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SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ: DEVELOPMENTS IN U.S. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS AND THE WAY AHEAD

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

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SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ: DEVELOPMENTS IN U.S. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS AND THE WAY AHEAD

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, September 10, 2008.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:07 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Welcome, Secretary Gates.

Welcome, Admiral Mullen.

Welcome, Ambassador Edelman, General Winnefeld, for being with us today.

Where are they? Right behind you. Thank you so much.

We are pleased to have you with us today to discuss the way forward in Afghanistan and Iraq. I would note, gentlemen, that your appearance today fulfills your obligation to brief this committee on force levels in Iraq under Section 1223 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009. As it turns out, this hearing could not be more timely.

To talk about progress in Iraq and Afghanistan is to talk about the tremendous Americans serving in uniform in those theaters. It is only appropriate to begin the hearing by paying tribute to them, to their service, and to their families.

Admiral Mullen, about nine months ago, you testified to this committee, and let me quote you—we have discussed this since then—"Our main focus, militarily, in the region and in the world right now, is rightly and firmly in Iraq. It is simply a matter of resources, of capacity. In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must."

Now, as you know, I have disagreed with you on that approach. Given this, I find myself struggling with the President's announcement yesterday that nets one additional brigade for Afghanistan and then not until this coming February. Almost all indicators of security and stability in Afghanistan are down this year. General McKiernan continues to plead publicly and to Members of Congress for additional troops, specifically three additional brigades. And the intelligence community and others, like Admiral Mullen, acknowledge any future attack against our homeland is most likely to come from the safe havens that exist along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

No one has been able to explain to me why Iraq is our first priority, based on national security interests. How can it be, when those most likely to attack us are in Afghanistan? How is it that the commander in Iraq was given every resource needed to achieve his goals, and we are not doing the same for the Afghanistan commander? Seven years after 9/11, when can we tell the American people we will be prepared to do what is needed to win in Afghanistan? I know you both are spending an enormous amount of time in Afghanistan. But seven years on, I still do not see a well-coordinated, comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan that addresses all aspects of the mission there, such as training and equipping the Afghan National Security Forces, counter narcotics, reconstruction, improving governance, and regional issues, including the border with Pakistan. Such a strategy needs to marshal all our resources and lay out clearly what it will take to succeed.

The Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act required such a strategy, yet the Department's answer was delivered two months late, with four-month old data, and did not include the required strategy. It also did not include enough on specific measures of progress, a timetable for achieving goals, or required budget information. There are a lot of specifics I hope we can have an opportunity to discuss today, including the status and the capability of the Afghan National Security Force and the chronic shortfall of more than 2,500 trainers and mentors for that force.

We also must remember that we can only stabilize Afghanistan if we are able to handle its complex relationship with Pakistan. However, in April 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that the U.S. lacks a comprehensive plan to eliminate insurgent safe havens in Pakistan's border region. Another GAO report found significant oversight and accountability problems recording Department of Defense (DOD) Coalition Support Funds which had been used to reimburse Pakistan nearly $7 billion since 2002 for support of American operations. Our policy on Pakistan, which has been largely shaped by the requirements of the war in Afghanistan, has not proven resilient in the face of changing circumstances in that country.

This all suggests that the U.S. has simply not devoted the focus or resources necessary to address the national security threats in Afghanistan and its border area. I am not discounting the gains made in Afghanistan since 2001. They are real, and they are important successes. And of course, U.S. troops in Afghanistan continue to serve with excellence, with devotion, with patriotism. And we all take this for granted so much.

However, much more must be done. And we have seen all too well this year any gains can quickly vanish if we don't capitalize on them. Our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies must also do much more, but we cannot expect our allies to step up if the U.S. itself does not demonstrate a strong commitment to the success of the Afghan mission.

In terms of Iraq, I applaud the military's successes there, but I remain concerned about the pace of political progress. The Iraqis still have not been able to even come to an agreement on holding provincial elections, much less address more fundamental questions like the future of Kirkuk. Given this, I have a real question of why

we are not redeploying additional forces, both to bolster our efforts in Afghanistan and to keep the pressure on the Iraqis to come to a sustainable political accommodation.

So, gentlemen, I ask you, when will the conditions in Iraq be good enough, and when will the conditions in Afghanistan have deteriorated enough, to warrant the reprioritization of focus and resources that is required to ensure the long-term success of the Afghanistan mission? When will you be able to tell this committee with confidence that, in Afghanistan, we do what we must?

Now I turn to my good friend, my colleague from California, ranking gentleman, Mr. Hunter, Duncan Hunter.

STATEMENT OF HON. DUNCAN HUNTER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing in a very timely way, especially timely in light of the President's announcement yesterday to remove some 8,000 American troops from Iraq by February.

I want to join with you in thanking our witnesses for being with us today and for their testimony.

First, I think it is important, with respect to Iraq, to point out that we are winning in Iraq. The United States is going to be leaving that theater in victory. And the metrics that are moving us toward that goal are manifested in the 80 percent reduction in the number of attacks; the 70 percent reduction in improvised explosive devices (IEDs)—that is, roadside bomb attacks; the fact that we found some 85 percent more caches this year than we did last year, with the enormous cooperation now mobilizing the citizenry of Iraq on our side; and also the increasing capability of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). That force is now standing up fairly robustly, the 130-plus battalions.

And Mr. Chairman, I think it is clear now that the United States did the right thing in not trying to simply restand the existing Iraqi Army, which included some 10,000-plus Sunni generals, but we had to build that force from scratch. And although that was difficult and it has been a long process, I think that that is now paying off.

And finally, I think we also need to look at the leadership that has been manifested in this discussion over the last couple of days with the books out about the American decisions that were made by President Bush, by the situation that surrounded our Iraq policy over the last couple of years. And you know, I noticed the President being criticized strongly by, I think, Mr. Woodward on a number of shows over the last couple of days; implicitly criticized, but you know, he pointed out that this President, in the *Post* yesterday, gave this message to General Petraeus. He said: "I want you to win. Your mission is to win. And I will give you everything that you need to win."

Mr. Chairman, those words to the combatant commander in that theater are the most important words that an American President can deliver. And they are the words that didn't go to the combatant commander in Vietnam many years, when you had a President who literally decided which bridges were going to be bombed on a cer-

tain day and what result we hoped to expect from that particular day's operations.

I think this operation in Iraq is going to be successfully concluded as the Iraq Army continues to stand up.

But Mr. Chairman, we now are focusing much more strongly than ever on Afghanistan. And Afghanistan involves a very complicated situation, in some ways similar to Iraq; in many ways very difficult and very different from the Iraq situation. You have got the border lands now in Pakistan approaching a level at which they are becoming now the new sanctuary for al Qaeda and Taliban operations. The political situation inside Pakistan complicates our ability to interfere with this new sanctuary. It is going to provide a challenge for us for the next many years.

I think, Mr. Chairman, it is important that we establish an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) curtain on the border with Pakistan, that we utilize American capabilities with respect to reconnaissance and surveillance so that, regardless of what happens in Pakistan—and that is a large question mark, where their politics are going to go, where their military is going to go—that we have the ability to interdict operations emanating from that side of the border. And that is going to be a challenge for our ability to field systems, but I think we have got to field a lot of new systems and utilize everything that we presently have in our inventory.

Obviously, another challenge is to bring this team, this NATO team, this International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) team plus into a full coordinated operation. This is a massive challenge for us with the disparate directives that are coming down from our partners' governments, from their civil governments, with respect to conditions that are put on their troops—things they can do, things that they can't do. We need to have a unified command. And we have done that to some degree by giving this second hat to the American commander, General McKiernan. That is very important. But unifying and coordinating the allies is going to be a continuing challenge and one that we must focus on.

So I know that the order of the day, Mr. Chairman, over the next several years is going to be, I think, making our operation in Afghanistan work. And I look forward to listening to the Secretary and the Chairman's ideas with respect to where we go from here.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I think that it is very important for us to look at the increased troop levels that are taking place now and have taken place largely unnoticed over the last couple of years in Afghanistan and remember the fact that Afghanistan, the Afghanistan operation, serves another purpose right now; it manifests another important Western exercise, and that is bringing together these allies in the NATO nations and the newly freed nations that have come out from behind the Iron Curtain which today comprise some of our strongest allies, bringing them together and training them to share this burden of fighting this war against terror with the United States.

And I think that one difficulty that we have is that a number of other nations have looked at us and said, "We are going to let Uncle Sam do it." And when they look at the price tags that attend deploying forces in a foreign country, supporting those forces, the

logistics, especially with respect to aerial operations, they say it is going to be a lot easier to let the Americans pay for this.

And so part of your challenge, Mr. Secretary, and to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, part of your challenge is to bring our allies with us. And you made statements like this in the past to the effect that it is only right that in these difficult and contentious areas where we are taking killed in action (KIAs) and wounded in action (WIAs), it is not acceptable to have allies which have conditions and rules placed on them by their home governments that say that they can't leave the garrison, that they can't operate in difficult areas, that they can't get involved in firefights when the American Marines and soldiers are carrying that burden.

So bringing them with us in this exercise in Afghanistan is, I think, a very major part of meeting this challenge. So we have got a big spread of important issues and sub-issues here today.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your leadership.

And the Chairman, Admiral Mullen, thank you for your leadership here over the last year. I look forward to your testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, first, let me thank you for not just your appearance today, and Admiral Mullen, thank you for your appearance today. It is critical that you be with us. But thank you for fulfilling the section in the last year's defense bill regarding Iraq. We appreciate you doing that as part of this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT M. GATES, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR ERIC S. EDELMAN, UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Secretary GATES. Mr. Chairman, Representative Hunter, members of the committee, thank you for inviting us to give you an update on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I would also like to express, at the outset, gratitude to the Congress for recently passing legislation to enhance the benefits of the GI bill. The Department is very pleased with the outcome. And I can tell you that our men and women in uniform are deeply appreciative. Of course this is just one example of the many ways in which you have supported our troops over the past years. And on behalf of all of them, I thank you.

Last week General Petraeus made his recommendations on the way forward in Iraq. Separate recommendations were submitted by the commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the commander of Central Command, the service chiefs, and the chairman. Although each viewed the challenges from a different perspective, weighing different factors, all once again arrived at similar recommendations. We have already withdrawn the five Army brigade combat teams, two Marine battalions and the Marine expeditionary unit that were sent to Iraq as part of the surge. The President announced yesterday that approximately 8,000 U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Iraq by February without being replaced. The withdrawal of approximately 3,400 noncombat forces, including aviation personnel, explosive ordnance teams, combat and construction engineers, military police, and lo-

gistics support teams, all begin this month, will continue through this fall and winter, and will be completed in January. In addition, a Marine battalion stationed in Anbar will return in November and another Army brigade combat team (BCT) will return by early February. The bottom line point is that the drawdowns associated with the President's announcements do not wait until January or February, but, in fact, begin in a few days.

The continuing drawdown is possible because of the success in reducing violence and building Iraqi security capacity. Even with fewer troops, U.S. troops, in Iraq, the positive trends of the last year have held and, in some cases, steadily continued in the right direction. Our casualties have been greatly reduced, even though one is still too many. And overall violence is down 80 percent. The recent turnover of Anbar province to Iraqi provisional control, the 11th of 18 provinces to be turned over, highlights how much the situation has improved. My submitted testimony has more details on some of the other positive indicators, as well as serious challenges that remain. In short, Iraqi Security Forces have made great strides. Political progress has been incremental but significant. And other nations of the region are increasingly engaged with Iraq.

That said, there are still problems, such as the prospect of violence in the lead-up to elections, worrisome reports about sectarian efforts to slow the assimilation of the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces, Iranian influence, the very real threat that al Qaeda continues to pose, and the possibility that Jaish al Mahdi could return.

Before moving onto Afghanistan, I would like to make a few general comments and put the successes of the past year and a half into some context. The President has called our reduction in troop numbers a return on success. I, of course, agree, but I would expand further. The changes on the ground and in our posture are reflective of fundamental change in the nature of the conflict. In past testimony, I have cautioned that no matter what you think about the origins of the war in Iraq, we must get the end game there right. I believe we have now entered that end game, and our decisions today and in the months ahead will be critical to regional stability and our national security interests for years to come.

When I entered this office, the main concern was to halt and reverse the spiralling violence in order to prevent a strategic calamity for the United States and allow the Iraqis to make progress on political, economic, and security fronts. Although we all have criticisms of the Iraqi government, there can be no doubt that the situation is much different and far better than it was in early 2007.

The situation, however, remains fragile. Disagreements in our country still exist over the speed of the drawdowns and whether we should adhere to hard and fast timelines or more flexible time horizons. I worry that the great progress our troops and the Iraqis have made has the potential to override a measure of caution born of uncertainty. Our military commanders do not yet believe our gains are necessarily enduring, and they believe that there are still many challenges and the potential for reversals in the future.

The continuing but carefully modulated reductions the President has ordered represent, I believe, not only the right direction, but also the right course of action, especially considering planned and

unplanned redeployments by some of our coalition partners. The planned reductions are an acceptable risk today but also provide for unforeseen circumstances in the future. The reductions also preserve a broad range of options for the next commander in chief, who will make his own assessment after taking office in January.

As we proceed deeper into the end game, I would urge our Nation's leaders to implement strategies that, while steadily reducing our presence in Iraq, are cautious and flexible and take into account the advice of our senior commanders and military leaders. I would also urge our leaders to keep in mind that we should expect to be involved in Iraq for years to come, although in changing and increasingly limited ways.

Left me shift to Afghanistan. There we are working with the Afghans and coalition partners to counter a classic extremist insurgency fueled by ideology, poppy, poverty, crime, and corruption. My submitted statement details some positive developments, such as the increased commitment by our international partners on both the military and nonmilitary fronts and the announcement yesterday to double the size of the Afghan Army, which has demonstrated its effectiveness on the battlefield. The statement also outlines in more detail some of the logistical challenges we still face and are working to improve, such as ISAF shortfalls and coordination problems between military forces and civilian elements, particularly the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs).

The persistent and increasing violence resulting from an organized insurgency is, of course, our greatest concern. The President has decided to send more troops to Afghanistan in response to resurgent extremism and violence, reflecting greater ambition, sophistication, and coordination.

We did not get to this point overnight, so some historical context is useful. The mission in Afghanistan has evolved over the years since 2002, in both positive and negative ways. Reported insurgent activities and attacks began increasing steadily in the spring of 2006. This has been the result of increased insurgent activity, insurgent safe havens in Pakistan, and reduced military pressure on that side of the border, as well as more international and Afghan troops on the battlefield, troops that are increasingly in contact with the enemy.

In response to increased violence and insurgent activity in 2006, in January of 2007, we extended the deployment of an Army brigade and added another brigade. This last spring, the United States deployed 3,500 Marines. In all, the number of American troops in the country increased from less than 21,000 two years ago to nearly 31,000 today.

At the NATO summit in Bucharest in April, ISAF allies and partners restated their commitment to Afghanistan. France added 700 troops in eastern Afghanistan. This fall, Germany will seek to increase its troop ceiling from 3,500 to 4,500. Poland is also increasing its forces by more than a thousand troops. The number of coalition troops, including NATO troops, has increased from about 20,000 to about 31,000, and it appears this trend will continue as other allies, such as the United Kingdom, add more troops.

In Bucharest in April, the President pledged the United States would send more troops to Afghanistan in 2009. Accordingly, we

will increase U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan by deploying a Marine battalion this November and, in January of 2009, an Army brigade combat team, both units that had been slated for Iraq. As in Iraq, however, additional forces alone will not solve the problem. Security is just one aspect of the campaign, alongside development and governance. We must maintain momentum, keep the international community engaged, and develop the capacity of the Afghan government. The entirety of the NATO alliance, the European Union (EU), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other groups, our full military and civilian capabilities, must be on the same page and working toward the same goal with the Afghan government. I am still not satisfied with the level of coordination and collaboration among the numerous partners and many moving parts associated with civilian reconstruction and development and building the capacity of the Afghan government.

We do face committed enemies, which brings me, finally, to the challenge of the tribal areas in Pakistan. As in Iraq, until the insurgency is deprived of safe havens, insecurity and violence will persist. We are working with Pakistan in a number of areas, and I do believe that Islamabad appreciates the magnitude of the threat from the tribal areas, particularly considering the uptick in suicide bombings directed at Pakistani targets. During this time of political turmoil in Pakistan, it is especially critical that we maintain a strong and positive relationship with the government, since any deterioration would be a set back for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The war on terror started in this region; it must end there.

Let me close by thanking again all Members of the committee and the Congress, as a whole, for their support for our men and women in uniform. I have noted on a number of occasions how positive the public response has been to those who have volunteered to serve. Our Nation's leaders across the political spectrum have led the way in honoring our service men and women, not just by providing the funds they need for their mission, but also by publicly declaring their support and admiration of our troops. I thank you for your sentiment, and I thank you for your leadership during these challenging times.

Mr. Chairman, before I close, I would like to just take a moment also to take this opportunity to share with the committee my decision to terminate the current Air Force tanker solicitation. As you know, the Department has been attempting over the past 7 years to find a proper way forward on replacing the current fleet of U.S. Air Force KC–135 tankers. Most recently, we have been engaged in discussions with the competing companies on changes to the draft request for proposal (RFP) that would address the findings and recommendations of the GAO's review of the Boeing protest. It has now become clear that the solicitation and award process cannot be accomplished by January. Thus, I believe that rather than hand the next Administration an incomplete and possibly contested process, we should cleanly defer this procurement to the next team. Over the past seven years, this process has become enormously complex and emotional, in no small part due to mistakes and missteps on the part of the Defense Department. It is my judgment that in the time remaining to us, we cannot complete a competition

that would be viewed as fair and competitive in this highly charged environment. I believe that the resulting cooling-off period will allow the next Administration to review objectively the military requirements and craft a new acquisition strategy for the KC–X as it sees fit.

