRISTAL. Sir, it is.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

General McCHRISTAL. I welcome this opportunity to testify on our way ahead in Afghanistan and I'm pleased to do so with Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, an old friend.

Let me begin by saluting the bravery of the men and women of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. They're anchored by over 68,000 courageous Americans, our close partners in the NATO alliance, and a 43-nation coalition. We honor the sacrifices of the fallen, the veterans, and their families.

We also recognize the toll paid every day by our counterparts in the Afghan security forces and by Afghan civilians, who ultimately suffer the most from this insurgency. It is for them and for all of us that we seek a stable Afghanistan, a defunct al Qaeda, and a secure future—

[Audience interruption.]

Chairman LEVIN. You'll have to remain seated, please. And no more outbursts, please.

Thank you. You can continue.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY.—and a secure future in that vital region of the world.

I first deployed to Afghanistan in 2002 and have commanded forces there every year since. Despite that experience, there is much in Afghanistan that I have yet to fully understand. For all of us, Afghanistan is a challenge that is best approached with a balance of determination and humility.

While U.S. forces have been at war in Afghanistan for 8 years, the Afghans have been at it for more than 30. They are frustrated with international efforts that have failed to meet their expectations, confronting us with a crisis of confidence among Afghans who view the international effort as insufficient and their government as corrupt or at the very least inconsequential.

We also face a complex and resilient insurgency. The Quetta Shura Taliban, or Afghan Taliban, is the prominent threat to the government of Afghanistan, as they aspire to once again become the government of Afghanistan. The Haqqani and Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin insurgent groups have more limited geographical reach and objectives, but they are no less lethal. All three groups are supported to some degree by external elements in Iran and Pakistan, have ties with al Qaeda, and coexist within narcotics and criminal networks, both fueling and feeding off instability and insecurity in the region.

The mission in Afghanistan is undeniably difficult and success will require steadfast commitment and incur significant costs. I participated fully in the President's assessment and decision-making process and was afforded multiple opportunities to provide my recommendations and best military advice, which I did. Combined with insights and policy considerations from across our government, I believe the decisions that came from that process reflect a realistic and effective approach.

To pursue our core goal of defeating al Qaeda and preventing their return to Afghanistan, we must disrupt and degrade the Taliban's capacity, deny their access to the Afghan population, and strengthen the Afghan security forces. This means we must reverse the Taliban's current momentum and create the time and space to develop Afghan security and governance capacity.

The President's decision rapidly resources our strategy, recognizing that the next 18 months will likely be decisive and ultimately enable success. I fully support the President's decision. The

President also reiterated how this decision supports our national interest. 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. Let me briefly explain why I believe so. My confidence derives first from the Afghans' resolve, since it is their actions that will ultimately matter most in ending this conflict with their interests and, by extension our own, secured.

Second, we do not confront a popular insurgency. The Taliban have no widespread constituency, have a history of failure in power, and lack an appealing vision.

Third, where our strategy is applied we've begun to show that we can help the Afghans to establish more effective security and more credible governance.

Finally, Afghans do not regard us as occupiers. They do not wish for us to remain forever, yet they see our support as a necessary bridge to future security and stability.

I've been back in Afghanistan for 6 months now. I believe that with the President's decision and ongoing reforms I outlined in our initial assessment, our efforts are now empowered with a greater sense of clarity, capability, commitment, and confidence.

Let me start with clarity. The President's recently completed review of our strategy, to include his deep and pointed questioning of all assumptions and recommendations, has produced greater clarity of our mission and objectives. We also have greater clarity on the way forward. Additional forces will begin to deploy shortly and by this time next year new security gains will be illuminated by specific indicators and it will be clear to us that the insurgency has lost the momentum. By the summer of 2011, it will be clear to the Afghan people that the insurgency will not win, giving them the chance to side with their government.

From that point forward, while we plan to have fewer combat forces in harm's way, we will remain partnered with the Afghan security forces in a supporting role to consolidate and solidify their gains. Results may come more quickly and we must demonstrate progress towards measurable objectives, but the sober fact is that there are no silver bullets. Ultimate success will be the cumulative effect of sustained pressure across multiple lines of operation.

Increasing our capability has been about much more than troop increases. For the past 6 months, we've been implementing organizational and operational changes that are already reflecting improvements in our effectiveness. But the additional forces announced by President Obama are significant. Forces to increase our capacity to train the Afghan National Security Forces and forces to partner with Afghan Army and police in expanding security zones in key areas will provide us the ability to reverse insurgent momentum and deny the Taliban the access to the population they require to survive.

The additional capability we are building translates into credibility in the minds of Afghans, who demand proof not only that we want to protect them, but that we can. In a war of perceptions where the battlefield is the mind of an Afghan elder, the hope of an Afghan mother, the aspirations of an Afghan child, this can be

decisive. Our commitment is watched intently and constantly judged by our allies and by our enemies. The commitment of 30,000 additional U.S. forces, along with additional coalition forces and growing Afghan National Security Force numbers, will be a significant step toward expanding security in critical areas and in demonstrating resolve.

The commitment of all coalition nations will be buttressed by a clear understanding of how we will mitigate risks. I'll briefly mention three. The first is the Afghan government's credibility deficit, which must be recognized by all, to include Afghan officials, as a critical area of focus and change.

Equally important is our ability to accelerate development of the Afghan security forces. Measures such as increased pay and incentives, literacy training, leader development, and expanded partnering are necessary to partner—correctly—to position the Afghan National Security Forces to assume responsibility for long-term security.

Third, the hazard posed by extremists that operate on both sides of the border with Pakistan with freedom of movement across that border must be mitigated by enhanced cross-border coordinations and enhanced Pakistani engagement.

Looking ahead, I'm confident that we have both the right strategy and the right resources. Every trip around Afghanistan reinforces my confidence in the coalition and Afghan forces we stand alongside in this effort. But I also find confidence in those we are trying to help. That confidence is found when an Afghan farmer chooses to harvest wheat rather than poppy, or where a young adult casts his or her vote to join the police, or where a group of villagers resolves to reject local insurgency.

We face many challenges in Afghanistan, but our efforts are sustained by one unassailable reality. Neither the Afghan people nor the international community want Afghanistan to remain a sanctuary for terror and violence. If we are to be confident of our mission and our prospects, we must also be accurate in our assessment of that progress. We owe ourselves, our leaders, and the American people transparency and candor, because the price to be paid is high and the stakes are even higher.

In closing, my team and I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your support to the American men and women currently serving in Afghanistan and to tell you a bit about them. We risk letting numbers like 30K roll off our tongues without remembering that those are fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters serving far from home, selfless in their sacrifices for each of us.

The other day I asked a young, but combat-experienced, sergeant where he was on 9-11 and his answer, "Getting my braces removed," reminded me that it had been more than 8 years since 9-11, and many of our service members and family have experienced and sacrificed much. But as I see them in action at remote bases, on patrol, partnering with Afghan forces, recovering in combat hospitals, they don't talk about all they've given up. They talk about all they are accomplishing and their determination in this endeavor.

This is not a force of rookies or dilettantes. The brigade commander in Khost is completing his fourth combat tour in Afghani-

stan and his experience and expertise is reflective of the force that represents you. All have felt fear and loneliness. Most have lost comrades. None have lost heart.

In their eyes, I see maturity beyond their years. In their actions, I see a commitment to succeed and a commitment to each other. I am confident that I share your pride in what these great Americans are doing for our country in Afghanistan, and it will be my privilege to accept your questions on their behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of General McChrystal follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY.

**STATEMENT OF HON. KARL W. EIKENBERRY, UNITED STATES  
AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN**

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Chairman Levin, Ranking Member McCain, and distinguished members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present my views on Afghanistan today, and I'd like to ask that my full statement be submitted for the record.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. It will be.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Last week in his speech at West Point, President Obama presented the administration's strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. His decision came after an intensive, deliberative, far-reaching review. I'm honored to have been part of that.

I believe that the course that the President has outlined offers our best path to stabilize Afghanistan and to ensure that al Qaeda cannot regain a foothold to plan new attacks against us. I can say without equivocation that I fully support this approach.

I consider myself privileged to serve as the United States Ambassador and to represent an amazing team of diplomats, developmental specialists, and civilian experts who form the most capable and dedicated United States embassy anywhere in the world today, and I'm extraordinarily proud of them.

I'm also honored to testify alongside General Stan McChrystal, my professional colleague and friend of many years. I want to say from the outset that General McChrystal and I are united in a joint effort where civilian and military personnel work together every day side by side with our Afghan partners and with our allies. We could not accomplish our objectives without this kind of cooperation.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the United States is at a critical juncture in our involvement in Afghanistan. On December the 1st, the President ordered 35,000 additional troops to deploy to Afghanistan on an accelerated timetable, with the goal of breaking the insurgency's momentum, hastening and improving the training of the Afghan National Security Forces, and establishing security in key parts of the country. On the civilian side, we aim to increase employment and provide essential services in areas of greatest insecurity, and to improve the critical ministries in the economy at the national level. These steps, taken together, I believe will help to remove insurgents from the battlefield and build support for the Afghan government.

As the President said, we will be clear about what to expect from those who receive our assistance. After a difficult election, the Afghan government does show signs of recognizing the need to deliver better governance and security. We await urgent concrete steps in a number of areas.

I would also like to briefly discuss the three main pillars of our efforts in Afghanistan: security, governance, and development. General McChrystal has already addressed our plans for improving security and building the Afghan National Security Forces. Since assuming my post, I've made a special point of getting outside of Kabul to see conditions firsthand, and I fully concur with General McChrystal's assessment that the security situation remains serious. Sending additional U.S. and other NATO ISAF forces to Afghanistan is critical to regaining the initiative and I'm confident that as these troops arrive the situation will stabilize and turn in our favor. Additional troops will also permit us to expand our work with the Afghan army and the Afghan police so that they may take a larger role in providing for the security of their own people.

As President Obama said, "The transition to Afghan responsibility will begin in the summer of 2011, when we expect Afghan security forces to begin assuming lead responsibility for defending their country."

Moving on from security, the second pillar of our comprehensive strategy focuses on governance. At the national and the sub-national levels, our overarching goal is to encourage improved governance so Afghans may benefit, see the benefits of supporting a legitimate government and the insurgency in turn loses its support.

As General McChrystal has pointed out, one of the major impediments our strategy faces today is the government of Afghan's lack of credibility with its own people. To strengthen its legitimacy, our approach at the national level is on improving key ministries by increasing the number of civilian technical advisers and by providing more developmental assistance directly through these ministries' budgets. By focusing on ministries that deliver essential services and security, we can accelerate the building of an Afghan government that is sufficiently visible, effective, and accountable.

At the provincial and the district levels, we're working jointly with our military partners through our provincial reconstruction teams, district development working groups, and district support teams, which help build Afghan capacity, particularly in the areas of greatest insecurity in southern and in eastern Afghanistan.

Underpinning all of these efforts is the need to combat corruption and promote the rule of law. With our assistance, the Afghan government is steadily building law enforcement institutions to fight corruption, organized crime, and drug trafficking. In his inaugural address, President Karzai stated his intention to make merit-based appointments in his new cabinet and to implement an anti-corruption strategy. We're encouraged by his statements.

Cultivation of poppy and trafficking in opium also continue to have a debilitating effect on Afghan society. Our strategy is multi-pronged, involving demand reduction, efforts by law enforcement agencies and the military to detain traffickers and interdict drug shipments, and support for licit agricultural development.

The narcotics problem will, of course, never have a solution, though, without economic development. This leads to the third pillar of our effort, which is development. In recent months we've adjusted our approach to focus on building key elements of Afghanistan's private sector economy, increasing our emphasis on agriculture, enhancing government revenue collection, and improving the coordination of assistance within the United States Government and the international community. These steps were taken to produce improvements in the lives of ordinary Afghans and to contribute directly to more effective government and lessen support for the insurgency.

Rebuilding the farm sector in particular is essential for the Afghan government to reduce the pool of unemployed men who form the recruiting base for extremist groups. We estimate that some 80 percent of the Afghan population derives their income either directly or indirectly from agriculture.

Mr. Chairman, I want to emphasize that we're concentrating on what's essential and attainable. The President's strategy is based on a pragmatic assessment of the security interests of the United States and our belief that a sustainable representative government of Afghanistan and a sustainable economy for Afghanistan are essential to success. We need a viable Afghan government so our forces can draw down and the investment of U.S. taxpayers can be reduced.

In closing, I need to mention two important risks we face in carrying out our strategy, and I know that General McChrystal shares these. The first is that, in spite of everything we do, Afghanistan may struggle to take over the essential tasks of governance and security on a timely basis; and the second is in our partnership with Pakistan. The efforts we're undertaking in Afghanistan are likely to fall short of our strategic goals unless there's more progress at eliminating the sanctuaries used by the Afghan Taliban and their associates in Pakistan.

If the main elements of the President's plan are executed and if our Afghan partners and our allies do their part, I'm confident we can achieve our strategic objectives. I say this with conviction because, for the first time during my three tours of duty in Afghanistan, all of the elements of our national power are being employed with the full support of the President and increasingly of our allies.

Achieving our goals for Afghanistan will not be easy, but I'm optimistic that we can succeed with the support of Congress. Our mission was underresourced for years, but it's now one of our government's highest priorities, with substantial development funds and hundreds more civilians.

We will soon have increased our civilian presence in Kabul over threefold and in the field over sixfold, and this just over the past year. We will, of course, need more.

U.S. foreign assistance is also comparatively small, but an essential fraction of the total amount spent in Afghanistan over the last 8 years. Additional resources will be necessary and we look forward to sharing more details of our anticipated needs with Congress in the coming days and weeks.

Mr. Chairman, Afghanistan represents a daunting challenge and success is not guaranteed, but it is possible. With the additional

troops and other resources provided by the President and with the help of Congress, we will work tirelessly to ensure al Qaeda never again finds refuge in Afghanistan and threatens our country and our homeland.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Eikenberry follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Ambassador.

We'll try a 7-minute round and hope that we can get to everybody by the time that you two have to leave us.

General, let me ask you the first question. Is it your personal professional judgment that the President's strategic plan is the correct plan?

General MCCHRYSAL. Yes, Mr. Chairman, it is.

Chairman LEVIN. Are there any elements of the plan you don't agree with?

General MCCHRYSAL. I'm comfortable with the entire plan, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Ambassador, do you support the President's plan and each of its elements?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I do, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, the President has set a specific date of July 2011 for the start of U.S. troop reductions. It's specific and it's set, as directed by the President. He's also indicated that the pace of the reductions is dependent on conditions on the ground.

General, do you fully agree with the July 2011 date which the President directed as the start of reductions of some U.S. forces?

General MCCHRYSAL. Mr. Chairman, I do, and I'd like to explain why.

Chairman LEVIN. Please.

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, I view—from the military strategy point, I view it in a wider context. First, I think most importantly, I think the President has stated and other leaders of our government have the commitment to a strategic partnership with Afghanistan and the Afghan people. So I believe that the context that that provides, that we will not abandon them over time, is very, very important. It gives them a consistency in our commitment to them and some assurance for the future.

Sir, on the other end of that, in the very near term, the President has provided our force additional combat forces, which I view, and I described in my opening statement, as being able to provide us time and space to reverse Taliban momentum and make progress against the insurgency in the near term, which I think the next 18 months are critical. During that period, I believe we'll be able to degrade the ability and the capacity of the insurgency significantly. Simultaneous to that will be growing the capacity of the government of Afghanistan's security capability, the Afghan army and Afghan police specifically, but also supported by governance.

So I believe that when we hit July 2011 that's not a significant factor in our campaign plan. In fact, I think it has a positive forcing function on our Afghan partners in reminding them that, although we have a long-term commitment, we also have shared responsibility. So I think there are some positives.

I do want to put out that I understand that there's an information operations challenge. The Taliban particularly will try to paint

this in a particular picture, and I think we just have to deal and combat that.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

General, how many Afghan soldiers are now partnered with U.S. combat troops and are in the fight in Regional Commands South and East, where the major fighting is occurring? What's that number?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, if you'll permit me to pull out my numbers here. For example—

Chairman LEVIN. If you could just give us the number of Afghan soldiers, one number, partnered with U.S. combat forces, in the fight?

General MCCHRYSAL. In RC-South, sir, that would be 16,700.

Chairman LEVIN. 16,000?

General MCCHRYSAL. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. How about east?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, that would be 23,300 army. Neither of those numbers include the police.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, in Operation Cobra Anger in Helmand it's reported we've got 1,000 marines there right now in that operation and there's about 150 Afghan troops. When we were in Helmand Province, the ratio was, where we visited, there were five—I may have misspoke. There were five U.S. troops for each Afghan troop. I think I stated it correctly. But currently in Operation Anger there's 1,000 marines, joined by 150 Afghans. That's about seven U.S. troops for every one Afghan.

Given the number of troops, Afghan troops, that are there, why are these ratios so inconsistent with what our own doctrine is, which says that we should have a one to one partnership, one unit of ours for one unit of the Afghans, hopefully leading to one unit of ours to three Afghan units by the end of the partnering period? How come the ratio is so reversed of what our doctrine requires?

General MCCHRYSAL. The primary reason is there are not yet enough Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police. The main focus of our coalition element or strategy has recently been in the south. In the Helmand area, when you and I were there, you're correct, it was about one Afghan security force participant to five coalition. That's now 1 to 3.6 and by the end of January we'll have it 1 to 2.3.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, the British insist on one to one. The Australians insist on one to one. It's their doctrine. It's their mission that they are mainly there for partnering with the Afghan troops, and so their requirement, which they insist on, is about a one to one to begin with. Why do we not have that same insistence, determination, that our doctrine, which is one to one, be implemented, since partnering and training the Afghan forces is such an important part of our mission?

