

EVALUATING GOALS AND PROGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

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EVALUATING GOALS AND PROGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2011

**U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
*Washington, DC.***

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Boxer, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Webb, Shaheen, Coons, Durbin, Udall, Lugar, Corker, Risch, Rubio, DeMint, Isakson, Barrasso, and Lee.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order, please.

It's a terrific pleasure to welcome Secretary Clinton back to the committee. I know, Madam Secretary, that you are literally fresh back from South America, the Caribbean, and we appreciate very much your willingness to take the time from an incredibly hectic schedule to join us.

Your leadership in South Asia has been important in many different ways and so we're particularly looking forward to your assessments today of where we are. I know you had to rearrange your schedule in order to be here, so I want to express my gratitude to Cheryl Mills and your staff for helping to make that happen and for your willingness to do this notwithstanding just getting off the plane.

Before we begin, if I can just say that as soon as we have 10 members here we're going to quickly have a business meeting to approve the nominations, hopefully approve, of Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns, and the Ambassadors to China and Afghanistan, all important. Then we have another business meeting scheduled for next Tuesday, you'll be pleased to hear, which will take up other pending nominations. I think that will pretty much clear our docket of key nominations.

Last night the President kept the commitment that he made to the American people 18 months ago at West Point. Because of the gains made in Afghanistan in the intervening months, and I believe from a position of strength, the President was able to lay out the next phase of our strategy, a transition to Afghan control that begins by withdrawing a significant number of our troops between next month and September 2012.

The ability to reap the surge dividend and to bring home 33,000 troops over the next months is I think—and I think people will agree with me—a testament to the courage and the sacrifices of our young men and women in uniform and their civilian counterparts. Every time that I have visited the region, from Kabul to Kandahar, Helmand to Khost, I am deeply impressed by the commitment and ability of our troops. Some are on their fourth or even fifth combat tour. Yet all remain steadfast in performing their duty with honor and with professionalism. I know you will agree, Madam Secretary, that it is their efforts that have helped to bring us to this historic transition point.

I think it's important also to acknowledge, notwithstanding the criticisms that I hear from both right and left, that if you really stop and think about it, we have met our major goals in Afghanistan as articulated by the President. We significantly disrupted al-Qaeda and dramatically reduced its presence in the country. The job is not finished, but we have come to the point where this mission can transition.

Bin Laden's death last month was the capstone of the President's original objective. Our strategy has given the Afghans the opportunity to build and defend their own country, something, incidentally, that they have done for centuries without our help.

Senator Lugar and I hope that over these last months this committee has contributed to the public dialogue on Afghanistan. Since 2009 we have held 20 hearings and helped to focus attention on critical issues. During that process, I think it's fair to say that all the members of the committee have developed conclusions that we believe will continue to have an impact on the remaining challenges.

Obviously, the remaining challenges are significant. The most important one, as I have said many times—I think the Secretary agrees—is really Pakistan, where we have a complicated relationship. We have to work with the Pakistanis where our interests converge and, frankly, we have to understand where they don't converge and work to try to bring those interests together, to find the common ground where, even if there are some different goals, we're able to overcome the obstacles.

For sure, the Pakistanis have reacted very strongly to the events of May 2. They have clamped down on visas, making it difficult for military, intelligence, and civilian personnel to do their jobs, although after the recent trip of Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to Pakistan I think there has been some improvement. But reducing our footprint in Afghanistan, coupled with the kind of high-level diplomacy that Secretary Clinton engaged in when she was there last month, should open the door for new talks on a range of topics, from reconciliation to shutting down extremist sanctuaries.

The bottom line with respect to our engagement in Afghanistan is this: No number of troops will resolve the challenge of Afghanistan. Every military leader has said there is no military solution. So now is the time to work with all of the parties and all of the neighbors to find the political solution to this conflict.

We cannot do this in a vacuum. As we talk with the Taliban, we have to pursue a vigorous diplomatic strategy with Pakistan, India,

Russia, China, and other nations in the region. And we need to listen closely, especially to the Afghans and the Pakistanis, and work with them to protect our national interests.

The drawdown therefore should not just be about the number of troops. We need to ensure that our diplomatic and development strategies are aligned with our political and military goals. The State Department and USAID have performed admirably in a very tough environment, hostile to say the least. But as we've said in our committee report earlier this month, we want to work constructively with the administration to ensure that our aid strategies are as effective as they can be.

As Ambassador Karl Eikenberry winds up his tour in Kabul, I want to personally thank him for his service to his country in and out of uniform and for his willingness to tell the truth in high-pressure situations. He's been enormously helpful to me and to members of this committee on each of my visits and both he and his wife, Ching, have really served the country and the President well in my judgment.

Secretary Clinton, again I want to thank you very much for being here. You have been deeply immersed in the challenges on both sides of the Durand Line. I know you are enormously respected in both Pakistan and Afghanistan and by the leaders there, and so we particularly look forward to your comments today.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Secretary Clinton, I join——

The CHAIRMAN. Could I just note, before you do your opening, that we have our quorum? I thought we'd go to the business meeting now.

[Whereupon, at 10:15 a.m., the hearing was recessed and the committee proceeded to other business, then reconvened the hearing at 10:16 a.m.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator LUGAR. I congratulate the nominees and I look forward to their service, and I join the chairman in welcoming you, Secretary Clinton, once again. The Foreign Relations Committee has undertaken a series of hearings on Afghanistan and Pakistan during the last 2 months that have illuminated many issues. We look forward today, for the first time in this series, to hearing the administration's assessments of the situations in those countries and its plans for moving forward.

Much of the discussion about United States policy in the region has been focused on the specific question of how many troops should be withdrawn from Afghanistan. I believe troop withdrawals are warranted at this stage, but our policy in Afghanistan is in need of much more than troop reductions on a political timetable.

The President should put forward a plan that includes a more narrow definition of success in Afghanistan based on United States vital interests and a sober analysis of what is possible to achieve. It should eliminate ambiguity about U.S. goals and make clear that we are not engaged in broad nation-building. It should include an

explanation of what metrics must be satisfied to achieve the original intent of the mission, namely to prevent Afghanistan territory from being used as a terrorist safe haven. Such a plan should designate and eliminate those activities that are not intrinsic to our core counterterrorism objectives.

It is essential that Afghanistan be viewed in the broader strategic context. If we set out to reapportion our worldwide military and diplomatic assets without reference to where they are now, no rational review would commit nearly 100,000 troops and \$100 billion a year to Afghanistan. An additional 31,000 troops are in the region supporting Afghanistan operations. The country does not hold that level of strategic value for us, especially at a time when our Nation is confronting a debt crisis and our Armed Forces are being strained by repeated combat deployments.

Administration officials have testified that Yemen is the most likely source of a terrorist attack against American interests in the short term. Further, we know that al-Qaeda has a far more significant presence in Pakistan than in Afghanistan. To the extent that our purpose in Afghanistan is to confront the global terrorist threat, we should be refocusing resources on Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, parts of North Africa, and other locations. Neither political optics nor inertia should compel us to persist in outsized missions that have declined in strategic importance.

The military and civilian efforts of the coalition have produced some notable progress that is measurable in relative terms. But in many parts of Afghanistan, measuring success according to relative progress has limited meaning. Undoubtedly, we will make some progress when we are spending over \$100 billion per year on that country. The more important question is whether we have an efficient strategy for protecting our vital interests over the long term that does not involve massive open-ended expenditures and does not require us to have more faith than is justified in Afghan institutions.

The Pakistan side of the border has a fundamentally different dynamic. Despite the death of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups maintain a strong presence. There is no question that the threat of these groups, combined with worries about state collapse, a Pakistani war with India, the safety of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal, and Pakistan's intersection with other states in the region make it a strategically vital country worth the cost of engagement. The question is how the United States navigates the contradictions inherent in dealing with the Pakistani Government and Pakistani society to ensure that our resources and diplomacy advance our objectives efficiently.

I appreciate Secretary Clinton's willingness to be with us today, and I look forward to our discussion.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar.

Madam Secretary, we welcome your testimony. As you know, your whole testimony will be put in the record as if read in full, and we look forward to a good dialogue with the committee. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you very much, Chairman Kerry and Senator Lugar; and to all the members of the committee, it's a pleasure to be back here with you in the Senate.

As the President said last night, the United States is meeting the goals he set for our three-track strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The military surge has ramped up pressure on al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. The civilian surge has bolstered the Afghan and Pakistani Governments, economies, and civil societies, and undercut the pull of the insurgency. The diplomatic surge is supporting Afghan-led efforts to reach a political solution that will chart a more secure future.

All three surges—military, civilian, and diplomatic—are part of the vision for transition that NATO endorsed in Lisbon last December and that President Obama reaffirmed last night. As he said, Afghans must take responsibility for their own future.

Today I want to amplify on the President's statement and update you specifically on our civilian efforts, and I also look forward to answering your questions about the road ahead, because, despite the progress, we have to stay focused on the mission. As the President said, we have to put al-Qaeda on a path to defeat, and we will not relent until the job is done.

First let me say a word about the military effort. Last night the President explained his plan to begin drawing down our forces next month and transitioning to Afghan responsibility. I will leave it to my colleagues from the Defense Department to discuss the specifics, but the bottom line, as the President said, is that we have broken the Taliban's momentum. So we do begin this drawdown from a position of strength.

With respect to the civilian surge, we greatly appreciate the attention that this committee has devoted to it, because improving governance, creating economic opportunity, supporting civil society, is vital to solidifying our military gains and advancing our political and diplomatic goals. Since January 2009, we have tripled the number of diplomats, development experts, and other civilian specialists on the ground in Afghanistan and we have expanded our presence out in the field nearly sixfold. These new civilians have changed the way we do business, focusing on key ministries and sectors and holding ourselves and our partners to higher standards.

There should be no doubt about the results of our investment, despite the very difficult circumstances that you all know so well. Economic growth is up, opium production is down. Under the Taliban only 900,000 boys and no girls were enrolled in schools. By 2010 7.1 million students were enrolled and nearly 40 percent of them girls. Hundreds of thousands of farmers have been trained and equipped with new seeds and other techniques. Afghan women have used more than 100,000 microfinance loans. Infant mortality is down 22 percent.

Now, what do these numbers and others that I could quote tell us? First, that, despite the many challenges that remain, life is better for most Afghans. The Karzai government has many failings, to be sure, but more people in every research analysis we are privy to say they see progress in their streets, their schools, their fields.

And we remain committed to fighting corruption and strengthening the rule of law in a very challenging environment.

The aim of the civilian surge was to give Afghans a stake in their country's future and provide credible alternatives to extremism and insurgency. It was not, nor was it ever designed, to solve all of Afghanistan's development challenges. Measured against the goals we set and considering the obstacles we face, we are and should be encouraged by what we have accomplished.

Most important, the civilian surge helped advance our military and political objectives. Let me just offer one example. Last November, USAID began funding the reconstruction of irrigation systems in Wardak province, providing jobs for hundreds of workers and water to thousands of farmers. In March, just a few months ago, insurgents demanded that the people abandon the project and support the spring offensive. The people refused. Why? Because, they asked themselves, should we trade new opportunities for a better life for more violence and chaos?

Frustrated, the insurgents threatened to attack the project. Local shuras mobilized and sent back a clear message: We want this work to continue; interfere and you will become our enemy. And the insurgents backed down.

We have now reached the height of the civilian surge. Any effort of this size and scope will face considerable logistical challenges, and we have worked hard in the last 2½ years to strengthen oversight and improve effectiveness. We have, frankly, learned many lessons and we are applying them. The efforts of our civilians on the ground, working in some of the most different conditions imaginable, continues to be nothing short of extraordinary.

Looking ahead, as the transition proceeds we are shifting our efforts from short-term stabilization projects, largely as part of the military strategy, to longer term sustainable development that focuses on spurring growth and integrating Afghanistan into South Central Asia's economy.

Now, the third surge is our diplomatic surge. It is diplomatic efforts in support of an Afghan-led political process that aims to shatter the alliance between the Taliban and al-Qaeda and the insurgency and help to produce more stability. To begin, we are working with the Afghans on a new strategic partnership declaration that will provide a long-term framework for bilateral cooperation and NATO cooperation, as agreed to again at Lisbon. And it will bolster Afghan and regional confidence that Afghanistan will not again become a safe haven for terrorists and an arena for competing regional interests.

As the President said last night, this will ensure we will be able to continue targeting terrorists and supporting a sovereign Afghan Government. It will also provide a backdrop for reconciliation with insurgents who must meet clear redlines. They must renounce violence, they must abandon al-Qaeda, and they must abide by the Constitution of Afghanistan, including its protections for women. As I said in February in the speech I gave outlining this strategy, those are the necessary outcomes of any negotiation.

In the last 4 months, this Afghan-led political process has gained momentum. Twenty-seven provincial peace councils have been established in Afghanistan and the Afghan High Peace Council has

stepped up its efforts to engage civil society and women even as it also begins reaching out to insurgents. Let me underscore something which you will not be surprised to hear me say, but I say it not because of my personal feelings, but because of my strategic assessment. Including women and civil society in this process is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart and strategic thing to do as well. Any potential for peace will be subverted if women or ethnic minorities are marginalized or silenced, and the United States will not abandon our values or support a political process that undoes the social progress that has been made in the past decade.

But we believe that a political solution that meets these conditions is possible. The United States has a broad range of contacts at many levels across Afghanistan and the region that we are leveraging to support this effort, including very preliminary outreach to members of the Taliban. This is not a pleasant business, but a necessary one, because history tells us that a combination of military pressure, economic opportunity, and an inclusive political and diplomatic process is the best way to end insurgencies.

With bin Laden dead and al-Qaeda's remaining leadership under enormous pressure, the choice facing the Taliban is clear: Be part of Afghanistan's future or face unrelenting assault. They cannot escape this choice.

Special Representative Marc Grossman is leading an active diplomatic effort to build support for a political solution. What we call the core group—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States—has met twice and will convene again next week. At the same time, we are engaging the region around a common vision of an independent, stable Afghanistan and a region free of al-Qaeda. We believe we've made progress with all of the neighbors, including India, Russia, and even Iran.

Just this past Friday, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to support reconciliation by splitting its sanctions on al-Qaeda and the Taliban into two separate lists, underscoring that the door is open for the insurgents to abandon the terrorists and choose a different path. We welcome these steps and for the United States the key diplomatic priority and indeed a linchpin of this entire effort is closing the gap between Kabul and Islamabad. Pakistan must be part of this process.

Earlier this month, the two countries launched a joint peace commission and held substantive talks at the highest levels. Also very significant was the full implementation on June 12 of the Transit Trade Agreement, which will create new economic opportunity on both sides of the Durand Line and lay the foundation for a broader vision of regional economic integration and cooperation. This agreement started being negotiated in the early 1960s. It therefore took decades, including great heroic effort by the late Richard Holbrooke and his team. But the trucks are now rolling across the border.

I recently visited Pakistan and had, as we say in diplo speak, very candid discussions with its leaders. The United States has clear expectations for this relationship and, as President Obama said last night, the United States will never tolerate a safe haven for those who kill Americans.

We are looking to Pakistan to take concrete actions on the goals we share: defeating violent extremism, which has also taken so

many innocent Pakistani lives; ending the conflict in Afghanistan; and securing a stable, democratic, prosperous future. Now, these are obviously tough questions to ask of the Pakistanis and there are many causes for frustration. But we should not overlook the positive steps of just recent weeks since May 2. Counterterrorism cooperation continues and several very key extremists have been killed or captured.

As I told the Pakistanis, America cannot and should not try to solve Pakistan's problems. They have to eventually do that themselves. But nor can we walk away from this relationship and ignore the consequences, for all the reasons that Senator Lugar outlined in his opening statement: Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state sitting at the crossroads of a strategic region.

And we have seen this movie before. We have seen the cost of disengaging from the region. As Secretary Gates, who was there at that time, has stressed, we cannot repeat the mistakes of 1989.

That's why it's important we have the resources to continue implementing our strategy. The State Department is following the Pentagon's model and creating a special emergency fund, an overseas contingency operations account that separates normal operating costs from extraordinary wartime expenses.

Now, I will hasten to say we are painfully aware of today's fiscal realities, and I know that it is tempting for some to peel off the civilian and diplomatic elements of our strategy. They obviously make fewer headlines. People don't know as much about them. And it would be a terrible mistake, and I'm not saying that just for myself, but as our commanders on the ground will tell you. The three surges work hand in hand. You cannot cut or limit one and expect the other two to succeed. Ultimately, I believe we are saving money and, much more importantly, lives by investing now.

And let's not forget. An entire year of civilian assistance in Afghanistan costs Americans the same amount as 10 days of military operations.

So, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members, I thank you for this opportunity to discuss our strategy. There have been a lot of developments in the last months and I feel that what we are doing is working, but it is obviously important that we ask the hard questions, and I look forward to working with you to improve the strategy and work together to implement it.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Clinton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Thank you, Chairman Kerry and Senator Lugar. It is always a pleasure to see you.

As the President said last night, the United States is meeting the goals he set for our three-track strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The military surge has ramped up pressure on al-Qaida terrorists and Taliban insurgents. The civilian surge has bolstered the Afghan and Pakistani Governments, economies, and civil societies and undercut the pull of the insurgency. The diplomatic surge is supporting Afghan-led efforts to reach a political solution that will chart a more secure future for the region. All three surges are part of the vision for transition that NATO endorsed in Lisbon and that President Obama reaffirmed last night. As he said, Afghans have to take responsibility for their own future.

Today I want to echo the President's statement and update you on our civilian efforts. I also want to answer your questions about the road ahead. Because, despite

this progress, we have to stay focused on our mission. As the President said, “We have put al-Qaida on a path to defeat, and we will not relent until the job is done.”