I am assured that the current KC–135 fleet can be adequately maintained to satisfy Air Force missions for the near future. Sufficient funds will be recommended in the fiscal year 2009 and follow-on budgets to maintain the KC–135 at high mission-capable rates. In addition, the Department will soon recommend to the Congress the disposition of the pending fiscal year 2009 funding for the tanker program and plans to continue funding the KC–X program in the fiscal year 2010 to 2015 budget presently under review.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much.

Admiral Mullen, thank you for your appearance today, sir.

STATEMENT OF ADM. MICHAEL G. MULLEN, USN, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF; ACCOMPANIED BY VICE ADM. JAMES A. WINNEFELD, JR., USN, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PLANS AND POLICY, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Admiral MULLEN. Chairman Skelton, Representative Hunter, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and thanks, as well, for all you do to support our men and women in uniform and their families. Having visited with our troops all over the world, I can tell you they are aware and appreciative of America's support, support which in so many ways emanates from this committee and from the Congress as a whole. So, again, on their behalf, I thank you for that.

Let me begin today by also expressing my appreciation to the President and Secretary Gates for their support of our armed forces and of the family members of those who serve. Today, on the eve of the seventh anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, we are reminded again of just how critical that service really is. And consequently, in an all-volunteer force, where people have other choices, how absolutely vital is the recognition and support of the Federal Government for the needs of our service men and women.

On that note, I stand particularly grateful today for the President's support of the recommendations that Secretary Gates and I have made to him with respect to the way forward in Iraq and Afghanistan. I need not recount for you here the details of those recommendations nor the circumstances that underpin them. Secretary Gates has just done that, and I am in complete agreement with his views.

Today, rather, I wish to make the following points. First, the recommendations that went forward to the Secretary and to the President represented a consensus view of the military leadership in this country. The process by which they were derived was candid, transparent, and thoroughly collaborative. The entire chains of command for both Iraq and Afghanistan were involved, engaged, including the Joint Chiefs.

We did not all enjoy complete agreement early on. Frankly, I would have been surprised had it been otherwise. One sees war, feels it, fights it, leads it from one's unique perspective. The key to success over the long term is proving able to see it also from another's perspective, be it in the enemy's or the public's or the chain of command, and being informed by that knowledge as you move forward. I can assure you that all of us at all levels in the chain of command considered the whole of each struggle, the totality of each effort, and the need to preserve, on a global scale, our greater national interests.

Some in the media have described our final recommendations as a compromise solution. And to the degree that this explains the process we employed, I would agree. But it would be wrong to conclude that our proposal represented a compromise in any way of our commitment to success. We did not compromise one war for the other.

And that, Mr. Chairman, brings me to my second point. Iraq and Afghanistan are two different fights. Many of you have been to both countries. You know these differences—the enemies' various objectives, the political and economic challenges unique to each culture, the weather, even the ground. As one soldier in Bagram told me in Afghanistan, the terrain itself can be the enemy. We treated the needs of each war separately and weighed our decisions for each solely against the risks inherent and the resources available.

Given the extraordinary success Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus have achieved in Iraq, the dramatic improved security on the ground, the growing competence of the Iraqi military and police forces, the growing confidence of Iraqi political leaders, and the economic progress which is burgeoning, it is our view that the risks of drawing down by one brigade and one Marine battalion is minimal at best and can be mitigated by the readiness of coalition forces already in theater or back at home, should a contingency arise to warrant their deployment.

The rewards, on the other hand, are potentially great, as we seek to build dwell time for our troops and their families and have at our disposal a rested, stronger, more capable strategic reserve for worldwide crises. As always, conditions on the ground matter most, and we reserve the right to recommend adjustments to these plans should those conditions require it.

Conditions in Afghanistan certainly do require it. And I don't speak of Afghanistan without also speaking of Pakistan, for, in my view, these two nations are inextricably linked in a common insurgency that crosses the border between them. You have all seen the challenges we have faced, particularly in the south and east, as Taliban and al Qaeda fighters grow bolder and more sophisticated. You have seen the willingness of these disparate groups of fighters to better collaborate and communicate from safe havens in Pakistan; their ability to launch ever more sophisticated, even infantry-like, attacks against fixed coalition positions; their increasing reliance on foreign fighters; and their growing and flagrant willingness to use innocent people as shields. Add to this a poor and struggling Afghan economy, a still healthy narcotics trade, and a significant political uncertainty in Pakistan, and you have all the makings of a complex, difficult struggle that will take time.

I am not convinced we are winning it in Afghanistan. I am convinced we can. That is why I intend to commission and am looking at a new, more comprehensive military strategy for the region that covers both sides of that border. It is why I pushed hard for the continued growth and training of Afghan National Security Forces. It is why I pressed hard on my counterparts in Afghanistan to do more against extremists and to let us do more to help them. And it is why the chiefs and I recommended the deployment of a Marine battalion to Afghanistan this fall and the arrival of another Army brigade early next year. These forces by themselves will not adequately meet General McKiernan's desire for up to three brigades, but they are a good and important start. Frankly, I judge the risk of not sending them too great a risk to ignore. My expectation is that they will need to perform both a training mission and the combat and combat support missions simultaneously, until such time that we can provide additional troops. And I cannot say, at this point, when that might be. Again, we must continually assess our progress there and in Iraq, weighing it against the global risk and the health of the force before we make any more commitments.

And that, sir, leads to my final point. As I once said about Iraq, let me now say about Afghanistan: Absent a broader international and interagency approach to the problems there, it is my professional opinion that no amount of troops in no amount of time can ever achieve all the objectives we seek in Afghanistan. And frankly, we are running out of time.

We can train and help grow the Afghan Security Forces, and we are. In fact, they are on track to reach a total end strength of 162,000 by 2010. The Marines conducting their training are doing a phenomenal job. But until those Afghan forces have the support of local leaders to improve security on their own, we will only be there as a crutch—and a temporary one at that. We can hunt down and kill extremists as they cross over the border from Pakistan, as I watched, personally, us do during a daylong trip recently to the Korengal valley; but until we work more closely with the Pakistani government to eliminate safe havens from which they operate, the enemy will only keep coming. We can build roads and schools and courts, and our Provincial Reconstruction Teams are doing just that. But until we have represented in those teams more experts from the fields of commerce, agriculture, jurisprudence, and education, those facilities will remain but empty shells. Fewer than 1 in 20 PRTs throughout the country are supported by nonmilitary personnel. Afghanistan doesn't just need more boots on the ground; it needs more trucks on the roads, teachers in schools, trained judges and lawyers in those courts. Foreign investment, alternative crops, sound governance, the rule of law; these are the keys to success in Afghanistan. We cannot kill our way to victory, and no armed force anywhere, no matter how good, can deliver these keys alone. It requires teamwork and cooperation. And it will require the willingness by everyone in the interagency and international community to focus less on what we think we each do best and more on what we believe we can all do better together.

I know you understand that, and I appreciate all you do on this committee to support those of us in uniform. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much for your statement, Admiral.

As a side note, Mr. Secretary, you mentioned the end game in Iraq. It is rather interesting to recall the Sun Tzu precept that said war should not be entered into without considering the end of that war. And I question whether that was considered to begin with.

I have a question, and I will only ask one at this time, if each of you would like to share it. Is Iraq still the higher priority than Afghanistan? I think we should know what the priority is between the two. And to lift a phrase from an earlier testimony, Admiral, when will we be able to do what we must to win in Afghanistan?

Mr. Secretary.

Secretary GATES. Well, I don't think it is a mathematical equation. I would say that success in Iraq means that we are steadily reducing our commitment, our level of commitment and resources, particularly manpower, to that theater. At the same time, we are able, under those circumstances, to increase our level of commitment and resources to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is, in some ways, a more complex challenge, it seems to me, in terms of how it is addressed. For one thing, in Iraq, we and the Iraqis, together, basically are the principal players. So if we reach agreement with the Iraqis on the strategy, then that is pretty well the strategy. In Afghanistan, we not only have many allies; we have diverse enemies. We don't have a single adversary. We have the Taliban. We have the Hekmatyar Golbedin—Golbedin Hekmatyar. We have the Hakani network. We have narco thugs. We have al Qaeda. We have foreign fighters. And while these are in many respects a syndicate, they are not an integrated enemy. So my view—the short answer to your question is that, as opposed to saying which has higher priority, I would say we are reducing our commitments in Iraq, and we are increasing our commitments in Afghanistan.

The CHAIRMAN. Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. Chairman, I spoke publicly in recent months about the hope, as did the Secretary, the hope I would have to have conditions in Iraq support reducing the number of troops that we have there and then making decisions about what we would do with those troops. That has indeed happened. And I continue to have that hope as conditions over time continue to improve—the Iraqi Security Forces continue to improve, both military and police—that the economy keeps continuing to improve and that that would allow us to continue to reduce troops there over time. I think the step that the President announced yesterday is a significant one and a very strong signal of what has happened in Iraq and, also, decisions to make to send additional troops into Afghanistan.

There are similarities between the two, but there are also great differences. And I agree with the Secretary that it is more complex, that there are many aspects of Afghanistan that need to be addressed more fully than just the security. We need to be able to provide, with the Afghan forces, the security so that country can develop. But there is a great deal more to be done in those other areas that I talked about in my opening statement. So they are both a priority right now. I think we are in a good place with re-

spect to Iraq. And being able to leverage that and look to increasing troops in Afghanistan is a very important step in my view.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And again, gentlemen, thanks for being here.

Mr. Secretary, just a thought on ISR. We have got the modularization, and the Army and the brigade combat team concept is an idea that was designed to ensure that we had a commonality of equipment and an efficiency, if you will, and the ability to chop units and to meld units and maintain military efficiency. In looking, just we have looked at, preliminarily—some of the staff members of the committee have done some analysis on ISR assets that we have throughout the Army and the other services, but primarily the Army, and it would appear to me that we have got assets that could be moved, could be focused on Afghanistan. And if the genius of effective military operations is being able to concentrate forces—that is, to focus resources, whether it is personnel or equipment, on a focal point in a limited area—we shouldn't let the brigade combat team concept keep us from breaking loose some of that equipment if we have got it in other places, having the flexibility to move that, perhaps from other theaters, and move it into the Afghanistan theater. And just looking preliminarily at the operations, the build up of operations, and the nature of those operations, and the fact that we are seeing a migration of the IED threat into Afghanistan, and that we need more surveillance capability, it would appear to me that we may need to look at moving existing assets very quickly into that theater. So just an idea there. I would hope we could work together with you on that and just assure that we have plenty of ISR in the Afghanistan theater.

Secretary GATES. Mr. Hunter, I would just say that, first of all, we are going to, because of the success of the Army's Task Force Operational Digital Network (ODIN) in Iraq, we are going to recreate Task Force ODIN—or replicate it in Afghanistan with additional assets. I think that most of the other combatant commanders would tell you I have, with the help of the Chairman, redirected too many of their ISR assets from other theaters into Iraq and Afghanistan. So we have looked very closely at all of the ISR resources worldwide in terms of what we can do to provide additional capabilities, particularly in Afghanistan.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. Thank you.

And I would hope we could continue to work on that.

The other thing is, you know, if we look at our allies, look at the conditions that have been imposed on some of our allies, with respect to what they can do down to the point where some of them can't leave the garrison in Afghanistan—give us, if you will, your thoughts on how the allies are performing and how well we are doing in bringing this team, this NATO-plus, if you will, into what is really their first major military operation since their inception. How are we doing, and how do we invoke more cooperation from the allies?

Secretary GATES. Let me speak to that and then invite the Chairman to add his view. I think, first of all, one of the positive results that has not gotten much attention out of the Bucharest NATO

summit last April was the decision on the part of several of our allies to reduce or remove the caveats that—the national caveats that they had on their troops. So we have seen, in several instances, our allies be able to step up to the plate and take on the full range of responsibilities since April that they had not done before.

The reality is that some of our allies have a significant number of people in Afghanistan. I mentioned the Germans are going from 3,500 to 4,500, and the Germans are basically taking care of Regional Command (RC) North in Afghanistan. We have a significant Italian and Spanish presence in the western part of Iraq. The heavy fighting in the south is carried out not just by the United States, but by the United Kingdom, by Australia, the Canadians, the Dutch, and the Danes. And I would tell you that they are in the fight all the way. And it is one of the sad results of that that the British, the Dutch, the Canadians especially, the Australians—all are taking significant casualties, proportionate to the size of the force that they have there and proportionate to the size of their forces. So I would say, particularly in RC South, where the fighting is the heaviest, our allies are playing a really critical role for us and are doing so both with skill and great courage. So I would say that the trend lines are very positive in this regard.

Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. Mr. Hunter, I would only add that in my interaction with my counterparts, which is very frequent on this issue, and in particular those countries that the Secretary mentioned, they really are very committed. And it has changed over the last year. When I am in RC South and visiting, that kind of feedback is what I get from our people on the ground with respect to the Canadians, the Brits, the Aussies. And indeed, the French just sent an extra battalion in and tragically, not too long after they were there, they lost 10 of their soldiers. So there is a significant improvement in my view of that. And I think the overall 10,000 troop increase there that the Secretary spoke to in his opening statement is part of this. We have tried to focus, particularly over the last year, year-and-a-half, and I think they have responded. And I think they will continue to respond, maybe not as quickly as we would like, maybe not with as much force, but clearly they are heading in the right direction in many of those countries.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. Thank you, gentlemen.

Just one last point, Mr. Secretary.

I have looked at the time line for the replication of Task Force ODIN with respect to Afghanistan. There may be some ways we can make some improvements on that. I would hope you would work with the committee on that, and we might be able to move some equipment a little bit quicker. And last, rules of engagement, looking at some of the battles that have taken place in the south recently, we may need to engage on that a little further, in that there are different rules of engagement, as you know, with respect to different countries. And that provides—at some point provides some issues when you have joint operations. And there have been one or two instances where there has been a—I think where we have had an issue or two arise. But I think we will talk to you about that off record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

John Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Secretary, Admiral Mullen, thank you very much for your testimony and for your service.

I think you both agree that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost us vastly more than anyone ever anticipated in dollar terms. And frankly, there is no near-term end in sight. By our calculation on the Budget Committee, with the help of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Iraq and Afghanistan, between 2001 and 2009, a 10-year period of time, have cost us about $859 billion. We asked CBO if they would give us a projection of the next 10 years, assuming a phase down to about 75,000 troops in both theaters and a steady state by 2013. And the number they gave us for that 10-year period of time was $913 billion. Together that is $1.8 trillion, which I think you would agree is a lot of money and a consequential number. If we spend it here, we have to forego things elsewhere.

We are six years into the engagement in Iraq, and we still don't get good numbers. We still don't get budget requests that reflect real needs. And this year is a good example. The request for the supplemental expenditures needed for Iraq and Afghanistan in this year's budget is $70 billion. I think you both agree that is a plug. It is not a real number. It is not a realistic number. In addition, if you look at the President's budget over time, over a five-year period of time, he gave us a run-out of the numbers over that period of time; in real dollars, the Defense budget, 050, goes down each year from 2009 through 2013. So my question to you both is, when can we expect to get realistic numbers and a realistic budget request?

I know that to start with, you didn't have a cost base to operate on, but we have been there some time now; there ought to be some way to extrapolate from past costs, based upon present and future plans, and come up with numbers that are a lot more realistic and reliable than the numbers we have got. Could you provide us those numbers now, or is there any way we could obtain those numbers from you in the near future—at least a commitment, for the budget requests, that we have more realistic numbers than we have had in previous fiscal years?

Secretary GATES. Mr. Spratt, I think that now that the President has made his decisions, in terms of the next step on the drawdowns in Iraq and also the reinforcement in Afghanistan, that we are now in a position to go back and—I couldn't agree with you more; we all knew that the $70 billion was basically to get us through March or thereabouts next year. And we will come back to you with what we think is the most realistic additional number on top of the $70 billion.

Mr. SPRATT. Is that in the near future?

Secretary GATES. I hope so, sir.

Mr. SPRATT. All right. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Saxton, please.

Mr. McHugh, I am sorry.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, welcome. Thank you, as always, for your service.

I am not sure. This may be the last time we see you, certainly for this year. But I know I speak for all my colleagues; we deeply appreciate your being with this committee on any number of occasions, but more importantly for the great work you do on behalf of our men and women in uniform.

Admiral Mullen, the last time you and I had a chance to chat, we talked about the kinds of things you mentioned today. And I couldn't agree with your comments more; the fact of the matter is troop strength is important. We need to focus on it. But Afghanistan presents a much more complex picture than just force structure. And not just Afghanistan. I don't know how we solve Afghanistan or our Nation's and world's problem without solving the problem of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Pakistan. The time we did discuss it, Admiral, we talked about the Frontier Corps, which remains kind of at the focus of addressing those, what I argue are, ungoverned tribal areas, not administered tribal areas. But that Corps had a rather rocky start, and yet it remains a key part of the hoped-for solution there. I wonder if you could give me an update on how you view the Frontier Corps program.

Admiral MULLEN. If I can, Mr. McHugh, I would just go a little broader initially. The Pakistani—because an equally important, if not more important, part of that is what the Pakistani military is doing, and literally right now. And they have had ongoing operations for several months now and will continue to do that. And I would capture the shift that their leadership has generated. If I look at the forces they have now in the Northwest Frontier Provinces and that part of Pakistan, a year ago, I think there were 8 or 9 brigades, and there are at least 10 more there now. And so there has been a big shift and a commitment on the part of the Pakistani military.

In addition, we do have a focus on the Frontier Corps. We are in a position to commence training with them, training the trainers, if you will, with more capacity than we have had in the past. And I also know that there has been a leadership change at the head of the Frontier Corps, which General Kiyani made, which is significant. So as I indicated, this isn't going to happen quickly, but I think it is headed in the right direction. And it is a combination in the long run, I think, of both the Pakistan military (Pak Mil), the Frontier Corps, and then the development that would come to follow that on the heels, to be able to sustain this over the long run.

Mr. MCHUGH. I won't ask you, because I don't think it is answerable at this point, but I certainly hope that the ever-changing face of the Pakistan government continues to support that initiative and continues to support the Pak Mil. Because I agree with you that it is critical to have those folks in there trying to govern their own territory.

