

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE TRANSITION
OF ALL UNITED STATES AND COALITION FORCES
FROM AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Washington, D.C.

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7 U.S. Senate

8 Committee on Armed Services

9 Washington, D.C.

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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,
13 chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],
15 Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,
16 Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Fischer,
17 Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley,
18 and Tuberville.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 RHODE ISLAND

3 Chairman Reed: Let me call the hearing to order.

4 The Committee meets this morning to examine the process
5 and implications of transitioning all United States and
6 Coalition forces from Afghanistan by mid-September. Helping
7 us better understand these challenges are two witnesses:
8 Mr. David Helvey, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for
9 Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, and Brigadier General Matthew
10 G. Trollinger, Deputy Director, Politico-Military Affairs
11 for the Middle East from the J-5. And General Trollinger,
12 let me congratulate you on your recent selection for
13 promotion to Major General. Congratulations, sir.

14 I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing here
15 today to give us a snapshot of what is happening at this
16 time. However, I want to note that I have repeatedly asked,
17 along with the ranking member, for General Scotty Miller,
18 Commander of NATO's Resolute Support Mission, to testify.

19 This Committee has not had an open hearing on
20 Afghanistan with DoD officials since 2017, and the last
21 closed briefing was in December 2019. That is far too long
22 to hear about a mission that involves so many Americans. I
23 understand that General Miller is now very busy with the
24 transition that is underway, but I will continue to press
25 for his appearance at the appropriate time.

1 Last month, President Biden announced the withdrawal of
2 all forces from Afghanistan by September 2021. It must be
3 noted that none of the options available to the President
4 were particularly palatable. He could have left May 1st, as
5 agreed to by the previous Administration, or continue to
6 press on with the United States' longest war. It appears
7 that the President concluded that more troops might buy more
8 time and more casualties, but more time would not create a
9 more effective Afghan government. The President's decision,
10 however, should be seen as a transition, not closure, and
11 should not mean an end to our counterterrorism efforts. We
12 must ensure that Afghanistan will not be a source of
13 planning, plotting, or projecting of terrorist attacks
14 around the globe, including particularly against our
15 homeland.

16 Despite great progress over the last 20 years, the
17 threats from al Qaeda, ISIS, and other terrorist groups
18 still remain. The Director of National Intelligence stated
19 in the 2021 annual threat assessment that ISIS and al Qaeda
20 remain among, in her words, "the greatest terrorist threats
21 to U.S. interests overseas," and that they "seek to conduct
22 attacks inside the United States, although sustained U.S.
23 and allied counterterrorism pressure has broadly degraded
24 their capability to do so." We must look to transition to a
25 new counterterrorism architecture in the region to continue

1 to degrade al Qaeda, ISIS, and other terrorist groups and
2 prevent their ability to attack the homeland.

3 CENTCOM Commander General McKenzie recently provided
4 the Committee some assurances that such a counterterrorism
5 posture in the region was possible, but cautioned that it
6 will be a reduced capability with longer ranges and
7 heightened risks, and will require greater resources. I
8 would be interested in hearing from the witnesses what
9 progress has been made in constructing a follow-on or over-
10 the-horizon posture.

11 Additionally, while the United States and Coalition
12 forces will physically transition from the country,
13 international support to the Afghan government, including
14 through support to the Afghan Security Forces, will remain
15 vital to security and stability there. Ultimately, the
16 Afghan government must find a way to govern in a way that
17 earns the confidence of its people, especially beyond the
18 limits of its cities, by providing basic services to include
19 security, education, health care, and justice.

20 It is broadly understood that the Afghan government
21 will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if international
22 support is withdrawn, and it will be increasingly difficult
23 for the international community to justify continuing to
24 provide such assistance without a functioning Afghan
25 government partner. The difficulty of providing such

1 support to the Afghan Security Forces is further compounded
2 by the fact that the deal the previous administration
3 negotiated with the Taliban includes the departure of all
4 security personnel, logisticians and contractors. When the
5 United States transitions from the country, the
6 international presence that is the foundation for security
7 assistance is dramatically reduced, if not entirely removed.
8 I would like to understand what plans are in place to
9 continue training and assistance to the Afghan forces in
10 light of these factors and how we will balance that against
11 the need to conduct robust oversight of funding that is
12 provided by the United States and international community.

13 Lastly, we must do our part to aid those Afghans who
14 have aided us. There are already troubling examples of
15 Taliban plans to target those who helped the United States,
16 and we must ensure that we have the capacity to bring them
17 to safety. That is why I joined 20 of my colleagues in
18 signing a letter to President Biden this week emphasizing
19 our support for the Special Immigrant Visa, the SIV program
20 for Afghans. I am grateful to Senator Shaheen for leading
21 this effort. It is an important effort, and she is doing an
22 extraordinary job. I would ask the witnesses to share what
23 the Department, what perception the Department sees as its
24 role in such operations and if any additional authorities
25 might be required in order for DoD to assist the State

1 Department or other agencies leading these efforts.

2 I want to thank you both again for being here this
3 morning and I look forward to your testimony. Before I turn
4 it to Ranking Member Inhofe, I would like to remind my
5 colleagues that there will be an informal classified
6 briefing which will include an appropriate DIA
7 representative immediately following this session in SVC-
8 217, the Office of Senate Security.

9 Moreover, I would like to remind my colleagues, and
10 request their assistance. We will need to gather a quorum
11 in the President's Room at the noon vote to vote out the
12 civilian nominations of Michael McCord for Comptroller and
13 Ronald Moultrie for Under Secretary for Intelligence. I ask
14 that everyone try to be helpful so no one has to wait to
15 look, and at the noon vote, if you could assemble and be
16 prepared to do so I would appreciate it very much.

17 With that, let me recognize Ranking Member Inhofe.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 First of all, I oppose and have expressed myself
5 several times about the full withdrawal of all troops by
6 September 11th of this year. The fact that the President
7 chose that date, the 20th anniversary of the most horrific
8 terrorist attacks in our nation's history, indicates this
9 was a calendar-based political decision. It was not based
10 on the conditions on the ground, which is the strong
11 bipartisan recommendation Congress has given to both the
12 Republican and Democratic presidents over the last decade.

13 This is not just my own interpretation. An unnamed
14 senior administration official told the Washington Post,
15 quote, "The President has judged that a conditions-based
16 approach is a recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever."

17 Now I am troubled by that statement that has been made
18 over and over again, framing the issue, which pretends that
19 there are only two options: unconditional U.S. withdrawal,
20 or a so-called "forever war."

21 Nobody wants to see United States troops in Afghanistan
22 forever. We understand that. And that is why I supported a
23 third option: maintaining a relatively small troop presence
24 until the conditions outlined in the February 2020 U.S.-
25 Taliban Agreement are fully implemented. I will be talking

1 about that with some questions to the witnesses. So under
2 that agreement, the troops were supposed to be withdrawn as
3 the Taliban met its counterterrorism commitments, and when
4 progress was made in the intra-Afghan dialogue.

5 A bipartisan majority of the Senate warned President
6 Trump against doing this 2 years ago. President Trump
7 listened. President Biden did not listen.

8 The precipitous drawdown from Afghanistan carries many
9 risks. First, there is the risk of severe chaos, violence,
10 and instability in Afghanistan, as the Taliban uses our
11 withdrawal to escalate its attacks around the country and in
12 Kabul. As we saw after President Obama's withdrawal from
13 Iraq in 2011, terrorists will exploit this instability. Two
14 and a half years after U.S. troops left Iraq, ISIS captured
15 Mosul.

16 Secondly, the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops will
17 make it much harder and more expensive to effectively
18 support our Afghan security partners. Over-the-horizon
19 counterterrorism does not work. General McKenzie, the
20 CENTCOM commander, testified, quote, "The ranges will be
21 greater. The resources will be greater. The risks will all
22 be greater."

23 Third, the U.S. drawdown puts at risk thousands of
24 Afghan -- and I think a lot of people realize this, this
25 article that was written in USA Today makes it very clear,

1 and it is kind of scary. We will be talking about that in
2 the questions that I have to ask.

3 So I thank both of you for your testimony and I look
4 forward to working with you in this endeavor.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Inhofe. And, Mr.
7 Helvey, would you begin please.

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1 STATEMENT OF DAVID F. HELVEY, ACTING ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY AFFAIRS

3 Mr. Helvey: Good morning Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
4 Inhofe, and members of this committee. Thank you for this
5 opportunity to provide you an update on the withdrawal of
6 the remaining U.S. forces from Afghanistan. I appreciate
7 you and this committee's continued interest in this matter.

8 Following a rigorous review, as you know, the President
9 determined that the best path forward to advance American
10 interests is by ending U.S. military involvement in the war
11 in Afghanistan. Accordingly, and as directed by the
12 President on April 14th, the Department of Defense began a
13 safe, orderly, and coordinate withdrawal of U.S. forces on
14 May 1st, and plans to have all U.S. forces out of the
15 country by September. This is the amount of time that we
16 have determined will be necessary to bring our forces, and
17 those of our Coalition partners, home safely, and to
18 retrograde, transfer, or dispose of responsibly equipment
19 and other property.

20 As a part of the interagency review of U.S. policy in
21 Afghanistan, the administration has assessed that the threat
22 from violent extremist organizations against the United
23 States, now emanating from Afghanistan, can be addressed
24 without a persistent U.S. military presence in that country.
25 At the same time, we will work closely with the Afghan

1 National Defense and Security Forces, or ANDSF, and with our
2 allies and our partners to maintain counterterrorism
3 capabilities in the region sufficient to ensure that
4 Afghanistan cannot become a safe haven for terrorists to
5 threaten our security. In this context, and in coordination
6 with our Afghan and international partners, we are working
7 to reposition our counterterrorism capabilities, including
8 by retaining assets in the region to prevent a re-emergence
9 of a terrorist threat to the United States homeland from
10 Afghanistan, and to hold the Taliban to its commitments to
11 ensure that al Qaeda does not once again a foothold there or
12 that ISIS or any other terrorist group could use Afghanistan
13 as a base to attack us or our allies.

14 And we will refine our counterterrorism strategy to
15 monitor and disrupt terrorist threats to our homeland and
16 our interests in a way that corresponds to the dispersed
17 threat landscape that we face today.

18 Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Congress and this
19 committee specifically for the continued support for the
20 Afghanistan Security Forces Fund, or ASFF. This is the
21 mechanism through which the United States provides the
22 majority of funding necessary to sustain the ANDSF and its
23 combat operations while developing the ANDSF into an
24 effective and independent force capable of securing
25 Afghanistan, protecting the Afghan people, and contributing

1 to regional security.

2 As Secretary Austin has said, we will continue funding
3 key capabilities such as the Afghan Air Force and Special
4 Mission Wing, we will continue paying salaries for Afghan
5 Security Forces and continue delivering certain military
6 supplies. We are developing mechanisms to provide
7 appropriate oversight for the use of these funds, most of
8 which will continue to be executed through DoD contracts,
9 and we have discussed with your staff how best to do this
10 with efficiency and accountability.

11 Although we are withdrawing U.S. troops from
12 Afghanistan, we are standing squarely with our Afghan
13 partners and redoubling our diplomatic efforts to achieve a
14 lasting peace. Afghan forces are performing heroically
15 against their relentless adversary. The Afghan Army takes
16 heavy losses daily, but they remain in the fight, and they
17 are an institution of which the Afghan people can be proud.

18 Mr. Chairman, the Department strongly supports the
19 ongoing diplomatic efforts to achieve a negotiated political
20 settlement in Afghanistan, one that the Afghan people
21 themselves endorse. And we will continue working with our
22 colleagues at the State Department to ensure that we take
23 care of those Afghans and their families who have helped us
24 over the past two decades, most notably Afghan employees of
25 the Department of Defense. And we will continue providing

1 sufficient support to the Department of State to maintain
2 the important diplomatic mission that will continue after
3 the Department of Defense's departure.

4 In closing, I want to thank the members of this
5 committee for your continued support for all those who have
6 served in Afghanistan.