First, let me say a word about the military effort. Last night the President explained his plan to begin drawing down our forces next month and transitioning to Afghan responsibility. I will leave it to my colleagues from the Defense Department to discuss the specifics. But the bottom line, as the President said, is that we have broken the Taliban’s momentum. So we begin this drawdown from a position of strength.

Now, let me turn to the civilian surge. We appreciate the attention you have devoted to this, because improving governance, creating economic opportunity, and supporting civil society is vital to solidifying our military gains and advancing our political goals.

Since January 2009, we have more than tripled the number of diplomats, development experts, and other civilian specialists on the ground in Afghanistan, and we have expanded our presence in the field nearly sixfold. Those new civilians have changed the way we do business, focusing on key ministries and sectors, and holding ourselves and our partners to higher standards.

There should be no doubt about the results, despite very difficult circumstances: Economic growth is up, and opium production is down. Under the Taliban, only 900,000 boys and no girls were enrolled in schools. By 2010, 7.1 million students were enrolled, 37 percent of them girls. Hundreds of thousands of farmers have been trained and equipped with new seeds. Afghan women have used more than 100,000 microfinance loans. Infant mortality is down 22 percent.

What do all these numbers tell us?

First, that despite all the many challenges that remain, life is better for most Afghans. The Karzai government has many failings, to be sure. But more and more people can see progress in their streets, schools, and fields. And we remain committed to fighting corruption and strengthening the rule of law.

The aim of our civilian surge was to give Afghans a stake in their country’s future and provide credible alternatives to extremism and insurgency—it was not, nor was it ever designed, to solve all of Afghanistan’s development challenges. Measured against these goals, and considering the obstacles we face, we are and should be encouraged by how much has been accomplished.

Most important, the civilian surge has helped advance our military and political objectives. Let me offer an example.

Last November, USAID began funding the reconstruction of irrigation systems in Wardak province, providing jobs for hundreds of workers and water to thousands of farmers. In March, insurgents demanded that the people abandon the project and support their spring offensive. The people refused. Why should they trade new opportunities for more violence and chaos? Frustrated, the insurgents threatened to attack the project. Local shuras mobilized and sent back a clear message: We want this work to continue; interfere and you will become our enemy. The insurgents backed down.

We have now reached the height of the civilian surge. Any effort of this size and scope will face considerable logistical challenges, and we are working hard to strengthen oversight and improve effectiveness. We have learned many lessons, and we are applying them. And the efforts of our civilians on the ground, working in some of the most difficult conditions imaginable, continue to be nothing short of extraordinary.

Looking ahead, as transition proceeds, we will shift our efforts from short-term stabilization projects to longer term sustainable development that focuses on spurring growth and integrating Afghanistan into South Central Asia’s economy.

Now, the third surge is our diplomatic effort in support of an Afghan-led political process that aims to shatter the alliance between the Taliban and al-Qaida, end the insurgency, and help to produce a more peaceful and prosperous region.

To begin, we are working with the Afghans on a new Strategic Partnership Declaration that will provide a long-term framework for our bilateral cooperation and bolster Afghan and regional confidence that we will not abandon Afghanistan. As the President said last night, this will ensure that we will be able to continue targeting terrorists and supporting a sovereign Afghan Government.

It will provide a backdrop for reconciliation with insurgents who meet clear red-lines. They must renounce violence; abandon al-Qaida; and abide by the constitution of Afghanistan, including its protections for the rights of women. As I said in February, those are necessary outcomes of any negotiation.

In the last 4 months, this Afghan-led political process has gained momentum.

Twenty-seven Provincial Peace Councils have been established in Afghanistan, and the Afghan High Peace Council has stepped up its efforts to engage civil society and women, even as it also begins reaching out to insurgents.

Including women and civil society in this process is not just the right thing to do—it is also the smart and strategic thing to do. Any potential for peace will be subverted if women are marginalized or silenced. And the United States will not abandon our values or support a political process that undoes the social progress that has been made in the past decade.

But we believe that a political solution that meets these conditions is possible. The United States has a broad range of contacts at many levels across Afghanistan and the region that we are leveraging to support this effort, including very preliminary outreach to members of the Taliban. This is not a pleasant business. But history tells us that a combination of military pressure, economic opportunity, and an inclusive political and diplomatic process is the best way to end insurgencies.

With bin Laden dead and al-Qaida's remaining leadership under enormous pressure, the choice facing the Taliban is clear: Be part of Afghanistan's future or face unrelenting assault. They cannot wait us out. They cannot defeat us. And they cannot escape this choice.

Special Representative Marc Grossman is leading an active diplomatic effort to build support for a political solution. What we call the "Core Group," of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States, has met twice and will convene again next week. At the same time, we are engaging the region around a common vision of an independent, stable Afghanistan and a region free of al-Qaida. And this effort is paying off. India, Russia, and even Iran are now on board.

Just this past Friday, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to support reconciliation by splitting its sanctions on al-Qaida and the Taliban, underscoring that the door is open for the insurgents to abandon the terrorists and seek a better path.

We welcome these steps. And for the United States, the key diplomatic priority—and indeed a lynchpin of this entire effort—is closing the gap between Kabul and Islamabad. Pakistan simply must be part of this process.

Earlier this month the two countries launched a Joint Peace Commission, with substantive talks at the highest levels. Also significant was the full implementation on June 12 of the Transit Trade Agreement, which will create new economic opportunity on both sides and lay the foundation for a broader vision of regional economic integration and cooperation. It took decades to negotiate this agreement, including great effort by the late Richard Holbrooke, but trucks are now rolling across the border.

I recently visited Pakistan and had very candid discussions with its leaders. The United States has clear expectations for this relationship. As President Obama said last night, the United States will never tolerate a safe haven for those who would kill our citizens.

We are looking to Pakistan to take concrete action on the goals we share: defeating violent extremism, which has taken so many innocent Pakistani lives; ending the conflict in Afghanistan; and ensuring a secure, stable, democratic, prosperous future for Pakistan and the region.

There are obviously tough questions to ask. And many causes for frustration. But we should not overlook the positive steps of recent weeks. Counterterrorism cooperation continues, and several key extremists have been killed or captured.

As I told the Pakistanis, America cannot and should not solve Pakistan's problems. They have to do that themselves. But nor can we just walk away from this relationship and ignore the consequences.

Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state sitting at the crossroads of a strategic region. And we have seen the cost of disengaging from this region before. As Secretary Gates has stressed, we cannot repeat the mistakes of 1989.

That is why it is so important that we have the resources to continue implementing our strategy. The State Department is following the Pentagon's model and creating a special emergency fund—an Overseas Contingency Operations account—that separates normal operating costs from these extraordinary war-time expenses.

Now, we are painfully aware of today's fiscal reality. And I know it may be tempting to peel off the civilian elements of our strategy that make fewer headlines. But as our commanders on the ground will tell you, that would be a serious mistake. The three surges are designed to work hand in hand. You cannot slash one and expect the other two to succeed. And ultimately, we are saving money—and lives—by investing now in getting this right.

And let's not forget: An entire year of civilian assistance in Afghanistan costs Americans the same amount as just 10 days of military operations.

So Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, I thank you for this opportunity to explain our strategy and why we feel it is so vital to America's national security. I hope we can work together to implement and improve it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Secretary Clinton. We really appreciate those opening comments and the opportunity now to ask some questions.

Let me follow up on the Pakistan side of things. Yesterday the results of a Pew poll were announced that found most Pakistanis consider us an enemy, extraordinarily, I think. Many Americans react appropriately with a huge question mark to that. Only 12 percent of Pakistanis express a positive view of the United States, notwithstanding what we're doing there.

Balancing that, it's interesting that only 12 percent have a positive view of al-Qaeda or the Taliban.

Now, in many ways the Afghanistan war—and I don't mean to insult Afghanistan or say anything pejorative about the efforts and what is at stake there—but in many ways the Afghanistan war is a side show to the main event, if you will, that is next door. Pakistan has 187 million people, Afghanistan 30 million. Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal estimated at more than 100 weapons, which has doubled since 2007, according to public unclassified statistics. It has a much more combustible brew of terrorist extremists groups than Afghanistan. And its territory is being used today to plot attacks against neighbors, as well as against America and Europe.

It is judged that perhaps there are 50 or 60 al-Qaeda fighters of some kind—it's hard to really measure that—in Afghanistan, versus countless numbers of foreign fighters of various nationalities and other terrorists in Pakistan.

Yet it seems that Pakistan has received less attention in regular interagency reviews and strategic planning sessions compared to Afghanistan and, more importantly, we have about \$120 billion a year going into Afghanistan compared to about \$2.8 billion that went into Pakistan last year, notwithstanding the fact it is in economic extremis and has enormous capacity needs on several levels.

I know you're aware of the sensitivity of Pakistanis to this disparity—so I wonder if you would share with us the impressions you took away from your most recent meetings and what you see as a more effective approach—it's fair to say that every member of the Senate is asking questions about this relationship, and the appropriations people are particularly troubled as they try to figure out what's real here in the relationship.

So if you could share with the committee your perceptions of the way forward, I think it would be very helpful.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Chairman Kerry, I think the dilemma we face is one well known to you and other members of this committee. We have had over many years a difficult relationship with Pakistan, in part because starting with President Kennedy and the extraordinary feting of the then-President of Pakistan at Mount Vernon, all the way to the present day, we have had a difficult challenge in staying on any single course with the Pakistanis.

As you remember very well, because of their nuclear program and other reasons, Congress passed what was called the Pressler amendment and we cut off all contact with them and we cut off particularly military contact with them. That meant we were not involved with their military training and the relationship-building with their military officers. We also have seen using aid on the one

hand to try to influence behavior, withdrawing it in the face of our disapproval.

So if a Pakistani official were sitting here, he—and they would most likely be he, although I think they are about to name a woman Foreign Minister—he would say: “We don’t know what you want of us; we don’t know what to expect from you; and we can’t count on you because you’re here today and gone tomorrow.”

Now, I would argue that is only part of the story, because clearly there is at work in Pakistani society, and particularly among the elite, which let us remember manipulate public opinion to a great extent to further what they view as either national or sectoral or even personal interests—so I think we have to recognize that the overriding strategic framework in which Pakistan thinks of itself is its relationship with India. Every time we make a move toward improving our relationship with India, which we started in a great commitment to back in the 1990s and it’s been bipartisan, with both President Clinton and President Obama and President Bush, the Pakistanis find that creates a lot of cognitive dissonance. So are you our friend or are you their friend? It’s all a zero-sum game to them.

What we tried to do in the Obama administration from the beginning of the President’s term was to look at Afghanistan and Pakistan and the entire region as a whole, and not just Afghanistan or just Pakistan, but also to try to understand what the drivers of certain behaviors were and how we could develop a more strategic partnership with Pakistan.

I remember testifying here back in early 2009, and let’s remember where we were at that time. The Pakistani Government had made basically a deal with the Pakistani Taliban to cede territory. They were literally abdicating governmental responsibility over large swaths of territory, Swat Valley, Bihar, moving toward Islamabad. I remember saying to this committee it was just unimaginable to me that a government would do that, and we publicly and privately urged them to get into the fight, which they did.

So from their perspective, they have had extraordinary losses in the military and in the civilian attacks that have occurred by the Taliban. And they are trying to figure out, as people do when they feel their survival is somehow at risk, how to manage many different factors coming at them all at once.

That’s not to make any excuses for their behavior, but it is to try to put it into some explanatory context, because we would not disagree at all with Senator Lugar’s comment that this is a very strategic situation for us, for the United States, and we have to do more to get it right. So we’re going to continue to make clear our expectations. We’re going to continue to try to work with them across the entire political spectrum. We’re going to demand more from them. But we are not going to expect any miracles overnight. This is a long-term, frustrating, frankly sometimes very outraging kind of experience, which you know firsthand, chairman. And yet I don’t see any alternative if you look at vital American national interests.

The final point I would make is I see our involvement in Afghanistan, obviously, also as a vital national security interest, but I also see it as part of our relationship with Pakistan. You know, they

would be perfectly happy if we picked up and left tomorrow, but what would we get for it and what would they do with it? I think the answers to those two questions mean that the President's approach, which is this steady, careful transition while we try to work the diplomatic and political piece of this, which includes Pakistan, is exactly the right way to go.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I think your last point is really the principal focus and I think an area where we need to really be very intense and focused. I really look forward to following up with you personally on that subject, because I think that's critical for our withdrawal process for Afghanistan and obviously for the stability. I know you know that. So I look forward to working with you on it.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Secretary Clinton, it was a fortuitous coincidence, but the Aspen Institute Congressional group had a breakfast this morning with Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad, our former Ambassador to Afghanistan. He could make the case better than I could, but you have already—

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar, I apologize for interrupting you. I just asked one question and obviously we took a fair amount of time to answer it and I appreciate that. But I'm just reminded that the Secretary needs to be at the White House for a debrief there at about 12:15. So if colleagues are OK with the idea, we'd probably have to limit the questioning to about 6 minutes each, if that meets everybody's approval.

Senator LUGAR. Fine.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks. I appreciate it. Thanks, Senator.

Senator LUGAR. The Ambassador strongly commended the initiative that you and the President took to create the office of Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and the appointment of the late Richard Holbrooke to fill that role, and likewise now the appointment of Marc Grossman to undertake that position.

Beyond that, he suggested—and I think you have touched upon this in your testimony—that Afghanistan is a part of a much larger diplomatic pattern and set of relationships. For example, whether it be comparable to the Congress of Vienna or however one wants to characterize this, you and the President might very well try to pull together, not overnight but over the course of time, not only the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan into a congress of sorts, but include also India, Russia, and perhaps even Saudi Arabia.

Maybe that's not the exhaustive list, but it indicates that each of these countries for a variety of reasons have an interest in each other, and an interest in us. Let's say, for example, that at the end of the day, without making predictions, the United States was to have a residual force in Afghanistan. That would be irritating perhaps to some, maybe even to all of the above parties, although for a variety of reasons some might find that to be fortuitous.

But as it stands, our advantage would come really from enhancing our relationships with all of the above actors. Not only in addition to working simply on the Afghanistan or Afghanistan-Pakistan problem from our own standpoint, but because there are these unresolved issues of India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, quite

apart from Russia and China as nuclear powers, and for a variety of additional reasons, and finally I would mention Saudi Arabia. Because of this reality, maintaining ties with all of these actors is important.

I mention this as, and perhaps you could give a different figure, but my understanding is that because the Pakistanis have now been more difficult in terms of their cooperation with us, only about 60 percent of our supplies for Afghanistan can get across Pakistan, as opposed to maybe 90 percent a few months ago. We have become more reliant upon Russia and other central Asian actors as a region through which we can transport goods and services to Afghanistan.

In short, this is a regional problem that is going to have a correspondingly broad diplomatic solution. This doesn't obviate the fact that fighting is still going on. As the President has pointed out, we still have a lot of work to do with our military in the field. You have mentioned the military, civilian, and diplomatic surges.

So I'm not arguing against any of the above, although I would suggest, as we all have today, that probably the resources of our Nation are not unlimited in this respect. I believe it is important to remain cognizant of this as we seek solutions to our own budget problems and review our relationship not just with Afghanistan, but also Pakistan and the other countries that I mentioned. In this context, we need to really begin to stress this regional diplomacy idea.

Do you have any thoughts beyond that to reflect on this morning?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, I agree completely with that. I think that the Congress of Vienna is an interesting historical example because there was a pact made among regional powers that in effect left the Benelux countries as a free zone, so to speak. Certainly if we could get to that point with the regional powers in South Asia that would not recommence with the great game in Afghanistan, that would be a very worthy outcome.

To that end, we have formed exactly the kind of group that Ambassador Khalilzad recommended. We do have this so called core group of the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It has met twice. It will meet again next week. Richard Holbrooke first and Marc Grossman second have been working very hard over the last 2½ years to create this regional approach toward solving the problems in Afghanistan.

I think that the countries you named—India, Russia, Saudi Arabia—are all ones that are at the table. In fact, the most recent meeting of all of the countries that had an interest was actually hosted in Saudi Arabia. So we are bringing many of these countries to the broad negotiations about the way forward.

Now, there will be some other actors who you cannot ignore, including Iran. Iran is a big player in the region and has a long border with both Afghanistan and Pakistan. How they are involved and what they're willing to do we don't, obviously, at this point know.

Uzbekistan has a lot of worries about what goes on in Afghanistan, and you're well aware that one of the issues we're all watching for is how the Tajiks and the Uzbeks and others respond to the

diplomatic outreach. I was in Uzbekistan a few months ago and the government there is very worried about what happens.

So there are a lot of players who can act independently or in concert with one another. But you are absolutely right, Senator, the only way we're going to get a political resolution is through this kind of intensive diplomatic outreach. That's what we're engaged in. I know you understand it, but I do hope that everybody in the Congress and the press and the public understands that you don't end wars by talking only to people with whom you agree or who are good actors. You end wars by, unfortunately, but the fact is, talking with people whose interests and values are often very much opposite of yours.

But what you've described is what we are in the midst of working on.

Senator LUGAR. I appreciate that very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary, I predicted you'd be a great Secretary of State. I want you to know that I think you are. We're proud of you and we thank you for all your work. You're just giving this all you have. The issues are so difficult.

I'm going to ask you about the pace of our drawdown from Afghanistan and then I'm going to ask you a little bit about the women. And I'm so glad you included them in your opening remarks. So let me just lay this out.

Everyone at this table who was in the United States Senate after we were attacked by al-Qaeda voted to go to war and get bin Laden and decimate al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. I think it's fair to say, with the incredible leadership of our President and our amazing Special Forces, finally getting bin Laden was a huge moment for us.