I just got back from my ninth trip to Iraq. I had a chance to do some visits to the Iraqi special operators training live-fire demonstration, went out and saw the military police training that the Italians are doing I think a fabulous job on, et cetera, et cetera. And as we look at the progress in Iraq, clearly a key component of that is the training up of the ISF, the Iraqi Security Forces.

Over 72 percent now, as I understand, of their available forces are taking the lead. And that has freed up pressure.

Clearly, in Afghanistan, the announcement to double the size of the Afghan National Security Force, I think, is a great step in the right direction. But back in June of this year, the GAO made a very pointed criticism of our efforts there. And it said that they could find no coordinated, detailed plan, U.S. plan, to develop the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). If we are going to have the success in Afghanistan vis-a-vis their National Security Forces that we have seen in Iraq and enjoy the benefits therefrom, how would you answer that GAO criticism? Do you feel that it is unfounded, or have there been steps taken since then to address that and to develop a coordinated plan to reach that goal of 162,000 by 2010, I believe you said?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir. Actually, I would take issue with the fact that there is no plan. We have had two—Major General Bob Cohen, who is there now, and his predecessor, General Bob Durbin—who actually put in place and are executing a very robust plan to train both the Army and the police forces.

Where we are is we are short trainers; we have been short trainers, and so in my statement where I talk about, I think, forces that go in will be doing both security operations and training simultaneously, that is what the Marines are doing in the west right now. And they are initial—they are really the first force we have had, a significant force we have had, in that part of Afghanistan. And we need to generate more trainers. There is no question about that.

From the military standpoint, we have actually made an awful lot of progress. We have got a long way to go on the police side, which is a combination of both trainers, corruption, the kind of background that has existed there for a long time, although it is being addressed. While it is not perfect, it is an area that has a great deal of focus and will continue on the part of the leadership here and our leadership there.

The CHAIRMAN. Solomon Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a question for both of the witnesses. And let me say thank you so much for your service to our country. And I know that we are going through very difficult times, but as we know, there is an election coming about in the next few months. I was wondering what planning and work has been done to enable the next Administration to make its own decisions about force levels upon taking office after who wins the Presidency? And what limits does the President's recent decision place on force level changes? Also, what plans are there to ensure that Iraqi security forces are ready and willing to and able to accept additional missions and responsibilities beginning sometime in February?

And my last—and I am asking all of these questions because the hurricane is getting ready to strike my district as I speak. You know, how much influence do nongovernmental organizations and former military personnel have in formulating United States strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan? And how do those organizations and individuals interact with the Department of Defense leadership and combatant commanders?

And one of the reasons I am asking this last portion of the question—I have had several calls because of the series of stories being written in the *Washington Post.* And maybe both of you can make some comments on my questions, and thank you so much.

Secretary GATES. Mr. Chairman Ortiz, first of all, I think that the new President will have a full array of options when he enters office, in terms of troop levels in Iraq. As I indicated in my opening remarks, I hope that whoever the new President is will listen closely to the commanders in the field and senior military leaders. I have made the comment before that those who worry and are concerned that the military view was not taken sufficiently into account at the beginning of the war would not neglect it as we get deeper in the end game. But there is nothing in place that would constrain the decisions of a new President in terms of policies or anything else that a new President could not change. So a new President will have complete flexibility and constrained only by his view of our national security interests.

In terms of the Iraqi Security Forces, based on information, the latest information, that I have from General Petraeus, there are now, I think, 164 Iraqi Army battalions in the fight, and about 107 of those are either in the lead or operating independently at this point. So I think that our view is that, particularly when we look at the operations in Basra, in Mosul, in Sadr City, and Diyala province and elsewhere, the Iraqi Army is acquitting itself very well.

In terms of the role of the civil side of the conflict and their engagement in the Iraq campaign plan, I would tell you that I believe since postwar Germany, we have not had a closer partnership between a senior military commander and a United States ambassador than we have in Baghdad. And Ryan Crocker and his team—and he has ambassadorial-level colleagues working on the economy and other parts of the civil side of this, and Ryan has been an intimate partner and an equal partner with Dave Petraeus in putting together the overall campaign plan for Iraq. And when it is briefed to the President, it is briefed as the Petraeus-Crocker plan.

So I would say that the civil side has had a significant voice in putting together the campaign.

Admiral.

Mr. ORTIZ. The last portion of my question was the influence of nongovernmental organizations and former military personnel. How much influence do they have or do they insert on the chief of staffs of the military on making their decisions?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think the honest answer to that is that there are more than a few NGOs that are uneasy about a relationship—too close a relationship with the military. And I think to the degree that their influence—I am sure there is some contact, because, after all, they are in the field working and interact with our troops and our commanders all the time. But I suspect in terms of formal input of their views, I think it is more likely to be done through the ambassador and the embassy than it is commander.

Admiral MULLEN. The only thing I would offer, in addition, with respect to the options for a new President is the full range, and we base these recommendations on what I call continued assessment. It is ongoing every day. From an analytical standpoint and a where we are standpoint, we will be ready to make those recommenda-

tions based on what is, in fact, going on at time that a new President goes into office.

I am very encouraged by what I see with the ISF. I do not just mean what gets reported in. I spend time with them, their leadership. They have a skip in their step and a focus on their own country that they are thoroughly enthusiastic about right now as they have continued to grow and to take the lead.

And the only thing I would offer with respect to specifically what has been written now, written recently—and one is, I know, I am quoted in that book. I was not interviewed for that book. Second, I think it is important, and I will tell you the process, since I have been chairman, that I have been able to work up the chain of command and give my very frank advice through the Secretary to the President, and that has been unimpeded, and I very much appreciate that. And I think that is a very important part of our democracy and how the system is supposed to work.

Mr. ORTIZ. Again, thank you both for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Afghanistan is not Iraq, but as someone said on television recently, progress in Iraq has been wildly successful over the past couple of years. And so I am thinking about lessons that we can learn from that success in Iraq and see whether they might apply to Afghanistan, particularly in the area of training and fielding Afghan security forces.

I heard what the admiral said. We don't have enough trainers and some of the other constraints. But I am wondering, Mr. Secretary, what are the lessons that you think our country can learn from the training, building up, and fielding of security forces in Iraq that have application to Afghanistan? Is it a situation where it just takes a certain amount of time? Are there tribal complexities you have to work through? Is it a question of how many—of resources? What are the lessons we can learn from what has worked?

Secretary GATES. The Chairman probably has more insight on this than I do, but let me take a quick stab at it and turn to him.

I think that we have learned a lot in both places. I think we are applying a lot of lessons that we have learned in Iraq to Afghanistan, in terms of overall counterinsurgency strategy, as well the successes and lessons learned in terms of training the indigenous forces.

I think that in both places you have to be mindful of the tribal and ethnic and sectarian divisions, more so in Iraq, on the sectarian side, than in Afghanistan. But I think what is important, and one of the most heartening aspects of the developments both in Iraq and Afghanistan, is that the national army is emerging as a national institution in which people from all parts of society are participating and working together. And they provide, perhaps, a more immediate model than the more slowly developing civilian capacity of both governments.

And I think that some of the lessons that we have learned in Iraq have helped us accelerate the effort in Afghanistan. Nobody has ever questioned the ability of the Afghans to fight, but training

them, planning, logistical support, all of the things that go into successful military operations, these are lessons that I think have been learned first in Iraq and certainly are being applied in Afghanistan.

Chairman.

Admiral MULLENS. I think there are a great deal of—a great number of lessons which apply directly. It took us a while to figure out that this was a counterinsurgency and that we had to secure the people. That is a direct application.

In addition to the surge, the turnaround in Anbar, which was a tribal turnaround; an ability to employ young Iraqi men, Sons of Iraq, to give them another option. Mr. Hunter talks about the way we get at this, which has been in terms of the combat side of this, the ISR lessons which apply directly. In fact, there is an argument that as we move forces out of Iraq, we are going to need more ISR there to be the multiplier for our Special Forces that it is, which makes capacity a challenge both there and in Afghanistan.

We are not having challenges with the sectarian aspects of the Afghan National Army, and yet we have huge challenges with the police. And then the similarities in terms of the rest of governance and the thing that I worry most about is how poor this country is and how long it is going to take to develop it in a way that—you know, the resources are not there as they are in Iraq. Once the economy gets moving there, it is going to be a while before we are there in Afghanistan, among other things.

Secretary GATES. I would just add one quick comment to the things the admiral said. Increasing the size of the Afghan Army to 122,000, with a float of 12,000 in training, is going to cost several billion dollars a year. Overall, Afghan government revenues this year will be somewhat under $700 million. This is an area, frankly, where we have some money in the budget going forward for this, but this is an area where we think some of our allies who are not committing troops in Afghanistan can contribute to paying for the cost of expanding the Army, the Afghan Army.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Gates, it is good to see you here. I hope this is not your last time before us, but it may be. We appreciate your service so very much and your future service, whatever that is.

And, Admiral Mullen, thank you also.

I want to ask you, Admiral, what you said in your written statement, and I am one of those who have been asking for some time about the requests from our commanders in Afghanistan for more troops, and you specifically talk about that. You say—talk about putting a Marine battalion in Afghanistan this fall and another Army brigade. You say these forces by themselves will not adequately meet General McKiernan's desire for up to three brigades, but they are a good start. You continue, until such time that we can provide additional troops, and I cannot say at this point when that might be.

This is consistent what you said before about the difficulty of finding additional troops. What does that say, this difficulty of finding these troops that have been requested for some time by our

commanders in Afghanistan—what does it say about our ability to respond to other contingencies around the world? Press reports in the last day about potential leadership changes in North Korea. What does it say?

Here we are, the greatest nation in the world, and we are struggling to respond to a shooting war with the levels of troops that you think that you need. What does it say about our ability to respond to other contingencies that may require large numbers of troops?

Admiral MULLEN. I think it says clearly these are our priorities, and they have been our priorities. I have been very clear and very consistent on the growing risks globally, and I have characterized that in my own risk assessment as significant, not—not unable to respond. And it would obviously depend on what the crisis was. And, in fact, if we had a requirement, and the American people and the President of the United States said—the President of the United States said we are going to go meet this requirement, there are options to do that. But I think the risk is significant, and we need to look at how much harder we can press this force.

Our Air Force and our Navy have been very heavily engaged, not as heavily as, clearly, our ground forces, but they have been on a pretty good operational tempo, and we have tremendous reserve capacity there as well. So it speaks, more than anything else, I think, to that at this particular point in time.

General McKiernan has asked for more forces. This does meet a significant part of that. What is also really important here is the both the battalion—Marine battalion and Army brigade are very important, but what is really critical in this is the Marine battalion, which goes and relieves the 2/7 Marines, who, without relief, with what they have done, you worry about, in fact, the insurgents coming back. So to be able to sustain the effort in that part of Afghanistan, we have done the same thing with coalition and Afghan National Army forces in the south, where the Marines went in, and they are being relieved there. So, those are really significant steps forward. That said, General McKiernan has asked for three or something more brigades, and it is going to be a while before we get them there.

Dr. SNYDER. Are you satisfied that everything is occurring on the ground in Afghanistan; that when we put additional troops in—and both Presidential candidates are talking about putting additional troops there—that everything is set for success? And by that, what I am specifically asking about is the issues of coordination between our forces, other forces, the folks on the ground doing intel work. It seems to me that we could set additional troops up in a chaotic situation for more chaos, if we are not working through some of the challenges that you have there. What is the status of those kinds of challenges?

Admiral MULLEN. I think there are areas where it is working very well. I will use, as a very specific example, the Brits and the 2/4 Marines have been fighting together over the better part of the last year, and their coordination and impact has been very significant. There are other challenges, although we all recognize, and I think General McKiernan does as well, that a campaign plan needs to be adjusted, and he is doing that. And I believe, also, that it has

got to be a campaign plan that is synchronized as best we can with what is going on in Pakistan.

So all of that is in play as we look at better coordination and synchronization. But it is not just there. It has got to go across the other part of our interagency and international partners there and the other parts of putting us in a position to succeed in Afghanistan. And we are not there yet, and there is still a lot of work to do with respect to that.

Secretary GATES. I would just add, in terms of the military coordination, one of the steps that we are taking is to name General McKiernan not only as the Commander of ISAF, but also as commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. This will give him broader purview and control over the training mission, over the range of activities, so that we think that there can be better coordination both among American forces, but also between American forces and our allies.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. Secretary, Admiral, thank you for being here today. I recently had, last month, an extraordinary opportunity. I appreciate being named by the Chairman to serve on a congressional delegation (CODEL) to visit with our allies in Romania and Bulgaria. And you mentioned the contributions of NATO countries. Nearly 1,000 troops from those two newly liberated countries are serving. And in visiting with the officials and citizens of those two countries, they were so proud of their forces serving in Afghanistan.

Additionally, it was just extraordinary to visit the joint Romanian-American Airbase Mikhail Kogalniceanu (MK), Constanta in Romania, and to visit Novo Selo, the joint Bulgarian-American base. As the cochair, along with Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher of the Bulgarian Caucus, it is a dream come true to see the relationship that has been developed and the very capable American forces working with our allies.

I want to thank you, as a Member of Congress and a veteran, 31 years Army Guard, as a parent. My second son just completed—Navy guy; I know the admiral will like this—his four months' service in Baghdad. It was a very, very uplifting experience for him. He followed in the footsteps of my oldest son, who was in the Army Guard there for a year. I know firsthand from them of the success of our troops.

Additionally, my National Guard unit, the 218th Brigade, just completed a year serving in Afghanistan. I had the privilege of visiting with them every three months to find out their success in training the Afghan Police and Army units. Over the weekend, I went to something that would make you so proud, the 132nd Military Police (MP) Company, South Carolina Army National Guard, for an awards program on their service in east Baghdad, and, indeed, all the troops returned home. It was a very inspiring program of wonderful people who are protecting America by defeating the terrorists overseas.

As we look at this—and, Mr. Secretary, you identified the increase in the Afghan Army from 82,000 to 122,000, but there is not

a planned increase with the Afghan Police. Should there be? Or what is the status on working with the Afghan Police forces?

Secretary GATES. The Afghan Police are at—I think the target for them is 82,000 independently. And I don't think I—I am not sure about any plan to increase the size of the Afghan Police.

Admiral MULLEN. Everything that has come thus far from Afghanistan is that that is about right. That could change over time. And, in fact, the target is 82-. And I think there are 78- or 79- that are actually in place. Our effort is really focused on getting them trained. That is the significant next step, and we have got a long way to go with respect to that.

Mr. WILSON. Another question. I was very pleased that a constituent of mine, Major General Arnold Fields, who is a personal hero of mine, has been named to be the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction. And there has been a concern—I was reading about the funding and his ability to get that office put together. What is the status on the funding for that office?

Secretary GATES. I think we will have to take that one and get back to you.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WILSON. And specifically, it has been indicated it was authorized $20 million, but only $7 million has been appropriated. And I just noticed that. But I ran into General Fields in his home county of Hampton, South Carolina. I was thrilled to find out that you all had selected him for that important position.

A final question for Secretary Gates. In terms of counternarcotics operations, what is the status in Afghanistan?

Secretary GATES. Well, the Department of Defense and our military do not have a direct role in the counternarcotics program in Afghanistan. We support the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which has a significant presence there.

There is no question that it is a problem. It is a problem getting our allies to take the problem seriously and being willing to engage on it. It is kind of a little good news, big bad news story. The little good news is the poppy crop is now basically limited to seven provinces, thanks in no small part to improvements in governance in some of the others.

According to the United Nations (U.N.), the size of the fields under cultivation with poppies has dropped from 197,000 hectares to 150,000. So it is down 19 percent. The fact is, though, that the seven provinces where they are growing the poppies more than meets world demand.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you both for your efforts and leadership.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Tauscher.

Ms. TAUSCHER. Thank you. Thank you for being here.

Tomorrow is the seventh anniversary of one of the darkest days in American history, September 11, and many of us will be at the Pentagon to honor the people that fell when Flight 77 hit the Pentagon.

Just last weekend, I led a bipartisan CODEL to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I am very pleased to see that you—under your leadership, Mr. Secretary and Admiral Mullen, that we have been able to rationalize a new policy to deal with the fact that the seam be-

tween Afghanistan and Pakistan, that ungovernable part of territory that has been a haven for al Qaeda and the Taliban where they have been able to refinance and recruit and retrain, is an area that we are taking a very strong look at to make sure that we are not only taking fire from Pakistan to Afghanistan, where we have troops, but also that the platform of Pakistan is not used to plan another attack. And I think that is a significant decision by this government, and I am very supportive of it.

But one of the good news of becoming Secretary, Mr. Gates, was the fact that we began to change our policy, which had been an overreliance on the military, in my opinion, and too much hard power. We have to use all the levers of national power and, especially, the influence of soft power. Pakistan is in a significant economic crisis, a food crisis, a power crisis, and my concern is that the new government, both Prime Minister Gillani and the new President Mr. Zadari, are facing so many different problems. It is not just that they have a country that they have only governed about 70 percent of it, where we know, perhaps, Osama bin Laden is hiding, and there are a lot of dangerous things going on, but they have an economic crisis; they have an internal displaced persons crisis. It is a panoply of things.

Can you talk briefly about the soft power options that we have, the things that we should be doing to make sure that this new government—this very trying situation has all of the attention of the American Government—not just our military, not just that part of it, but the other things that we should be doing?

Secretary GATES. Well, we are very fortunate in that the U.S. has an extraordinary ambassador in Islamabad, Ambassador Patterson, and I think she is doing an excellent job of making sure that different parts of the American Government can make a contribution to the Pakistani—to the challenges in Pakistan are there. For example, the Treasury Department has been very much engaged with the Pakistanis, in terms of their foreign currency reserves and things like that. And I think we have other elements of the government involved. It really often is heavily dependent on the skills of the ambassador in terms of making sure that the tools that we have available are, in fact, used.

