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AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL: THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN (PART II)

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

OF THE

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AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL: THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN (PART II)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committees met, pursuant to notice, at 2:15 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The joint subcommittee hearing will come to order. After recognizing myself, Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Ted Deutch, and Ranking Member Faleomavaega, for 5 minutes each for opening statements, we will then hear from our witnesses and without objection, the witnesses' prepared statements will be made a part of the record and members may have 5 days in which to insert statements and questions for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

The Chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes. In May, I led a bipartisan congressional delegation to Afghanistan and was honored to spend some time with our brave heroes in the armed forces who continue to sacrifice their own safety to protect our freedoms.

As the administration's deadline to finalize the Bilateral Security Agreement, also known as the

BSA, with the Afghan Government approaches, it is becoming clear that there are still obstacles to overcome. It is vitally important that the BSA adequately addresses the safety and well being of our brave men and women who will remain in Afghanistan after 2014.

However, if a BSA is finalized that addresses all of our concerns, we must ensure that an adequate number of U.S. forces will stay in Afghanistan to help fight extremist elements and train and advise the Afghan National Security Forces.

Listening to the counsel and advice of our generals on the ground regarding troop numbers is crucial to maintaining the gains we have made over the last decade. We cannot let politics get in the way of our national security and stability in this volatile region. We may not be leaving in place enough of a support team to fight the extremist elements who will quickly move to take power away from the Afghan people.

I remain highly skeptical of the Afghan security forces' ability, political will, and commitment to fight jihadists on their own. Last week an Afghan Special Forces Commander defected to an insurgent group allied with the Taliban, taking with him most of his unit's guns, ammo, high tech equipment, packed in a Humvee.

We cannot risk allowing the Taliban to retake control of Afghanistan, reversing the significant progress made by our heroes in uniform. This will also lead to al-Qaeda regrouping and stepping up terrorist activities using the safe havens in Pakistan as a staging ground, posing a real danger to our national security interests and those of our allies in the region.

A major test of the stability of a post-2014 Afghanistan will be the upcoming elections in April 2014. In Afghanistan, I urged President Karzai to commit to the electoral process and ensure that a free, fair, and transparent election will result in a peaceful transition of power through a democratic process. The 2009 election was marred in controversy, as corruption and fraud were widespread and rampant. Another fraud-plagued election this spring could severely jeopardize Afghan security, and put our own forces at risk. With a new government, I hope we will be able to tackle the endemic corruption that has plagued the Afghan Government and hampered substantial progress.

One reason for the massive corruption problems in Afghanistan stems from narcotics. Our codel pressed the Afghan Government to do more to counter narcotics operations and eradication efforts. During the last poppy season, it is disappointing that the Afghan Government wasn't willing to provide security for the eradication teams. Combating the nexus between terrorism financing and narcotics trafficking is vital to stabilizing the security situation in Afghanistan so that terrorist organizations cannot finance their illicit operations.

And let us look at Pakistan's role on the security situation in Afghanistan. For Afghanistan to achieve security and stability, Pakistan is going to have to play a stronger and more positive role. Extremist groups like the Taliban, al-Qaeda and the Haqqani Network have used areas in the Pakistan border as insurgent sanctuaries to conduct militant operations inside Afghanistan without much resistance from the Pakistani intelligence and military forces, if not outright collaboration.

Because Pakistan is vital in establishing stability in the region, we must work with the government. But we mustn't continue to give billions of dollars in aid to Pakistan and hope, and pray, and wish that the Prime Minister will work with us. We must ensure that Pakistan is meeting certain benchmarks in its fight against these insurgent sanctuaries within its borders, or else Pakistan should not receive further U.S. funding.

And with that, I will conclude my remarks and turn to the ranking member, Mr. Deutch, and then Mr. Chabot and Mr. Faleomavaega.

Thank you, Ted.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thanks to our witnesses for testifying today on the future of Afghanistan as the U.S. continues its responsible drawdown of troops.

Like many of my colleagues, I recognize that ending 12 years of war in Afghanistan raises many difficult challenges that have no easy solutions. But I am deeply committed to bringing our troops home as quickly and as responsibly as possible. Our country is tired of war. More than 2½ million American men and women have served our country in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Tragically, in Afghanistan alone, there have been more than 2,200 American casualties. We will never forget these tragic deaths, as well as the crippling injuries that so many of our bravest have suffered.

This war must end for financial reasons as well. Given that the United States Government now spends about $2.1 million per year per soldier deployed in Afghanistan, an unending presence in Afghanistan is not in our best interest. However, we must act to protect our national security. Allowing Afghanistan to devolve back into a safe haven for al-Qaeda threatens U.S. national security.

Furthermore, we have a moral obligation to ensure that progress that has been made with regard to human rights, health, and personal freedoms in Afghanistan continues, even without a sizable American military presence. For example, a recent report found that a USAID health program has saved the lives of 100,000 Afghan children per year. When considering the staggering statistics, it is essential we remember the impact that even one life can have on the world.

Although I wish it was under different circumstances, everyone in the world is now familiar with Malala Yousafzai and her courageous stance against the Taliban to advance the universal rights of equality in education. She is an inspiration and a reminder that we need to give every child, including those from Afghanistan, the education necessary for a brighter future.

So how do we responsibly ensure that Afghan security and our national security without committing to an unending American presence? How do we ensure our moral commitment to the Afghan people without risking more American lives? There are those who believe that the only way to achieve a stable Afghanistan is through an unending American military presence on the ground. However, as former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, General Eikenberry has pointed out, no amount of troops can make our political and military strategies succeed if we do not have the full support of Afghani leadership.

Others have advocated for the immediate withdrawal of every last American troop and all resources. However, this, too, is not a realistic option. Leaving an on-going war totally on an Afghan Government that cannot afford its own security service threatens our national security as it could very well lead to the re-emergence of terrorist safe havens inside Afghanistan and severely jeopardize the humanitarian gains that have been accomplished.

Some have advocated for a negotiated political solution with the Taliban. And while this should be explored, it cannot come at the expense of human rights and equality. At this juncture, it remains unclear whether the Taliban is even serious about negotiations or wants to be an on-going force for division in Afghanistan's future.

Therefore, in a world where we have only bad choices, I believe that the best option is for Congress to continue to support the Afghan National Security Forces and the administration's drawdown

strategy while remaining cautiously hopeful that reconciliation efforts between the Afghan Government and the Taliban are able to resume.

In June, the Security Forces officially took the lead role in securing the country and is now exclusively patrolling Afghan villages. While it is not able to operate independently, it is improving. It has shown it is capable and is undoubtedly the future of Afghanistan's security.

At the same time, we need to finalize the Bilateral Security Agreement with the Government of Afghanistan that provides U.S. personnel with necessary protections so that American and NATO forces are able to continue to train, to assist, and to advise Afghan Security Forces.

Ultimately, for any of this to succeed, the Afghan Government must become more accountable for its future. If Afghanistan is going to progress as a sustainable democracy, a good point of measure will be the country's April 2014 elections. These elections cannot be marred with the widespread fraud of 2009 and the next Afghan President must protect the human rights conventions in the constitution and provide Afghans with a leader that they ultimately will believe in.

A stable Afghanistan will require continued patience and some level of resources from Congress. Achieving strategic objections in Afghanistan is never going to be quick or easy, but we owe it to the Americans and Afghans who have sacrificed so much to try to get this right.

I appreciate the witnesses being here today and I look forward to our discussion. I yield back.

Ms. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch. And I also want to thank Chairman Ros-Lehtinen for calling this important joint hearing this morning or excuse me, this afternoon, with the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific. I am pleased to join her efforts to discuss the current situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan in that region and how the United States' 2014 withdrawal from Afghanistan might impact the broader region.

Earlier this year, the picture of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan remained largely unclear, but it was clear that expediting the withdrawal plan was strategically risky to the stability and security interest of South Asia more broadly. The departure of 34,000 U.S. troops by February 2014 still raises the prospect that the security situation may take a wrong turn, especially due to Afghanistan's weak and corrupt governance. This is an issue that should be of particular concern considering that Afghanistan prepares for national elections in April 2014 which is not that far away. Even 6 months out, there is consensus that the election process will be filled with political pressures from Karzai, vote rigging, and practices not representative of a democratic system.

There are few signs Karzai's government learned the lessons from Afghanistan's past elections. He took control of the independent election commission and appointed new commissioners who will no doubt show preference toward his alliances and acolytes. There is little disagreement that the structure of Afghanistan's Government is itself a major problem, but how we help move

it toward a more democratic, fair, and incorrupt system at this point is a difficult matter.

In the coming months, Afghanistan's mounting internal political uncertainties cannot be brushed off. The political power struggle that will no doubt consume the Presidential campaign season in Afghanistan may also threaten to unravel negotiations to finalize the Bilateral Security Agreement with the U.S. And to no one's surprise, the likelihood that the U.S. and Afghanistan will finalize the BSA before the end of the year faces some major obstacles.

It is important that the final agreement adequately safeguards our troops which, as of earlier this month, is the primary issue still on the table. Failure to reach an agreement would threaten U.S. gains in Afghanistan and impair our commitments to the broader region. But let us not forget that the outcome of the BSA is not the only issue influencing U.S. withdrawal plans. Long-term stability in Afghanistan, political reconciliation, and a successful U.S. military drawdown is contingent upon Pakistani cooperation. Since the election of Prime Minister Sharif earlier this year, U.S.-Pakistan relations are showing some signs of improving as illustrated by Sharif's visit to Washington just last week and the Obama administration's decision to release more than $1.6 billion in military and economic aid to Pakistan.

Suspicions between the U.S. and Pakistan still linger despite marginal recent advances. Newly elected Sharif is linked to sectarian extremist groups in Punjab and his past support of the Afghan Taliban may well influence his policies in the upcoming months to the detriment of Pakistan's neighbors and U.S. security informed policy interests. Islamabad's desire in maintaining an indispensable position in Afghan peace talks while obstructing its neighbor India is paramount. I find it increasingly difficult to justify the administration's decision to release the $1.6 billion in military and economic aid and having spoken to my colleagues on the Hill, many of them share those same concerns. My concern regarding this level of assistance is amplified by Pakistan's widespread persecution of religious minorities, particularly the Christian communities.

Pakistan is ranked among the most religiously intolerant countries in the world and this level of intolerance, unfortunately, seems to be increasing. A Pakistani adhering to anything but Suni Islam finds himself the target of discrimination, overt persecution, and potential terrorist attacks. For example, in September 22nd, a suicide bombing of the All Saints Church in Peshwar, left over 130 Christians killed and over 150 injured. And earlier this month, extremists beat two Christians in Islamabad after they refused to convert from Christianity to Islam.

While this is a problem we see happening throughout the region, the level of oppression existing in Pakistan is particularly aggressive. It is my hope that Prime Minister Sharif addresses this problem and reforms Pakistan's blasphemy laws, laws that terrorists use as an excuse to attack Christian churches, burn their settlements, and commit murder in Christian communities.

I urge Prime Minister Sharif to include the protection of religious minorities as part of his new security strategy and I urge the Obama administration to make Pakistan's progress on this par-

ticular issue, among others, a qualification for receiving U.S. assistance.

I again want to thank Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen for calling this hearing and we look forward to hearing testimony from our distinguished panel of witnesses and it is truly a distinguished panel this afternoon. I will turn it back over to Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Steve. Thank you.

And now we are pleased to welcome our distinguished panelists. First, we welcome Dr. Frederick Kagan, who holds the Christopher DeMuth chair and is the Director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute. Dr. Kagan has served in Afghanistan as part of General Stanley McChrystal's Strategic Assessment Team and also conducted research there for Generals David Petraeus and John Allen. For his work in Afghanistan, he received the distinguished Public Service Award, the highest honor given to a civilian who does not work for the Department of Defense and he gets the Great Witness Award from our subcommittee for always being available. Thank you.

Next we welcome General Jack Keane, who is chairman of the Institute for the Study of War. In 2005, General Keane retired from the U.S. Army as Vice Chief of Staff after 37 years in public service and during this time he provided strategy and oversight for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. He is a career paratrooper and like my hubby, he is a decorated combat veteran of Vietnam, who has served in operational command roles throughout the world including in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The General is also a member of the Secretary of Defense's Policy Board and an advisor to two foundations that assist veterans. Thank you, sir.

Third, we welcome Ms. Lisa Curtis, who is a senior research fellow for South Asia at The Heritage Foundation. Prior to this, she served as a staff member at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, handling the South Asia Portfolio for then Chairman Richard Lugar and from 2001 to '03, she served as an advisor on India-Pakistan relations to the Assistant Secretary of State. Ms. Curtis also served as a South Asia policy analyst at the CIA and before this was stationed in U.S. Embassies in Islamabad and New Delhi as a foreign service officer. We welcome you, Ms. Curtis. Thank you.

And finally, we welcome Dr. Stephen Biddle. Thank you, sir, who is an adjunct senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations and professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University. Prior to joining George Washington, Dr. Biddle taught at the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute and served at the Defense Policy Board and also advised Generals Petraeus and McChrystal in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Indeed a distinguished set of panelists and we will begin with you, Dr. Kagan.

STATEMENT OF FREDERICK W. KAGAN, PH.D., CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH CHAIR AND DIRECTOR, CRITICAL THREATS PROJECT, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member, it is an honor to be in front of this committee, talking about this important topic and I thank you very much for convening hearings at this time when so much else is going on to focus on an issue that I think hasn't received as much attention as it should, given what the stakes are in so many ways.

Reasonable people can disagree about the desirability of committing to a long-term relationship with Afghanistan, keeping American troops there, giving large amounts of financial aid to Pakistan and many other specific policy decisions in South Asia. We can argue about the relative importance of U.S. interests in that area compared with the cost of taking this with that action and also compared with the cost of inaction or withdrawal. And we can certainly argue and I and many in this room have been part of arguments, about what strategies might work or might not work.

But all of these discussions and arguments should be based on a common set of facts that are not really arguable. American national security requires defeating al-Qaeda and all other affiliated groups that seek to kill Americans, working with local partners to prevent those groups from maintaining or reestablishing safe havens from which to do so and retaining the ability to take direct action against those groups, if and when required. It is also a fact that the war in Afghanistan is not yet either won or lost and it can still go either way. A more inconvenient fact is that the Afghan National Security Forces will not be ready to secure their government or their territory without significant U.S. and international support, including military forces and denablers after 2014.

A still more unpleasant fact is that Pakistan continues to harbor, shelter, and support some of the most virulent insurgents and terrorist groups closely associated with al-Qaeda including serving as haven for some that have already tried to attack the U.S. homeland.

Yet, it is also a fact that Pakistan is a country of some 190 million people with perhaps 100 nuclear weapons and the deepest hatred for the U.S. of any nation on earth. Pakistan is also, moreover, perennially on the verge of complete economic collapse that would lead to political collapse and consequently very likely a massive increase in the number of terrorist groups operating there. In the very worst case, one or more of those terrorist groups might get control of a Pakistani nuclear weapon and use it or at least try to use it against India, the U.S., or another of our allies.

The most distressing fact of all is that there is no single clear policy or strategy that could reliably handle all of these other facts. And that offering simplistic solutions or focusing on one of these problems to the exclusion of the others will simply lead rapidly to failure.

International Afghan forces have made tremendous gains against the Taliban in the past 4 years, largely sweeping them out of Kandahar of which they have nearly gained control in 2009, driving them to the fringes of Helmand, securing the Konar River Val-

ley to Asadabad and most strategically vital, Nangahar Province, and preventing the enemy from sustaining significant bases in other parts of the country.

Isolated spectacular attacks in Herat and Kabul and elsewhere have not disrupted Afghan politics nor significantly affected the daily lives of most Afghans. Tragic instances of Afghan forces or Taliban masquerading as Afghan forces attacking NATO and U.S. troops have not destroyed the cooperation or cohesion of the coalition. Many seasons of tough fighting have not seen the erosion of the ANSF, but rather have seen it improve in strength size, skill, and determination.

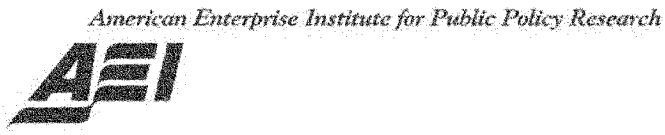
But President Obama ordered reductions in U.S. forces prematurely, preventing them from completing critical clearing operations in southeastern Afghanistan where the Haqqani network operates from sanctuaries in Pakistan. Haqqani forces and their allies retain important safe havens in Ghazni, Logar, Wardak, Paktia, Paktika, and Khost Provinces and neither the U.S. nor the ANSF have the resources needed to clear them out at this point.

On the contrary, we can expect to see an increase in Haqqani network activity over the coming months and years, including both spectacular attacks in Kabul and a regular drumbeat of attacks against U.S. and ANSF positions in the Haqqani areas. The ANSF will not be able to defend itself against this threat on its own after 2014. It lacks the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets that the U.S. and NATO provide which give it a decisive advantage over its enemies. It does not have enough artillery or skill in using it to overmarch the enemy, nor will it have enough of its own combat air power to do so. A full U.S. withdrawal would very likely be followed by the collapse of ANSF forces facing the Haqqanis that would be very bad for the U.S.

The obvious rejoinder to these comments is that, of course, I am talking about bases in Pakistan and that the problem really is in Pakistan and not in Afghanistan at this point. And the bottom line take away that I would offer to the subcommittees is that you should not imagine that we can solve this problem on one side of the Durand Line only. Losing in Afghanistan, yielding the gains that we have made so far, failing to complete efforts to defeat the enemy, to deprive them of safe havens in Afghanistan will make it impossible to succeed on the other side of the Durand Line just as succeeding in Pakistan is not in and of itself sufficient to achieve success in Afghanistan.

And so despite all of the displeasure, all of the obvious distastefulness of providing support on such a large scale to a regime in Islamabad that is so clearly harboring our enemies and so clearly failing even to provide adequately for its people, nevertheless, there are important strategic reasons to continue to do so having to do with the complexity, unfortunately, of any sound strategy that might conceivably work to achieve American security in this region. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kagan follows:]



Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and Subcommittee on Asia
and the Pacific on "After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in
Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)"

An Unarguable Fact: American Security is Tied to Afghanistan and Pakistan

Frederick W. Kagan

Christopher DeMuth Chair and Director, Critical Threats Project

American Enterprise Institute

October 29, 2013

The views expressed in this testimony are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the American Enterprise Institute

Frederick W. Kagan
October 29, 2013

Reasonable people can disagree about the desirability of committing to a long-term relationship with Afghanistan, keeping American troops there, giving large amounts of financial aid to Pakistan, and many other specific policy decisions in South Asia. We can argue about the relative importance of U.S. interests in that area compared with the costs of taking this or that action—and also compared with the costs of inaction or withdrawal. We can certainly argue about what strategies might work or probably won't work.

But all of these discussions should be based on a common set of facts that are not really arguable. American national security requires defeating al Qaeda and all other affiliated groups that seek to kill Americans, working with local partners to prevent those groups from maintaining or re-establishing safe-havens from which to do so, and retaining the ability to take direct action against those groups if and when required. It is also a fact that the war in Afghanistan is not yet either won or lost and it can still go either way. A more inconvenient fact is that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will not be ready to secure their government or their territory without significant U.S. and international support, including military forces and enablers, after 2014.

A still more unpleasant fact is that Pakistan continues to harbor, shelter, and support some of the most virulent insurgent and terrorist groups, closely associated with al Qaeda, including serving as haven for some that have already tried to attack the U.S. homeland. Yet it is also a fact that Pakistan is a country of some 190 million people with perhaps 100 nuclear weapons and the deepest hatred for the U.S. of any nation on earth. Pakistan is also, moreover, perennially on the verge of complete economic collapse that would lead to political collapse and consequently, very likely, a massive increase in the number of terrorist groups operating there. In the very worst case, one or more of those terrorist groups might get control of a Pakistani nuclear weapon and use it—or at least try to use it—against India, the U.S., or another of our allies. The most distressing fact of all is that there is no single, clear policy or strategy that could reliably handle all of these other facts, and that offering simplistic solutions or focusing on one of these problems to the exclusion of the others will simply lead rapidly to failure.

Afghanistan in the Balance

International and Afghan forces have made tremendous gains against the Taliban in the past four years, largely sweeping them out of Kandahar, of which they had nearly gained control in 2009, driving them to the fringes of Helmand, securing the Konar River Valley to Asadabad and most of strategically-vital Nangarhar Province, and preventing the enemy from sustaining significant bases in other parts of the country. Isolated spectacular attacks in Herat and Kabul have not disrupted Afghan politics nor significantly affected the daily lives of most Afghans. Tragic instances of Afghan forces (or Taliban masquerading as Afghan forces) attacking NATO and U.S. troops have not destroyed the cooperation or cohesion of the coalition. Many seasons of tough fighting have not seen the erosion of the ANSF but, rather, have seen it improve in strength, size, skill, and determination.