According to Leon Panetta—and it was reiterated by our Chairman Kerry—we're down to about 50 al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. So as I look at it, before I vote to go to war, every one of us here, that's the most difficult vote you ever make. I feel that we did what we said we wanted to do. And now, as I hear the President's words, I agree with everything he said, and you reiterated today. You said, and he said yesterday, it's time for Afghans to take control of their own future.

I think there's a big difference in doing that in 18 months or 12 months and waiting until 2014. So I want to ask you a question about that when I get to the end of this.

We have trained 290,000 security forces in Afghanistan, and I could break it down: 126,000 police, 164,000 army. We have spent \$30 billion training them. Now, I'm the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. You served on that proudly. We are desperately seeking \$6 billion to keep the highway program going for a year, and people are saying: Oh my goodness, \$6 billion. And we're spending, well, \$12 billion a month right now on Afghanistan, it's my understanding, and Iraq, a month. I need \$6 billion for a year to keep people working.

So this issue of the drawdown, it's really a matter of not only are the lives of our soldiers, but everything else, the money, and the fact that Karzai has said on many occasions this is a sovereign

nation. He's said—his last quote I have is: "The Afghan people's trust in the Afghan Army and police is growing every day, and preservation of this land is the job of Afghans."

So you put it all together and you wonder why we're looking at 2014. I was hopeful that this surge that was essentially temporary, I was hopeful that 33,000 could be moved out this year.

Having said that, I respect the President. I know he's got everybody telling him their ideas and we have to be humble if we don't agree. But I think it's important to state that I think this is leaving 70,000 troops.

So my question to you is, What are those 70,000 troops going to do? I thought since we have trained all these Afghans, we'd turn it over to them and that we would shift to the counterterrorism mission, which will help us with Pakistan, which is so dangerous, as opposed to counterinsurgency. So that's the first question.

The second question has to do with the women and then I'll stop and have you answer. I had the distinct honor and privilege of meeting with a delegation of Afghan women. You know how amazing they are, how courageous they are, how brave they are. They risk everything to come forward. We remember the days of the forced burkas and all those things, and the Taliban leading the country. Just, the women suffered. And yes, I'm so proud of the progress they've made because of what we've done, frankly, along with them.

So I said, what do you need from us? They were very clear. They didn't ask for one more troop. They didn't even ask for one more day of war. They don't want that. They want a seat at that peace jirga, at that reconciliation. So I said: "How many seats do you have?" They said: "9 seats out of 70 slots."

Now, I told them I'd do everything in my power, including writing legislation, which actually Susan Davis in the House wrote, to tie our aid to their seat at the table. How can we have a situation that's fair? The people that got hurt the most were those women and those girls. And to have so few of them at the table is just not right.

So I would ask you, what are we doing to push forward to get more women at the table? And also, can you explain to me what are those 70,000 troops going to be doing until 2014?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, first on the troop withdrawal. I think that, as the President explained last night, the surge which you remember he announced in December of 2009 at West Point, was intended to provide additional military support for the troops we already had there and to accelerate certain aspects of the mission, like greater training of the Afghans, which had been languishing and now has quite impressed the trainers on the ground with the ability to get a force that is going to be sufficient.

So when the surge leaves, as the President announced last night, we will be back to where we were when he announced it. I think it's a bit of a misnomer to say then we can do CT or COIN, because in effect we've been doing counterterrorism the whole time. We've been targeting high-value targets. We have been going after Taliban leaders. And we have been using the extra troops to hold territory that was finally taken back from the Taliban.

So what the remaining troops will do for the remaining time they're there, because remember we have a hard stop, along with our NATO ISAF allies of 2014, is they will be continuing training, they will be continuing mentoring the Afghans, who are going to be taking the lead responsibility, they will continue in combat to some extent, but in a much more limited field.

It is the assessment of the President and those of us in the administration, along with our military commanders, that this is the right pace of withdrawal. As the Defense Department will tell you, we're on a downward trajectory of military spending because of the drawdown in Iraq and because of the drawdown now in Afghanistan. So that the Defense Department will be spending many billions of dollars less, even in the next 18 to 24 months.

But I think that the way this has been laid out, along with our allies, because remember the decision at Lisbon was agreed to unanimously by everybody, is the right way to proceed, and there will be continuing missions that will be important as we transition to Afghan lead.

With respect to the women, I totally share your view that the Afghan women I've met and worked with are just among some of the most courageous people in the world. Some of them withstood just horrific treatment during the Taliban and the warlord years, never lost their spirit, kept educating girls, kept providing health care, kept standing up in their own way against the oppression.

I think it's important that they have more seats at the table. It's something that I agree with and have been pushing on. There are many different interests that have to be accommodated in Afghanistan, and if you look just at the people with the guns, the men with the guns, who have to have some stake in the outcome, they are obviously a big concern to the Afghan Government and to us. But we know from long work that I've done over many years now and which was embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, if women are not part of the peacemaking the peace will not keep to the same extent that it would have otherwise. We saw that in Central America. We've seen that in African conflicts. And we will see it in Afghanistan.

So it's not only because we admire these women that we want them to have a place at the table. It's because they have to be part of making a lasting resolution in Afghanistan.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I thank you for your service. I know we had a nice conversation out back. Subject for another day, I don't know how the administration could have purposely more so created unnecessarily a conflict over Libya the way that it has. But as usual, your frankness and transparency is disarming, and I look forward to that conversation happening at another time.

But I do appreciate your service and the way you handle yourself and the tremendous effort you put out on behalf of our country.

Let me ask you, do you 100 percent agree with what the President had to say last night?

Secretary CLINTON. Yes; I do.

Senator CORKER. In every facet?

Senator CORKER. Yes; I do, Senator. This was a very open, candid discussion within the national security team. Obviously, people forthrightly presented their own views. It will not surprise you that the views ranged across the spectrum about what should be done and what should not be done. But I think that the President, with his decision has hit the mark. He has answered what is a very legitimate concern, not only of this Congress but of the American public, that this has been a very long conflict for the United States. Our own internal domestic needs are very pressing.

At the same time, we have made a difference in the last 2½ years. It's not been at all easy and it's been at the loss of many young Americans. But he made the right decision.

Senator CORKER. I got it. I don't want to be rude. I just know I have a limited amount. So you agree.

Secretary CLINTON. Yes, sir.

Senator CORKER. So the nature of—I think many of us were concerned about, so what is the nature of what it is we're going to be doing on the ground. I think what you've said today is we're going to continue with lesser troops on a counterinsurgency, not a counterterrorism effort.

Secretary CLINTON. No; both. I was trying to make the point that we've been doing both. Every night, special operators go out. Every night we are targeting people in a counterterrorism effort, and we're holding territory. So we'll continue doing both.

Senator CORKER. And those same Navy SEALs that we're so proud of I know do an outstanding job every night doing the counterterrorism piece. But the counterinsurgency piece leads us continually toward a, quote—and I know this is an old term in your perspective, but—it's continually doing the nation-building, state-building kinds of things in Libya that I think many of us are concerned about being able to sustain, not only while we're there, but after we leave.

You're comfortable with continuing, quote, the “nation building”—I know you use a different term; it's the one I understand—effort that is taking place in Afghanistan?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, I am comfortable with our continuing to interact with and support Afghan leadership at all levels. For example, Senator, our assessment is that about 75 percent of the governors now that have been appointed in the last year or two are actually performing well. That was not the case 2½ years ago. Part of the reason we think they're performing well is that they have been mentored by both military and civilian personnel.

I don't think we—I know that so-called nation-building rightly raises a lot of questions in people's minds. That's not what we think we're doing and that's not our intention. But what we are doing is, a young captain or a young Foreign Service officer getting in there and helping these people know what it means to actually run a government, make decisions, I think is in our interests, because it gives them a stake then in the kind of future we're building with our military efforts.

Senator CORKER. I think we end up with a country, because of the distortive cultural things that we're doing—some of which are very good, and I thought you had a very nice exchange; some of which, though, create a situation where Afghanistan is a supplicant

or Afghanistan doesn't exist ever without United States involvement. I see that as what we're doing there, and obviously that's concerning.

Let me move to the last point. I know I'm getting close on time. I've been here 4 years and 5 months and our reasons for being in Afghanistan have continued to evolve. One of the main reasons we're there is because we're there, at this point. There was a concern that the partnership—that our partners, the Afghans, the Pakistanis, would not view us as a reliable partner if we left. That was sort of the code a couple of years ago, I think, about the time the Holbrooke doctrine, if you will, came into play.

So we created this AfPak doctrine and we have this partnership under way that you're talking about. One of the reasons we continued to be there the way that we have is we didn't want to destabilize Pakistan by leaving behind a destabilized Afghanistan. But now we understand that—and of course, there is no Pakistani voice. It's not a country that speaks with one voice. It's not really ruled. It's ruled by disparate entities, which is one of the problems we have with them.

But now we're understanding that many of the leaders of Pakistan really don't want to see a stabilized Afghanistan. So our interests, while we've given them billions and billions of dollars of aid, is different from ours.

Then what struck me was your last comment, and that is that Pakistan would just as soon we leave Afghanistan immediately. Now, that—from my perspective, that's 180 degrees from where we were 2 years ago under the administration, which I'm not criticizing. Everybody's had trouble with Afghanistan.

But if you will, reconcile that with me?

Secretary CLINTON. Yes. Well, I'll start there and then I want to circle back if I have time to the future in Afghanistan and its present status as kind of a supplicant, in your words.

I think that Pakistan wants to be sure that whatever happens in Afghanistan will not affect its strategic interests. It wants what it calls strategic depth in Afghanistan. By that it means, No. 1, it wants a regime in Kabul and it wants a border that is not going to challenge its interests. So it's particularly focused on having the Pashtun population on the Afghan side of the Durand Line and the Pashtun population on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line not coming together in any way that threatens Islamabad.

So it has in the past invested in a certain amount of instability in Afghanistan. It also does not want Afghanistan to become a satellite of India. India and Afghanistan have a historical affinity. Historically, Afghanistan has supported elements within Afghanistan which Pakistan has seen as inimicable to its own interests.

So if Pakistan could be assured that what would be left would be favorable to and even in their view subservient to Pakistani interests, that would be fine with them. The Indians aren't going to sit around and accept that. The Uzbeks and the Tajiks are not going to sit around and just accept that.

So part of what we have been doing is to try to build up capacity within Afghanistan so it is strong enough to defend itself against all comers, but without falling back into civil war, because particu-

larly the Northern Alliance constituents believe that they are threatened by Pakistan and the Pashtuns.

So when I say, yes, they'd be happy if we left as long as it ended up the way they wanted, I think that's just an obvious statement. But it won't end up that way in the absence of some kind of political resolution and without the strength of ability within the Afghan Government to defend itself going forward.

So you're right, Senator, this is a Rubik's Cube of diplomatic and political complexity. I'm sure you do hear different things from different members of the administration or very well-informed Members of Congress, but I don't think that they are necessarily contradictory. I think they are all part of what is an incredibly complex situation that we're trying to get our arms around, and attempting to move in a direction that will leave a stable Afghanistan, not a perfect nation state, but a stable Afghanistan, with the interests to be able to defend itself against both overt and covert challenges to its security.

Finally, I think it's important for us to maybe take a step back and look at other countries that the United States made investments in over long periods of time. There were different historical reasons, we all know. But you look at the decades of our investment in South Korea and you look at the coups that took place. You look at the stop-and-start efforts of democracy. You look at the massive corruption. You look at the thousands of American troops that we kept there. And we not only provided military protection against North Korea. We also in effect helped to model and support what is now a vibrant democracy and a very strong economy.

Can we look back and say, you know, we could have left in 1967 or 1979 or 1984 and let them fend for themselves, knowing that they were in a very dangerous neighborhood? I think it's been in America's strategic interests and in America's values to have stood the test of time here. I think it's not a comparable situation, but I do believe that looking at historical examples to see where American investment persevered is important.

Senator CORKER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not want to diminish at all the amount of time that we're able to apply to these answers because I think it's very important and it's very interesting. But I do have to note that we've got about 9 or 10 Senators left and at 6 minutes that takes us into the Secretary's White House briefing time.

Most of the questions have taken around 10 minutes rather than the 6 minutes on both sides.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, that's my fault mostly.

The CHAIRMAN. Madam Secretary, it's important to get these on the record. I regret that we have the back end pressure. But hopefully everybody can try to hold to 6 minutes.

Senator MENENDEZ.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, as a long-term supporter of yours, I think you're an extraordinary Secretary of State at an incredibly momentous time in history, where there are tectonic shifts taking place in different parts of the world. So I very much appreciate your service.

But that does not assuage a deep and nagging set of concerns I have on the course that we are on, both as it relates to where we send the sons and daughters of America to fight and sometimes die, and how we spend the national treasure of the United States. So I want to express those concerns that I have.

We went into Afghanistan for very clear reasons; reasons that I supported when I was in the House of Representatives. These were the perpetrators of September 11 that you and I vividly understand from the number of citizens that we lost, both as Americans and from our respective States. This is where Osama bin Laden was at the time. This is where al-Qaeda was. They were the perpetrators.

Bin Laden is dead. There are less than 100 al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan. I look at this \$10 billion a month in a counterinsurgency effort to prop up a government that I believe is corrupt, and the fact that we will have spent about \$38 billion by the end of the next fiscal year to prop up and to train an Afghan security force that is composed of about 290,000 individuals to fight 20,000 Taliban fighters—that is a 14 to 1 ratio—in a country where we have spent \$19 billion in development assistance, which has come under criticism by a staff report of this committee and by the Commission on Wartime Contracting.

I listen to President Karzai talk about us as an occupying force and I see a country sitting on a trillion dollars of mineral deposits, including lithium that could fuel its own prosperity, and take care of its own security. And when the first contract is let out, it's let out to the Chinese, who have not shed one drop of blood in behalf of Afghan freedom.

And I just say to myself, that while I appreciate where the President started last night, we do not seem to be transitioning out in a way that is in the national security interest of the United States. I agree with Senator Lugar. If we were to assess and redistribute our worldwide military and diplomatic assets without reference to where they are today, we'd be hard-pressed to say that we should spend \$120 billion in Afghanistan and have 100,000 troops.

Then I turn to Pakistan. And I just got an answer today from Ambassador Grossman to a letter several colleagues and I had sent you expressing concern, especially after bin Laden's capture and killing in Pakistan. And the letter says we see no evidence to indicate that anyone at the highest levels of the Government of Pakistan knew that bin Laden was living in Pakistan.

Now, that may be true, but I don't think there's an American who believes that. And I look at it in the context of assistance: Pakistan is now the third-largest recipient of U.S. security assistance, \$2.7 billion in 2010 alone. That's a 140-percent increase since 2007. Someone had to know bin Laden was there or at least a high-value target, and I am also concerned with reports of Pakistan receiving intelligence that we reportedly gave them in mid-May about insurgent bomb factories in the tribal regions that was leaked and the facilities were abandoned before military strikes could take place.

I wonder when I see the Pakistani Intelligence Service arresting Pakistanis who provided information that led to our finding bin Laden. And I say, wow, \$2.7 billion of U.S. taxpayer moneys.

Do we not see the need to alter the civil development assistance and our security assistance, in a way that can have me say to the fiduciary responsibility I have to the taxpayers of my State and this country that we are going to have a much better result?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, I read the speech you gave recently, I think it was on the floor, and you have echoed some of the main concerns today. I can only tell you that those concerns are ones that we take very seriously.

With respect specifically to bin Laden, we have looked very hard and we have scrubbed all of the intelligence that we have. Certainly, in a classified session we can go into greater detail. But the conclusion Ambassador Grossman gave you in the letter is the one we have reached. We did not start out there. We were not sure what we would find. But we do believe that at the highest levels.

However, I have said and I know other members of the administration have said we do not in any way rule out or absolve those who are at lower levels, who may very well have been enablers and protectors.

Now, the fair question is, well, were they protecting their higher ups? Could be. Was it one of these kind of a wink and a nod? Maybe so. But in looking at every scrap of information we have, we think that the highest levels of the government were genuinely surprised. If they had reason to believe he was there, they believed that he was certainly in the tribal areas, protected by the Taliban or by the Haqqani Network, by somebody. But they did not know and we have no reason to believe that they are running some massive deception on us to that point.

But your larger concerns, Senator, are ones that are totally legitimate. All I can tell you is that, despite the difficulties that we face in our relationship with Pakistan, it is our conclusion that we have to continue to try to pull and push to get it more right than wrong. So for example, when it comes to our military aid, which you pointed out is quite significant, we are not prepared to continue providing that at the pace we were providing it unless and until we see certain steps taken.

So we're trying to play this orchestra the best we can, where we look in one direction and say to those who we think are largely responsible for the difficulties we know that exist within Pakistan, you can't continue doing that, but on the other hand we have a democratically elected government which has made some courageous decisions despite the challenges. They've made some courageous economic decisions. They have made some courageous civil decisions in terms of pushing the military to go after the Taliban. And in my very emotional meeting with President Zardari, he basically said: "Look, al-Qaeda was in league with the people who killed my wife; I would never have turned a blind eye if I had known anything."

Now, is it a strong democratic government? No. But it is a step in the right direction. Again, I go back to historical precedent. We've been there before. We have supported governments and supported countries that just drove us crazy over a long period of time because they just didn't quite grasp what we thought was necessary for democratic institution-building and rule of law. Some of them have worked out well over time, but it took a lot of patience.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, and I look forward to following up with you on Afghanistan and how we're spending our money.

Secretary CLINTON. I would like to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Clinton, thank you so much for coming today. I think everyone here is expressing frustrations. When I first came here and looked at all this, I was struck by what a Rubik's Cube this is, and perhaps a Rubik's Cube that you can't ever totally resolve.