7 I thank you for the opportunity to brief you and I look
8 forward to taking your questions.

9 [The prepared statement of Mr. Helvey follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Mr. Helvey.

2 I believe General Trollinger, you do not have a
3 statement.

4 General Trollinger: That is correct. I do not.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, sir.

6 Before I begin my questions, let me remind my
7 colleagues that because of the hybrid nature of this hearing
8 we will not be using the early bird rule. We will be going
9 by seniority. Also, we will have 5-minute rounds and would
10 ask everyone to mute their microphone if they are not
11 speaking. Thank you very much.

12 Now, Mr. Helvey and General Trollinger, one of the
13 critical aspects is maintaining that over-the-horizon
14 capability to disrupt counterterrorist group. General
15 McKenzie described it as feasible but more demanding in
16 terms of resources and other issues. Has there been any
17 change in General McKenzie's assessment, Mr. Trollinger, Mr.
18 Helvey?

19 Mr. Helvey: Mr. Chairman, I believe the General
20 McKenzie statement is still very much accurate. I mean, the
21 geography is the same. We are working to develop the
22 options to be able to provide the type of intelligence,
23 surveillance, and reconnaissance and other necessary
24 elements to maintain an appropriate counterterrorism
25 capability. The planning and the discussions are ongoing on

1 how to do that.

2 In the interim, I would note that we do have
3 significant capabilities that are resident in the Persian
4 Gulf region and Middle East. That obviously creates time
5 and distance between there and any type of operations that
6 we may need to undertake, and we are looking at options that
7 could be closer in within the region, and those
8 conversations and the planning for that is ongoing.

9 Chairman Reed: General Trollinger, do you have any
10 comments on the steps that have been taken most recently to
11 mitigate the risk that General McKenzie spoke of?

12 General Trollinger: Mr. Chairman, I would only offer
13 that as we approach this particular problem there is a sense
14 of urgency and earnest planning effort ongoing so that we
15 can maintain a seamless transition from that capability that
16 resides in Afghanistan, but we would be required to be
17 located elsewhere. So that planning continues in earnest.

18 Chairman Reed: Now would these activities be
19 undertaken with our Coalition partners? Are they fully
20 integrated into the planning and the execution, and also
21 with regional countries? Mr. Helvey?

22 Mr. Helvey: We are in some discussions with certain
23 Coalition partners with respect to future CT architecture,
24 and obviously if we have any new arrangements made for
25 access basing and overflight that would be undertaken in

1 consultation with local partners. And these are the types
2 of negotiations that are underway now, that we are
3 supporting. Our State Department and intelligence community
4 colleagues are also playing a role in that.

5 Chairman Reed: One of the specific articles in the
6 agreement that the Trump administration signed was the
7 removal of all contractors, and yet you indicated in your
8 statement that we will be using contractors to pay,
9 distribute, and overview the distribution of resources. How
10 do we reconcile the, appears, complete withdrawal of
11 contractors with contractors?

12 Mr. Helvey: Mr. Chairman, I indicated there were DoD
13 contracts, which may not necessarily involve DoD contractors
14 on the ground in Afghanistan. So we are looking at ways
15 that we can provide the type of oversight for our security
16 force assistance from an over-the-horizon posture, and we
17 are looking at options that we can continue doing that
18 internally.

19 I think the key things that we are focused on are
20 things like paying Afghan salaries. A vast majority of the
21 servicemembers that are paid have electronic bank accounts,
22 for example, and so there are ways that we can provide that
23 to the Afghan Ministry of Finance without necessarily having
24 somebody there. But we are looking at how to provide the
25 right type of oversight mechanisms so that we have

1 confidence that the resources that we are providing are
2 going to its intended recipients, and we want to make sure
3 that we are working very closely with Congress to ensure
4 that Congress is comfortable with those mechanisms as well.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you. General Trollinger, one of
6 my impressions is the key contractors are those mechanics
7 that service their aircraft, those specially trained
8 individuals, and the Afghan after 20 years, to our chagrin,
9 we have not created a cadre of those type of individuals.
10 How can they effectively maintain aircraft and other fairly
11 sophisticated pieces of equipment?

12 General Trollinger: Mr. Chairman, we continue to work
13 with them in looking at the potential ways, a variety of
14 ways that we can get after continuing to support them to
15 work on their aircraft in-country, and then looking at
16 options whereby we can facilitate more extensive work on
17 those airplanes elsewhere.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you. A final question, General
19 Trollinger. We missed a lot of signals in 2014 about the
20 status of the Iraqi army, and then suddenly they collapsed
21 before Mosul, and it was a rush to safety on their part not
22 to contact with the enemy. How can we avoid that same
23 situation on the ground in Afghanistan, at least knowing the
24 strength and the fighting capabilities of the force on the
25 ground?

1 General Trollinger: Mr. Chairman, as we execute the
2 retrograde we are going to continue to maintain contact with
3 our ANDSF partners, do what we can from elsewhere, from
4 outside the country, and maintain good situational awareness
5 of their current capabilities and any areas where they may
6 be challenged and we may be able to help them.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Senator Inhofe,
8 please.

9 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I
10 sound like a broken record but I have had two consistent
11 concerns with the action in Afghanistan, and I want to ask
12 you, each one, a specific question about each of these
13 things, one, of course, being with what was supposed to have
14 been done before we would have a withdrawal and the other
15 having to do with a concern for our Coalition forces and
16 their safety.

17 So on the first one, I think you all are very familiar
18 with the document of February 29, 2020. That was the U.S.-
19 Taliban agreement that established a conditions-based
20 approach drawing down troops in Afghanistan. According to
21 this agreement, the Taliban was supposed to take certain
22 steps against terrorist groups and participate in intra-
23 Afghan dialogue on the country's political future.

24 Now what I would like to ask each one of you to briefly
25 respond to, in your assessment, what areas has this

1 agreement come to? What is behind this now? What successes
2 have we had, and which conditions have been met, and which
3 ones have not been met from that agreement of February 29,
4 2020? Let's start with you, Mr. Secretary.

5 Mr. Helvey: Sir, thank you for that question. I would
6 say, right up front, that the Taliban's compliance with the
7 agreement has been uneven over time, and I think in terms of
8 areas that we have seen a follow-through or success, they
9 did comply with their agreement not to conduct attacks
10 against the U.S. or Coalition forces following the signing
11 of the agreement, and that has largely held, with some very
12 minor exceptions. So I think in terms of the attacks
13 against U.S. and Coalition forces they complied with that.

14 As I have testified publicly and said publicly,
15 previously, however, their violence against the Afghan
16 forces and the Afghan people remain very high throughout
17 this period.

18 With respect to the entering into intra-Afghan
19 negotiations, they did do that, and last September they
20 began discussions with the Afghan government on future peace
21 arrangements. Those discussions have not been fruitful, but
22 they did begin.

23 Senator Inhofe: That is fine. We are running out of
24 time here. General, do you generally agree with the
25 comments or the answer that was given by the Secretary?

1 General Trollinger: Senator, I do agree, and would
2 just offer that as Mr. Helvey mentioned, since that
3 agreement was signed the Taliban has not targeted the U.S.
4 or Coalition forces.

5 Senator Inhofe: I think that is kind of a mixed
6 answer. I understand it, and I appreciate it, but I do not
7 think we have met the conditions that we talked about, and,
8 of course, this is a different administration.

9 Now the second area that I have been concerned about
10 for a long period of time came from a number of articles and
11 awareness that is out there. One of them, that I actually
12 had talked about, was found in USA Today, May 10th. Now in
13 this thing they talked about, what is going to happen with
14 our allies, people who stood by us, if we withdraw in a
15 manner that they are talking about? And such things in the
16 article say, quote, that "you will see the dead bodies on
17 every street, where he said he is already being tracked by
18 the Taliban. They will slaughter us. They are in a panic
19 right now because there has been such a backlog of these
20 visas." It goes on and on. And I do want to ask, at this
21 point in the record, Mr. Chairman, that this be a part of
22 the record.

23 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

24 [The information follows:]

25 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Inhofe: So I would like to know, from each one
2 of you, what has happened? What have we been doing? What
3 are we doing now to try to -- assuming that these problems
4 are very real, and I do not think anyone is going to deny
5 that they are -- that we can help our allies for the great
6 job they have done for us? And I would like to have each of
7 you respond. Let's start with you on this one, General.
8 What can we do right now to minimize that event?

9 General Trollinger: Senator, we continue to coordinate
10 very closely with our Coalition partners. We went into this
11 together, we have adjusted over the years together, and we
12 are coming out together, and we continue to work together to
13 do our best to support the ANDSF and the government of
14 Afghanistan.

15 Senator Inhofe: And you say we are coming out
16 together.

17 General Trollinger: That is correct.

18 Senator Inhofe: Okay. To me, that makes that even
19 worse. What do you think, Mr. Secretary?

20 Mr. Helvey: Senator, thank you for that question, and
21 I agree with you. We have a moral obligation to help those
22 that have helped us over the past 20 years of our presence
23 and work in Afghanistan. We are working very closely with
24 our State Department and interagency colleagues to look at
25 programs like the Special Immigrant Visa program. However,

1 as you know, that program, in and of itself, is limited. We
2 would like to be able to work with Congress to be able to
3 increase the quotas and the resources for Special Immigrant
4 Visas. But there are certain categories of our Afghan
5 partners that would not meet the thresholds for Special
6 Immigrant Visas, so we need to look at other tools and other
7 mechanisms to help those that have helped us, whether that
8 is significant public benefit or humanitarian parole or
9 other types of mechanisms that we can use to facilitate
10 this. And we are working within the interagency to be able
11 to identify those and get the proper resources attached to
12 them.

13 With respect to Special Immigrant Visas, we are working
14 very closely with State Department to identify and provide
15 data that can help to provide the identification and the
16 identities of those employees of the Department of Defense
17 that would qualify. We are also looking at biometric data,
18 which can also help to provide information and insight on
19 who may qualify for that type of benefit. But that is --

20 Senator Inhofe: Okay. Okay. Well, my time has
21 expired, but I do not get a lot of comfort out of those
22 answers. I am very much concerned about those. Thank you,
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Inhofe. Senator
25 Shaheen, please.

1 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Helvey,
2 I want to begin by sharing the Chairman's frustration with
3 the fact that we have not been able to hear from our General
4 in Afghanistan. It is very difficult for this committee to
5 conduct its oversight responsibilities when we cannot get
6 the appropriate people in front of us, and there is no
7 excuse for that. So I hope you will take that back to the
8 Department and share that with them.

9 General Trollinger, there have been multiple reports
10 over the last months, since the February 2020 agreement,
11 that the Taliban have not broken their ties with al Qaeda,
12 that al Qaeda continues to operate with the Taliban in
13 Afghanistan, and that ISIS also is operating in Afghanistan.
14 Is that your understanding, and is that the understanding of
15 our military people on the ground in Afghanistan?

16 General Trollinger: Senator, it is clear that the
17 Taliban's compliance with the agreement has been uneven, but
18 I would prefer to go into detail on that in our closed
19 session.

20 Senator Shaheen: I appreciate that. However, people
21 are going to know very soon, once we pull out, whether al
22 Qaeda and ISIS continue to operate in Afghanistan.

23 Mr. Helvey, I appreciated your support for those
24 Afghans who have helped us during our 20 years in
25 Afghanistan, but I think we have got to be clearer about

1 what we are doing to address that. Currently there are an
2 estimated 18,000 Afghan SIV applicants currently in process.
3 These applicants and their families, as we know, are in
4 imminent danger from the Taliban. Many of the delays in the
5 SIV program stem from the difficulty that those applicants
6 have in obtaining employment verification letters from
7 former and often defunct employers. And considering that
8 many of those applicants have served in support of the
9 military and directly with the Department of Defense, do we
10 have a centralized database that can be used to verify the
11 employment of those SIV applicants?