General MCCHRYSAL. Mr. Chairman, I could not agree more. There are simply not yet an Afghan National Army to meet everyone's requirements. We are fielding as we speak this month 1900 additional Afghan National Army soldiers between December and January. That's 16 new ANA companies. All will go into the Helmand area.

Chairman LEVIN. And we're going to have 20,000 there by what time?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Of our additional forces?

Chairman LEVIN. No, of our forces. We have 10,000 in Helmand now. We're going to add another 9 or 10,000.

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, by mid-spring, late spring.

Chairman LEVIN. So the ratio is still going to be overwhelmingly U.S. to Afghan, even after those Afghan additions; isn't that right?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, by April we will create another brigade of Afghan National Army forces that will go to the south—I'm sorry. Two brigades by summer and an additional corps headquarters. We're flowing everything we can build in the Afghan army into that area. I absolutely agree with your point.

Chairman LEVIN. We've been told—General Jones indicated in a news interview last weekend, I believe, that currently at least 7 of the 34 Afghan provinces today—that's 20 percent of their provinces—have the conditions for successful transition, right now. Now quoting General Jones: "Specifically, security, economic development, and reasonably good governance."

Why not transfer responsibility now, since the conditions exist now for successful transition?

General MCCHRYSTAL. In fact, the Afghans have the lead over the entire country. Legally, they're a sovereign country. It's different than Iraq. What we are—

Chairman LEVIN. Then why did Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton repeatedly say that transition is going to begin in July of 2011, if the conditions for transition in seven provinces exist now? Why wait?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, in fact the city of Kabul has already transferred to—

Chairman LEVIN. And how about the other seven provinces?

General MCCHRYSTAL. There are areas where they in fact have lead now, they execute, because there are not coalition forces operating in those areas. So the legal mandate that might be executed to do that I think is really in that case a formality. They have the lead in most of those areas right now, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Eikenberry, during the decisionmaking process there were several cables that you sent back that were classified Secret and yet were revealed to the media, that indicated you had strong reservations about the surge.

Have those reservations been resolved in your mind?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, 100 percent with the refinement of the mission and with clarification on the ways that we're going to move forward and the resources allocated against this, absolutely.

Senator MCCAIN. General McChrystal, Secretary Gates said today in Kabul: "We're in this thing to win." Do you agree with his statement and do you have what you need to win?

General MCCHRYSTAL. I agree with the Secretary's statement. We are in it to win. I think we have what we need to win. But I think the ultimate winners become the Afghan people.

Senator MCCAIN. What do you expect we will have achieved by 2011? I understand there's going to be a major review of the plan by December of 2010. What do you expect we will have achieved by 2011 when, as the response to Senator Levin's statement, is a firm date for beginning withdrawal of U.S. troops? And we will have benchmarks that you will be sharing with us, I'm sure. Go ahead.

General MCCRYSTAL. Absolutely. The most important thing we will have done by the summer of 2011 is convince the majority of the Afghan people that in fact we are going to win, we and the Afghan government are going to win, and that that is going to be the direction for the future. To get to that, what we will do is start by reversing the Taliban momentum and the perception of momentum, because at the end of the day success in this fight is about what the people believe.

We will be able, between now and summer of 2011, to reverse that momentum, to increase the number of security zones we have, providing more areas contiguous security. So for example, a farmer in Garmsir in the central Helmand River Valley, which has been secured now by a combination of Afghan forces and marines, who've done a great job, he'll be able to move product all the way from Garmsir to Lashkar Gah and Kandahar. Currently we don't have contiguous security; we have pockets of security. We'll be able to grow that. We'll be able to increase his ability not only to live in his own neighborhood more normally, but also to live a life more normally.

Senator MCCAIN. What if we haven't achieved those objectives by July 2011? What do we do then, since we have a firm date for beginning of withdrawal?

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, of course we always assess our strategy as we go along and make decisions based upon the situation.

Senator MCCAIN. But we still have a firm date.

You said, General McChrystal, "The success of this operation will be determined in the minds of the Afghan people." What would you say to Afghans, Pakistanis, and others in the region, both our friends and enemies, who may now feel like hedging their bets or sitting on the fence because they doubt America's commitment and resolve?

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, there will be some who are in opposition and some who are in ignorance, who will try to use that as a point of propaganda. I think if we point out the long-term strategic partnership both to the government of Afghanistan and to our Pakistani partners and our short-term clear commitment by the additional forces and the focus of our strategy, I believe that we can make that point effectively.

Senator MCCAIN. And it is obvious from your experience in Afghanistan that the Afghan people do not want the return of the Taliban, and that is a significant advantage and one that perhaps has not been made as clear to the American people, not only because of the things they might do to harm the United States, but the terrible treatment of the Afghan people, including women in Afghanistan.

General MCCRYSTAL. Senator, that is absolutely correct. Everywhere I go, I have never seen evidence that the Taliban have pop-

ular support, like a political liberation movement. They get their support largely through coercion. So the average people are simply waiting to see whether or not their government can defeat that insurgency.

Senator MCCAIN. Is it still your goal to train 400,000 Afghan security forces by 2013?

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, I believe that we need to significantly increase the Afghan National Security Forces. I recommend that we stay on a very aggressive time line to try to reach that, but adjust those goals on two things: one, if the insurgency's size creases, it might be able to be adjusted; and also the ability of the Afghan government to provide recruits, retention, and those things which enable the growth.

Senator MCCAIN. What level do you expect it to be by July of 2011?

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, I believe between the army and police total it will be approaching 300,000 people.

Senator MCCAIN. What about the strain on the men and women in the military, General?

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, I think the strain is significant. But I was out at Walter Reed yesterday morning as I went through with my wife and visited soldiers who'd been wounded, not just in Afghanistan, but also in Iraq. Every soldier we spoke to talked about wanting to get back in the fight, even though it was clear that many would be very challenged to do that.

Every soldier that I see in the field expresses the same sort of focus. So I believe that while there's clear strain on families, and we cannot understate the importance of the programs that this body has done for wounded warriors and for families, I believe this force wants to win, and I believe that commitment is the most important thing.

Senator MCCAIN. How important is it that we find and bring to justice Osama bin Laden and what effect would that have on our effort there?

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, I believe—

Senator MCCAIN. And I'd be interested in your view, Ambassador.

General MCCRYSTAL. Sir, I believe he is an iconic figure at this point, whose survival emboldens al Qaeda as a franchising organization across the world. I don't think it would make—it would not defeat al Qaeda to have him captured or killed, but I don't think that we can finally defeat al Qaeda until he is captured or killed.

Senator MCCAIN. Until he is captured or brought to justice.

Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, I'd only add to that that it does remain important to the American people, indeed the people of the world, that one day Osama bin Laden is either captured or killed or brought to justice for his responsibility for the murder of many Americans and citizens of the world on the 11th of September 2001.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I thank the witnesses. I know you have an enormous task ahead of you. You have our support and our thoughts and our prayers are with you. We look forward to making your life miserable by coming over to visit you.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator LIEBERMAN.

I promise to come with Senator McCain and to the extent that

I can try to make his visit less miserable for the two of you than it would otherwise be.

[Laughter.]

I thank you both for your extraordinary service. I do want to say a word about Senator McCain's opening statement today. It builds on what he said last week when Secretaries Gates and Clinton and Admiral Malawian were here. It's obvious that he disagrees on the question of the deadline, or whatever one calls it, for July 2011, exit strategy. But he made an important statement today, which is he's just going to have to agree to disagree. The administration and he are going to have to agree to disagree and go forward, because he supports the basic program.

I hope this sets a tone for people in both parties. No matter what they feel about one or another detail of the decision the President made, it is now American policy, and the truth is we all ought to come together behind you, General McChrystal, and the troops that you're leading, and Admiral—Ambassador Eikenberry, you and the civilian personnel you're leading, and give you 18 months when you don't have any carping or backbiting from Washington to get the job done for us. I thank you for that.

I want to get to the—I never felt uncomfortable or critical about the length of the deliberative process that President Obama conducted, but I thought the worst thing about it was that it appeared that people associated with it were leaking documents or arguments to try to affect public opinion, and one was this alleged email that you sent, Ambassador Eikenberry, because none of us, obviously, saw it. I didn't see it.

And I appreciate what you said to Senator McCain, that you have a good working relationship with General McChrystal. But what the media was reporting was that the substance of the email was your concern that if we sent troops, too many troops too quickly, it would take the pressure off of the Afghan government. I wanted to ask you to deal with that in two ways, if you would. It's awkward to ask it and yet the media is talking about it, so I think it's best to give you a chance to comment in public.

One is, to what extent the publication of that email, with its skepticism, that a lot of people here in Washington share, about the government in Kabul, what effect, if any, it's had on your relationship with President Karzai and the government. And the second, if you could deal with the substance, which is I gather—what we heard of the email, it had a substantial policy argument, which was that first we better get the Afghans to shape up before we send in more troops.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Thanks, Senator. Maybe let me take the second half first, on the substance. There was a very deliberate review process that both General McChrystal talked about in our opening statements, and during that review process all of us were encouraged to render our best analysis and best advice. It was an extraordinary process, as it should have been given the complex-

ities and the consequences of the decision. During that time, all of us participating had opportunities in videoteleconferences, through face to face discussions, through written correspondence, to submit our views.

The second point I wanted to make is that at no time, Senator, was I opposed to additional forces being sent to Afghanistan. I share General McChrystal's, and I do share, his security analysis that he conducted. It was comprehensive and it was correct. The situation in parts of Afghanistan, the security had deteriorated, and still in parts of Afghanistan it remains very difficult.

The only way to address those problems, those challenges of insecurity, is additional forces, whether U.S. or non-U.S. NATO forces. We have an absolute consensus that we need to accelerate the building of the Afghan army and police. The best way to do that is additional U.S. forces. But all of us had questions, of course, when we have a very significant question, decision, to be made about additional forces, important to understand the number, the time line, the purpose, the context.

But the third point I'd make then: With the President's decision, with the refinement of the mission, with clarity on what ways we were going to use and what resources would be allocated against that, at that point in time I was 100 percent, and am now 100 percent, supportive of the decision that was made.

With regard to effect on my relations with the Afghan government, I maintain, Senator, good relations with President Karzai. My embassy, our embassy, maintains excellent relations with the government of Afghanistan, and we're going to continue to improve upon what is already a very good working relationship.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate both parts of your answer. When I was last there with Senator McCain in August, it was clear that you had a good, an honest relationship with President Karzai and the administration, including there are disagreements, but then a commitment to one another, that's exactly what we want.

General McChrystal, just following up, I take it that the leak of the email has had no lasting effect on your ability to work with Ambassador Eikenberry? Obviously, if we're going to employ all elements of our national resources to Afghanistan, the relationship between the two of you is critically important to that.

General MCCHRISTAL. It's fine, Senator. We work together literally every day. We have dinner together. That is an absolute misperception. We also know that we're only going to be successful together, both the two of us, but then also all our coalition and Afghan partners.

Senator LIEBERMAN. That's great. Thank you.

When Secretary Gates was before the committee last week, he told us: "Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal are as we speak working on a joint civil- military campaign plan just as General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker developed for Iraq in 2007."

I wanted to ask you first whether the Secretary is correct? Are you writing such a plan? And second, if so, can you tell us a little bit about the process by which the plan is being written? Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Actually, if I could, Senator, actually there is an existing civil-military plan. General McChrystal and myself back in August, after intensive combined staff work on the civil-military side, we had signed a joint campaign plan that General Petraeus, when he reviewed it along with Ambassador Holbrooke, said it was absolutely the best civil-military plan that he's ever seen. We're proud of the work that was done on it.

We are in the process of having to revise that plan based upon the implementation now of the new strategy. This plan is not a document which sits on a shelf. To give you an example of the integration that follows from this plan, at the national level we have 14 national level working groups. What do I mean by that? We have a national level working group for agriculture, a national level working group for infrastructure development.

These are fully integrated teams that sit on these working groups. For instance, agriculture; members of USAID sit on the team, the Department of Agriculture. Very importantly, from General McChrystal's command, we have the National Guard sitting on there and more of their military command.

I could go through all of these various functional groups that we've established. That's at the national level horizontally. But vertically, from Kabul all the way down through the province, all the way through the district, we have a fully integrated civil-military unified effort. We're impressed with what we've got. We're committed to making it better.

Senator LIEBERMAN. General McChrystal, do you want to add to that? I'm curious as to whether you have integration at the staff level on civil-military to work on the next phase of the plan.

General MCCHRISTAL. We absolutely do. On a daily basis, they are meeting and working.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you both.

Thanks very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator WICKER.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General McChrystal, when there's fighting near the Afghan-Pakistan border area and our troops are engaged with the enemy insurgents, what have been the rules of engagement with regard to what our troops can do when the enemy retreats back into Pakistan?

General MCCHRISTAL. The intent of our rules of engagement is always to protect our forces, to never take away from our forces the ability to protect themselves, their wellbeing. We have the ability to fire across the border—artillery, air strikes, direct fire weapons—and that actually happens with fair amount of regularity. But it also happens with coordination. We have a series of mechanisms in place with the Pakistani army so that as an incident occurs, before we shoot we immediately contact them and try to work out all the details so that they in fact approve the engagement with the enemy. That reduces misunderstandings.

There are times when there are misunderstandings about that. So we constantly work with our forces to try to make sure we don't create issues. But we also try to prevent, both the Pakistani military and us, to prevent there being any kind of a scene.

Senator WICKER. So we don't pursue across the border? Our troops don't have the ability to do that; is that correct?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, I'd like to take that part for the record, whether they actually legally can. We have not been doing that, not going across on the ground.

Senator WICKER. So they're under orders not to do that?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, let me take that for the record, to make sure.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WICKER. I just wondered, because you had testified that "organizational and operational changes were going to need to be implemented, and I just was curious, and maybe you might want to take for the record that question too, as to whether our ability to pursue the enemy across the border, with the cooperation of the Pakistanis, might be part of those changes.

So thank you for that, and I'll appreciate your answer there.

Mr. Ambassador, there are going to be Afghan parliamentary elections next year. I think it's beyond dispute that the presidential election was riddled with fraud and that the turnout was much lower than expected because of intimidation by the Taliban. What are our lessons learned from the presidential election to help us going forward to the parliamentary election?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, clearly the presidential election that Afghan went through was a very difficult process. There was fraud. There was, in areas of Afghanistan that were challenged by insecurity, there was lower voter turnout. I would emphasize, however, that the rule of law, the rules according to the constitution, remained intact, and for that the Afghan people are proud.

In the early 1990s when there was a change of political power in Kabul, it took place through warlords firing rockets down into the city of Kabul. So the Afghan people are proud that they made it through this process, difficult though it was.

Now, against that, what lessons were learned, Senator? There has to be improvement in the electoral system of Afghanistan. The commission which has the oversight for the running of the election, it needs improvement. It needs help from the international community in that regard.

Second, I think that the Afghans are politically going to have to come together and look at the election cycles that they've established right now. Between this year and the year 2024, every year except one has got elections. They're going to need to look hard at that place of elections.

Then third, there's going to have to be reform and work done for voter registration to get a better handle on who is actually eligible to vote out there. I think that the Afghan parliament and President Karzai's administration over the next several months, they will be looking at this. Right now the parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place in the spring. That will be a very ambitious time line. I know it has security consequences, but it's a major point on the agenda, political agenda, for Afghanistan, and we're talking with the government about this.

Senator WICKER. Is a major point of your political agenda to provide better security against coercion of the voters? And what would be our plans for that?

And let me interject: Were you surprised at the low turnout?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I was, I was, Senator, not on the day of the election. If you had asked me when I first came into Afghanistan on this tour of duty in May of 2009, several months before the election, I would have suggested a much higher voter turnout in eastern and southern Afghanistan. One of the key factors that voter turnout was not high in those areas was insecurity. So as I said earlier in the testimony that I agreed with General McChrystal's security assessment, low voter turnout in areas where there is insecurity, not surprising.

I was surprised, though, to see how far security had trended downward.

Senator WICKER. Is a major agenda item providing better security for voters so they'll have more confidence that they can get back and forth to the polls?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I'd defer to General McChrystal on that, Senator.

Senator WICKER. Is that a major item, General?

General MCCHRISTAL. It absolutely is, Senator.

Senator WICKER. Let me ask this, then. President Karzai in his inauguration speech mentioned his desire to convene a loya jirga. It has been further elaborated on by spokesmen saying that members of the Taliban would be invited to this loya jirga.

Was this an American idea? I understand the President—I understand much of the President's inaugural address was written in consultation with Americans. And is that our view, Mr. Ambassador, that a loya jirga would include members of the Taliban? And when might this occur?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I know that President Karzai has discussed holding a loya jirga. He has articulated that the purpose of the loya jirga would be to gain a consensus among the people, renew their support for the presence of the international community in the way ahead.

With regard to Taliban participation in this, Senator, I don't know. I have not discussed that with President Karzai.

Senator WICKER. Do you have an opinion with regard to whether that would be advisable?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. With regard to political discussions between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, Senator, that's very much a political question for the Afghan government, the administration. The principles that President Karzai has set forth about discussions of anybody rejoining Afghan society, Taliban rejoining Afghan society, the set of principles that he's established—number one, that they would have to renounce their ties to international terrorism, number two, renounce violence; number three, to follow the constitution of the government of Afghanistan—those are entirely consistent with our own views.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Just two quick procedural points. First of all, I understand that the microphones can be left on. So you don't need to switch them on and off each time.