It's frustrating when you talk with the American people. They ask me, well, explain our strategy, explain our objectives. And it's very, very difficult to do. For one reason, it's been changing. We are becoming more realistic. I notice what's crept into our dialogue now has been that it'll never be perfect, and thank goodness we've finally recognized that. That clearly is a fact of life.

The frustrations with the two governments in both countries is just overwhelming. We started in Afghanistan with motives, as everyone said, that were great. And we always hear people talk about winning in Afghanistan. Well, we won a long time ago. Our objective there was to beat al-Qaeda. We did it. Reference has been made that there's less than 100 of them left in the country. So we're left fighting the Taliban, who will fight us for centuries if we are so inclined. I mean, they fight whoever is there.

So we've got to find—we've got to find a way to articulate what the objective is and then move on.

My question that I'd like you to focus on—and please don't take this as being argumentative or anything in that regard. This is very, very pragmatic. When we leave Afghanistan—and we will at some point in time—we're going to be left with the Karzai government, I suppose, and a military and security forces that should hold all this together. One of the problems I have is, from a purely, purely pragmatic standpoint, the just—just the salaries for those security people far exceeds the gross national product of the country, and as I understand it by multiples.

How is this going to work? Because clearly there's got to be security forces. There's no possible way that Karzai can hold on, or whoever it is that's his successor. There's no way that you can keep the fragmented country like it is together without very substantial payments to security forces. I just don't see how that's possible.

I mean, you hear the talk about their natural resources and what have you. Right now they seem to be relying on the poppy for their income. From a purely pragmatic basis, what's your vision of how they're going to keep enough security forces paid and on the ground to hold this whole thing together?

Secretary CLINTON. I think it's a very fair question, Senator, and I'd answer it with the following points. First of all, you're right that they are going to have to have a security force to protect the country, and that's what we've been trying to train up. It's not only the United States. We have a number of partners who have been contributing to the training and the paying of these security forces. So the formal Afghan military and Afghan police forces will be a continuing source of assistance provided by a number of countries, and it will be something that is a lot cheaper than what we're doing

now and is going to be essentially continuing to try to maintain a security presence there.

But there is a trust fund for paying the security forces that countries like Japan that don't have any military on the ground have contributed to. So that's one of the issues we're going to be negotiating as we go forward.

Second, a lot of the security is going to be provided by local militias, local police. General Petraeus has invested a lot of effort in helping to create what are essentially village patrols, so that people will be trained and armed to protect themselves, not connected to the national military or police force. We think that's a very good line of defense and that doesn't really cost us anything once the initial investment is made because people themselves will pick that up.

Third, we do think that there is an opportunity for Afghanistan to fund some of its own security needs—the reference to the mineral wealth and some other sources. So we are discussing that right now with the Afghan Government. At the present time, President Karzai has said he will not stay in office, which we think is the appropriate decision, that he will leave when his term is up. So there will be a great effort made to ensure that there's a free and fair election and, assuming there can be such an election, a lot of this responsibility will fall to whoever succeeds him.

So we will continue to support Afghanistan and its security, but we're going to be doing it on a conditions-based analysis.

Senator RISCH. I think that's probably the best answer there is to that, and I really appreciate that. But I would really urge someone to sit down with a pad and a pencil and come up with some specific numbers, because the frustration here is obvious. We're not going to continue to pour the money in there for that.

The numbers I've seen, the estimates I've seen, are just staggering. So I'd like to see somebody do that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Risch.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Clinton, I think that there is total agreement on this committee how proud we are that you represent our Nation globally. You give great credibility to the position of Secretary of State and the leadership. And we thank you for your service.

I also want to applaud your efforts, working with Secretary Obama and Secretary Gates, of understanding the importance of national security being more than just our military, but also including our civilian and diplomacy. I couldn't agree with you more that these are three tools that are in our toolbox that need to be deployed in a coordinated way.

But let me just get to the resources for one moment. The amount of resources that we are currently expending on the military aspects of Afghanistan is really draining our capacity as a nation in so many different areas. As has been pointed out by several members of this committee, that if we were using an allocation

today as to our greatest risk I don't think we would be spending as much as we are in Afghanistan.

You make a very good point about 1 year of our civilian efforts in Afghanistan is equal to 10 days of our military. What a lot of us would like to do is free up more of that military funds at a faster pace than the President announced last night, to give you additional tools to be able to use our civilian side to advance our objectives. So I think that's one of the concerns that we have as to resources.

There's been discussion among many of us on both sides of the aisle that, yes, we understand the deficit, we understand we're going to have to make tough choices on the deficits, but we also have to find a source of funds to move forward in areas that are important. And if we can save money on the military side, at least part of that could be invested in the civilian side of our national security equation, which we think could be used very effectively.

Which really brings me to the question of accountability. You've addressed that several times in response to questions and also in your statements. But I want to get to Pakistan for one moment, because the chairman mentioned our 12 percent popularity among the Pakistan people. I don't want to overestimate the importance of being popular in the countries that we operate, but I don't think we should underestimate that.

If we're trying to advance values that are consistent with America, that are universal, and there's such a low opinion of the United States, it makes it difficult for our values to have the ability to be effective in that country. So I think we need to be concerned about it.

Also in Pakistan, we have the unusual issue that we're supplying a lot of money to a country where there is clear evidence that their intelligence agency, ISI, is assisting and funding a terrorist group, LET, and that's inconsistent with our laws.

So I guess my question to you is, as we share your vision of a more robust U.S. involvement globally on the civilian side to deal with our national security interests, we have to have accountability, even with countries that we have strategic interests, because if we don't I think it really affects our credibility as a nation. So how do we reconcile that?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, that is, Senator Cardin, a very difficult question to answer. From time to time, we do a lot of business around the world with governments that don't meet our values, don't share our interests, but with whom we believe we have strategic security concerns. It is not easy to explain to people and it is something that we're constantly evaluating. There's nothing new about it in this administration. It goes back to the founding of our country.

But I guess I would say that we do try to marry accountability with our objectives, and we do it in a way that tries to get the attention of the leaders whom we are working with and trying to influence. There's always the tough question, how far do you go? I think in retrospect many people who know a lot about Pakistan would say the Pressler amendment went too far. Now, at the time it seemed absolutely clear that we needed to come down with a big

hammer of accountability because of the behavior that we disapproved of.

So trying to modulate this, to influence and manage expectations and actions, is an ongoing part of the diplomatic process. I guess I would just conclude by saying specifically when it comes to Pakistan there is a ledger and on one side of the ledger are a lot of actions that we really disapprove of and find inimicable to our values and even our interests. Then on the other side of the ledger there are actions that are very much in line with what we're seeking and want. So we're constantly balancing and weighing that.

We've made the assessment in this administration that, despite the challenges, we have to continue to engage, we have to continue to work with, and we have to continue to try to influence Pakistani behavior.

Senator CARDIN. I'll use my last 30 seconds to suggest that I think all of us want to engage Pakistan. We're not asking to isolate America from Pakistan. But I do think that our policies have not been as effective as they need to be in developing the type of partnership in that country that will advance our values, and that the popularity issue speaks to whether we have effectively used our civilian efforts in a way that will advance more longstanding gains for the United States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Madam Secretary.

Secretary CLINTON. Good morning.

Senator RUBIO. I understand and know and expect that our military folks will be supportive of this decision and implement it. But could you share with us, is it possible to share with us, what was General Petraeus' recommendation with regards to the timetable and the numbers?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, I'm not going to be able to do that, but I can tell you that the decision that the President made was supported by the national security team. And I think it would be totally understandable that a military commander would want as many troops, for as long as he could get them. But any military commander with the level of expertise and experience that General Petraeus has also knows that what he wants is just part of the overall decision matrix, and that there are other factors at work.

So at the end of the day, I think the President made the right decision. You've heard from colleagues here. Those voices were heard within the national security apparatus: Out now, out by the end of the year, out by the beginning of the year. Then there were those who said let's wait until the end of the next year. What the President decided was to get through the next fighting season, in effect, which we think should be sufficient.

Senator RUBIO. That leads me to my next question. What was the logic behind the September 2012 date for the full surge pull-back?

Secretary CLINTON. I think the logic, as the President explained last night, is that when he announced the surge he said he would start withdrawing it in July 2011 and that he would try to recover

the surge within a period of time that reflected the amount of time it took to put the surge in. It took about 18 months to put the surge in. It'll take about 18 months to get the surge out. But that giving the commanders the opportunity to stage the withdrawal in the midst of another fighting season I think is what persuaded the President that that was the right place for him to be, despite, frankly, having lots of competing opinions coming at him from all sides.

I would also just add, Senator, because I do think it's important to note, that when the President became President there were waiting on his desk requests for additional troops. At the time President Obama was inaugurated, there were, give or take, about 30,000-plus American troops and there was no doubt that our attention had shifted to Iraq in the preceding years, and that in Iraq there had been a negotiated agreement with the Iraqi Government by our government, the Bush administration, as to when our troops would come out.

So the President looked at that and accelerated it to some extent, but basically the framework was there.

With Afghanistan, there was nothing. There was an open-ended commitment. There were evidence of our losing ground to the Taliban. So he not only put in the surge; he put in an additional 38,000 troops. So I think when all is said and done we will still have more than twice as many troops as when he took office in January 2009.

Senator RUBIO. You discussed an open and frank discussion process that took place in arriving at this decision. On one hand, clearly we can't be there forever, and in fact there has to be a strategy to begin to transition over to the Afghan people and Afghan control increasingly so, and that's an ongoing process that I think is always being weighed.

On the other hand, this is a region that I've heard best described as a region where folks like to hedge their bets. I think that's true within Afghanistan, with both tribal leaders, local leaders, government leaders, who sometimes question how committed the United States is, and so perhaps they hedge their bets. And it's even more true, I think, with Pakistan. You alluded to that earlier in some of your statements, where you described that at least some of our difficulties in getting Pakistan to commit to help us on some things can be explained by their stated doubt about our commitment.

How did you weigh that? How was that weighed in the decision-making process? In essence, how did we arrive at a strategy to begin to transition without creating a situation where people are afraid to work with us because they think the Taliban's going to come back, or Pakistan decides they're not going to work with us because they need to hedge their bets and keep some of these people happy? How was that discussed? How was that handled?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, you're absolutely right, Senator. That was a source of a lot of discussion, because clearly our goal here is to further our objective of having an Afghanistan that can defend itself and provide sufficient security to fend off all of the regional and other players that wish to influence it.

It was our assessment that we are balancing two competing concerns. On the one hand, Afghanistan has to take its responsibility

seriously and it has to be prepared to really instill in its own people the obligation of self-defense and security. So the longer they felt that they didn't have to accept that responsibility, the longer the timeline would be pushed out. So the Lisbon decision of 2014 was the first signal, agreed to by the Afghans, and the President's assessment that we would have to begin to show our resolve to withdraw in order to get them to really face up to their own responsibilities is the second part of that.

At the same time, we believe that there will be some continuing presence of NATO in Afghanistan following 2014, which is in the process of being negotiated through the strategic partnership declaration, so that there will be an American presence to continue CT operations, to support the Afghans when needed, to send a signal to the region that there's not a free shot available here.

So we think we have tried to balance all these competing concerns. But historically this is a region where hedging is an art form, and what we're trying to do is to say through our diplomatic efforts there's going to be a resolution here where all the players are going to be watching each other, where there's going to be—I'll just be very, very clear about this. Pakistan knows that if Afghanistan gets too worried by what it is or isn't doing, it will turn to India, and we know that India supported the Northern Alliance in previous times.

So there are lots of moving parts here to try to put together, so that everybody is checkmated from hedging that could upset the Afghan security profile that we're trying to leave them with.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, thank you for your testimony and your extraordinary work, not only on these difficult issues, but on so many others. Let me commend you as well on the work that you have done with me and with others on focusing the Pakistani leadership, their government, on a critically important issue that involves the strategies to prevent the killing of our troops by way of IEDs that come from and have their origin in the ammonium nitrate which is flooding into Afghanistan from Pakistan. So I appreciate your work on that and your reporting back when you raised the issue with the Pakistani leadership.

I have just one basic question. It's a focused question on the certification that you must provide pursuant to the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act. We know it by the common name "Kerry-Lugar-Berman." Let me just set forth the predicate for the answer. I'm just reading in pertinent part with regard to the certification, section 203: "The certification required by this subsection is a certification by the Secretary of State, under the direction of the President, to the appropriate congressional committees that"—and then, in pertinent part: That Pakistan has "demonstrated a sustained commitment to, and is making significant progress"—"significant efforts," I should say—"toward combating terrorist groups." That's where that section ends.

Then the second part: "In defining what that progress is, the following can be taken into consideration: No. 1, ceasing support, including any element within the Pakistani military or its

intelligence agency, to extremists or terrorist groups.” That’s the pertinent part of No. 1.

No. 2: “Preventing al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and associated terrorist groups, such as LET and others, from operating in the territory of Pakistan.”

So that’s the basis of the certification. I just ask you a fundamental question, even though I know the next certification isn’t due yet and you have made one I guess as of the end of 2010. But is it your current assessment that Pakistan, the government of Pakistan, has met these criteria outlined in section 203 for continued U.S. assistance?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, you’re right, I provided Congress with a certification on security-related assistance to Pakistan in March, as required by the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill. And I will not be required to make another certification until later when we look back on 2011. I will follow the rules that the law sets forth and try again to balance and weigh what they’ve done and what they have failed to do.

We did say after bin Laden’s death that our close counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan did help us in tracking him down over many years. We also have seen some significant actions that have led to unprecedented additional pressure on al-Qaeda and the deaths of some top extremists. So we will be once again trying to balance this.

I don’t want to get ahead of myself, but I can assure you that I will do my very best to follow the rules set out in the laws passed by this body.

Senator CASEY. If you were—I guess what I’m trying to get to is, even though you don’t have a current statutory requirement, just to give people a sense of where we are in that assessment, because you’re hearing in this committee. You have heard a lot about this topic, about the question of accountability and how we justify support that the Pakistani Government benefits from.

So I would urge you in any way you can, in addition to the statutory certification, to be able to report back to the American people.

I only have another minute or so, but I wanted to ask you another question. It’s broader and not as focused, but just in terms of the question of governance in Afghanistan, which has been one of the areas of real focus that we’ve got to make continual assessments about, and in particular the Karzai government. I and others have been critical over a long period of time. There’s still not just the perception, but I think the irrefutable reality that there is corruption.

I wanted to get your sense of that challenge we have right now. How would you grade them or how would you rate them or how would you assess the Karzai government’s efforts to root out corruption, which is a problem throughout?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, I would give them a grade of incomplete, Senator. I think we have seen some progress, but nothing like what we would either expect to see or want to see from them. We have continued to keep the pressure on, and we of course have learned a lot over the last decade about how better to deliver the assistance we do, because it is fair to say that a lot of the corrup-

tion is tied to contracts that come from the United States, NATO partners, and others.

So we have been trying to get to what is a good enough standard, because we are dealing with a society that has a very old history of how to deal with people and how to get tribal loyalties and family and clan loyalties. So I think we have to recognize that we're in a very tough environment when it comes to corruption, as it is in many other parts of the world that we deal with.

We have been watching closely because of our own interests, but we give military and civilian aid to a lot of countries that hardly measure up to any high standard of enforcement against corruption. It is one of the biggest problems we face in the world right now, because it's a cancer and it undermines good governance and the rule of law and so much else.

So it's an incomplete. We see some things that we think are the right direction and then we see a lot that we're very unhappy with.

Senator CASEY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Clinton, welcome. I have only got 6 minutes, so I'm going to try to talk fast to make sure all our colleagues get their chance to also make some comments.

Let me begin by just saying I wouldn't want the record to show that I was in total agreement with your analogy comparing our situation in Korea, our long-term commitment to Korea, with what might take place in Afghanistan. Our situation in Korea is in one of the most vital areas commercially and in terms of large powers in the world. The Korean Peninsula—Northeast Asia—is the only place where the direct interests of the United States, China, Japan, and Russia intersect. Korea is kind of the bull's eye in the middle of that.

For all the questions that I have had about the engagements in this other part of the world, I think you and I both know how strongly I believe that this is a critical moment in East Asia in terms of the potential volatility of our relations there. In that regard I want to say again that I appreciate the comment that you made last July relating to the sovereignty issues in the South China Sea. As you know, this is a very live issue today.

I also would like to just point out, I keep hearing this analogy and I take the point to a certain extent with the situation in 1989, where we could have done more in Afghanistan and in that region and we didn't. But, we also should be mindful that the geopolitical circumstances today are quite different than they were in 1989, and the fact that we could have done more in 1989, does not in and of itself justify the methods that are being used today.

I have to express my agreement with Senator Lugar's comment that if we were doing a military model right now, I don't think any of us would be sitting up here saying, "Oh, it would be 100,000 troops and spending \$120 billion a year in Afghanistan." It's almost like Groundhog Day. I keep coming back to how we began this. If you really look at who defeated the Taliban in 2001, the Afghans defeated the Taliban with a handful of very competent Americans, special operators, and forward air controllers. But the Afghans beat them.

If we look at the model that we're going to be moving forward with in places like Somalia and Yemen, the model is a much, much different model. So I think that the questions that people are asking about on where this is going to go—what Senator Corker calls nation-building and—I would tend to agree with him, these are valid questions.

With respect to Pakistan, the word we haven't heard very much today is "China." The day that Chairman Kerry left Pakistan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan went to China and said: "China is our No. 1 friend." I picked up the Washington Post today; there's an article in there again where Pakistan clearly is courting China.

This is one area where I think China seriously could do more to legitimize the status that it now has in consonance with the economic and military power that has grown, and in a way that could be positive. They're going to be a great beneficiary if this region does regain the stability and they clearly need to be more overt. I would hope they would be more overt in trying to bring about a solution.