I think one of the concerns—and we spoke about this with some of the members of the committee before this session—I think one of the challenges is putting together a longer-range package of assistance for Pakistan on the civilian side on economic assistance and developmental assistance, and to help them address some of these issues. That is a multiyear package that they know that we are in this to help Pakistan over the long term. And it isn't just a relationship based on the military relationship that is focused on the border with Afghanistan; that it is much broader and has the interests of the Pakistani people in mind.

We won an enormous amount—the American military won an amazing amount of support among the Pakistani people for the response that we provided after the terrible earthquake in Pakistan, but that reflected on the whole of the United States. And a broader kind of assistance challenge that helps the Pakistani people, I think, would not only give their new government confidence that we have a long-range plan in mind, in terms of partnering with

them, but that it is multifaceted, and it is not just focused on the military fight. And I know that there are some proposals here on the Hill in terms of doing some things like that, but I think it really bears serious attention.

Ms. TAUSCHER. Admiral Mullen, you lead the finest military in the world. Thank you for your service and to all the men and women in our military and their families that support them. I assume you would echo Secretary Gates' remarks that we need to have a comprehensive strategy and that part of this needs to be economic aid and stability and the civilian side of this.

Admiral MULLEN. I would—the only thing I would add, and really for emphasis, is that it is the long-range commitment. We were not in Pakistan for 12 years because we sanctioned them, and that is part of what we have got to overcome in terms of whether they are going to believe we are going to be with them for the long haul or not.

Ms. TAUSCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Secretary Gates, it has been a pleasure to work with you and have you testifying and Admiral Mullen. Congratulations to you and to all the men and women in uniform—my microphone is not working? How is that? Is that better? Much better, I can tell.

I also want to congratulate you on the new command arrangement, or Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP) arrangement, if you will, for General McKiernan. I think we talked about that earlier. I think that is a good move. And I want to associate myself with many of the comments of Mrs. Tauscher when she talked about soft power. And, certainly, we have had discussions about the relationship with Pakistan and how important that is, and counterinsurgency operations, and the interagency effort, all of which are essential to succeeding in Afghanistan.

But I also know—I have it from a reliable, unimpeachable source in Afghanistan that, in his words, it is very kinetic there and much more kinetic than Iraq, frankly. We are fighting a very tough enemy there, or enemies in Iraq. These are tough fighters, and it is a different kind of a fight that our forces and our allies are fighting in Afghanistan than we have been in Iraq because of the different enemy.

And so a couple of things. One, I know that the Marines are—from their perspective, are in a pretty good position. They can sort of attack in any direction out of Kandahar. And I know that there is a requirement—we have talked about it here—for more forces, and I have heard that the commandant of the Marine Corps is interested in the possibility of essentially pulling the Marines out of al Anbar, where there is very little violence now and concentrating in Afghanistan. So to the extent that you can or are willing to comment on that, I would like to hear your thoughts on that, more U.S. Marine forces in Afghanistan and fewer in Iraq.

And then, Mr. Secretary, you had talked about when you were here some months ago, one of the issues that we have been dealing

with in Afghanistan is the lack of air, lack of helicopters, and part of that support from our allies. So two pieces here. We have had some indication from you, both of you today, that our NATO allies are doing more. I would like to hear a bit more about that and, particularly, some of the issues about helicopters we talked about earlier and any thoughts you are willing to share on, essentially, moving the Marines from Iraq to Afghanistan.

Secretary GATES. Let me just take on a couple of pieces of that and then turn to the admiral.

First of all, I think the image, certainly from Afghanistan, is that it is principally a kinetic fight. In my view, this is another inadequacy of our soft power capabilities. I said, in some remarks, we are being outcommunicated by a guy in a cave. And the reality is you have 42 nations, countless NGOs, universities, and others in Afghanistan building roads, helping with agricultural development, a variety of development projects. Many schools have opened, and you have heard all the statistics about the clinics that have been opened and the schools that have been opened and so on. And frankly, we not only—all of us involved, not just the United States, involved in Afghanistan and helping them, have not done a nearly enough—nearly good enough job in communicating, first of all, to the Afghans and, second, to the rest of the world, in fact, what is going on in the nonkinetic part of the international assistance effort in Afghanistan, because it is an extraordinary effort by a huge array of countries and organizations.

With respect to the—I will let the admiral address the question about the Marines. But you——

Mr. KLINE. The NATO allies and the ability to provide helicopters and forces?

Secretary GATES. The Canadians had some very significant needs if they were going to continue their presence in RC South, and that included some helicopters, and the Army, I think, did something very creative, and they basically did a deal where they let the Canadians have—buy, I think—six helicopters that the Army was to receive that were at the front of the production line, and then they would pick up those helicopters further back in the production line. So there has been some increase in helicopters. There is still a shortage of helicopters.

The British and the French have put together an initiative in terms of trying to bring together the money for helicopters, to retrofit some of the existing helicopters from Europe or to lease them from someplace else to send them to Afghanistan. And there is some millions of dollars in that fund put together by the Brits and the French that other nations have joined in on. So they are making a significant effort to try and help us out on the helicopters.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Did you have a comment, Admiral?

Admiral MULLEN. Briefly, helicopters are the biggest shortfall we have, and it is clearly in support of the ISR effort in addition to the attack effort as well. And I see it everywhere. In Pakistan, the helo force there, their helo force is yet another example. So we need more, generally speaking.

With respect to the Marines, General Conaway is delighted that 2/7 is going to be relieved by the 3/8. The President made that decision. There has been no other decision as to where the Marines will go. And conditions permitting and recommendations so supporting, that certainly could happen in the future. But it is not going to happen— best I can tell, it is not going to happen in the very near future.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Admiral Mullen, and to the people you represent, thank you for a lifetime of service to our country. We appreciate it very much.

And, Mr. Secretary, thank you. I hope that whomever succeeds you reads very carefully your address at Kansas State and follows its admonitions. I think it was the best statement of defense posture for this country by any modern Secretary of Defense, and I appreciate it very much.

I know that tomorrow the country will understandably be focused on the tragic events that took place seven years ago tomorrow. I would like to focus on what took place eight years ago today and make an assessment. Eight years ago today, Osama bin Laden and his followers were in the midst of planning and executing the September 11 attacks. And I think the metric by which we have to evaluate our collective effort since 9/11 is how much progress we have or have not made—"we" meaning the executive branch and the Congress—toward preventing another one.

My assessment is that the 9/11 attacks succeeded because bin Laden and his followers had four elements. They had leadership, they had logistics, they had money, and they had sanctuary from which they could plan their attacks and execute them.

Obviously, with respect to leadership, there has been some decapitation of al Qaeda's capabilities, but its leader, to the best of our knowledge, lives today, seven years later.

With respect to logistics, with respect to money and with respect to sanctuary, within the bounds of propriety given the public forum in which we sit, Mr. Secretary, I would like for you to assess for us how much progress we have made in those areas. If bin Laden were planning a second 9/11 this morning, where does he stand relative to eight years ago, with respect to logistical capabilities, financing capabilities, and the ability to enjoy a sanctuary, be it in parts of Pakistan or Afghanistan? How are we doing?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think that the first fact that ought to be put on the table is that we are, in fact, 7 years from September 11. I was not in government, but I would tell you that I don't think very many Americans on September 12th, 2001, would believe or would have believed or even dared hope that in seven years there would not have been a single additional attack on the United States, and it is not for the lack of those guys trying, because we have caught too many of them and uncovered too many plots. That sort of basic consideration has to be put on the table.

What you have described is basically the offensive side. There is the defensive side, where I think there have been significant improvements, in terms of our capabilities, intelligence, law enforcement, coordination, and so forth. With respect to the specifics, as

you mentioned, below the level of Osama bin Laden, there has been a significant degradation of the leadership. A number of these people have been killed. They know that they are being hunted.

And with respect to logistics, I think that logistics and sanctuary in many respects go together, and that is that when they were able to plan 9/11, they not only had sanctuary; they had a partner in a government, and they had the assets of that government, in terms of communications, logistics support, diplomatic relations with other countries, and so on that they could draw on as a way to carry out their planning.

Similarly, they not only had—while they had—and that obviously was a benefit of sanctuary as well.

While they have not been caught, and while they are in something of a sanctuary in the western part of Pakistan, the reality is that they are on the move most of the time. Their ability to stay in place, to conduct training, to do the logistics, their ability to communicate with one another is dramatically impaired.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Secretary, if I may, because my time is expiring—again, within the bounds of what is appropriate in the public forum, have we given you the tools that you need to finish the job and deal with Osama bin Laden?

Secretary GATES. I think we have the tools, yes, sir.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, Admiral Mullen.

Contrasting Iraq with Afghanistan from the economy standpoint, it is easy to see, with the natural resources that Iraq has, that you could have a vibrant democracy there if you unleash the economic power of that country. On the other hand, Afghanistan is limited in natural resources, unless you consider rocks a natural resource. And I struggle with the idea that a democracy can be maintained in which the economy is, to a significant portion, drug-related and the corrosive effects that that has.

I have asked questions that I have not gotten very satisfactory answers to. Maybe there are not satisfactory answers, but I think we have the ability to deal with the sharecropper and tenant farmer who is forced to grow poppies and manufacture opium as the payoff. But I don't know the impact that the Karzai government is having on everything above that, the distribution chain where the real money is being made. I think we could find cash crops for those tenant farmers and sharecroppers to grow with a proper distribution system that they could make a living, but you can't replace all the other wealth that is up the food chain that may involve druglords and others. The coordination between—and you said it earlier; DOD has nothing to do with the drug interdiction, the fight against narcotics.

In advising your successor and others, in terms of how do we coordinate this fight, because it is related; the profits from the drug trade feed the folks who fight our guys. So I think there is enough of a nexus that a focused fight against that with DOD and whoever, and not just stovepipe or silo chain of command that we have with respect to the fight against drugs and the fight against al

Qaeda and Taliban—what kind of advice are you going to give to your successor, with respect to this frustration that the ongoing drug impact has on this country?

Secretary GATES. First of all, I think that we need to get the cooperation of our allies and the understanding that this is a problem and that it feeds many of the other problems that the alliance and our partners are addressing. From the Afghan side, it is in the first instance a matter of governance. In a number of provinces where there was some poppy growing going on, the appointment of new governors and governance has led to significant improvements. In the south, in Regional Command South, Helmand Province principally, it is a huge problem.

It seems to me that you don't get at this problem by going at the individual farmer. You go after the labs, after the distribution networks, and you go after the ringleaders as it were. And I think that may require much more coordinated law enforcement and investigative Drug Enforcement Agency kind of activity. We need to further build Afghan capabilities. They have some capability in this respect. They have trained up units for counternarcotics.

Another issue—and it goes straight to the governance issue—is that clearly the narcotics crop feeds corruption. Corruption is, as you said, a corrosive—has a corrosive impact. I would tell you those are the—exactly the words that I used with President Karzai the first time I met with him, in terms of the impact on the government.

So I would say we probably need to find a way for ISAF and even the U.S. military to have, perhaps, a great role. But it is more in going after the labs and perhaps the distribution network. We don't want to be in the position of doing crop eradication. My view is you do crop eradication without having money and a substitute crop there, you have just recruited somebody else for the Taliban.

Mr. CONAWAY. I sense, though, that there is still a big line of demarcation between those two, between DOD's capabilities in the field and DEA, not for lack of trying, but just lack of jurisdiction. And you have restructured the command structure, with General McKiernan, to try and eliminate some of that stuff that was between ISAF and our guys. I am not sure a better single commander who is in charge of—bringing that under McKiernan may be the answer or something else, but I sense a lack of coordination between the two fights that are both well intended and trying to get the job done, but maybe could do the job better together than they do separately.

Thank you, sir. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I will call on Mr. Marshall, but before I do, by prearrangement, the Secretary and the admiral must leave at high noon, and they will be replaced by Vice Admiral James Winnefeld and also by Ambassador Edelman, and we appreciate that. You will be able to stay to one o'clock; am I correct on that?

Without taking any additional time, because I want you to get out of here at high noon, I will ask your successors who testify about the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds, which seem to be used in some interesting manners. I will

do that at a later moment, but I just want to alert the two of you gentlemen about that.

Mr. Marshall, you can clean up, and then we will turn the witnesses over.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for the leadership that you provide the great men and women who serve under you and serve us so well.

For some time now, at different hearings, I have raised the same question, and I am curious to know whether any action has been taken with regard to this particular question. First, with regard to Iraq, our history is one of being very effective at creating security forces. We have done this a number of times; I think about 17 times just in the 20th century alone. And then more often than not, those security forces wind up taking over in one way or another, either as a result of leadership from a charismatic private individual in the government or just because the head of the Army just decides, or the head of whoever just decides, that the chaos is too much, the political disorder is hurting the country, and consequently something must be done.

Part of the thinking that I think we ought to be doing is how to coup-proof; how do we help structure things in Iraq, so that it is less likely that that will occur? Everybody concedes that the civilian side of this is going to evolve much more slowly and much more chaotically. Are we planning that? Are we structuring it, and is it part of the Structure of Forces Agreement (SOFA) conversations? I had a conversation a couple of weeks ago with the National Security Advisor. The Iraqi National Security Advisor raised this issue. He is actually concerned about it. That is one question.

The second question with regard to the PRTs—I visited my first PRT in Afghanistan with Pete Schoomaker in Christmas 2003, and the only one we had at that time—Gardez. Now we have, I think, 28. We are not manning all of them, but I think we have 28 in Iraq, and they are structured—at least, the American ones are structured essentially the same way that Gardez was structured 5 years ago. I know that we are talking about change the name, and that, I think, is great. "Reconstruction" assumes there was something there to start out with, or it assumes that what was there to start out with was desirable and we should reconstruct it, so maybe "Provincial Development Teams."

But beyond that we ought to change the competition. In five years we could have had a PRT university in Kabul to train Afghans to do what Americans are doing there. It is far less expensive for us. It accomplishes the objective more effectively because it is the reach of the Afghan government. It looks more like the reach of the Afghan government than just the Americans or Italians or whoever is out there. And it is easier to do securitywise, since they are Afghan. They don't stick out like sore thumbs. And Afghans should be providing security and most of the other support in the PRTs. And I am wondering whether or not we are moving in the direction of trying to make this pretty much an all-Afghan operation?

While I was there I talked to a couple of military officers who had, as clerks, Afghan doctors who chose to be typists for us, because the pay is far better than what they can make as Afghan

doctors. Well, pay them a little bit more than as clerk and send them out to the PRTs. They don't need the translators. They can simply do the work without the help that Americans need to have trying to do that job.

Secretary GATES. Let me speak to the first and then turn to Admiral Mullen. First of all, in terms of military, as you suggested, the Iraqi government is very mindful of their own history, of the history of Iraq and the military taking over. And while I think there is an ongoing debate about whether or not the decision to disband the Iraqi Army was a good one back at the beginning of the war, it seems to me that one potential salutary benefit of that was to break the cycle and the mind-set of those who had been in the Iraqi Army that the army runs the country. And so by basically starting from scratch, what I think has been interesting is the role of the Iraqi government. In choosing their senior commanders, the prime minister takes a personal role in this; and certainly the partnering with us and the relationship with our officers and our experience in civilian control of the military.

I think both the Iraqi military and the Iraqi civilians in government, at the top levels of that government, are appreciative of this problem and are taking steps to make sure that the Iraqi military knows its place in that society. And I would tell you, on a day-to-day basis, I believe that our commanders are basically teaching that lesson to the Iraqi commanders with whom they are working.

With respect to the PRTs, I would tell you it seems to me that if I had—if, looking back, I identified a number of the issues where I felt we needed to take action, whether it was wounded warriors or mine resistant ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs) or ISR or some of these other issues, they became acute issues because few, if any, people expected either of these wars to go on so long. And so there was not a lot of long-term planning.

It seems to me that the notion that you have of how do you train people to participate in these PRTs is something we need to take under—how you train indigenous people to do this job is important as we look forward and can anticipate other countries facing these kinds of developmental problems, and how do we partner with them so that at a minimum, I am not sure you can have an entirely indigenous PRT, but you can at least have an indigenous face on that PRT, and you can have partnerships within that PRT with the locals that I think is really critical. And I think one of the things worth taking a serious look at is how you might build that civilian capacity over time in those countries.

The CHAIRMAN. High noon has come. And before we turn to pumpkins, we wish to thank you both for your excellent testimony, for your excellent service to our country. And we wish you success in the days ahead. And, Mr. Secretary, it is a pleasure to have you.

Admiral Mullen, thank you. It is a pleasure to have you, sir.

So if the two gentlemen would assume your seats, Ambassador Eric Edelman, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Vice Admiral James Winnefeld, the Director of Strategic Planning and Policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The CHAIRMAN. It appears that Mrs. Boyda is next on the list. Mrs. Boyda, the lady from Kansas.

Mrs. BOYDA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I had a—Joe? Joe? Would you move over a little bit? Thank you very much. This seat.

I had a question, and I was very honored to be on the delegation with Chairwoman Tauscher, just coming back from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and one of the most purposeful and rewarding trips that I have come back with was a, as you can well imagine, a renewed understanding of the importance of this region and the importance that we get it right.

And my question is we met with Gilani, the Prime Minister. We had great meetings. We met with Kiyani, the general. And clearly, I think they get it. They understand that getting control of this region on both sides of the Duran Line is important to us, and it is important to them. And so, as an American and a mom, and very, very worried that we don't have another 9/11-type event happen in our country ever, ever again, that was heartening.

Obviously, the economy in Pakistan is of huge importance to them. And so when it was my chance to speak with Gilani, and just said—Prime Minister Gilani—and said, "You know, I understand that you are dealing with a very, very difficult economy here. So am I. In Kansas, I represent an area that the median income has gone down time and time again. We have seen it go down, not up."