But President Obama ordered reductions in U.S. forces prematurely, preventing them from completing critical clearing operations in southeastern Afghanistan, where the Haqqani Network operates from sanctuaries in Pakistan. Haqqani forces and their allies retain important safe-havens in Ghazni, Logar, Wardak, Paktia, Paktika, and Khost Provinces, and neither the U.S. nor the ANSF have the resources needed to clear them out. On the contrary, we can expect to see an increase in Haqqani Network activity over the coming months and years, including both spectacular attacks in Kabul and a regular drumbeat of attacks against U.S. and ANSF positions in Haqqani areas.

The ANSF will not be able to defend itself against that threat on its own after 2014. It lacks the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets that the U.S. and NATO provide, which give it decisive advantages over its enemies. It does not have enough artillery (or skill in using it) to overmatch the enemy, nor will it have enough of its own combat airpower to do so. A full U.S. withdrawal would very likely be followed by the collapse of ANSF forces facing the Haqqanis, and that would be very bad for the U.S.

The Haqqani Network is much older than the Taliban, dating back to the 1970s. Its ties with Osama bin Laden began in the mid-1980s, and the first al Qaeda camps (and most important training camps) were established and maintained in Haqqani territory in the 1990s. Neither Jalaluddin Haqqani, the group's founder, nor his son and successor, Sirajuddin, have shown the slightest inclination to break with al Qaeda, even after bin Laden's death. The Haqqanis are prominent in the Miramshah Shura (in North Waziristan, Pakistan), where they coordinate with al Qaeda representatives and the leaders of other al Qaeda-affiliated groups such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). A Haqqani victory in southeastern Afghanistan would give those groups and others room to expand in Afghanistan, where they could re-establish bases from which to plan and conduct future attacks against the U.S. and its allies. Preventing such a development remains a vital national security interest for the U.S., and it has not yet been secured—nor will it have been secured by the end of 2014.

Al Qaeda and Affiliates in Pakistan

The obvious rejoinder to the discussion above is that the Haqqanis are currently based in Pakistan, rather than Afghanistan, along with al Qaeda leaders, the TTP, IMU, and many others. It is reasonable to ask why the U.S. should continue to spend blood and treasure trying to solve a problem in Afghanistan that emanates from Pakistan. The answer is that there is no solution to the problem that does not operate on both sides of the Durand Line.

Even today, groups such as the Haqqanis, al Qaeda, and the IMU do not operate with full freedom or impunity in Pakistan. Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate (ISI) supports some of them and turns a blind eye to the activities of others, but it also requires them to keep their profile in Pakistan down, to avoid attacking Pakistani targets, and not to develop plans for attacking the U.S. easily traceable to Pakistani territory. In addition, Pakistani forces have

conducted significant operations against groups that directly threaten Pakistan but are still linked into this mélange, especially the TTP and the IMU. Those operations have disrupted and distracted the Afghan-focused groups that the ISI actually supports, albeit briefly. Those limitations may not seem like much, but we know that these groups chafe under even this degree of Pakistani control. Yet they generally adhere to Pakistani requirements for the simple reason that they know that the Pakistani Army could, if it chose, round them up at any moment. That fact does constrain both the actions and the ambitions of these groups, as we can see from the periodic efforts their leaders make to rein in the handful of groups, such as the TTP, that persist in violating Islamabad's strictures.

Were the Haqqanis and their allies able to relocate some or all of their most important bases to an ungoverned Afghanistan, those constraints would fall away. They would be free to attack their erstwhile Pakistani hosts (which some of them surely would do) and to plan attacks on the U.S. and its allies without having to worry that the heavy arm of the ISI might come down on them at any moment. The re-establishment of Haqqani safe-havens in Afghanistan would be worse than the expansion of the safe-havens across the border in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)—it would be the liberation of one of the most lethal Islamist terrorist groups in the world to expand its aims, methods, and targets.

It is equally true, of course, that the status quo is unacceptable. Pakistan must be made to see that it cannot continue to protect and support such lethal extremist groups—certainly not while pocketing large amounts of money from the U.S. in exchange for "counter-terrorism" cooperation that seems almost laughable after the Abbottabad raid. Surely U.S. aid money could be spent better elsewhere—or even at home, as some would have it. Alas, supporting Pakistan financially remains an important pillar of American strategy, distasteful as it is.

Pakistan: Always on the Brink

Pakistan's economy epitomizes dysfunction. Government revenues are far too low due to corruption, absurd tax rates, and pervasive tax-cheating. The government heavily subsidizes electricity, theoretically making it available to a broad swath of Pakistan's poor. But the electrical infrastructure is inadequate, antiquated, and suffers from extensive theft. As a result, rolling blackouts and extended periods without power are common, so that the enormous sums the government spends subsidizing electricity leads only to more popular anger over its lack. Pakistan has subsisted on large loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in addition to the much smaller U.S. assistance, but the IMF lost patience with Pakistan toward the end of President Asif Ali Zardari's tenure and has insisted on a series of painful economic and fiscal corrections that the current government is struggling to undertake. The economy is further distorted by the ubiquitous influence of the military establishment both directly through an exorbitant military budget and military industries and indirectly through the assets of current and retired military officers. The survival of the Pakistani economy at any time seems improbable.

It seemed especially improbable under Zardari, whose reputation for corruption was well-earned. But Zardari also refused to undertake badly-needed economic reforms for fear of angering institutions already anathema to him and alienating voting constituencies going into the recent election. He therefore achieved nothing at all—he lost the election and left the Pakistani economy in free-fall.

The peaceful succession of Nawaz Sharif to the premiership after the completion of a full term in office by a civilian government was a landmark in Pakistan's history. Such a thing has never happened before. More interestingly, Sharif appears to have understood that his political survival, along with the survival of his country, depends on righting the economy somehow. He has therefore focused his efforts intently on meeting IMF goals (or coming close), managing the energy crisis, expanding the economy, and even reaching out to India (although spoilers on both sides of the border are making that prospect daunting). Sharif is an unlikely hero from the American perspective. Ousted from his previous premiership by Pervez Musharraf, Sharif has long been seen as virulently anti-American. So far he has not shown such tendencies, perhaps because he realizes the depth of his domestic problems.

It is difficult to believe that Sharif will actually turn the Pakistani economy around. It seems clear, however, that he is trying to do so. It is almost as much in our interest that he succeed as it is in his. A viable Pakistani economy could supply the Pakistani state—as distinct from the Army—with revenues it needs actually to govern and provide services to its people. After the first successful transition from one civilian government to another after a full term, Pakistani representative government can only be solidified by the emergence of a functional and solvent state. Such a development would weaken the influence of the military significantly. It would also weaken the attractiveness of groups such as Jamat-ud-Dawa (the front group for Lashkar-e-Tayyiba), which flourish by providing services when the state does not.

Now is not the time, therefore, to undercut whatever long-shot prospects Sharif might have by cutting off U.S. aid, even if Pakistan shows no greater willingness to cut support to America's enemies than it has hitherto. It is also vital to keep in mind that Sharif really does not control that policy. The Army does. And the best long-term strategy for pulling Pakistan away from support to extremist groups is to work to strengthen the elected civilian government. That cannot be done by cutting off aid—even aid to the Army, which will demand its cut from the state regardless of what the U.S. gives it. Whatever leverage the U.S. has with Pakistan, finally, will vanish with the end of American assistance.

Conclusion

There can be no rapid conclusion to the problems of South Asia, nor is there any end in sight to the threats to American security and its interests emanating from that region. The White House is quite wrong to keep repeating that al Qaeda is "decimated," "on its last legs," or nearly defeated. Even the "core group" still in Pakistan remains functional, but that core group is far

from being the only threat to Americans. Al Qaeda franchises are expanding in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and North Africa, which should cause us great concern. But the sheer number and complexity of extremist Islamist terrorist groups based along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border remains by far the greatest single concentration of threats. A strategic partnership with Afghanistan, underwritten with aid and with troops, along with continued engagement with Pakistan, is the only hope for securing American interests and the safety of Americans in this region.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Dr. Kagan.

General?

STATEMENT OF GENERAL JACK KEANE, USA, RETIRED, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR

General KEANE. Madam Chairman and Ranking Minority and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me. I haven't been back to foreign affairs until September 2007, just prior to Dave Petraeus doing it. Some of you may have been there. You had a joint committee meeting in a room much larger than this and I think there was somewhere in the neighborhood of 70 of you there. And myself and Bill Perry went through 5 hours of questioning. I really appreciate the seriousness of what you are about here. I know this is the second hearing that you have had, the first one dealing with the Bilateral Security Agreement.

This is my third hearing on Afghanistan. Your colleagues in the House Armed Services Committee have been about this task as well. So I truly appreciate what the House is trying to do in educating and informing itself so it can influence some policy direction.

Let me correct the record. I am a Vietnam veteran, but I was not in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Haiti. My troops were and I had left the Defense Policy Board after 9 years. I thought providing advice to three Secretaries was sufficient and probably about wearing my welcome out in terms of advice, so I walked away.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You are always welcome here.

General KEANE. I walked away from the fourth opportunity.

Obviously, the decisions we are going to make in the next 6 to 12 months are going to have profound impact on Afghanistan and the region as a whole. And certainly a stable and secure Afghanistan, free of radical Islamist sanctuaries, free of radical Islamists is in the U.S. national interest to be sure and something we are trying to achieve.

What is key to achieving that is, in fact, U.S. commitment and resolve and U.S. leadership. It is not about cutting our losses. It is about not squandering the gains and the results that we have achieved. The United States and Afghanistan have got a written strategic agreement right now which is a long-term strategic relationship between both nations for mutual benefit. I am reminded, we had a similar agreement in Iraq. It was called the Strategic Framework Agreement. In my judgment, it was not honored. We pulled away from Iraq. Iran gained influence and al-Qaeda reasserted itself as we can see today.

At issue at the time was a place we are in now. We are arguing over the status of forces agreement. It is a misrepresentation of what took place to say that the reason there are no forces in Iraq is because we could not get an agreement over immunity. Maliki only offered that as a face-saving device because the forces we put on the table, personal envoy to the President of the United States was 10,000, virtually 60 percent less than what the military commander had recommended. Maliki, a nefarious character to be sure, knew that wasn't a serious proposal and tried to find a way out of it. We cannot make that mistake again here.

We need military presence post-2014. We also need a determined, aggressive, diplomatic and political engagement for years to come. And we have to help a fledgling democracy mature. We have huge experience in this area and we can help them. They certainly have huge problems as we all know and has been born out of the last 12 years. We have got to assist Afghanistan to move from a donor economy to a self-sustaining economy focused around mining, agriculture, and a transportation hub and some of that is clearly now on the horizon. We know how to do this. We have done this in Germany, Italy, Japan, post-World War II, South Korea, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, just to name a few and the list is long. We have had some problems as well with other countries.

The central issue facing Afghanistan post 2014 is managing the security risk. Three key decisions to mitigate that risk: Funding the ANSF right now through 2015 at 352,000. We have got to keep that funding through 2020. If we draw down the ANSF on the heels of the NATO–U.S. drawdown it absolutely makes no sense operationally and tactically and we might as well underscore failure if we permit that to happen. And we are actually arguing over what? Two or three billion dollars a year for 5 years? Given what we spent in this government, that is what we are arguing over between 352,000 versus 200,000 and something? That makes no sense to me whatsoever and it borders on irresponsibility if we go down that road.

The second thing is the residual force and you spent a lot of time on it. I won't. The force is essential. It is the glue that will bind the United States, Afghanistan, and international community relationship during the critical transition years; largely noncombat except for counterterrorism missions. If it is too small and cannot perform the required mission, the risk will go up exponentially. Must be counterterrorism. Must be training assistance. And must be enablers.

The third thing is sanctuaries. My dear friend, Fred Kagan, mentioned it. This is a huge problem for us. The south is relatively stable. The east, some parts of it are, as you go toward the Pak border, it is not. The Haqqani network dominates. We were never able to put in place the surge forces in the east that we were able to do in the south. Why? We prematurely withdrew those forces over the objections of General Petraeus. So we never had the force application. As a result of that, they still dominate there.

My recommendation to mitigate that risk is to permit targeting of the Haqqani network in those sanctuaries in Pakistan. And then you bring down Haqqani's operational network and certainly raise the morale of the ANSF forces to the point where they think they have a chance.

Some relationship to Pakistan because you included it in this and just let me very quickly say this is a regime that is dominated by its military who puts its military self above the state. We have got a weak civilian government, fundamentally corrupt. The economy is in the tank. We have got a raging insurgency. We have got an escalating nuclear power. They support terror operations in India with terrorist organizations. They support the Haqqani network and the Taliban in conducting operations against the United States and NATO and Afghanistan. They have got blood all over

their hands with the casualties, Ranking Minority Member, that you mentioned.

[The prepared statement of General Keane follows:]

Congressional Testimony
After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Joint Subcommittee House Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building

by

John M. Keane
General
US Army, Retired

29 October 2013

1415 hours

Congressional Hearing
Testimony
29 October 2013
1415 hrs

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, ranking minority Ted Deutch, and distinguished members of the joint subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on such a critical subject as the "way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan". Am honored to be with such a distinguished panel who I have known for many years.

Afghanistan is rapidly moving toward its most critical milestone since 2001, when the Taliban were deposed, as 2014 approaches and Afghanistan participates in a political, economic and security transition. It is US and Afghanistan written policy that both countries will maintain a long term strategic relationship which is mutually beneficial. I am reminded we had a similar agreement with Iraq, titled the Strategic Framework Agreement, which we have not honored, indeed, we have pulled away from Iraq allowing Iran to gain influence and encouraging the Al Qaeda to reassert itself.

The United States cannot make this mistake again in Afghanistan, not only is U.S. military presence required but a determined, aggressive, diplomatic and political engagement is needed for years to come. It took multiple generations after the Korean War for South Korea to transition from a 3rd world nation run by military dictators to the world's 12th largest economy and a flourishing democracy. U.S. and international community presence in Afghanistan is vital to its future success and for overall stability in the region.

In 2014, there will be national elections in Afghanistan. While there are no guarantees, a relatively fair and open election that reflects the peoples' choices and results in an improved national government will be a significant step forward in the political development of Afghanistan. As such, it will positively impact the confidence of the Afghan people and the international community at large in the Afghan political process. On the contrary, if the election is perceived to be fundamentally corrupt and unfair it will be a major setback which will adversely impact US and IC support.

As part of the post 2014 presence the US and the IC should assist the Afghans to move from a "donor" economy with outside sources representing

the bulk of the resources to a self-sustaining economy focusing on mining, agriculture and transportation. Despite all of Afghanistan's current economic woes it does have the real opportunity to dramatically increase the quality of life of the Afghan people.

The central issue facing Afghanistan post 2014 is how to manage the security risk. How do we avoid squandering the gains we have made in Afghanistan security. Only if the security situation is stable, and the Taliban know they cannot win, can there ever be a realistic hope for a political settlement.

Three key decisions can mitigate the security risk and provide a hedge:

1. FUNDING AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES (ANSF) POST 2014

Currently the transition from US/NATO leading combat operations to supporting the lead of the ANSF in combat operations, frankly, is going better than most expected. The growth and development of the ANSF into an acceptable force which has the respect of the Afghan people is quite an achievement. While it is still too early to tell how they will do entirely on their own, the preliminary indications are positive. Currently, the ANSF is at

a force level of 352 thousand which is funded through 2015. Options are under consideration to drawdown the ANSF post 2015. To drawdown the ANSF on the heels of the US/NATO drawdown makes no sense and drives up the risk. We can mitigate the risk by planning to fund the ANSF at the current 352 thousand to 2020. At some point the Afghans will be in a position to contribute to the funding level.

2. POST 2014 RESIDUAL FORCE

The size of the residual force should be driven by the missions that are required for the force. Those missions are counter-terrorism (CT), training and assistance and enablers to the ANSF.

--CT focus is on the Taliban leaders to disrupt their ability to plan, support and lead combat operations. While leaders can be replaced, successful CT operations are very disruptive to the Taliban and definitely adversely impact their operations. Successful CT operations not only require a direct action force but also drone crews, analysts, helicopter maintenance and flight crews, medical trauma units and security forces.

--Training and assistance are essentially advisors to assist the army and police with their continued growth and development. These advisors will be

mainly to operational headquarters and to the ministers of defense and interior.

--The enablers for the ANSF is often misunderstood as to its importance. Just about every NATO country in Afghanistan requires enablers from the US in varying degrees, such as helicopters, intelligence, medical, logistics and road and mine clearance. When the ANA was organized, recruited and trained the decision was to build an infantry force, or a "boots on the ground" force. The enablers would be provided by the US and are similar to what the US provides NATO forces. Eventually, the ANA will have its own enablers but not till years beyond 2014. If the ANA is to be offensive minded they must have confidence in their support, otherwise they will be paralyzed and reduced to defending their bases.

Based on the required missions the residual force size should be approximately 20, 000 U.S.

3. PAKISTAN SANCTUARIES

--US diplomatic policy has failed to reverse Pakistan's support of the Afghan Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan. The most serious impact is in the

EAST where the security situation is not as stable as the SOUTH. Indeed the Haggani network (HN) in Afghanistan dominates the most eastern provinces. US surge forces were withdrawn before they were able to be applied in the EAST and as such the ANSF faces a critical security risk, which can be reduced by authorizing the targeting of the HN, in its sanctuary in Pakistan. This would be an extension of the mission the OGA is conducting against the Al Qaeda (AQ) in the FATA. Once systematic targeting commences, the sanctuary will cease to exist as we currently know it; a place where strategy, training, operational oversight, intelligence and logistics is executed, routinely, in safe haven. These functions will suffer significantly which will positively impact operations in the EAST and a huge morale boost for the ANSF.

U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN

Post 9/11 U.S. policy with Pakistan has produced mixed results. Pakistan has a history of profound strategic miscalculation. On the positive side, we have successfully impacted the PAK military to transition and train conventional forces for counter insurgency operations and while they have not defeated the Taliban insurgency they have made progress. U.S. and Pakistan have shared

intelligence on AQ and the PAK's have been instrumental in killing and capturing key AQ leaders. However, as mentioned, the PAK's have not withdrawn their support for the HN and the TB as they hedge against a potential US failure in Afghanistan. The way forward is to recognize there are common goals in regional stability, Pakistan internal security and Afghanistan stability and, yet, be cleared eyed about a Pakistan military that puts itself before the state, a weak and corrupt civilian government and an escalating nuclear power. The aid that the USG just resumed should be shifting some of the U.S. effort to assisting in the development of a stronger, less corrupt, civilian government capable of controlling its military. Additionally, the US must assist PAK leaders to address their real strategic issues and a national security strategy to sustain it without confrontation with its neighbors or the use of non-state actors as instruments of national policy.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by saying that war is fundamentally a test of wills and the ultimate objective of war is to break your opponents will. Some claim it is our will that is being broken, we are war weary, and, it is best to just leave because the Taliban will take over eventually, regardless of what we do. No

one knows what will be the long term future stability of Afghanistan but there are things we do know after almost 12 years of involvement:

--the AQ has largely been driven out of Afghanistan

--Afghanistan routinely, now elects its own local and national leaders (not close to a mature democracy, but a beginning)

--education from primary through university is flourishing with woman at all levels

--despite an insurgency, quality of life has improved

--the potential for economic self-sustainment is on the horizon

--the ANSF in recent polling shows dramatic improvement in Afghan confidence

--security has dramatically improved, most of the country is relatively stable, the Taliban are largely defeated in the SOUTH and the ANSF is holding its own. In the EAST there is risk, and I addressed how to mitigate it. My point is, much has been accomplished and we should not squander these gains and risk the return of the TB and the AQ. US/IC presence post 2014 is essential. The required resources are dramatically less than what we provided in the past or are providing now. Is that future investment worth it to protect the positive results of our previous investment, my judgment is,

yes. Ryan Crocker our most esteemed Middle East Ambassador, in over a generation, who served in Pakistan, in Iraq and Afghanistan during the "surge" periods has said, "how we leave a country and what we leave behind is far more important than how we started." What is key is the US policy commitment to the stability and security of Afghanistan must be clearly stated, time and again, and moreover reflected in the political, economic and military assistance that is critical to reduce the risk of failure. We cannot afford any equivocation or mixed signals about the strength and resolve of the US commitment to Afghanistan's future.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, General. Thank you so much for your testimony.

General KEANE. Sorry I ran longer than you wanted.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Ms. Curtis. Thank you very much, you are next.

STATEMENT OF MS. LISA CURTIS, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, ASIAN STUDIES CENTER, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Ms. CURTIS. Madam Chairwoman, Chairman Chabot, and Ranking Member Deutch, thank you very much for inviting me here today to share my views on Pakistan and its role in Afghanistan.

The election of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif does provide an opportunity for the U.S. to forge a more effective partnership with Pakistan albeit on a limited set of issues including social and economic development. Washington and Islamabad are seeking to revive these ties following a series of shocks to the relationship, particularly in 2011 including the U.S. raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad and an accidental NATO strike on the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers later that year.