Second, we do expect that we'll have an opportunity at least for a brief second round. I want everyone to know that we expect that opportunity will be present.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen.

General McChrystal, the rules of engagement within Afghan emphasize minimizing civilian casualties. That was a point you made when you took over, and Admiral Malawian made the same point yesterday at Camp Lejeune. That is based, I think—I don't want to be presumptuous, but my understanding is it is based on your experience, your understanding of counterinsurgency warfare, the experience of the Soviets before us; you were not directed to do that by anyone; is that correct?

General MCCHRISTAL. That is correct, Senator. I did before I deployed out watch the situation going on, so I had formed opinions, but got no specific direction.

Senator REED. Very good.

One of the issues here is not only the increase in size of forces, but it's the unity of command and the unity of effort. That stretches across several dimensions—COIN operations, counterterrorism operations, counternarcotic operations, civil-military coordination, operations between NATO and Afghan security forces, operations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, intelligence operations versus tactical operations in the field.

Can you in a few minutes tell—and Ambassador Eikenberry also—what are you doing specifically to address this issue of unity of effort, and how important is it to your success?

General MCCHRISTAL. Senator, it's absolutely critical to our success, unity of effort across the civ-mil and within military operations. What we have done is, as we arrived out, we've done some organizational changes. The standup of the Intermediate Joint Command, General Dave Rodriguez's command, provides a corps-like headquarters over the regional commands that allows him to orchestrate this fight much better than we could have done before or was the habit before.

Additionally, internal to each what we call battle space owner, starting at the regional command level down to typically a brigade combat team, we have moved to put all the elements that operate in that battle space under the control of that single battle space owner.

I'll let Karl talk—I'm sorry—Ambassador Eikenberry talk more about what they've done. But we've also established a civ-mil lashup so that each regional commander has a senior civilian rep that is right next to him all the time. So that gives us unity of effort so that they are literally joined at the hip as we move forward there.

We have worked to bring our—we've changed the structure and focus of our special operating forces so that they come under either the regional commander's focus, to ensure that they are implementing his. What we can't do is have multiple wars being fought. We have to have one overall effort.

There is still a distance to go. There are some national limitations. There are cultural limitations within U.S. military, and there are other steps. But we have made huge progress.

The last point I'd make is, our effort to partner with the Afghans starts at the Ministry of Defense level, the Ministry of Interior, which is much more robust than we did before. I see the ministers almost every day. We have VTCs with them. They're in our VTCs every day. So that we and the Afghans are planning the fight together, executing the fight, talking about the fight afterward together. That goes down at the lower levels and increasingly, as Senator Levin said, the partnering down at the lowest levels, the closer we get that, gets us not only better forces, it gets us unity of effort.

Senator REED. Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, four points in our own efforts on the embassy side to try to achieve unity of effort. First of all, within the government itself, within the embassy. I'd mention as an example of some of these working groups that we have established an agricultural working group. We're very proud of the success that we've had in pulling together the interagency on the civilian side of the government, so that you will not have one agricultural group meeting with USAID, another led by the Department of Agriculture—fully integrated. If you were to go into our rule of law group, you'll find in that same room FBI, DEA, the Department of Justice, State INL, the military.

Stan, General McChrystal, already mentioned the second point about our civ-mil coordination. I mentioned that to Senator McCain. As you get down to outside of Kabul, for the first time I truly believe we've really got it lashed up well. The senior civilian representative concept we have for a military regional commander, not a political adviser but a fully empowered co-equal that has responsibility for all the civilians from all agencies assigned in that sector, and, very importantly, can take the resources assigned and can allocate them so that they're in support of major military efforts.

Third point is with our unity that we have with the international community: difficult, challenging, but still the United Nations mission led by Kai Aida. We work closely with Mr. Aida. He's made good progress there. We have more work to do in that area. And that's important because Afghanistan's going the need international commitment for many more years. So we continue to work hard to ensure that's a success.

Then the fourth and final area, just what General McChrystal had said on the military side. Really, who's the key partner for our unity of effort? It is the Afghan people. So increasingly as we see more competency within Afghan ministries, we will be encouraging the Afghan ministry partners to lead the efforts. We'll go down to their ministry. We'll help them, but they'll be in the lead and we'll be in support of those efforts.

Senator REED. A quick question to follow up, Mr. Ambassador. In terms of the civilian surge, not just in numbers, but in the duration of the service: I think there are some agencies that are giving you or giving this effort 3 months, 4 months, in terms of personal assignments. Is that adequate?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Tours of that length are not. We've made great progress, though, Senator, with support of most of our departments and agencies in really getting that turned around. There's a real commitment there. I'll give you an example. We have something called the major crimes—the Afghans have established a major crimes task force in Afghanistan. It's going to be their FBI. Our FBI has sent a group of mentors to work with them. The initial plan was they'd be, each mentor would be there for several months and rotate out. We talked to Director Mueller directly and said, for an endeavor like this you can't build trust in a couple of months; it's got to be a long-term endeavor. So he's got ten agents on the ground right now in Afghanistan, 1-year tours of duty each. So we're making a lot of progress in that area. We still need to do better, though.

Senator REED. General McChrystal, but you might want to also comment, Ambassador: Even with the most dedicated and talented government in Kabul, Afghani government, the ability to reach out into the provinces is limited. It's limited by the constitution. The governors are appointed by President Karzai. It's limited by the lack of any ability to raise revenues locally. And in the short run you're going to have to essentially fill in the gaps, which seems to be similar to the issue in Iraq with the CERP funding, where military units and their civilian counterparts were using funds to jump-start some of the build activity.

Is that your plan, essentially?

General MCCHRISTAL. Sir, it is. We will seek every chance we can to use the central government's ability to reach down, every chance we can to use existing provincial or district governments. But we'll also help wherever we can. In some cases, just security alone makes it difficult for, for example, a district sub-governor to get out and do the kinds of things that he wants to do or would normally do. So we're going to have to partner with them, and it'll be unique in every place, doing the right answer.

Senator REED. Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I'd agree with what General McChrystal laid out. We are working very hard as well, Senator, with the different programs, with our developmental programs delivered in the civilian side, to make those much more agile and much more flexible, so that, as General McChrystal's forces move with Afghan National Security Forces into a new district and it becomes imperative that on an urgent basis we're able to start delivering economic assistance and try to get jobs created. We've made a lot of progress here in the last 6 months about refining programs, so that, as an example, when General McChrystal's marines went into Nawa District in Helmand Province in the summer, 24 hours later we had a USAID developmental specialist on the ground, several days after that agricultural programs, jobs for work programs, digging of irrigation districts, that was under way.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator LeMieux.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador and General, thank you for being here. Thank you for your public service all these years.

I had the opportunity to visit with you in Afghanistan along with Senator Burr and Senator Whitehouse at the end of October. Since the time of our trip—and perhaps, General McChrystal, you could answer this question first—has the situation improved in terms of our fight against the insurgency, stayed the same, or slid backwards?

General MCCHRISTAL. Senator, I believe it's improved. I'm not going to say dramatically, and I try to always let events be provable. But I absolutely believe it's improved.

Senator LEMIEUX. Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I'd say, Senator, if we take this through the political lens, there's been some very significant improvement. Of course, what's happened since your visit, we made—the second round was decided upon, and then Abdul Abdullah withdrew, President Karzai elected, inauguration. I have to say that when we looked at President Karzai's—listened to his inauguration address, there was a lot of positive things in that about governance and about security.

I think we're seeing more confidence being displayed right now from President Karzai's administration. Actions have to follow the words, but I know that—I heard that Secretary Gates yesterday in his visit, today in his visit to Kabul, in his discussions with President Karzai and the national security team of President Karzai came away with the very good impression that the Afghan leadership has got a sense of determination about them.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you.

General McChrystal, it seems to me with the addition of the 30,000 troops and a goal, at least an aspirational goal, to draw down those troops, at least start to by July of 2011, that this puts a lot of pressure on you and your team. You're going to get these troops starting in January. The troops I guess will not be fully deployed in theater until maybe the summer, and even that might be ambitious. So you have what it seems to me is a year to show real success with the full complement of the troops.

Do you think that that's possible? I mean, would you think that on a scale of one to ten, with ten being very likely and one being not likely at all, that you have a chance for success in that period of time?

General MCCHRISTAL. I believe the chance is very high. I am confident that, although there's pressure on us to move forward, I think that's fine. There's also pressure on our Afghan partners, because they realize we need to move forward, and that's good. And I think there's going to be a tremendous amount of pressure on the enemy. Because of the forces already on the ground and then the changes we've made and this additional 30,000, I think we're going to be able to make very, very significant progress.

Senator LEMIEUX. Ambassador, do you think that the Afghan government senses the pressure of this time line and that they are fully engaged to make this a successful period for us?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, I do. Success for all of us in Afghanistan, of course, is the point when we reach—when the government of Afghanistan is able to provide for the security of its own people. There's a bit of ambivalence right now on the Afghan leaders and their people, and it's understandable. On the one hand,

they do want to stand up and have full control of their sovereignty. That was reflected in President Karzai's inauguration address, where he said within 5 years over the course of his second term he wants Afghanistan's security forces to be in the lead responsible for security nationwide.

Against that, given the history of modern Afghanistan, given the uncertainty of the neighborhood that they live in, there's a nervousness about losing the presence of NATO ISAF and the Americans. So there's the tension. I believe, as General does, that this July 2011 date is a very good forcing function to get the Afghan leadership to stand up, to have a hard target for their army and police to move to.

President Karzai's initial reaction to it was positive. He said: We need that kind of pressure; we want to stand up. But at the same time, as General McChrystal has said, we're going to have to be cognizant of Afghanistan's long-term needs for security. So, as President Karzai said in his inauguration address, the idea of having a strategic partnership with the United States or refining that is something that I think is going to be essential as we move forward and define what that long-term relationship with Afghanistan is about.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you.

General, the American people still want us to capture and kill Osama bin Laden. It occurs to me that, in terms of your warfighting and trying to break the will of our enemy, that that would be an important strategic military goal as well. Are we still about the business of trying to capture and kill him? Recently Secretary Gates said that we haven't had good intelligence on his whereabouts in years. Can you discuss with us what part of the mission capturing and killing Osama bin Laden is for you right now?

General MCCRYSTAL. Senator, I am responsible as commander of ISAF for inside Afghanistan. Were Osama bin Laden to come in there, of course that would become a huge priority for all of our forces. If he is not inside, it's outside of my mandate right now. I do believe it's very important.

Senator LEMIEUX. Ambassador, can you speak to that at all?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. The exact same perspective, Senator.

Senator LEMIEUX. The last thing I'd like to discuss with you is Pakistan. Recently the President said that we cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists, and this might be where Osama bin Laden is, whose location is known and whose intentions are clear. The New York Times has reported that the administration has said in private that if the Pakistani leaders will not allow us to follow these insurgents and fight them, that we will continue to do so even without their permission.

What kind of cooperation are you getting from Pakistan and do you believe that they are going to be willing and good partners as we fight this cross-border battle?

General MCCRYSTAL. My current partnership with the Pakistani military, led by a personal relationship I have with General Kiyani, is very good and it's getting better all the time. They face, unlike a few years ago, they now face a very significant internal insurgency from the TTP or what we call the Pakistani Taliban. I

believe that as they focus on that more, our shared strategic interests become closer in alignment, both ours the U.S. and Pakistan, but also Afghanistan's and Pakistan's, because neither can achieve security and stability without success on the other side of the border.

I think that helps pull us into alignment. Pakistan does have sovereign strategic interests, which I respect, and I think it's important that what we as a Nation do is recognize those and, just like we do with Afghanistan, reinforce that long-term partnership.

Senator LEMIEUX. Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, you know that a major shift that the administration made when it announced the strategy in March was to try to pull together the regional aspects of security in central and south Asia, so not looking just at Afghanistan or Pakistan in isolation, but looking at the two together. So with the naming of the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, and his frequent partnership on the military side with General Dave Petraeus, there is a full-time effort being made.

I would also say that when you talk about then the embassy, our embassy in Islamabad, Ambassador Anne Patterson, our embassy in Kabul, that we do work together under Ambassador Holbrooke's direction to try to find ways to facilitate cooperation beyond the military and security domain between Afghanistan and Pakistan—political dialogues that we try to encourage and more promising in the area of economic cooperation, trying to help both sides reach a transit trade agreement to improve trade, working with both sides to help improve customs posts along the frontier. Some of those, some of those projects have led to positive results. There's not going to be any real significant breakthroughs there, but we do have a comprehensive approach.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you. Again, thank you both for your service.

Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator LeMieux.

Senator Akaka.

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

I want to say welcome, add my welcome to Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal, and to thank you each for your extraordinary and dedicated service to our country.

I also want to thank all the men and women under your leadership for their sacrifices. As we discuss Afghanistan policy today, I ask that we keep our military and civilians in mind and also in our prayers as they stand in harm's way.

Ambassador Eikenberry, much has been said and written about the problems with the Afghan government. One of them is corruption, of course. Clearly we must have a reliable Afghan government to partner with in pursuing our new strategy. Without question, the goal of unity of effort I think has really set a new spirit in Afghanistan and has brought many parts of our government to bear on what we need to do.

You also mentioned about improving the key ministries in order to build legitimacy in the Afghan government. Ambassador, you have a first-hand view of the ministries and local governments in

Afghanistan. What is your view of how the government is doing today? You've touched on this?

Do you want to go deeper into it as to what we need to do to bring an improvement about?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Well, Senator, I'd start and say that, again having gone through a very difficult election process, President Karzai did emerge as the winner and he is our partner now as the leader of Afghanistan. I give you one area where I think we're doing reasonably well and I'm optimistic, another area where I think we can expect to see improvements; the third area will be the most difficult.

First of all, at the national level. You've talked about some of the ministries of Afghanistan. We're focusing our efforts on the key ministries, the security sector, the financial sector of course, key ministries that deliver important services, health and education; and finally, those ministries which are going to be very important to Afghanistan for the generation of income for its people—agriculture, mining potentially, energy, water management, and so forth.

Those ministries have had a lot of progress over the last several years. We expect President Karzai over the next several days will announce his new cabinet. We're cautiously optimistic we're going to get generally good ministers named there. And we'll work closely with those important ministries with good leaders. We think we've got good programs aligned here to see further success in capacity-building.

The next area is in the rule of law and justice. There a lot of work needs to be done, but we do have some success that we're building upon and we do have a commitment from President Karzai in his inauguration speech that he's going to tackle head-on the issue of corruption.

It's not going to be an easy fight at all and indeed help is needed from the international community, help for programs. But also the international community has to change its way over time of how we dispense aid. A lot of money that goes into Afghanistan right now goes outside of the government of Afghanistan. We'll work with the Afghan government. I think our government's setting a very good example for the international community to make improvements in that area.

The third area is at the sub-national level, and this, Senators, is the most difficult area, about how do you reach out into a district of Afghanistan, if you're a minister sitting in Kabul, and provide health services in insecure districts of Afghanistan right now that General McChrystal's forces and Afghan National Security Forces are moving into and trying to push the Taliban back. That's the area that is the most problematic. We've got good work going on in that area. We have some good aid programs, but this is the one we're going to have to lean into very heavily with our Afghan partners to try to figure this out.

We talk about clear, hold, build, and transfer. That transfer piece out in that far district, that's the one that's the most problematic for us.

Senator AKAKA. You mentioned these different departments that we are sending there to help the Afghan government. One that you

alluded to but didn't mention, I guess, is Commerce and the possible development of businesses within these districts, and also the government level as well.

General McChrystal, since the release of your assessment of the region there has been a healthy debate over the number of troops being deployed to Afghanistan. However, I feel we should not focus solely on the number of troops alone. General, ignoring the total number of troops proposed, my question has to do with equipment and with personnel. Are we sending the right personnel there, with the right equipment in place, to achieve the goals that we have in those regions?

As you mentioned, the ultimate goal is the capture of al Qaeda. You probably know what you need in terms of personnel and equipment. So my question to you is, do we have the right equipment and personnel to achieve our goals in the region?

General MCCHRISTAL. Sir, the short answer is we do, but the reality is the requirement keeps changing, so we have to keep on it. We've made extraordinary improvements in things like intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment. In many cases people think of Predators, but it's a really wide array of that, differing capabilities, to include people. That's one that keeps growing and we've done a tremendous effort at continuing to grow, but it will need to continue.

MRAP vehicles, things to protect our forces; the engineer equipment to help us find and dispose of improvised explosive devices. So the answer is I think we're doing an extraordinary job across our government providing it, but I think it's something we've got to watch constantly as this effort evolves in nature and scope.

One area I would—that I never cease to talk about, we are getting great people out there. As Ambassador Eikenberry mentioned, tour length is something I continue to encourage all the participants, to include our coalition partners, not to go with very short tours because you lose continuity and language training. This is one where I would tell you, we across Defense Department can do better and must do better. We don't have enough people who speak Dari, Pashtu, Urdu, and we are not producing them fast enough.

There is a ramp-up. Yesterday I got to meet with about 160 people that—under Chairman Malawian's direction we've created the Afghan Hands Program and I got to talk to them. They're midway through training, language training and cultural training in preparation to going the key jobs. But that's got to be a start. We've got to produce people who are culturally aware, linguistically armed to be effective, and then have enough time in theater to be effective.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Akaka.

Senator SESSIONS.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you both for your service to your country. I've been honored to visit you in the field and I appreciate that work and the good briefings we've gotten and the professionalism you've shown.