12 Mr. Helvey: Senator, it is my understanding that we
13 are drawing from a centralized database to collect and
14 provide biometric data to facilitate that type of
15 identification. I do not have the specific scope for how
16 long that biometric data has been collected, so I think
17 there are some gaps in that. But since we began the
18 collection and maintenance of that biometric data we have
19 been able to use that. There are Afghan individuals that
20 have supported us prior to the collection of that biometric
21 data that we are looking to pull other resources of data to
22 provide that type of information to State Department.

23 Senator Shaheen: Can you share with me and with this
24 committee specifically what we are doing with that data?

25 Mr. Helvey: Senator, if I can provide that in writing,

1 just to provide the --

2 Senator Shaheen: That would be great. I would
3 appreciate that.

4 Mr. Helvey: I would be happy to do that.

5 Senator Shaheen: In fiscal year 2014, NDAA required
6 that the Secretary of Defense designate a senior
7 coordinating official, and I am quoting, "with sufficient
8 expertise, authority, and resources to carry out the duties
9 with regard to the issuance of SIVs." It tasked the
10 official with developing proposals to improve the efficiency
11 and effectiveness of the process.

12 Can you tell me if we have someone designated to do
13 that, who that person is? And if not, are we going to
14 appoint someone to do that?

15 Mr. Helvey: I will have to get back to you, Senator.
16 I mean, State Department is in the lead for this program,
17 and so let me find out if there is such a special
18 coordinator performing that function.

19 Senator Shaheen: I can tell you that I do not believe
20 that there is, so I would urge the Department to take a look
21 at that.

22 Finally, let me just ask you, in the time that I have
23 left, about the status of women and girls in Afghanistan.
24 We know that on May 8th there was a bus bombing that killed
25 more than 80 people. Many of them were schoolgirls. We

1 have seen the violence against women, particularly women in
2 the media and women working in Afghanistan over the last
3 months, and based on what we understand from the Taliban we
4 expect that to continue once the United States pulls out.

5 So can you speak to any steps that we are taking to try
6 and support the women and girls of Afghanistan, and
7 particularly in the context of the Women Peace and Security
8 Act in 2017, which requires the Department to incorporate
9 gender lens decision-making into its policies and actions.
10 Are we doing anything to involve women as we are looking at
11 what happens after we leave?

12 Mr. Helvey: Senator, with respect to what we are doing
13 today, we are using some of the funding within the Afghan
14 Security Forces Fund, or ASIF, to encourage and build in
15 Afghan women, in particular, into the Afghan National
16 Defense and Security Forces. And so that is something that
17 we are doing.

18 With respect to --

19 Senator Shaheen: We have been doing that for some
20 time, though. Is that not correct?

21 Mr. Helvey: Yes, Senator, that is something that we
22 have been doing in compliance with the law. In terms of
23 where we need to go, I agree with you 100 percent. We want
24 to be able to maintain and see the gains that we have made
25 over the past 20 years preserved. This is something that we

1 are working with our State Department, USAID colleagues, and
2 our Coalition partners who are equally interested in this.

3 I think, you know, fundamentally, this is going to have
4 to be something that the Afghan government and the Taliban,
5 if they are able to sit and determine the arrangements for
6 the future Afghanistan, to figure out how to get to that
7 peaceful outcome and to be able to preserve these gains for
8 all Afghans.

9 And I think with respect to what the Taliban does in
10 the future, this is something that Ambassador Khalilzad has
11 talked about. At some point, if they are in a position
12 where they are exercising power and influence in
13 Afghanistan, they are going to need to have international
14 support. And that does provide a degree of leverage that
15 the international community would have on the Taliban in how
16 it treats the people within the borders.

17 Senator Shaheen: Well, I appreciate that answer, but
18 we would have had a lot more leverage if we had made the
19 point to the Taliban when we were negotiating a peace
20 agreement, before we signed it.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Now let me
23 recognize, via Webex, Senator Rounds.

24 [Pause.]

25 Chairman Reed: Senator, we cannot hear you.

1 We still cannot hear you.

2 Senator Gillibrand: You are on Webex so staff just has
3 to turn up your volume in the committee room.

4 Senator Rounds: Yeah, I think they need to -- you got
5 it now?

6 Chairman Reed: We can hear you now.

7 Senator Rounds: All right. Yeah, thank you. Thanks,
8 Senator Gillibrand. I appreciate that.

9 Gentlemen, first of all, let me just begin by saying
10 thank you very much for your time in front of the committee
11 today. I do not think this is necessarily the type of a
12 meeting that you relish to come before the United States
13 Senate.

14 I want to begin by acknowledging that there is no
15 perfect answer to what should be done next in Afghanistan.
16 We have been in a protracted state of war for almost 20
17 years, at least 2,448 servicemembers and DoD civilians have
18 died, an additional 20,722 servicemembers and DoD civilians
19 have been wounded in action, according to the current DoD
20 website. The human cost has also been borne by our NATO
21 allies, the Afghan National Security Forces, and the Afghan
22 people. Finally, we can never forget the 2,997 people who
23 were killed on 9/11.

24 My question is this. Is there a middle ground where we
25 continue, or where we could continue to support the

1 government of Afghanistan that would recognize the lives,
2 sacrifice, and the hundreds of billions of dollars our
3 citizens have invested in this endeavor, one that provides
4 the resources to Afghanistan to prevent a return to being a
5 haven for terrorists or the creation of a power vacuum,
6 which would benefit China, Russia, and Iran, while the
7 Afghan government develops the unique capabilities that only
8 we currently can provide? Gentlemen?

9 Mr. Helvey: Senator, thank you for that question. And
10 if I may, that is the path that we are seeking to embark
11 upon. While we are retrograding the forces out of
12 Afghanistan, we want to make sure, and the President has
13 been clear, he wants to continue providing support and
14 assistance to our Afghan partners. So to the extent that we
15 can, we are looking at ways to be able to continue providing
16 the critical support to the ANDSF, in terms of continued
17 paying their salaries, continued providing assistance for
18 contracted logistics and maintenance, and providing support
19 for the Afghan Air Force's and the Special Mission Wing,
20 which are --

21 Senator Rounds: Mr. Helvey, I hate to -- let me just
22 ask this. Are you talking about providing that until we are
23 out of the country or are you talking about providing that
24 over an extended period of time?

25 Mr. Helvey: We are talking about providing that after

1 we leave, in addition. The challenge that we face today is
2 making sure that we have got the right type of oversight
3 mechanisms that we are working, but the intent would be that
4 we would maintain that support, provided we also continue to
5 get the support from Congress. The intent would be we would
6 maintain those resources and that assistance to the Afghan
7 government.

8 Senator Rounds: Thank you. I appreciate that. I
9 think you are answering my question, and I do want to ask
10 General Trollinger, rather than asking you the same question
11 or expecting you to respond, I think, because this will be a
12 policy decision that the administration will be making, I
13 want to go to you and I want to ask you this. With the U.S.
14 withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan by September, one
15 has to question the ability of the Afghan Security Forces to
16 stand their ground against the Taliban and our ability to
17 successfully conduct over-the-horizon counterterrorism
18 operations. I know we have kind of touched on that a little
19 bit, but I want to ask it this way. In your professional
20 military judgment, can we successfully and continually
21 combat threats posed by the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other
22 violent extremist organizations via over-the-horizon
23 operations?

24 General Trollinger: I absolutely believe we can,
25 Senator. We have the capabilities to be able to posture in

1 the region where it is required, and we have the
2 capabilities to be able to monitor potential adversaries,
3 track those adversaries, and then strike when conditions
4 permit and allow.

5 Senator Rounds: Do we have the will to do that? Is
6 that the plan right now?

7 General Trollinger: The plan right now would be to
8 make a seamless transition from what we have currently in
9 Afghanistan to other locations that would be able to meet
10 our overarching objectives of ensuring that Afghanistan does
11 not become a safe haven for terrorist that would attack the
12 U.S. or our allies.

13 Senator Rounds: Gentlemen, thank you for your answers.
14 Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Rounds.
16 Now let me recognize, via Webex, Senator Gillibrand.

17 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would
18 like to continue the questioning that Senator Shaheen
19 started. General Trollinger, with the U.S. and NATO's
20 departure, human rights groups, non-governmental
21 organizations, schools, and business are left trying to
22 figure out contingency plans for female employees, for
23 female students, should the Taliban return to power by force
24 or through an agreement with the Afghan government.

25 Considering the Taliban is already restricting the

1 human rights of women in the territories they control, what
2 is the U.S. doing to ensure peace negotiations result in a
3 deal that protects women throughout the country,
4 particularly after the withdrawal?

5 General Trollinger: Senator, we continue to support
6 the ANDSF and intend to do so going forward, even as we
7 retrograde from Afghanistan. We also continue to work with
8 our coalition allies and partners to facilitate diplomatic
9 pressure that could be put on against the Taliban to work
10 out a peaceful agreement, negotiations with GERoA such that
11 women's rights, girls' rights, et cetera, are protected.

12 Senator Gillibrand: Mr. Helvey, over the last two
13 decades the United States has spent more than \$780 million
14 to promote women's rights and gender equality in
15 Afghanistan, and the efforts have yielded mixed results.
16 What kinds and amounts of funding should we expect in the
17 future? How will funding be implemented given the security
18 situation after troop withdrawals? And second, Afghan women
19 have pointed to the vocal support by the United States and
20 other international actors as key factors to advancing
21 rights and participation in the public sphere. What will
22 the U.S. do to continue to advance women's rights and gender
23 equality?

24 Mr. Helvey: Senator, thank you for that question, and
25 you are right to point out we have spent resources to

1 promote the rights of women and girls and other minorities
2 in Afghanistan as part of our policy and approach there.

3 I do not want to get ahead of the President's budget in
4 terms of what types of future funding would be requested or
5 required, but in response to the previous question to
6 Senator Shaheen, ASIF does have specific requirements for
7 promoting women in the Afghan Defense and Security Forces,
8 and our intent would be that that would continue.

9 We would also continue working with our state and USAID
10 and coalition partners in providing the type of diplomatic
11 support and pressure -- pardon me, pressure on the Taliban,
12 because I think fundamentally the best way to protect the
13 rights of women, girls, and minorities in Afghanistan is to
14 realize a negotiated, peaceful settlement and outcome to the
15 war that has been in Afghanistan for the better part of 40
16 years.

17 Senator Gillibrand: I have some counterterrorism
18 questions and assessments of Taliban strengths that I will
19 ask in closed session, but let me just ask one more question
20 of General Trollingier before my time expires.

21 What is your assessment of the security of the U.S.
22 Embassy in Kabul, and what is your assessment of how the
23 security situation in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of
24 troops will affect the ability to conduct diplomatic and
25 other operations?

1 General Trollinger: I think our diplomatic facilities
2 in Kabul remain secure, and planning is ongoing currently to
3 ensure that that remains the case as we continue to conduct
4 our retrograde. And then any diplomatic security presence
5 that remains we will want to ensure has the appropriate
6 security force to protect our diplomats and their important
7 mission.

8 Senator Gillibrand: And then can you please -- I know
9 you requested to answer Senator Shaheen's question in closed
10 session, but can you give us your general assessment of the
11 likelihood of Afghanistan falling under Taliban control, and
12 if it does not fall completely, the likelihood of central
13 government only having control of Kabul, and what effect
14 that will have on the Afghan people and our ability to fight
15 terrorism. And perhaps maybe whether a peace or power-
16 sharing agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan
17 government could prevent a Taliban takeover.

18 General Trollinger: I will acknowledge the range of
19 potential outcomes in the months as we go forward,
20 everything from a Taliban takeover to ANDSF being successful
21 in defending against the Taliban and GERoA maintaining its
22 ability to effectively govern, and everything in between.
23 But I will say that the ANDSF, they are a capable force.
24 They have capable ground, air, and special operations
25 forces, and here very recently they have effectively both

1 defended against Taliban attacks as well as gone on the
2 offensive to disrupt Taliban activities.

3 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
4 Chairman.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Now let
6 me recognize Senator Ernst, please.

7 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you,
8 gentlemen, very much, for being here today.