Now, I want to say two things really quickly here and then I'm afraid if I ask you a question I'm going to run out of time. But the first is, in your statement you mention this new strategic partnership declaration. I met with the Afghani Ambassador yesterday. He mentioned this. He said that they are seeing this as an executive agreement and that they, the Afghans, believe there will be some sort of a document within the next couple of months.

You and I had many conversations with respect to the strategic framework agreement that the previous administration worked up with Iraq, where the Congress didn't have a chance to really fully vet it. I hope we will get a chance to examine this and give our input, because clearly the question, in terms of what our long-term relationship in Afghanistan should look like, is something we need to be talking about before this agreement goes into place.

Then the final thing that I would say is, again with your comment on page four of your testimony regarding this core group that Special Representative Grossman is putting into place in hopes of building political support, you have India, Russia, and Iran. I hope you can get China.

With that, I have 9 seconds left and I yield back the balance of my time to Senator Shaheen.

Secretary CLINTON. In 5 seconds, Senator Webb, we are working very hard to get China to play a more productive role with Pakistan. We agree with that. Some day I'd love to talk to you about analogies, whether or not we agree with them, but to just kind of go through them. So I appreciate what you said.

Senator WEBB. Any time. Thank you very much.

Senator SHAHEEN. Secretary Clinton, thank you for being here. I join my colleagues in all of our appreciation for the job that you're doing as Secretary of State.

A little earlier, in responding to Senator Rubio and the decision about what happens after 2014, you talked about the continuing presence of NATO. Shortly after the President's speech last night, France announced that it too plans to begin drawing down troops. Obviously, several weeks ago Secretary Gates talked about the challenges with our NATO allies.

So, given that situation, do you believe that our allies in NATO will continue to step up and to help us in Afghanistan through 2014, and what assurances do we have that that will happen?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, that was the agreement at Lisbon and I think a number of our NATO ISAF allies will be doing drawdowns proportionate to the troops that they have. There is a planning process within NATO as to how to manage that, because some are in areas where we have no U.S. presence.

But there certainly has been an agreement that following 2014 there will be some kind of continuing presence, and I think that the President mentioned last night that the United States will host the NATO heads of state next year in Chicago and it will be the time where we will take stock of where we are and the way forward.

Senator SHAHEEN. Given the operations in Libya and the pressure that that's putting on both our capacity and the capability of NATO, is there concern that that will in the interim have an effect that will change our calculations for what's happening on the ground in Afghanistan?

Secretary CLINTON. I don't think so, Senator. I think that certainly from NATO's perspective, they joined with us in the Afghan mission and they were very anxious to have us join with them in the Libyan mission. So I think that there's not necessarily a connection, direct line between the two, but the larger questions that Secretary Gates has been raising, which are not Afghan-related or Libya-related specifically, about the commitment of NATO are ones that are going to have to be addressed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Looking at the potential for a negotiated solution in Afghanistan, and I certainly understand and agree with you that—and we've heard from everybody who's testified before this committee that this is not a military solution; it's got to be a political and negotiated solution.

But Ambassador Neumann testified before this committee that he was skeptical of power-sharing agreements. He said they only tend to last as long as it takes for one side to be strong enough to break it. I'm paraphrasing his comments there. Do you share this assessment and do you think that there really is the possibility for any kind of an agreement with the Taliban?

Secretary CLINTON. I think there is, but I think that we're a long way from knowing what the realistic elements of such an agreement would be. I think that Ambassador Neumann expresses a very common view that power-sharing agreements are often just a way station between fighting and a resumption of fighting if parties cannot maneuver out their opposition.

I think it's too soon to say how this could play out in Afghanistan. But I can only stress that we are committed to pursuing it, because it is the only path forward. There is no other path forward. Nobody is strong enough to really assert control. They can go back to a civil war. They can go back to all kinds of fighting between them. But I think a resolution is in the interests of the parties as well. We just have to work to determine what the elements would be.

Senator SHAHEEN. To go back to your discussion of the civilian surge, obviously we're talking about the need to draw down the

military surge now. How do you look at the reduction of that civilian surge that's happened?

Several weeks ago, I'm sure you're aware this committee issued a report that talked about the false economy that's being created in Afghanistan by the amount of money that is available and what that's doing to the Afghan economy. So looking at that and looking at the civilian efforts and the economic efforts that we've put in there, how do you see that being drawn down, or do you, as we get closer to 2014?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, we do. I think that the recommendations that the committee made are ones that we are very, very seriously looking at. The committee recommended that the administration and Congress should consider working together on multiyear civilian assistance. Well, there's a big problem with that. We don't get multiyears of civilian assistance. We get multiyear military commitments, and we have no disagreement that it would be great if we could, and Kerry-Lugar-Berman was the first multiyear effort to commit to Pakistan.

But we certainly are going to be looking at the programs we're running that are in conflict zones. One of the other points that the committee made was why 80 percent of the funding is spent in COIN regions. It's because the military was very insistent that there needed to be a marrying up of civilian efforts. The example I gave in my testimony about the Wardak region is a very good example.

Then finally, we need to focus on sustainability of our programs so that the Afghans can continue them. We're looking at that as well.

So we don't agree with all the recommendations or all the conclusions of the committee report. But we wish we could get multiyear programs that could be implemented and we had the flexibility and the agility. I mean, the committee, for example, talks about commander's response funds. Well, we don't have those. I can't send a diplomat or a development expert out with \$50 or \$100,000 in his back pocket. But young captains and majors can do that.

We've learned a lot from this and we will do our very best to try to implement those lessons. I certainly, working with our team and Raj Shah over at AID, have been trying to wrestle to the ground how we get more accountability and more measurable outcomes from our assistance. So we're going to be changing in light of the military changes, but also in light of the lessons we've learned.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Madam Secretary, I just wanted to thank you for your testimony here today. It's been engaging and compelling and broad-ranging and very constructive, and I'm grateful to Chairman Kerry for convening this whole series of hearings on our policy toward Afghanistan. They've provided some important insights, very helpful to me, and I know to members of the committee.

After attending nearly all of the hearings and traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan for the first time in my life back in February, continuing to attend deployment ceremonies for Delaware National Guard units and a dignified transfer ceremony at Dover Air Force Base, I've spent a lot of time wrestling with what is the best path forward, as have all the members, I know, of this com-

mittee, and concluded, with some real hesitation and regret, ultimately that we need to make a change in strategy in Afghanistan.

While I welcome the President's decision to redeploy all of the surge troops by next summer, my view is that we shouldn't really focus on the number of the troops as much as on the strategy driving them. I think for a variety of reasons we have heard discussed at great detail here today, a counterinsurgency strategy is just not sustainable and is not likely, no matter how many years we pursue it, to succeed in developing a truly secure and stable Afghanistan.

So for a number of reasons, I've advocated for a change to a counterterrorism strategy. One of the principal reasons is in order to have the resources, the diplomatic and the military and the development resources, the focus, the capacity for lots of other important threats, to deal with Yemen and Somalia, with an emerging nuclear Iran, and principally with Pakistan.

I do think that we see al-Qaeda beginning to emerge in Yemen in a way that's really challenging for us. I am really concerned about the points that have been raised by other members here about the very destabilizing impact on Pakistan of our role in Afghanistan and the lack of the resources to really make the engagement with Pakistan successful.

So let me, if I could, move to three relatively brief questions around this. First, I wonder about what additional steps we can and should take to engage India more effectively in stabilizing what I think you very compellingly describe as a really difficult, complex relationship with Pakistan. I'd be interested in hearing from you what you're doing in the Department and what you are doing to successfully engage India.

Second, in the core group passage that Senator Webb referred to I was struck to hear you make reference to Iran as being one of the regional parties that's being engaged successfully in the political resolution. Obviously, they did work with us in overthrowing the Taliban. They have a real shared interest with us in ending the narcotics trafficking out of Afghanistan. But their emerging very real threat as a nuclear power strikes me as one of the greatest challenges that all of us face, not just for the region, but for the world and for our critical ally Israel.

So I'd be interested in how you assess the degree to which we actually could have aligned interests with Iran in developing some political resolution in Afghanistan.

Then last, any input you'd like to offer about how we could refocus our efforts to bring more vitality and energy to the engagement with Pakistan, given the very troubling recent developments there?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, those are all very excellent and quite complex questions. Let me start by saying, I think this debate between COIN and counterterrorism is to some extent unfortunate, because there is no real contradiction between the two inasmuch as there is a phasing from one to the other. I think that the President decided and I agreed back in 2009 that if we didn't have a significant enough presence we would have one-off CT victories, but we would not change the momentum of the Taliban and we would be facing a situation that would have been very difficult for us to control.

I think what the President has decided now, which I also agree, is that we have made substantial progress in reversing Taliban momentum and now we have to see how sustainable it is by relying on the Afghans themselves and by not only withdrawing our troops, but to begin to somewhat reshape their mission.

So I don't think it's an either-or. I think it's a both-and, which is why I made the point that we've been running CT operations consistently. It's not like we have just had big brigades of marines and soldiers. We've also had a very aggressive effort against Taliban and al-Qaeda and their allies.

With respect to India, we are working very hard on our strategic partnership with India. You know, I think it's fair to say that India looks at Pakistan and believes that their continuing support for elements of insurgency against India in Kashmir and across the border into India proper makes it very difficult for them to know what path to choose. But I've been encouraged by the cricket diplomacy between Prime Minister Singh and Prime Minister Galani. I've been encouraged by the resumption of talks that had broken off in 2008. And we have certainly urged both sides to go as far as they could to build more confidence and to try to be able to develop an atmosphere of greater cooperation.

I don't want to be misunderstood about Iran. I'm not saying that Iran is a partner in this process or is playing a constructive role. I'm merely saying that Iran is a player. The core group is strictly the core: Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States. But then there is a concentric circle and it goes out and gets wider and wider, and in that have to be China, have to be Iran, have to be Central Asia, et cetera.

One of the insights that Holbrooke brought to this was you had to have a lot of buy-in from a large group of nations and institutions in order to pull every lever possible. So for example, the last so-called SRAM group was hosted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. That never would have happened 2½ years ago. Why? Because all of a sudden they think they have a stake in trying to help push toward some kind of political resolution.

Finally, with respect to Pakistan, we're going to focus and refocus and refocus again, because it's an important relationship and it's one that requires a lot of effort and there's no easy course forward, but there's many different approaches that we are trying within the context of trying to enlist them in a resolution in Afghanistan.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much for those answers.

Senator DURBIN. Madam Secretary, thank you for being here. It's a pleasure to see you and I thank you for your service.

There was a week we shared in our public lives which we will never forget. It began with the tragedy of 9/11. It ended 3 days later when we both joined in voting for the resolution which authorized the President of the United States to find those responsible and those who supported them and bring them to justice.

I voted for that enthusiastically, as you did. I don't vote for many war resolutions, but that was the right one. If someone would have said to me on September 14, 2001, we're still going to be the 10 years from now, in the longest war in American history, we will have lost 1,600 American lives and possibly more, not to mention

the casualties and injuries, we would be spending \$120 billion a year, roughly four times as much in military spending in Afghanistan as their gross national product, their annual gross national product, and the end would still be years away, I would have found it hard to believe.

We were going after Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda and the people who made his evil opportunity possible. Now we are doing something else.

I would have to join in what was said earlier by Senator Menendez. I have a real skepticism about our mission in Afghanistan at this moment. I do not have great confidence in the leadership in Afghanistan, either in its competence or honesty. I worry about the money that we are shoveling into this country in sums that are unimaginable in this poor, underdeveloped country.

I've gotten reports and seen the contractors we are paying to go there to do things, and even this committee says the accountability is very limited in what we are trying to achieve. I've seen it first-hand. You talked about captains and majors with thousands of dollars to spend. They took me to Khost to show me a city hall and community building they had built with those funds. It was empty. The Afghans weren't looking for that, but we built it anyway.

So I come to this with some skepticism, and I bring another element to it as well. If we cannot win this from a military basis—Senator Kerry said no military solution. You said in your Asia Society speech we will never kill enough insurgents to win this war—we still have to acknowledge that 100,000 brave Americans are risking their lives as we sit here and tell them: You can't win this, but perform your mission.

I go back to the point raised by Senator Shaheen. I want to ask a few more questions about it. What is the likelihood that we can use the standard you set out in your Asia Society speech to engage the Taliban in a meaningful discussion that will come up with a political solution?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, your comments took me back to that very difficult time that we did share together as Members of the Senate. I certainly agree with you that we committed to going after al-Qaeda, but we also in my view did not follow through the way we should have early on. That's not meant as criticism. It's just a statement of fact.

I think that President Obama, who you know very well faced an incredibly difficult choice—it was difficult politically, it was difficult substantively, it was difficult personally. But upon very careful reflection and review, he made the decisions that I thought were the right decisions, given what he had inherited. I think he is now on the right path toward resolving our involvement in Afghanistan in the best way possible out of a lot of very difficult choices.

So I would answer the question in this way. I don't think it's a matter of winning or losing. I think it's a matter of how we measure the success we are seeking in Afghanistan. I do believe it is possible to construct a political and diplomatic resolution.

I will know more about that at the end of this year than I know now, because we were not in a position, frankly, to pursue that until recently. Why? Because the Taliban were not interested in talking to us because they thought they were going to make a big

comeback. I remember when President George W. Bush basically said to Mullah Omar and the Taliban: Look, turn over bin Laden and al-Qaeda and we're done; we're not going to come after you. And they would not do it, and they never have agreed to do it. And only now are we beginning to see the kind of outreach that evidences a willingness to discuss the future. I don't think we would have gotten there absent President Obama's very difficult, tough assessment that led to his decisions.

So good people and very smart people can disagree about the way forward and that's what this hearing has demonstrated. I have the highest regard for every member of this committee and I know that every single man and woman wants to do what's best for America, wants to do what's best for our troops, wants to do what's best for our future. And it is our very reasoned assessment, taking into account everything that we have all discussed today, that we now have a chance to bring this to a political and diplomatic end. But the President has started us on a path that will lead to the bringing home of our troops over the next years.

So it's a tough call, Senator, and there's no easy formula that any of us can follow at this point. I wish it were 6 years, 7 years, 8 years ago and we had made different choices then. But you know, we don't get that luxury. And it's deeply regrettable, but Presidents have to make the tough calls and this President has made it.

Senator DURBIN. I'll just conclude by saying thank you and urge you to use—and I know you will, because I know you—use all of your skills to pursue the diplomatic end so that we can bring our troops home more quickly than the President suggested last night. I'll do everything I can to support that.

Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Clinton, for being here, and thank you very much for your service to our country. I can't emphasize that enough and I think all of our colleagues here very much appreciate your service.

I don't want to repeat a lot of what was said, but I agree very much with what Senator Durbin said about where we are today. I really believe—and the President said this last night—if you look at the situation we're in and why we went in, the focus was on a government, as you have said in your testimony, that was sheltering terrorists. There were training camps, there were—they had organized this terrorist attack on us.

That's all gone, and bin Laden has been brought to justice. It just seems to me that we're at the point where we should be looking at what many of our NATO allies—I remember over and over again in the period when President Bush was there and organizing the NATO allies, they would say over and over: This needs to be Afghan-led in terms of security, this needs to be Afghan-led.

I don't know how we get to that point on the Afghans leading on security, unless you have some kind of deadline. Senator Levin I know, our Armed Services chairman, has said several times that a deadline focuses the mind. It obviously lets us know when we pass off and it lets them know.

Do you think we have a deadline right now in terms of when all of our combat forces will be out of Afghanistan and when they will really take the lead on security?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, I certainly do. I think that has been the agreed-upon path that was adopted at Lisbon. We have a final deadline of 2014. The Afghans accepted it. We made it very clear that that was it. And we have a glide path to 2014 that the President promised in his West Point speech, which he is now beginning to order the implementation of.

So I agree with you that we needed to set a deadline in order to make it clear to the Afghans that there would be a transition. I would also just underscore that 2½ years ago when the President began this assessment there was so little to the Afghan security forces. It just was not even credible. For whatever reason, what had been done before had not worked.

But I think it is absolutely fair to say that it is working. There is still a lot that has to be done in terms of building up and professionalizing. But Afghans in some areas now are in the lead. They've had the lead in Kabul for a year. I remember talking to General Petraeus after he took command in Afghanistan. He said: "You know, Kabul is right now a lot more peaceful than Baghdad was when we started."

So I know how frustrating it is because we have been there for 10 years and there are lots of factors that we can't really hold accountable or manage the way we would like. But I also think it's only fair to look at what has been accomplished, and it has been accomplished in part against the backdrop of the deadline.

So yes, we do have a deadline and we are acting upon it.

Senator UDALL. And your sense is our deadline is at the end of 2014, that all of the combat forces for the United States will be out of Afghanistan?

Secretary CLINTON. That was the agreement and that was the agreement with NATO ISAF and the agreement with the Afghans.

Senator UDALL. Now, you know, we use the term a lot and you hear this about conditions on the ground. The thing that is dependent here, if you use the term, you say, well, it's going to depend on conditions on the ground, then we're going to talk about how prepared their forces are to step up to the plate. From all the reports I have heard—and you just mentioned this a minute ago—they have come along, but they may not be ready.

I know that there was a U.N. official, a high U.N. official, and he was a controversial one, and he left and he gave a talk on 60 Minutes, an interview, and his opinion was it would take 100 years to get the police, the Afghan police and army, to the point where we would feel they were acceptable. So I just hope that we're not going down a road where we're saying, well, we do have a deadline, but it's going to be based on conditions on the ground and we're going to change, we're going to change direction based on the fact that the Afghan army and police in our judgment aren't able to take this over.

As Senator Durbin said, "I hope that we can quicken this. I hope that we can move more quickly to an accelerated transition to Afghan security. And if you're able to do that, I'm going to be here to support you."

