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THE WAY AHEAD IN AFGHANISTAN

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
JULY 27, 2011

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THE WAY AHEAD IN AFGHANISTAN

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, July 27, 2011.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:10 a.m. in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

I apologize for being late. We had a conference, and I was engrossed in what was going on, and Mac leaned over and says, are you going to start the hearing? And it was 5 after 10:00. I apologize.

Good morning. The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the way forward in Afghanistan, particularly in light of the President's recent decision to withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year and the remaining 23,000 surge forces by next summer.

As I noted during our hearing with the Department last month, I am deeply concerned about the aggressive troop withdrawals proposed by President Obama. Every witness before this committee this year has testified that the comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy the President committed to in December of 2009 is bearing fruit.

In recent congressional testimony, both Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen and now former International Security Assistance Force Commander, General David Petraeus, stated that the President's formulation went beyond the options they had recommended. Both Mullen and Petraeus noted that the approaches they had recommended would have assumed less risk.

I am particularly concerned about the specific timing of the redeployment of the surge forces. General Petraeus reportedly recommended that the bulk of the surge forces be redeployed by the end of 2012, thereby making them available through the end of 2012 fighting season. Instead, many of the redeploying units will be tied up, making their logistical preparations for redeployment during the height of the fighting season. This suggests that the redeployment deadline did not reflect a carefully conceived operational plan, but rather was designed to conform to the political calendar.

Although troop strength is not the only variable in determining strategic success or failure in Afghanistan, it affects all other variables by shaping the perceptions of America's commitment to that country and its people.

Fears of wavering resolve will further incentivize Afghan corruption, as the possibility of renewed civil war may cause Afghans to seek short-term profits. Such doubts would also undermine efforts to end the war through some sort of reconciliation process.

U.S. commanders reportedly have until October 15 of this year to submit a plan regarding the details of the remaining 2012 redeployments; however, on a July 6 press conference, then-ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] Joint Commander Lieutenant General David Rodriguez identified units that were coming out of Afghanistan starting this month. It is not entirely clear whether these units were never intended to be replaced and, therefore, not part of the President's plan, or if the redeployment is occurring in advance of October 15.

Thus this hearing comes at a particularly opportune time to consider the strategic alternatives for the war effort in Afghanistan. Can we maintain the current balance between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in light of troop reductions? Will we be able to shift the focus of operations from RC [Regional Command]–South and Southwest to RC–East as originally planned? What are the implications for our reduced footprint on our training, advise and assist missions? These are merely a few of the strategic considerations this committee must consider in exercising its oversight role in this critical conflict.

Fortunately, today we have three uniquely expert witnesses to discuss our way ahead in Afghanistan, and we are happy to have them here.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

Mr. MCKEON. Ranking Member Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing and bringing in such well-qualified witnesses. This is a subject that this committee and I think the broader Congress needs to be more focused on. Certainly with the debt crisis swirling around us, it has sucked all of the oxygen and all of the focus to some degree, as well it should, but we still have 100,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, and this is still the central piece of our national security strategy and something that we all need to become more informed on. So I look forward to the testimony from our three very well-qualified witnesses and to the discussion that follows.

I think we also need to recognize, as the chairman did, the tremendous success that our troops have brought us in the last 18 months. The surge has been successful. For all of the problems and challenges in that region in Pakistan and Afghanistan, I think much of the reporting often misses this point. For those of us who have been there over the years, you can see the progress, and I see

that reflected in much of the testimony today, that has been made particularly in the South. We have pushed back the Taliban, held ground, and, I think, as importantly, done more than just focus on the military side of this. We have begun to focus on the governance side of this as well.

When I was in Afghanistan last time, I had never seen so many folks from the State Department, from USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development], from the Agriculture Department, and Justice Department recognizing the need to get the governance right. So we have made progress, and our troops are to be commended. They did so with great courage and at great sacrifice.

Now I think the great challenge going forward is how we begin to make the hand-off to the Afghan Government. We have to do that. We cannot stay forever for a variety of different reasons. And in this part of the world, that is not an easy thing to do. Afghanistan does not have a history of stable governance. They do not have a history of a stable economy. No matter when and how we do this, it is going to be fraught with risk, and it is going to be difficult. But we must begin that process.

And I think that is the thing I look forward to hearing most from our witnesses, what is the best and smartest way to do that. And it is a matter of managing risk. It is not a matter of saying if we just stay an extra year, then we can be absolutely sure that the successes that we have had will hold. There is no perfect time to do this, so we need to figure out how to do it best as we are moving forward.

This is an extraordinarily difficult part of the world. As I have said many times, I wish we did not have national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a very complex and difficult place with severe governance problems, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But the truth is we do have very strong national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and they are relatively simple.

We want stable governments in both countries that can stand so the violent extremists like Al Qaeda and the Taliban, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, aren't able to take over those governments or even hold substantial areas of space so that they can plot and plan attacks against us. That is our interest, but it is very difficult to achieve. And I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today as to how we should best proceed going forward with our plans to achieve those interests.

With that, I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We have with us three retired military people who have dedicated their lives to service to our country. We are happy to have you here.

General Jack Keane is former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, one of the authors of the successful 2007 Iraq surge, and has recently returned from an assessment trip to Afghanistan.

Lieutenant General David Barno commanded Combined Forces Command Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005 and is coauthor of the

study Responsible Transition: Securing U.S. Interests in Afghanistan Beyond 2011.