9 Twenty years ago, of course, our nation's
10 servicemembers deployed to deliver justice to the terrorists
11 who had carried out the deadly and deliberate attacks on our
12 homeland, and thousands of Iowans have proudly served in
13 Afghanistan, risking life and limb. And I am hoping that I
14 can assure the Iowa families and the American people that
15 the threat to our homeland has been reduced and we have the
16 measures in place to keep this threat at bay.

17 So I know we have talked about our ability to project
18 over the horizon. I understand that. But Mr. Helvey, what
19 is your assessment of our adversaries' ability to plan for
20 and conduct attacks on America from bases in Afghanistan
21 after we have gone?

22 So let's talk about the reverse. What is their ability
23 to plan -- not our ability to respond? What is their
24 ability to plan attacks on us when we have left?

25 Mr. Helvey: Their ability today has been significantly

1 degraded, and that degradation is due, in large part, to the
2 presence that we have had in that country. With respect to
3 the specifics, I prefer to keep those specifics in the
4 closed session. But I can say with confidence that the
5 ability of international terrorist groups to plan, recruit,
6 train, organization, and execute attacks against the United
7 States from Afghanistan has been significantly reduced.

8 Senator Ernst: Significantly reduced, because we are
9 there and we are enabling efforts on the part of the Afghan
10 National Defense and Security Forces. Correct?

11 Mr. Helvey: Our presence has had a significant impact
12 on that. I would also add, though, that the nature of the
13 international terrorist threat over the past 20 years has
14 become much more diffuse.

15 So, yeah, as we know we have got terrorists,
16 international terrorist groups operating in the Middle East,
17 in Africa, the northern part of Africa. The nature of the
18 threat has changed over the past 20 years, but the threat
19 emanating from Afghanistan to the United States and our
20 allies has been significantly degraded.

21 Senator Ernst: And please do not mistake me. I do
22 believe that at some point we have to bring this war to an
23 end. Absolutely we have to do that. However, not leaving a
24 remnant or a small number of troops within Afghanistan,
25 intelligence officials in Afghanistan, we are leaving a

1 void. And I do worry that while the threat has been
2 diminished that it will reconstitute in Afghanistan. So
3 just worries there, and I hope that everything goes smoothly
4 and that the impacts to stability are minimal.

5 I do also share the concerns raised by Senator Shaheen
6 and by Senator Gillibrand, and Senator Gillibrand and I went
7 to Afghanistan pre-pandemic, and we were able to visit a
8 number of training facilities where Afghan women were being
9 trained in various secretarial and clerical positions, but
10 also as women warriors. And I am very concerned about what
11 will happen to them, what will happen to girls that have
12 attended school and are now working in businesses. So I
13 just want to re-emphasize that.

14 Senator Shaheen is leading a letter, and I am a co-
15 lead, to our President, asking for those Special Immigrant
16 Visas. It is something that we are very concerned about.
17 Just in the news this morning, coming from Iowa, we have an
18 Afghan interpreter in Iowa Falls, and his asylum request has
19 been denied. He just received a letter the other day.

20 So if you can also work with the State Department and
21 just stress to them, as we are stressing to them, how
22 important it is that as we are withdrawing we are also
23 making sure that we are protecting those who have enabled
24 our forces in Afghanistan. It is extremely important, and
25 it is not just the men that have served as interpreters, but

1 it will also be the women, girls that have stepped up to
2 assist us as well.

3 So I am running out of time. I know this is a very
4 important hearing. You can hear the level of frustration in
5 all of our voices as we are going through this. I do
6 believe that, again, we need to withdraw our forces. I
7 think that is important. But we need to do it in a smart
8 and meaningful way. And I sincerely hope that this is the
9 right plan, because if not, we will see a significant threat
10 increase to our homeland, to our allies, but most certainly
11 to the people that we are leaving behind.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst. Now let me
14 recognize Senator Kaine, please.

15 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to
16 the ranking member, and I want to thank our public servants
17 for their testimony.

18 Every concern expressed by everyone on this committee
19 on this issue is very legitimate. I do not think there is
20 just a completely clear answer. But I just want to state
21 quickly, as I have before, that I support President Biden's
22 decision with respect to the removal of U.S. troops. We
23 have been in Afghanistan -- it is the longest war in
24 American history -- 20 years come this September. It took
25 us 10 years to find and kill Osama bin Laden, the

1 perpetrator and mastermind of the 9/11 attack, and then for
2 10 years we have done our best to build up and train an
3 Afghan security apparatus that was essentially nonexistent
4 when we began the war in 2001. The civil war in Afghanistan
5 had degraded the Afghan military and national security
6 forces and police to such a degree that we pretty much had
7 to start from scratch.

8 Twenty years in, I think I am right, although I will
9 certainly accept correction from the experts, the Afghan
10 Army is now about 180,000, by my sort of quick analysis; the
11 Afghan Air Force is 7,000 with hundreds of aircraft; the
12 Afghan National Police is 116,000. All of these security
13 components have been funded, built, carefully, carefully
14 trained over these two decades by the United States and by
15 other allies.

16 The Taliban is estimated to be at about 55,000 to
17 85,000. And so the combined Afghan national security
18 apparatus, if I am correct, is over 300,000, and the
19 Taliban, a formidable fighting force, is 55,000 to 85,000.

20 The commitment of these witnesses, and I hope Congress
21 will continue to meet this commitment, is that the United
22 States will continue to provide massive support to our
23 partner and ally, Afghanistan, military support, including
24 the payment of salaries of Afghan Security Forces,
25 diplomatic support, humanitarian support, economic support.

1 But we will remove 3,500 U.S. troops.

2 When President Biden made his announcement in April, at
3 that point the official count of U.S. troops in Afghanistan
4 was 2,500. There were other reportings suggesting that
5 possibly involved in special operations or additional
6 missions the total might have been 3,500.

7 Is 3,500 U.S. troops the difference between success and
8 failure in Afghanistan after 20 years? I do not believe
9 that it is. I do not believe the 3,500 U.S. troops --
10 because no one on this committee, as far as I am aware, is
11 proposing to increase the number of U.S. troops. I do not
12 believe 3,500 U.S. troops, after 20 years, is the difference
13 between a success or failure in Afghanistan when there is an
14 Afghan national security apparatus of more than 300,000
15 matched up against a Taliban of 55,000 to 85,000.

16 What is the ingredient that will determine success or
17 failure in Afghanistan going forward? It is the Afghan
18 people, the Afghan people who have experienced a significant
19 increase in life expectancy, who have experienced a
20 significant increase in the education of their young,
21 including the education of young women, a dramatic
22 improvement in public health infrastructure and other
23 elements of civil government.

24 The Afghan people will have to decide, is it worth
25 fighting for? And it cannot be worth more to us than it is

1 to them. And that is kind of a painful thing to say. It is
2 kind of a cold, tough thing to say. But success in
3 Afghanistan cannot mean more to the United States than it
4 means to the Afghans. And at the end of the day, I believe
5 it will not mean more to us than the Afghans. I believe the
6 Afghans, having seen the benefits of improved quality of
7 life over 20 years will decide that they want to keep that
8 rather than to go backwards and experience what they were
9 during the time when the Taliban and others were engaged in
10 a massive civil war in the country.

11 But if the Afghans choose, at the end of the day, that
12 that does not matter to them, there is no amount of U.S.
13 troops -- none -- there is no amount of U.S. troops that
14 would make a difference.

15 And so I think this is a painful decision, and the
16 comments of my colleagues who feel differently about it I
17 completely get every legitimate concern they have, and it is
18 a very legitimate concern. But we cannot want success in
19 Afghanistan more than the Afghans do. And having built up a
20 security apparatus with a continued commitment to funding
21 that apparatus and being a support of our allied nation
22 going forward, I think that is the right role for the United
23 States to play right now, and that is why I support
24 President Biden in his decision, and I thank the witnesses
25 for appearing today.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Let me
2 recognize now Senator Cramer.

3 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to
4 both of you for being here. A question that came up, based
5 on some of the things I heard, have we committed to
6 completely supporting the current government in Afghanistan
7 should it fall into an all-out civil war, and if so, what
8 would that commitment include?

9 Mr. Helvey: Senator, thank you for that question. We
10 have committed to continue supporting the Afghan government.
11 We have a bilateral security agreement with the Afghan
12 government in which we indicate we will continue to seek
13 funding to provide support to them, to support the ANDSF,
14 through the mechanisms that we have specified, in terms of
15 training, advising, and assisting salaries, contractor
16 logistics and assistance. So we have committed to
17 supporting our Afghan partners. And through this
18 negotiation period, through the implementation of the U.S.-
19 Taliban agreement, we have continued supporting our Afghan
20 partners as they have been fighting the Taliban.

21 Senator Cramer: Obviously, a risk analysis would
22 include the cost of preventing an all-out civil war versus
23 having to come back and try to clean it up. And I can
24 associate myself with every comment that has been made by my
25 colleagues, even the ones that conflict. That is how

1 conflicting this is, I think, for a lot of us, as it is no
2 doubt for you all.

3 I think it might have been in response to a question
4 from the chairman, but I am going to maybe get more
5 specific. Or I think you mentioned something about ISR
6 capabilities and whatnot. What type of unmanned or space-
7 borne capabilities do we need to maintain or even enhance to
8 minimize the possibility of global terror threats? Do you
9 have a sense of that?

10 Mr. Helvey: Well, with respect to Afghanistan, I think
11 the best way to characterize how we need to look at it is
12 based on three concentric circles. There is the type of
13 footprint or apparatus that we would do within Afghanistan
14 that is based largely on our relationships with local
15 partners and DSF and the Afghan government to be able to
16 understand what is going on within Afghanistan.

17 Then there is a regional component to it, which is
18 outside, which, you know, the things that we cannot have in
19 Afghanistan we would want to be able to maintain, to be able
20 to provide the type of access basing and overflight that
21 would allow us to have the type of presence.

22 Then there is kind of like this broader global
23 framework, where it includes not only national technical
24 means but also the types of capabilities that may not be
25 resonant within the region but that we could flow into the

1 region on an as-needed basis.

2 And I would also note that over the past 20 years we
3 have had a lot of different changes in how we, as a
4 government, and indeed as a society, have been combating
5 international terrorist organizations. You cannot get on a
6 commercial aircraft or open a new bank account without
7 understanding how we have changed in ways that help us to
8 better understand and illuminate the types of terrorist
9 threats that would seek to do us and our allies harm.

10 So I think all of these things have to be working in
11 concert in order to be able to maintain the type of broader
12 threat picture, if you will, of the types of terrorist
13 threats that we may need to face.

14 Senator Cramer: General, maybe you could answer the
15 same question in more specificity as it relates to Afghan or
16 the region, regarding assets, whether they be unmanned or
17 space. Is there more we can be doing to shore up this new
18 way of providing some security?

19 General Trollinger: Well, Senator, I think certainly
20 the capability that we currently have and use to achieve our
21 objective we want to continue to utilize and make
22 technological advances that we are able to, to better enable
23 us. But in terms of specificity I cannot offer you that
24 right now.

25 Senator Cramer: Very good. Thank you both. Thank

1 you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cramer. Now, via
3 Webex, let me recognize Senator Manchin.

4 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to
5 thank all of you for your service and for being here today,
6 and I want to congratulate --

7 Chairman Reed: Senator, we are going to have to raise
8 your volume, so if you would withhold for a minute.

9 Senator Manchin: Okay. Can you hear me now, Mr.
10 Chairman?

11 Chairman Reed: A little bit better.

12 Senator Manchin: Okay. I will talk louder.

13 Chairman Reed: We have you, sir. Go ahead.

14 Senator Manchin: Okay. I want to say, I wanted to
15 thank everybody for their service. I wanted to pre-
16 congratulate Brigadier General Trollinger for hopefully his
17 advancement. I am very proud of that.

18 First let me say that I completely support the
19 Afghanistan withdrawal, and we have to shift our focus to
20 other priority threats. The future of Afghanistan and any
21 global impacts rest on whether the government can prevail by
22 securing their country and upholding their 2004
23 constitution.