And so this is a sensitive question that I am going to be asking, but people want to understand what we are doing for accountability with the Pakistani government. And having been there again, it is easy for me to say they do understand; they are in a very, very difficult situation themselves. And yet I need to be able to say the Pakistani government is working with us, and this is what we are doing. And we are spending a lot of money in Pakistan. We are certainly spending a lot of money in Afghanistan, but specifically—and I see you shaking your head; I know you understand the question, and it is not an easy one. It is a nuanced question. But what am I supposed to tell people in Kansas about what accountability we are seeking with the Pakistani government, with the billions of dollars that we are spending there? How do we—I don't think we have held the Pakistani government accountable. It is difficult, but how are we going to do that in the future?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman Boyda, I take it your question is largely focused on the Coalition Support Funds that we have provided to the government of Pakistan over——

Mrs. BOYDA. Yes. Can you pull up to the mike a little bit?

Ambassador EDELMAN [continuing]. Over time. And those funds, as you know, are not an assistance program; they are a reimbursement program for the costs associated with, in the first instance, our operations——

The CHAIRMAN. Would you get a little closer to the microphone, please?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Yes, sir. Can you hear me now?

Mrs. BOYDA. Thank you.

Ambassador EDELMAN. The Coalition Support Fund is a reimbursement program that is meant to reimburse the Pakistanis for the cost of support, in the first instance, for our operations that began at the time of the operations in Afghanistan in 2001–2002. Over time, as the situation in the FATA became more critical, some

of that money was also put to the use of supporting the Pakistani operations. We have tried over the last few months to make this system both more user friendly to the Pakistanis, as well as more accountable.

You rightly raise a question of accountability. We screen first, at the level of the offices of the Defense representative in Pakistan, the requests for reimbursement that come in. They are then subjected to a second screening at Central Command (CENTCOM). They are then screened yet a third time——

Mrs. BOYDA. Is this new, or is this something that we have been doing?

Ambassador EDELMAN. That has been the process in the Office of the Comptroller in the Pentagon before payment is actually authorized. We have—on the Pakistani side, by the way, they have had some complaints about the timeliness of our reimbursement, in part because we have held these things up to, I think, a fairly intense level of scrutiny. And if you would like, for the record, we could give you an answer that goes down to much more granularity and detail——

Mrs. BOYDA. Yes, sir, thank you.

Ambassador EDELMAN [continuing]. About the kinds of things that the Coalition Support Fund has been used to fund, because we do have a fair amount of detail.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 71.]

Ambassador EDELMAN. So we have tried to balance both the requirement for accountability and, I think, understandable Pakistani interest in timeliness of reimbursement. That has become more acute, the latter, for the government of Pakistan, because as you know, I was there in June; I think it is only more acute now. But the economy in Pakistan has gone from a period of seven, eight, nine percent growth per annum to zero percent growth over the last year because of the political turmoil, because of the unsettled situation in the FATA. There has been a drying up of foreign direct investment, because they have been hit by increasing fuel and food costs, as other nations have. They have had their foreign currency reserves run down. So these payments are quite important.

Mrs. BOYDA. Have there been ongoing—with the new government that have been coming in, has this issue been raised about increased accountability?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Yes, ma'am. I mean, this was a subject of discussion when I was there, and I also met with Prime Minister Gilani and with the Defense Minister and the other senior members of the government. It was also, you know, discussed by Secretary Gates with Prime Minister Gilani.

Mrs. BOYDA. Again, I understand it is a very fine line, but it is one that we still need to continue to push.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador EDELMAN. I don't think, Mrs. Boyda, that the authorities in Pakistan are under any illusions that this is not an issue for us, but also for you and the members of the committee.

Mrs. BOYDA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I mentioned to Secretary Gates a few moments ago that I would raise the issue of CERP funds. The Department's understanding of the allowed uses of CERP funds seems to have undergone a rather dramatic change since Congress first authorized it. The intent of the program was originally to meet urgent humanitarian needs in Iraq through small projects undertaken at the initiative of brigade and battalion commanders; am I correct?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Your answer was yes.

Last year, the Department of Defense has used millions of CERP dollars to build hotels for foreign visitors, spent $900,000 on a mural at the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). And it is, as I understand, this second piece of art that CERP funds were used for. I am not sure that the American taxpayer would appreciate that, knowing full well that Iraq has a lot of money in the bank from oil revenues. And it is my understanding that Iraq has announced they are going to build the world's largest ferris wheel. And if they have money to build the world's largest ferris wheel, why are we funding murals and hotels with money that should be used by the local battalion commander? This falls in the purview of plans and policy, Ambassador.

Ambassador EDELMAN. No, you are absolutely right. And I will share the stage here quite willingly with Admiral Winnefeld, with whom I have been actually involved in discussions for some period of weeks about how we provide some additional guidance to the field and additional requirements to make sure that CERP is appropriately spent.

If I might, Mr. Chairman, let me first make some general observations and then get to some of the specifics about the project that you——

The CHAIRMAN. Remember you are talking to the American taxpayer.

Ambassador EDELMAN. Absolutely. And I think it is a fair question, because Iraq does have significant resources. It is only fair for both you and the American taxpayer, of whom I am also one, by the way, to expect the Iraqis to, you know, step up and pay for their own reconstruction.

The CERP authority remains very important, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, because it is a flexible authority that allows the tactical and operational commanders to execute projects that will help save lives by smoothing out the situation in the area of operations. That is the first point I would like to make.

I would also like to make the point that in Afghanistan this is absolutely crucial, because as Secretary Gates said earlier in the hearing, unlike Iraq, where there are significant resources and there is a discussion to be had about the appropriate division of labor and expenditure, in Afghanistan, the government has less than $700 million in annual revenue. And the CERP money is absolutely crucial for our commanders in Afghanistan.

With regard to the specifics of the project that you mentioned, I think there is an important—there is some important contextual elements to it. And then I would like to mention some adjustments that we are making in the Department to take all of this into account. The first is that when the project that you mentioned was

first undertaken, it was about 18 months ago. It was at the early stages of the surge. And General Odierno, General Petraeus were attempting to get the additional aviation brigade that we were putting into country, which was a crucial capability to have as part of the surge operations, into Baghdad International Airport. It was an area that had been—the environs of which had been controlled by Shia militias. It was extremely important to get that Jaish al Mahdi (JAM) element away from the airport, to be able to build public confidence, to be able to provide some employment.

The mural, for instance, that you mentioned, while I understand completely why it could appear to be an inappropriate use of the funds, can also, I think, be seen in the actual context in which it was expended, as a jobs program, a local jobs program to get the people off the street and dry up the support for JAM around the airport. The investment that was made in that project was a pump primer, if you will, for the government of Iraq to come forward with about $45 million in reconstruction projects of its own in the BIAP area. And over time, as a part of the discussion between the U.S. and the government of Iraq and the Iraqi authorities, it has developed—it was part of the development of the beginning of what we now call I–CERP or Iraqi CERP. And I think the government of Iraq has put forward about $300 million that they have been running through, executed under our CERP program, but projects that they themselves have picked out.

I think as we move forward with the Iraqis, it is essential that they bear the bulk of the burden here. But I think while there are still gaps in ministerial capacity and ability to execute the spending of their budget, we do not want to take away from our commanders the flexibility to be able to do things in their area of operations that will make it easier for them to operate and ultimately save American lives on the battlefield.

Let me ask if Admiral Winnefeld wants to add something.

Admiral WINNEFELD. Yes, sir, just a few important points that I think ought to be made. First of all, I think we should reassure the American taxpayer——

The CHAIRMAN. Get a little closer.

Admiral WINNEFELD. We should reassure the American taxpayer that this money actually is being spent in our interests. As many of you have visited Iraq, you know that this type of expenditure is an absolutely critical part of the counterinsurgency strategy, the approach that General Petraeus and his team have taken.

I remember speaking to a young Army captain last year in Baghdad who told me that force protection is your relationship with the community. And I would tell you that CERP is an absolutely essential enabler for that type of relationship, building the kind of relationship with the community that these young captains and majors out in their combat outposts and so on are doing every day, day in and day out. And while there may be dreamers in Baghdad who are thinking of building a large ferris wheel, we still have to do the hot, tired, and dirty work every day of bringing stability to that place, and CERP is an essential enabler.

I would point out a couple of numbers. One is that so far, this year, 81 percent of the CERP expenditures have been on projects less than $500,000. This has been money that has been put in the

hands of young captains and first lieutenants and majors out on the street who are doing the kinds of things that are going to enable us to eventually bring them home, which I think is absolutely essential.

I also want to address the point that the Iraqis are making an effort to do this kind of work with us. Ambassador Edelman mentioned, I think, $270 million in Iraqi CERP that we execute that is vetted through the Iraqis to make sure that we doing the kinds of projects that they would agree with. But there are other sort of virtual CERP programs out there that I think represent Iraqi commitment to this program.

First of all, Iraq has said that they would like to raise their level of I–CERP to $750 million. There is also a $550 million commitment that the Iraqis have made for postkinetic reconstruction operations in the five cities where they have gone out and taken the initiative to take control of their country, and I think that is a significant investment. And they have already executed $280 million of that $550 million. And on top of that, they have, I believe, $75 million in small loans that they are giving to people, micro-type loans, which is exactly the kind of thing that our young captains and first lieutenants are out there on the street doing.

So I would summarize by saying that while there have been some high-profile cases in the past, as Ambassador Edelman points out, if you look behind those high-profile cases, there is usually a reason that is there. And most of those high-expenditure cases have happened in the past. We have no projects over $2 million that are currently on the books. And we are executing greater oversight, I believe, of that program with the Secretary involved. And I have personally looked through the Multi-National Coalition–Iraq (MNC–I) and the U.S. Army Forces, U.S. Central Command (ARCENT) guidelines for execution of CERP, and I am satisfied that they get it. And I think that I can tell you that the Chairman, Admiral Mullen, is very, very high on the CERP program. He really wants to see it continue, and it is very important that we keep it going not only in Iraq, but in Afghanistan. And so we would ask for the committee's support, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The issue raises two serious questions, of course. Number one is they have a lot of money of their own; and number two, the choice of the type of projects that are being paid for. I would like to ask, Mr. Secretary, if our committee could receive a list of the expenditures of $100,000 or more within the last year. Would you do that at your convenience, please?

Ambassador EDELMAN. We will work with our colleagues in the Comptroller's Office and with the joint staff to try and get you that.

The CHAIRMAN. That would be very, very helpful.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 71.]

Ambassador EDELMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I might, I mentioned that I was going to say that in my answer, but I neglected to include it, that Admiral Winnefeld and I have been talking; we are trying to balance the tension between allowing, on the one hand, the folks in the field to have sufficient flexibility to be able to execute their mission, while at the same time providing a little closer oversight. And we are looking at trying to make sure that we have

sufficient not only information about projects over a certain level, but also the requirements, what kind of monitoring they have in place, and the kind of intended benefits that there are. And we are working our way—we are not quite there yet, but we are working our way toward having some criteria that will allow us to have greater oversight here.

The CHAIRMAN. That would be very helpful. When you make your decision on the criteria, why don't you forward that along with your list; would you, please?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Sure.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Roscoe Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to apologize for not being able to be here for much of the testimony and much of the question and answer, but I wanted to have an opportunity to address a concern I have that is probably not under the purview of our committee. Afghanistan, of course, is a very poor country. I guess a fair percentage of their revenues come from agriculture, and the biggest agricultural crop is poppies. Poppies are an interesting example of something very good and something very bad, because from poppies we get what I think is still the medical world's best painkiller, morphine, but also regrettably get, at the very end of that, heroin, which is one of the worst illicit drugs.

I know that one of our challenges is trying to replace poppy agriculture with some other agriculture. I would just want to caution that Afghanistan is not the United States. If we encourage them to adopt our kind of agriculture, I don't think that that will work in Afghanistan. Among the several things that I did in a former life, I was a dirt farmer, and so I understand a bit about agriculture. We brag that we have the most efficient agriculture in the world. That is true from one respect: We have more productivity per manhour than any other major country in the world. What that means is, of course, that we use horrendous amounts of energy to do that. In an increasingly energy-deficient world, I don't think that is an agriculture that we should be exporting to poor countries.

One person in 50 in our country feeds more than the other 49 people because we have a fair amount of food to export. The agriculture that we need to be encouraging in countries like Afghanistan is subsistence agriculture. We disdain that in this country. But I tell you, sirs, there is virtue in labor, and people who are gainfully employed are probably not going to be terrorists. And so I would hope that we might get the Rodale Institute, rather than a land grant college, to counsel the Afghans on the type of agriculture that might be most beneficial to their country. Do you agree?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman Bartlett, no, I don't disagree. I mean, obviously, for any type of alternative livelihoods effort to be successful in Afghanistan, it has got to be agricultural techniques and products that are suitable both to the terrain that is being cultivated, but also the traditions of agriculture that people have. While there may be some things that can be introduced

from outside that may be helpful, it has got to be essentially consistent with local custom and practice, to be taken up by people in the first instance. And I can't pretend to be an expert on that. And if you like, we would be happy to take for the record a question to get our colleagues in the Agency for International Development (AID) to get back to you about what, in fact, is entailed in the alternative livelihoods program.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. BARTLETT. I think the sustainable agriculture for the future is going to be increasingly that agriculture which has lesser British Thermal Unit (BTU) inputs and greater calorie outputs. If you look at that ratio in our agriculture, we have huge amounts of BTUs going in for relatively small amounts of calories coming out. That was wonderful when we had oil at $10 a barrel or less. That is not sustainable. And furthermore, we need to employ as many people as we can, because unemployed people tend to become—particularly young men—tend to become terrorists.

I know this is a big challenge, and I would hope that when we address this challenge, that we don't just presume that the agriculture that has made us the envy of the world, in a low-cost energy world, is the agriculture that necessarily should be exported to these other countries.

Thank you very much, sir, for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SPRATT [presiding]. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for being here. I heard that testimony from Secretary Gates earlier and Chief Mullen. I just wanted to appreciate the fact that you are here to follow up with some of us.

Could you talk a little bit more about the logistics issue? A recent article in the paper suggested that, in fact, the Iraqis do not really have the backup logistics that is needed—batteries even, for example—that are needed for communication, the kind of air power that—the preparation for that kind of air power. How would you assess that? They are saying that it is just not getting to them because of corruption, whatever it may be. How do you judge that situation?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Mrs. Davis, I think we have known for some time, as we have been training the Iraqi security forces, that getting to the point where we had the enablers, the mobility, the logistics part was going to be coming at the latter part of this. So I think we are now in the process of beginning, really, to get into those issues to enable them to perform more independently.

I would say that if you look at, for instance, the operation in Basra, when they went down, there were some initial difficulties that they had in executing that, but over time they actually were able to move people and, ultimately, able to supply them. They need a little bit of help from us in that. But my sense is—and I defer to Admiral Winnefeld on this—is that as they have moved forward in other operations. They are getting better in all these areas, although there is still, I think, a long way to go for them to be certainly anywhere close to the kind of logistical support that we would provide.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Go ahead, sir.

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would just echo what Ambassador Edelman said. You know, with 107 of 164 Iraqi battalions in the lead, and that is 164 that are in the fight and another 21, I believe, that are in training right now, they are on a very aggressive profile to get training and equipage and the capacity to do the kinds of things that you would expect a regular U.S. Army battalion to do. So I don't think it is unexpected that there would be issues. But I also know that the Multinational Security Transition Command, MNSTC–I, in Iraq is very sensitive to this, and they track how the various battalions are doing after they have transitioned out. We have mobile training teams that are with the various battalions out there. We watch very closely. And I think there is a good, healthy feedback system when we find deficiencies, and we do the best we can to take care of them.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. There just seemed to be that kind of confidence gap in what we were reporting and what they were seeing on the ground. And it is something that we obviously need to be very sensitive to.

Secretary Gates said that we are being outcommunicated, essentially, by a guy in a cave earlier. And I wonder if you could speak to our strategy, our strategic communications strategy, and what you feel needs to be done. I mean, Zawahiri was speaking in English to people in Pakistan, suggesting that if they got involved with the Americans, that obviously was going to be a problem. So I am not sure if this is appropriate, necessarily, to you, rather than Department of State, but what kind of pressures are you putting on to be sure that our communication strategy is a sound one?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, Mrs. Davis, again, you are correct. I mean, in terms of the government as a whole, the Department of State overseas has the lead for communications. We have a new Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Jim Glassman, who is bringing, I think, a good deal of energy to that effort. And we in Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) work quite closely with him to provide support for the public diplomacy effort, which is, know, largely our strategic communications effort overseas, although we have lots of activity going on in the Department of Defense that is related to all this, because it is supporting operations in the field, et cetera.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Can you give it a grade at this time? How can we assess it?

Ambassador EDELMAN. I don't think I am any easier a grader than my boss. I don't think we have done very well on this dimension, and we clearly have a long way to go. But we suffer from a few weaknesses, but they are weaknesses that I don't think we would want to change, which is to say our enemies have the luxury of not having to tell the truth. We pay an extremely high price if we ever even make a slight error in putting forward the facts of a case.

And so I think we do place a high premium on getting the facts, getting the information. And in today's modern world of electronic communication, where news moves instantaneously, we frequently find ourselves sort of, you know, catching up.

We also face some legal hurdles, in terms of dealing with things like our adversaries' use of the Internet, which is a sort of public domain, and it is sometimes not that easy for us to operate, because sometimes these things are hosted in the United States of America.

So we face, I think, an awful lot of challenges, and I think we have got a long way to go. I think, in specific, in Afghanistan, we have made some changes in ISAF to try to provide greater support to the public effort, get a spokesperson out there. But, you know, I would concede that I think we have a long way to go.

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would second that and say that it is one of the most, if not the most, difficult thing that we do, our strategic communications. So it is a very insightful question. And the doctrine folks inside the U.S. military realize this, and are struggling with how we can train people to do this better and get that out into the field.

At operational-level exercises, I have had two recently, one under NATO and one under the U.S. command, where it was very clear to me that there was huge emphasis, from the trainers to the training audience, that we have to do this better and to show us techniques on how to do it. And to do it right, you have to have deliberate messages, you have to have the ability to craft reactive messages, and you have to have a feedback mechanism coming back up from the chain, to see if your messages are working or not. And I would say that, echoing what Ambassador Edelman says, is we are handicapped.