At the Foreign Relations Committee not too long ago, a Brookings individual testified that he wasn't sure whether we should increase troops or not, but no military in the world was better prepared than ours to be successful if given that challenge. I think

that's very, very true. I couldn't be more proud of what you and your soldiers and sailors, airmen, marines, and guardsmen have done.

General McChrystal, I read your assessment. I thought it was highly sophisticated and a nuanced analysis of the challenges that we face. Some people think the military never talks about civilian issues and economics and security and those kind of things, but you are looking at it comprehensively. No issue I think raised by members of Congress weren't at least addressed in your analysis of the challenges that we face.

I do not like that we've had to commit more troops to Afghanistan. I had hoped that we could be able to bring down those troops. I think the Commander-in-Chief has analyzed this and come up with a proposal that I intend to support. You say you can make it work. It sounds like to me that it can be made to work consistent with my analysis of the events, and I intend to be supportive of it, and certainly look forward to the hope that we will be able to draw down our troops and turn over the government to the local people.

Twice I've talked, or maybe three times, with Secretary Gates about the dangers of too great expectations about Afghanistan. They've got historical challenges, regional history; extremely remote, extremely poor; and not a history of a strong national government. So I'd like to pursue this with you a bit.

Secretary Gates recently indicated in his prepared statement for his appearance, I guess it was last week, that he would want to engage the communities in Afghanistan, to enlist more local security forces to protect their own territories. I heard former National Security Adviser Brzezinski on television a week or so ago talk about the need for local militias, and I think I knew what he meant by that. Former President Musharraf of Pakistan in a Wall Street Journal op-ed a few weeks ago reminded us that for centuries Afghans have been governed loosely through a social compact of sorts between all ethnic groups, but under a sovereign king or a sovereign central authority.

Now, Ambassador Eikenberry, your statement made me a bit nervous. In your written statement you said that "Some might argue that we are reaching too high, that Afghanistan has rarely in its history had a central government capable of carrying out these tasks, that to expect a coherent state to now emerge is unrealistic and a waste of resources. I disagree with that argument on several levels."

I also believe that one of the breakthroughs in Iraq was in Anbar, al-Anbar, when the marines made a compact with tribal leaders and basically funded those leaders to use their young men to oust al Qaeda, who they did not like and wanted to see ousted. To my knowledge, they weren't all sent off to Baghdad to be trained. They were loyal to their local leaders. They shared a common goal with us.

I know there's tension between creating militias not loyal to the central government. I know there's dangers in that. But it seems to me we've got to take some risks and in some of these areas that are remote, that have good and decent leaders, that if we can just support them we could perhaps be able to not have to commit our own troops there.

So I'll ask both of you: Do we have this right? Are we over-committed to a centralized authority? Or are we willing to look sufficiently at local militias and national guard areas?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, I think we are getting it right. Like you said, Afghanistan has a unique sensitivity to militias, even more so than Iraq did, because the history after the civil war that began in the period with the departure of the Soviets saw the rise in these militias that were predatory and they were under warlords, and they're just absolutely feared and hated today. But they also have a very strong local security tradition as well.

What we're trying to do, and we're working in a number of areas with something called a community defense initiative to enable villages and small elements of tribes to deny their area to insurgent access. What that means is we'll support them and they provide local security. We don't want to create militias that then move around the battlefield and become a problem. There's a balance.

There is still a need in my opinion for a very credible Afghan national army because it helps bind the Nation together. As we found in Iraq, it's also a source of pride there as well. So I think the combination of the two, keeping a very close eye on the sensitivity. Every time I talk to Afghans about the local security initiatives, I will get: Yes, but be very careful; yes, but make sure you don't arm the wrong group that will do it. So I think we need to do it, but with caution.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Eikenberry?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, I agree with General McChrystal. There is a balance here. It's the absence of a coherent state of Afghanistan that paved the way for the rise of the Taliban and then facilitated the entry of al-Qaeda. So you can't ignore the need for a central government of Afghanistan with the ability to provide for the security of its people and deliver sets of basic services.

Senator AKAKA. Are you committed—do you see as your vision that there has to be very strong control from the capital, from Kabul, to each one of the local security forces that might exist?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. No, I think I would agree with General McChrystal that it's essential that the government of Afghanistan have a capable army that is able to reach throughout the country. It has to have control over its police forces. Then what's that right balance of minimum service provision from the government of Afghanistan that has to flow through the country in the area of health care, education, I think that trying to get that proper balance right is essential.

Senator SESSIONS. I hope so.

My time is up, but I would say, Ambassador Eikenberry, that the State Department is challenged in fulfilling its responsibility, at least its paper responsibilities, in Afghanistan. We are well aware that the PRTs are dominated by the military because you don't have people there. Secretary Clinton said last week, I believe, that there are about 900 civilian State Department people in the country, 900 plus. That would be about 1 percent of our total.

So if the State Department could fulfil a greater role, I would be supportive of it. But so far we're not seeing the numbers I think that justify confidence that you're going to get there.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Do I have a moment to respond, Senator?

Senator SESSIONS. Yes.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, the civilian uplift that we've had over the last year is most impressive. I've had a 35-year military career and I have gained over this past year an extraordinary respect for how the civilian elements in our government have responded to the requirements of Afghanistan. We've had a threefold increase of civilian personnel assigned to our embassy and throughout Afghanistan, as I said in my opening statement, we'll soon reach that point over a 12-month period of time, a sixfold increase of who we have out in the field.

Senator, it's not the number of people. Given that the numbers are impressive, but it's not the numbers of people ultimately that matter. An example: Right now in Helmand Province we have five agricultural experts who in turn are mobilizing a 500-man Afghan agricultural delivery capability that's reaching 14,000 farmers. We have in the department—we have in the Ministry of Agriculture several advisers and their expertise is at the level that they're able to over time really help build a capable Ministry of Agriculture.

So it's not necessarily the number of people; it's what those people can do. If we're talking about military units, military units—the military deploys platoons, companies, battalions. On the civilian side, we deploy individuals. Every individual is unique, and I'm very proud of the fact that over this past year we've tripled our presence on the ground. We intend to keep going.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, thank you. It's still a small number.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to begin by saying I share a number of the concerns that Senator Sessions just raised with respect to this potential contradiction between the cultural and political history of Afghanistan and what we are attempting to do in this policy.

Ambassador Eikenberry, I'd like to start by saying I read your written statement in full. I really appreciate its frankness. I think it is important for us to set out with an awareness of the limitations that we have, which is something that you mentioned. I want to come back to that in a minute.

Let me really begin here by saying I supported strongly this evaluation process, this lengthy evaluation process. I think it was very important for us to get the best minds of our government involved in it.

In that respect, General McChrystal, I'm going to give you an opportunity here to straighten the record on something a little bit along the lines of what I think Senator Lieberman posed to the Ambassador. This process took several months. In early September the Senate Majority Leader wrote a letter to Secretary Gates asking for an update on the evaluation. Secretary Gates wrote back: "Until the President makes his decision on the way forward in Afghanistan, it would be inappropriate for me or our military commanders to openly discuss the advice being provided or the nature of the discussions being carried out."

That was right about the time that you popped up on 60 Minutes with a rather lengthy interview. When people were actually in the White House discussing options, you were seen giving a speech in London, and there are a number of people who believe that this was detrimental and even divisive as this process moved forward.

So can you explain to us your view on how those actions were compatible with the policy outlined by the Secretary of Defense?

General MCCHRISTAL. Yes, Senator. The 60 Minutes interview was scheduled before I deployed and filmed in July, so it was before this process and before that guidance. So there was no intent or connection with that.

The discussion in London which you're referring to, there was no intent on my part to influence or in any way negatively impact the decisionmaking process. I regret if there's any impression that it did, but there was absolutely no intent for that.

Senator WEBB. You are aware that it was the same day that people were meeting in the White House to discuss the way forward?

General MCCHRISTAL. I was not aware of that at the time.

Senator WEBB. Ambassador, I would like to ask you two questions. The first: In your testimony you are talking about the need—excuse me, I want to get to the page here—“We need to address our efforts to promote governance at the provincial and district levels,” which I totally agree with. My question for you is, do you believe this is achievable under the current constitutional system that Afghanistan has or would you prefer to see another system of government that devolves power in a way that would make this more compatible with the history and culture of Afghanistan?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I think the limiting factor right now is not the framework of the constitution; the limiting factor that exists, Senator, is just the difficulties that the government of Afghanistan has after 30 years of war trying to develop the necessary organizational capacities to deliver services. They're challenged very much in terms of the development of human capital.

Senator WEBB. So it's your view that this is not a result of the present constitutional system, but rather just of governance, given the interruptions in the structure that has been in place?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. That would be my view. I know that the Afghan leadership right now, starting with President Karzai, is looking at the possibility of reforms that are perfectly within the constitution. A very important one is the idea of taking more financial resources and allocating that to a provincial governor, allocating that to a district governor. Right now they're really starved for funds.

There is additional discussions going on about what should be the right mix of electoral bodies and representative bodies at the sub-national level. But again, the way the constitution exists today I don't see that as a limiting factor. But I do see very significant challenges in developing governmental and economic livelihood at some of the most challenged districts in Afghanistan.

Senator WEBB. Thank you.

I would like to pose another question for you that I think you are perhaps uniquely qualified to address, given your experience on many different levels with China culturally, historically, and also governmentally. The Chinese government was known to be on a

very good relationship with the Taliban government prior to our driving it out. There are a number of reports about Chinese economic projects in Afghanistan right now. Could you just give us a summation of the nature of the relationship between China and Afghanistan and in terms of China cooperating with us in the program that you're putting forward right now?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I think that clearly China sees a stable Afghanistan as in their own security interests. The Chinese government has its own concerns with international terrorist groups that are known to operate in the border regions and inside of Pakistan, that have an impact on Chinese internal security. The Chinese have made very significant investments inside of Afghanistan. They have one major investment right now, a billion dollar investment in a copper mine in Logar Province, and they're looking at potential additional investments in other of the mining sectors of Afghanistan.

Senator WEBB. I'm aware of that project. It's an interesting one to follow.

Are you—are they cooperating with us on a government to government level with respect to what we're attempting to do here?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. We have an active dialogue with the Chinese government, as we do with many others, in terms of the overall development strategy and political strategy in Afghanistan.

Senator WEBB. So are they proactively cooperating with the approach that we're taking? That's the question. Are you aware?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. They have their—they have their economic interests, which they have been—which they've put investments into in Afghanistan—

Senator WEBB. My time is up, but just as a question of fact has there been a proactive announcement of any sort from China with respect to the policy that we're attempting to put into place?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. We have a good policy dialogue with the Chinese over Afghanistan—

Senator WEBB. Has there been a statement, yes or no, in terms of supporting what we're doing?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I would not say that their level of engagement in Afghanistan is on the level in terms of our—

Senator WEBB. Just answer, if you would, please. Has there been a statement to your knowledge from the Chinese government that they support what we are attempting to do?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I'm not aware of policy—

Senator WEBB. Thank you.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY.—not aware of policy statements from the Chinese.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Chambliss.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, it's good to see you in this part of the world. Ambassador Eikenberry, thanks for your hospitality. General McChrystal, thanks for Thanksgiving dinner. We enjoyed visiting with 68,000 of your and my closest friends. It was a great day, and I want to second what you said about the morale of your troops. It's unbelievable that, in spite of the difficulties that we've had in Afghanistan,

are continuing to have and will have, the morale over there is spectacular. I think a lot of that is attributable to leadership.

General McChrystal, as you know, we had the opportunity to meet with some of your team that you put in place. First of all, let me just ask you. I know a lot of these folks have been hand-picked by you. Have you got your team in place? I don't expect you to discuss individuals or specifics, but is your team in place there now? Have you got what you want?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, I do. I've been extraordinarily well supported, not only by the leaders and organizations who provided me the people, but by the families who've given them up for this period.

Senator CHAMBLISS. And resource-wise, of course we know you're going to have to plus up as you bring additional troops, but where are you from the standpoint of having the equipment that you need to carry out your mission?

General MCCHRYSAL. With the additional forces that have been approved, we're going to have to work through getting additional MRAPs. We're going to continue to increase our intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment, and some other things. But it is generally on track, Senator.

Senator CHAMBLISS. I want you to walk through with us this issue of building up of the Afghan troops, both the military and the security police, because I went back and read your report again and also read your testimony from today and heard what you've had to say, and obviously the critical point that we can seriously think about turning that country over to the Afghan people from the standpoint of security—not governance, but from the standpoint of security—is the point in time when the military as well as the security police are trained to the point to be able to protect the citizens of Afghanistan.

In your report you indicated that at that point in time we had about 94,000 Afghan military personnel trained. Is that still in the range of where we are?

General MCCHRYSAL. Yes, Senator.

Senator CHAMBLISS. You indicated that we had about 84,000 Afghan National Police trained. Again, is that in the range of where we are?

General MCCHRYSAL. We're a little higher on the police now. It's in the low 90s.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Now, of those numbers, General, what percentage of that can we really count on? What's the hard-core number that you can say, go hold and secure X province or whatever?

General MCCHRYSAL. For the Afghan army, we work with a calculus of about 77 percent present for duty. There are some not available in training, some that in fact are not available because they've gone AWOL and different challenges. But it's pretty good. So a significant percentage of that 93 or 94,000 we can put out on actual operations.

On the Afghanistan National Police, it's less, and that is because the level of training and the commitment that we've had over time is much newer and much more immature. So while there may be most of the 92 or 93,000 Afghan National Police currently on the payroll out in their jobs, the ones that I would say are effective is

smaller than that. They have a drug problem, they have a few other things.

Senator CHAMBLISS. On the military side, are the Taliban paying their soldiers more than we're paying Afghan troops?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, there's no set pay scale, but by our intelligence they are paying them the equivalent of about 300 U.S. dollars a month, and that is higher than we are paying Afghan army or police.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Do we intend to ratchet that pay up so that we can at least compete financially with the Taliban?

General MCCHRYSTAL. In coordination with the government of Afghanistan, we just almost doubled Afghan army and police training. It's at parity now. It's less than \$300 a month, but it's much closer.

Senator CHAMBLISS. I'd like for you to go through some benchmarks relative to these training numbers. My understanding is you eventually want to get to 240,000 military, 160,000 police. You indicated to Senator McCain that you're still on the time line of 2013 of accomplishing those numbers. But looking at where we are today and knowing that in 2010, the end of 2010, you're going to assess the situation on the ground, the biggest part of that assessment is going to be the number of military and security police that you have available to be assigned to different areas to start transitioning to them.

What do you expect to have trained by the end of 2010 from both the military and security police standpoint?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, for the Afghan army our goal is 134,000 soldiers in the force trained, all have gone through initial entry training, and through partnering we expect to be able to raise the effectiveness of each of their force's individuals and organizations. But about 134,000. Of that, obviously less are actually in units in the field, but a good significant percentage would be.

Sir, of the police, I expect to have us get over 100,000. They are currently authorized 98,000. Expect to get approval to increase that to the low 100, 110,000 range. I think the biggest progress we can make in police, though, won't be in aggregate numbers. It will be in improving their leadership, improving their levels of training.

We were only partnering with about 20 percent of the police as of this summer. We are increasing that dramatically with the forces that the President approved in March, and we will increase that significantly again with these additional forces that have come forward.

Senator CHAMBLISS. In your report to the President on August 30, you indicated by October of 2010 you wanted to get to that 134,000. So the additional troops that are being sent are not going to plus up that number in your mind relative to the number of military folks you can have trained?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, we don't believe that we can speed it up any faster than the 134,000 about a year from now, October of 2010. But we are going to put a significant portion of the force that the President just authorized into both the training base, where they get initial training, and then the rest of the force will essentially all be partnering.

Senator CHAMBLISS. One of the areas where you're going to send some of this 30,000 additional troops is down into Helmand, where you're obviously having a very tough time, a very tough fight down there, where the Marines deployed some additional marines recently. Let's assume that you have great success there. Assume you have great success against the Haqqani network over in RC-East. General, if you have that success and they get to the border and they cross the border into Pakistan, what do we have to have from the Pakistan military on the other side of that border to really accomplish our mission and meet the challenge that you've laid out there?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, what I'm seeking the government of Pakistan to do is essentially be intolerant of the Haqqani network. The Haqqanis are Afghans. They want a sphere of influence from the Khost bowl all the way up into Kabul. That's their aspiration. They live in northern Waziristan, in the Miram Shah area, and they have a sphere of influence there. They have had historic relations with al Qaeda and now with the TTP.

What I am hopeful that the Pakistani government will do is be intolerant of the existence of the Haqqani network inside Pakistan. If they will prosecute that policy, I believe inside Afghanistan we can deal with the remainder of the Haqqani network.

Senator CHAMBLISS. And Helmand?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, in Helmand—one point I'd want to make. You're right, the marines and our British partners and the Danes and others—it's a team effort down there—we're not reinforcing failure; we're reinforcing success down there. We're expanding the areas. The additional forces are going to let us expand so that we have contiguous security zones.

There's a significant area that I want to get at as soon as we get the first marine forces in and we're going to do that, and that's going to send not only a powerful operational pulse to us, but it's going to send a powerful communications network or message to not only the narcotraffickers, but to the Taliban.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Chambliss.

Senator McCaskill.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service to our country. I know this is—while I think the President made the best choice, I think we have to remember that he made the best choice among a lot of bad choices.