Now Pakistan's reopening of the ground lines of communication in the summer of 2012 and the U.S. reinstatement of coalition support funding for Pakistan in December of that year did mark the beginning of a rapprochement between our two countries and this culminated in last week's visit of Nawaz Sharif to Washington during which the administration resumed $1.6 billion in economic and military assistance. Now the mutual good will that was generated by the Obama-Sharif meeting was welcome, but it should not mask the fact that each side remains deeply distrustful of the other.

Pakistan is home to a variety of terrorist groups that keep the region unstable and contribute to the spread of global terrorism. The Pakistani military's policies toward the Afghan Taliban and terrorist groups like the Haqqani network and the Lashkar-e Tayyiba have remained largely unchanged over the last 12 years, despite U.S. pressure and $27 billion in aid.

Pakistan's military maintains a short-term tactical approach of fighting some terrorist groups deemed to be a threat to the state, while supporting others that are aligned with Pakistan's goal of curbing Indian regional influence. The recent release of Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar from a Pakistani jail is a potentially positive step for Afghan reconciliation efforts. Afghan leaders have praised the release of this pro-talks leader but say Baradar remains under the supervision of Pakistan's intelligence agencies. But it is unclear to what degree other Taliban leaders believe the group should engage in talks while U.S. and NATO forces are departing. There is skepticism among experts, including myself, about the Taliban's sincerity in the negotiating process. The insurgents have stepped up their attacks and they appear confident that time is on their side.

While Pakistan has been helpful in facilitating travel of Afghan Taliban leaders to meetings in third countries, there are no signs that Pakistan has pressured the Taliban leadership or Haqqani network to compromise for peace. For reconciliation talks to succeed, the Taliban and Haqqani network would have to come under

more pressure in Pakistan. Pakistan's inconsistent policies toward terrorism certainly pose a threat to U.S. national security interests. But cutting off relationships with Pakistan altogether would be a risky option. The U.S. instead should pursue policies that build up the economy and support Pakistani civil society while conditioning military assistance on Pakistan's cooperation with U.S. counterterrorism goals.

There is recognition among some Pakistan civilian leaders that a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan would likely have a destabilizing effect on Pakistan and unless Islamabad uses its resources now to convince the Taliban to compromise in Afghanistan, Pakistan will suffer from an emboldened Taliban leadership that will project its power back across the border into Pakistan. But despite the frustration with Pakistan's approach, the U.S. should persist in using the tools that it has to try to shape Pakistani decision making in a more helpful direction.

Number one, the U.S. should strictly condition military aid to Pakistan. In the last year, the Obama administration has exercised its waiver authority on two occasions to provide military aid to Pakistan. If the administration continues to rely on its waiver authority, it will undermine its ability to influence Pakistani terrorism policies.

Number two, as my colleagues have also testified, we should maintain a robust, residual force presence in Afghanistan post-2014 and commit to funding the ANSF for several more years.

Third, we should foster U.S.-Pakistan civil society dialogue. There are many Pakistani citizens working to reverse extremist trends in the society. There is a need for the U.S. to bolster these forces through civil society engagement and here I would point to an initiative that I believe the U.S. should get behind which is the U.S.-Pakistan Leadership Forum which is a forum that brings together American and Pakistani civil society and private sector leaders to cooperate in areas like media, the arts, education, business, and agriculture.

Lastly, it is important for the U.S. to encourage Indo-Pakistani dialogue. The two countries made significant progress in their peace talks from the period of 2004 to 2007 and the U.S. should encourage both countries to get back to those terms of talks. The U.S. should not seek to restrict India's diplomatic and economic involvement in Afghanistan to appease Pakistan. India has an important role to play in encouraging democratic institution building and economic development in Afghanistan and it shares our objective of preventing terrorists from reestablishing bases in the country. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Curtis follows:]

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CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)

Testimony before the
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
and
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives

October 29, 2013

Lisa Curtis
Senior Research Fellow, Asian Studies Center
The Heritage Foundation

My name is Lisa Curtis. I am Senior Research Fellow on South Asia in the Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

The election of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League/Nawaz (PML/N) party offers the U.S. an opportunity to forge a more effective partnership with Pakistan on a limited range of issues, including social and economic development and regional integration. Given that the Pakistani military continues to seek to undermine Indian regional influence through terrorist proxies operating in both Afghanistan and India, however, Sharif's election alone is unlikely to have significant impact on the core U.S. goals of stabilizing Afghanistan and rooting out terrorism from the region.

Despite the challenges, there are sound reasons for the U.S. to pursue engagement with Pakistan, including maintaining access for tracking global terrorists sheltering on its territory, encouraging Pakistan's leadership to pursue a moderate, democratic path, and maintaining a degree of leverage with the military leadership to ensure that Pakistan's nuclear weapons remain safe and secure and out of the hands of extremists.

Pakistan is home to a plethora of terrorist groups that keep the region unstable, and contribute to the spread of global terrorism. Its policies toward the Afghan Taliban and terrorist groups like the Haqqani network and the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) have remained largely unchanged over the last 11 years, despite U.S. pressure on Islamabad to crack down on the terror groups. Provision of nearly U.S. $27 billion in military and economic assistance to Pakistan over the last decade has had little impact on Pakistan's strategic calculus with regard to Afghanistan and India. Pakistan's military and intelligence leaders maintain a short-term tactical approach of fighting some terrorist groups deemed to be a threat to the state, while supporting others that are aligned with Pakistan's goal of curbing Indian regional influence.

Moving relations forward with a country that is both hurting and helping in the fight against global terrorism has proven challenging. But cutting off relations with Pakistan altogether is a risky option. The U.S. instead should pursue policies that build up the economy and support Pakistani civil society, while conditioning military assistance on Pakistani cooperation with U.S. counterterrorism goals.

The Obama Administration exercised its national security waiver authority to skirt counterterrorism conditions on military aid to Pakistan earlier this year. This was likely prudent in the middle of the U.S. drawdown from Afghanistan, given Pakistani influence with Afghan Taliban leaders and U.S. reliance on the Pakistani Ground Lines of Communication (GLOCs). But a policy of continually overlooking Pakistani inaction against extremist groups on its territory would have long-term negative consequences for U.S. interests in the region and increase the chances for additional terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland. U.S. policymakers should make clear to Pakistani leaders that the future of U.S.-Pakistan ties will hinge on how helpful Pakistan is in supporting the U.S. objective of stabilizing Afghanistan and reining in terrorist groups on Pakistani territory.

Reviving Ties amidst Continuing Mistrust

Washington and Islamabad are making a serious effort to revive ties following a series of shocks to the relationship in 2011 and 2012. Relations started to spiral downward when CIA contractor Raymond Davis was arrested in Pakistan for shooting two Pakistanis in early 2011, then further plummeted following the U.S. unilateral raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan on May 2, 2011. An attack on the U.S. embassy in Afghanistan by the Pakistan-based Haqqani network in September, 2011, and an accidental NATO strike on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers two months later put relations in cold storage for nearly a year.

Pakistan's full re-opening of the GLOCs and the U.S. reinstatement of coalition support funding (CSF) in December 2012 marked the beginning of a rapprochement in relations that culminated in last week's visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Washington, during which the Obama Administration announced full resumption of military and economic aid to the tune of $1.5 billion. The Obama Administration had been working with Congress over the last several months to resume hundreds of millions in assistance programs aimed at strengthening Pakistan's counterterrorism capabilities. In the joint statement issued by Prime Minister Sharif and President Obama on October 23, the two sides committed to holding a ministerial-level strategic dialogue next spring. The priorities for the dialogue include law enforcement and counterterrorism; economics and finance; energy; security, strategic stability, and non-proliferation; and defense consultations.

The mutual goodwill generated by the Obama-Sharif meeting was welcome, but it should not mask the fact that each side remains deeply distrustful of the other. A recent report in *The Washington Post* details the challenges the U.S. faces in managing relations with Pakistan. According to the report, based on classified CIA documents and Pakistani government memos, Pakistan has secretly cooperated with the U.S. drone program.[1] This revelation followed closely on the heels of Sharif's calls on the Obama Administration to halt drone strikes and an Amnesty International report that denounced drones for causing civilian casualties.

The Washington Post article further detailed how U.S. officials have had to confront Pakistan's leadership with evidence that Pakistan retains links to groups involved in attacking U.S. forces. In one instance, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told Pakistani officials the U.S. had found cell phone numbers of Pakistani intelligence officials on bodies of dead militants. In another case, former Deputy Director of the CIA Mike Morell showed Pakistani officials video of militants clearing explosive materials from plants the U.S. had asked Pakistan to raid. U.S. officials said the videos proved that Pakistani authorities had tipped off the militants before the raid was launched. The article is a reminder that despite all the talk about putting relations on a more even keel, the two sides remain deeply divided over the counterterrorism issue.

[1] Greg Miller and Bob Woodward, "Secret memos reveal explicit nature of U.S., Pakistan agreement on Drones," *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2013, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/top-pakistani-leaders-secretly-backed-cia-drone-campaign-secret-documents-show/2013/10/23/15e6b0d8-3beb-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story_1.html.

Pakistani Calculus on Afghanistan

Pakistani leaders appear to believe that U.S. forces will depart the region before Afghanistan is stabilized and thus calculate that continuing support for the Taliban and Haqqani network constitutes their best chance to counter Indian regional influence. Unfortunately, President Obama's aggressive withdrawal strategy and questions about whether the U.S. will retain a residual force presence in the country post-2014 only reinforces their view.

Pakistani officials publicly voice support for a stable Afghanistan, but the truth is they want to ensure that their own proxies remain influential in the country to prevent India from making further inroads into Kabul. Pakistan's concerns about increasing Indian influence and presence in Afghanistan over-ride its desire for a stable Afghan neighbor. This leaves U.S. policy in a conundrum in which American officials acknowledge the need to work with Pakistan on encouraging a peace process in Afghanistan, but also recognize that Pakistan has different regional goals than the U.S., making it an unreliable partner.

Taliban Reconciliation Talks

U.S. efforts to encourage talks between the Afghan government and Taliban have faltered in recent months. The proposed opening of a Taliban political office in Doha, Qatar this past summer turned into a fiasco when the Taliban raised its flag on the office and posted a sign referring to the group as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Afghan President Hamid Karzai was furious about the move and demanded the office be closed down.

There is skepticism among many regional experts about the Taliban's sincerity in the negotiating process. The insurgents have stepped up their attacks and shown signs of confidence that time is on their side. A 2012 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Afghanistan raises concerns that the Taliban could manipulate negotiations with the U.S. to gain international legitimacy, and simply stall for time as America draws down its forces.[2] Other unidentified Western intelligence officials have also expressed reservations about talks with the Taliban, and their assessment is that the Taliban is playing a waiting game and has no real interest in reconciling with the Karzai government.[3]

U.S. officials say Pakistan has been helpful in facilitating the travel of Afghan Taliban leaders to meetings in third countries with U.S. and Afghan officials. But there are no signs that Pakistan has used its leverage to pressure either the Taliban leadership or its Haqqani network allies to compromise for peace. Details of the relationship between the Pakistan military and the Haqqani network are laid out in a recent book, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973–2012,* by Vahid Brown and Don Rassler.[4] The book highlights that Pakistan is actively assisting the Haqqani network the same way it has over the last 20 years, through training, tactical field

[2] Sara Sorcher, "Peace Talks with Taliban a Good Step, But Unlikely to Pay Off," *National Journal*, January 23, 2012, at http://mobile.nationaljournal.com/nationalsecurity/insiders-peace-talks-with-taliban-a-good-step-but-unlikely-to-pay-off-20120123.
[3] Con Coughlin, "Talking to the Taliban: Are Afghanistan's Insurgents Really Serious About Peace Talks with Washington and Kabul?" *The Wall Street Journal*, January 17, 2012.
[4] Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), page 171.

advice, financing, and material support. The assistance, the authors note, helps to sustain the Haqqani group and enhance its effectiveness on the battlefield. For reconciliation talks to succeed, the Taliban and Haqqani network would have to come under more pressure in Pakistan. As U.S. national security expert Anthony Cordesman pointed out, the U.S. inability to convince Pakistan to give up support for the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and other terrorist groups has been a "critical failure" of U.S. strategy in the region.[5]

The case of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the pro-talks Taliban leader whom Pakistan held in detention for over three years, also shows that Pakistan's role in the reconciliation process has been more opaque than U.S. officials seem willing to acknowledge. Pakistani authorities captured Mullah Baradar in February 2010. Baradar was reportedly involved with peace negotiations with the Karzai administration at the time, so his arrest seemed clearly aimed at disrupting the talks. Islamabad refused the Afghan government's request for Baradar's extradition.

After continuous requests over the last three years from the Afghan government for Baradar's release, Pakistan finally let him go last month. Afghan leaders have praised the Pakistani action but say that Baradar remains under the supervision of Pakistan's intelligence agencies. Afghan Taliban leaders have so far refused to meet him inside Pakistan. Pakistan has released several other Taliban prisoners over the last year, but it is still unclear whether this will have an impact on the talks.

Pakistani intelligence officials understand better than anyone how to break apart and disrupt the Taliban–Haqqani–al-Qaeda nexus. Pakistan's Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has had close relationships with members of these groups for three decades and has a well-developed understanding of the dynamics among the organizations and the strengths and weaknesses of each group's leaders. But if Pakistan is unwilling to use its leverage to help bring genuine peace to Afghanistan, there are other policies—aside from pursuing reconciliation with the Taliban—that the U.S. can pursue. Political reconciliation involving the Taliban is desirable only to the extent that it contributes to the goal of ensuring that Afghanistan never serves as a safe haven for global terrorists again.

Peace Efforts with the Pakistani Taliban

Pakistan's fostering of various militant groups has backfired badly as some extremists have turned their guns on the Pakistani state. This is the case with the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, the Pakistani Taliban), which has killed several thousand Pakistani civilians and security forces in terrorist attacks since its creation in 2007. Despite ongoing attacks, an All Parties Conference (APC) in Pakistan decided in early September to endorse the idea of peace talks with the TTP. The Nawaz Sharif government has reached out to the group, even though nearly 140 people were killed in terrorist attacks in the Pakistani city of Peshawar in just the last month. Pakistani leaders say the attacks are being carried out by militant elements opposed to negotiations, implying the TTP may be splintering as an organization.

[5] Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Afghanistan–Pakistan War at the End of 2011: Strategic failure? Talk Without Hope? Tactical Success? Spend Not Build (and then Stop Spending)?" Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 15, 2011, http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/showRecord.php?RecordId=36405.

TTP leader Hakimullah Mehsud, during a recent interview with the BBC, said his group was ready for serious negotiations with Islamabad.[6] It is unclear what the two sides would discuss, however, since Mehsud made clear that one of the TTP's main goals is to wage jihad against the "infidel" system of governance in Pakistan. He said the TTP would demand the country be run exclusively according to Shariah law even after the U.S. and NATO withdraw combat forces from Afghanistan. Mehsud also called for an end to the U.S. drone campaign in Pakistan's tribal border areas and claimed his group would consider a ceasefire, if drone attacks were halted.

The APC resolution notwithstanding, some Pakistani commentators have expressed skepticism about efforts to engage the TTP and see the government's offer as a sign of weakness in the face of escalating attacks. In the six weeks before the elections in early May 2013, the TTP took responsibility for attacks that killed scores of election workers and candidates mainly from the secular-leaning parties. The PML/N's support for negotiations with the TTP during this campaign of violence and failure to denounce the attacks seemed to play in to the TTP's strategy of using violence to intimidate civilians and impose its agenda.

Pakistani leaders have a poor track record of past efforts to forge peace deals with militant groups. The most disastrous attempt at peacemaking with militants came in 2008 and 2009, when Taliban fighters took control of the Swat Valley and then sought to make inroads in other parts of Pakistan. The military finally regained control of the Swat Valley through force in mid-2009, but its initial appeasement of the militants had allowed them to entrench themselves in society and emboldened them to try to gain more territory.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have seen both highs and lows in the last few years. The political leaders have held several meetings but President Karzai often directly blames Pakistan for attacks in Afghanistan. Relations took a downturn earlier this year following a meeting in the United Kingdom in which Pakistan apparently demanded that Afghanistan scale back its relations with India and agree to allow Pakistani training of Afghan security forces.[7] President Karzai visited Islamabad in late August, and many see the recent release of Mullah Baradar and other lower level pragmatic Taliban leaders as a result of those meetings and an effort to improve Afghan-Pakistani relations.

There have been some flare-ups along their shared 1,500-mile border in the last six months. In May, an Afghan border policeman was killed and two Pakistani soldiers were injured during a firefight along the border. In mid-September, Pakistan accused Afghan border forces of killing five innocent Pakistanis along the border in Baluchistan province.

But their shared border has also led to limited economic cooperation and increasingly robust people-to-people linkages. About 3 million Afghan refugees continue to reside in Pakistan and 30,000 Afghan students study in Pakistani schools, while around 50,000 Afghans move back and

[6] "Full Text: BBC interview with Taliban's Mehsud," *BBC*, October 9, 2013, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24466791.
[7] Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy, *CRS Report for Congress*, September 19, 2013.

forth across the Afghan-Pakistani border every day. The two countries signed a "transit trade" agreement three years ago to allow for easier export of Afghan agricultural products through Pakistan. Afghan trucks are not permitted to move cargo back from India, however. Afghan-Pakistani trade currently totals around $2 billion. The two countries also are discussing the possibility of joint economic projects like building a common hydroelectric station.[8]

Indo-Pakistani Ties

India is committed to building economic and political links with Afghanistan both to prevent the re-establishment of terrorist sanctuaries in the country and to gain trade and energy access to Central Asia. India has pledged nearly $2 billion in aid to Afghanistan, making it one of the top donors to the country, and is moving forward with major economic investments. President Karzai and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh completed a Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2011 that allowed, among other things, Indian training of Afghan security forces.

Pakistani military and intelligence officials remain highly suspicious of ties between Kabul and New Delhi and believe that India uses its embassy and consulates in Afghanistan to recruit insurgents to fight in Pakistan's Baluchistan province. From the U.S. perspective, however, India is contributing positively to Afghanistan's economic and democratic development and it is, thus, in the U.S. interest that India remain engaged in Afghanistan. The only way to reduce Pakistani paranoia about Indo-Afghan ties is to promote dialogue and improved relations between India and Pakistan.

Indo-Pakistani tensions are rising after a series of firing incidents in August that killed several Indian and Pakistani troops along the Line of Control (LoC) that divides Kashmir. LoC tensions flared again last week when India accused Pakistani troops of firing guns and mortars on at least 50 Indian border posts in Kashmir. Indian officials said it was the most serious ceasefire violation between the countries in a decade. Meanwhile, Pakistan said that Indian troops targeted 27 Pakistani posts near Sialkot in the same timeframe.

During his previous stint as prime minister from 1997 to 1999, Sharif encouraged back-channel negotiations with India on Kashmir that made significant progress until the Pakistan military occupied Indian positions in northern Kashmir. That slammed the brakes on talks and precipitated a brief border war in the spring of 1999 in the Kargil region along the LoC that left more than 1,000 Indian and Pakistani soldiers dead. Sharif is likely to tread carefully on the issue of Kashmir because of this experience.

U.S. Policy Recommendations:

Pakistani military leaders have so far resisted cracking down on Taliban and Haqqani network sanctuaries largely because of their failure to envision a new strategy that both protects Pakistan's regional interests and uproots support for terrorist activities and ideology. Islamabad's practice of relying on violent Islamist proxies in Afghanistan (and India) has backfired badly on Pakistan and there is increasing recognition among Pakistanis that a Taliban-dominated

[8] Roundtable discussion with visiting Pakistani National Security and Foreign Affairs Advisor Sartaj Aziz, Willard Hotel, Washington, DC, October 23, 2013.

Afghanistan would likely have a destabilizing effect on Pakistan. U.S. officials must build on this sentiment by convincing Pakistani leaders that unless they use their resources now to force the Taliban to compromise in Afghanistan, Pakistan will suffer from an emboldened Taliban leadership that will project its power back into Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan will face increasing isolation and lose credibility with the international community for continuing policies that encourage terrorism and endanger the safety of civilized nations.

Moving forward the U.S. should:

Condition military aid. Despite nearly $27 billion in civil and military aid to Pakistan over the last decade, the U.S. has been unable to sway Pakistani leaders to adopt consistent and comprehensive policies that crack down on terrorism in all its forms. Islamabad has not changed its fundamental strategy of supporting extremist groups like the Taliban, Haqqani network, and LeT. The U.S. must strictly condition further military aid to Pakistan on it cracking down on terrorism in all its forms. Language in the House of Representatives version of the FY 2014 National Defense Authorization Act bill that conditions reimbursement of Coalition Support Funds for Pakistan on it taking action against the Haqqani network is helpful.