One of the fundamental principles of fourth-generation warfare is that they will use our Western civilization freedoms and culture against us. And so what do we do when we have an incident on the ground? We want to make sure that we get the facts right before we put the facts out. And there is a built-in delay where you are vulnerable for somebody who doesn't have to get the facts right to beat you to the punch. And we struggle with this every day. But I think I would rather be on our side of it and get the facts as best we can, and we still don't always get them right. We work very hard at that, but try as we might, it doesn't always happen.

I will tell you that General Dempsey has recently asked if ISAF and the Office of Defense Representative Pakistan (ODRP) in Pakistan and also Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 101 will come together to try to form some strategic communications cells, so we can do a better job of this. And I think that bringing General McKiernan in in a more overarching role with the streamlined change of command we are going to have will only help that problem.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Shea-Porter, please.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I had a comment. You said when they were taking about the ferris wheel and the murals that it could appear to be an inappropriate use of funds, but actually it was a jobs project. And when I think about jobs projects in a place like Iraq, I think about schools, health clinics, infrastructure. Could you explain why it would be more useful to build a mural than a school?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would not tell you it is more useful to build a mural than a school. I will only repeat what Ambassador Edelman—the point that he made. That is the point behind some of these seemingly frivolous applications that there usually is an application that is trying to accomplish our objectives. And in this case Jaish al Mahdi had just been evicted, essentially, in a very hard-fought struggle.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Okay. Thank you. I only have five minutes, so I am going to have a series of questions. But I understand where you are going. But I think that the American public would feel a lot more comfortable if we gave jobs projects that we had to the Iraqis, and they built that. So we could still have the same psychological win by helping the people there.

But I am very concerned, as are my constituents, and I think all Americans, about the cost and the taxpayer dollars that are going into Iraq. And I wanted to ask you a couple questions and, also, the ambassador. First of all, who are we buying our fuel from right now for the U.S. military in Iraq, and how much are we paying?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would have to take that question for the record, ma'am.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Okay. I would appreciate if you would get back to us on that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 72.]

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. And all the money missing that we have not had the oversight, and there has been, you know, money sent to Iraq missing, any idea what that figure is now? I have heard other numbers, but I wonder if you could——

Ambassador EDELMAN. I am not sure specifically what part of the money you are talking about. There was an issue in the Ministry of Defense a few years back having to do with some contracts let to a third country that appeared to have had some corrupt element to it, which is one reason why we have moved increasingly to providing some of the military equipment that Iraq is purchasing with their own Iraqi money through our foreign military sales (FMS) system, which provides greater accountability and oversight.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I recall about 6.9 billion, I think, that was under indictment right now for the lack of oversight.

Ambassador EDELMAN. In the Ministry of Defense?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Well, actually in our own Department of Defense that we had a hearing on this. And it was money missing that, because we didn't do oversight, you know, it was stolen from us——

Ambassador EDELMAN. This is the contracting you are talking about?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Yes, I am talking about the contracting.

Ambassador EDELMAN. The contracting issue that General Kicklighter had been investigating——

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Right.

Ambassador EDELMAN [continuing]. And is subject to a Justice Department investigation.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Right. And the fact that we had people in the Department of Defense tell us that they didn't have the account-

ants to do proper accounting—and I found that very, very disturbing. We also heard people from the Department of Defense come here and tell us that they were—there were going to be Iraqi products on our shelves—this was a while back—that the factories would be coming on line, and we would see that. And I wondered: Is that happening?

Ambassador EDELMAN. I think that may have been my colleague in Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L) on the other side of the house, Paul Brinkley, who has been involved in doing that. And I will have to take that for the record and get back to you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 72.]

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Okay. Because I haven't seen any Iraqi products. I did see—when I was in Iraq in March, I was given a tray, and the tray was in Arabic on the front, but on the back was stamped all over it "Made in China."

And I also know that Iraq bought some weapons from China, and my question to you is: Is Iraq shopping in China, instead of the United States? And these are questions that are coming from Main Street, USA, wondering why our U.S. tax dollars are going there and what Iraq is doing in terms of, you know, what they do with the money, and why can't we make the trays, and why can't they purchase from us?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, I think the Iraqis are a sovereign country, and obviously they can buy from whoever they want. It is in our interest, we believe, to have the Iraqi military have a close operational relationship with our military and be able to operate together with ours and, therefore, to purchase U.S. military goods and services, and that is one reason why we have encouraged them to use the FMS system. I think we have been fairly successful, because they have put, I think, over close to 3 billion, I think, now, or maybe 4 billion into the FMS system. We can get you the exact amount.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I would like to point out you are right; they are a sovereign country. But you just said they can buy from whoever they wish, but I would submit that these are American dollars, and we have robbed America's Main Streets in order to pay for so many of these programs, and I don't think that they should just buy from whoever they wish. Perhaps they should have thought about the American taxpayers.

Ambassador EDELMAN. They can buy from whoever they wish with money out of their national funds, not with our money.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Their surplus and our deficit. I obviously have great concerns about the spending there. And I think the ferris wheel and the mural are small but significant comments about what went wrong in Iraq. And I thank you. And I thank you for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, Ambassador Edelman, I just wanted to at least be on record complimenting Secretary Gates' announcement at the end of his testimony that the tanker decision has been put off to the next Administration. Again, I think the reasons he stated clear-

ly show that he had the public interest in mind. And please convey to him, at least by hearsay, my compliments.

Ambassador EDELMAN. I will do that.

Mr. COURTNEY. Last April, when General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker made the rounds before the House and Senate committees, Senator Biden asked sort of the point-blank question to Ambassador Crocker: Mr. Ambassador, is al Qaeda a greater threat to U.S. interests in Iraq or in the Afghan-Pakistan border region? And Mr. Crocker's answer was, "I would pick al Qaeda in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area." Again, coming from the ambassador in Iraq, that is a pretty powerful statement.

And listening to Admiral Mullen today, talking about the gravity of the situation in Afghanistan, I mean, the term that he used is that we are, quote, "running out of time." Trying to sort of get both of those sort of contextual statements in sync with the President's announcement that we are not going to—we are going to send one Marine battalion in November, two months from now, and then an Army brigade in February, I mean, are we moving too slowly? Just, it is hard to see how, when we have identified the larger threat in one place, and time is of the essence, how that time frame works.

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman, I would—one thing I would say is that, first, Ryan Crocker is well situated to make that comment, because he had not only been ambassador to Iraq; he had also been ambassador to Pakistan, so he knows both sides of the equation.

I think, frankly, it would have been an interesting question, if you had asked him at the very beginning of his tour whether he would have made the same statement then. I am not sure he would have. There was a period of time when we knew al Qaeda in Iraq was actively plotting against the homeland. There was a period of time when Zawahiri and bin Laden and others had said that Iraq was the central front for them in their struggle against the infidels and crusaders. I think that has changed over time, in part because of our success in Iraq and degrading al Qaeda in Iraq, making them a less effective organization. We have seen indications that they are now moving their effort away from Iraq and toward Pakistan, Afghanistan. And so some of that has been, I think, the inevitable adjustment that takes place in war between two contending adversaries.

Mr. COURTNEY. I will stipulate to that. But I guess the question, though, is today in September, and given the timeline that the President—I mean, that is really the question that you have to figure out is are we doing what we need to do?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, first, I think we have already been increasing, over the last couple of years, the number of troops we have in Afghanistan, both because we have increased the presence of the NATO allies in ISAF. I think we have got about 20,000 more troops total in Afghanistan today than we did 2 years ago. That is before the President's announcements of the additional forces. We started to make adjustments, as Secretary Gates, I think, said in his opening statement, in 2006 and 2007, as we dealt with the increase in violence and the recovery that the Taliban was making from the pretty significant defeat that had been inflicted on them in 2001–2002.

Again, I think you need to pull back and put this into a larger, you know, historical context. In Afghanistan, as Secretary Gates has said on a couple of occasions, we have been engaged in a project that essentially is both countercultural and counterhistorical to Afghan experience. We have created a central government there, for the first time, that is trying to extend its writ. As we have had more success politically with the first constitution, the first elected parliament, the first elected president, that has, of course, created a political circumstance in which the Taliban has not only had some time to recuperate, but now has a greater incentive to try and disrupt that effort.

Mr. COURTNEY. We are about to run out of time. Again, maybe we can follow up afterwards, but, you know, again, just looking at the weather and the fact that the winter is coming on, and obviously that has been a time for the Taliban to regroup—again, I am just very concerned that this plan really doesn't match up with the needs. And, you know, talking about the need to win hearts and minds with communication campaigns, I mean, relying on air strikes for security, I think, is the worst way for us to win hearts and minds. And clearly, the collateral damage to civilians by not having enough boots on the ground in Afghanistan, I mean, it has a spillover, in terms of the damage that we are doing to our public image there. And I—we can, as I said, maybe follow up later.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman, I agree with that.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Castor.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, very much for your service.

How do you intend to develop a robust strategy in Afghanistan against al Qaeda and the Taliban that involves, you know, the desperate need for additional soft power resources, Special Operations personnel, when the White House has had tunnel vision, a tunnel vision focus on Iraq for years and years and years now? All of the resources that the American people have put forward, the vast majority of them have gone to Iraq and not Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the global threat to our national security seems to have hardened. Certainly, the Taliban and al Qaeda and the extremist threat at the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan has regenerated. We are now facing our deadliest year in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden is still out there. The strategic depth and readiness of our military has been degraded over the objections of many respected American military leaders in the chain of command. And while Secretary Gates has been a breath of fresh air, he has had to spend a great deal of time prodding and pushing our allies, cajoling them to join our effort in Afghanistan to provide the resources that they really need to provide under NATO. They have been turned off by the Bush-Cheney approach in Iraq, and that has had very severe consequences for American military personnel and the American people. And now Admiral Mullen testifies today that the commanding officer in Afghanistan, General McKiernan, has now made a certain request for troops, and the Bush-Cheney Administration is not able to meet that request.

I would like to know why hasn't the President and the Vice President been willing or able to get our national security priorities

straight? And go back to the original question: How do we develop a successful strategy in Afghanistan against al Qaeda and Taliban in the face of those challenges?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, Ms. Castor, I think, as the Secretary said in his testimony, the challenges that we face in Iraq and Afghanistan are somewhat different, both because of the composition of the adversary and the geopolitical circumstances of the two countries. I think the Administration's view has been that with the situation in Iraq in 2005–2006, particularly with the escalation of violence in 2006 and into the beginning of 2007, that not devoting attention to a country that sits on a lot of the world's oil reserves in the middle of a very volatile region was not an acceptable risk to take, which is why so much of the effort went to Iraq. But that is not to say we weren't taking into account the challenges we faced in Afghanistan. As I said a moment ago, we, in the last two years, have pretty dramatically increased the number of troops.

Ms. CASTOR. And yet, Mr. Ambassador, we are not able to meet, even today, the request of General McKiernan. After all of those resources and all of the troop levels still today, we still have about 150,000 troops in Iraq; is that correct? And the American troops in Iraq, 19,000, and then we have—I was trying to get the latest information from all the testimony—45,000 NATO troops, which includes about 15,000 American troops. So it is still that tunnel vision approach. And I don't—how do we develop this strategy going forward in Afghanistan, if we cannot even meet General McKiernan's request, his expressed need to address our national security situation in Afghanistan?

Admiral WINNEFELD. It is very clear that, first of all, there has been a balance of risk assessment against Iraq—between Iraq and Afghanistan. And I think the Secretary and the Chairman made it very clear how they, on the advice of two military commanders in the field—an overall regional commander, General Dempsey, the Joint Chiefs, came together through a very transparent and healthy process, I would say, to the conclusion that it was time to accept a little more risk in Iraq and move a brigade over into Afghanistan. And that sounds like a very mechanical and easy thing to do, but it actually involves six months of training. And we really came up against the last minute for when we could determine that that unit could switch from going to Iraq to Afghanistan, because you have to train them for completely different environments. So mechanically, it is perhaps not as easy as it sounds.

And I would tell you that, regarding strategy in Afghanistan, the first thing, I think, that Admiral Mullen would reply is that you can't have a strategy in Afghanistan without one in Pakistan. And I believe in his written, if not verbal, statement he mentioned that he is—and we are in the process of developing a comprehensive strategy that would address both Afghanistan and Pakistan in the same context, rather than looking at them in a stovepipe fashion, which I think is a very healthy move.

And I can also assure you that in the interagency dialogue that Ambassador Edelman and I each participated in, that there is a great deal of discussion about Afghanistan, probably more now than there is about Iraq. So I think that we are shifting our center

of gravity slowly but surely in that direction, based on the risk assessments of the commanders in the field.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Giffords, please.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank the panelists today for being here, hanging in there with the rest of us. I appreciate the opportunity.

I am concerned, as we look to a post-9/11 world, how we are really preparing the men and women that are working to counter any sort of future terrorist attacks—the language skills, the cultural training, the historical training, all of that information which we understand to be really critical. Military skills are important, but the cultural awareness and the language proficiency, I think, are really key.

We have had a lot of people come before this committee and talk about the importance of this, and I am very pleased to know that a lot of this training is happening at Fort Huachuca in my district. And we are proud of the training, particularly in Arabic and Farsi. But unfortunately, only about 3,500 Regular Army officers were actually trained last year among the 500,000 active duty personnel.

And so my question, which was for Secretary Gates—and he testified before this committee in February; he said that for all forces preparing for regular warfare, training and advising missions, humanitarian efforts, security and stabilizing operations, that language and cultural proficiency was essential. So could someone please address what the Army is doing to fully train personnel this year, in respects to what was accomplished last year and as we move forward?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, I will let Admiral Winnefeld speak to the specific, but just if I could make a couple of quick observations, Ms. Giffords. Number one, I agree, particularly as a career Foreign Service officer, that the language and cultural skills are crucial. I can give you one anecdotal piece of evidence, which is that my son, who is a specialist in the Army at Fort Lewis, has just completed 11 months of intensive Arabic training.

And so I know from personal experience that we are doing a lot more. My colleague David Chu, the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, has been overseeing an initiative department-wide to increase our facility and skill with languages. But I will let Admiral Winnefeld talk to the specifics.

Admiral WINNEFELD. I think there is hardly a military officer out there today who would disagree with what you are saying. It is terribly important that we get better at this. And I can tell you from personal experience that—both on the positive side and the negative side—that language skills are extremely valuable. My broken and limited French was very valuable to me in NATO. My extremely small smattering of Arabic was very useful to me when I was deployed to the Arabian Gulf. And I can tell you that our sailors and Marines that occasionally deploy down to West Africa could certainly benefit from an understanding of Portuguese in some of the countries down there that speak Portuguese and, certainly, French and the like. So there is no question that it is a very, very important skill that we need get better at.

In terms of being able to give you exact specifics of what the Army and the other services, for that matter, are doing, I know the will is there, and I know that we are doing more, and I believe that either this afternoon or yesterday our director for manpower on the Joint Staff, General Patton, is up on the Hill speaking to—I thought it was the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), but it may be the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC)—on exactly this issue. So we do have a rich bit of information we can get to you, and I would like to offer to provide that to you for the record.

Ms. GIFFORDS. I think we would appreciate seeing that.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. GIFFORDS. As I look to the transition which happened between Iraq and Afghanistan, I realize, as well, that there is some core languages, from Dari to Pashto, Uzbek, Turkmen, that are not included in the cultural and the language training. And not just for the language side; there is also a cultural component that goes with that. So I am curious whether or not, as you all work toward transitioning, are there plans in place to incorporate these other additional languages?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I believe there are, but I would want to again refer to the record, because our Manpower and Personnel Director is going to be talking about that this week on the Hill. It is a very good question, and I believe he has got some good answers.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Yes.

Ambassador EDELMAN. Ms. Giffords, if I could just add one thing, which is, I think, above and beyond the requirements for training: There is a broader issue for the Nation, which is, sort of, our kind of intellectual capital in a lot of these areas—that is to say in language and in the cultural awareness. I think you know, probably, about the Human Terrain project which we have ongoing, which helps bring to bear some outside academic expertise. But it is hard to come by, because there are some disciplines in the academy where people feel a little bit uncomfortable about working with the U.S. military.

The Secretary has been trying to deal with that by the Minerva Initiative that he has announced, which is a partnership, public-private partnership, between the Department and universities to try and stimulate research in areas that are of interest and future importance to the Department and in languages like Chinese and Arabic that are particularly difficult and require a lot of time and investment, personal investment, to learn. So that is, I think, an ongoing challenge for the Nation, much as Russian was during the Cold War era.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Taylor, the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you gentlemen for being here for three hours.

Three questions. Hopefully we can answer it now or, if not, I would like for the record. The Sons of Iraq program, at what point does the Iraqi Government start paying that bill? And what assurances do we have that that is going to happen and that these peo-

ple who are used to getting $300 a month don't one month not get paid and decide to start shooting at Americans again?

Ambassador EDELMAN. It is a good question, Congressman Taylor, and I can give you the answer. I believe it was just yesterday or the day before—Prime Minister Maliki signed a decree. They are taking over the responsibility on October 1 for all the Sons of Iraq, and the first payday, I believe, is supposed to be the 1st of November.

Mr. TAYLOR. Okay.

Admiral WINNEFELD. And, just to add, I think it is a phased program. My recollection is that they are going to start in Baghdad with about 54,000, and they will be drawn into the Iraqi Army pay system. And then it will be decided the disposition of sending them to vocational training or actually inducting them into the Iraqi Security Forces. And then, as the program matures, we see if it is actually executed, which is an excellent question, further on down the line inducting the others into the same system. So it will be a phased program, but they have committed to doing it, and we are certainly hopeful it will happen.

Mr. TAYLOR. Second question. It is my hunch, but I certainly would seek your guidance, that we are not paying rent for things like Camp Victory, that we are not paying rent on the Water Palace, that we are not paying rent on any of our installations. I would think it is just the determination our government made that we have conquered this nation, and for the time being we are going to take these places.