I would like to speak a little bit about contracting as it relates to the Afghans that are being hired. Following up a little bit on Senator Chambliss's line of questioning, I know the Joint Contracting Command has issued directives to some contractors, especially on security personnel, that at least half of the contracting force must be from the area, not just Afghans but Afghans in the immediate vicinity of the bases that we're hiring them to perform security on.

I know that for the other civilian contractors we're running at a very, very high percentage of Afghans. It is a marked and much different situation than we had in Iraq. Now, it's my understanding that President Karzai has expressed frustration with this because these contractors are paying more than the military police and the

army. So it is even worse than us competing against the Taliban; we're competing against ourselves since, as you have clearly stated, the most important part of this mission is to add to the police and the army.

So how are we going to fix this problem?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, two points. What you're raising is very important. It's very important. First of all, President Karzai in his inauguration speech said that he would like to move forward and over the next several years take these various contracting companies, foreign contracting, private security companies, and move those under a more formal licensing from the government of Afghanistan. We fully support that. It will be difficult to try to agree upon the standards, but we see examples where it can work and we think that's the direction that we should be going.

That's very consistent with the idea over the next several years about Afghanistan taking further steps to really reclaim its full sovereignty, getting its army out front, its police out front. Private security contractors is another issue.

Second, with regard to our own embassy policies, we're already working very hard to, wherever we can, to try to take any kind of security contract group that is expatriate and we're trying to move that in the direction now where there's increasing numbers of Afghans, beginning with the strategic detachment for our United States embassy.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, you haven't addressed the problem, though. I mean, I'm somebody, I'm an Afghan, and I am toying with whether or not I want to continue to be a hanger-on with the Taliban or I want to join the good side. And I look and I can go and get trained as a police officer, or I can get hired—I have a little bit of English, just a little bit—or I can get hired for more money watching an American base.

Well, that's not hard. I go for the more money watching the American base, or even a more extreme example, which is even more frustrating, I can peel potatoes in the mess and make more money than taking up arms on behalf of my country.

So it's almost like we're working—I understand that this was great in theory, but in executing this policy to use Afghans aren't we denying ourselves success in our own mission?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. When I talked about the move towards Afghan licensing of security companies, that would address—I didn't explain that, Senator. That would be a move to try to address what you're getting at then, pay structures that are inconsistent with the national security—

Senator MCCASKILL. What about on our other kind of contracts? What about the LOGCAP contract and all the people that are being hired in terms of moving supplies and food and all of those services? How are we addressing this pay disparity, that they're making more from us than they could make by joining forces with the Afghan government?

General MCCRYSTAL. You've hit something that's very, very important, and I bring it back to counterinsurgency and unity of effort. Counterinsurgency is a complex system. Every time you change one thing, it has intended and unintended effects somewhere else.

Senator MCCASKILL. Right.

General MCCHRYSTAL. What we have done since 2001 is come in with all good intentions, and someone is given a requirement to do something like build a school. The quickest and most efficient way to do that particular task may be to hire people from outside Afghanistan. It may be to pay a higher wage because you can get it done faster. But the unintended consequences are that people who would be school teachers or people who would be soldiers pick up and move into something that is not effective or efficient for the Nation for the long haul.

What has happened in Afghanistan is a number of things are now out of balance. We have doctors and educated people doing things because they could make money, usually for the international community, but they're not taking their rightful place in the economic system overall.

Senator MCCASKILL. Right.

General MCCHRYSTAL. This is where we've got to improve unity of effort, because when you aren't unified decisions are made that seem to make sense, but the larger picture—but it's very complex, because it's not just U.S. military, it's not just USG; it's international community and then in some cases just straight business interests.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, I hope that you get with the Joint Contracting Command and discuss this, because I think I hate it that we could be working against ourselves on this. I get it that it was a good idea in isolation, but, as you said, it's like a lot of other things, there's always unintended consequences and I think we need to be realistic about the unintended consequences of this policy.

On CERP funds, when I first came to this committee it was explained to me kind of this was walking-around money for people on the ground to help. I remember General Petraeus explaining it to me, it would be like somebody realizing if they helped fix a storefront in Baghdad that could do more to stabilize that neighborhood than many other things we could be doing, and for them to be able to do that quickly and efficiently is great.

What has happened in Afghanistan with the \$1.6 billion we've spent there, now 67 percent of that money is being spent on projects that are bigger than a half a million dollars. I mean, we are doing big stuff. I'm very worried that we don't have a singular database between AID and the military on these projects. I'm worried that the training for CERP was about committing funds, but not about monitoring or oversight of these large projects.

Who is in the command, General, who is the person that signs off on sometimes multimillion dollar projects that are much bigger than fixing a window on a storefront, or much bigger than what I believe CERP was originally intended to do?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Inside my command now, it goes by levels of spending. I sign some. Others have to go to General Petraeus for approval. But I absolutely agree that there is a need for walking-around money kind of CERP, and then there is a need for larger projects that particularly enable COIN.

I bring up roads. Sometimes people ask me, how can you build a road with CERP? In fact, sometimes building a road is the best

counterinsurgency thing we can do. I'm pretty proud of where we've gone. Ambassador Eikenberry and my teams have pulled together the review of all the money that's spent, USAID and CERP, because it's looked at together now. We don't spend CERP money without their team on it, and we're allowed to be part of the USAID part.

It's not perfect, Senator. I'm not going to kid you.

But I think we have come a long way and understand the importance of targeting that money effectively.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, I think that's great. I'm going to continue to keep a very close eye on that, because I think there's going to be some problems if you don't stay joined at the hip on this particularly. I don't think that—I get the insurgency strategy, but I don't think the military was ever envisioned training people to oversee large construction projects. That was why AID kind of got its mission. So I want to be careful that we don't drift too far away, especially if you guys are working together.

I hope you're handing off to AID where appropriate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCaskill.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service. When our colleagues go over to visit, I would just make a recommendation to committee members. If you get a chance, go to the Bagram Confinement Facility. General McChrystal, you have done a great job. That is a—I wish we had jails like that in South Carolina. I mean, it really is a very impressive facility, and I want to commend you and your staff and the embassy, working together, to come up with a new detainee policy that I think will help the war effort. You've done a good job there.

The narcotics court, where we're doing some of the high-profile narcotics cases, well-vetted judges, secure environment. Obviously, we need to expand that into the corruption area, but those are two facilities I think where you can see some real success. So I want to commend you both for that.

Now, to make sure I understand the way forward, because it's been pretty difficult, quite frankly, to figure out what the rules are going forward, but I think I have a better understanding today. July 2011, it is my understanding that we're going to begin withdrawing troops on that date, according to President Obama. The only question is how many and how fast. Is that right, General McChrystal?

General MCCHRYSAL. That's my understanding, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. So let it be said that the policy going forward is that in July 2011 somebody in Afghanistan is coming—if it's just one guy, somebody's coming home, right?

General MCCHRYSAL. That's correct.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. On a scale of one to ten, failure in Afghanistan, a failed state, what would that mean to our national security, one being inconsequential, ten being catastrophic?

General MCCHRYSAL. I believe it would be a nine or ten, not just because I believe al Qaeda would move back in, but also be-

cause I believe regional instability as it would spill over into Pakistan and other areas would be absolutely negative to our interests.

Senator GRAHAM. Ambassador Eikenberry, what would you say to that question?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I concur with General McChrystal's assessment.

Senator GRAHAM. How many Taliban are there, generally speaking? I know you don't have exact numbers.

General MCCHRYSAL. Our estimate right now is between 24 and 27,000 full-time fighters, with some people obviously part-time.

Senator GRAHAM. How much of the country do they have significant influence over?

General MCCHRYSAL. They affect people's lives significantly in much of the south—Kandahar, Helmand, Gosni, Zabul, up to Kabul. They do so in significant parts of RC-East, and then in patches of north and west—Kanduz, Baklan, a little bit in the Balkh area, out in Bagdiz and out in Ferra. In the north, it doesn't change the pattern of life significantly for the average Afghan who lives up there, except in selected areas.

In the south, because of their ability to impact things like the Ring Road and commerce, it is a significant impact on everything, the way everybody lives.

Senator GRAHAM. Is every Taliban a Pashtun? Is every Taliban a Pashtun?

General MCCHRYSAL. The vast majority, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. So that's one reason that's why they're a problem, because that's where they live.

Now, how big is their air force? They don't have one. I don't mean to be cute. They don't have an air force. They don't have a navy. Their biggest weapons system would be what?

General MCCHRYSAL. They have rockets, ground-launched rockets, 122s, things like that.

Senator GRAHAM. How have they been able to accomplish what they've been able to accomplish with thousands of coalition forces, 90-something thousand Afghan army folks, 90,000 Afghan police? How have they been able to come back so strong?

General MCCHRYSAL. Several reasons, I believe. The first is there weren't that many coalition forces or Afghan security forces.

Senator GRAHAM. That's a good point. If you had to rate the reasons in terms of the majority, would it be lack of security forces on our part?

General MCCHRYSAL. I would put that right with weakness in governance at the local level in Afghanistan. The two together, weakness in security forces and inadequate governance, opened the door for them to come in.

Senator GRAHAM. Why haven't previous commanders asked for more troops if it was that obvious?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, I haven't asked commanders. I know there were some previous requests tabled.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, at the end of the day what part of the lack of governance has led—is it at least an equal contributing factor to them coming back, a lack of the Afghan government to deliver basic services?

General MCCHRYSAL. I believe that it is.

Senator GRAHAM. And one of the reasons they've been able to seize power and influence is they can provide services the Afghan government is unable to provide, like resolving legal disputes; is that true?

General MCCHRYSTAL. That's correct.

Senator GRAHAM. So in the next 18 months, to roll them back we're going to put combat power in that we've never had, right? And we're going to do the governance piece differently than we've ever done; right, Ambassador Eikenberry?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. We're going to make efforts, yes, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. On the legal system front, there are less than 500 lawyers in all of Afghanistan as I understand it. Is 18 months realistic for us to basically recapture lost momentum in the area of governance and security, knowing that at the end of the 18 months we're going to be withdrawing no matter what?

General MCCHRYSTAL. I think when you look, I think we can reverse momentum, I absolutely do. I think the most important thing is much of what happens in an area determines who secures that area. If we secure that area and then we can provide the opportunity for the government of Afghanistan, with assistance, to start to build those nascent legal capacities and what-not, I think that is much of it.

What has happened is a vacuum of security and a vacuum of governance together.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, sir. That vacuum is being filled in different forms throughout the country.

Do you feel totally comfortable with the idea that the enemy now knows that we're going to be withdrawing, but they don't know at what pace; that that's not going to compromise your ability to be successful?

General MCCHRYSTAL. I think more importantly, if we carefully articulate and strongly articulate the concept of a strategic partnership over the long haul, that's a much more powerful idea. In the short term, we have a tremendous additional capability that's being fielded in addition to what we're already using, as you saw when you were out. Then the idea of a strategic partnership, in my view that takes the strategic horizon away from the insurgents.

Senator GRAHAM. Let's go down on some of the constraints that both of you will be working under. I want the American public to know the job—the hand you've been dealt and the assignments available to you. Number one, no matter how many Afghan army folks are on the payroll or numbers on a piece of paper, we're only using 150 in this new operation. So I think that says a lot about the state of the army.

Another rule you've got to operate under is the 96-hour rule. As I understand the policy, ISAF forces have to turn over a detainee within 96 hours of capture to the Afghan government, and all they can do in field interrogation is basically ask them basic questions. Is that policy going to be in effect as we move forward?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, we're working through that policy, how it will affect U.S. forces as we try to move additional forces under ISAF. As you know, I'm working with General Petraeus on what the right calculus there. In the long term, as you mentioned,

we now call it the Detainee Facility in Parwan. We changed the name of the Bagram facility. That will go to Afghan control, and with our assistance they will run that facility. We will help provide them expertise, particularly in things like exploitation, effective use of intelligence.

So I believe in the long term that's the most effective thing we can do, is build their capacity to do counterinsurgency when we partner with them.

Senator GRAHAM. My time has expired. Could you send the committee a list of the rules of engagement that each country operates under now and in the future, so we could evaluate what these new troops are able actually to do in terms of engaging the enemy?

General MCCHRYSAL. Their caveats and what-not?

Senator GRAHAM. If you could do that.

General MCCHRYSAL. Certainly, sir.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator GRAHAM. God bless. You've got a big challenge and we'll be pulling for you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator Kirk.

Senator KIRK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General McChrystal, Ambassador Eikenberry, let me render my own salute to you for patriotism individually and the people that you represent. And thank you for your patience this afternoon.

My first question, General, would go to you. It's a follow-up basically on the chairman's question about the disparity of troops, U.S. troops to Afghanistan troops. I understand we're working as hard as we possibly can to redress that balance. Just so we can understand perhaps what it is we're looking at here and what to prepare for, is there a risk until we close that gap in the trainers and the combat troops that our troops will be viewed more as occupiers and therefore we may incur or incite further insurgents and violence and therefore perhaps even put our guys and gals in more harm's way than otherwise?

General MCCHRYSAL. There are several components to that. The first is we view that how we are viewed will be based on how we operate more than the numbers we have. So I think it's very important that our forces operate with a level of cultural respect and clear desire to protect the population. And they're doing a good job of that, although we obviously can always continue to get better.

As we work with the Afghans, they want to be secured by Afghans, but they are tolerant. They understand the need for coalition forces to do it until Afghan security forces are available to do it. So I would say that we need to continually communicate to them that, while we are doing this in the bridging period, that we are working as hard as we can to create their forces.

I think if they didn't see and feel that effort was real and significant, that it would be difficult to continue to win their support.

Senator KIRK. Just a follow-up. How do we communicate? Do we communicate through our trainees, if you will, to the population? Or is it we who communicate as best we can in our combat gear that, we're really here to help you and not to occupy?

General MCCHRYSTAL. We do it on a number of levels. We start, of course, at the official interaction at the government level, then all the way down to our forces in the field and Ambassador Eikenberry's great civilians as we partner, to interface as much as we can, as often as we can—shuras at the local level, just day to day interactions.

We also do a number of communications activities, where we use different media ability to communicate the reality of what we're doing to the Afghan people. I participate in some of that. I talk to youth forums, things like that. In every case, we try to give them a clear view of what our real efforts are and our real intentions.

Senator KIRK. Thank you.

This is also on training, because I understood that one of the problems or challenges that we face in our training is the fact that the middle level commanders, if you will, unlike our chain of command that's pretty direct and authoritarian, that a lot of these folks are cronies and that they're appointed through favoritism and so forth. I wondered first, is that an accurate representation? And if not, maybe you could correct it. To the degree that it is accurate, how do we react to that? How long would it take to train and develop the kind of chain of command that we feel comfortable then handing off to, to know that the population is secure and they're doing their job?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, we have extraordinary military in the U.S. So whenever we try to compare ours to anybody else's, it's very difficult because at every level in the chain of command we just over many years built a culture that is very effective.

What I do recognize in the Afghan army and even more in the Afghan police is in many cases there's nepotism, there's corruption, there's inefficiency, and there isn't yet a culture that automatically produces those leaders. Yet for all the times we see challenges, I go out in Garsir—Mr. Chairman, I think you met the young Afghan battalion commander, an extraordinary professional. So those kinds of leaders are the future, and if we partner effectively we'll grow those kinds.

It will take them a generation or two to get to where I think they want to be. But we can make progress.

Senator KIRK. Thank you.

One other thing about this strategy, and I know you and I agree and I think the Ambassador agrees that this will only work if we can work it by, with, and through the Afghan government. For everything I can see—a fraudulent sort of installation, an economy that's dependent on opium, corruption rampant throughout the government—am I wrong to say that we are taking a leap of faith here with President Karzai, and that my sense of it is—I have absolutely no doubt about the strength and the courage of our folks and what we're going to do, but the way I look at it, if there's a weak link in this formula, it's the bet we're placing on President Karzai.

Can you tell me if that gives you pause, and if so, your degree of confidence that this at the end of the day is going to be a sound bet and not that we're betting on the wrong horse here?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, the challenge of establishing accountable governance in Afghanistan, it goes beyond one indi-

vidual. This is a societal problem. This is a problem of a state that was utterly decimated by three decades of warfare. It's a state that has two generations without, really without education. It's a very profound challenge.

We have programs that we're partnered with the Afghans to try to help them to develop accountable governance. We're making progress in certain areas, in the areas of law enforcement. We have a very robust training program, us with the international community and the Afghans, to try to help develop a more competent civil administration. It's a priority area for President Karzai. We support that.

We have major efforts to try to improve the financial accountability of ministries. We're making progress in those areas.

But against that, it remains an extraordinary challenge. We are encouraged with President Karzai's commitment in his inauguration address to try to place more emphasis on this area, and certainly political leadership and political emphasis is going to be absolutely indispensable to make further progress. But it's going to remain a challenge.

Senator KIRK. General, is that good by you?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Yes, sir.

Senator KIRK. I thank you very much. My time is expired. I wish you godspeed and thank you once again.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Kirk.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Let me first of all make sure you understand that I'm probably not alone in disagreeing with the comments made by the Senator who was somewhat critical of the way the CERP program is put together. The CERP program, train and equip, and IMET have been three of my favorite programs, and I think I've been somewhat responsible for advancing the CERP program and changing also the CCIF in other areas.

But the whole—what's good about the program is they don't have to go through all that stuff. I mean, I've probably been over there as many times as anyone else has. When I talked to the commanders in the field, they say that anything we can do in 3 days instead of 3 months is going to have 10 times the value. So I'm hoping that you will continue to talk about the success of that program.