In September 2012, the Administration waived FY 2012 certifications on U.S. military aid to Pakistan and in February 2013, it issued a waiver to allow the transfer of major defense equipment.[9] If the Administration continues to rely on its waiver authority, it will undermine its ability to influence Pakistani terrorism policies.

Establish a congressional commission to investigate Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. The public contradictions within the Obama Administration regarding the extent to which Pakistan supports U.S. enemies in the region is leading to speculation that the Administration is reluctant to rock the boat with Pakistan in the middle of a drawdown of forces from Afghanistan. This in turn is weakening the U.S. position in the region and emboldening Pakistan's military leadership. A bipartisan panel would help to bring clarity to U.S. policy toward Pakistan.

Maintain a robust residual force presence in Afghanistan post-2014 and ensure that people in the region know that the U.S. will remain engaged there diplomatically, financially, and militarily even after 2014. The major reason that Pakistan continues to support the Haqqani network (and other Taliban proxies) is the belief that the U.S. will fully withdraw from Afghanistan before the situation is stable and that the Haqqanis provide the best chance to secure Pakistan's interests in the country. Announcing the U.S. intention to leave a robust number of forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014 would signal the Pakistanis that the U.S. is committed to finishing the job in Afghanistan.

Remain open but clear-eyed on the issue of Afghan reconciliation. The goal of Afghan peace talks should be to split the Taliban from al-Qaeda and encourage them to become part of the political process, not to allow them to dominate power at the expense of other ethnic groups and progress made for the people of Afghanistan over the past 12 years. The U.S. must be realistic about the threat that Taliban extremists and their al-Qaeda allies pose and not pin false hopes on

[9] Susan B. Epstein and K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance," *CRS Report for Congress*, July 1, 2013.

a political reconciliation process merely to justify a troop withdrawal. Political reconciliation is desirable -- but only if it contributes to the goal of ensuring that Afghanistan never again serves as a safe haven for global terrorists.

Encourage Indo–Pakistani dialogue. The U.S. should fully support dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi but should also avoid any kind of mediation role. Pakistan and India made strong progress in peace talks from 2004 to 2007, and Washington should encourage the two countries to return to the terms of those talks. The U.S. should not seek to restrict India's diplomatic and economic involvement in Afghanistan to appease Pakistan. India has an important role to play in encouraging democratic institution-building and economic development and shares the U.S. strategic objective of preventing global terrorists from re-establishing a safe haven in Afghanistan.

Foster U.S.-Pakistan civil society dialogue. Although the Pakistan military and intelligence establishment has pursued dual policies toward terrorists that have strengthened support for extremism, there are plenty of Pakistani citizens who are working hard and indeed risking their lives to reverse extremist trends and ensure the rights and freedoms of all Pakistanis. U.S.-Pakistan government-to-government interactions alone will not help Pakistan achieve the goal of becoming a moderate, successful, and stable country. There is a need for more and deeper civil society engagement between Americans and Pakistanis. The U.S. should support initiatives like the U.S.-Pakistan Leadership Forum, organized by three U.S.-based non-governmental organizations (Convergence, the Consensus Building Institute, and the Institute for Resource and Security Studies). The Leadership Forum brings together American and Pakistani civil society and private sector leaders in cooperative endeavors in the fields of media, the arts, education, business, and agriculture development. The Pakistanis involved in the forum are voices for democracy and good governance and can mobilize support for a more stable and cooperative U.S.-Pakistan relationship.

Conclusion:

The global terrorist threat emanating from Pakistan remains a core U.S. national security concern as a multitude of different extremist groups with varying degrees of ties to al-Qaeda operate in and from Pakistan. While the U.S. has made progress against al-Qaeda's core leadership base in Pakistan, it must use whatever pressure is necessary in its engagement with Pakistan to ensure that all terrorist groups in the country are denied sanctuary. Failing to make additional progress in rooting out terrorism from Pakistan could set the stage for future attacks on the U.S. homeland. Perhaps the strongest argument for continuing to pursue some level of engagement with Pakistan, despite its lack of cooperation against some terrorist groups, is to help it avoid facing the nightmare scenario of its nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

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Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Ms. Curtis.

Dr. Biddle.

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN BIDDLE, PH.D., ADJUNCT SENIOR FELLOW FOR DEFENSE POLICY, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BIDDLE. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thanks to the committee for the opportunity to speak with you on these important national issues.

The Afghanistan debate often focuses on the immediate and that is understandable. Certainly, there are lots of important short-term challenges to overcome from the need to negotiate a Bilateral Security Agreement to the need to hold acceptable Afghan elections in the spring, to the need for a successful transition to Afghan security responsibility by the end of 2014. But as important as these issues are, they tend to overlook a question of larger, ultimate importance which is not how we get to a successful transition, but how we get from a successful transition to an actual end to the war that can realize the interests for which we now wage that war. We need to avoid losing focus on what David Petraeus famously asked in his question, "Tell me how this ends?"

And if current trends continue, when U.S. counterinsurgent combat troops withdraw, they are likely to leave behind a stalemated war in 2014. The Taliban is unlikely to be able to defeat the Afghan National Security Forces or the ANSF as they are sometimes called, or take major urban centers such as Kabul or Kandahar, but I think the ANSF is also unlikely to be able to drive the Taliban from their remaining strongholds, especially in the countries east, and the Taliban are unlikely to surrender or stop fighting, simply because they can't break rivals' hold on major urban areas or because foreign combat troops have left.

In fact, the Taliban are likely to remain militarily viable for the foreseeable future. If so, the result would then be deadlock in which neither side can prevail, not the Taliban, but also not the ANSF. The ANSF can probably sustain the stalemate indefinitely, but only as long as the U.S. Congress pays the annual bills needed to keep the ANSF in the field and fighting. The war will then become a contest in stamina between the U.S. Congress and the Taliban. For the ANSF to win this contest outright would require either that the Congress be more patient than the Taliban or that the Taliban prove less resilient in the next decade than they have been in the last.

But if the ANSF isn't going to win the war outright, that leaves only two plausible long-term outcomes to the conflict. One is a negotiated settlement with the Taliban, at some point, whether near or distant. The other is defeat for the Afghan Government. Of course, this body will determine to an important degree via its decisions on funding Afghan National Security Forces whether the ANSF can, in fact, outlast the Taliban.

What I would like to do with the balance of my time this afternoon is to sketch briefly one of the two plausible alternatives to that end game, a negotiated settlement, be it near term or be it more distant, what that might look like and what it would require of us.

My written testimony goes into these questions in some detail. For now, I will just make two points. The first is the plausible terms of an eventual settlement, if it is possible at all and it may not be, would presumably involve the Taliban agreeing to break with al-Qaeda, forego violence, disarm and accept something like the current Afghan constitution. In exchange, they would get legal status as a political actor within Afghanistan, some set of offices or parliamentary seats or ministries, and the withdrawal of any remaining foreign forces. This would obviously be no panacea. The Taliban are an abhorrent group with the blood of thousands of innocent Afghans and American soldiers on their hands and they represent an ideology contrary to deeply held American values. Settlement with them represents at best a least bad option. But a deal along these lines would nevertheless be preferenced to outright defeat and properly structured could preserve the two core interests at the heart of the U.S. war effort, that Afghanistan not become a base by which militants could strike the United States or our allies in the west and that Afghanistan not become a base for destabilizing its neighbors, including Pakistan.

The second point I want to make is that if a negotiated settlement is going to be ultimately the way this war ends, and if we are serious about ensuring that its terms secure the interests for which we are now waging the war, then there are things we need to do starting now to lay the ground work. This includes, of course, funding the ANSF long enough to enable the talks to reach fruition which will be a long process of years at best, but it also includes real governance reform of a kind that we have not been willing to pursue seriously heretofore.

Any plausible deal that ends this war will legalize the Taliban as a political actor and provide them some sort of a foothold in Afghan politics. The only way to keep the terms of any such deal sustainable and to limit the subsequent influence of the Taliban is via domestic political competition within Afghanistan from a viable non-Taliban alternative. The existing political establishment in Kabul is unable to provide this and is unlikely to change simply because we asked them to.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. BIDDLE. Real change of a kind that could make an eventual settlement sustainable will require credible conditionality and the longer we wait to do this the harder it will get.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Biddle follows:]

COUNCIL on FOREIGN RELATIONS

October 29, 2013

War Termination in Afghanistan

Prepared statement by
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Before the
Committee on Foreign Affairs; Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa & Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
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Hearing on "After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan"

The Afghanistan debate often focuses on the short term. Is violence up or down relative to last year? Is the Taliban stronger or weaker? Are Afghan government forces ready yet to take over from international troops? This is understandable. Certainly there are many important short term challenges to overcome – from the need to negotiate a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) this fall to the need to hold an acceptable Afghan election in the spring or the need for a successful transition to Afghan security responsibility by the end of 2014.

Yet the more important issue is the long run. How do we get from transition in 2014 to an end to the war that would secure the aims for which we now fight? Short run policy is just a means to this end. Of course failure in the short run would moot the question. But success in the short run is not sufficient, and near term policies should be judged in light of their effects on the post-2014 prognosis, which is when our

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real interests will either be won or lost. The President often talks about 2014 as though the war will be over then; as he said in January, "[By] the end of 2014 …. this long war will come to a responsible end."[1] But the war will not end in 2014. The U.S. role may end, in whole or in part, but the war will continue – and its ultimate outcome is very much in doubt.

If current trends continue, U.S. combat troops are likely to leave behind a stalemated war in 2014. The Taliban is unlikely to be able to defeat the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) or to take major urban centers such as Kabul or Kandahar. But the ANSF is also unlikely to be able to drive the Taliban from their remaining strongholds in Afghanistan's east, south, and southwest, and the Taliban are unlikely to surrender or stop fighting simply because they cannot break rivals' hold on major cities or because an ostensible foreign occupation is mostly gone. In fact the Taliban are likely to remain militarily viable for the foreseeable future. If so, the result will be a deadlock which the ANSF can probably sustain, but only as long as the U.S. Congress pays the multibillion-dollar annual bills needed to keep them fighting. The war is thus likely to become a contest in stamina between the Congress and the Taliban. Only if the Congress is more patient than the Taliban (or if the Taliban prove much less resilient in the next decade than they have been in the last one) can the ANSF win this contest outright.

If the ANSF is not able to defeat the Taliban on the battlefield, this leaves only two plausible long term outcomes to the war. One would be a negotiated compromise settlement with the Taliban at some point, sooner or later. The other is defeat for the Afghan government via eventual defunding of the ANSF war effort.

If defeat is to be avoided, then the purpose of the war is now to shape the terms of a future settlement to make them more favorable, and to make the settlement more sustainable once reached. And this implies that near term investments of lives and dollars make sense only if they facilitate an acceptable, sustainable, deal. There are at least three critical requirements for this which have not yet been met, and which current approaches may not meet unless we alter today's policies.

First, we will need to get serious about governance reform in Afghanistan. Any imaginable deal will legalize the Taliban as a political party and provide them a set-aside of offices or ministries in the government. If the non-Taliban alternatives in Afghanistan continue to escalate their predation and political exclusion then a legalized Taliban will eventually expand its influence through the political process, and U.S. aims will ultimately be lost. The only way to sustain the terms of a compromise settlement is to ensure domestic political competition in Afghanistan than can contain a legalized Taliban's influence after the deal

[1] United Press International, "Obama: Afghan war to end in 2014," January 11, 2013, available at http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2013/01/11/Obama-Afghan-war-to-end-in-2014/UPI-33701357891200/

2

is signed. And this will require that we accept risk to pursue governance reform in a way that we have been unwilling to do heretofore.

Second, the U.S. Congress will have to fully fund the ANSF for many years to come. Negotiations with the Taliban will be difficult and even if they succeed the process will be long. In the meantime the ANSF will have to stave off defeat while talks grind forward. The ANSF can probably maintain a military stalemate indefinitely, but only if they receive large-scale financial support from the West – an ANSF large enough to hold its ground will be much more expensive than any Afghan government can afford. If Congressional appropriations shrink and the ANSF collapses, the Taliban will be able to seize what they want without concessions and U.S. aims will be forfeited.

Finally, the U.S. Congress will have to accept compromise with the Taliban. This will not be pleasant. The Taliban are brutal, loathsome actors with much innocent blood on their hands, and they represent an ideology contrary to deeply held American values. It would be easy to oppose concessions to such a group. But if we oppose concessions then we have to face the alternatives realistically. Unless we are willing to fund a much larger, longer, U.S. war effort than anything currently proposed, then we have no means to end the war militarily. A no-concessions policy thus means either funding the ANSF at multi-billion dollar annual expenditures indefinitely or accepting defeat. Unless the Congress is willing to accept the former or tolerate the latter, the only alternative is compromise.

If we are unwilling to do these things, a continuation of current policies will eventually yield outright defeat on the battlefield. This would not be a "responsible end" to the war – it would be closer to what the Nixon Administration was willing to accept in the final stages of the Vietnam conflict, a "decent interval" between the United States' withdrawal and the eventual defeat of its local ally. And this decent interval would be purchased at the cost of more American lives and possibly another $100 billion or more of the taxpayers' money, depending on the time it takes for the end to arrive. A strong case can be made for taking the steps needed to make settlement possible. But if we are not willing to do this, a better choice than slower, costlier defeat would be to get all the way out now and avoid wasting more lives and resources in the meantime. For the United States, losing per se is not the worst-case scenario; losing expensively is. Yet that is exactly what a myopic focus on short-term transition without the political work needed to settle the war will probably produce.

To make this case, I first review American interests in the war to establish the minimum conditions that would constitute an acceptable outcome. I then consider the military prognosis on the battlefield and argue that the war is likely to remain stalemated as long as the ANSF is funded. Next I assess the prospects for a negotiated settlement that could secure our interests, and I conclude by evaluating the steps we would need to take to make such a settlement viable.

3

U.S. Interests in Afghanistan

The United States has many aspirations for Afghanistan. We would like its economy to be prosperous, its children to be educated, its government to be democratic, the rights of its women and minorities to be respected, and its people to enjoy a decent chance for a better life. We seek these things for any country in the international system, so surely we would want them for Afghanistan, too. Normally, however, we would pursue this broader agenda via peaceful economic, diplomatic, and political means. When it comes to killing in the name of the state via warfare, by contrast, there is a much narrower range of potentially vital national interests that might justify such extreme measures.

In fact, they are essentially twofold: that Afghanistan not become a base for terrorism against the West, and that chaos in Afghanistan not destabilize its neighbors, especially Pakistan.

The first interest is the most discussed – and the weaker argument for waging war. The United States invaded Afghanistan in the first place to destroy the al Qaeda safe haven there, and Afghanistan's role in the 9-11 attacks clearly justified this. But al Qaeda central is no longer based in Afghanistan, nor has it been since early 2002; it is now headquartered across the border in Pakistan. The Taliban movement in Afghanistan is clearly linked with al Qaeda and sympathetic to it, but there is little evidence of significant al Qaeda infrastructure within Afghanistan today that could threaten the U.S. homeland in any direct way. If today's Afghan government collapsed, if it were replaced with a neo-Taliban regime, or if the Taliban were able to secure real political control over some major contiguous fraction of Afghan territory then perhaps al Qaeda could re-establish a real haven there.

But this risk is shared with a wide range of other weak states in many parts of the world, from Yemen to Somalia to Syria to Djibouti to Eritrea to Sudan to the Philippines or even parts of Latin America or central, west, or North Africa, among other possibilities – including Pakistan. Many of these offer al Qaeda prospects superior in important ways to Afghanistan's. Syria, for example, is richer and far better connected to the outside world than is primitive, land-locked Afghanistan with its minimal communications and transportation systems. Pakistan, of course, is a nuclear power. Afghanistan does enjoy a historical connection with al Qaeda, and it is important to deny them sanctuary on the Afghan side of the Durand Line. But its intrinsic importance is no greater than many other potential havens – and probably smaller than many. We clearly cannot afford to wage protracted warfare on an Afghan scale simply to deny al Qaeda potential safe havens anywhere terrorists might go sometime in the future; we would run out of money and troops long before al Qaeda ran out of prospective sanctuaries.

4

The more important U.S. interest in Afghanistan is indirect: to prevent Afghan chaos from destabilizing its Pakistani neighbor. With a population of 193 million (six times Afghanistan's), a GDP of over $230 billion (over ten times Afghanistan's) and an actual, existing, functional nuclear arsenal, a failed Pakistan would be a much more dangerous sanctuary for al Qaeda. And the risk of government collapse there may be in the same ballpark as Afghanistan, at least in the medium to long term. Pakistan is already at war with internal Islamist insurgents allied to al Qaeda, and by most measures that war is not going well. Should the Pakistani insurgency succeed in collapsing the state or toppling the government, the risk of nuclear weapons falling into al Qaeda's hands would be grave indeed. In fact, given the difficulties terrorists face in acquiring usable nuclear weapons, Pakistani state collapse is the likeliest scenario for a nuclear-armed al Qaeda.

Pakistani state collapse, moreover, is a danger over which the United States has limited influence. The United States is now so unpopular in Pakistan that we have very limited options there. Certainly we have no meaningful prospect of deploying major ground forces to assist the Pakistani government in counterinsurgency. U.S. air strikes can harass insurgents and terrorists within Pakistan, but the inevitable collateral damage arouses harsh public opposition that could itself threaten the weak government's stability. U.S. aid is easily – and routinely – diverted to purposes remote from countering Islamist insurgents, such as the maintenance of military counterweights to India, graft and patronage, or even support for Islamist groups seen by Pakistani authorities as potential allies against their Indian neighbor.

The net result is a major threat over which Americans have very limited influence. With such a limited ability to make a bad situation much better, it is especially important to avoid making it any worse than it needs to be.

And failure in Afghanistan could make the prognosis in Pakistan much worse. All states worry about instability on their borders. For a state as internally threatened as Pakistan, this danger is greater than most. The Taliban are a transnational Pashtun movement that is active on either side of the Durand Line and sympathetic to other Pakistani Islamist insurgents. By many accounts, their links to anti-Pakistani militants are growing as these groups expand and seek allies to extend their reach and power. If Afghanistan descended into chaos, a combination of refugee flows, safe haven in an anarchic Afghanistan beyond Pakistani state control, and the calling in of IOUs by anti-Pakistani militants who had assisted the Afghan Taliban in part to secure the latter's support against Islamabad could eventually be enough to tip an already-unstable Pakistan into collapse. Much has been made of the threat Pakistani base camps pose to Afghan government stability, but this danger works both ways: instability in Afghanistan poses a serious threat to the civil government in Pakistan, and the latter is a greater threat to U.S. interests than the former.

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These security interests are real but they are not unlimited. Afghanistan's potential effect on its neighbor is genuine, but indirect. Nor does failure in Afghanistan predetermine failure in Pakistan: if Pakistan puts its own house in order and marshals the full resources of the state behind its own counterinsurgency effort then it could survive in spite of chaos on its border. A series of uncertain events would have to break in unfavorable ways for an Afghan failure to yield a nuclear-armed terror threat from south Asian militants. The consequences for our own security if this chain of events did unfold would be radically grave, but the likelihood of this should not be overestimated. Americans have invested major resources to combat unlikely but grave threats in the past (the Cold War nuclear arms race had much the same quality), but that does not mean we should always do so, or that it necessarily makes sense to do so here. Reasonable people can thus differ on whether our interests in Afghanistan warrant American warmaking to secure, or whether they merit the scale of effort we are now expending.

But to the extent that our interests in Afghanistan are worth waging war to secure, these interests turn centrally on denying the use of Afghan territory by Pakistani militants, and secondarily on denying the use of that territory to al Qaeda or other terrorists who might use it to strike the West. Success or failure in the war is properly judged against these criteria.

The Military Prognosis in Afghanistan

The war we are waging to secure these interests has made important but incomplete progress since 2009. Prior to that time, the Taliban had been expanding their influence in much of the country's east and south, they were solidifying de facto control of much of the central Helmand River Valley, and they were posing a growing threat to Kandahar and even Kabul. The troop surge announced by the President in fall 2009, however, coupled with other Western reinforcements and a major expansion of the ANSF, reversed this momentum and re-established government control in much of Afghanistan's south and southwest.

Yet the results fell short of stabilizing the country as a whole. Important areas in Afghanistan's east and some parts of the south remain under Taliban control. And while the surge weakened the Taliban it did not destroy them or their ability to inflict casualties. When the original 2009 campaign plan was written it was hoped that the surge would clear the Taliban from Afghanistan's critical terrain and so weaken the insurgency that the war would be close to a finish by the time Afghans took over. This has not happened. Tight deadlines for U.S. withdrawal combined with Taliban resilience have left insurgents in control of enough critical terrain to remain a threat well after 2014.