Using that analogy, again, correct me if I am wrong, but using that analogy, in that a huge expense of the war in Iraq is fuel and that up until around Easter of 2005, the Kuwaitis were footing the bill for the fuel and sometime in that time frame they started charging us, giving us some still and then charging us some; and, again, they have been great partners in this, and so I can understand their need for some revenue, but to what extent do you, Mr. Ambassador, tell the Iraqis that one of the greatest contributions they can make toward this effort is something that they have in abundance that happens to be very expensive to the American military, and that is their fuel?

Ambassador EDELMAN. I think it was Ms. Shea-Porter who asked the question about the fuel, and we will get back to you, Mr. Taylor, with all the details on that. I don't have them for you right now.

Mr. TAYLOR. As a further follow-up to Ms. Shea-Porter's question, I would be curious what percentage of the fuel is actually purchased in Iraq, what percentage comes from Kuwait and other places.

Ambassador EDELMAN. I think there is still quite a bit that has to come from Kuwait.

Admiral WINNEFELD. I think it has to come from—largely from outside the country because of Iraq's limitations on their refining capacity.

Mr. TAYLOR. Well, sir, it is my understanding that the Iraqis had about a $80 billion surplus this year, mostly from the export of oil. So, again, I think it is a fair question to ask.

Admiral WINNEFELD. The difference between the question is paying for it and actually producing it, and we have taken for the record the paying for question. But I think in terms of producing it, they just don't have the refining capacity.

Mr. TAYLOR. Okay. Well, again, they could contribute the funds toward the fuel.

The third one, Admiral, and this is within the military, for the 19 years I have been lucky enough to serve on this committee, I have heard the expression "We train as we fight. We train as we fight." One of the important programs that this committee has taken the lead on funding was the mine-resistant vehicles. And somewhere about now we ought to have about 12,000 of them in theater, with several thousand more on the way. It is my understanding that almost none of our training installations have sufficient MRAPs for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines to actually train on before they get to Iraq, that the first time that most people see an MRAP is in Kuwait, just days before they are going to cross the berm and be in a real war zone.

What is the timeline to get MRAPs of sufficient numbers to places like Camp Shelby, Fort Hood, the big base in Louisiana? I understand there is some at the National Training Center, but a fairly small percentage of the troops actually cycle through the National Training Center before they get to Iraq. So what is the goal to have sufficient number of MRAPs at the training installations to where they become a part of the training regimen?

Admiral WINNEFELD. Sir, that is a very good question. I think the initial priority, of course, has been to get them to Iraq.

Mr. TAYLOR. I understand. But we are getting to the point now where the manufacturers are saying, "hey, I don't have enough work," which tells me that they have the capacity to build enough to get to the training installations.

Admiral WINNEFELD. Intuitively, I would tell you that that is going to eventually happen, once we fill out our needs not only in Iraq, but elsewhere. And I would like to take that for the record, because I know we can give you an answer on that.

Mr. TAYLOR. And when should I expect an answer on that one?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I think we can get that to you very quickly, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. A week?

Admiral WINNEFELD. Yes, sir, probably about a week.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 71.]

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. The witching hour has come, and Mr. Spratt has a follow-up.

Mr. SPRATT. This issue has been touched upon, but I would like to put it to you for a direct response. The stated purpose of the surge was to open up a window of opportunity for the civil government, the Maliki government, to work out an agenda of reconciliation items—basically, among other things, assuring the Sunnis of accommodation within the polity and government and economy of Iraq. It now appears that the Maliki government is hell-bent upon disbanding the Sons of Iraq, some 100,000 of them who played a key role in the surge, without effectively assuring them of employ-

ment either in the government or in the military or elsewhere in the economy or giving them any kind of transition. Or even worse, some would suspect that they may be arrested, and some are being investigated. It is not a good turn of affairs.

Would you please describe for us what the State Department and Pentagon propose to do to prevent this potential situation, which could be—could reverse the gains that have been achieved in the surge?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman Spratt, I think Admiral Winnefeld and I, a minute ago, addressed, to Congressman Taylor's question, a response that indicated that the Maliki government has signed a decree and is taking over the management of the Sons of Iraq as of October 1, first pay date November 1. There has already been, I think, some 20,000 who have already been employed in the security services. Others have been given other jobs.

I think there is concern, and I think it is a concern that underpins your question, about some events that took place in Diyala a couple of weeks back, which is, I think, a good cause for concern. But overall, I think the Prime Minister has, in fact, reached out to his Sunni colleagues. The Tawafuq bloc has come back into the government. He has actually worked quite well, given his past history with Vice President Tariq al Hashemi. So while it is a concern that we continue to monitor and watch, and I can promise you that General Petraeus and soon General Odierno pay close attention to this, I think right now we, at least for the moment, appear to be on a positive trajectory.

Admiral WINNEFELD. Yes, sir. And I would only add whatever we can pull the string on for those incidents, I think that caused concern over the last week or so; they were isolated. They were reported in the Arab press, which tends to want to foment concern about that. And it wouldn't be Iraq if there were not concern over whether this is going to actually pan out. But the Maliki government——

Chairman SPRATT. Are you two testifying that this matter is being resolved, worked out; it is being addressed?

Admiral WINNEFELD. It is our understanding that the Maliki government has committed to doing this, and that they will either induct them into the Iraqi Security Forces or provide some kind of vocational training or some other mechanism. But our understanding at the moment is that they have committed, over the course of time, to assuming a responsibility for the Sons of Iraq, including paying them.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlemen. And Ambassador, Admiral, thank you so much for your testimony. And we have four votes pending, and upon that, and upon thanking you again, we are adjourned.

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

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT M. GATES
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBMITTED STATEMENT
SEPTEMBER 10, 2008, 9:00 A.M.

Mr. Chairman, Representative Hunter, members of the committee:

Thank you for inviting me to give you an update on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I would also express gratitude to the Congress for recently passing legislation to enhance the benefits of the GI Bill. The Department is very pleased with the outcome, and I can tell you that our men and women in uniform are deeply appreciative. Of course, this is just one example of the many ways in which you have supported our troops these past years. On behalf of all of them, I thank you.

Last week, General Petraeus made his recommendations on the way forward in Iraq. Separate recommendations were submitted by the commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the commander of Central Command, the service chiefs, and the Chairman. Although each viewed the challenges from a different perspective, weighing different factors, all once again arrived at similar recommendations.

We have already withdrawn the five Army brigade combat teams, two Marine battalions, and the Marine expeditionary unit that were sent to Iraq as part of the surge. The President announced yesterday that approximately 8,000 U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Iraq by February without being replaced.

The withdrawal of approximately 3,400 non-combat forces – including aviation personnel, explosive ordnance teams, combat and construction engineers, military police, and logistics support teams – begins in September, continues through the fall and winter, and finishes in January. In addition, a Marine battalion stationed in Anbar will return in November, and another Army BCT will return by early February.

This continuing drawdown is possible because of the success achieved in reducing violence and building Iraqi security capacity. Even with fewer U.S. troops in Iraq, the positive trends of the last year have thus far held – and in some cases steadily continued in the right direction. U.S. troop casualties have been greatly reduced – though even one is still too many, and overall violence is down 80 percent. The recent turnover of Anbar province to Iraqi provincial control – the 11th of 18 provinces to be turned over – highlights how much the situation has improved.

There are other positive indicators:

- The Iraqi Army has planned and executed operations in Amarah, Baghdad, Basrah, Diyala, and Mosul – with encouraging results. Seventy percent of the 150 Iraqi battalions are now in the lead. Their confidence level has grown with each passing month, as has ours in their ability to get the job done.
- Overall, political progress has been incremental but significant. The Iraqi parliament has passed key legislation this year. And the recent return of the Sunni Iraqi Accord Front party to ministerial positions was a welcome sign of reengagement by Sunnis at the national level.
- With the exception of Iran and Syria, we have seen an increasing willingness by neighboring countries to help engage with and stabilize Iraq. Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait,

and the UAE have all announced that they will send ambassadors to Baghdad. Jordan's king and Lebanon's prime minister both visited Iraq last month.

- The International Monetary Fund estimates that the Iraqi economy will have 8 – 8 ½ percent real growth this year.

Despite all this, very serious challenges remain:

- Political progress remains too slow – as seen recently by the inability of the parliament to pass an election law. This means that provincial elections, which we believe will continue and enhance the process of reconciliation, will in all likelihood be pushed back until at least December. Elections also mean the possibility of increased violence.
- There have been some worrisome reports about sectarian efforts to either disrupt or slow the process of assimilation of the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces. It is a reminder that sectarian tensions still exist and have the potential to undo recent progress at the local and national level.
- Despite Iran's pledges last year to stop providing weapons, training, and funding to armed militias, evidence suggests that this support continues.
- Iraqi security forces still lack many key capabilities. Many of their operations would simply not have been possible without Coalition enablers. That will remain the case for some time to come.
- The threat from Al Qaeda and other militant groups has receded, but is still very real. In the last few months, we have seen a number of suicide attacks – as well as tactical shifts, such as the increased use of women. This is a reminder that Al Qaeda still retains the ability to inflict mass casualties, the operational capacity to assess and change strategies, and is still trying to sow chaos and reassert itself.
- Similarly, there is the possibility that Jaish al-Mahdi could return.

On that note, I would like to make a few broader comments and put the successes of the last year and a half into some context.

The President has called our reduction in troop numbers a "return on success." I of course agree, but I might expand further. The changes on the ground and in our posture are reflective of a fundamental change in the nature of the conflict. In past testimony, I have cautioned that, no matter what you think about the origins of the war in Iraq, we must get the endgame there right. I believe we have now entered that endgame – and our decisions today and in the months ahead will be critical to regional stability and our national security interests in the next few years.

When I entered office, the main concern was to halt and reverse the spiraling violence in order to prevent a strategic calamity for the United States and allow the Iraqis to make progress on the political, economic, and security fronts. Although we all have criticisms of the Iraqi government, there can be no doubt that the situation is much different – and far better – than it was in early 2007. The situation, however, remains fragile.

Disagreements in our country still exist over the speed of the drawdowns and whether we should adhere to hard-and-fast timelines or more flexible time horizons.

I worry that the great progress our troops and the Iraqis have made has the potential to over-ride a measure of caution born of uncertainty. Our military commanders do not yet believe our gains are necessarily enduring – and they believe that there are still many challenges and the

potential for reversals in the future. The continuing but carefully modulated reductions the President has ordered represent, I believe, not only the right direction but also the right course of action – especially considering planned and unplanned redeployments by some of our coalition partners. The planned reductions are an acceptable risk today, but also provide for unforeseen circumstances in the future. The reductions also preserve a broad range of options for the next commander in chief, who will make his own assessment after taking office in January.

As we proceed deeper into the endgame, I would urge our nation's leaders to implement strategies that, while steadily reducing our presence in Iraq, are cautious and flexible and take into account the advice of our senior commanders and military leaders. I would also urge our leaders to keep in mind that we should expect to be involved in Iraq for many years to come, although in changing and increasingly limited ways.

Let me shift to Afghanistan. There we are working with the Afghans and coalition partners to counter a classic extremist insurgency fueled by ideology, poppy, poverty, crime, and corruption.

First, some positive developments:

- The international coalition, led by NATO, is more committed than it has ever been. We see this in increased troop contributions from our partners, as well as efforts to reduce some of the caveats they place on their troops. There are also increased resources being devoted to non-military efforts. Our allies deserve credit, and I thank them for their sacrifices.
- At the Paris Donors Conference in June, the international community pledged more than $20 billion in assistance to Afghanistan.
- The United Nations appointed Ambassador Kai Eide of Norway as the Special Representative of the Secretary General to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Ambassador Eide has been empowered to play a greater role in coordinating international assistance to ensure aid is distributed effectively and where it is most needed.
- The Afghan National Army is more than 65,000 strong and growing. Yesterday, the President announced an initiative to double the size of the Afghan National Army over the next five years.
- The Afghan National Police lag behind the army, but here, too, progress is being made. There are more than 75,000 police assigned today. Our main challenge is increasing the competence and reliability of the force, and that requires large numbers of mentors and trainers. So far we have been unable to fill most of what is required. Nonetheless, an innovative program called Focused District Development is helping build police forces capable of serving local Afghan communities.

Before addressing the increase in violence, let me mention other problem areas:

- Despite increased NATO contributions, we are still short in several areas. More maneuver forces are required, as well as aviation assets, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and mentors for the Afghan army. Where Allies cannot provide more troops and equipment, they need to provide other types of support to build Afghan capacity.
- There remain questions about the efficacy of having two lines of command – one for a contingent of U.S. troops training and equipping Afghan forces as part of Operation

Enduring Freedom, and one for the ISAF mission, which also includes more than 14,000 American troops.

- Coordination between PRTs and ISAF needs to be improved. Civilians in PRTs report to their respective capitals – which makes it difficult to synchronize PRT activities with military actions. We are working with Allies and partners to stand up a civil-military planning cell in the south to help coordinate PRTs in a more holistic fashion – both locally and regionally.
- Afghanistan's government must improve its delivery of essential services and extend its reach by reducing corruption and promoting faster development and a stronger economy. Here we do run up against some hard realities: Afghanistan has always been a diffuse, tribal nation with few natural resources and little infrastructure. To give you some idea, total annual revenue for the government is approximately $700 million versus tens of billions in Iraq.

The persistent and increasing violence resulting from an organized insurgency is, of course, our greatest concern. With the flexibility provided by success in Iraq, the President has decided to send more troops to Afghanistan in response to resurgent extremism and violence reflecting greater ambition, sophistication, and coordination.

We did not get to this point overnight, so some historical context is useful. The mission in Afghanistan has evolved over the years – in both positive and negative ways. Reported insurgent activities and attacks have grown over the past 2 ½ years. In some cases, this is a result of safe havens in Pakistan and reduced military pressure on that side of the border. In others, it is the result of more international and Afghan troops on the battlefield – troops that are increasingly in contact with the enemy.

In response to increased violence and insurgent activity in 2006, in January of last year we extended the deployment of an Army brigade and added another brigade. This last spring, the United States deployed 3,500 Marines. In all, the number of American troops in the country increased from less than 21,000 two years ago to nearly 31,000 today.

At the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April, ISAF Allies and Partners restated their commitment to Afghanistan. France added 700 troops in Eastern Afghanistan. This fall, Germany will seek to increase its troop ceiling from 3,500 to 4,500. Poland is also increasing its forces by more than 1,000 troops.

The number of Coalition troops – including NATO troops – increased from about 20,000 to about 31,000. It appears that this trend will continue – as other allies, such as the United Kingdom, add more troops.

Thanks to success in Iraq, we will increase U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan by deploying a Marine battalion this November and in January 2009 an Army brigade combat team – units that had been slated for Iraq.

As in Iraq, however, additional forces alone will not solve the problem. Security is just one aspect of the campaign, alongside development and governance. We must maintain momentum, keep the international community engaged, and develop the capacity of the Afghan government. The entirety of the NATO alliance, the EU, NGOs, and other groups – our full military and civilian capabilities – must be on the same page and working toward the same goal with the Afghan government. I am still not satisfied with the level of coordination and collaboration among the numerous partners and many moving parts associated with civil reconstruction and development and building the capacity of the Afghan government.

We do face committed enemies, which brings me to the challenge of the tribal areas of Pakistan. As in Iraq, until the insurgency is deprived of safe-havens, insecurity and violence will persist. We must continue to work with the Pakistani government to extend its authority in the tribal region and provide badly needed economic, medical, and educational assistance to Pakistani citizens there. At the same time, we continue to train and equip the paramilitary Frontier Corps and Pakistani military units so they can better secure the border area and carry out operations against militants.

We also continue to encourage the Afghans and Pakistanis to work together to secure their common border. This effort includes the establishment of more Border Coordination Centers jointly manned by ISAF, Afghan, and Pakistani troops; following up on the 2007 Joint Peace Jirga; and holding routine meetings of the Tripartite Commission.

I do believe Islamabad appreciates the magnitude of the threat from the tribal areas – particularly considering the uptick in suicide bombings directed at Pakistani targets. During this time of political turmoil in Pakistan, it is especially crucial that we maintain a strong and positive relationship with the government – since any deterioration would be a setback for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The War on Terror started in this region. It must end there.

One final point. Last year, Admiral Mullen noted that in Afghanistan we do what we can – while in Iraq, we do what we must. With the positive developments in Iraq, the strategic flexibility provided by ongoing troop reductions there, and the prospect of further reductions next year – I think it is possible in the months to come to do militarily what we must in both countries.

Let me close by again thanking all members of the committee – and the Congress as a whole – for their support of our men and women in uniform. I have noted on a number of occasions how positive the public response has been to those who have volunteered to serve. Our nation's leaders across the political spectrum have led the way in honoring our servicemen and women – not just by providing the funds they need for their mission, but also by publicly declaring their support and admiration of our troops. I share your sentiment. And I thank you all for your leadership during these challenging times.

STATEMENT OF

ADMIRAL MICHAEL G. MULLEN

CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, U.S. NAVY

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

House Armed Services Committee
Hearing on Iraq and Afghanistan
10 September 2008

Chairman Skelton, Representative Hunter, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today and thanks as well for all you do to support our men and women in uniform.

Having visited with our troops all over the world, I can tell you they are aware and appreciative of America's support ... support which, in so many ways, emanates from this committee and from the Congress as a whole.

So, again, on their behalf, I thank you for that.

Let me begin today by also expressing my appreciation to the President and to Secretary Gates for their support of our Armed Forces and of the family members of those who serve.

Today, on the eve of the seventh anniversary of the 9-11 attacks, we are reminded again of just how critical that service really is, and, consequently -- in an All-Volunteer Force, where people have other choices -- how absolutely vital is the recognition and support of the federal government for the needs of our service men and women.

On that note, I stand particularly grateful today for the President's support of the recommendations Secretary Gates and I have made to him with respect to the way forward in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I need not recount for you here the details of those recommendations, nor the circumstances that underpin them. Secretary Gates has just done that very well, and I am in complete agreement with his views.

Today, rather, I wish to make the following points:

First, the recommendations that went forward to the Secretary and to the President represented a consensus view of military leadership in this country.