24 Between 2009 and 2020, we increased and decreased troop
25 strength at least five times. These shifts and end strength

1 range from a few hundred to as much as 23,000 personnel.
2 Additionally, we experienced major diplomatic and
3 operational delays in 2012, with insider attacks, and in
4 2013, when President Karzai temporarily suspended security
5 talks with the U.S. More recently, the Taliban continues to
6 refuse to negotiate efforts until all foreign forces are out
7 of Afghanistan.

8 So one question I would have to General Trollinger, how
9 will our withdrawal from Afghanistan impact other combatant
10 commands?

11 General Trollinger: Senator, if I understand your
12 question correctly it is as we withdraw from Afghanistan how
13 that will impact other combatant commands. And the only
14 thing it can offer is that it is not in any way adversely
15 impacting others.

16 Senator Manchin: Thank you. Mr. Helvey, one of my
17 fears about our withdrawal from Afghanistan is that it will
18 become a power vacuum in which terrorist organizations can
19 recruit, train, and operate from. With nearly no assets on
20 the ground, we are going to have to rely on regional
21 partners to work with us to stay ahead and on top of
22 counterterrorism efforts. Are you confident in our regional
23 partners and their capacity and commitment to driving
24 terrorism out of the region?

25 Mr. Helvey: Thank you, Senator. We will have to work

1 with our local and regional partners, and we want to
2 continue developing those capabilities and those
3 partnerships to be able to ensure that we have got the right
4 type of confidence and the right type of framework to
5 address our CT threats. That is one of the things that we,
6 as a Department, in concert with our interagency colleagues,
7 are doing today, is to make sure that we have got the right
8 type of arrangements, relationships, and framework so that
9 we can ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe
10 haven for terrorism.

11 Senator Manchin: Could you outline your assessment of
12 Pakistan, and specifically, the Pakistani Intelligence
13 Service, the ISI, and the role you expect them to play in
14 our future?

15 Mr. Helvey: Pakistan has played an important role in
16 Afghanistan. They have supported the Afghan peace process.
17 Pakistan, as you know, also has allowed us to have
18 overflight and access to be able to support our military
19 presence in Afghanistan. We will continue our conversations
20 with Pakistan because their support and their contribution
21 to the future of Afghanistan, the future of peace in
22 Afghanistan, is going to be critical.

23 Senator Manchin: Thank you. General Trollinger, the
24 amount of assets that we have accumulated in Afghanistan has
25 to be significant. Specifically, we have provided the

1 Afghan forces with Black Hawk helicopters, A-29 Super Tucano
2 planes, armored vehicles, mine rollers command, and control
3 capacity and large generators. What assets are you planning
4 to leave behind for the Afghan forces, what assets will be
5 withdrawn, and what assets will be destroyed?

6 General Trollinger: Senator, as we conduct the
7 retrograde we will be transferring facilities, some
8 vehicles, and other equipment that the Afghan National
9 Defense Forces can utilize in their ongoing efforts to
10 secure the country. We will be retrograding that equipment
11 that we are able to bring back, to base it in stations in
12 the continental United States as well as elsewhere. And
13 then we will be disposing of equipment that essentially is
14 either obsolete, is inoperable, or legally we are not able
15 to transfer to Afghanistan.

16 Senator Manchin: What I was saying is for the assets
17 that you are going to leave with the Afghan people, what
18 guarantees do the American people have that Taliban will not
19 get their hands on it and use it against them?

20 General Trollinger: Senator, I do not think there are
21 any guarantees. Again, I would acknowledge the range of
22 possible outcomes over the coming months, from the dire
23 certainly to the positive. So I could not offer any
24 guarantees on that.

25 Senator Manchin: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Manchin.

3 Now let me recognize Senator Blackburn please.

4 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary
5 Helvey, yes or no. Do you expect the Taliban will take over
6 Afghanistan when we leave?

7 Mr. Helvey: Sorry, Senator.

8 Senator Blackburn: Yes or no?

9 Mr. Helvey: I do not expect the Taliban to take over
10 Afghanistan after we leave.

11 Senator Blackburn: So then why does the IC's annual
12 threat assessment say the Taliban is likely to make gains on
13 the battlefield and the Afghan government will struggle to
14 hold the Taliban at bay if the Coalition withdraws support?

15 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I do not believe there is any
16 inconsistency.

17 Senator Blackburn: I would say there is an
18 inconsistency. Yes or no now. Have we seen a steady stream
19 in violence out of the Taliban over the last year?

20 Mr. Helvey: Yes, Senator.

21 Senator Blackburn: Yes. It has risen 169 percent.
22 They are getting really aggressive.

23 Yes or no. Have the Taliban previously demonstrated a
24 propensity for human rights abuses, cultural genocide,
25 ethnic cleansing efforts?

1 Mr. Helvey: Historically, yes.

2 Senator Blackburn: Yes, they have, and we have
3 thousands of undocumented cases, and we know that the U.S.
4 still needs a presence in Afghanistan to resist Iran's
5 malign interests in their plots. And if we fail to
6 recognize the opportunity Afghanistan presents to what the
7 India sites as "rogue regimes and revision powers," we are
8 kidding ourselves.

9 General Trollinger, yes or no for you. Do you agree
10 with the IC's annual threat assessment that, and I am
11 quoting, "Iran will hedge its bets in Afghanistan, threaten
12 instability, is worried about a long-term U.S. presence in
13 Afghanistan, and as a result is building ties with both the
14 government in Kabul and the Taliban so it can take advantage
15 of any political outcome." Yes or no -- do you agree?

16 General Trollinger: I would agree.

17 Senator Blackburn: Okay. Thank you. And to you
18 again, General Trollinger. Yes or no. Has Iran provided
19 support to the Taliban at this point in time?

20 General Trollinger: Not to my knowledge.

21 Senator Blackburn: Not to your knowledge. Okay.

22 As a Middle East subject matter expert on the Joint
23 Staff, do you assess that Iran is intent on taking advantage
24 of a U.S. withdrawal in Afghanistan, and what does that look
25 like?

1 General Trollinger: I would assess that they would be
2 opportunists and looking for every opportunity to gain an
3 advantage, a decisive advantage, a slight advantage. Any
4 opportunity they might perceive that they have, they would
5 take advantage of that.

6 Senator Blackburn: Do you believe that Iran is
7 prepared both politically and militarily to compete on two
8 fronts?

9 General Trollinger: I cannot answer that question.

10 Senator Blackburn: Okay. Could you answer that in
11 closed session?

12 General Trollinger: I could talk to you more about
13 that in closed session.

14 Senator Blackburn: Excellent. Thank you.

15 Within 48 hours of the announced Afghanistan
16 withdrawal, The Washington Post wrote, and I am quoting,
17 "Beijing should use its leverage with Pakistan to keep the
18 Taliban true to the February 2020 agreement and encouraging
19 a cease-fire among fighting parties in Afghanistan. China
20 has some incentive to do this, lest Afghanistan become a
21 source of instability, particularly within Xinjiang.

22 So, Secretary Helvey, do you assess China, Iran, or
23 both will inject themselves into the affairs of a post-U.S.
24 occupied Afghanistan, and what form do you see that taking?

25 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I do agree. I think China will

1 become more involved. They are involved in Afghanistan.

2 Senator Blackburn: Do you think Beijing looks at
3 Afghanistan as an investment opportunity?

4 Mr. Helvey: Yes, Senator. They are looking at it
5 primarily for economic purposes, but also they do have
6 concerns about counterterrorism and extremist threats.

7 Senator Blackburn: Rare earth minerals?

8 Mr. Helvey: That would fall within economic
9 opportunity. Yes, Senator.

10 Senator Blackburn: Okay. Thank you. Knowing what you
11 know about China's Belt and Road Initiative, specifically
12 their overland routes, are they predicated on access to
13 central Asia?

14 Mr. Helvey: A significant part of One Belt, One Road
15 does transit through central Asia and Pakistan.

16 Senator Blackburn: From an exclusively geographic
17 standpoint, if China had unfettered access to Afghanistan,
18 knowing that they share that border, would there be anything
19 standing between them and their land-based BRI route to
20 Tehran?

21 Mr. Helvey: I would have to look into that a little
22 bit more in detail. I am aware of the investment through
23 central Asia and Pakistan. There are also maritime routes
24 to Iran as well. But I would submit that is not the
25 objective --

1 Senator Blackburn: Right. I would appreciate getting
2 that in writing, because I think it would give them that
3 unfettered access, the ability to build that consistent
4 route.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blackburn. And now
7 let me recognize Senator King.

8 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my
9 first question, Mr. Helvey, is the Trump administration
10 entered into an agreement in February of 2020 that all U.S.
11 troops would be out of Afghanistan by May 1st of 2021. The
12 Taliban had indicated that if that did not occur they would
13 begin attacking U.S. troops, which they had not done during
14 the period leading up to that.

15 My specific question is, have there been attacks on
16 U.S. troops subsequent to May 1, or has the Taliban tacitly
17 accepted the fact that the timetable has been extended to
18 September?

19 Mr. Helvey: Senator, there have been no Taliban
20 attacks against U.S. or Coalition forces since May 1. I
21 cannot speak to what the Taliban's thinking is or if there
22 has been a tacit internal acceptance of that. But there
23 have been no attacks against U.S. or Coalition forces.

24 Senator King: But the Taliban has gained ground in the
25 last several months, have they not?

1 Mr. Helvey: Senator, yes, the Taliban has gained some
2 ground in Afghanistan, and they have continued positioning
3 themselves within Afghanistan over the past several months.

4 Senator King: A question for both of you. This is the
5 definition of a difficult decision. Were we to decide it is
6 a vital national interest to preserve the existing civil
7 government, to protect women's rights, and otherwise stifle
8 the power of the Taliban in the country, what would it take
9 in terms of a commitment by this country, in terms of
10 troops, money, air power? Are we back to 100,000 troops and
11 surge such as occurred some years ago? General, your
12 thoughts? What would it take?

13 General Trollinger: Senator, I cannot answer that
14 question specifically. I will not presuppose a decision or
15 a possible outcome and cannot speak to what it might take.

16 Senator King: But if the President said to you, "I
17 want to stabilize. I want to get Afghanistan back to where
18 it was 5 years ago," your military advice would be, "We
19 would need a lot more troops, Mr. President, and ISR, air
20 power, and a greater investment." Isn't that true? I mean,
21 you are not going to do it with 2,500 to 4,000 troops.
22 Isn't that correct?

23 General Trollinger: I would guess that if guidance and
24 direction was given and the objectives were changed, then
25 yes, we would look to have significantly more capability.

1 Senator King: For an indefinite period. That is what
2 is very difficult about this. We have been there 20 years,
3 and here we are with somewhat the same situation that we
4 were in when we entered the country. So not only is it a
5 question of investment but it is a question of persistent
6 investment over, as I say, an indefinite period. Would you
7 agree? You probably do not want to, but I am asking you.

8 General Trollinger: Again, I do not want to presuppose
9 certainly an outcome or direction that we are given in terms
10 of maybe our objective changing and what it is we need to
11 do, based on a potential outcomes.

12 Senator King: Mr. Helvey, we have invested a huge
13 amount in Afghanistan, in terms of dollars, lives, tens of
14 thousands of people wounded, and yet here we are on the
15 brink of -- it is debatable and we will know in a year or so
16 -- a Taliban retaking the country, and we are right back
17 where we were in 2001. My question is, why couldn't the
18 Afghan government succeed, given the level of support that
19 they have had? They have had air power, they have had ISR,
20 they have had economic support, they have had infrastructure
21 support, and yet we see this terrorist group taking over, in
22 rural areas and approaching Kabul. Is this something in the
23 nature of the Afghan polity that central government is not
24 going to succeed, or was it the people in this government?
25 Why are we where we are, given the level of investment we

1 have made?

2 Mr. Helvey: Senator, that is a complicated question.
3 I mean, in part I think you have hit on a number of points.
4 I think, you know, the central government in Afghanistan has
5 not been strong. Over the course of Afghan's history it has
6 not been pronounced by strong central government. In fact,
7 it has largely been weak and diffuse and distributed.