General MCCHRYSTAL. Sir, I'd like to throw something in on there. It's important for several reasons. One, whatever you do quickly the Afghans appreciate more, because they understand. It also increases the credibility of the local leader, the decentralized leader we have forward. If that person can say yes and then produce quickly, it raises his ability to do future interactions and leverage. That's one of the huge values of it.

Senator INHOFE. We'll continue to try to enhance that program.

Let me—several people have mentioned the agricultural development team, but not really giving it the credit that I think it's due. You know, people talk about the negative things, but my gosh—and Mr. Chairman, I want to put this—without objection, so ordered—into the record. That is from 2007 the number of hectares that has gone from—that was in poppy development, went from 193,000, 157,000, 123,000, a reduction of 22 percent in 3 years.

Now, I'm particularly proud of this because as we speak we have 60 of our Oklahoma 45th in a plane going over there for the second time. They come back and, Mr. Ambassador, they tell me the success of the story and the happiness that is generated by their relationships.

So I'd like to ask you, of course, if you agree with that assessment as I put this into the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, I can go first. We absolutely agree with the assessment. The agricultural development teams, to include from the 45th of Oklahoma, are really making a profound difference.

We have a very good civ-mil integrated agricultural approach. Each element brings their own strength. The United States Department of Agriculture, they've got tremendous technical expertise. They know how to build agricultural systems. Our USAID team members, they know how to deliver programs. What these agricultural development teams are able to do, they take the best of the military—they have their security, they have mobility—they can get out into parts of the farm areas of Afghanistan that are insecure.

Senator INHOFE. And they've actually had their hands in the dirt before. These guys know what they're doing.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Absolutely. It's a great compliment to our overall ag strategy. Indispensable.

Senator INHOFE. Good. We want to just continue to see that success take place.

General McChrystal, I asked this question when the Secretary was here and I didn't get the answer I felt real comfortable with. I just would like to have you give me an idea. You put together threat assessments when you make recommendations, threats low, medium, high. When you made the recommendation at 40, what was the threat assessment that you would have said was attached to that?

General MCCHRISTAL. Moderate, Senator.

Senator INHOFE. Moderate, all right. Then 30,000 would be what?

General MCCHRISTAL. We didn't try to grade it in great detail.

Senator INHOFE. All right, it would be below that.

General MCCHRISTAL. Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Well, that's—I think that I would agree with that and I think that we need to have that for our own use to quantify some of the successes.

Now, for only the second time since President Obama has been in office, I want to compliment him and tell him how pleased I am. I think there have been some unfair questions concerning—in this meeting, concerning the end game, because I was upset with the end game until West Point. In West Point, the speech that he made—and I'm quoting right now—the last thing he said in terms of that: "Just as we have done in Iraq, we will execute this transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground."

Now, he said that. That's not you saying it. I know both of you agree with that, but that's the President saying it. To me, that

means that the ground—the conditions on the ground are very important in any decisions to be made. It's not a calendar decision. It's a condition.

Do you agree with my interpretation of that?

General MCCHRYSAL. I do, Senator.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I do as well, Senator.

Senator INHOFE. And the same thing—you had made the statement, General McChrystal, “We are in this thing to”—well, actually it was Secretary Gates: “We’re in this thing to win. We intend to partner for a long time to come.” Keeping in mind, there will be troops over there for a long—we still have troops in Bosnia, in Kosovo, and some of these other places.

But he said: “We are in this to win.” Would you define “win”?

General MCCHRYSAL. Absolutely, and I absolutely agree with the Secretary. I would define winning as when we have our partners in Afghanistan, the government and the Afghan National Security Forces, to the point where they can defend their sovereignty with very limited help from the outside; obviously a strategic partnership, but they can take the strong lead.

What that then does is it allows them to enable the people of Afghanistan to build the Nation, to shape their lives as they want to do that.

Senator INHOFE. That's good. Do you agree with that, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, I would say that it's very similar to what General McChrystal outlined: The government of Afghanistan has the capacity to take responsibility for its own security, the Taliban's been degraded to levels that are manageable by their own security forces; most important, al Qaeda is prevented from regaining safe havens inside of Afghanistan.

Senator INHOFE. Well, Mr. Ambassador, the last time you and I talked you were in uniform, and I would just compliment both of you on the great job that you're doing.

Lastly, because my time is about to expire, is people are talking about the non-U.S. participants we're going to try to—the plan is trying to get to the 7,000 figure. As I look through this thing—and I have a breakdown that at my request I got—Italy and Georgia are both at 1,000. All the rest of them, Poland, the rest, are way below that, considerably below that. If you add them all up, that's 4,300. That was my math, so I might be wrong on that.

To get to 7,000, what can you do now? Is there any obvious thing you can do that you haven't done before? Because I know the effort has been there before, but is there something that's open to us now that wasn't there before? Perhaps one suggestion is that when the President made his commitment he first called the heads of state of our NATO and other allies over there, and I think that perhaps that might have changed their enthusiasm for sending troops and participating. What do you think?

General MCCHRYSAL. Senator, I believe our level of clear commitment on the part of the United States is a big part of the calculus. I think another thing we can do is we can encourage our partners to contribute where they can most effectively. What I am doing is asking for additional help in the training realm, is initial

entry training and partnering, because in some cases that fits very well with what partners can provide.

Senator INHOFE. Do you agree that the statement—that the fact that the President called these other heads of state and told them what he was going to say and what he was going to do was helpful?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I certainly do, Senator. Secretary Clinton, as you know, several days ago, with General McChrystal and I in attendance, was at the foreign ministers conference of NATO, and this was the first foreign ministers conference of NATO in Brussels since the President made his West Point speech. I think all of our sense was the reception there with General McChrystal's articulation of the strategy, understanding of what our way ahead was, it seemed to resonate well. So we left Brussels with some confidence.

Senator INHOFE. That's good. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Udall is next.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, gentlemen. As many of us have said up here, I want to thank you for your service. I look forward as well to joining Senator McCain and Senator Lieberman in their upcoming visits to Afghanistan as you begin to implement this important strategy.

I know that we've all talked about, Secretary Gates and both of you, about the limits of our ability to actually defeat the Taliban. There's been a lot of talk about reconciliation with the Taliban and how we drive wedges between those who are interested in the Taliban and its presence for political purposes versus those who are eager to push the forces of chaos and destruction and hatred.

I know that we're not in the best position to pursue reconciliation right now, given that the Taliban are strong and they lack an incentive to change sides. But I'd like to think we're doing more in this area than we have been and that we're working closely with the Afghan government. Could both of you comment on my question?

General MCCHRYSAL. I certainly can. I can start. I don't agree when people say we cannot defeat the Taliban. I absolutely believe that we—and I mean the government of Afghanistan with coalition help—can defeat the Taliban. I define that by meaning putting the Taliban in a position where they can no longer accomplish their objective of threatening the government of Afghanistan. I believe that's absolutely achievable.

I believe en route to that, as we reverse the momentum that they perceive that they have now, we will weaken the resolve of many of the members of the Taliban. I think it's important in that process as we talk about re-integration that there be opportunities for Afghans who might have sided with the Taliban, whether they fought with them or they just supported them, to be able to come back under the constitution of Afghanistan, under a program that must be supervised by the government, with respect and with honor, not to feel like they are criminals being brought back in, but instead being brought into the political fold.

I think giving an opportunity for that if they are willing to meet the conditions of living under an Afghan government with a con-

stitution, I think makes a lot of sense, and we're working very closely with the government to do that.

Senator UDALL. Ambassador Eikenberry?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Again, Senator, I'd share General McChrystal's assessment that it's going to be important to have momentum in order then to push those fighters and mid-level commanders that are out there right now opposing the legitimate government of Afghanistan to make the right choice. But with that momentum, I think that the push won't have to be that great in many areas.

It was interesting, during this past presidential election in Afghanistan there were 42 presidential candidates and they were all unified on one issue: All 42 talked about reintegration and reconciliation. So there's a desire out there among the Afghan people to try to find a way to achieve peace.

I know that President Karzai is very committed to it. He did mention it, again, in his inauguration address. We await soon, we hope, to have the delivery or decision by President Karzai to have the formal establishment within his government of a reconciliation, reintegration commission. With that then, I know that General McChrystal and NATO ISAF are very prepared to provide full support in an array of areas in order to help the reintegration program achieve success.

Senator UDALL. Ambassador, if I might follow up on those comments. There's a perception that there is a perception among many ethnic Pashtuns that they don't really have a meaningful role in the central government, particularly in security institutions. Is this something we're attuned to? Do you agree with that assessment? And is this something that President Karzai could take the lead on, given that he is a Pashtun as I understand it?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Well, I would say that if you look at President Karzai's cabinet, there is a very strong representation of Pashtuns. For instance, the Minister of Defense is a Pashtun, the Minister of Interior is a Pashtun.

Separate, though, from that is there a feeling of disconnection from many of the Pashtun population from their central government? I think that President Karzai would say that there is. But that's the question of insecurity right now that exists in the Pashtun tribal areas, and that's a very important part, if we have success in the year ahead and the next 18 months of further delivering security, that will have profound positive political impacts because it will help bring the Pashtun population then closer to their central government.

Senator UDALL. I would note for the record that the three Senators sitting right here met with you in May when we were in Afghanistan. We had a chance to meet with both of those ministers, Minister Wardak and Minister Atmar, and were very impressed with their plans and with the way they carried themselves, and we hope that that continues.

General, if I could turn back to Pakistan. For me, my support is based as much on the fact that Pakistan is inextricably linked to success in Afghanistan. Their reaction, Pakistan's reaction, is critical to the President's speech and his new strategy. I imagine that the comment that Prime Minister Gilani made last week where he

said “We need more clarity on it and when we get more clarity on it we can see what we can implement on that plan,” I hope that was for public consumption.

Are either of you concerned by his statement?

General MCCRYSTAL. Not by his statement, Senator. I talk routinely with Pak mil leadership and I believe that we’ve always got to work through aligning our campaigns, but I believe that they have a shared interest in our success in Afghanistan, as we do in their success.

Senator UDALL. Ambassador, would you have any thoughts on that?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. No, I couldn’t add to what General McChrystal laid out.

Senator UDALL. Let me move to the concept that the President proposed, which was to move the bell curve to the left, in other words get the troops into theater faster and then leave faster. I have a few questions about shifting the bell curve. I apologize for throwing them all at you at once. Maybe some you will have to take for the record.

Are you confident you can expedite the deployment of these additional 30,000 troops? What sort of challenges would this pose for you logistically? Does this depend on a timely withdrawal from Iraq? General Odierno stated if the elections get pushed back this could make things more complicated in terms of getting our troops out as scheduled. In other words, would a slower withdrawal from Iraq impact the troop buildup in Afghanistan?

I see my time has run out. Gentlemen, if you want to try and answer one or two of those and maybe field the rest of them for the record, I’d appreciate it.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

General MCCRYSTAL. Senator, I would just say that the deployment part is very complex, but we have a really good team working it and I’m very comfortable we’re going to get the forces in as fast as possible.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Udall.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Ambassador, it’s great to see you. Like everyone else here, I was planning to reminisce about having seen you in Afghanistan in August. But since I saw both of you yesterday at the White House, it seems it’s been taken over by events.

But let me thank you both for your extraordinary service, which is so appreciated. I cannot imagine our having better leaders in Afghanistan than the two of you and I’m very grateful for your work.

I also would guess, having seen part of your hearing on the House side earlier today, that you’re eager to return to Afghanistan and get on with the job, rather than appearing here in Washington before the House and the Senate.

General, you have such great knowledge and deep understanding of Afghanistan. You mentioned in your statement today that you were first deployed there in 2002 and that you’ve commanded

troops there every single year since then, which is truly extraordinary. I also know that you've studied closely the history of Afghanistan. In fact, one of the first times that we met you told me you were reading "The Great Game" and that you were seeking to learn from the British and the Soviet experience in Afghanistan.

At one point the Soviets had more than 100,000 troops in Afghanistan and yet they did not prevail. Now, clearly our goals in Afghanistan are completely different from the goals of the British in Afghanistan—the British and the Soviets. But still, that history of the British and the Soviet experience gives me pause, no matter how brilliant our leaders, how brave our troops, how successful the civilian surge.

Could you share with us what lessons you take away from the failed British and Soviet experiences in Afghanistan, and why you believe that our experience can end up in a more positive way?

General MCCRYSTAL. One of the things I have learned is to be very, very humble about thinking that we have the right idea, the better idea, and to be very careful as we go forward. I think the common themes that I see that caused failure in the past is when the Afghan people come to the conclusion that an outside force are either occupiers or they are culturally in opposition to the currents of Afghan history. In fact, Afghan leaders, Afghans, have been toppled because they went against the grain of the sense of the people, the social fabric of the people.

My view of both the British experience and the Soviet experience is there came a time when there coalesced a sense, almost antibodies, in Afghan society against their presence. In the Soviet case, we can't be too superior thinking about this because they did a lot of things correctly. They did a lot of tactical things correctly. They did a lot of programs correctly. But at the end of the day they couldn't change the perception that they were outside occupiers trying to impose on Afghanistan a foreign system, a foreign thought process, of—in this case it was communism, but it was also a number of other social changes that just ran against the grain of society.

So I think it's very important that, from an overall point of view, we understand how Afghan culture must define itself and we be limited in our desire to change the fundamentals of it. We've got to respect those, and I think that's important.

Then tactically, in the counterinsurgency system, of course the Soviets became fairly heavy-handed and they killed more than a million Afghans in the process. Of course, that worked to cause their defeat. One of the reasons why we're working so hard on counterinsurgency with and respecting the people is because we understand it's only with their partnership that we can be effective here. So it's a very careful strategy, almost admitting what we don't know. What I tell people is every time you go to do something in Afghanistan, realize there's a lot of things going on you don't understand, and don't pretend that it's more simple than it really is.

Senator COLLINS. I think those are very wise lessons indeed.

When I look at the President's plan and his date for beginning the transition and the withdrawal of forces, while I share the concerns of some of my colleagues about the signal that sends, it may in fact be a helpful signal because it shows that we're not like the

Soviets, that we're not trying to stay there and impose our way of life on them. So it may cut both ways.

Ambassador, let me ask you about another issue that troubles me gravely. We know that the Taliban is securing funding for its operations from the narcotics trade in Afghanistan. But another source, another significant source, is from wealthy individuals and bogus charitable organizations or charitable organizations that have two purposes from the Middle East, from Saudi Arabia for example.

Do we have a strategy for engaging the countries whose citizens are funneling money to the Taliban fighters?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. In short, yes, we do, Senator. It's a pretty robust strategy. You're correct, sources of Taliban funding right now, it comes from profits from narcotrafficking, increasingly from taxation of areas that they might dominate, and then the third important source of funding is external funding coming from cover NGOs and individuals from the Gulf and Pakistan itself.

Against that, we have a very vigorous law enforcement effort where we're trying to track finances, and we are working very closely with countries within the Gulf, to include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Republic, and others, in order to try to get at these sources and find ways to shut it down.

Senator COLLINS. Are you optimistic about securing full cooperation from the Gulf countries?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. We're making some progress there, Senator. I wouldn't want to get into the specifics, but if you'd like for the record perhaps we can submit something to you. Progress is being made, but it's difficult. Trying to track finances in any kind of environment is difficult work, but we are making progress.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Collins.

Senator Bill Nelson.

Senator BILL NELSON. Gentlemen, thank you for your service.

Today with Secretary Gates Hamed Karzai in Afghanistan—both of them had a press conference. I'm going to read to you from the web site of the New York Times: "Karzai said that his country would not have the resources to pay for its own security for another 15 to 20 years and would remain dependent on American and NATO financial aid until then."

So how does that comport with what you have announced, given that Karzai has said this today?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, just four points on that. The first would be that, as General McChrystal has said, we have to have a long-term relationship with Afghanistan that our leadership has talked about, a long-term diplomatic relationship, an economic and assistance relationship, also a relationship which is one of providing support for the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police over time, their security organizations. That will be an effort that we'll do together, we hope, with NATO and with other countries. We don't know exactly, of course, what the cost will be, but it will have to be long-term assistance.

The second: Against that, we recognize that this will be a burden on the government of Afghanistan. They'll need assistance. So a lot of our economic programs that we are emphasizing right now is aimed at the generation of wealth and at the same time trying to find ways to help the Afghan government with revenue collection. So we're looking at that.

The third would be that, with regard to longer term costs, while I don't know what the order of magnitude is for the cost of an American soldier or marine for 1 year in Afghanistan compared to an Afghan National Army soldier or police, but we know the orders of magnitude are probably 20, 30 to 1. So it's clearly, if nothing else, in our own long-term economic interest and certainly in the Afghan interest to continue to help the Afghans stand their police up and their army forces up. That's a pretty good tradeoff. If we're not having to send more U.S. soldiers and marines, but instead Afghan soldiers are taking—are on the front line taking their own place, that's a pretty good return.

The fourth point would be, as we move forward and Afghanistan does gain more security perhaps the army and the police of Afghanistan, perhaps they won't need very high levels in the future. Maybe at some point in time 10 years from now the army of Afghanistan might be a smaller force than it is 5 years from now.

Senator BILL NELSON. That's what Charlie Wilson was arguing for in 1989, was to keep a presence going. But we pulled out and we made a mistake. Last week I recalled that for Secretary Gates when he was in front of us and he said we're not going to make that mistake again.

Let me ask you. One of the things that I asked Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton, General McChrystal, last week was, we have a military force that can be all the more effective, not in nation-building, but in getting things settled down, if we use all the other civilian agencies of government along with NGOs. Do you want to sketch briefly for the committee how we're doing that and to whom you're listening as you set that policy as the commander?