The process by which they were derived was candid, transparent and thoroughly collaborative. The entire chains of command for both Iraq and Afghanistan were involved and engaged, including the Joint Chiefs.

We did not all enjoy complete agreement early on. Frankly, I would have been surprised had it been otherwise.

One sees war -- feels it, fights it, leads it -- from one's unique perspective.

The key to success over the long term is proving able to see it also from another's perspective -- be it the enemy's or the public's or the chain of command -- and being informed by that knowledge as you move forward.

I can assure you, that all of us at all levels in the chain considered the whole of each struggle, the totality of each effort, and the need to preserve on a global scale our greater national interests.

Some in the media have described our final recommendations as a "compromise solution," and to the degree that this explains the process we employed I would agree. But it would be wrong to conclude that our proposal represented a compromise in ANY way of our commitment to success. We did not compromise one war for the other.

And that, Mr. Chairman, brings me to my second point: Iraq and Afghanistan are two different fights.

Many of you have been to both countries. You know these differences -- the enemy's various objectives; the political and economic challenges unique to each culture; the weather; even the ground. As one soldier in Bagram told me, in Afghanistan, the terrain itself is an enemy.

We treated the needs of each war separately -- and weighed our decisions for each solely -- against the risks inherent and the resources available.

Given the extraordinary success Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus have achieved in Iraq -- the dramatically improved security on the ground; the growing competence of the Iraqi military and police forces; the growing confidence of Iraqi political leaders, and the economic progress which is burgeoning -- it is our view that the risks of drawing down by one brigade and one marine battalion is minimal at best, and can be mitigated by the readiness of coalition forces already in theater -- or back home -- should a contingency arise to warrant their employment.

The rewards, on the other hand, are potentially great as we seek to build dwell time for our troops and their families and have at our disposal a rested, stronger, more capable strategic reserve for worldwide crises. As always, conditions on the ground matter most, and we reserve the right to recommend adjustments to these plans should those conditions require it.

Conditions in Afghanistan certainly do require it, and I don't speak of Afghanistan without also speaking of Pakistan. For, in my view, these two nations are inextricably linked in a common insurgency that crosses the border between them.

You have all seen the challenges we have faced, particularly in the South and East, as Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters grow bolder.

You have seen the willingness of these disparate groups of fighters to better collaborate and communicate from safe havens in Pakistan, their ability to launch ever-more sophisticated -- even infantry-like -- attacks against fixed coalition positions, their increasing reliance on foreign fighters, and their growing and flagrant willingness to use innocent people as shields.

Add to this a poor and struggling Afghan economy, a still-healthy narcotics trade there, and significant political uncertainty in Pakistan and you have all the makings of a complex, difficult struggle.

I am convinced we can win the war in Afghanistan.

That is why I intend to commission a new, more comprehensive strategy for the region, one that covers both sides of the border.

It's why I have pushed hard for the continued growth and training of Afghan National Security Forces.

It's why I have pressed hard on my counterparts in Pakistan to do more against extremists, and to let us do more to help them.

And it's why the Chiefs and I recommended the deployment of a Marine Battalion to Afghanistan this fall and the arrival of another Army brigade early next year.

These forces, by themselves, will not adequately meet General McKiernan's desire for up to three brigades, but they are a good start.

I judge the risk of not sending them too great a risk right now to ignore.

My expectation is that they will need to perform both the training mission and combat and combat support missions simultaneously until such time that we can provide additional troops. I cannot at this point say when that might be.

Again, we must continually assess our progress there and in Iraq, weighing it against global risk and the health of the force before we make any more commitments.

And that, sir, leads me to my final point. As I once said about Iraq, let me now say about Afghanistan.

Absent a broader international and interagency approach to the problems there, it is my professional opinion that no amount of troops in no amount of time can ever achieve all the objectives we seek. And frankly, sir, we are running out of time.

We can train and help grow the Afghan security forces … and we are. In fact, they are on track to reach a total endstrength of 162,000 troops by 2010. The Marines conducting this training are doing a phenomenal job.

But until those Afghan forces have the support of local leaders to improve security on their own, we will only be as much as a crutch, and a temporary one at that.

We can hunt down and kill extremists as they cross over the border from Pakistan, as I watched us do during a day-long trip to the Korengal Valley in July.

But until we work more closely with the Pakistani government to eliminate the safe havens from which they operate, the enemy will only keep coming.

We can build roads and schools and courts, and our Provincial Reconstruction Teams are doing just that.

But until we have represented in those teams more experts from the fields of commerce, agriculture, jurisprudence and education those facilities will remain but empty shells. Fewer than one in twenty PRTs throughout the country are supported by non-military personnel.

Afghanistan doesn't just need more "boots on the ground." It needs more trucks on those roads, more teachers in those schools, and more trained judges and lawyers in those courts.

Foreign investment. Alternative crops. Sound governance. The rule of law. These are the keys to success in Afghanistan. We can't kill our way to victory, and no armed force anywhere -- no matter how good -- can deliver these keys alone. It requires teamwork and cooperation.

And it will require the willingness by everyone in the interagency and international community to focus less on what we think we each do best and more on what we believe we can ALL do better together.

I know you understand that, and I appreciate all you do on this committee to support those of us in uniform. Thank you.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

Afghanistan Map

Source: Website of the United States Army, http://www.Army.mil

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. SKELTON

Ambassador EDELMAN. On September 26, 2008, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) staff provided to your office a list of the 707 projects in Iraq on which $100,000 or more has been expended in the first three quarters of FY 2008.

This list is out of a total of nearly 6,500 CERP projects that have been executed across Iraq by the commanders in the field. [See page 36.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. TAYLOR

Admiral WINNEFELD. The MRAP vehicle fielding plan for home station training is driven by the operational requirements in theater. Fielding vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan is the Department's top priority; home station training is the next highest vehicle fielding priority.

The Department is committed to providing assets to train as we fight. However, with increasing requirements in Afghanistan, the MRAP fielding at home station training bases will be delayed until operational requirements are met. The USMC, USN and USAF fielding plans provided initial vehicles for home station training requirements but the need to support increasing operational requirements will delay final fielding of training vehicles. The USA plans to complete their theater fielding before they begin cascading older MRAP vehicles from Iraq to CONUS for home station training. While current production and fielding plans call for the USMC, USN, and USAF to complete fielding of home station training vehicles in early 2009, increasing operational requirements in Afghanistan are likely to delay final fielding of training vehicles. The Army plans to cascade older MRAP vehicles back to CONUS for home station training after completing theater fielding requirements in summer 2009. [See page 49.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MRS. BOYDA

Ambassador EDELMAN. The U.S. continues to receive substantial returns from the use of coalition support funds (CSF) to reimburse Pakistani operations in the War of Terrorism. The Pakistan Army has broadened its engagement in the tribal areas against violent extremists, suffered larger numbers of casualties than any other coalition member in the fight against extremists, and Pakistan's contributions further U.S. objectives in the War on Terror (WOT).

Coalition Support Funds are not military assistance. They are a reimbursement for the actual costs incurred by Pakistan, and 26 other nations, in support of U.S. military operations in the WOT.

The U.S. has reimbursed Pakistan $6.3B for the support it has rendered to U.S. forces since 2001. Major expense categories and costs are

- Operations: Operate and maintain forward ground and air bases; conduct air and maritime operations
- Subsistence: Food, clothing, billeting, and medical expenses for deployed forces
- Reconstitution: Repair and maintenance of weapons and vehicles; replace combat losses
- Surveillance: Air defense radars, surveillance, and operational watch costs
- Logistics: Transportation, communications, manual labor charges, road construction to facilitate movement to remote areas
- Helicopters: Lease of 26 Bell 412 helicopters to provide air mobility
- Ammunition: Cost of ammunition used in operations

Coalition Support Funds (CSF) have allowed Pakistan to deploy and maintain in excess of 100,000 Army and paramilitary forces along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

- Since December 2001, Pakistan has conducted 91 major and countless small operations, and suffered more than 1400 combat deaths in support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Of note, due to increased operational tempo, Pakistan has sustained as many casualties in these operations since July 2007 as in the five previous years of operations.
- Pakistan has assisted in the capture or elimination of more Al Qaeda (AQ), Taliban, and other extremists than any other coalition partner. Those captured include 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Muhammad, AQ operational planner Abu Faraj al-Libbi, and Taliban military leader Mullah Obeidullah.

The CSF reimbursement process is timely, thorough with multiple levels of oversight, and takes into account currency fluctuations.

- The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad receives and endorses Pakistani claims, U.S. Central Command validates that the costs were incurred in support of the WOT, and the OSD Comptroller evaluates for reasonableness and alignment with previous claims.
- The USD (Policy) and the Department of State confirm that reimbursements are consistent with USG national security and do not unfavorably affect the balance of power in the region.
- The four congressional defense oversight committees are notified before any reimbursement.
- The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad works closely with Pakistan to ensure that the process for substantiating Pakistan's claims is as thorough and transparent as possible.

In addition, the Department revised its CSF procedures and processes in 2008 based on suggestions from the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The Department's goal is to achieve greater accountability and oversight of CSF while reimbursing Pakistan fairly and promptly. Actions taken since the GAO report include:

- Department published new guidance, June 19, 2008, that:
  - — Is more prescriptive for coalition country claims, U.S. Embassy endorsements, and U.S. Combatant Command operational validations
  - — Allows for an operational assessment of costs (i.e., based on operations vice actual invoices, contracts, receipts, if such are not available)
  - — Is continually being assessed to ensure it can he implemented and audited
- Department team visited Pakistan August 3-8, 2008
- Department prepared specific guidelines for Pakistan's claims
- The Department plans to meet every six months with the Pakistan Joint Staff and military services to ensure continued dialog and transparency

The Department will provide additional details on CSF to Congress in April 2009 in accordance with Section 1217 of the FY2009 National Defense Authorization Act. [See page 33.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SHEA-PORTER

Admiral WINNEFELD. Through DESC's Bulk Petroleum purchase program, the following are the current contract prices (effective October 16, 2008):

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (FOB Origin contracts, no transportation included). We believe that fuel from Kuwait is from crude produced and refined in Kuwait.

Jet Al- $1.261095 - $2.465
Diesel - $2.28
Motor Gasoline - $1.908704

IOTC (FOB Destination prices, which include ocean transport to Jordan, storage in Jordan and truck delivery into Iraq). IOTC's offers states that refined product is from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and/or Qatar. We cannot advise the country of origin of the crude used to produce these products, because DESC's solicitation did not require this information.

JP8 - $3.589631
Diesel - $3.368516
Motor Gasoline - $3.316746

Through DESC's Direct Delivery Fuels program, with product coming through Turkey, the following are the escalated contract prices effective October 1, 2008. Products are refined in Turkey (Tupras refineries in Izmit, Kirkale, and Batman). The crude is 10% domestic, and 90% imported from Kirkuk, Iraq (via Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline) and Baku, Azerbaijan (via Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea).

(RAM) - Gasoline; range is $3.060400/USG - $3.105867/USG
(Golteks) - Diesel Fuel; range is $3.355859/USG - $3.455859/USG
[See page 41.]

Ambassador EDELMAN. DoD's Task Force to Improve Business and Stability Operation in Iraq (TFBSO), led by Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Business Transformation, Mr. Paul Brinkley, has helped Iraqis learn to market their products to international markets as well as within Iraq. Several of the clothing factories that Task Force has worked with are now running at or near capacity. However, the Task Force focuses much more broadly on economic stability in Iraq as a way to bolster security for our troops on the ground and for Iraq's nascent democracy. TFBSO's most tangible accomplishments to date have been the establishment/restoration of over 100,000 sustained manufacturing and professional jobs and assistance in the restart or significant increase of production for 66 factories within 35 state-owned factories in Iraq. Privatization is now underway for many of the factories that have been restarted. [See page 42.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MILLER

Mr. MILLER. Do you intend to ensure all sections of the 2005 BRAC law are upheld, especially with respect to the Joint Strike Fighter being based at Eglin Air Force Base?

Secretary GATES. The Department understands that it has a legal obligation to close and realign all installations recommended for closure and realignment by the Commission and approved by the President and Congress. The Department will fully comply with all BRAC 2005 closure and realignment recommendations.

Mr. MILLER. Do you believe that any service should take action (or take no action) based solely on a belief that an action, although necessary due to the law, may result in a lawsuit? It is our understanding the Air Force may be doing just that with respect to the Eglin Air Force Base Joint Strike Fighter Environment Impact Statement.

Secretary GATES. The Department of Defense and the Military Services face many risks in taking actions and accomplishing our mission. Litigation is a potential risk during the environmental planning process, but we remain committed to taking actions through informed decision making. I am confident that our environmental planning process provides our decision makers thorough analysis of potential impacts.

Mr. MILLER. Do you support the expansion of Tricare benefits to military retirees with autistic children? Are you aware this is currently not the case? Military retirees with autistic children do not qualify for the same benefits under the ECHO program as they did on active duty.

Secretary GATES. Applied behavioral analysis therapy is a covered educational intervention for Autism Spectrum Disorders under the ECHO program. Only those individuals who are licensed or certified by a State or certified by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) or a Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst (BCABA) are eligible to be TRICARE authorized providers of applied behavioral analysis therapy under ECHO. There is a severe national shortage of these qualified providers, making it very difficult for families with autistic children, including military families, to obtain applied behavior analysis (ABA) autism intervention services. As a result, military families' access to ABA services for their autistic children has been limited.

In an effort to explore a means of mitigating this lack of providers, the Department initiated an autism services demonstration on March 15, 2008, intended to assess the feasibility of providing effective ABA intervention by using tutors working under supervision by certified BCBAs and BCABAs. Because the demonstration is in its early stages, whether the supervised tutor model will be successful has not yet been determined. Until establishing an effective means of increasing qualified ABA providers, it would be premature to open ECHO autism services to children of retirees. To do so now would only exacerbate the difficulty active duty families have in accessing these services.

Mr. MILLER. What capabilities are we using to protect U.S. forces in Afghanistan operating in battlespace that is controlled by our Allies against IEDs? I am disturbed at some reports that U.S. teams training Afghan police in Helmand and Kandahar provinces are operating on Highway 1 without their routes being properly swept for IEDs.

Secretary GATES. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. MILLER. Are you aware of any reports that training teams in RC-South in Afghanistan are being told to reduce operations because there is not enough medevac support?

Secretary GATES. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. FRANKS

Mr. FRANKS. Dr. Gates, press reports over the past three months suggest that the Bush Administration has delayed taking action on several critical arms sales to Tai-

wan. Can you tell me what the Administration position is on pending Taiwan arms sales and when the Administration will send these cases to Congress for legislative review?

Secretary GATES. U.S. policy on arms sales to Taiwan is guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, under which the U.S. makes available items necessary for Taiwan to maintain its self defense. The Administration notified Congress on October 3 that it intends to sell to Taiwan various defensive weapons, including PAC-3 missiles, helicopters, aircraft parts, Harpoon missiles, anti-tank missiles, and upgrades to Taiwan's early warning aircraft.

Some of Taiwan's requests continue to be under review by the Administration. In accordance with Administration policy, we do not comment on our deliberations on specific weapons systems under consideration. When these deliberations are complete and the Administration decides to move forward with a weapon system sale, we will submit the notification to Congress for review.

Mr. FRANKS. ADM Mullen, you have often said that one "cannot talk about Afghanistan without also talking about Pakistan." In what ways do you feel the U.S. can help the Pakistanis' efforts to fight Taliban and Al-Qaeda aligned militants in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas and to win the "war of ideas" against extremism throughout the country?

Admiral MULLEN. The U.S. can help Pakistan in their efforts to fight Taliban and Al Qaeda through helping to build the counterinsurgency capabilities of Pakistan's security forces and by providing key enablers to these forces. The U.S. can also help in this fight through non-military assistance such as our support to Pakistan's Security Development Plan, which is designed to improve the economic conditions of the people in the tribal areas and bring better governance to the area. Bringing security to the people of the western Pakistan region and improving the economic condition of the people will go a long way toward winning the "war of ideas". An example of the positive effects of providing strong assistance to Pakistan was the earthquake relief effort in 2005, which showed the U.S. in a positive light to the people of northern Pakistan. A strong U.S. support effort for the tribal regions could bring about similar results.

Mr. FRANKS. ADM Mullen, what is your opinion of Foreign Military Financing of F-16 Mid-Life Upgrade for Pakistani Air Force F-16s? In your estimation, do these upgrades support Pakistani counterterrorism operations?

Admiral MULLEN. I support Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for F-16 Mid-Life Upgrade (MLU) for Pakistani Air Force F-16s and when completed, believe these upgrades will support Pakistani counterterrorism operations. Pakistan is a key partner in the War on Terror, and plays a critical role in our long-term efforts to build a stable and democratic Afghanistan. This F-16 FMF program to Pakistan dates back to 1983 and was interrupted in the 1990s by nuclear-related sanctions. Since its resumption in 2006, this F-16 program is considered by the Pakistanis to be the most important symbol of the U.S.-Pakistan security relationship. Pakistan has used F-16s to support military operations in the Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA), most recently in operations in Bajaur where their extensive use has been publicly reported. The key capabilities that this MLU will bring to Pakistan is broader day/night use and precision strike capabilities, which can diminish collateral damage during counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SHEA-PORTER

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Who are we buying our fuel from right now for the U.S. military in Iraq? And how much are we paying? Where did the fuel come from (what is the country of origin of the crude oil, and where was it refined)?

Admiral MULLEN. The Defense Energy Support Center (DESC), a field activity of the Defense Logistics Agency, supplies U.S. Forces in Iraq from Kuwait, Jordan and Turkey.

Through DESC's Bulk Petroleum purchase program, the following are the current contract prices (effective October 16, 2008):

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (FOB Origin contracts, no transportation included). We believe that fuel from Kuwait is from crude produced and refined in Kuwait.

Jet Al - $1.261095 - $2.465
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is from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and/or Qatar. We cannot advise the country of origin of the crude used to produce these products, because DESC's solicitation did not require this information.

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