To date there are few signs of any looming collapse in the Taliban's will to defend these strongholds or expand their influence beyond them. Their funding base and sanctuaries in Pakistan will remain viable for the foreseeable future. And they have shown themselves still capable of inflicting serious casualties through

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the 2013 fighting season. Some now hope that when U.S. combat forces withdraw in 2014 this will undermine the Taliban's status as opponents of foreign occupation, and that this will weaken their ability to recruit and motivate fighters. Yet the withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces in 1989 had no such effect on the Mujaheddin, who continued to fight through more than a decade of subsequent bitter warfare over the spoils; there is ample historical precedent for Afghan militants to fight on long after foreign forces' withdrawal. Nor will the 2014 transition actually remove all foreign "occupiers" – if a follow-on force of Western advisors or counterterrorist special forces remains, this will offer all the justification the Taliban needs to continue a war they claim is motivated by resistance to foreign occupation. After all, the Western footprint in the country when the insurgency began was hardly omnipresent; if 25,000 Western troops in 2004 were sufficient to motivate the Taliban to mount an insurgency then would a residual of perhaps as much as half that many in 2015 really do otherwise? Overall, the Taliban have shown remarkable patience and resilience from 2002-2014, and there is little reason to suppose that they will cease fighting or lose effectiveness any time in the foreseeable future. The ANSF[7] will thus inherit a more demanding job than originally planned in 2009.

The Afghan government forces that will take over this job are a mixed lot. Their best units will probably be capable of modest offensive action to clear Taliban strongholds; others' corruption and ineptitude will leave them part of the problem rather than the solution for the foreseeable future. Opinions on the net potential of this amalgam vary; on balance, a reasonable optimist would assess the ANSF as likely to hold most or all of the terrain the surge cleared but unlikely to expand the government's control much beyond that. ANSF casualties were heavy this fighting season, but there is little evidence that this broke any units' will to fight or undermined their ability to hold ground over any large area of the country. Depending on the size of the post-2014 ANSF structure, they may have to contract their zone of control somewhat to ensure adequate security in the areas they hold. They will continue to need assistance from Western enablers for many years (especially in the form of medical evacuation, air support, logistical support, military intelligence, and planning). And they will probably not be able to wrest control of established Taliban strongholds any time soon, if ever. But their performance this year gives little reason to assume that they will collapse – it is reasonable to expect them to hold their ground as long as they are supported by the necessary enablers, and especially, as long as someone pays the bills to keep the ANSF operating.

Those bills will be substantial, and it is the U.S. Congress who will have to pay most of them. The Coalition has always understood that an ANSF big enough to hold what the surge gained would be vastly more expensive than the Afghan government could afford. Last year's ANSF operating budget of $6.5 billion was more than twice the Afghan government's entire federal revenue. Most of the money to keep the ANSF fighting will thus have to come from abroad, and the lion's share from the U.S.

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In principle this funding should look like a bargain. Current estimates for the annual cost of a post-transition ANSF often fall in the $4-6 billion range; even $10 billion a year would be tiny relative to the nearly $120 billion the U.S. spent to wage war with mostly American troops in 2011. The further one gets from 2011, however, the less salient that contrast becomes. And other natural comparisons are much less congenial. Annual U.S. military aid to Israel, for example, was $3.1 billion in FY 2013; U.S. requirements for the ANSF will surely exceed this for a long time, and will probably exceed combined U.S. military aid to both Israel and Egypt together for the foreseeable future.

If the ANSF's appropriations are cut back, their military viability would erode quickly. The Administration appears likely to seek the smallest ANSF appropriation they can, cutting expenditures back as far as possible to make the bill easier to pay. This means, however, that even modest reductions below the requested levels would force the ANSF to shrink below the troop strength needed to hold the line – and a shrinking pool of patronage money could quickly split the institution along factional lines. Either result risks a return to the atomized civil warfare of the 1990s, yet this chaos would provide exactly the kind of terrorist havens that the Coalition has fought since 2001 to prevent. A stalemated war is strategically tolerable for Americans (if tragic for Afghans), but chaos represents defeat, and stalemate can only be maintained as long as the U.S. Congress funds it.

The Prospects for a Negotiated Settlement

If Congressional funding is sustained forever, then the Afghan stalemate can probably be maintained forever. But if not, then the only way to end the war will be through a negotiated settlement in which both sides must compromise.

Yet there is widespread skepticism on the prognosis for such talks. Many doubt the Taliban are serious. After all, they assassinated Burhanuddin Rabbani, the head of Karzai's High Peace Council and the Kabul official charged with moving talks forward. If they can simply wait the U.S. out and win outright, why should they make concessions in a serious negotiation? Others see the Taliban seeking only legitimation and a soapbox for political grandstanding. Many worry that the sheer complexity of talks involving multiple Taliban factions, their Pakistani patrons, the government of Afghanistan, the government of the U.S., other allies, and intermediaries such as Qatar, few of whom trust the others, will prove too difficult. Many U.S. conservatives doubt the Administration's motives in the talks, fearing giveaways to cover an Administration rush to the exits and worrying that negotiation signals weakness. American progressives fear the loss of hard-won gains for Afghan women and minorities in concessions to the Taliban. Many Afghans, especially women's groups and non-Pashtun northerners, share such concerns; some have even threatened civil war to prevent this.

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Is there any real prospect, then, for a deal offering anything more than a fig leaf to conceal policy failure? Perhaps. The Taliban have, after all, publicly expressed willingness to negotiate, and this posture incurs cost to them. The Taliban is not a monolithic actor, but a potentially fractious alliance of factions. When Mullah Omar's representatives accept talks, other factions worry about deals being made behind their backs. Taliban field commanders wonder whether the battlefield prognosis is as favorable as their leadership claims (if outright victory is near, why negotiate?), and face the challenge of motivating fighters to risk their lives when shadowy negotiations might render such sacrifice unnecessary. All of this reduces Taliban effectiveness, and none is necessary: all they needed to avoid such complications is to have declared their refusal to parley. In the meantime the Coalition would incur all the costs and potential divisions of proposing talks. The Taliban could simply have pocketed these gifts and carried on, yet they have instead declared their willingness to negotiate, accepting costs they could have averted. This implies some actual interest in a settlement of some kind.

In fact there may be good reasons for the Taliban to explore a possible deal. Omar and his allies have been living in exile for over a decade, their children are growing up as Pakistanis, and their movements are surely watched and constrained by their Pakistani patrons. Afghans are famously nationalist, and Afghan-Pakistani rivalry is old and deep; exile in Pakistan surely grates on the Afghan Taliban. Perhaps more important, they live under the constant threat of assassination by U.S. drones or commando raids – just ask Osama bin Laden or six of the last seven al Qaeda operations directors, all killed or captured in such attacks. And the war imposes costs on the Taliban, too. Stalemated warfare is an equal opportunity waste of lives and resources. They are probably able to continue indefinitely, and they will certainly not surrender simply to stanch the bleeding, but this does not mean they enjoy it or would prefer it to any possible settlement terms. Stalemate is costly enough that the Taliban might consider an offer if the process is not tantamount to capitulation.

What would such a deal comprise? In principle a bargaining space exists wherein all parties' vital interests could be preserved even if no one's ideal aims are achieved. The Taliban would have to renounce violence, break with al Qaeda, disarm, and accept something like today's Afghan constitution. In exchange they would be legalized as a political party, they would receive some set-aside of offices or parliamentary seats, and any remaining foreign forces in Afghanistan would withdraw – negotiations would turn on the scale and nature of the set-aside, and the nature of any modest changes to Afghan government policies. The Afghan government would have to accept a Taliban role in a coalition government, and the springboard for Taliban political activism this would provide. In exchange, the government would preserve the basic blueprint of today's state, and would surely command the votes needed to lead a governing coalition, at least in the near term. Pakistan would have to give up its blue sky ambitions for an Afghan puppet state under Taliban domination, but would gain a stable border and enough influence via its Taliban proxies to veto any Afghan-Indian axis that could threaten Pakistan.

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The United States would have to accept the Taliban as a legal political actor with an extra-democratic guarantee of positions and influence, and the U.S. would probably forfeit any significant base structure for counterterrorism from Afghan soil. Of course this would sacrifice aims the U.S. has sought since 2001. It would put at risk the hard-won rights of Afghan women and minorities by granting the Taliban a voice in Afghan politics. And it would mean legalizing and offering a share of power to an organization with the blood of thousands of Americans on its hands. This would be far from an ideal outcome.

Yet if properly negotiated, it could at least preserve the two vital U.S. national interests at stake in Afghanistan: that Afghan soil not become a base for militants to attack the West, and that it not become a base for destabilizing Afghanistan's neighbors. The non-Taliban majority in a coalition government would preclude 2001-style base camps in a post-settlement Afghanistan as long as the Taliban are denied control of internal security ministries or district or provincial governments in critical border areas. By contrast, an ANSF collapse and subsequent chaos would preclude nothing. And whatever fate Afghan women and minorities suffered under a stable coalition would be far less bad than what they would face under anarchy. A compromise deal with the Taliban would be a bitter pill to swallow, but it would sacrifice far less than would defeat in a defunded war.

What is to be Done?

Absent military re-escalation to compel Taliban capitulation, we face two intellectually defensible ways forward.

One is to get serious about negotiations that aren't just Taliban surrender talks. Meeting with the Taliban is only part of this, and may be the easiest part. Seriousness on this score also demands painful political work now on at least two other fronts.

The first such front is in Afghanistan. There will be challenges getting anti-Taliban northerners to accept concessions, but the biggest problem is predatory, exclusionary misgovernance in Kabul. Any settlement will legalize the Taliban and grant them a political foothold. An acceptable deal will provide only a minority foothold initially, but the Taliban would then be free to expand it electorally if they can. Over the longer term, the containment of the Taliban's influence will thus depend on internal political competition from a viable non-Taliban alternative. Karzai's government, however, is deeply corrupt, exclusionary, and getting worse. If his successor continues this trend it will hand the Taliban their best opportunity for real power. The Taliban are not popular in Afghanistan; the reason any deal will require extra-democratic set-asides for them is because they know how unpopular they are and will surely reject a mere invitation to compete in elections without guarantees. The one political ace-in-the-hole they enjoy is a reputation for

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honesty: they are seen as brutal but incorruptible. This advantage is not yet enough for them to command popular support over any meaningful part of the country, but if today's misgovernance continues to worsen, eventually even a brutal but honest movement will make headway. If a legalized Taliban eventually controls critical border districts, and its Pakistani militant allies then call in wartime IOUs to establish base camps under Taliban protection, the result could be nearly as dangerous as government military defeat. The only real insurance against this is governance reform.

To date, however, the West has been unwilling to compel reform, preferring benign "capacity building" to coercive diplomacy with Kabul. Benign assistance might be enough if the problem was just a lack of capacity, but it isn't: Afghanistan is misgoverned because its power brokers prefer this; benign capacity building via Western aid just creates better trained kleptocrats given this. Real improvement thus requires, inter alia, real conditionality wherein Western assistance is provided only if reforms are implemented and withheld otherwise. Without this, self-interested officials have no incentive to reform. Yet heretofore the West has been systematically unwilling to threaten to withhold assistance – the Coalition campaign plan turns on transition, and any withholding of assistance is seen chiefly as a threat to rapid creation of an Afghan civil and military administration that could take over and let Coalition troops go home. If we cannot credibly threaten to withhold something Kabul values, however, then governance will never improve. Of course, the West's potential leverage was greater when aid budgets were bigger and military resources more plentiful; the less the West can promise, the less leverage a threat to withhold it conveys. But without conditionality even vast assistance does little for governance reform, and liberal unconditional aid often makes matters worse by fueling corruption; serious conditionality could make even a smaller budget into a stronger tool for reform. To use it properly, however, means accepting the risk that we may have to reduce deliberately Afghan institutions' capacity if they continue to refuse reform. This is neither easy nor pleasant, but it is necessary if we are going to be realistic about settlement.[2]

The other front on which serious political work is needed is Capitol Hill. Any deal will require real concessions from the West, and will take years to negotiate. This means the Congress must sustain two potentially unpopular policies if Afghan talks are to succeed.

First, the Congress must continue funding multi-billion-dollar annual appropriations for the ANSF until the negotiations reach fruition, which is likely to be years. And these appropriations will need to continue in the face of the inevitable crises in U.S.-Afghan relations that we have seen with such frequency over the last decade. There will surely be another Afghan corruption scandal that will hit the newspapers, or another wave of Afghan protests over an accidental Koran burning, or another American advisor killed by an Afghan recipient of U.S. aid, or another occasion when an Afghan president plays to local politics by

[2] For a more detailed discussion of strategies for governance reform in Afghanistan under current conditions, see Stephen Biddle, "Salvaging Governance Reform in Afghanistan," Council on Foreign Relations Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 16, April 2012, available at: http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/salvaging-governance-reform-afghanistan/p27778

insulting American sensibilities. If the Congressional response to such crises is to reduce the ANSF's appropriations, the result could soon be an inability to stave off defeat long enough to settle the war on acceptable terms.

Second, the Congress must accept compromise with the Taliban. This will not be easy. There are few other negotiating partners as abhorrent as these. The difficulties here can be seen in microcosm in the Administration's recent experience of trying to negotiate a mutual prisoner release with the Taliban as an early confidence building measure. Last year the Administration offered to release five Taliban detainees from Guantanamo in exchange for the Taliban releasing Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, their only American prisoner. This offer to release Guantanamo detainees produced sharp criticism from U.S. lawmakers; stung, the Administration then withdrew the offer, the Taliban charged bad faith (both on the detainee issue and on the addition of new conditions from Karzai), and the negotiations collapsed. Serious talks will provide serial opportunities for such controversies extending for years; success will require a Congressional willingness to keep the temperature of such disagreements low enough to allow the Administration to negotiate.

If the U.S. is unwilling to accept the costs a serious settlement effort requires, then the other defensible policy at this point is to cut American losses and get out now. A stay-the-course policy that cannot end the war and eventually results in its defunding is a recipe for a more expensive version of failure. Losing per se is not the worst case – losing expensively is. And continued myopic focus on short term transition without the decisions needed to settle the war is likely to produce exactly this.

Some might see the Obama administration's current policy as a hedged version of such disengagement already. The U.S. military presence in Afghanistan will soon shrink to perhaps fewer than 12,000 advisers and trainers, and U.S. aid might decline to around $4 billion a year for the ANSF and $2–$3 billion in economic assistance, with the advisory presence costing perhaps another $12 billion a year. This commitment is far smaller than the 100,000 U.S. troops and over $100 billion of 2011, and it offers some chance of muddling through to an acceptable outcome while discreetly concealing the United States' probable eventual failure behind a veil of continuing modest effort. Only in Washington, however, could up to $20 billion a year be considered cheap. If this yielded a stable Afghanistan, it would indeed be a bargain, but if, as is likely without a settlement, it produces only a defeat drawn out over several years, it will mean needlessly wasting tens of billions of dollars. In a fiscal environment in which $8 billion a year for the Head Start preschool program or $36 billion a year for Pell Grant scholarships is controversial, it is hard to justify spending perhaps another $100 billion in Afghanistan over, say, another half decade of stalemated warfare merely to disguise failure or defer its political consequences. It is harder still to ask Americans to die for such a cause. Even an advisory mission involves risk, and right now, thousands of U.S. soldiers are continuing to

patrol the country. If failure is coming, many Afghans will inevitably die, but a faster withdrawal could at least save some American lives that would be sacrificed along the slower route.

I prefer the first way: a real effort to lay the political groundwork to end the war via a compromise settlement. But without the groundwork, success is unlikely. And if Americans persist in unexamined and unrealistically rosy assumptions about the post-transition prognosis while stalling on reform in Kabul and failing to build a consensus for sustained funding at home, then the likeliest result will be a more expensive version of failure. Getting out now would be a better policy than that.

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Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thanks so much to Dr. Biddle.

Thank you to all of our panelists. I will begin the questions.

There is no short-term solution, no policy decision that Congress or the administration can make to win the war and see stability and democracy flourish in Afghanistan in the foreseeable future and certainly not before 2015. But there are decisions that we can make or not make that would jeopardize our efforts in Afghanistan and risk eliminating the gains we have made during the past 12 years.

The first obstacle is ensuring that the Bilateral Security Agreement is finalized and that it includes immunity for U.S. personnel from persecution under Afghan law. The administration has indicated that without this it would pull out of Afghanistan completely, leaving the zero option on the table. Putting aside the immunity issue, what are the key features the BSA will need to include in order for us to ensure that we are able to maintain the gains made while protecting U.S. troops and personnel? That is number one.

Another major obstacle is the size of the residual force in post-2014 Afghanistan.

General, you testified that based on the scope, size, and difficulty of the post-2014 mission, the residual U.S. force should be about 20,000.

And Dr. Kagan, you didn't put a number on it, but you testified that the Afghan National Security Forces would not be ready to secure their territory without significant U.S. and international support which includes military forces.

Ms. Curtis, you stated that the U.S. must maintain a robust residual force.

We have heard that the administration could set its numbers at less than 10,000 and it was reported that NATO is planning on a smaller residual force than we first thought. What are the dangers of leaving behind a smaller force that has been recommended? Insurgents generate over $100 million a year in illegal drug trade and that is with troop levels at a much higher number than is currently been floated. How will the reduced numbers impact other operations that are critical to our mission in Afghanistan like counternarcotics?

And finally, at times our President has laid out the narrative that al-Qaeda has been decimated and nearly defeated. With so much of a threat still remaining in Afghanistan, Pakistan region, should we underestimate al-Qaeda's strength and is that believed to be setting the U.S. for failure in a post-2014 Afghanistan?

Dr. Kagan, we will start with you, quickly.

Mr. KAGAN. Yes, I think al-Qaeda is not decimated and actually if you look at maps as our team has provided of al-Qaeda area of operations around the world, it controls more territory, has more fighters and poses a greater threat to the United States today than it ever has. Giving it back its sanctuary in Afghanistan would be a crowning glory for al-Qaeda and would be extremely dangerous for the U.S.

Please hear me very carefully because I don't want to have numbers taken out of context. My personal assessment of the forces required after 2014 to do the missions that are being described is upwards of 30,000. That has not been on the table for a long time.

I agree with General Keane that with 20,000 at very high risk and with a great deal of difficulty, it is feasible. When you get down below 10,000, a lot of missions fall off. We will not be doing counternarcotics. We will not be doing counterinsurgency and our ability to train, advise, and assist will be extremely limited.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Dr. Kagan.

General? Punch your button for the mic.

General KEANE. I agree with Dr. Kagan about al-Qaeda. It is on the rise and there is a lot of misunderstanding about them. They are not morphing into something else. Their plan was always to decentralize, establish a caliphate in a region by gaining operational and territorial control in the various countries that they want to control and that is absolutely happening before our eyes. So let us be clear about it.

In terms of size of residual force, it is about the missions which must be performed that drives the size of the force. And those are counterterrorism, training assistance, and also the enablers that the force requires.

The optimal size, I totally agree with Fred is 30,000, a minimum of that is 20,000. We can establish arbitrary numbers here and then what you have eventually if you get down into the numbers people are talking about, 10,000 and below, you have a residual force in name only that is not capable of performing assigned missions.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, and I am sorry for the other two, I know Ms. Curtis and Dr. Biddle were ready, but I am out of time and we have got a lot of folks. So we will get you later.

Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks. General, let me just continue with that. You say we can establish arbitrary numbers. Help me understand, this is the issue that we all struggle with. I am not a general, so when you talk about the need, both of you talk about the need for 30,000 is optimal, maybe 20,000, the administration has been talking making 10,000, maybe 6,000, all sorts of numbers have been thrown around. How do you determine—how is it that the administration can come up with a number that they think works with lots of generals giving their input into that decision for you to consider it so far off?

General KEANE. I can't speak for that analysis. Frankly, just when you look at the mission and you start to lay it down what it is, let us just take one as an example, counterterrorism. If you try to perform that mission from one location, you cannot operationally accomplish the mission. So in other words to go all the way to the east to take down Afghan, excuse me, Taliban leaders, to go all the way to the south to do the same as we are currently doing, you have to be at multiple bases. That drives up numbers. It is not just about special operators who kick doors down. The fact of the matter is they have to have drones, the crews to support them. They have to have helicopters which is an assault force. They need maintenance to support those helicopters. They need intelligence analysts. And they also need people to secure them and some logistical support as well.

So when you lay those numbers down, you get way beyond 10,000. Just in dealing with this one alone, I think the minimum

force requirement on the mission I am just talking to you about is about 7,000.

Mr. DEUTCH. And that mission is what exactly? How do you define the mission?

General KEANE. Excuse me?

Mr. DEUTCH. How do you define the mission that we need 30,000 troops ongoing in Afghanistan?

General KEANE. How do I define the mission for the residual force?

Mr. DEUTCH. Yes.

General KEANE. Is to assist in the stability and security of Afghanistan, recognizing that we are in a transition phase from where we have been in the lead and the Afghan security forces are now on their own. They do not have the kind of terrorism capability that we have. They have a facsimile of it.

The other thing, they need enablers. Just think of this. All the NATO forces that are in Afghanistan to this day by and large all receive some kind of enablers from the United States to be able to function effectively. How could we possibly walk away and not provide the Afghan National Security Forces with some enablers to enable them to function when they are an infantry-based force?