I once again thank you for your service. And thank you, Chairman Kerry, for holding these hearings and allowing all of us to participate. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Udall.

Madam Secretary, thank you. I know that we've gone over a little bit on the time. I know your staff has been sitting there chafing and trying to get you down there. I apologize for that.

But I also want to say to you I think it has been really very constructive and very healthy to have this exchange and for our colleagues to put their thoughts on the table, as you remember well, and also to hear your answers. I want to thank you for being as thorough and as generous in your answers as you have been. I think it's been really constructive.

I would like to personally thank you for your many courtesies. Also, I echo my colleagues in saying what a terrific job you are doing, and we're grateful to you for your seemingly endless reserve of energy. So thank you very, very much. I look forward to following up on our other conversation.

Secretary CLINTON. Good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY

Question #1. In your testimony you said "When it comes to our military aid [to Pakistan], we are not prepared to continue providing that at the pace we were providing it unless and until we see some steps taken."

- How will withholding certain forms of military aid for Pakistan affect our counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts in Pakistan and in Afghanistan?

Answer. Pakistan remains a key ally in our common struggle against terrorism and continues to proactively undertake counterterrorism efforts. We believe that establishing a long-term partnership with Pakistan is the best way to support both of our country's national security interests.

We are working intensively with the Government of Pakistan to establish a shared set of expectations that will permit us to strengthen cooperation to successfully achieve our shared security objectives. Our goal is to ensure that Pakistan understands the importance of demonstrating—to the administration and to Congress—that it is a vital and active partner in counterterrorism and is helping us end the war in Afghanistan by pressing the Taliban into reconciliation. At the same time, the Government of Pakistan has requested a significant reduction in the U.S. military presence in Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan has significantly limited the number of visas it provides for U.S. military and contractor personnel involved in implementing our assistance programs. Both of these actions have inhibited implementation of security assistance programs in Pakistan at this time, creating a de facto pause in our deliveries to Pakistan's military.

The Department is continually reviewing its security assistance programs to ensure that these programs are meeting our counterinsurgency and counterterrorism goals and that there are minimal disruptions to these objectives. We remain committed to helping Pakistan build its counterterrorism capabilities in order to fight extremists who carried out 1,400 terrorist attacks and caused more than 6,500 casualties in Pakistan in 2010 alone.

Question #2. The United States is seeking to help the Government of Pakistan improve its capacity to deliver health services to its people and to improve outcomes in that country, including reductions in infant and child mortality. Vaccines are among the most cost-effective tools in the health arsenal. Pakistan is also among only four countries in the world in which wild polio continues to circulate. Helping Pakistan eliminate polio could be a very tangible legacy of Kerry-Lugar-Berman assistance, as part of integrated efforts to enhance health services and improve outcomes.

- (a) What are the funding levels for U.S. support for immunization programs in Pakistan for FY 2009–10 and the projected funding levels for FY 2011–12?

Answer. Unfortunately, despite the many campaigns over the years, polio still exists in Pakistan, and the number of cases actually increased in the last year. We recognize the benefit that polio eradication would have for the Pakistani people and the world. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also support polio eradication efforts in Pakistan. As you may know, the United States has been the largest single donor to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, providing over \$2 billion in support since 1985, including \$132 million in each of the last 2 years.

FUNDING LEVELS

Budget Overview (\$millions)	FY09	FY10	FY11 (est.)	FY12 (est.)
Polio eradication	2	8	2	2
All Other Immunization (within separate health programming)	2	26.5	20	20

Please note that in attempting to balance the importance of polio eradication efforts and the absorptive capacity of Pakistan, we believe a total of \$10 million for FY 2010 and FY 2011 to be the most effective allocation of funds.

- (b) Some have suggested that unobligated funds that were previously appropriated might be available for expanding the U.S. investment in immunization efforts. What are the current levels of unobligated economic assistance funds for Pakistan for FY 2009–10 and to what degree have those funds been committed in agreements with the Pakistani Government although not yet obligated?

Answer. There are no unprogrammed FY 2009 or FY 2010 funds for Pakistan which are available for expanding health activities.

- (c) What are the health opportunities that could be achieved through greater investments either in U.S. bilateral support for immunization or through the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) in Pakistan?

Answer. Greater investments in either U.S. bilateral support for immunization or through GAVI in Pakistan could further reduce and prevent infant mortality and morbidity caused by common childhood diseases and could help with efforts to eradicate polio. For example, with the increased support for immunization in FY 2010, \$7.5 million was used to purchase 6.5 million doses of measles and 15 million doses of tetanus vaccines; \$7.5 million was used to purchase cold chain equipment (refrigerators, coolers, storage rooms); and an additional \$5 million will be used to purchase BCG (tuberculosis) and pentavalent vaccine—a five-in-one vaccine that protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenzae type b (often known as Hib) which causes some severe forms of pneumonia and meningitis. In FY 2009 and FY 2010, \$5.5 million in USAID funding supported 19 national and subnational polio campaigns, which reached over 32 million children under 5 years of age with 250 million doses of polio vaccine each year.

- (d) With India now making substantial progress in the fight against polio, how can KLB help Pakistan to make similar gains in eliminating this disease from within its borders? What are the most significant obstacles to such an achievement?

Answer. Polio in Pakistan is fueled by a small number of geographic areas (the majority of cases occurred in 15 chronically underperforming districts) and by migrant groups. Major constraints include poor supervision and management (poor performance during immunization campaigns, routine immunization, and in community awareness and surveillance) and lack of access (estimates indicate that more than 25 percent of children in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas are missed during the campaigns due to insecurity).

KLB funds are helping Pakistan to eradicate this disease. The United States plays a low visibility but highly important role in polio eradication in Pakistan. Our objective is to ensure that this is seen as a Pakistani-led and implemented program, which builds local ownership, provides safe passage for vaccinators, and avoids sparking antivaccination rumors often linked to the United States. Through the World Health Organization and UNICEF, the United States provides funding and technical support for the implementation of the Pakistan Emergency Action Plan and in collaboration with the World Bank and other partners, the funding of oral polio vaccine.

In particular, the United States has focused its resources on improved surveillance at the union council level, improved planning for immunization campaigns, improved monitoring and evaluation, and communication to increase community participation and demand for polio and other vaccinations. These areas will be important as we strive for nationwide population immunity to stop transmission and in the 3-year minimum period needed to verify the absence of disease in advance of certification.

We support immunization posts at 11 formal border crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan on both sides of the border. Further, the United States provides technical support through surveillance training, Center for Disease Control (CDC)-detailed personnel, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) participation on interagency committees, and USAID and CDC participation in technical advisory groups and program evaluations.

Question #3. A recent report from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee entitled “Avoiding Water Wars: Water Scarcity and Central Asia’s Growing Importance for Stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan” commended the Obama administration and specifically the State Department for its work to elevate water in terms of diplomacy and national security, specifically in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The report also made recommendations and observations for large dam projects, which hold vast potential for energy, irrigation and flood resistance, but also can displace people and exacerbate domestic and international tensions over water resources. The report found that “[w]hile the United States has appropriately begun to elevate its interest in supporting water through ‘signature’ projects in these regions, our efforts still lack strategic clarity, unity of purpose, and a long-term vision to support our national security interests.”

- Please provide specific examples of how the United States plans relating to water use, supply, or demand in Afghanistan and Pakistan applies the comprehensive and sustainable approach recommended in the committee report.
- In Pakistan, please describe (1) water-related projects that may or will be funded by the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) legislation, and (2) how the U.S. Government plans to respond to future flooding in Pakistan, which is expected by some experts.
- In Afghanistan, how has our agriculture strategy been tailored toward long-term, sustainable productivity able to withstand climate change, floods and potential water scarcity?

Answer. Despite significant economic and development problems stemming from water scarcity, Pakistan is deadlocked on how to deal with the complex challenges of its water sector. Competing demands for water—among countries, provinces, localities, and domestic cross-sector users—compound the stalemate. These concerns, along with growing public awareness of an impending water crisis, prompted Pakistan to request a Water Working Group under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue.

Over the past year, the Water Working Group has become a key venue for substantive discussion of Pakistan’s pressing water needs. We have encouraged Pakistan to adopt a water system that is based on sustainable, efficient use of water with pricing established on a cost recovery basis. Through our efforts, and in support of Pakistan’s goals, the Friends of Democratic and Pakistan (FODP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have commenced preparation of an integrated water sector report and plan for Pakistan. The plan, due to be completed in late 2011, will provide a detailed roadmap for reform of Pakistan’s water sector.

We also demonstrate support for Pakistan’s water sector through the Secretary’s Signature Water Program. Announced in July 2010 and valued at \$270 million, the program focuses on seven major projects designed to improve water systems across Pakistan: Gomal Zam Dam improvements and irrigation project; Satpara Dam improvements and irrigation project; Jacobabad and Peshawar Municipal Drinking Water Systems; a portion of the Municipal Services Delivery Program; the High Efficiency Irrigation Systems Program; and Water Storage Dams in Balochistan. Implementation of these projects will result in near-term, tangible improvements to Pakistan’s water infrastructure.

The Government of Pakistan has also proposed a number of hydroelectric projects for us to consider as candidates for assistance funding, notably the Diamer Basha Dam in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, and the Kurram Tangi project in North Waziristan. We are evaluating our support for these projects in terms of their contributions to sustainable energy and water sectors in Pakistan.

We stand ready to support the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people in the event of additional flooding in Pakistan this season.

In Afghanistan, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Guard Agribusiness Development Teams are

collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock to improve long-term sustainability and resilience to climate change through increased water-use efficiency. We are accomplishing this by improving on-farm water management, repairing irrigation infrastructure, and improving watershed management. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is evaluating potential sites for constructing small dams that will increase water storage for irrigation during dry seasons.

Question #4. I understand that the administration is considering involvement in high-profile dam projects in Pakistan, including the Diamer Bhasha project. With respect to the Diamer Bhasha project:

- Please discuss what specific improvements you envision would need to be made in surrounding areas to both irrigation and electricity transmission to best realize the potential benefits of the dam and to ensure that U.S. money was being spent to maximum positive impact, if the United States were to contribute funding to the project.
- Please provide any detailed funding plans you have developed or received for financing the Diamer Bhasha project.
- What steps are being taken to address resettlement issues resulting from Diamer Bhasha? Has contact been made with India to discuss resettlement options? When seeking to learn best practices from past mass resettlements due to dam construction, what past examples do you think will be most helpful?
- According to the World Bank, the Indus Waters Treaty gives India the right to “veto” major dam projects in the disputed territories, including, but not limited to, the Diamer Bhasha project. In contrast, according to the Asian Development Bank, the treaty only gives India the opportunity to raise concerns that relate to rights to the disputed territory. Please describe in detail the U.S. position on this issue, as well as any strategy for securing Indian approval or acquiescence if it proves necessary.
- Who prepared the feasibility study for the project? Please provide a copy of the study.

Answer. The Government of Pakistan has told us that construction of Diamer Basha dam, valued over \$12 billion, is one of its top development priorities. We are currently considering how the U.S. Government can support discrete, practical elements of the overall project that will have tangible results—and will attract additional funding from other donors. We believe that investing in projects that support the overall construction of Diamer Basha would attract recognition for U.S. assistance in Pakistan, and convince the Pakistani public that we are here for the long haul.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is reviewing the Diamer Basha project, including its environmental and social impact, as well as other technical standards. This project would not need any special review or consideration with regard to the Indus Water Treaty. The ADB has its own internal policies when dealing with projects in or near disputed territories, such as Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan’s Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has commissioned noted international consulting engineering firms to conduct a series of feasibility studies and reviews of alternative designs for Diamer Basha Dam. These include:

- Montreal Engineering Company (MONENCO of Canada), 1984. “Basha Storage and Power Project—Feasibility.”
- NEAC (a joint venture led by National Engineering Services—Pakistan), 2002. “Basha Diamer Dam Project—Feasibility Report.”
- Diamer Basha Consultants (a joint venture led by Lahmeyer International of Germany), 2005. “Review of Feasibility Report, Engineering design and Tender Drawings/Documents.”

Question #5. What evidence do we have that U.S. stabilization programs are promoting stability and extending the reach and legitimacy of the Afghan Government?

Answer. Our stabilization goal in Afghanistan is to help the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) gain the support of the Afghan population by reducing the conditions that give rise to the insurgency, while also helping enable Afghan-led transition by the end of 2014 by establishing a foundation for long-term development assistance.

The United States has executed more than 5,325 community stabilization activities, most of which were short-term and targeted at sources of instability by connecting communities to nascent subnational government in key areas. These programs have generated more than 14.5 million employment days through short-term income generation, as well as provided livelihood assistance to more than 36,000 individuals suffering losses because of military operations.

Progress on stabilization can be difficult to measure because the concept is subjective and contextual, and monitoring and evaluation is challenging in a fluid political-security environment such as Afghanistan. Nevertheless, recent independent survey research evaluating the impact of USAID stabilization programs is encouraging:

- Research by Altai Consulting for USAID's Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative found that in Kandahar's Argandhab and Zari districts, where subnational government institutions have only recently been reestablished, the vast majority of Afghan respondents said they looked first to local government to help solve their problems;
- Research by the Afghanistan Center for Social Research for USAID's Local Governance and Community Development program found that the stabilizing impact of improved service delivery increases significantly when GIRoA is seen as the provider rather than an international agency or nongovernmental organization.

Anecdotal evidence also supports these findings. For example, the Taliban's recruitment campaign in the Jalriz district of Wardak province this spring faltered for the first time when hundreds of likely recruits employed in a USAID-funded reconstruction project preferred repairing their own irrigation systems to fighting, and the community stood by this decision, even when threatened with Taliban reprisals.

Question #6. What percentage of FY11 and FY12 resources will be spent on stabilization programs in Afghanistan by region?

Answer. In FY 2011, we have notionally allocated \$241 million to explicit stabilization programs, which is approximately 12 percent of the total FY 2011 USAID budget. Stabilization programs are designed to be flexible and responsive to needs on the ground, so it is difficult to provide precise estimates of future stabilization resource allocation by region. That said, a significant portion of stabilization resources in FY 2011 and FY 2012 are likely to be allocated to the relatively more kinetic areas of the south, southwest and east. Actual resources spent will depend on a number of factors and will require flexibility to respond to unstable areas in the north and west.

Table 1 provides a regional breakdown of the percentage of estimated money disbursed on programs under our stabilization portfolio for FY 2009 through the second quarter of FY 2011. This table reflects data only for our programs explicitly designated for stabilization, but does not reflect a range of other USAID programs that also contribute to our stabilization goals, such as agriculture stabilization, subnational governance programs, and health and education programs that are implemented in Key Terrain Districts. This money was already disbursed out of Spend Plans prior to the FY 2010 supplemental and reflects the reported estimated disbursements made by USAID implementing partners to implement the projects.

Table 1 Regional Breakdown of the Stabilization Disbursements

	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011		
	Est. FY 2009 Disbursements	Est. Total FY 2010 Disbursements	Est FY 2011 1st Qtr Disbursements	Est FY 2011 2nd Qtr Disbursements	FY 2011 Total YTD Disbursements
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
RC-E	64.6%	40.9%	42.9%	25.2%	33.0%
RC-N	6.4%	10.7%	13.0%	11.7%	12.3%
RC-S	14.0%	20.3%	17.0%	29.4%	23.9%
RC-SW	6.3%	10.5%	4.0%	5.1%	4.6%
RC-W	1.5%	5.5%	5.6%	7.5%	6.7%
RC-Cap.	7.1%	11.9%	17.4%	20.9%	19.4%

Table 2 shows the percentage of money disbursed in each region allocated to stabilization from FY 2009 through the second quarter of FY 2011.

Table 2 Stabilization Disbursements' Contribution to Regional Disbursements

	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011		
	Est. FY 2009 Disbursements	Est. Total FY 2010 Disbursements	Est FY 2011 1st Qtr Disbursements	Est FY 2011 2nd Qtr Disbursements	FY 2011 Total YTD Disbursements
TOTAL	80%	65%	71%	85%	78%
RC-E	29.0%	17.2%	20.3%	12.7%	16.2%
RC-N	5.4%	6.7%	9.1%	9.2%	9.2%
RC-S	23.3%	18.1%	13.5%	22.2%	18.5%
RC-SW	16.6%	9.9%	9.5%	13.8%	11.8%
RC-W	3.2%	8.9%	14.5%	17.4%	16.2%
RC-Cap.	2.5%	4.3%	4.6%	9.4%	6.7%

Question #7. A recent report from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee entitled "Evaluating U.S. Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan" noted "with the upcoming transition to an Afghan security lead in 2014 and the increased responsibilities our civilians will absorb from the military, we have a critical planning window right now to make any necessary changes to support a successful transition." According to World Bank data, the total aid to Afghanistan was 91 percent of GDP in 2010/2011 (private sector investment was only 4.3 percent). Even under optimistic scenarios, the Afghan budget will not be fiscally sustainable in the medium term. Operation and maintenance (O&M) costs will be the largest liability, accounting for twice as much as domestic revenues by 2021. Under conservative estimates of declining aid, the Afghan budget deficit will reach 30 percent of GDP by 2021 with additional O&M costs. By comparison, Greece's budget crisis took place at a deficit of about 13 percent of GDP.

- Please explain why we are continuing to fund new infrastructure projects such as those proposed under the Afghan Infrastructure Fund when the Afghan Government has limited to no capability to sustain such projects, particularly operations and maintenance costs.
- Please describe the civilian transition planning that is underway, with particular emphasis on how our assistance such as "foundational investments" in economic growth, infrastructure and human capital is sustainable under Afghan control.