8 What we have seen and what we have tried to promote is
9 a greater central government, kind of bringing all Afghans
10 to the table and being part of a governing system that can
11 ensure security for the country and economic development.
12 That has been difficult and that is not yet complete.

13 I think in terms of why we were there, Senator, I think
14 it is important that we were there because of the attacks
15 against this country.

16 Senator King: It was a counterterrorism mission.

17 Mr. Helvey: It was a counterterrorism mission. That
18 is why we authorized forces to go there.

19 Senator King: And it succeeded for 20 years.

20 Mr. Helvey: It has largely succeeded. We brought the
21 perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks to justice, and we have
22 significantly reduced the threat of international terrorists
23 emanating from Afghanistan. I think the President's
24 decision reflects his determination that American interests
25 can best be served by completing and ending the U.S.

1 military involvement in Afghanistan. That does not mean
2 that the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan concludes. We will
3 continue to work with the Afghan government, we will
4 continue to maintain a diplomatic presence, and we will
5 continue providing support to our Afghan partners, because
6 we do have interests still in Afghanistan. But the
7 President's determination is our interests can best be
8 served without a military presence in that country.

9 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Let me
11 recognize Senator Tuberville, please.

12 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
13 you for being here today.

14 Today, 41 percent of our veterans served in our wars in
15 Iraq and Afghanistan. It is our largest group of veterans
16 ever, 7.8 million, and we paid the ultimate price as a
17 nation, and in discussion on withdrawal needs to bear the
18 sacrifice in mind our Afghan veterans will be listening
19 closely today.

20 General, what will our nearest base be to Afghanistan,
21 after we pull out?

22 General Trollinger: After we pull out of Afghanistan I
23 believe our nearest base would be in the Arabian Gulf
24 region.

25 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. In your experience,

1 has the U.S. been successful in over-the-horizon
2 counterterrorism efforts in the past?

3 General Trollinger: [Inaudible.]

4 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. You know, I have got
5 [inaudible] a little bit. I went through Vietnam. Eighteen
6 years old, they stopped the draft, I did not go. I had a
7 lot of buddies that went and some did not come back. One of
8 my worst memories is that helicopter over our Embassy, when
9 we were pulling out, and we left behind millions of people
10 that supported us, and a lot of them were slaughtered. I
11 hope to heck we do not do this in this one. We did the same
12 thing in Iraq. Sooner or later we are going to have to
13 understand why we get into these wars. We get into them to
14 win them, and our American people deserve to know that. We
15 are spending trillions of dollars.

16 Secretary, the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan is already
17 known as a veritable military bunker. Do you believe that
18 we will be able to maintain that embassy?

19 Mr. Helvey: Senator, yes, and we are working today
20 with our State Department, U.S. Embassy Kabul, Joint Staff
21 Central Command, and counterparts to determine what
22 specifically the requirements would be to maintain that
23 embassy and how to resource that. That is also something
24 that we are undertaking in concert with our coalition
25 partners as well.

1 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville. Now let
4 me recognize Senator Peters, please.

5 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
6 gentlemen, thank you for being here today. Thank you for
7 your testimony. Thank you for your service.

8 Mr. Helvey, I will just start with a statement because
9 I know you have been asked this question many times here
10 this morning, regarding Special Immigrant Visa program. And
11 I just wanted to add my two cents' worth. I appreciate your
12 willingness as you have committed to working on that.
13 Clearly folks who have been helping us over many years and
14 served this country, we have to make sure that they are
15 taken care of in a way that does not bring harm to
16 themselves or their families. So I appreciated your
17 commitment that you have already made here, and hope that
18 that will indeed occur.

19 My question to you first, Mr. Helvey, is the absence of
20 Taliban attacks on U.S. and NATO personnel since May 1st
21 indicates a capacity, it appears, to adhere to the
22 agreements that were made with us. But the peace process is
23 ultimately between the Taliban and the Afghan government.
24 And my question to you is, how do we remain optimistic when
25 over 400 pro-government forces and Afghan civilians were

1 killed just in the first two weeks of May?

2 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I would not say that I am
3 optimistic. I would say that work still remains to be done,
4 and that the best future for Afghanistan will arrive through
5 a negotiated peace settlement, and that is something that
6 we, as a department and as a government, are continuing and
7 committed to supporting. This is critically important work,
8 but fundamentally the best path to a safe, secure, and more
9 prosperous future in Afghanistan is going to be the Afghan
10 people themselves sitting down and determining their future.

11 Senator Peters: Indeed a challenge. It is a
12 significant one going forward.

13 General, the Joint Doctrine of Stability lists four
14 fundamentals of stabilization, which I am sure you are very
15 familiar with: unity of effort, conflict transformation,
16 host nation ownership, and capacity. By the measure of the
17 Joint Doctrine for Stability, is Afghanistan currently
18 stable, and if not, how would that relate to these four
19 fundamentals of stabilization?

20 General Trollinger: Senator, I think that Afghanistan
21 is clearly very challenged right now in those different
22 areas, given the pressure that the Taliban are exerting in
23 different areas of the country and the challenges that the
24 government of Afghanistan and the Taliban face with their
25 efforts to get after a negotiated peace settlement.

1 Senator Peters: Mr. Helvey, in addition to funding
2 capabilities and paying salary, will the Department of
3 Defense continue institutional capacity building, such as
4 the Military Defense Advisor Program, going forward?

5 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I think those capabilities or
6 those programs will have to be adjusted. I think the
7 principal vehicles that we are going to be looking to
8 support is the salaries, support for the Afghan Air Force
9 and Special Mission Wing, and then the logistics and supply.
10 Now how we do that type of training and mentoring can be
11 adjusted. So we are looking at different mechanisms and
12 ways to be able to do that. Some of that can be done over
13 the horizon. We would also look at maintain some type of
14 security cooperation, you know, presence, which is typical
15 and traditional through an embassy, that could allow us to
16 maintain those types of connections and the ministry level.

17 Senator Peters: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Let me
19 recognize Senator Hawley, please.

20 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to
21 both of the witnesses for being here. Thank you for your
22 service.

23 Mr. Helvey, let me start with you. Can you give me
24 your assessment of whether our withdrawal in Afghanistan
25 will allow the Department to focus more resources and

1 attention on our pacing theater, the Indo-Pacific, and China
2 in particular?

3 Mr. Helvey: I think the intent would be that yes, as
4 we withdraw our forces and reduce our commitment in
5 Afghanistan, maintaining the ability to monitor Afghanistan
6 for counterterrorist threats, that resources that we would
7 be able to accrue we would be able to distribute to our
8 other areas, including Indo-Pacific, where we face the
9 pacing challenge.

10 Senator Hawley: And I assume, just on that point, that
11 when you talk about distributing resources elsewhere, I
12 assume that PACOM and the China challenge, in particular,
13 would be at the top of the list in terms of receiving any
14 resources that were freed up. Is that fair to say?

15 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I cannot speak for the
16 Secretary's decision on that, but I know he has spoken about
17 looking to redistribute resources to our pacing challenge.

18 Senator Hawley: Very good. General McKenzie said last
19 month, Mr. Helvey, that he is "concerned about the ability
20 of the Afghan military to hold on after we leave" -- that is
21 a quote from him -- knowing that if the Afghan military
22 collapses the Afghan government probably would too. So with
23 that in mind, is the Department currently developing plans
24 for achieving our counterterrorism objectives should the
25 Afghan government collapse?

1 Mr. Helvey: Senator, yes, we are. We are looking at
2 developing mechanisms or plans for doing over-the-horizon
3 counterterrorism capabilities, but also we are looking at
4 ways of provide continued support and assistance to our
5 Afghan partners, even after we conclude our retrograde plan.

6 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you about some of the
7 partners. Is the Department considering reconstituting the
8 Northern Alliance, or finding other ways to work with local
9 partners there in Afghanistan to achieve our CT objectives?

10 Mr. Helvey: Senator, our principal focus is working
11 with the government in Kabul, and how we would do that,
12 those plans are still being developed, and I would be happy
13 to talk in a little bit more detail in a closed session.

14 Senator Hawley: Fair enough. You said last week, Mr.
15 Helvey, that sustained funding for the Afghan Security
16 Forces is going to be critical for achieving our CT
17 objectives in Afghanistan. Let me just ask you, though,
18 given the, I would say, notable lack of success we have had
19 thus far with the Afghan Security Forces, in terms of
20 standing them up, achieving a high level of efficiency and
21 output, under what conditions are we willing to say, would
22 you say, that the Afghan Security Forces are no longer
23 effective and U.S. funding for them ought to be reduced or
24 eliminated?

25 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I would say that we have had some

1 tremendous success in working with the Afghan forces. The
2 Afghan Air Force's Special Mission Wing, in particular, and
3 the Afghan Special Forces have been very close partners for
4 us through our CT missions.

5 To your point, though, there will be a time, and this
6 has to be how we look at what the criteria would be for
7 adjusting our security force assistance planning, and that
8 is part of the work that we are doing today in concert with
9 the United States Central Command Joint Staff and our
10 presence in Kabul, to look at what the different criteria
11 would be, or indicators would be, to adjust how we provide
12 that type of assistance, and to whom.

13 Senator Hawley: So has the Department developed
14 criteria then for adjusting or terminating the forces fund,
15 the Afghan Security Forces Fund?

16 Mr. Helvey: No decisions have been made yet but we are
17 doing prudent planning right now to look at how we would be
18 able to provide that and how we may look to change it, in
19 terms of, you know, as the security conditions change.

20 Senator Hawley: No decisions have been made but you
21 have developed criteria for assessing our continued support
22 and what we might do going forward, in terms of continuing
23 or terminating the fund. Is that right?

24 Mr. Helvey: I think that work is still being
25 developed. I understand, from General McKenzie, that he

1 intends to provide a lot of his recommendations to the
2 Secretary by the end of this month, so I would like to let
3 that process continue.

4 Senator Hawley: I am asking because we spend to the
5 tune of \$4 billion a year on this objective. That is not an
6 insignificant chunk of change. That is, in fact, about what
7 we spend each year on the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, if
8 I am not mistaken. Has the Department done an analysis of
9 whether we can achieve our counterterrorism objectives in
10 Afghanistan if the Afghan Security Forces are no longer
11 viable, if they collapse?

12 Mr. Helvey: In the absence of a capable and willing
13 partner, our ability to do our CT objectives there in
14 Afghanistan becomes significantly harder. But as the
15 General indicated, based on historic precedent, we have been
16 able to conduct counterterrorism operations exclusively from
17 over the horizon. However, having, as I said, a willing and
18 capable partner in Afghanistan is a critical piece of our CT
19 capabilities. If that goes away it becomes much harder,
20 greater risk, and it will be more costly.

21 Senator Hawley: This is my last question, Mr.
22 Chairman, just on that point. The partner may be the
23 Security Forces or it may be others. It may be the Northern
24 Alliance. It may be other allies or partners -- I mean, not
25 allies -- partners, in-country, though, right? I mean, it

1 doesn't have to be Security Forces. Is that right?

2 Mr. Helvey: History would indicate it does not have to
3 be the Security Forces.

4 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley. Senator
6 Blumenthal, please.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
8 both for your service and your testimony here today.

9 Mr. Helvey, in your answer to the ranking member's
10 question concerning the Special Immigrant Visa program, you
11 made mention of the need for legislative changes to the
12 program. I think we are very unified on this committee in
13 our resolve that we provide this access to people who have
14 put their lives and their families seriously at risk. And I
15 am wondering, what legislative changes you have in mind that
16 you would recommend we do, and would you be willing to
17 provide this Committee with a specific proposal for those
18 changes that you envision?

19 Mr. Helvey: Senator, it is my understanding that the
20 National Defense Authorization Act has historically been the
21 vehicle through which we have received additional quotas or
22 increased numbers for those that could participate in the
23 Special Immigrant Visa program.

24 Senator Blumenthal: Well, that is right. They have
25 numbers, but I understood your answer to be including also

1 proposals for reforming perhaps the criteria or the
2 procedure of other aspects.