Mr. DEUTCH. General, I don't think anyone is saying that there should be no assistance, no enablers. I would make one point though. When you said earlier, almost in an off-handed way that the discussion about troop numbers, whether it is—we are discussing cost and you said $2 billion, $3 billion a year over the course of however many years until 2020 that it is almost irresponsible for us to be discussing that.

I would just make the point that here in Washington these days, we have debates in every one of our committees about where we spend money and how we spend money and what our priorities are. And I don't think it is irresponsible for us to struggle through, with all due respect, I don't think it is irresponsible for us to try to struggle through whether $2 billion or $3 billion a year more in Afghanistan is something that we should be spending when tomorrow, the conferees are going to meet on the Farm Bill to talk about whether to cut SNAP funding by $40 billion. And on Friday, there is going to be a $5 billion cut in SNAP funding when the Recovery Act expires.

So I don't—my problem here is we are trying to get to the right point here where we can, as I laid out in my opening statement, where we can get to an Afghanistan that can take care of itself, that doesn't become a breeding ground for terrorists again. But we can't have that debate in the absence of a broader debate about what our priorities are as a nation.

So when we listen to the administration make suggestions, to readily dismiss a force for being too small because it doesn't do all that we think it should, I think is to lose track. And I don't blame you for this. You are looking at a very specific point. But for us here, as we debate these broader issues, at some point we have to start to balance whether spending that extra $3 billion a year in Afghanistan is more important than spending the extra $3 billion a year on critical needs here in this country. That is just part of

the debate that too often is missing and I think it needs to be brought back in and I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Deutch. Thank you. Mr. Chabot is recognized for his time.

Ms. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair. General Keane, let me get back to you for just a second. If you get down to say 10,000 or fewer U.S. troops, I have heard this and if you can tell me how accurate this is, you get to a point where basically those personnel are for the most part protecting itself kind of, its own force protection and things like that and that you can't really perform any functions outside that are going to be particularly helpful to U.S. interests in Afghanistan. Is that correct?

General KEANE. Well, certainly, I do agree with that. Numbers have a certain quality all of their own. And when you rationalize what those numbers should be it has to be on the tasks and the missions that are required to be accomplished by a residual force. If you permit the sizing of the force to be essentially numbers driven and not mission and task driven, then you are just pulling the guts out of what you are trying to accomplish.

And I think if you will put arbitrary numbers on the table without looking at the tasks—the military can definitely provide task purpose and numbers assigned to that task and purpose. And if you are going to bring down the numbers, you have to understand what we are losing as a result of those reduction in numbers. And we should be honest with ourselves about that. I think it is a serious degradation and mission capability when you drive those numbers down like that. We should know what is the loss of that and not just tell those 10,000 make do and do the best you can.

Ms. CHABOT. Thank you. Thank you, General.

Dr. Kagan, let me turn to you, if I can. I remember the last time I was in Iraq it was maybe 6 months before the agreement with Iraq fell apart. And I remember being in various military briefings and talking with Iraqis and government leaders over there. Everybody at that point assumed that there would be a residual, pretty significant residual U.S. force there on the ground and I and many other people were ultimately shocked when it was just announced pretty much: We can't reach an agreement, everybody is coming out.

Now when that happened, there were obviously consequences as a result of that. Could you touch on some of the consequences we have seen in Iraq? And what should that teach us about what we are actually talking about here with respect to Afghanistan which isn't too late?

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you, Congressman. The consequences in Iraq have been absolutely devastating. We have seen the reconstitution of al-Qaeda in Iraq in most of the safe havens from which it had been operating before the surge and subsequent operations cleared it out. It is now conducting car bomb operations at the same level as it had been in mid-2007. We have seen Shia sectarian militias remobilized and now some of them are being brought into the Iraqi security forces. We are seeing increased sectarian killing and of course, all of this is in the context of the Syrian war as well.

If we pull out of Afghanistan, the consequences may or may not ensue as rapidly as they did in Iraq, but I believe that they will

ensue very much along those lines because like the Iraqi security forces, the Afghan National Security Forces were not created, have not been established in such a way that they can continue to operate independently without any support.

Ms. CHABOT. Thank you. With about a little over a minute that I have got left, let me turn to Ms. Curtis and Dr. Biddle.

We really haven't touched too much on India which is right in the region there and a key player. Could you discuss briefly India's role in all of this relative to the future of Afghanistan and Pakistan to some degree? What role have they played? What role would you expect them to play? And I have got about a minute so Ms. Curtis, maybe I will give you 30 seconds and Dr. Biddle, about 30.

It is only the second most populist country on earth and let us talk about that for 30 seconds.

Ms. CURTIS. Can I quickly just add that when we are talking about troop numbers in Afghanistan, obviously that decision will have an impact on Pakistan, a nuclear arms state. So we are not just talking about the Afghanistan state, but we are talking about the entire region and the impact on the entire region.

As far as India goes, India has played a helpful role in Afghanistan. They have provided assistance. They have built roads, power stations. They have helped support the nascent democratic process there. So India's goals in Afghanistan match those of the U.S. and not wanting the Taliban to retake the country. The problem is that Pakistan is paranoid about any role that India has in Afghanistan, even if the Indian role is helping with the economy, Pakistan sees any increase in influence that India has in Afghanistan as detrimental to Pakistan's interests.

But as I said, I don't think we can play into Pakistan's hands and ask India to pull back from Afghanistan just to appease Pakistan. I think the only way to reduce the Pakistani paranoia is to encourage better Indo-Pakistani relations.

Ms. CHABOT. Thank you. Madam Chair, I would ask unanimous consent for 30 seconds for Dr. Biddle to complete the thought.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection.

Mr. BIDDLE. I agree with most of what my colleague said. I am very skeptical about the prospects for Indo-Pakistani rapprochement any time soon. And I think in the absence of that, the way I would prefer we look at India's role in Afghanistan is as a part of a strategy for bringing about a settlement to the war that will necessarily require Pakistani agreement.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. I am so sorry, Mr. Chabot, but we have so many——

Ms. CHABOT. He has got 6 seconds.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Okay, go ahead.

Mr. BIDDLE. Don't let marginal Indian help in Afghanistan overturn relations with Pakistan.

Ms. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Mr. Higgins is recognized.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, on the issue of Afghanistan, we have been there 12 years. We have lost 2,092 American troops. We have spent $1 trillion. There is an agricultural economy, but it is not one the government controls or at least from what we know it is the poppy fields. It is the heroin trade.

And Gretchen Peters in her book, Seeds of Terror, puts the estimate of $½ billion which goes to fund Taliban activities in Afghanistan. Very little has been done about that issue. And the Taliban doesn't even own the poppy fields. They preside over it. They charge protection, but it funds their activities.

The United States has spent $89 billion, rebuilding the roads and bridges of Afghanistan and then the Taliban sets and provides explosive devices on the very roads and bridges that we built to kill our people. The best way to defeat an IED is not to be there. About 63 percent of American casualties are attributed to IEDs.

There has been a lot of talk about Pakistan being a partner in defeating terrorist activity over the past 12 years. Well, guess what? Pakistan is not helping to defeat terrorism. In fact, they are facilitating it.

Abbottabad is about 70 miles north of the capital city of Islamabad. Abbottabad is described as a pleasant weather city with lots of educational institutions and military establishments. Also the place, prior to the knowledge of bin Laden living there, of hundreds of thousands of tourists every day. We are up in the mountains of Afghanistan looking for bin Laden and he is in one of the most prosperous cities of Pakistan. The Pakistani Government, the military, or the intelligence services didn't know he was there? He has been there for 6 years. How about people just walking by and saying I wonder who lives there? He doesn't pay property taxes. He added to the compound going against zoning regulations in that city.

Back to Afghanistan, we, the United States have to bribe the brother of the President to help his brother, the President, build a functioning state. And after 12 years and $1 trillion and over 2,000 soldiers lost, Afghanistan is nothing more than a major criminal enterprise. Afghanistan is as violent today as it has ever been. So this talk about staying in or leaving or kind of staying in or kind of leaving, it seems as though we are getting played. There is always two conversations going on in that part of the world, the one that the Americans are participating and the ones where they are being plotted against. And that is just the reality.

So I think, you know, we need to develop a new strategic policy to try to constrain in some way the bad activity that is taking place in both of those countries. And believe me, I am not naive about this stuff. I understand. Our Afghan problem is really our Pakistan problem. Pakistan is a big country, about 190 million people, a lot of Islamist extremists and they have nuclear weapons, last count 131 of them. A major goal of al-Qaeda is to gain access to an area with nuclear weapons. But the amount of time that we have been there, the lives that have been lost because of our excursion there, our distraction away from the real problem which was Afghanistan in the early 2000s to spend time in Iraq chasing weapons of mass destruction that weren't there, this just isn't working.

So whether we have 30,000 troops at the end of next year or 50,000, the fact of the matter is things aren't changing. We are told that we are not nation building Afghanistan. You know what? I was in Kandahar city. I was in Kandahar, the spiritual home of the Taliban because that is where all the poppy fields are. And the literacy rate for women, 1 percent. One percent. What are we told

constantly that we are doing there? We are building up an Afghan army and security force. Oh, really? With a population that is largely illiterate? How do you change that? You build schools and power lines and roads to get people to those schools. That by definition is nation building. We have been played in that part of the world. We continue to be played in that part of the world and the American people are sick and tired of it. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. Kinzinger.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it is important to remind everybody at the outset of my discussion that there was this really tragic event on September 11, 2001 in which thousands of Americans were killed by folks that found safe haven in Afghanistan and we were able to root them out of Afghanistan. I also take issue with the idea that there has been no improvement and that the place is just as violent as it has ever been. I think that flies into the face of every statistic I have seen, including the statistic that a huge percent of the Afghan population is under the age of 30, actually under the age of 20, that there actually is this revolution among the youth of this idea that we can discuss our differences without resorting to the gun. We can do it by having verbal discussions. I think you have seen revolutionary changes in a positive way in the population of Afghanistan.

I would also like to remind that the $3 billion we are talking about and sure, at any moment we talk about spending taxpayer dollars it is something we should take seriously. But that is 1/100 of what we spend in interest on our debt every year which has exploded in the last 5 years.

I also want to thank you, General, for exposing the farce of this idea that golly, we really wanted to stay in Iraq, but we just had no choice because they didn't want us. When you offer a plan of just a handful of troops, compared to what was needed, you really incur upon the Iraqi Government and this was the decision they made a much higher political cost than your number of troops had the ability to actually counter on the other end. And that is my concern with what we are looking at in Afghanistan. There is a cost. We have to know it. We have to understand it. There is a cost to having American troops when it comes to a domestic government having American troops on their soil. They know that they become a target of terrorist activities. They become the focus of that. But if you end up with 7,000, 8,000, 9,000 troops, half of whose job is to clean latrines and cook food and secure the gates so that the other half may be able to actually exit the gate at some point, you almost incur upon the native population a much higher political cost than you do any benefit of U.S. troops being there.

So I think the number of 20,000, 30,000 is not a number that has been pulled out of the air. It is a number that says if we are going to have an effective counterterrorism strategy or if we know a network exists or we know bad actors exist, we can send something over that kills that person or captures that person to take them out of the mix of being a threat to the domestic government of Afghanistan, then that is what we need. I would hate for history in 20 years to judge that America lost the war in Afghanistan over the difference of 10,000 troops and that is what I fear right now.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban have a saying that says, "America has the watches, but we have the time." And that, to me, is so evident of the fact that this administration made the decision to "surge" into Afghanistan, but in the same breath tried to reassure the American people that we are going to be out very quickly. Basically, at the moment the last surge troop is going in, the last one is going to exit, so don't worry, everybody. The Taliban just simply said okay, so now we have a timetable on how long we have to outlast the Americans.

In Iraq, the reason the surge I believe was so successful was not just the addition of thousands of American troops, it was the fact that in a time when I even heard a leader from the other body in this wonderful body we have here, from the other side of the Capitol, stood up and said and I was actually getting ready to fly a mission into Afghanistan, and I saw the news and I saw this leader say that the war in Iraq is lost. And I could only have imagined the cheers that went through the opposition at that point. But in the midst of all that bad press, the President of the United States, President Bush said not only are we not retreating, not only is the war not lost, we are doubling down and we are going to win. And we saw the opposition forces in Iraq say we can't defeat the United States on the battlefield. We have no choice but to join them. That is what could and should happen in Afghanistan. The longer we debate a post-2014 plan, the longer the administration goes without saying what the answer is in Afghanistan, the more damage I fear we are doing in the long term.

Now let me just say one, I guess I have 30 seconds, so Mr. Kagan, I will ask you to answer this. Let us say we leave Afghanistan as we did Iraq. What is that going to do to the morale of the Taliban and to al-Qaeda and to the enemies of the United States around the globe?

Mr. KAGAN. It will be an enormous boon to the morale of the Taliban and it will be an incredible boon for al-Qaeda which will explain they wrongly claim credit for defeating the Soviet Union. They are poised to claim credit for defeating the second super power and for reclaiming the land on which their movement was founded. It would be a devastating blow for us from the standpoint of al-Qaeda morale.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Kinzinger.

Mr. Schneider is recognized.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you to the panel for joining us here today.

I want to turn to Dr. Biddle and Ms. Curtis to the idea of as we look at our strategies, as we look going forward, whatever we want to accomplish, we cannot accomplish without partners. And partners in Afghanistan, ANSF, partners in Pakistan.

Dr. Biddle, I will turn to you first in Afghanistan. What is it we need to do immediately, short term, medium term to make sure that we have the partnership to get to the choices you laid out earlier?

Mr. BIDDLE. On the military side of the partnership, I think we need to provide funding for the ANSF and the kind of enablers people have talked about. On the governance side of the partnership, I think the theme, we can talk about the particular mechanics if

you like, but the theme has to be conditionality. The governance problem in Afghanistan which also affects the Afghan National Security Forces, it is not just a problem of civil government, it exists because malign actors in Afghanistan profit from it, prefer it, and want it to continue. If that is going to change, the only way it is going to change is if the United States uses leverage to change the interest calculus of actors who are profiting from the kind of misgovernance that we see in the country now.

The scale of leverage at our disposal is much smaller now than it was some years ago, but in principle, anything we do in the country is a potential source of leverage. If, in fact, we are prepared to use conditionality and shape what we do as a tool for changing not the structure of Afghan governance, certainly not eliminating corruption in Afghanistan, but to bring about a relatively small number of carefully triaged governance objectives that we think are critical to making the difference between there being a viable non-Taliban alternative and not after 2014.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Are there things we should be doing in the immediate term before the next election or are there things we should be looking to see after the election to do immediately following?

Mr. BIDDLE. I think before the election, it is time to do the homework. After the election, it is time to execute. We don't know what after the election government in Afghanistan is going to be yet, but there is a great deal of preparation we need to do before we act in any event. There is intelligence work that we need to do. There is policy coordination work that we need to do. We actually enjoy the advantage of having an interregnum in which it doesn't make sense to act initially and we ought to use that time to our advantage.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you. Ms. Curtis, with respect to Pakistan and as you touched on, what do we need to do to develop a workable partnership with Pakistan vis-à-vis Afghanistan?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, I think what we need to do is we need to have a dual strategy where we are supporting the civilian leadership, the Pakistan civil society through our aid, through our diplomatic engagement. But we are also conditioning our military assistance to the Pakistan military on its efforts to help us in Afghanistan to crack down on the Haqqani network, the Taliban leadership.

We need to be willing to pull the plug on the military aid that we provide Pakistan because it is the Pakistani military and intelligence services that are making those decisions on how they are supporting the Haqqani network and the other militant groups. There is a lot of debate about whether this is an issue of capability or political will. It is my belief after following this region for 20 years that it is more an issue of political will. And that while capabilities are an issue, particularly when you are looking at the TTP and trying to get them under control, that when you are looking at groups like the Haqqani network, the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, the senior Taliban leadership, it is more a question of will. And the Pakistanis could be doing more to crack down on these groups using their leverage to get these groups to compromise for a political solution in Afghanistan. I believe that is possible, but we need to be willing to put more pressure on Pakistan.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I think one of the challenges we face though and it was highlighted in today's New York Times in a story of the question of Pakistan working in collaboration with Afghani Taliban and then we see Afghanistan potentially working with the Pakistani Taliban. How do we deal with two partners on both sides who are oftentimes playing against each other and oftentimes playing against us?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, I think that is true. I think it is very disconcerting to see that the Afghan Government may have been supporting parts of the TTP, a group that has been conducting suicide bombings in Pakistan, killed thousands of Pakistanis. This is extremely problematic and again, unfortunately, Pakistan has relied on violent groups to achieve its foreign policy objectives and it just has backfired on Pakistan and I would see that story that we saw today as part of that backfiring effort and that we need to be able to convince Pakistan that that is not in its interests either to support these groups.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Ms. Curtis. Thank you, Mr. Schneider.

Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

General, how much does it cost to have 1,000 troops in Afghanistan? You are advocating 30,000 residual troops. How much would it cost?

General KEANE. I don't know what that——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thirty billion dollars. Does that sound out of line?

General KEANE. Absolutely.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. No, that is the estimate of what was given to us about a few years ago on the number of cost per troop in Afghanistan, $30 billion. This isn't a couple billion. This is we were borrowing that money at a time we are cutting back services to our own people. And we are borrowing money from China in order to maintain a force in Afghanistan.

Could the fact that we haven't won yet indicate that there is something wrong more fundamentally in other than just we don't have enough troops there? Do you believe the constitution—let me be more clear. Do you believe the constitution of Afghanistan which we forced upon the Afghan people after the Taliban were kicked out by the Northern Alliance, I might add, not by U.S. troops, is that constitution consistent with Afghan tradition? Do you know anything about the constitution there? It is the most centralized constitution of any country in the world that we have foisted upon these people which is the most decentralized country in the whole world with a tribal culture. They don't even elect their provincial leaders, do they? Do you think we would have corruption in the United States if we had a government in which the President of the United States appointed all the governors and then the governors appointed all the chiefs of police and all the people responsible for education? Do you think we would have a corruption problem here?

We have forced on these people a system totally inconsistent with their tradition and then we are arguing about how many

troops we are going to keep there because the situation is so unstable.

General, you were in Vietnam. You know, do you think we just needed to keep a couple extra troops there and the situation would have cleared itself up? There are some fundamental decisions that were wrong in Vietnam. And let me say that after 9/11, let us remember this, how many people who flew the planes into those buildings were Afghans? None. They were Saudis. And that operation was probably planned in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere and we all know it. Yeah, they were giving aid and comfort to Osama bin Laden and we should never forgive them for that and I am very happy that we support the Northern Alliance to help them free their country from the Taliban which was allied with al-Qaeda. But those days are over.

General, it would not have helped our country to stay in Vietnam any longer. We were divided then and going through that experience eventually helped us get ourselves together to put a better perspective on things.

We need a better perspective of the role of the United States in the world and it is no longer acceptable to the people of the United States to be the policemen of the world and they have 2,000 guys lost here, 5,000 guys lost here, and then they leave the area because the world hates us now because we are playing the policeman role. This is—what I am getting today is frankly wrong-think. And I am sorry, but I disagree with what almost everybody has testified today.

Let me put it this way. Thirty billion dollars for 30,000 extra troops in Afghanistan. The whole gross national product of that country is $15 billion. And I can assure you the experience that I have had in Afghanistan, which is extensive, that for $3 billion we can buy off every tribal leader and every political leader in that country and we can have them wave good-bye to us and for an extra billion dollars, there can be smiles on their faces and they can wave American flags. And that is more important right now, just get our troops out of there, let them run their affair. And this idea that everywhere that there is a radical Muslim who pops his head up that we are going to send troops over to that country, we should be yes, helping the Northern Alliance, helping those people who are struggling against the radicals in their own country as they are in Egypt right now with Morsi. Morsi was kicked out by al-Sisi and we should be helping the al-Sisis of the world over there and let them do the work. But the last thing we need to do is send our troops everywhere in the world any more. The American people are tired of it. They are sick and tired of being the policemen of the world. It is too expensive and we end up having thousands of American lives lost for who knows what. Thank you very much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Dr. Bera is recognized.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I had the privilege of visiting Afghanistan with our chairwoman over Memorial Day. And let me just say we met some of the most professional troops, men and women that answered the call of duty and have performed extremely admirably. But talking to them, talking to our leaders on the ground, talking to our intelligence folks on the ground, talking

to our diplomatic community, and then having the opportunity to meet with President Karzai, I don't think 30,000 troops solves it. I don't think 10,000. I think this is a very difficult part of the world and I think my colleague from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, just touched on how difficult this part of the world is.

I also think we haven't touched on what I think the most critical factor in Afghanistan's stability is. As we start to draw down and I think the American people have spoken pretty loud and clear that they are ready to start drawing down, whether it is $30 billion or $3 billion, the presence of our troops there over this last decade has essentially been the driving force of Afghanistan's economy.