Answer. The administration recognizes that in order to achieve our long-term infrastructure goals for Afghanistan, we need to build a shared vision among the Afghans, the international community, and the private sector on a prioritized list of infrastructure and energy investments as well as develop Afghan capacity to sustain these investments. The Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund (AIF), while designed as a joint civil-military approach to meet the critical needs of the war effort in Afghanistan, has also been designed to incorporate elements that will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Afghanistan's infrastructure. AIF funds will support USAID's work with Afghanistan's national power utility, Da Afghan Breshna Sherkhat (DABS), to extend the North East Power System (NEPS) into communities in eastern Afghanistan. By working with DABS on this project, USAID will build DABS capacity to oversee, implement, and manage such large-scale infrastructure projects. Further, the long-term sustainability of this and other AIF investments is linked with USAID's ongoing capacity-building and commercialization efforts to increase DABS revenue and management capacity. As a result of this ongoing support, the Kabul-based division of DABS has already doubled revenues in just 2 years, an amount equivalent to the total USAID investment in the utility. As the program expands to seven additional cities, it will be complemented by a new USAID program that will build capacity in engineering, procurement, project man-

agement, and operations and maintenance. The Afghans have already begun expanding DABS commercialization efforts outside of Kabul without international assistance, another sign of progress and increasing Afghan capacity.

The statement attributed to the World Bank, that “total aid to Afghanistan was 91 percent of GDP in 2010/2011 (private sector investment was only 4.3 percent)” is sometimes misinterpreted as meaning that international aid constitutes 91 percent of the Afghan GDP. That is incorrect. In fact, total international aid to Afghanistan was roughly equivalent to 91 percent of Afghan GDP. At the same time, we recognize that transition will affect Afghanistan’s short to midterm fiscal sustainability. To address this, we are working to attract increased private sector investment, build the capacity of Afghan institutions to collect and manage revenue (e.g., there has been a 200-percent increase in customs revenues alone since 2006), and focus on foundational investments in sectors most likely to drive mid- and long-term economic growth, such as extractive industries.

Our continued support for Afghanistan as a development and strategic partner will be important as the transition to Afghan-led security gains momentum. This requires foundational investments that promote economic growth and improve the government’s capacity to generate revenue, strengthen national and subnational governance, enhance the capacity of the government to deliver rule of law and justice, improve accountability, and support Afghan leadership, sustainability, and capacity across our assistance program. Foundational investments in infrastructure (energy and water) enable the most promising economic growth sectors in agriculture and the extractive industries. Complementary foundational investments in human capacity development and financial inclusion will increase Afghan human and institutional self-sufficiency and help build transparency in Afghanistan’s financial system. As Afghan capacity increases and as transition progresses, USAID’s role will shift away from stabilization and services provision and move toward supporting the Afghan Government and civil society as these institutions provide essential services, engage the private sector, leverage donor support, and increasingly integrate Afghanistan into the regional economy. In this support role, the United States will have a much more conventional development relationship with Afghanistan.

Question #8. Wage levels for Afghan Government staff such as teachers, health workers and administrative staff can range from \$50 to \$100 per month. By contrast, drivers, assistants and translators for aid projects are paid upward of \$1,000 per month. Based on conversations with senior Embassy Kabul officials, my staff learned that 40 Afghans working in professional positions within the government received between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per month in salary supplements from the U.S. Government under a program that ended in March. According to SIGAR, many of these donor-supported positions fall outside the government’s budgeting process and staffing charts.

- Please describe in detail the steps the administration is taking to standardize Afghan salaries and operate within Afghan Government staffing constraints.

Answer. As reported by SIGAR and the World Bank, the presence of the international community in Afghanistan has had an impact on the labor market, particularly related to salaries. The U.S. Government recognizes the challenges this presents and has taken a number of steps to address the situation. First, the United States, along with others in the international community, have agreed to increasingly shift technical assistance through the Civilian Technical Assistance Program (CTAP), an innovative mechanism run through the Afghan Ministry of Finance that allows donors to contribute funds to be used by the Afghan Government to directly hire technical experts. The United States has disbursed approximately \$5.5 million to CTAP, but plans to increase this to \$30 million overall. Use of CTAP will help reduce salary inflation by decreasing the number of expensive expatriate technical advisors and allowing the Afghan Government to select its own technical experts at reduced rates.

Second, the United States has supported the Afghan Government as it implements a series of pay-and-grade reforms that will create the groundwork for a more structured hiring and management process within the civil service. Assistance in this area has supported analysis of workforce roles, salary surveys to generate data from the private and public sector for jobs, and development of a pay and classification system for implementation of the new pay and grade system.

Question #9. Does the administration support a multiyear authorization bill for U.S. civilian assistance to Afghanistan as described in the committee’s report “Evaluating U.S. Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan”? If so, please describe the steps you

will take to work with Congress and this committee to help shape such an authorization.

Answer. One of the key recommendations of the May 2011 SFRC report was to pursue the option of a multiyear authorization bill for U.S. civilian assistance to Afghanistan. In the current resource-constrained budget environment and in light of the uncertainties surrounding security transition leading toward 2014, it is not clear that now is the most opportune time to pursue this kind of multiyear agreement. The example of the Kerry-Lugar-Berman multiyear assistance package for Pakistan demonstrates the difficulty of fulfilling such commitments in this constrained budget environment as well as under the changing diplomatic and development conditions. That being said, the administration is open to continued dialogue on the topic.

Question #10. Contractors are an important part of our strategy in Afghanistan, as implementing partners for USAID projects, as support personnel for the Embassy, and as experts who are helping build the capacity of the Afghan Government. However, there are too many reports of waste, fraud and abuse, and SIGAR, DOD and State Inspectors General have raised concerns about the State Department's lack of sufficient oversight. Contracting is difficult in the best of circumstances; it is much more challenging in war zones, where the preference is to hire local contractors and use local nationals, and where there is enormous pressure to award contracts rapidly.

- (a) Please describe the steps the INL Bureau is taking to increase contractor oversight in Afghanistan, including increasing the number and quality of contracting officer representatives to oversee INL projects.

Answer. INL continues to strengthen contract oversight for Afghanistan. Key among those improvements were increasing the INL contract administration personnel in the field, refining Standard Operating Procedures for ICORs operating in theater to be fully implemented by September 30, 2011; increasing the number of staff for conducting reconciliation on historical invoices; and establishing remote field access to the Contracting Officer Representative's files here in Washington, DC. The number of contract administration personnel in the field fluctuates due to normal personnel transition schedules, but currently 10 contract administration personnel are in Afghanistan, three will begin predeployment training shortly, and four are going through the clearance process. INL also increased the number of staff conducting historical invoice reconciliation (those invoices prior to 2007) from a total of 10 staff in 2007 to the current total of 16 by working on invoices for both Iraq and Afghanistan. The enhancement to INL contract administration oversight resulted in a higher rejection rate (31 percent) for all INL Afghanistan task order invoices. Beyond that, the transfer of contract support for the Afghanistan National Police training program to the Department of Defense means that INL oversight can focus on other program areas, amplifying the impact of the steps that we have already taken.

- (b) Please describe the steps USAID is taking to increase contractor oversight in Afghanistan, including increasing the number and quality of contracting officer representatives to oversee USAID projects.

Answer. USAID is taking a number of steps to increase oversight in its assistance programs. First, USAID has created a new Division within the Office of Acquisition and Assistance called Compliance and Oversight of Partner Performance (COPP). The Division was formally inaugurated in February 2011 and has already completed more than 40 suspension and debarment actions agencywide, based largely on referrals from the OIG. Though the COPP Division is located in Washington, DC, it works closely with our Kabul Mission.

More specific to Afghanistan, USAID has 71 staff in Kabul working in oversight capacities in auditing, contracting, and financial management. USAID/Afghanistan also has 84 certified Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs). In addition, in 2010 USAID developed the Accountable Assistance for Afghanistan initiative (A3) to help prevent assistance directly or inadvertently supporting malign groups or being diverted from their development purpose by extortion or corruption. As a result of this initiative, USAID is implementing safeguards in four areas, two of which strengthen our preaward processes and two that strengthen our post-award process. For example, USAID/Afghanistan now includes a subcontractor clause in new awards that permits USAID to restrict the number of subcontract tiers, requires the prime contractor to perform a certain percentage of the work and prohibits subcontractors from passing the work to another party, thereby reducing the risk for corruption. Another example is that USAID is increasing its financial controls through a joint program with the USAID Inspector General to audit all locally

incurred costs of program-funded implementing partners. Audits will be performed by internationally accredited regionally based audit firms and checked by the Inspector General. Oversight will all be increased through the establishment of On-Site Monitors (OSMs) in USAID field offices for project monitoring. Each USAID project will be assigned an OSM that will provide real time data to contract staff in Kabul on project performance and accountability. Finally, in an effort to make projects more manageable and to improve program oversight, in some cases USAID has moved from larger contracts to smaller, more regional based contracts with durations of 1 year, with an option for extension years. This model enables us to assume more flexibility in terminating poorly performing contractors from long-term projects.

Question #11. While the World Bank's ARTF is a valuable instrument through which the United States can and should disburse aid, we believe the administration should push for more robust supervision from the World Bank on the ARTF, including greater field oversight and more consistent application of the metrics and benchmarks of the ARTF Incentive Program. While the World Bank has strengthened its oversight for the Recurrent Window, by requiring provincial site visits to ensure comprehensive M&E, and for the Investment Window, by recruiting a Monitoring Agent, additional Kabul-based World Bank staff would further strengthen program management, particularly as increasing demands are placed on the ARTF by donors and by GIROA to support the critical period of Afghanistan's transition. The administration should also consider using the ARTF for a smaller number of big "national programs" like the National Solidarity Program to improve focus and oversight.

- What steps is the administration taking to push for more robust supervision from the World Bank on the ARTF?
- How many programs is the ARTF currently sponsoring? Please list all the programs.

Answer. As a significant contributor to the World Bank's ARTF, the United States has played a prominent role in guiding the World Bank's management and supervision of funds. The United States actively participates in the ARTF Management Committee meetings and working groups including: Financial Strategy; Program Strategy, and Incentive Program working groups. Recent financial, strategy and incentive program working group discussions have reviewed the financial status of the ARTF, assessed the Afghan Government's performance in meeting the incentive program benchmarks, proposed increased oversight of the Recurrent Window (salaries and O&M), and considered donor action related to the lack of an Afghanistan IMF program.

Quarterly, ARTF Donors meet to discuss broader ARTF strategy with the Afghan Government and with the ARTF Management Committee which includes the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the U.N. This oversight combined with rigorous independent audit mechanisms required of the ARTF (including GAO, SIGAR, and other donor audits) ensures robust supervision.

At the technical level, weekly reports (and sometimes daily updates) are provided by the ARTF program managers and by key project managers, including in particular the National Solidarity Program.

Specific details of ARTF programs are covered in quarterly and annual reports. The most recent annual report is located: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFGHANISTAN/Resources/Afghanistan-Reconstructional-Trust-Fund/Quarterly_Report_Mar2010_Mar2011.pdf.

Current Investment Window projects of the ARTF are as follows:

**Status and Ratings of Active and Disbursing ARTF Investment Projects
(Amounts in US\$ million)**

	Approved Grant Amount	Amount Disbursed	Amount Available	Start Date	Closing Date	Achievement of Grant Objectives	Implementation
Water Resources Development Technical Assistance Project - TF093637	5.50	1.09	4.41	3/23/2009	3/31/2011	S	S
Justice Sector Reform Project - TF092160	27.75	8.82	18.93	7/15/2008	6/30/2011	MS	MS
On Farm Water Management Project (OFWM) - TF096991	1.00	0.40	0.60	6/22/2010	6/30/2011	MU	U
Kabul-Aybak/Mazar-e-Sharif Power Project - TF091120	57.00	35.70	21.30	12/26/2007	9/30/2011	MS	MS
Management Capacity Program - TF090077	15.00	7.79	7.21	10/17/2007	12/31/2011	MU	MS
Horticulture and Livestock Program - TF091885	34.90	17.69	16.61	5/26/2008	12/31/2011	S	MS
Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project - TF092073	5.60	2.18	3.42	5/13/2008	12/31/2011	S	S
Kabul Urban Roads Improvement Project - TF093632	18.00	9.69	8.31	2/25/2009	12/31/2011	U	U
Second Education Quality Improvement Program - TF093962	85.00	80.85	4.14	4/14/2009	9/1/2012	MS	MS
Rehabilitation of Noghlu Hydropower Plant - TF054718	20.00	12.43	7.57	2/13/2005	9/30/2012	S	MS
Strengthening Higher Education Project - TF092544	5.00	2.44	2.56	8/5/2008	12/31/2012	MS	MS
Skills Development Project - TF093854	9.00	7.55	1.45	4/14/2009	2/28/2013	NA	NA
Power System Development Project - TF093513	60.00	7.89	32.11	5/19/2009	7/31/2013	S	MS
Strengthening Health Activities for the Rural Poor (SHARP) - TF096362	22.00	20.89	1.11	4/11/2010	9/30/2013	S	MS
National Emergency Rural Access Project - TF095297	80.00	35.15	44.84	10/20/2009	12/31/2013	MS	MS
Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Project (AREDP) - 1498045	16.00	0.40	15.60	10/21/2010	1/1/2015	MS	NA
Third Emergency National Solidarity Project TF098459	250.00	40.00	210.00	1/24/2011	9/30/2015	S	S

Question #12. We are concerned about the implications of the IMF negotiations with the Afghan Government on the ARTF.

- What are the consequences on our aid disbursements through the ARTF if the Afghan Government and IMF cannot agree on a program?

Answer. The United States has set aside \$400 million in FY 2010 supplemental funds to support the ARTF, of which \$250 million is designated for the Investment Window, specifically to the National Solidarity Program (NSP). We have yet to distribute any of those funds to the ARTF. This is due in part to the lack of resolution over an IMF agreement. Some programs and windows within the ARTF are bound by the presence of an IMF country program or extended credit facility. The absence of an IMF country program has already prevented the disbursement of \$70 million in Incentive Program discretionary funds to the Afghan Government and had a strong influence on the World Bank's position not to disburse quarterly \$50 million payments to the ARTF Recurrent Costs Window—a position that the U.S. supports.

The World Bank has asked donors to consider “delinking” Investment Window contributions from resolution of the IMF impasse. In doing so, the World Bank is seeking to create the conditions that would allow critical development projects such as NSP, higher education, skills development, irrigation, governance, and justice projects, to continue operating. This would also prevent new national programs outlined in the ARTF Financing Strategy for this year from being postponed, in the absence of additional ARTF funding. Regardless of the donor decision on continued support to the Investment Window, the absence of additional disbursements to the Recurrent Cost Window may lead the Afghan Government to reprioritize its discretionary spending towards paying civil servant salaries.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

Question. Please comment on the issue of the tax that U.S. contractors pay to the Government of Afghanistan. Are there any efforts to overturn this policy? Evidently, the Afghan Government has been sending past-due tax bills to U.S.-based companies in direct contravention of existing bilateral agreements that prohibit such taxation. Many of these companies are delivering stabilization and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan funded through American taxes. Taxing such U.S. foreign assistance diverts it from its intended purpose and hampers its effectiveness. Further, is there any information on different standards for treatment of local contractors or U.S. or other coalition contractors?

Answer. The taxation of foreign contractors operating in Afghanistan, as in most countries, is a complex issue and one that is complicated by the variety of tax exemptions related to the U.S. Government and its contractors. ISAF is governed by the Military Technical Agreement (MTA); DOD is governed by the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA); USAID and State’s International Narcotics and Law (INL) assistance programs are governed by program-specific bilateral agreements; and, the U.S. Embassy’s tax and duty exemptions are based on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR).

You expressed concern that the Afghan Government is presenting tax bills in contravention of existing agreements. We are aware that some foreign contractors have received tax bills from the Afghan Government. In a number of cases, the tax bill was for income derived from activities that were not tax exempt, for income mistakenly reported by the contractor as taxable instead of tax exempt, or resulted from the contractor’s failure to properly register its activities as tax exempt. In other cases, however, taxes may have been assessed on activities that were properly exempt from taxes where the contractor sought to register them as such. In some of these cases, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul has worked with the contractor and with the Afghan Government to resolve the matter. Other contractors, on their own, have worked with the Afghan Government to reduce their tax bills and ensure their compliance with applicable law.

The Afghanistan Country Commercial Guide issued by the U.S. Commercial Service at U.S. Embassy Kabul includes a description of the tax treatment of a range of U.S. agency contractors. It is available online at http://photos.state.gov/libraries/afghanistan/231771/PDFs/2011cgg_afghanistan-final.pdf and http://trade.gov/static/2011CCG_Afghan.pdf. USAID has also made available detailed information on tax issues related to USAID assistance to Afghanistan, including an information sheet specific to its implementing partners, which can be found at <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/about/legal/taxation/>. Additionally, lawyers and contracting officers from both the U.S. Embassy and DOD have formed a working group to coordinate responses to USG implementing partners with concerns about improper taxation (including back taxes) to ensure consistent messaging and responsiveness. In addition, the Embassy has consistently recommended that U.S. companies retain local counsel specializing in taxation matters.

Regarding local contractors, the Afghan Government does assert its authority to tax its own nationals, which is consistent with the position taken by the U.S. Government with respect to U.S. nationals and as is commonly recognized in bilateral assistance agreements.

Question. In your statement, with regard to the civilian surge of personnel in Afghanistan, you stated that “improving governance, creating economic opportunity, and supporting civil society is vital to solidifying our military gains and advancing our political goals.” While the President asserted that the military would begin to drawdown in July and complete the withdrawal of at least 10,000 by the end of 2011 and another 23,000 no later than September 2012.

- a. What number of civilians do you expect to be withdrawn over the same time period?