General MCCRYSTAL. The person I listen to the most is about 3 feet on my right. What we do is in every area we go, before we even go into an area, we work together to figure out what's going to be required as we provide security to make it durable, because the governance and development parts need to flow in almost simultaneously.

Of course, our Afghan partners aren't here today, but they're in that same meeting as we try to pull that together. We're working plans for an operation, an additional operation in the Central Helmand River Valley now, which will happen later this winter, and the idea is as security elements go in every other aspect is literally waiting to flow in with it and then grow.

It's not easy, so I don't want to paint it as a simple process. But it's very important.

The harder part is coordinating nongovernmental organizations and other international partners. We do that through PRTs in many cases. We do that through other nations and UNAMA, helpful in doing that. But that's one of the areas where we need to continue to seek unity of effort so that every dollar or euro or man-hour of effort is focused towards a single outcome in Afghanistan.

We are doing a lot of coordination. UNAMA is part of our planning process. They're in our planning process as we develop our campaign plan.

Senator BILL NELSON. General, let me recommend something for you to think about. You have been so successful with your CERP funds for your commanders. After combat, they've got a ready pot of money that they have the authority to build a bridge or to repair a school or whatever, and it's been terrific. Don't we need that same kind of authority for the civilian agencies, instead of having to go through this requisition process that takes months and months, where the people on the ground can make something happen just like your commanders can?

General MCCHRISTAL. Senator, I haven't been a civilian since I was 17, so I'd probably be out of my lane. But I absolutely agree that that's the right thing, and I'd defer to my friend.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, you're correct. We are doing—we're taking measures right now to try to be faster, more responsive. We've gotten great support from Congress. We have what we call the quick response fund which is available to our State Department officers throughout Afghanistan. That's more of a quick spending program.

We're changing the nature of our contracts. Rather than have long, multi-year contracts, we're shifting to 1-year contracts. We get better performance from contractors as a result of that, NGOs that we work with frequently as implementing partners.

We also—the last point I'd make is with the reorganization of our civilian effort as we talked earlier about this concept of having senior civilian representatives out in regional commands that have really chief of mission kind of authorities within the region. They're a counterpart of the military commander. We're also now looking at ways we might be able to innovate to push then down more of the decisionmaking and the authorities for developmental assistance funds down to the regional level and perhaps even farther down closer to the district level.

So we are innovating and in certain areas we may be coming back to Congress and asking for some help.

Senator BILL NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Senator Thune.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Mr. Ambassador, thank you—and General—thank you for your outstanding service to our country. You have what is a very challenging job on a good day and there haven't been many good days recently in Afghanistan. But I think the reason that the President and members of Congress on both sides and the American people are willing to commit to this mission, to this effort, is because they have such a high level of confidence in your leadership. So thank you for your willingness to take that on.

I guess when you get to this point in a hearing pretty much all of the questions that can be asked have been asked. But I want to just touch on a couple of areas that I think are really important to our success.

By the way, just a clarification, too. There was the announcement of the additional NATO troops, but there was a report I think

today in The Times of London that more than 1500 of those extra troops that have been pledged by the allies to back up our surge there are already in the country and have been counted before, so that there may be some double counting going on.

Do you know exactly what that number is and how close that will bring us to the 40,000 number that you had requested, General?

General MCCRYSTAL. I don't know that right now, Senator.

Senator THUNE. With regard to the NATO allies and the important role that they play in our effort there, one of the things I think that has impeded and inhibited our ability to make the best use of our forces has been some of the caveats that have been attached to some of the troops that have come in from other countries. Of the 43 countries that are allies in this fight, how many of them do have caveats and what are you doing to try and get some of those removed so that we can get everybody engaged more in the fight?

General MCCRYSTAL. The first thing I'd say is when I deal with it as the coalition commander I'm actually surprised by how little the limitations are compared to the advantages of having the coalition. One of the advantages of the coalition is everybody is a little stronger together, and in the eyes of the Afghans we are a lot more credible than we would be as a single country. Even though clearly the United States is a huge factor, the fact that we are a coalition with the Afghan people I think is key.

Each of the countries brings different strengths and weaknesses. Some have caveats that I have urged be adjusted, give us a little bit more flexibility. Across the force what I've asked is for all countries to look at the policies that they have for their people. In some cases, their forces are not allowed to move out of a geographical area. But if they are partnered with an Afghan Army battalion and they can't move, then there's hesitation to let that Afghan National Army battalion move and that takes away from Afghan National Army leadership the ability to mass forces for operations, and it's one of the things that we'd asked people to work with.

In other cases there are limitations on night operations or things like that. So what we're doing is asking each of our partners to move more toward full counterinsurgency, and we do have progress in that, and then to look at all their caveats.

Some of our Nations also—or some of our partners as well don't have caveats, but they have limitations in mobility, vehicles, or things like that, and the degree to which we can help them with that enables them to do even more.

Senator THUNE. Of the Afghan security forces—and there's been a lot of focus, as there should be, on getting them trained and ready. That again, I think as we have seen demonstrated in Iraq, is so critical. Are the Afghan security forces willing to take on the Taliban? I mean, are they willing to—

General MCCRYSTAL. They are. They die at a higher rate than—the Afghan police die at the highest rate, then the Afghan Army, before coalition forces. They absolutely are.

Senator THUNE. There has been a lot of discussion about also integrating, reconciling elements of the Taliban that might be reconcilable, and I know I think that's been touched on already. But General Petraeus had indicated previously that we lack the

nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the Taliban to be able to identify and distinguish between reconcilable and irreconcilable elements.

My understanding is that you have selected retired General, British General, Lamb to head a program of reconciliation with members of the Taliban based on some of the success that he had in Iraq. I'm just wondering if you could provide some of the details of those efforts or at least maybe some of the broad features of the program?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, it's a partnered program, first. It's got to be an Afghan program. It's got to be under the government of Afghanistan. So what we'd be doing is empowering them as much as we can with resources, some expertise and experience, and things like that.

What we've stood up with General Lamb is a section in my command. He's also got now an additional British two-star general that has been provided, and we've got a full element that works with the government of Afghanistan to help craft their policy, help work this forward, partner with not just the U.S. embassy, but other embassies as well, so that as we go forward we have a program that is not only effective, but it's also understood by people.

Reintegration is really a question of confidence, and it's confidence on multiple levels, as we remember from Iraq. It's first the confidence of the individual who's going to reintegrate, that's got to believe that as he comes back in he will be protected from his former Taliban partners, he'll also be protected from anyone in the government of Afghanistan who might target him or throw him in jail or something.

It's also a question of confidence on the part of the government that the people they bring in are genuine, that they're not seeding the Taliban inside their ranks as well. Then the last part of the confidence is it's to undermine the confidence of the Taliban. So to the degree to which we can start to pull people out and they start to look at each other, it has a very good effect.

But for this reason, it's very important that this program be very carefully thought out and coordinated, because as soon as somebody loses confidence in it it boomerangs on us.

Senator THUNE. Do you have anything to add?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. No, Senator. We're fully engaged with General McChrystal's program. We have a State Department officer that serves as one of General Lamb's staff, and we're optimistic about the potential. It will certainly be predicated upon having some momentum, though, against the Taliban. With that momentum, with a good reintegration program, I think it will be a very important, a very important tool.

Senator THUNE. General, one last question, I think. I'm guessing my time's running out. Over the past few years the demand for persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities has spurred the Air Force to field unmanned aerial systems more rapidly than originally planned. The Air Force now has a goal of fielding enough Predator and Reaper drones by 2012 to man 50 orbits around the clock. The majority of this new capability has been dedicated to Iraq.

As we begin this drawdown in Iraq, the persistent ISR requirement there is not likely to decrease. So with fewer soldiers and marines on the ground that are gathering information, the joint forces are going to rely more heavily on the air component to provide intelligence.

Meanwhile, with the increasing troop presence in Afghanistan, you're going to have the need for persistent ISR in that area of operation, too. So I guess the question is, are you comfortable with the Afghan's current plan to operate 50 of those round-the-clock orbits by 2012 in order to meet the requirements in both Iraq and Afghanistan, or do we need to invest in a UAS capability over and above the current plan to ensure that those requirements are addressed?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, I haven't looked at exactly how they're going to break out around the world. I have looked at the balance between Afghanistan and Iraq. Secretary Gates leads a very focused effort.

The one thing I would say is almost everything we do to increase our ISR capacity, not just the unmanned, but also there's a number of manned aspects, and then there's what we call the part that digests it, or PED. It's people and it's information systems. It takes what we get and turns it into real intelligence. Those programs are expensive, but they are extraordinarily effective and extraordinary value added, because they allow us to operate with smaller numbers of our forces on the ground. The more we have those, we can go after IEDs, we can go after terrorist leaders, we can protect our forces.

So there's almost no amount of ISR in my view that would not be value added to my effort in Afghanistan.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Thune.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry, I want to—I welcome your testimony and I want to thank you for your sacrifice and your extremely hard work that you do every day on behalf of all of us. As Senator Udall said, Senator Begich and I and others visited Afghanistan and Pakistan back in May, Ambassador Eikenberry, just several days, I think, after you had taken over the post. I wanted to, one, thank you for your hosting us.

But I also want you to give my best wishes to your wife. I think the fact that she is there touring the country with you by your side in a war-torn country says a lot about her character, but I also think it speaks volumes to the Afghani women and in committee the Afghani men. So please give her our best wishes.

General MCCHRYSTAL. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator HAGAN. But I did want—we've had some questions concerning the Pashtuns. My understanding is that currently Pashtun recruitment to the Afghan National Security Forces is difficult along the Pashtun tribal belt that, General McChrystal, you mentioned, the southern and southeastern Afghanistan, because the Pashtuns would run the risk of having their families subjected to Taliban retribution.

General McChrystal, can you describe the ethnic composition of the Afghan National Security Forces?

General MCCHRYSAL. Yes, ma'am. I can get it to you for the record in exact numbers, but we're about 42 percent of the population is Pashtun and almost exactly that is the representation in the army. So Pashtun participation in the army matches it.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

However, I would say that is Pashtun, but it is not represented from the south, as you mentioned. Kandahar and Helmand and those areas which have been under Taliban either control or threat are very underrepresented. So it's important to us that we be able to recruit from there.

But what we've got to do first is get security there.

So the effort now is to increase security, make them—make their families feel comfortable, and then go.

The rest of the breakdown of the Afghan National Army falls pretty much along ethnic percentages in the country writ large, except for the Tajiks are slightly overrepresented in the army.

Senator HAGAN. Does an ethnically unbalanced Afghan National Security Force pose linguistic and ethnic barriers within the local Afghan villages along this Pashtun tribal belt, as well as the legitimacy concerns and securing the local population and, as you mentioned, in the Helmand Province how does that affect our marines and allies? I understand the Tajiks speak actually a different language or a different—language.

General MCCHRYSAL. It's a challenge. There are two parts to this. First, every kandak or Afghan battalion that we field is ethnically balanced as it comes out of training. So we field the force so that it's got a mix. We don't field a Tajik battalion or a Hazara battalion or a Pashtun battalion, for the obvious reasons.

Senator HAGAN. But do you have enough of the different ethnicities to do that?

General MCCHRYSAL. We have enough of the ethnicities. What we don't have enough is southern Pashtuns. So we've got to recruit better.

So the things that you said about a battalion operating in Helmand, we would like to have more representation in that battalion of people from that area. But we wouldn't want to create again southern Helmand kandaks.

Senator HAGAN. Well, how do you recruit these individuals?

General MCCHRYSAL. The first thing we've got to do is establish security there.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Pakistan continues to pursue a dual track policy of disrupting the Pakistani Taliban in its tribal areas, most notably in South Waziristan, while elements of Pakistan's military support the Afghan Taliban networks also in its tribal areas, most notably in North Waziristan, and the Afghan Taliban high command in its Baluchistan Province. The key question is if elements of Pakistan's military can be persuaded to change this dual track policy. In order to do that, we've got to address Pakistan's regional concerns, taking into account its relationships with Afghanistan and India.

As you know, the Durand Line cut across the Pashtun tribes and reduced the Afghanistan Pashtun territory and, as you mentioned, the Pashtuns comprise about 15 percent of Pakistan's population, or a little over close to 26 million people, whereas in Afghanistan it's about 12 million Pashtuns.

Despite Pakistan's attempt to permanently demarcate its border with Afghanistan, the Afghans claim Pakistan's Pashtun areas on the ground that Afghanistan is the home to all of the Pashtuns. Ever since the partition of India, Islamabad has attempted to utilize its proxies, I believe, to install a friendly Pashtun government in Afghanistan that would preserve the de facto border and prevent Pashtun aspirations of a homeland and prevent Indian involvement in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Eikenberry, in the interest of Afghanistan's stability, how are you working with the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, and our Indian Ambassador Tim Romer, as well as Ambassador Holbrooke, to facilitate positive relations between Islamabad, New Delhi, and Kabul?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Well, Senator, let me concentrate on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ambassador Holbrooke is the special representative that has responsibilities for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Clearly the security relationship between India and Pakistan has consequences for Afghanistan, as you've articulated. But more specifically, with our efforts in Kabul have a very strong relationship with our embassy down in Islamabad. At the level of Ambassador Holbrooke and General Petraeus, they have a close civil-military partnership themselves and provide overall policy direction and have sets of programs that they've set into motion.

Then between Ambassador Patterson and myself, we take that direction. We are looking and continuously searching for ways to facilitate political dialogue between Kabul and Islamabad. They're leading. We try to facilitate wherever we can. We have an array of programs to try to develop mutual trust and confidence, anywhere between the law enforcement area, where Director Mueller from the FBI hosts trilateral initiatives led by himself, but partnered with the Ministries of Interior of Afghanistan and Pakistan. We have programs to help both sides to improve their customs programs along the border. We have a very promising initiative in which we're hoping to see further progress between Afghanistan and Pakistan to reach an agreement for transit trade.

So it's a comprehensive effort that gets into improvements in law enforcement, trade, economics, and diplomacy, and then, of course, General McChrystal has a very robust program with the tripart, the military tripartite between Afghanistan and Pakistan and NATO.

Senator HAGAN. That was my next question: What are you in the CENTCOM doing to facilitate military-to-military confidence-building between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and then I threw in India too?

General MCCHRISTAL. At our level what we're doing is, as Ambassador Eikenberry mentioned, we've got a series of tripartite meetings at the principals level, myself, General Kiyani, and General Bismullah Mohamedi for the Afghans. But then we also below that have operational lower levels that happen very regularly. We have a series of border coordination centers. There's one in oper-

ation. There's a second one just moving toward that. There'll be a total of six.

We also have—for example, about a month ago we went over and briefed our full campaign plan to General Kiyani and his staff. They did the same back to U.S. forces some time back.

The idea is confidence-building. It's to get on the same page, but then also to also have the mechanics in place for things like cross-border incidents, so that they don't become something that's a negative. There's a whole series of activities.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, also if I could add one important area that has been under way for several years. That is efforts to improve intelligence exchanges and cooperation between the United States and Afghanistan and Pakistan. Those efforts are led by Director of CIA Leon Paneta and his counterparts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. That's been a very robust program as well.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

My time is out. Godspeed.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator BURRIS.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To our distinguished gentlemen testifying, General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry, I want to congratulate you also, as my colleagues have done. I just want to say most all the questions have been asked and I don't know what else you've got to answer. But I hope to see you. I hope to be on a trip next month to Afghanistan. I just came back from Iraq and a very, very interesting visit there, and I'm encouraged by what has taken place in Iraq and the confidence that the Iraqi government officials—we didn't see too many Iraqi personnel because it just wasn't safe. But I was very encouraged to what the officials are saying, that the Americans are carrying out what they promised to do, and that is key.

So just permit me, gentlemen, to try to get some clarification, because the questions have been answered; so if I repeat some of these and you want to make your answers short, I would appreciate it because I've got several clarifications to try to make.

Number one, how effective have the efforts been to reintegrate the former Taliban and the Northern Alliance and the mujahedin fighters so that they will no longer fight for the insurgency? How is reintegration going?

General MCCRYSTAL. Senator, in the case of the Taliban, that effort is still very young and has not yet in my opinion been effective. But we are posturing ourselves to do that.

Senator BURRIS. Ambassador, in terms of understanding that Kabul and President Karzai probably and the central government only control so many of those 37 provinces there in Afghanistan, what is taking place in the local provinces and working with the local tribal leaders to try to educate—not educate, but to understand the issues that are taking place?

Are we working, not only on the military side, but also on the resource side, with the locals where, because of the divisions of that country and all the different ethnicities that's there, the locals are really in charge?

So do we have a specific program that's working with the local province, with the governors that are there or the local councils that are there?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Well, Senator, our principal voice is working through the government of Afghanistan. Now, the government—

Senator BURRIS. The central government?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Working through the government of Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan, of course, it appoints at the national government level, it appoints provincial governors. It appoints district chiefs. So when I say "district chiefs," district governors. The police force of Afghanistan, it stretches down to the district level. The district level of Afghanistan is at the county level.

What I want to say first and foremost, though, is that our programs that we're delivering do work through the government of Afghanistan. What we're trying to do in partnership with the government of Afghanistan is help them get their reach down further, down to that local level. We do that through reinforcing what have been some very promising programs that have developed over the past 3, 4, 5 years.

An example of a program that has worked well, a developmental program, is a program called the National Solidarity Program. It's run by the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development and it's a program in which a community, a village, will elect for a particular small developmental project to benefit that particular—it may be wells, it may be a road that connects them to the district center. But it's a program which empowers the community then through electing or voting on developmental projects.