As we draw down and maybe this is for Ms. Curtis or Dr. Biddle, I think my biggest fear of Afghanistan falling apart is their economy falls apart when we are not there and we are no longer pumping those billions of dollars into their economy. I would be interested in your thoughts.

Ms. CURTIS. Thank you. There are a couple of issues here. There is one, the issue of the troop numbers and I would just point out we still have 30,000 troops in Korea, 60 years after the war ended. So if we can afford to have a number of troops there, I don't see what the issue is with keeping a substantial residual force in Afghanistan, about 20,000 troops in the place where the 9/11 attacks originated.

In terms of moving forward and supporting the Afghans, you know, it has also been pointed out that we need to continue funding the Afghan security forces and if we allow the Afghan security forces to kind of flail about on their own without any U.S. support, then I think we are going to see the Taliban gradually begin to retake parts of the country, allow al-Qaeda to reestablish its safe haven there and we do have to think about what we have invested there. It is not impossible. We don't need to go from 100 to zero. I think there is something to be said for a responsible drawdown where we do have gains that have been made. I think those were pointed out by a few people and it is not as if the people of Afghanistan are not better off today than they were under Taliban rule.

Mr. BERA. Certainly, I don't disagree that our troops have not made gains and certainly inside Kabul, when we were there, you see stability and you see a somewhat normal way of life. Obviously, in the rural parts of the country, it is probably much less stable. Since I have only got about a minute and a half left, I was also recently in India and the issue of post-2014 Afghanistan certainly is very present on Indian minds. They have invested about $3 billion. I think they stand ready to continue to invest in infrastructure, and both their industry and their government, want to see a stable Afghanistan, obviously. They want to see stability in South Asia.

Maybe Dr. Biddle, India's concern is they won't invest those dollars if it is an unstable security situation. So I may be contradicting myself, but I understand that we have to have some presence and we have to try to have a stable ANSF. But what would you like to see India's role being in Afghanistan?

Mr. BIDDLE. I would like to see India's role in Afghanistan be as part of a larger strategy for dealing with Pakistan. I could imagine India being cooperative in a way that would help us build leverage

with Pakistan. If it is uncoordinated, however, mostly what it stands to do is play into Pakistani paranoia in a way that isn't constructive and doesn't move our agenda forward.

If I could, I would like to spend just a brief moment speaking to the question you raised initially on the economic consequences in Afghanistan of the western drawdown. Because when I was last there in March, we spent some time with the World Bank team and with the Economic Branch and the Embassy talking about exactly that question. And to my surprise, their assessment was they believed that the economic consequences, while negative, would be modest. In fact, their projection is a reduction in the growth rate of the Afghan economy, but they don't actually project a recession.

There are a variety of reasons for that that I doubt I will be able to detail in 4 seconds, but suffice to say that my sense is that the best economic analysis of the country at the moment holds that they will not see an economic catastrophe as a result of this. I yield back.

Mr. WEBER [presiding]. All right, the gentleman from Florida is recognized.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, gentlemen, and ma'am, I appreciate you all being here.

I am going to ask my last question first and that is I want you to think about this when I come back to you. I want you to spend about 30 seconds. What is the role of the U.S. Government in the world?

And then starting with that, General Keane and Dr. Kagan, you both said that al-Qaeda is more dispersed around the world, throughout the Middle East, and greater in number, and this is after $2 trillion in Afghanistan and Iraq, several thousand lost lives, tens of thousands of injured soldiers, and this is after an 11- to 12-year effort of going over there fighting the war terror.

How much has our intervention over the last 60-plus years in the Middle East, how much has that led to the radical Islamist terrorists that mean to do us harm like in Beirut, the Cole in Yemen, 9/11, and Benghazi that we see today? If one or two of you want to answer that real quickly, then we will move on to the next question.

General?

General KEANE. Well, I don't see a direct correlation of U.S. involvement in the Middle East and radical Islam. Radical Islam is an ideology that has a historical, theological, and philosophical foundation for it.

Mr. YOHO. Right.

General KEANE. And you know how ambitious that ideology is. One of the near term strategic objectives to be able to achieve their ambitious political goals which is what they are is to drive the United States out of the region so they can dominate it. The United States is in the region because of genuine national interest and we have been there rather significantly since post-World War II.

I don't think you can draw a correlation that that is the spark that drives radical Islam. They certainly use it politically to their advantage.

Mr. YOHO. I would love for you to come by our office at some point where we could have a more in-depth discussion.

Dr. Kagan?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, sir, I agree with General Keane on that point. I think that this is a movement that has evolved from a number of different sources, some of which were related to the American presence, some of which weren't. Most of them pre-dated this significant American presence in the region quite a lot and I think we have the problem that al-Qaeda does not identify the United States as an enemy because we are in the region. They identify the United States as an enemy because of what we stand for and who we support.

Mr. YOHO. You know, I have heard that, but I personally don't believe that. I believe it is because we try to put western ideologies in their government that they don't want to accept: Freedom of religion, freedom of expression, women's rights, and all these things that we believe on the western side. And we go over there with foreign aid and we say we will give you this foreign aid if you do these things. I think we are going to disagree on that.

Let me go to Ms. Curtis and Dr. Biddle. If we develop energy security in the U.S., would it change our foreign policy in the Middle East, if we had energy independence here in this country?

Mr. BIDDLE. At the margin, but probably not radically because our major trading partners will continue to be dependent on the Middle East for energy. To the extent that we care about whether Europe, for example, as an economy that can trade with us and maintain our economic growth, we therefore need to worry not just about where we get our energy, but also where our trading partners get it.

I think at the margin it can mean that we can become less militarily engaged, but I don't think it can get to the point where we can become independent of events in the Middle East.

Mr. YOHO. Okay, let me ask what would be a way to negotiate a change in foreign policy from military conflicts and to capitalize on the investment we have had with human life, the trillions we have spent and build one around trade whether it is agriculture, construction. Is it feasible with a corrupt government in both those countries? And you know, you both said you know, that both of those governments are corrupt. And I don't understand how we can throw billions and billions of dollars over and over again to a corrupt government and expect it is going to turn out good. I see it in Egypt and I see it in all these countries in the Middle East that we have done over and over again.

And Ms. Curtis, if you could answer that real quickly. And I want to get your response to that first question I asked you.

Ms. CURTIS. I think you have made a very good point about in the interest of building trade linkages and how that might be a more stable relationship than just providing foreign aid and this is something that the new Pakistan Government is extremely interested in and hopefully we can expand the dialogue and try to improve our trade relationship. Even though I believe the aid is still important, perhaps focusing more on trade rather than just focusing on the aid would be a prudent way to approach the relationship with Pakistan.

And also, promoting regional integration and regional trade is extremely important. That means Afghanistan-Pakistan trade,

Indo-Pak trade, anything we can do to encourage more regional economic linkages. That is going to help stabilize that region and that will be in our interest as well.

Mr. YOHO. All right, thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am out of time. If you guys would submit that question I asked you, the role of the United States Government in the world, I look forward to your answers. Thank you.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our panel.

General Keane, you had a lot to do with helping President Bush understand the failed policy in Iraq, militarily, and to repivot with the counterinsurgency strategy propounded by General Petraeus. Is that correct?

General KEANE. Yes. Others participated, not the least of which is the man sitting next to me.

Mr. CONNOLLY. That is right. I remember your name as well, Mr. Kagan. That is right.

We have been in Afghanistan now for 12 years. By one simple measurement, that is the longest war we have ever been involved in, is that not correct?

General KEANE. Yes, it is.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The President who ran against Mr. Gore, Vice President Gore, inter alia, saying he didn't believe in nation building, has spent a lot of money nation building in Afghanistan. And included in that nation building was the reconstitution or the constitution of a security force of 350,000 members at a cost estimated of about $40 billion. What is your assessment, General, of the ability of that security force after those 12 years to deter insurgent threats and to create some semblance of peace and stability domestically in Afghanistan?

General KEANE. Yes. Just let me briefly say that 12 years is driven by choices that we made. We set up a government initially of our choosing. And we did not provide initially to grow and develop a security force early on. We changed our priorities from Afghanistan to Iraq very early. The decision was made actually in December 2001 and priorities began to shift. Afghanistan from 2002 to late 2008 was on a diet. And we never really got after it again in a way that was consequential until after President Obama made his decision to escalate.

Just to put the facts on the table, a lot of our own policy decisions drove this long war. I believe the Afghan National Security Forces, after all the stumbling that we have done in fashioning a coherent strategy for the growth and development and the resources to support it, we have finally arrived at a point where we have an acceptable force. It has proven its mettle in the south. It is now leading operations there and according itself. Their casualties have certainly gone up from what they used to be when we were in the lead, but those preliminary signs are favorable that that investment has been worth it.

As Dr. Kagan and I have both said, we have a problem in the east that I don't think they can handle by themselves. And we have to assist them as we transition and pull all of our combat forces

out which we will do. That is already a decision. We have to assist with that transition.

I also believe the training and assistance force is important intellectually to stay engaged with them. We need officers there to help shape their operations. Those numbers are low by comparison to what our commitment is now. Those numbers will be in the thousands, but relatively low. What we get out of that is exponentially greater than the numbers that are there to help shape it. There is a lot we can do to assist them.

The most important thing is they have the courage to fight, no doubt about that and we have given them the skill to fight and they have now shown that they can handle that. It is uncertain what it would be like when we are totally gone and that is a question mark. We think the signs are favorable, except for what we are dealing with in the east.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. Mr. Biddle, Dr. Biddle, there were reports in today's New York Times complicating what General Keane I think would like to see accomplished and I don't disagree, that the Afghan Government has been secretly negotiating with elements of the Pakistan Taliban. We captured Mr. Mehsud, one of the key leaders in that effort and it raises real questions about trust and about the intention of the Afghani Government and given what General Keane just said, it might be construed as also undermining the work of their own security forces. Would you comment?

Mr. BIDDLE. Clearly, it has been a major source of friction between ourselves and the Afghans and may have had something to do with the difficulties and the talks over the Bilateral Security Agreement over recent months. That said, I think it is only natural that the Afghans are trying to develop leverage against what they view as a Pakistani Government that has been unhelpful in talks to settle the war.

The appropriate use of leverage in dealing with Pakistanis would ideally be something that we would coordinate across the various interested parties on our side of the conflict. This was evidently remarkably uncoordinated, but leverage is necessary in any negotiation and it is certainly going to be necessary in this one and we are not particularly leverage rich.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. I wish I had more time. This is a fascinating panel. Thank you all for being here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEBER. The gentlelady from Florida is recognized.

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, thank you, Mr. Weber. It is a pleasure to be here with you. I have enjoyed the discussion and thank you all very much. I am sure it is very frustrating for you to hear our frustration because really, I think Congress should stand in front of a mirror and yell at itself, but with that said, you are the ones that get to sit here.

My son who I am very proud of, a United States Marine, who served in Afghanistan and returned in USAID and I also did visit Afghanistan with Mr. Wilson, who led a very wonderful codel.

One thing that I found and I would echo Mr. Bera's comments that we met with many, many military personnel and I thought they were articulate. They were committed. I have nothing but very high marks. The other observation I had was that they also

had what I would see as a narrow view of their own world because obviously, you are in the military in Afghanistan, that is probably what you are thinking about. You are not thinking about educating a kid in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Anyway, I have often wondered—I studied psychology in college and I learned about this principle called cognitive dissonance which is basically, it is like there was an Aesop's fable, the fox, when he can't reach the grapes he decides well, he really didn't want grapes in the first place. I often wonder, are we in a situation where we have cognitive dissonance which is really defined as a distressing mental state that people feel when they find themselves doing things that don't fit what they know. And sometimes otherwise they take puzzling and irrational and destructive behavior.

The point being is this, are we supporting continuing efforts in Afghanistan because we want to try to feel good about what we did even though we know, I think many of us have doubts about that. Or is it about national security? And so the question I have and I am not sure whether you can answer it, but I want you to take a shot at it if you want to because some of you would seem to me are coming from the point of view of continued military action or involvement in Afghanistan.

What do you fear is worse to happen to us in this country than us not properly educating our children, not modernizing our infrastructure, not finding cures for diseases, not feeding poor children and elderly? Because those are the choices we have to make in Congress, where to put our money.

General KEANE. I will be happy to take a shot at that, Congresswoman. It is obviously a very important question and it needs to be answered for anybody who is going to advocate putting U.S. resources against military operations.

I am not making a sunk cost argument in Afghanistan. My eyes are fixed as clearly as they can be on the people who wake up every morning and ask themselves what they can do to kill Americans that day. And my answer to your question, ma'am, is having more Americans killed on American soil, that I think is worse than the various other things that you identified because it is the first responsibility of government to protect its citizens from death and injury by foreign attack. That is what I am preoccupied with and that is what I believe the stakes are, otherwise I wouldn't be advocating for military force.

Ms. FRANKEL. I will let somebody else answer that, too. There are many who believe that it is our economic superiority that it will lead to our security.

I see, Ms. Curtis, you want to answer that?

Ms. CURTIS. I lived in Pakistan in the mid-'90s. I saw the rise of the Taliban. I saw what the extremist groups in Pakistan, what that meant. And then, of course, 9/11. We just cannot afford to go back to 1989. That is when we turned our backs on the region after the Soviets left. And I believe that over time the result was the 9/11 attacks and I simply believe we cannot afford to go back to that situation where we just simply throw up our hands, say this is too difficult, and we can't make any progress.

Again, I will reiterate. It is not an either/or option here. Certainly, all of the things that you listed are extremely important,

but I think what I fear is losing our sense of freedom and safety here in the U.S. which we certainly lost in spades on September 11, 2001. And so I think what is driving me to counsel you to continue to support the efforts in Afghanistan is that fear that us completely pulling up stakes and leaving will embolden the Taliban, will embolden al-Qaeda, will provide them a safe haven again, we will be back to where we were on September 10, 2001.

General KEANE. You know, the tension that you are describing is something your predecessors and national leaders have felt for the past 60 years, going all the way back to the decisions should we do something about the problem in Europe in World War II, etcetera. And those are understandable tensions between what are our concerns at home with education and poverty and crime and other major issues that this country has dealt with for 60 years, and then also our responsibility to protect those very people that we are so concerned about, our American citizens.

The fact is the United States is involved in the world. From a national security perspective, we have global interests in the world. We want open and free markets. We want a stable world out there. Radical Islam is a major, major ideology and political movement that is threatening the security of the United States. And the issue that we are talking about here is directly related to that and everybody knows that.

We are at the cusp of a long involvement with it and we are frustrated because it has taken us so long and the fact of the matter is some of the key decisions we make now will drive how this does turn out. And I think war is fundamentally a test of wills and the ultimate objective of it is to break your opponent's will. It is our resolve and it is about our commitment and it is about our leadership. And I believe that is what is needed now. Your leadership, as well to understand the issues that we are trying to speak to here, and also our national leadership to commit to see this through.

Ms. FRANKEL. It is up to the chair. Does anybody else want to try?

Mr. BIDDLE. Briefly, then. I think probably relative to the other members of the panel, I am more skeptical about the merits of counterterrorist uses of violence around the world, but I make an exception in Afghanistan and South Asia. And among the reasons why I make an exception there is the unique status of Pakistan as a radically unstable nuclear weapons power in which there is a resident of militant groups that have expressed threats toward the United States and our allies in the West.

If Pakistan does collapse, if the state loses the counterinsurgency war that it is fighting within its own borders in Pakistan, that nuclear arsenal could breach containment and that is one of the very few ways in which I can imagine a terrorist threat to the American homeland reaching the scale of weapons of mass destruction in severity. And that strikes me as a very unusual problem relative to what the United States faces around the world and merits an unusual degree of attention and sacrifice in order to address.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Just an observation I want to share with the panel. Listening to this conversation has to be fascinating, especially to those of you who come from conserv-

ative think tanks. What you heard at this dais today is from the right of center and the left of center, real skepticism about the continued role of the United States in conflicts such as this even when from your point of view and mine, U.S. self interests are clearly indicated, given the history of Afghanistan. This is part of the consequence, I say to you, as conservatives of the obsession with the debt. It has led to a false choice. We can either afford to fund a food stamp program or we can fund our foreign policy interests. We cannot do both. And I would submit that a great power must never be forced into such a false choice, otherwise it will not remain a great power. But that is where we are. That is what you just heard.

And you heard it echoed in the debate about Syria.

We could argue the merits of whether a reaction was justified, but much of the debate wasn't about that. It was about how we are sick of it. We are tired of it and we don't want to be dragged into any more conflict irrespective of the merits. And to me, I don't know about you, but that is a very dangerous place for the United States to be. Debate is healthy, but looking at where we have been led because of the obsession, frankly, with the debt.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to share my thoughts.

Mr. WEBER. Now it is my turn. Dr. Kagan, you said in your comments, I am paraphrasing, Pakistan hates us like no other nation.

Ms. Curtis, you said you spent some time—was it in Pakistan, and you watched the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s.

General Keane, you said in your comments just a short while ago that we are on the cusp of having to deal with radical Islam and decision we make are going to be pretty major was what you insinuated.

Now I want you all to square that for me and I will start with Dr. Kagan first. You are saying the Taliban has been around a long time. Now let me say this. I liked what our colleague from New York, Mr. Higgins, said earlier when he said that we educate and we train and we build roads and we build infrastructure and yet we have a radical Taliban group who blows up those very roads that we build in the country. They stand for anti-education. Is that true enough? So even though I like the idea that we would educate so that those people would have a political will, that they would develop the political will of their own, they would get educated, they would understand they can have freedom if they are ready and willing to work and sacrifice and pay one terrific price for it.

We cannot go in there and absolutely inject with a needle, if you will, that political will or that willingness for them to sacrifice and pay all kinds of prices, some of them the ultimate price, to take their country back.

So Dr. Kagan, with that in mind, explain to me why it is that Pakistan hates us like no other nation?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, Congressman, I don't know why Pakistan hates us like no other nation. We poll very poorly in Pakistan. Part of that, I think has been because the number of Pakistani leaders have seen it as in their interest while receiving a lot of money from the United States to run against the United States. That is a reality of the world and I don't think there is an obvious conclusion

that follows from that, frankly, about what it is exactly that we should do.

Mr. WEBER. General Keane, how do you explain? I mean, you said we are on the cusp of dealing with radical Islam, yet this has been going on for a long time, witness Ms. Curtis' comments that she watched the rise of the Taliban in the '90s.

General KEANE. The question about the cusp was the decisions we are about to make and how they dramatically will affect the future stability of Afghanistan and obviously it is in relationship to Pakistan because if Afghanistan is destabilized as a result of the policy decisions that we make where we contribute to it, it obviously will have an adverse impact on Pakistan. That is what my comments were. It was not to the general issue of radical Islam. I have strong feelings about that as well.

Mr. WEBER. I see. I appreciate that. To any of y'all's recollection has there been any country that is so devolved in this kind of violence and terrorism and we are going to come back to your comments, Dr. Biddle, but you were skeptical about using counterterrorist violence around the world is what you just said a few minutes ago, and we will come back to that. But is there any of you who can remember a country that has so devolved into the world where an outside nation, i.e., the United States came in and we were able to prop them up and get their people to understand what was at stake and they were able to help them pull themselves up from the bootstraps and they are now a successful, thriving, democracy today? Anybody remember a country like that?

Mr. KAGAN. I think you can make an argument for Colombia along those lines. Large swaths of the country were controlled by vicious drug gangs and there was incredible violence in the capital. The government was unable to function. We worked closely with a very small footprint with Colombians who were interested in taking that back and Colombia is now very much headed in the right direction and much more democratic, much more peaceful and the drug trade is much more under control. So yes, I think there are premises. Was it as bad as Afghanistan? No, not necessarily.

Mr. WEBER. Forgive me for interrupting, but what kind of outlay of manpower, casualties, suffering on our behalf and money did the United States——

Mr. KAGAN. It was obviously much more limited than what we have put into Afghanistan, but the circumstances were also very different and the requirements were very different.

Mr. WEBER. Would you say there was a difference in the people, the willingness of the people to actually get involved and take their country back?

Mr. KAGAN. Sir, I would not. I have got to tell you that for the many months that I have spent in Afghanistan and the many Afghans that I have known, and the many people standing up in suras fighting against the Taliban after their successors were killed and the successors before them were killed, that the Afghans are very determined to take the fight and are willing to take casualties and have been willing to take casualties at a much higher rate than the United States.

Mr. WEBER. Time will tell, won't it?

And Dr. Biddle, we are going to go to you now. Your comment about you were skeptical about the use of antiterrorist, counterterrorist violence around the world, what did you mean by that?

Mr. BIDDLE. Two things. One is I think with respect to any tool when it is perceived as free, it tends to be overused. I think many of the military instruments we have been using for counterterrorist activity have been perceived by some in the United States Government as being largely free of cost, but especially largely free of risk to the United States and I think that necessarily tends to create over use. But I would distinguish between terrorist threats to the United States and I would not treat them all the same.