Answer. Our civilian presence in Afghanistan is closely coordinated with the U.S. military and our NATO allies and partners, and is an integral part of the administration's strategy to disrupt, defeat, and dismantle al-Qaeda. Civilians are partnering with the military on District Support Teams, Regional Platforms and Provincial Reconstruction Teams. As provinces are transferred to Afghan security lead and as the military phases out these civilian-military field platforms, our plan is to gradually reduce our civilian field presence from our approved 1,227 positions—725 in Kabul and 405 in the field—and fold the remaining personnel into enduring presence platforms: Kabul, plus two to four regional outposts or consulates by 2015. These changes would reduce the field number to about 200.

- b. What specific programs and resources have been identified, within the U.S. whole of government approach to stabilization and reconstruction and development that the Obama administration has taken in Afghanistan, for reduction to align with the President's newly formulated strategy?

Answer. USAID and the State Department are currently undertaking planning exercises for the civilian presence post-transition. These exercises recognize that we will need to gradually reallocate civilian assistance resources to more closely match long-term needs and priorities as we move toward transition. Closer to 2014, we anticipate a need for increased civilian resources in some sectors, as State and USAID inherit some roles and responsibilities formerly funded by the U.S. military that are essential to a responsible transition. For example, as the U.S. military draws down, the State Department may need additional funds to ensure the successful transition of U.S. military detention facilities to Afghan control. At the same time, transition offers the opportunity for the United States to shift to a more "traditional" assistance relationship with Afghanistan with a longer term focus and a reduction in short-term stabilization and counterinsurgency-focused programs.

We will continue to make priority/foundational investments in key sectors identified in cooperation with the Afghan Government (such as energy, infrastructure, and human capacity). Design and implementation of these programs will focus intensely on sustainability and regional integration as our programs transition away from stabilization and focus more exclusively on long-term sustainable development.

- c. Describe the limits of the narrower approach to achieving more specific and achievable goals. Do you expect the next budget request to reflect similar levels as the most recent or should Congress expect to see significant reductions in economic and security assistance requests?

Answer. The FY 2013 budget request is still being developed within the Department of State and USAID, and final recommendations on overall levels of assistance for Afghanistan have yet to be made by Secretary Clinton. As the military draws down and more responsibilities transition to an Afghan lead, some funding in sectors explicitly tied to stabilization and counterinsurgency could be scaled back in parts of Afghanistan. However, as we focus on transition and sustainable foundational investments (such as infrastructure, economic growth, and capacity-building), assistance levels may need to increase in some areas to address these priorities. We have begun a multiagency review of our economic strategy in Afghanistan as we move toward transition, with a goal of prioritizing projects or foundational investments that will allow Afghanistan to generate revenues, particularly from the extractive industries, to minimize dependence on donor assistance.

Question. You and others have stated that Pakistan will play an important role in a political resolution to the Afghanistan conflict.

- Describe what role other neighbors or other nations will play in a political resolution, including India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, and China.

Answer. To complement our efforts within Afghanistan, the United States and Afghanistan are both actively engaged in regional diplomacy to seek support for a political solution to the conflict. The Afghan Government has engaged the Pakistani Government to secure its support for reconciliation, and both countries agreed in January to form a Joint Peace Commission, which had its first meeting on June 11. The United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have established a core group to support reconciliation, which has met twice since May 3. Special Representative Grossman has begun regular consultations with interested regional powers, including Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Turkey, and India. Our diplomatic surge is building on and consolidating the gains made by our military and civilian surges, and helping to make Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration achievable and sustainable.

Question. What if any role will the United Nations play in the political resolution?

Answer. The U.N. plays an important role in the political resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan. The mandate of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) includes as one of its priorities support to an Afghan-led process of peace and reconciliation. Through the “Salaam Support Group,” UNAMA has been supporting and advising the High Peace Council (HPC). In consultation with the HPC, UNAMA has engaged provincial council representatives, religious and community leaders, as well as civil society, youth, women’s groups, and emerging political groups to discuss peace and reconciliation in an inclusive dialogue with all segments of the Afghan population. UNAMA also plays an important role in the reintegration process through the UNDP administered Afghan Peace and Reintegration Fund (APRF). The Secretary General’s Special Representative (SRSG) is further mandated to support regional cooperation to work toward a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Question. What specific roles are envisioned for the United Nations as the individual partners and the broad coalition, including the United States, depart Afghanistan?

Answer. As the military mission winds down during the transition process, civilian assistance to Afghanistan will remain a high priority for the United States and our international partners. The U.N. Security Council in March 2011 (UNSC Resolution 1974) asked the U.N. Secretary General to review the scope of the mandate for UNAMA in the light of the transition process and with the aim of strengthening Afghan leadership and ownership, to make sure that the next mandate reflects the changed environment. The review process is still in its early stages.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) will continue to be an agent-partner in delivering development assistance, focusing mainly capacity development for government ministries in areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery. UNDP’s 2010–13 Country Program for Afghanistan was resources at USD 1.1 billion funded entirely through donors’ voluntary contributions.

Question. Please provide a list of the countries, by year, that have received waivers to the national budget transparency requirement enshrined in recent appropriations acts requiring that no “funds appropriated . . . may be made available for assistance for the central government of any country that fails to make publicly available on an annual basis its national budget, to include income and expenditures” unless waived by the Secretary of State because it “is in the national interests of the United States.” Please also indicate whether Afghanistan and Pakistan have received waivers and, if so, what steps they are taking to improve budget transparency.

Answer. Countries receiving fiscal transparency waivers from FY 2009–11 include:

*FY 2011 **

East Asia and Pacific: Cambodia*

Near East: Algeria,* Egypt,* Lebanon,* Libya, Yemen

South & Central Asia: Afghanistan,* Kyrgyzstan,* Tajikistan,* Turkmenistan,* Uzbekistan*

Western Hemisphere: Dominican Republic,* Nicaragua

Africa: Angola, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar,** Niger, Somalia, Swaziland*

FY 2010

East Asia and Pacific: Cambodia

Near East: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen

South & Central Asia: Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Western Hemisphere: Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua

Africa: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Comoros, Cote d’Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Senegal, Somalia, Swaziland

FY 2009

East Asia and Pacific: Cambodia

Near East: Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen

South & Central Asia: Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Western Hemisphere: Bolivia, D.R., Dominica, Nicaragua, St. Vincent

Africa: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo-B, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Somalia, Senegal, Swaziland, Zambia

*Indicates that Deputy Secretary Nides has already signed the transparency waiver.

In FY 2011 Afghanistan received a fiscal transparency waiver, as its budget was not deemed to be sufficiently available to the public. For example, it is difficult to find data on the external component of Afghanistan's budget, including external assistance provided by donors. Afghan budget numbers do not adequately reflect the low execution rate for the development budget. U.S. support for strengthening the capacity of Afghan institutions helps increase budget transparency. The Afghans have taken positive steps in this direction. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) drafted a Public Financial Framework in July 2010 to strengthen budget execution and fiduciary controls.

The MOF also posts annual government budgets online, as it has since 2004, in addition to mid-year reviews of the budget and government execution and disbursement reports.

Pakistan did not receive a budget waiver in FY 2011, as its budget was assessed as sufficiently transparent.

Question. On March 11, 2011, I wrote to you to seek answers to questions about the administration's March 7 statement with regard to Article 75 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

On May 18, 2011, I received a letter signed by the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs purporting to respond to my questions. The information contained with this letter was not responsive to my questions.

- Will you review the response to my letter and ensure that I receive responsive answers to my questions?

Answer. As noted in the Legal Advisor's responses to questions from the June 28, 2011, hearing, the administration's statement of March 7, 2011, resulted from a comprehensive interagency review, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, and State, of current U.S. law and military practice. The statement also reflects the longstanding view of the United States that Article 75 contains fundamental guarantees of humane treatment (e.g., prohibitions against torture) to which all persons in the power of a party to an international armed conflict are entitled. In 1987, President Reagan informed the Senate that although the United States had serious concerns with Additional Protocol I, "this agreement has certain meritorious elements . . . that could be of real humanitarian benefit if generally observed by parties to international armed conflicts." For this reason, he noted, the United States was in the process of developing appropriate methods for "incorporating these positive provisions into the rules that govern our military operations, and as customary international law." As a general matter, the executive branch previously has taken the position that certain norms, including those reflected in treaties to which the United States is not a party (e.g., the Law of the Sea Convention, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties), constitute customary international law.

a. The Administration determined that existing U.S. treaty obligations, domestic law, and regulations related to the treatment of detainees in armed conflict substantially overlap with the obligations that Article 75 imposes on States Party to Additional Protocol I. Examples of where many of the provisions of Article 75 are already reflected in existing U.S. law and regulations include: Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions; the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War; the War Crimes Act of 1996, as amended; the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005; the Military Commissions Act of 2009; the Uniform Code of Military Justice; DOD Directive 2310.01E ("The Department of Defense Detainee Program"); and Army Regulation 190-8 ("Enemy Prisoners of War, Retained Personnel, Civilian Internees and Other Detainees"). Consistent with this set of existing and overlapping requirements in U.S. law, the administration also determined that current U.S. military practices are fully consistent with the requirements of Article 75. Accordingly, the administration considered it appropriate to state that the United States will choose to abide by the principles set forth in Article 75 applicable to detainees in international armed conflicts out of a sense of legal obligation, and that we would expect other states to do the same.

b. Following our March 7 statement, there was some speculation as to why we referred to the application of Article 75 specifically in the context of "international armed conflict." The simple explanation is that Article 75 of Additional Protocol I, like all of Additional Protocol I, is intended by its terms to be applied to inter-

national armed conflict. Our statement should not be taken to suggest that similar protections should not apply in noninternational armed conflict. It only reflects the fact that corresponding protections with respect to noninternational armed conflict are memorialized elsewhere—in particular, in Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and Articles 4 through 6 of Additional Protocol II, both of which apply to noninternational armed conflicts.

Although the United States is not yet party to Additional Protocol II, as part of the review process described above, the administration, including the Departments of State, Defense and Justice, also reviewed its current practices with respect to Additional Protocol II, and found them to be fully consistent with those provisions, subject to reservations, understandings, and declarations that were submitted to the Senate in 1987, along with refinements and additions that we will submit. Accordingly, on March 7, 2011, the administration also announced its intent to seek Senate advice and consent to ratification of Additional Protocol II as soon as practicable. We believe that ratification of Additional Protocol II will be an important complement to the step we have taken with respect to Article 75. We look forward to working with you, as ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on this most important matter.

c. As a matter of international law, the administration's statement is likely to be received as a statement of the U.S. Government's *opinio juris* as well as a reaffirmation of U.S. practice in this area. The statement is therefore also likely to be received as a significant contribution to the crystallization of the principles contained in Article 75 as rules of customary international law applicable in international armed conflict.

Determining that a principle has become customary international law requires a rigorous legal analysis to determine whether such principle is supported by a general and consistent practice of states followed by them from a sense of legal obligation. Although there is no precise formula to indicate how widespread a practice must be, one frequently used standard is that state practice must be extensive and virtually uniform, including among States particularly involved in the relevant activity (i.e., specially affected States). The U.S. statement, coupled with a sufficient density of State practice and *opinio juris*, would contribute to creation of the principles reflected in Article 75 as rules of customary international law, which all States would be obligated to apply in international armed conflict. (The 168 States that are party to Protocol I are of course already required to comply with Article 75 as a matter of treaty law.)

d. As discussed above, the administration's statement followed from a determination that existing U.S. law and regulations impose requirements on U.S. officials that substantially overlap with the requirements of Article 75. The statement does not alter those statutory and regulatory requirements. If Article 75 were determined to be customary international law, it would have the same effect on U.S. law as other customary international legal norms. The United States has long recognized customary international law, whether reflected in treaty provisions or otherwise, as U.S. law (see, e.g., the Supreme Court's discussion of customary international law in *The Paquete Habana* 175 U.S. 677 (1900)).

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE

AFGHANISTAN

While in Afghanistan on June 6, 2011, Secretary Gates said that pulling out of Afghanistan too fast would threaten the gains made in the 18 months since the “surge” of 30,000 troops. Secretary Gates told Marines in Afghanistan, “If you guys and everybody keeps the pressure on, we can hang onto everything we’ve gained over the last year to 18 months, we can expand the security bubble beyond that. . . . We have succeeded in stopping the Taliban’s momentum . . . but we’ve just kind of turned that corner and I think we need to keep the pressure on.” In Kabul, he appealed for patience and said that only modest U.S. troop reductions would make sense this summer in a still unstable Afghanistan. U.S. and coalition commanders I met on the ground in Afghanistan have repeatedly told me that it’s too early to make major changes, and some believe it will take until the end of this fighting season to get a true assessment of the conditions on the ground in Afghanistan. I trust our military leadership to make the right decision based on their assessment of the conditions on the ground. Some argue that, with Osama bin Laden dead, our mission in Afghanistan is complete. The killing of Osama bin Laden was a great victory, but our mission in Afghanistan is to ensure that it can

never again become a staging area for terrorist attacks against the American homeland.

Question. What specific conditions must be met to determine the extent of a U.S. troop drawdown this year, next year, and in 2014?

Answer. As the President laid out in his June 22 speech, the United States will withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2011; the remaining 23,000 “surge” troops he announced in December 2009 will leave Afghanistan by the end of summer 2012. Beyond this initial reduction of the surge, the process of transition will continue as Afghan security forces move into the lead, and our mission will shift from combat to support. In line with the President’s speech, the commander on the ground will determine the pace and reinvestment of the remaining security forces based on these comprehensive assessments. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their security.

Question. Which conditions have been met to date?

Answer. We have made substantial progress on the objectives the President laid out in his December 2009 speech at West Point, where he put forth a new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan focusing on disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qaeda and preventing its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future. To accomplish this, he said we would pursue three objectives: deny al-Qaeda a safe haven, reverse the Taliban’s momentum, and strengthen the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan’s future. We have exceeded expectations on the core goal of defeating al-Qaeda—killing more than half of its top 30 leaders, including Osama Bin Laden. We have broken the Taliban’s momentum, particularly in their traditional strongholds of Helmand and Kandahar provinces, and trained over 100,000 ANSF. Building on that progress, the United States and its international partners are now working with the Afghans, through a process approved by the international community, to restore Afghanistan to full sovereignty and to assist them in resuming full responsibility for both security and service delivery by 2014. The first tranche of seven provinces and municipalities, which have been vetted and approved for transition, will begin their transfer to Afghan lead July 20.

Question. What conditions would cause a delay in the withdrawal of troops?

Answer. As the President stated in his speech, as a result of the progress in Afghanistan 10,000 troops will depart Afghanistan by the end of 2011 with 23,000 additional troops departing by September 2012. The 68,000 troops that constituted the base force in place before the surge will remain and then begin gradually coming home as Afghan security forces move into the lead. Independent monthly provincial assessments provided by ISAF and NATO track security and governance across all Afghan provinces. In line with the President’s speech, the commander on the ground will determine the pace and reinvestment of the remaining security forces based on these comprehensive assessments.

Question. What conditions must be met to transition to Afghan control?

Answer. Transition is linked directly to and in the service of the larger political process that was introduced by Secretary Clinton in her Asia Society speech on February 18, 2011. In pursuit of this goal, we are following a strategy with three mutually reinforcing tracks—three surges: a military offensive against al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgents, a civilian campaign to bolster the governments, economies, and civil societies of Afghanistan and Pakistan to undercut the pull of the insurgency, and an intensified diplomatic push to bring the Afghan conflict to an end and chart a new and more secure future for the region. The Afghan National Security Forces need to be equipped and capable of sustaining achieved security gains with minimal overwatch from coalition military partners. This will concurrently provide the space for the Afghan Government to continue to build capacity within local and provincial offices in order to provide basic services to the people and opportunities for external private sector investment to grow. As the first two surges transition, the final diplomatic surge becomes the focus of our political efforts. It envisions a political process operating on all levels, including the region and Afghanistan’s neighbors, and encouraging Afghans to address their own internal political challenges.

Question. What are the minimum conditions that must be achieved in Afghanistan in order for Afghans to be able to sustain stability with relatively limited international assistance?

Answer. All provinces will have completed security transition by the end of 2014. The timing of each province’s transition will be determined through a review process

that has been established by the Afghans and supported by the international community that will take account of the capacity of local security forces to maintain security. For all partners and allies, there will be issued guidance, but not a template. Plans will be developed around each province's unique circumstances that are not formulaic, or excessively prescriptive. The Afghan National Security Forces need to be equipped and capable of sustaining achieved security gains with minimal overwatch from coalition military partners. This will concurrently provide the space for the Afghan Government to continue to build capacity within local and provincial offices in order to provide basic services to the people and opportunities for external private sector investment to grow.

Question. What impact would a failure in Afghanistan have on U.S. national security in the long term?

Answer. Our strategic objective in Afghanistan remains to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and to prevent its return to Afghanistan, where it could once again threaten the United States and our allies. We know the consequences of disengaging from this region and letting despair and extremism take hold. Afghanistan is at the heart of a region with over 2 billion people and two nuclear weapon states. Long-term stability here is a vital U.S. national interest. This is why even after our combat troops come home, we remain committed to preserving their hard-won gains, and why our civilians will remain engaged to help build and stabilize the region in the years to come.

Question. During my visit over the New Year's holiday, Afghan and coalition personnel unanimously told me that setting the July 2011 timeline to begin withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan had a devastating effect on operations—it sent the wrong signal to the Afghan people, our coalition partners, and the Taliban.

- Do you believe the announcement of a July 2011 withdrawal date negatively impacted operations?

Answer. No, the President's drawdown decision was based on the best assessment of conditions on the ground. He has calibrated the drawdown to match those conditions and his decision is in line with our transition strategy. We are confident that we are on track and that the drawdown he announced will unfold on the timelines set forth.