So we have programs like that that we're partnering with the government of Afghanistan to try to extend further and farther across the country. That delivers security. Also, we're working right now with key ministries to see over the next year, the next 18 months, how more progress can be made in strengthening government at the local level and developing capability to deliver a very basic set of services, education, health, and so forth.

Senator BURRIS. Mr. Ambassador, Senator Hagan just raised a question about the languages. Are we trying to teach them English there? Are we trying to learn their dialect and their native tongue? The American personnel that's there or any foreign personnel in any of those various provinces, whether it's British, whether it's German or Polish? [Speaks in Polish] A little Polish here.

Are we trying to teach them English or are we trying to learn their language so we can communicate with them in their language?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. First of all, let me say, Senator, the most popular foreign language on demand right now within Afghanistan in all the schools is the English language.

Senator BURRIS. Unfortunately, unfortunately. Mr. Ambassador, we must learn the language of the natives and they will accept us better when we can speak their language. As a student who studied abroad and speaks another foreign language, which was German, the fact that I could speak German, I was very well received.

That is what we must do as Americans, is to learn the language there. I hope that we'll learn it.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Senator, you had asked about the English language. Your separate point here about our need to develop better language skills inside of Afghanistan—I know General McChrystal said earlier about the Afghan Hands Program being developed by the Department of Defense and the military. We're doing better on the civilian side. Many more of our political officers being assigned to Afghanistan are coming in now with a year of Dari language training or some Pashtun. We need to do better, though.

Senator BURRIS. Let me ask the General. Now, in terms of just for clarification, General, on the drawdown dates, knowing the military, what little I know about the military, I heard one of our distinguished Senators ask about whether they were going to start withdrawing the first troops on that date. Well, there are rotations regularly in and out of Afghanistan, is there not? So I don't think we're going to be able to really zero in on whether on July 1 the first soldier is going to be withdrawn from the area. Am I correct in that assessment, General?

General MCCHRYSAL. Sir, the way we are interpreting the President's guidance is we would do troop rotations, but not count them in that drawdown. In July 2011 we believe—I am comfortable it is his intent we start to reduce the overall number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. But the rate and pace of that reduction will be based upon conditions on the ground at that time.

Senator BURRIS. Yes, that's correct, but—I see my time has expired, but you also indicated that, to the other Senator—and I think it's a clarification, and please correct me—that on July 1 we will make the first withdrawal. That's what I understood you to—

General MCCHRYSAL. In July 2011—

Senator BURRIS. 2011, that's correct.

General MCCHRYSAL. That's correct, Senator.

Senator BURRIS. But how do you reconcile that with, we will begin to assess it? As Secretary Gates said, he'll start assessing it in January of 2011, and they're going to start the assessment, and if the assessment is not right and the ground is not right we may not withdraw a troop on July 1 of 2011. Is that possible?

General MCCHRYSAL. Senator, we will be making constant assessments, with a formal assessment a year from now next year, and then in July 2011 I believe that the President has given us instructions to start to reduce U.S. force numbers, but that the pace and scope of that, how fast that happens, would be based upon the assessments and the conditions at the time.

Senator BURRIS. I see. So you could then withdraw one troop and say, we responded—I mean, one battalion or a squadron can go home and say, well, now we've started our withdrawal, and then we halt it to see because we don't know what the conditions are?

General MCCHRYSAL. Senator, we would coordinate that with our entire chain of command up, obviously, to the President to meet his intent. We would have no intent not to do that.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you very much, gentlemen. I hope to see you all next month, and if everything goes well I'll celebrate New Year's with you over there.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Burriss.

Senator Begich.

Senator BEGICH. You have been so patient and what you have seen is a slow withdrawal of the Senate from this committee room. So it's all how we measure things in withdrawal.

Let me say thank you for enduring 3 hours or so of questioning, comments, and commentary from us. But it is an important issue. Again, I want to thank you both for your service to our country. Thank you both.

Let me—I want to follow up, in seriousness, about the transition and withdrawal. This is just for clarification, but I know some continue to bat this around, what is withdrawal, what is not withdrawal. Really, probably the proper word would have been in July 2011 we're going to start a transition, because a withdrawal could be 5 people, it could be 5,000 people; it could be 1 day, it could be 10 years. That's a determination that will come over time, not July hits and suddenly everything's starting to move out. It's a process, and transition is really what it's about. Is that a fair statement?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, I want to make sure that I'm clear. I think that is. I think transition is also a process. I think we'll be transferring to Afghan lead in areas across the country as conditions permit, and I think that will occur. It may not wait until July 2011.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

General MCCHRYSTAL. I do believe that the President wants us to understand that we are absolutely going to start a reduction in forces in July 2011.

Senator BEGICH. Right. But that will all be determined on the quantity and the timing of that, in the sense you may start it, but it may be a short period, it may be a long period, it may be large numbers, it may be small numbers. Is that a fair statement?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Exactly, Senator.

Senator BEGICH. I just want to—I know I hear from others sometimes—and Senator Inhofe was very good in repeating the President's words that it's not a sudden, July hits and our enemies know exactly what we're doing. They'll know no matter what, whenever we do withdrawal, because everything we do is very transparent. And they will notice that and they'll have their own decisions as to what they will do or not do, and hopefully we'll be successful and they won't be doing much. So I want to make sure that's clear.

The other thing, I want to really echo what some other members said. I think what you've been able to do with the CERP moneys have been very, very powerful, very positive. Are there always rooms for improvement on accountability? Absolutely. I don't care how much money you have, if you have ten dollars or one point some billion dollars. There's an option, an opportunity to continue to improve, and it sounds like you folks have been doing that.

But I would also echo what Senator Nelson said, that I agree that the State Department should have as much flexibility in those dollars. Would you both—I assume, Ambassador, you will agree with that. But I'm curious from the General's perspective: Would you agree also that the State Department should have some more

flexibility with their dollars to do very similar activities, so you can kind of join these resources together? Is that a fair statement?

General MCCHRISTAL. I absolutely would agree.

Senator BEGICH. Well, I again want to echo that anything—I know you heard a couple Senators here, very aggressive about this: Whatever we can do to help streamline the rules, the regulation, and-or statutory issues, please let us know. We are motivated. We recognize there will be a little tug of war here on this committee, but I think there's a sizable majority that recognize the success you've had with the CERP funds and we should see the same with the State Department, rather than going through this maze that you have to go through to access their money and then access your money. So anything we can do, please feel free as we move through this process.

Mr. Ambassador, do you have any comment you want to add to that?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. No. We'd welcome that support, Senator.

Senator BEGICH. Okay. The other one I want to clarify—and Mr. Ambassador, I know it seemed like you wanted to go a little further in clarifying this—on do I think that going from 300 to 900-plus individuals from your operation is a great move? Absolutely. You're tripling it. Some will argue it's only 1 percent of the total force, but if I took both of your total work forces, the majority of what the military does is deploy people. You don't necessarily have that luxury. You have a huge number of people to deploy at any given time. You have to pick and select and be very selective.

So I understand the differences. I'm sure we would love a higher percentage, but that's not realistic based on the capacity that the DOD has in the sense of deployment between the military.

In your 2011–2012 budget process, 2011 that's moving forward, are you looking at—and you may not be able to tell us here, but are you looking at additional resources that could be added to your budget to create a more robust deployable force in the sense of what you need on the ground to assist the military in the civilian activities?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Indeed we are, Senator, both in terms of the personnel and in terms of our development programs. We're doing a very careful analysis against General McChrystal's now, his military campaign. In order to support that, we are going to need more civilians out in rural areas, out in different population centers to support. As he clears and holds areas, then it shifts on the civilian side to the building. So we're looking at additional civilians and development programs in order to support that. So there will be increases, yes.

Senator BEGICH. Would it be fair to say that—

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Begich, if I could interrupt you for a moment. I'm going to have to leave for a few moments.

Senator BEGICH. I'll close it off.

Chairman LEVIN. I don't want you to close it, because I have some additional questions. If you are finished before I get back, which will just be a few moments, would you just recess for a couple minutes.

Senator BEGICH. Sure, I'd be happy to do that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Begich [presiding]: Boy, I get the whole—this is a good opportunity. It's always good to be last.

I guess I want to make sure one other piece in your allocation of resources for those people. My assumption is—again, I'm not in your business, but my assumption is your people will need also longer term potential with the country of Afghanistan because of the work you'll be doing.

It's not just you'll be doing the water lines, sewer lines, governance, and be done. You'll actually be moving through.

So that resource is not just about a 1-year, but a few years out. Is that how you look at it? That's how I look at it? I just want to make sure I'm on the same page.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Yes, Senator, absolutely, multi-year and the whole of government. We'll have to be looking then at the sustainment of our civilian force. There'll be changes in the composition, but it'll still be a sizable presence, and it will be multi-year. So it's not only the challenge of getting it there over the next year, year and a half. We would anticipate this to be a multi-year requirement and have to think through how we'll sustain that kind of presence.

Senator BEGICH. I guess I'm supportive of that. I just want to kind of warn you ahead that's some of the questioning I'll have as we move down that path, and I just wanted to kind of telegraph that to you.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. If I could, Senator, though, a point of emphasis here. More civilians needed, but to continue to emphasize that as our civilians move forward they're multiplying their effects through Afghans.

Senator BEGICH. Correct.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. And as we now are starting to reach a point in Afghanistan where you had 7, 8 years after the fall of the Taliban more children, more young adults starting to graduate from high school, vocational schools, universities, the pool out there of talented people is starting to enlarge, and our civilians as they come in, they're going to be able to leverage that in increasing numbers. You can reach a point where it's starting to get diminishing returns, too costly, and also the possibility of dependency building up.

Senator BEGICH. I agree. I think that's a great outcome, if you have more of a larger Afghan pool.

General, let me if I can just on one aspect. You reminded me of this and I'm just trying to remember from our briefings when I was there and some of the folks you had on the ground. We have in Afghanistan, I want to say, "West Point Lite" for officer—explain what we have there in regards to trying to do what we can to ensure that we have an officer corps within the Afghan Army that's well trained? Remind me of that just so I'm clear on that?

General MCCHRISTAL. Senator, they have stood up a military academy.

Senator BEGICH. That's right.

General MCCHRISTAL. And they are expanding the size of that military academy in the next year or so. So that will provide a corps. But then they also have other commissioning entry ways as

well. For their noncommissioned officer corps, which is critical, they have a sergeants major academy and then a series of stairstep professional development programs for their noncommissioned officer corps as well, and I think that's going to be very important for them.

Senator BEGICH. How long do you think—how involved are we now with that and how long before they take a very sizable role in managing those academies? Or are they doing it now?

General MCCHRYSTAL. They really do it now. They get assistance on many of the courses, but they really do it now.

Senator BEGICH. They manage it with their own teaching aids and all the other aspects of it?

General MCCHRYSTAL. That's correct. Again, we assist, but they run it.

Senator BEGICH. One last question I think I'll have time for, and that is, the efforts of their national security force and their police force, what do you think is the major change that can move them into these higher numbers that we want to get them to in short order? What's the one or two things that you think is going to make the difference, or that you believe is making the difference now?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Senator, it's partnering. It's where we put our units with them and operate, often co-located in the same outpost together, and then as we go together. It's that shoulder-to-shoulder partnering that I think's going to help increase their professionalism and development most rapidly.

Senator BEGICH. Very good. Thank you very much.

I know, Mr. Chairman, I was probably—you were very generous with allowing me more time as you vacated. So thank you very much.

Thank you again for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. Actually, Senator Begich, your last question segues perfectly into the first question I was going to ask. It goes back to this question of partnering. Our understanding is that we have about 19,000 U.S. troops now in RC-South. We have about 11 combat battalions in RC-South, with perhaps 40 companies, more or less. My question is: How many of those 11 U.S. battalions in RC-South are actually partnered with, co-located with, as you just put it, shoulder-to-shoulder now with Afghan units?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Mr. Chairman, I would say I don't know the number that are co-located on the bases, but in terms of partnered 100 percent.

Chairman LEVIN. What I'm talking about is co-location, actually physically with, eating with, living with, co-located with. How many of the 11 battalions or approximately 40 companies are physically actually co-located with Afghan units?

General MCCHRYSTAL. I'll have to take that for the record, Mr. Chairman.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Could it be few? Might the answer be few?

General MCCHRYSTAL. I do not believe so, but I'd like to take that for the record and make sure it's accurate.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay, thank you.

When General Jones tells us that we've got to get more Afghan troops out of their garrisons, that's to me a major challenge. It's something that I think needs to be our mission. This partnering needs to be our mission to the same extent that it's a British mission or an Australian mission. Our COIN doctrine, our counter-insurgency doctrine, as I understand it—and we had a little discussion about this before, but I want to be more precise. Our COIN doctrine is that our partnering strategy is aimed at achieving a ratio of one U.S. company—leading to three Afghan companies for every one U.S. company as their partnering progresses.

Is that your understanding?

General MCCHRYSTAL. It is.

Chairman LEVIN. And those ratios that you gave us that we currently have and that we hope to have will ideally lead up to that. But we're nowhere near one to one, quite the opposite in Helmand, from everything we can understand.

There was an article in the Washington Post this morning which described the increasing influence of Taliban shadow governments. I don't think anyone's asked you about this today here. If not, I would like to just quickly as you this. And our votes have begun, so you're almost free.

These shadow governors establish Taliban governors, police chiefs, administrators, and judges in nearly all the Afghan provinces. Did you see the article this morning? Did you read the article, and do you agree with that report? Ambassador?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I did see the article and, chairman, what I'd say is that this growth of parallel governance, in some provinces of Afghanistan effective shadow governance with real consequences and real capabilities—when I came into Afghanistan on my third tour of duty in May of this year and did my own assessment of the security situation, for me the development of this shadow governance was the most striking change that I had seen since early 2007 when I last left.

In that regard then, when General McChrystal did he security assessment and highlighted the deterioration of the security situation in important parts of the country, I had keyed in on that and that was one of the factors that led me to be in absolute concurrence with his own analysis of the deterioration of security.

Chairman LEVIN. Would you say it's as extensive as the Post article suggested? Is that about accurate in terms of its—

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I'd defer to General McChrystal for specifics.

Chairman LEVIN. General, have you had a chance to read the article?

General MCCHRYSTAL. I did.

Chairman LEVIN. Is the shadow government existence by the Taliban as extensive or approximately as extensive as the Post article stated?

General MCCHRYSTAL. Mr. Chairman, it is, but I'd like to provide some wider context.

Chairman LEVIN. Sure.

General MCCHRYSTAL. They have established shadow governors in 33 of the 34 provinces. In some areas those shadow governors can do what was outlined in that article and have an awful lot of

influence. In other areas it's more aspirational. They have a shadow governor, but the individual doesn't have that kind of reach or control. And even within a province where they have a shadow governor, they will typically have areas where they have a tremendous amount of influence—south primarily, some in the east.

So what was described in the article was accurate, but not for everywhere.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay, thank you.

On the reintegration initiatives, you were both I think extremely clear about the importance of these initiatives taking place and that the Afghan government is going to have to lead those initiatives. General, you talked about keeping open the door to reconciliation. Ambassador, you talked—going back to you, General, you said there's some important opportunities—it's important that there be opportunities for Afghans to come back under government rule, I guess, and that they be treated when they do so, providing they abide by the rules, treated with respect when they do that.

Ambassador, you also felt that we've got to try to find a way; more importantly, the Afghan government's got to try to find a way for this reintegration; and that there's a commission which is going to be created, you indicated.

Have we been supportive of that reintegration effort?

Whenever I talk to Karzai he says: You know the reason we haven't gone ahead with this; your guys don't want us to. Have we been an impediment to this in any way? Or to put it positively, are we clearly supportive of this effort, whether it's a reintegration commission or whether it's a plan for reintegration? Is it clear to President Karzai that we're supportive of that effort?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. It's absolutely clear.

Chairman LEVIN. Have we not been supportive over the last year, say?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. Chairman, the efforts up until today have been very uneven, very uneven success by the government of Afghanistan.

Chairman LEVIN. Is that partly our fault, that we've sent signals that we have some reluctance in this area?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I don't know over the last, going back to 2004 and 2005. I was not in a position at that point—

Chairman LEVIN. How about in the last year?

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. In the last year, it's been very clear. I would say since the arrival of General McChrystal and myself it's been crystal clear, absolutely clear—

Chairman LEVIN. It's been McChrystal clear.

Ambassador EIKENBERRY.—to President Karzai and the Afghan leadership that we would be in full support of their efforts.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. Would you agree with—

Ambassador EIKENBERRY. I think he's got confidence—

Chairman LEVIN. Would you agree with that, General?

General MCCHRYSAL. Absolutely.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. That's fine. Thank you.

Can you get us that figure which I asked you about? Can you get us that, if possible, overnight?

General MCCHRYSAL. Yes, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay, thank you. I would really appreciate it.

We all very much appreciate your staying power, not just in Afghanistan, but your steadfastness through this process of ours. I know you're committed to the process in Afghanistan. We all wish you, obviously, godspeed and good luck in that regard. Your answers I think today have been clear. Your understanding of the President's directives it seems to me is clear. You both indicated you not only support them, you agree with them. I think that's clear and it's important, because the clarity of our mission is essential as well as the resources to accomplish it.

I know I'm speaking on behalf of everybody, everyone but me who is now voting in the Senate, that we're grateful again to you, your families, your troops, the people who work with you on the civilian side. Just pass along our thanks if you would and our gratitude and support for this effort.

We will stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 5:22 p.m., the committee adjourned.]