I believe that a terrorist threat of the use of weapons on the scale of 9/11 or on the scale of nuclear or biological is a serious existential threat to the American way of life and warrants the waging of war to prevent.

Mr. WEBER. I.e., the falling of nuclear weapons and Pakistan becoming——

Mr. KAGAN. And I believe that is the primary means by which that threat could be realized.

Mr. WEBER. Does that also translate over to Iran in your estimation?

Mr. KAGAN. My view of Iran tends to be that they have powerful disincentives to transfer weapons of that kind to terrorist groups. I would prefer that they not get nuclear weapons. I see no particular benefit to the United States or the region in that happening, but I tend to believe that if they get it, the odds that they will transfer the materials are relatively modest.

What worries me about Pakistan is that the state could collapse and if that happens, then you don't have to assume that a state that could be retaliated against will transfer weapons to a terrorist. The weapons simply become loose and that strikes me as a very——

Mr. WEBER. Are you also concerned about that in Syria?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, Syria doesn't have——

Mr. WEBER. Well, I get it on nuclear, but we are talking about weapons of mass destruction, WMDs.

Mr. KAGAN. And you will note that I mentioned biological and nuclear and I did not mention chemical. I believe the scale of the threat associated with chemical weapons is significantly lower than the other two and warrants different treatment.

Mr. WEBER. Your comment intrigued me. I thank you. And we have our distinguished colleague, Mr. Sherman, and I yield 5 minutes to him.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. We are obsessed, of course, as we should be with our own national security. The Pakistani military is either obsessed with its national security or it at least needs to appear to be so if it is going to retain its position in that society.

And one existential threat would be if Afghanistan were to be in some alliance with India because India is the traditional existential threat to Pakistan. We installed Karzai. It is not like he had this huge national following in Afghanistan. And we seem to have done so without Pakistan either voicing approval or disapproval in any

loud way. And then today, the Taliban exists pretty much because the ISI wants it to exist.

What can we do to assuage the Pakistani military that Afghanistan will not be a second front in a confrontation with India? Why has Karzai allowed the Indian Embassy in Kabul to be so robust? And why is he the only Muslim ruler that seems to not take the Pakistani side on the Kashmir issue?

I will look to see if I have got any volunteers? Yes, the witness whose name has collapsed in front of you, Mr. Kagan.

Mr. KAGAN. Hopefully, it is just my name that has collapsed.

Look, the Pakistanis are hated in Afghanistan by all sides to a remarkable degree and the reason for that is that for the past 30 years Pakistani policy in Afghanistan has been to supply guys with guns, foster chaos, create death, and do absolutely nothing positive for that country.

Mr. SHERMAN. If I can interrupt, you are going back 30 years. Pakistan played a critical role in overthrowing the communists, the Russian-supported regime?

Mr. KAGAN. Yes, that is right.

Mr. SHERMAN. The Taliban had enough popular support to obtain power in Afghanistan, although they were supported by the Pakistanis.

Mr. KAGAN. The Taliban was created by the Pakistanis and would not have been able to defeat its enemies militarily or take control of the country, such control as it had without Pakistani support.

Mr. SHERMAN. But they also wouldn't have been able to take control without Afghan support.

Mr. KAGAN. Yes, of course, that is true. What I can tell you is the conversations, again, it is remarkable. As you go down to Kandahar, you talk to the tribal chiefs there who are fighting against the Taliban. You ask them who these guys are and they say they are Pakistanis. You ask them who their enemy is, they are Pakistanis. And that is not just because they don't want to admit that there is Afghan Taliban.

My point is that the Pakistanis have been treating problems in Afghanistan like a nail, and the hammer that they have is supplied guns to bad dudes. They need to figure out that that is not going to work and that they need a new policy. And what we can best do for them, I think, is to help them figure that out.

Mr. SHERMAN. General.

General KEANE. I believe if you look at Pakistan, there are very few countries in the world that have a history as profound as theirs is in making poor strategic choices and miscalculations. It is quite extraordinary. And this one with the Taliban is another example of it.

I mean I have felt for some time in dealing with them that we should have taken the gloves off a long time ago, maintain a relationship with them, but certainly deal much more directly with them and I agree with my panel colleague about their aid. I think it should have been much more conditioned based and this last aid should have that——

Mr. SHERMAN. General, if I can interrupt because my time is close to expiring. Why did we install a regime in Kabul unacceptable to the Pakistani military?

General KEANE. I think why was Karzai installed was the issue. We had a relationship with Karzai and the Central Intelligence Agency had a relationship with them. These are all the things that were done very quickly to put somebody in charge. Was it a good decision? Probably not.

Mr. SHERMAN. Ms. Curtis?

Ms. CURTIS. I think at the time, Karzai was a good leader for the country. He is a Pashtiun. He was a consensus builder. Certainly things have fallen off in the last few years and we see more corruption. But you know, it really gets at what, is Afghanistan a sovereign country? That is like asking why we would allow a certain Pakistani leader——

Mr. SHERMAN. We didn't allow Karzai to be swept into Kabul by a wave of popular support. You are saying Afghanistan is a sovereign country and therefore had a chance to select its anti-Pakistani leader, it didn't select Karzai. We selected Karzai.

Ms. CURTIS. I would refer to Karzai as an anti-Pakistan leader.

Mr. SHERMAN. But the Pakistani behavior seems to indicate that they regard him as an anti-Pakistani leader.

Ms. CURTIS. But I think he has tried to build better relations and he has been able to, to a certain degree with Pakistan civilian leadership. If you look at the equation with——

Mr. SHERMAN. How large is the Indian Embassy in Kabul?

Ms. CURTIS. How much aid is India supplying to Afghanistan? He is a rational leader.

Mr. SHERMAN. I get to ask the questions. I couldn't do your job. That is why they gave me mine. Let me go on to another question. I thank the chairman for a little additional time. And that is Pakistan is a very diverse nation at its upper levels there has been an effort to homogenize Pakistan and back when there was an East and West Pakistan and even an attempt to impose the Urdu language on East Pakistan.

Now you have a government there that seems to indicate a preference for the Urdu language. Should we be reaching out to Pakistanis in the various languages they speak or should we accede to the wishes of the most Urdu homogenous in Islamabad?

General?

General KEANE. Well, I cannot comment about the language issue, but certainly I do believe we should be working closely with Pakistan. What I wasn't able to say before is that I agree with my colleague here that the aid in general, it has been a mistake to continually provide aid to the military regime that is dominating the country. And we should have a condition base so that the country moves toward responsible civilian government where they can control the military. That is down the road. It is generational to be sure. But the path we are currently on is not the right one.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay, thank you. I thank the chairman for his indulgence.

Mr. WEBER. Ms. Frankel?

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Weber. I do have one followup to something to—Dr. Biddle, I am sorry, my glasses are not on. Okay,

because I am very interested in the point you made about what a failed Pakistan would look like and the potential of nuclear weapons getting a very bad—worse actor's hand. And I would just like to ask if the rest of the panel agrees with that and whether you think that is a serious possibility or consequence.

Mr. KAGAN. Yes, absolutely. I mean if you are looking at a failed Pakistani state, then once you have a state collapse scenario, you cannot be confident about how the military forces will break down. You certainly have a very large concentration of well armed and well trained insurgent fighters who are eager to get their hands on those weapons and I do think that it is a significant risk that we should be concerned with.

Ms. FRANKEL. Where do you put that in the—one to ten, you are advocating continued military involvement. Where do you put that risk compared to some of the others that you talked about today?

Mr. KAGAN. It is a very low probability, extraordinarily high risk scenario. Obviously, a lot of things have to go wrong to get there. What I am concerned about is that we, from this perspective, and I think there are a lot of other reasons why I would put ahead of this as higher probability, things that we need to be concerned about.

What I am concerned about is creating conditions in Afghanistan or allowing conditions to be created in Afghanistan that will conduce to this kind of state collapse and make what is now, I think, a very low probability scenario a much higher probability. And if I could beg your indulgence for one more comment, you know, I have come across as very anti-Pakistani in this.

I want to make the point that Nawaz Sharif has come to office trying to focus like a laser beam on getting the Pakistani economy turned around. Now I am a little skeptical about his ability to do that. But it is a laudable goal. And he is doing it with much more energy and creativity than his predecessor did and it is very much in our interest for him to succeed in that.

And I think as we talk about how we are going to approach the problem of Pakistan at this minute as opposed to in general terms, I don't think this is actually a terribly good idea to be pulling aid or talking about taking aid out. I think it is worthwhile giving Sharif a chance to try to turn the Pakistani economy around.

Ms. FRANKEL. Ms. Curtis, did you want to answer that?

Ms. CURTIS. Yes, I just wanted to say I would characterize the risk of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into the hands of extremists as a high risk, low probability scenario. I think the Pakistani military is a competent force and the senior leaders understand the importance of keeping the nuclear weapons safe and the U.S. has assisted in this effort which is important for maintaining our engagement with Pakistan. I have made that point.

But I think the links to the extremist elements in Pakistan are worrisome and that if you do have a scenario where Afghanistan falls back on the Taliban sway, there will be blowback into Pakistan. And as Dr. Kagan pointed out, this, what I would call high risk, low probability scenario then becomes a high risk, high probability scenario.

General KEANE. Let me just follow up. You have the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense spend a lot of ef-

fort on this issue of nuclear weapons in Pakistan. And we have had the opportunity to check on the security of those weapons and were somewhat comforted that the military establishment has that as a top priority to protect those weapon systems.

There are some issues surrounding that though because Pakistan has made a decision to go to tactical nuclear weapons as opposed to the strategic nuclear weapons they have now which means that you can fire a nuclear weapon out of an artillery or rocket capability that we used to have by the tens of thousands and have destroyed them since the conventions with the Soviet Union. That escalation gives people pause for concern because of the numbers of those and the multiple locations they will be at. If they would ever be of any use you have to decentralize those weapons to many more locations. So that is an issue.

The second issue is our Department of Defense has very high on its list of scenarios for this issue in dealing with an implosion of a government and what do we do about those nuclear weapons. And it has been practiced and practiced and practiced in dealing with the reality of that issue.

Ms. FRANKEL. So I am not trying to put words in anyone's mouth. So is your top fear 9/11-type scenarios? Is that like number one most probable risk?

Mr. KAGAN. I don't think it would look like 9/11 again. My concern is that you have a global organization that is trying to bring the war to our shores and that enabling them and giving them a victory of this variety and giving them a staging area of this variety will make it more likely that they will bring the war to our shores. That is my higher probability, perhaps lower risk, but still intolerable.

Ms. FRANKEL. In some of type of terrorist attack, maybe not——

Mr. KAGAN. I am more concerned about the possibility of a terrorist campaign because among other things, we have watched these terrorist organizations evolve away from the one off spectacular attack to the multiple attacks, smaller and so forth that in some respects could do even more damage to the American psyche.

Ms. FRANKEL. You are in agreement with that?

Ms. CURTIS. Yes. I also am concerned about emboldening the Taliban and al-Qaeda and other extremist groups in the region and outside of the region if the terrorists can then propagandize and show that they were able to defeat not only the U.S., but the 40-odd NATO countries as well.

Ms. FRANKEL. And one last, would this be—is the concern some type of a physical conflict or incident or cyber security breach or both?

Mr. KAGAN. When you are talking about al-Qaeda, the principal threat is physical attack. They haven't to my knowledge developed a very sophisticated cyber attack wing although they are getting more sophisticated at that.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Weber, and I yield back my time.

Mr. WEBER. General Keane, you said something that got my attention that they now have tactical nuclear weapons. I think in all my reading, if I remember correctly, Pakistan has 100 nuclear weapons. Does that sound right?

General KEANE. I think that is a generally-accepted number in public sources.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. So you are saying I think what the gentlelady from Florida was driving at if there is another attack along those lines, it will be far worse than 9/11, especially if they were able to use one of those weapons, whether they were to use them against our ally Israel and draw us over there. So with that in mind, what would the four of you, each of you offer? How do you fix that for Pakistan? What is your recommendation? Okay, so they have got these nuclear weapons. They hate us like no other nation on earth was part of your testimony. What do we do about that? What is the best case scenario?

General Keane, you look the most anxious.

General KEANE. To me, it is not a military answer. It has to do more with Pakistan's internal situation, you know, a stronger government, less corrupt, that is responsive to the needs of its people that is capable of controlling a military is something that is desperately needed as opposed to the reverse, a military that dominates the country and dominates the civilian government and puts itself and its needs first. Those are the kind of things that I think are needed and I think in a sense we know how to do that. And a much more——

Mr. WEBER. We do know how to do that, but as was already previously stated, it might have been Mr. Connolly who said they don't like it when we come over there to try to help them do that. So how do you get around that? How do you placate that hatred for Americans when we come over there to try to help them do that?

And Dr. Biddle, you looked awful anxious to mash your button.

General KEANE. Let the doctor mash his button.

Mr. WEBER. All right. My wife tells me you don't mash a button, you press a button. I said look, in Texas, we mash buttons. Go ahead.

Mr. KAGAN. Preempting a military officer is a dangerous thing, but I will offer some brief commentary which is that there are very few bilateral policy options we enjoy toward Pakistan that I think have very much traction for us at all. There is a serious problem there that poses serious risks to us. There is very little that we can do, I think, positively to make the situation better. Given that, I think in many ways the appropriate policy stance for the United States is to invoke the Hippocratic Oath, and at least——

Mr. WEBER. Do no harm.

Mr. KAGAN. Don't make a bad situation that it is very hard for us to improve any worse than it needs to be. And the reason why I care about Afghanistan is because it seems to me that failure of the project there is actually a serious opportunity for us to make things considerably worse in Pakistan than they might be otherwise. And in an environment where it is very hard for us to improve things, avoiding making them worse than they need to be strikes me as an unusual policy priority. And I think the key issue in policy priority toward Pakistan is the collapse of the state is the primary threat to the United States. I don't worry nearly as much about Pakistani nuclear weapons leaking out or somehow being stolen by terrorists, as long as the Pakistani Government is intact

and as long as their control of their nuclear arsenal is no worse than it is today.

It is if they lose their war that I think we have got a problem that poses literally unique national security issues for the United States. And our primary leverage over that, I suspect at the end of the day, limited as it is, is our influence over what happens in Afghanistan.

Mr. WEBER. You are not real encouraging.

Mr. KAGAN. Sorry.

Ms. CURTIS. If I may make a quick clarification? So Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons is mainly to counter what it perceives as the Indian threat. So to the extent that we can encourage Indo-Pakistani talks, strategic stability talks to try to reduce their nuclear arsenals or at least put in mechanisms that provide more stability in the region, I think that is where we can help on that issue.

When it comes to, you talk about Pakistani hatred toward the U.S., I think it is important to remember that we have seen that the Pakistani intelligence services often feed negative stories to the Pakistani media about the U.S. They try to fuel this anti-U.S. sentiment.

Mr. WEBER. You mean like we are spying on the Germans?

Ms. CURTIS. I think what I was going to say it was important for us to engage directly with civil society, the civilian leadership to ensure that we are not just focusing all of our attention on engaging with the military leadership.

Mr. WEBER. Well, they have called votes. It looks like we have picked you all's brains as long as we can. So I thank the witnesses and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:42 p.m., the joint subcommittees were adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Steve Chabot (R-OH), Chairman

October 22, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held jointly by the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Tuesday, October 29, 2013

TIME: 2:15 p.m.

SUBJECT: After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)

WITNESSES: Frederick W. Kagan, Ph.D.
Christopher DeMuth Chair and Director
Critical Threats Project
American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

General Jack Keane, USA, Retired
Chairman of the Board
Institute for the Study of War

Ms. Lisa Curtis
Senior Research Fellow
Asian Studies Center
The Heritage Foundation

Stephen Biddle, Ph.D.
Adjunct Senior Fellow for Defense Policy
Council on Foreign Relations

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Middle East and North Africa/Asia and the Pacific* HEARING

Day *Tuesday* **Date** *10/29/2013* **Room** *2172*

Starting Time *2:27 p.m.* **Ending Time** *4:40 p.m.*

Recesses ____ (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Steve Chabot (R-OH), Rep. Randy Weber (R-TX)

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑
Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

(See attendance sheet)

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

SFR - Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA)
QFRs - Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *4:40 p.m.*

Subcommittee Staff Director

Joint Subcommittee Hearing Attendance

Hearing Title: After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)
Date: 10/29/2013

Noncommittee Members

Member	Present
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana (FL)	X
Chabot, Steve (OH)	X
Wilson, Joe (SC)	X
Kinzinger, Adam (IL)	X
Cotton, Tom (AR)	X
Weber, Randy (TX)	X
Desantis, Ron (FL)	
Radel, Trey (FL)	
Collins, Doug (GA)	
Meadows, Mark (NC)	X
Yoho, Ted (FL)	X
Messer, Luke (IN)	
Perry, Scott (PA)	X
Rohrabacher, Dana (CA)	X

Member	Present
Deutch, Ted (FL)	X
Connolly, Gerald (VA)	X
Higgins, Brian (NY)	X
Cicilline, David (RI)	X
Grayson, Alan (FL)	
Vargas, Juan (CA)	X
Schneider, Bradley (IL)	X
Kennedy, Joseph (MA)	X
Meng, Grace (NY)	X
Frankel, Lois (FL)	X
Bera, Ami (CA)	X
Gabbard, Tulsi (HI)	X
Sherman, Brad (CA)	X

Statement for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Gerald E. Connolly

The United States and Afghanistan are in the process of negotiating an agreement that would allow U.S. troops to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014. The U.S. force's key mission would be to train Afghan forces to defend against the Taliban. Secretary of State John Kerry and Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai recently settled on key elements of an agreement to keep U.S. forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014. A central issue which remains unresolved and has echoes of the Iraq withdrawal is immunity for U.S. soldiers from Afghan prosecution. For the United States, this issue is a deal breaker. Both sides agree that the so-called zero option, where U.S. troops would completely withdraw, is undesirable. Most assessments place the figure of a residual U.S. force in 2014 at 8,000-12,000 servicemembers.

The outcome of next spring's provincial and presidential elections in Afghanistan will provide a method to gauge progress since the 2009 elections, which were plagued with irregularities and low voter turnout. An initial vote count showed that President Karzai received an adequate number of votes to remain President, but the people of Afghanistan and the international community voiced skepticism at the authenticity of the results. Almost 3,000 complaints were filed with the U.N.-appointed Elections Complaints Commission (ECC), and the ECC determined that 750 of those had a "material effect" on the election.

News reports do little to allay concerns about Afghanistan's readiness for the 2014 elections. As reported by *Reuters* earlier this month, an illicit trade in voter cards has alarmed several candidates. A campaign manager can buy a voter card for less than $5 and conspire with a poll worker to skew the results of the election. Complicating the entire process is that President Karzai has a very real stake in who wins, considering his older brother is running to succeed him. The outcome will also signal whether or not a new Afghan government would negotiate with the Taliban. Frankly, it is unclear how one can negotiate with a terrorist group that is hell-bent on destroying any progress made in Afghanistan, especially recent strides made in women's education and empowerment.

Another point of contention is the readiness of Afghanistan's 350,000 security forces. The United States has invested $40 billion in Afghanistan's forces since the beginning of the war, but their ability to fight the Taliban and maintain internal security is questionable. Moreover, reports of rogue elements within the Afghan forces turning on their American trainers and killing them continue to be a source of distress and erode public confidence in the mission.

Pakistan could have a role in potentially stabilizing Afghanistan in the future, but it must first show willingness to police on insurgent safe havens within its borders. U.S. trust has been further strained due to Pakistan's support for the Haqqani network, which is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the U.S. Government. In addition, drone strikes, which have long been a source of contention, came to the forefront of the discussion once again after Prime Minister Sharif's recent visit. He repeatedly raised the issue, and two human rights organizations published reports alleging that U.S. drone strikes have killed innocent civilians. The revelations that elements inside of Pakistan, including the ISI, tacitly approved of U.S. drone strikes while denouncing them will further complicate the relationship.

The stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue to pose challenges for U.S. interests in the region. There are several complex issues with long-standing baggage that require a holistic approach that finds common ground for all entities involved. I look forward to hearing suggestions from our witnesses for moving forward in the region as the withdrawal from Afghanistan approaches.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Questions for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Tulsi Gabbard
To General Jack Keane, USA, Retired

Question 1:

The United States should not fight today's threats with yesterday's tactics and expect different outcomes. Regarding troop levels, why should the U.S. to pursue a 'more of the same' strategy against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan?

Question 2:

Experts can disagree about the degree to which al Qaeda is "decimated," but it is apparent the organization is more mobile and Afghanistan is no longer the locus of global operations. How is the argument for maintaining a significant military presence in Afghanistan different from the argument for maintaining a U.S. military presence in every country where branches of al Qaeda exist?

Question 3:

What are the Taliban's mission and objectives specifically for Afghanistan at this point? What constitutes "defeating" the Taliban? Why would U.S. efforts to defeat the Taliban militarily succeed when historically all other efforts have failed?

[NOTE: Responses were not received prior to printing.]

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