3 Mr. Helvey: My statement, Senator, was speaking
4 specifically to the numbers and the resources that are
5 necessary to be able to execute the Special Immigrant Visa
6 program.

7 Senator Blumenthal: So you would recommend more
8 resources.

9 Mr. Helvey: Yes, Senator. There is a resource
10 requirement.

11 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask both of you. I know
12 there has been a lot of talk so far this morning about
13 kinetic efforts, antiterrorist efforts after our withdrawal
14 in Afghanistan. I want to focus on the non-kinetic efforts,
15 such as limitations on international travel, fundraising,
16 financing, fund transfers, and what can be done to mobilize
17 both our resources against it and multilateral organization
18 efforts?

19 Mr. Helvey: Well, Senator, as I indicated, we have
20 learned a lot over the past 20 years in terms of how to go
21 after and defeat international terrorist groups. There are
22 things that we have done domestically, and there are things
23 that we are already doing internationally, with our
24 partners. I think to the extent that we continue to
25 identify ways and those tools that we can use unilaterally

1 or in concert with allies and partners to better illuminate
2 terrorist threat networks and then prosecute them, I think
3 that is necessary and important. Whether it is things like
4 financial action task force work to be able to go to after
5 terrorist funding and fundraising, or trying to harmonize
6 our work for air travel or these types of ways to be able to
7 close any vulnerabilities that we may have in identifying
8 potential terrorists and preventing them from being able to
9 travel, fundraise, recruit, train, plan, and execute
10 operations against us.

11 Senator Blumenthal: How well are our allies doing in
12 cooperating with us in trying to stop the transfer of money,
13 the financing?

14 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I think the Department of
15 Treasury would be best positioned to answer those types of
16 questions, as they are the lead in terrorist financing.

17 Senator Blumenthal: In what areas are you the lead?

18 Mr. Helvey: Sir, I advise the Secretary of Defense on
19 matters of defense policy and strategy. And so with respect
20 to our defense policy, strategy, our operations, the
21 resources that we have in supporting our Afghan Defense and
22 Security Force partners, cooperation with allies and
23 partners in counterterrorism policy, that is where my --

24 Senator Blumenthal: Well, the Taliban reportedly earns
25 \$200 million or more from drugs, illegal timber, pistachios,

1 taxes imposed on the local population, and there are revenue
2 streams from funding sources, all of it going to support
3 military operations. How satisfied are you that we are
4 using every tool we have to combat that flow of funding?

5 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I think you have highlighted one
6 of the key challenges in Afghanistan has been trying to
7 reduce the Taliban's access to resources. Part of the South
8 Asia strategy was focused on looking at better ways of going
9 after, in particular, the drug network within Afghanistan,
10 to be able to prevent the Taliban from gaining access to
11 those resources. This has been a very difficult problem
12 that has persisted over the past 20 years.

13 I think there is more work that can be done. That will
14 be much more difficult, obviously, if we are not there. So
15 we will be reliant on working with the Afghan government to
16 address that, to be able to maintain the law enforcement and
17 the counternarcotics work within their own country.

18 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Now let
20 me recognize, via Webex, Senator Warren, please.

21 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
22 you, Mr. Helvey and General Trollinger, for being here.

23 The U.S. first sent troops to Afghanistan to root out
24 al Qaeda and their Taliban host and to prevent them from
25 using Afghanistan as a haven to launch another 9/11-type

1 attack. That was 20 years ago, and we accomplished that
2 limited objective rather quickly. But then our military
3 took on more and more responsibility, from building an
4 entire Afghan National Army from scratch, to stemming the
5 drug trade, to fighting Afghan government corruption.

6 General Trollinger, we have been training the Afghan
7 Security Forces for more than a decade now. We have been
8 providing them with the best equipment, with hands-on
9 training, and enabling their operations with American air
10 power. So have the Taliban and associated militant groups
11 had access to that level of assistance?

12 General Trollinger: Senator, I do not believe, if I
13 understand your question correctly, they have not, to my
14 knowledge, have any access to that sort of --

15 Senator Warren: Right. Okay. So here we are, that we
16 have given all this assistance to the Afghan Army. The
17 Taliban has not had that kind of help. And yet the Taliban
18 prevented us from achieving anything close to the security
19 conditions that we have been seeking, or else we would have
20 left long ago. So does that suggest it is a bigger than
21 just a military problem?

22 Let me ask you, Mr. Helvey, does corruption remain an
23 endemic problem in the Afghan government?

24 Mr. Helvey: Senator, corruption is a problem in
25 Afghanistan.

1 Senator Warren: Okay. And does the government still
2 lack the public support necessary for it to govern
3 effectively across the country?

4 Mr. Helvey: The Afghan government does maintain
5 popular support. I think that support, though, is not
6 evenly distributed across the country.

7 Senator Warren: So I take it the answer to the
8 question, does it have public support necessary for it to
9 govern effectively across the country, I take it your answer
10 then is no, they do not.

11 Mr. Helvey: Senator, the presence of an insurgency,
12 the presence of the Taliban indicates that the Afghan
13 government does not have control or popular support
14 everywhere in the country. They do maintain large support
15 within the major population centers and in large parts of
16 the country, but the Taliban --

17 Senator Warren: Right. So they have partial support.
18 Did the Afghan government's inability to govern effectively
19 inspire support amongst the population and give the Taliban
20 space to grow and build support? In other words, the
21 Taliban has done well, and is part of the reason for that
22 because the Afghan government has not been able to govern
23 effectively and inspire support among the population across
24 the country?

25 Mr. Helvey: I think there are a lot of different

1 factors that influence the Taliban's ability to maintain its
2 presence and support locally. Part of that has to do with
3 weaknesses within the Afghan government, but part of it also
4 has to do with historical, cultural, tribal, you know,
5 affiliations and relationships.

6 But to your point, I think the fact that the government
7 has had challenges in maintaining popular support across the
8 country has created a space for the Taliban to continue to
9 grow and operate and present challenges to the government.

10 Senator Warren: But look at what you are saying. The
11 root of Afghanistan's problems are political and cultural in
12 nature. The United States military is the most powerful in
13 the world, but our military alone is not responsible nor
14 designed for solving political problems.

15 It has been said before but it bears repeating again.
16 A conditions-based withdrawal was a recipe for staying
17 forever. And I am glad that President Biden recognized this
18 and has made the long-overdue decision to end our military
19 involvement in Afghanistan.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Warren.
22 Let me recognize, via Webex, Senator Hirono.

23 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary
24 Helvey, I know that you have been asked by a number of my
25 colleagues, their concerns of the Afghani women and

1 children. But I want to reiterate my concern and add to
2 that of my colleagues.

3 Earlier this week, I joined a letter with my
4 colleagues, Senator Shaheen and Senator Collins, to
5 President Biden, asking him to appoint an ambassador-at-
6 large for global women's issues to serve as the senior
7 administration's official responsible for coordinating U.S.
8 government efforts for the protection of women's rights in
9 Afghanistan.

10 So my question is, what is your assessment of the
11 Afghanistan government and security forces' ability to
12 protect girls' education? Let's just focus on education in
13 the country. Mr. Secretary?

14 Mr. Helvey: Senator, thank you for the question, and
15 thank you for your support for Afghan women and girls.
16 Yeah, I think we have been able to see significant progress
17 in Afghanistan since 2001, advancing human rights and
18 opportunities specifically for women and girls, and
19 education is an important part of that. I think, you know,
20 the contributions that women have made in Afghanistan and
21 the progress that those contributions have enabled across
22 the society as a whole are remarkable.

23 We continue to work using the tools that we have as the
24 Department of Defense to try to continue to promote the role
25 of women in peace and security and the role of women in the

1 Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. I know the
2 State Department and the U.S. Agency for International
3 Development are looking at this through their resources,
4 tools, mechanisms, and authorities.

5 I cannot really speak to, you know, the Afghan
6 government's ability to provide for education, but I can say
7 that in terms of what we have been doing with the Afghan
8 National Defense and Security Forces is to increasingly
9 promote the role of women as part of the ANDSF.

10 Senator Hirono: I am sorry, Mr. Secretary, but are you
11 saying that the Afghan Security Forces and the Afghan
12 government has, as a priority, the rights of women and girls
13 in Afghanistan? Is it a priority?

14 Mr. Helvey: Senator, it is a priority. It is built
15 into their constitution, and it is part of the development
16 of ANDSF. This is something that President Ghani has
17 highlighted, and this is something that I think, you know,
18 we, as part of the international community, have also
19 impressed upon the Taliban that we will be paying very
20 careful attention to how the Taliban treats women, girls,
21 and minorities in Afghanistan. That is an important part of
22 our diplomacy in this space.

23 Senator Hirono: And I do not know what leverage we
24 have to change how Taliban treats women and girls, because
25 their track record is terrible. And the concern is, the

1 reality is that should they come back into power, which, to
2 me, is a matter of when, not if, then I think that the
3 rights and protections for women and girls in Afghanistan
4 will go down the drain. And I really think that that is a
5 realistic assessment of what is going to happen.

6 So, at the least, shouldn't we be appointing a single
7 ambassador-at-large, which remains a vacant position, to
8 serve as the administration's point person, especially for
9 those of us who want to very much be focused on what is
10 going to happen to Afghani women and girls after we leave?

11 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I am not familiar with your
12 specific proposal for an ambassador-at-large, but that is
13 something that I believe the State Department would be
14 looking at in concert with the White House.

15 Senator Hirono: So my colleague, Senator Warren,
16 talked about what exactly is happening in Afghanistan and
17 what the future looks like, because you mentioned tribal
18 chiefs. And the first time I went to Afghanistan was back
19 in 2006, 2007 or so. At that point we were told that the
20 Afghani Security Forces were being trained and they were
21 going to be able to take care of the security needs, et
22 cetera, of their country. And as Senator Warren pointed
23 out, it remains not so.

24 And so Afghanistan, historically, has never had a
25 central government. You have all these tribal chiefs who

1 are not about to listen to whatever is emanating from the
2 central government because that would mean they would be
3 giving up their power. So, you know, the political and
4 cultural aspects of Afghanistan is something that I do not
5 think our country really appreciated or understood very
6 well. And so these are issues that arise any time you go
7 into a foreign country where we do not necessarily assess
8 accurately the cultural and political dynamics going on in
9 that country, and we certainly cannot swoop in and try to
10 make change that can be sustained, militarily. And I saying
11 the military, I am sure, did its best, but here we are.

12 So I do not know if my time is up, Mr. Chairman?

13 Chairman Reed: Yes, it is, Senator. We are trying to
14 move --

15 Senator Hirono: I cannot see the -- okay. Thank you.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Hirono.

17 Let me recognize Senator Sullivan.

18 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
19 thank you for your testimony here on a really difficult
20 topic. But I think the bottom line is, as this is being
21 planned out, we need to plan for the worst, for the worst-
22 case scenario, and I think the worst-case scenario, from my
23 perspective, reading the intel it does not seem like it is
24 even an unlikely scenario, is that the government collapses
25 and the Taliban or some group related, could be in charge,

1 or that we see a civil war within the next several months.
2 Would you agree that is the worst-case scenario right now?
3 And how likely do you think that is? General, what do you
4 think?

5 General Trollinger: I acknowledge the range of
6 possible outcomes to include that one that you have just
7 described.

8 Senator Sullivan: Mr. Helvey?

9 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I would be happy to discuss in a
10 little bit more detail in the classified setting,
11 intelligence assessments. But I think you have described a
12 range of outcomes, as the General indicated, that we are
13 looking at.

14 Senator Sullivan: So it seems to me, let's assume a
15 worst-case scenario, civil war or Taliban, or, God forbid,
16 al Qaeda in charge again, of that country, a terrorist
17 potential safe haven. So, General, how far along are we on
18 kind of -- I know it has already been discussed, but a CT
19 presence, capability? Because I think everybody here
20 agrees, having this country, Afghanistan, as a safe haven
21 for major violent extremist organizations, particularly al
22 Qaeda or ISIS or the Taliban, is not in the interest of the
23 United States at all. So how far along are we on dealing
24 with the capability to address that, primarily having either
25 an over-the-horizon CT capability or a CT capability from a

1 neighboring country?

2 General Trollinger: Senator, that planning and
3 coordination is ongoing. I cannot characterize how far
4 along we are other than to say that the intent is to
5 maintain seamless capability, what we have currently in
6 Afghanistan, as we transition that to other place in the
7 region to, again, ensure that we are able to meet our
8 overarching objectives of preventing al Qaeda or other
9 terrorist organizations from flourishing in Afghanistan.

10 Senator Sullivan: So let me turn to another element,
11 given the worst-case scenario, and I know it has already
12 been discussed but I think it is an important one. I want
13 to highlight, Mr. Chairman, an op-ed written by your Senate
14 colleague and mine, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode
15 Island, who wrote an opinion piece. "As the U.S. withdraws
16 from Afghanistan, what is our plan for the aftermath?

17 Chairman Reed: Would you like it included in the
18 record?

19 Senator Sullivan: Yes, sir.

20 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

21 [The information follows:]

22 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Sullivan: So I will ask this to both of you.
2 When General McKenzie was testifying here a couple of weeks
3 ago I asked him the question, if he thought countries had
4 honor. Does the United States have honor? He said, "Yes, I
5 would agree with that." And I do think that if we are
6 looking at a worst-case scenario, you know, in Vietnam, all
7 told, 123,000 South Vietnamese civilians and military
8 personnel ended up in U.S. custody for processing as
9 refugees.

10 I think if a year or two from now anybody who
11 cooperated with our military forces in Afghanistan is being
12 hunted down or killed, this would be a horrible thing, of
13 course, and if we have the ability to prevent that, kind of
14 the way we tried to in Vietnam, on a big scale, I think it
15 is in the interest of our nation to do that. I think it
16 goes to the honor of our country. These are people who have
17 sacrificed, risked their lives, to help us when we were
18 there. And if they are going to be at risk we should try to
19 do something to help them.

20 General, Mr. Helvey, do you agree with that, and do we
21 have plans to do that, as a large scale, the way we did in
22 Vietnam?

23 Mr. Helvey: Senator, I do agree. We do have a moral
24 obligation to help those that have helped us over the past
25 20 years, and we are working intensely with our interagency

1 colleagues to identify those mechanisms and the resources
2 required to provide that type of assistance. We have talked
3 here about the Special Immigrant Visa program. There are
4 other authorities that we can use with respect to assisting
5 those Afghans that provide significant public benefit. They
6 are for humanitarian parole purposes.

7 So yes, this is important. This is an important thing
8 that we should do. And if the security conditions
9 deteriorate and if we are given an order to take other means
10 and other mechanisms, we would have the ability to do that.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator. Let me now
13 recognize, via Webex, Senator Duckworth.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to
15 second Senator Sullivan's last comment. It is imperative
16 that we do not leave those who have risked their lives and
17 the lives of their family members behind. It was not just
18 in Vietnam that we helped reach out to those who helped
19 American troops. But we also, President Clinton actually
20 sent in an aircraft and airlifted many Kurds who were being
21 hunted and killed by Saddam Hussein in the early '90s after
22 the first Gulf War, and brought those Kurds to safety.

23 So, Senator Sullivan, if you are going to do any work
24 on this, I would be happy to join you on this effort.

25 Along those lines, with not leaving folks behind, I do

1 want to bring up a discussion on a matter of utmost
2 importance in Illinois. That is the safe return of my
3 constituent, Mark Frerichs. Mr. Frerichs is an Illinoisian
4 and a Navy veteran. He lived in Kabul for years, working as
5 a civilian contractor, before he was kidnapped on January
6 31, 2020. And with our military relying more and more on
7 contractors, these Americans who are there as contractors
8 are there on behalf of us, but lack the protections that our
9 troops have when they are in places like Afghanistan.

10 The information that we have right now indicates that
11 the Taliban or its affiliates, likely the Haqqani Network,
12 are holding Mr. Frerichs in Afghanistan or Pakistan. He was
13 kidnapped on January 31, 2020. We believe, at the moment,
14 that he remains in okay physical health, whatever that
15 means. Mr. Frerichs' family is terrified by his ongoing
16 captivity and have advocated tirelessly for his safe return.
17 They were deeply disappointed that the Trump administration
18 failed to use the February 20, 2020, deal with the Taliban
19 to secure Mr. Frerichs' release, and the recent announcement
20 that we will be withdrawing all troops from Afghanistan has
21 heightened their fear, as they understandably question
22 whether we will have any leverage to secure Mr. Frerichs'
23 return once we no longer have a military presence in
24 Afghanistan.

25 And I have repeatedly raised Mr. Frerichs' case with

1 members of this administration, in letters with my
2 colleague, Senator Durbin, in briefings with Cabinet
3 officials, and a call with the lead negotiator with the
4 Taliban, and with President Biden himself. Everyone has
5 assured me that they are aware of Mr. Frerichs' and are
6 raising his status in ongoing diplomatic negotiations with
7 the Taliban.

8 And I hope that, consistent with precedent such as the
9 late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke used in the Dayton Accord
10 negotiations as leverage to secure the release of a
11 kidnapped American, I hope that the Biden administration
12 will prioritize every avenue available to achieve the
13 release of Mr. Frerichs.

14 Gentlemen, we cannot fail at this mission, and we
15 certainly cannot abandon an American citizen behind in
16 Afghanistan. We must pursue every path available to make
17 sure that Mark Frerichs is safely return to his family in
18 Illinois.

19 And now OSD has a longstanding relationship with
20 Pakistan, and, in fact, Secretary Austin just spoke with
21 Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff a few weeks ago, on April
22 28th, and Haqqani Network operates on the Afghanistan-
23 Pakistani border, and there is a good chance that Mr.
24 Frerichs is actually in Pakistan right now. We should be
25 leveraging our relationships with Pakistan to help secure

1 Mr. Frerichs' return. And I discussed this issue with the
2 Pakistani ambassador a few weeks ago, and he agreed to take
3 the message back to Islamabad.

4 The DoD presently has an opportunity to use senior
5 leader engagements and our other interactions with the
6 Pakistani military to raise Mark's case and seek Pakistan's
7 assistance in securing his return.

8 Mr. Helvey, I know this was a long preamble but it was
9 very important, certainly important for Mr. Frerichs and his
10 family. Mr. Helvey, as the Acting Assistant Secretary of
11 Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, you are the
12 principal advisor to top DoD leadership on issues related to
13 Pakistan. Will you commit to pursuing opportunities to
14 advocate for Mr. Frerichs and seek his return throughout
15 cooperation with Pakistan's military?

16 Mr. Helvey: Senator, absolutely.

17 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Withdrawing our troops
18 from Afghanistan without securing the safe return of my
19 constituent, Mr. Frerichs, would be an abject failure of the
20 United States Government to rescue an American citizen, a
21 Navy veteran, somebody who was there because the DoD decided
22 to use more contractors, and an Illinoian who served his
23 country, as I said, in uniform. Now is the time to redouble
24 our efforts to make sure that we secure Mr. Frerichs' safe
25 release and bring him home.

1 Thank you so much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Duckworth.

3 Let me now recognize, via Webex, Senator Rosen.

4 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chair Reed. I appreciate
5 it, Ranking Member Inhofe. This is a really important
6 hearing. Thank you to the witnesses. And I want to start
7 by expressing my gratitude and my respect to the hundreds of
8 thousands of U.S. troops who bravely served in Afghanistan,
9 including members of my own team and the brave men and women
10 of the Nevada National Guard. I am particularly thinking of
11 the 20,722 troops who bear the scars of battle, as we
12 prepare for Memorial Day, the over 2,400 U.S. military and
13 civilian personnel who did not come home, and their families
14 who mourn their loss every day.

15 We have to talk a little bit about the continued
16 support for the Afghan. You know, in President Biden's
17 Afghanistan withdrawal announcement, he stated that we are
18 going to reorganize our counterterrorism capabilities and
19 the assets in the region to prevent a re-emergence of the
20 threat to our homeland from over the horizon, and that we
21 will continue to support of government in Afghanistan and
22 keep providing assistance to the Afghan National Defense and
23 Security Forces.

24 So General Trollinger, What is the plan for an enduring
25 counterterrorism strategy that we will be able to address

1 and counter the influence of the violent extremist
2 organizations which directly influences the stability of the
3 Afghan government? And how we establish or build up an
4 existing presence elsewhere to continue counterterrorism
5 operations?

6 General Trollinger: Senator, that planning and
7 coordination is ongoing currently, and the intent is to
8 maintain a seamless transition from the capability that we
9 currently have in Afghanistan to other areas and locations
10 in the region so that we can continue to meet our objectives
11 there.

12 Senator Rosen: I appreciate that. So Mr. Helvey,
13 building on that, what will the U.S. assistance to
14 Afghanistan look like after withdrawal? We are talking
15 about looking ahead. We established agreements to fly our
16 U.S. air assets from neighboring countries like Tajikistan,
17 Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, or others to provide the Afghans
18 with the possible air support that they may need.

19 Mr. Helvey: Senator, thank you for that question. In
20 terms of support to Afghan forces, we are looking at ways to
21 be able to adjust that to an over-the-horizon type of
22 support, things that we can do that does not require a
23 large-scale military presence in that country.

24 With respect to access basing and overflight, those
25 negotiations are ongoing within the region, to be able to

1 provide those types of arrangements that could enable us to
2 do that from within the region.

3 As I had indicated in a response to a previous
4 question, we do already have significant capability resident
5 within the Persian Gulf region that can provide that. Now,
6 granted, that is a little bit farther away, but we would
7 certainly augment that, and look to augment that, with
8 arrangements that would be within the region closer to
9 Afghanistan.

10 Senator Rosen: Thank you. And I think another
11 important thing that we have to think about is countering
12 our adversaries, because as has been discussed today, the
13 decision to negotiate with the Taliban, withdraw from
14 Afghanistan raises concerns about the vulnerability of not
15 only the Afghan government, the danger to freedom, women's
16 rights, civil society, and, of course, Taliban's increasing
17 territorial reach.

18 And so, Mr. Helvey, can you please talk to us about
19 Iran, Russia, and China, how you think they are going to
20 come in and fill the vacuum created by our department, and
21 what implications might that have for us?

22 Mr. Helvey: I think it is clear that there are a
23 number of different countries around the region that do have
24 interests and that have the potential to exercise malign
25 influence in Afghanistan. Part of what we want to be able

1 to do, in working with our Afghan partners, is to be able to
2 ensure that the Afghan government has the ability to provide
3 for security and economic development, and to be able to
4 mitigate the extent to which other actors would exercise
5 malign influence in that country.

6 I think, you know, China does have an interest in
7 Afghanistan. As we talked about before, there was economic
8 interest. They do have concern about extremist groups
9 operating in Afghanistan. But to the extent that China's
10 influence could be used to undermine stability instead of
11 reinforce stability or support stability, obviously that is
12 something that we have got concern about.

13 Iran as well. Iran will likely seek to exercise
14 influence in negative ways in Afghanistan, although I think
15 it is largely to potentially frustrate and complicate our
16 withdrawal. And I think that is something that we need to
17 maintain persistent vigilance of as we are executing our
18 retrograde.

19 Senator Rosen: Well, I appreciate it. I look forward
20 to discussing these issues in a little deeper fashion with
21 all of you going forward.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen. With that we
24 are completing the open session of this hearing. I would
25 ask the witnesses to move to Room SD-217 in the Capitol so

1 we can conduct the classified portion of this.

2 Let me thank the witnesses for their excellent
3 testimony. Let me ask my colleagues to assemble in the
4 President's Room, either before or after you vote, as
5 quickly as possible so we may vote out the nominations of
6 Mr. McCord for the Comptroller and Mr. Moultrie for Under
7 Secretary for Intelligence.

8 With that I will adjourn the open portion of the
9 hearing, and again, thank you, gentlemen, for your
10 testimony.

11 [Whereupon, at 12:06 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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