And Former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Marine Colonel "Bing" West is the author of the counterinsurgency classic, *The Village*, and, more recently, *The Wrong War*, drawn from his experiences embedded with units in Afghanistan.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service. Thank you for being here with us today.

We will hear first from General Keane.

STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN KEANE, USA (RET.), SENIOR PARTNER, SCP PARTNERS, PRESIDENT, GSI, LLC

General KEANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ranking minority and members of the committee, for allowing me once again to testify on the war in Afghanistan.

I truly appreciate my distinguished colleagues who have joined me here today and the contribution that they have made and will continue to make.

I just completed this month an assessment for General Petraeus in Afghanistan and briefed General John Allen, General Petraeus' successor, who is now the Commander of International Security Assistance Forces Afghanistan. This is the third assessment in less than a year. Let me briefly provide some highlights from that assessment, which we can explore further in questions and answers if you desire.

The President's recent drawdown decision of 33,000 troops no later than September 2012 has increased the risk significantly and threatens the overall mission success. The ISAF Command is conducting detailed assessments of the drawdown impacts and what can be done to mitigate the risk.

The Taliban have suffered a stunning defeat in the South, in Kandahar and Helmand Province, so much so that it is not reversible unless we draw down ISAF troops in those provinces prematurely.

I am making a statement it is not reversible after considerable analysis, and there are three major reasons. First, we own the ground and are staying on it with Afghan National Security Forces and not departing as we have done so many times in the past. The Taliban have tried to come back and have failed time and time again during this spring and summer offensive. They are reduced to softer targets, assassinations and attacks on the Afghan people.

Number two, we have destroyed the Taliban's logistical infrastructure. Their IED [improvised explosive device] factories and caches numbers well over 1,000, which prevents the Taliban from sustaining their operations.

And number three, the people are aligned with ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces and, as such, are providing assistance with tips, early warnings and cache locations. In fact, a highly respected intelligence chief with considerable experience believes the Taliban and the people in Kandahar Province after many years are "getting a divorce."

In the South, therefore, we have a much improved security situation, which, in time, the Afghan National Security Forces will be able to take over and, in fact, lead. The security situation in the

South improved dramatically because of the President of the United States' decision to escalate the war and provide much-needed additional resources. Most of the so-called surge forces were applied in the South, the birthplace and center of gravity of the Taliban.

Secondly, the Afghan National Security Forces have improved in quality and quantity and now number about 300,000, with a final force level of 352,000. This proves once again that quantity does have a quality all of its own.

Moreover, the Afghan Local Police, or ALP, essentially part-time village police selected by village elders, trained by the Special Forces to protect the villages in the contested areas after the Taliban have been driven out, is a potential game changer and one of the most successful programs that we have enacted.

And, finally, there is a noticeable improvement in governance in the South, and the degree that this exists, frankly, did surprise me. With better leadership in district and subdistrict governors and in numerous elected councils at the village and district levels, government capacity has improved, but there is a long way to go before the national government is providing effective services at the local level.

Our next major contested area, which the chairman mentioned, is the East, from Kabul to the Pakistan border. We have been conducting a defense in depth from that Pakistan border to Kabul, which, by and large, has been successful in that Kabul is relatively stable, and the legitimacy of the national government is not threatened by the insurgency.

All that said, to defeat the Taliban and the Haqqani network in the East, it must become our main effort, and it will require an aggressive, comprehensive campaign. Those plans are in the making as we speak.

Remember, the campaign in the South and the one in the East, which we are talking about, are not being conducted simultaneously, but sequentially, because the President of the United States' 2009 decision did not provide the 40,000 requested forces by Generals McChrystal and Petraeus. The command received 30,000, thus a sequential operation and not simultaneously conducted. Indeed, the campaign in the East is further threatened by the imminent withdrawal of one-third of our U.S. forces by September 2012.

We cannot discuss the security situation in Afghanistan without mentions of the sanctuaries in Pakistan, which are the engine of the insurgency. They are Chaman and Quetta in the South and Miranshah in the East. Almost all of the middle- and senior-level leaders of the insurgency come from these sanctuaries. Many of the fighters and 80 percent of all the material for IEDs originate in Pakistan factories.

To succeed in Afghanistan, something must be done about the sanctuaries. A few points of emphasis. We lack a regional strategy for South Asia, which Afghanistan and Pakistan are an important part.

We must recognize our soft policy with Pakistan as it pertains to the sanctuaries has failed.

There is no doubt that General Kayani and General Pasha, the Chief of Staff and Director of ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], are

complicit in supporting the sanctuaries. We need a new approach diplomatically that recognizes their manipulation of the United States Government and, frankly, how destructive the military oligarchy is to the future growth and development of Pakistan.

We all know that the Pakistanis are paranoid about their political and competitive struggle with India, but we should recognize that the Pakistanis have clearly lost. India is a democracy which is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and Pakistan is moving in the opposite direction.

And, moreover, in reference to the sanctuaries, we must consider covert and military operations against the sanctuaries. It should be on the table.

And let me conclude by saying significant progress has been made in Afghanistan, but success is certainly not guaranteed. The consequences of failure and the direct impact to the security of the United States are unacceptable.

Many challenges remain. We lack a coherent political and economic strategy for Afghanistan. Ryan Crocker, who took his post this week as the United States Ambassador, will do much to turn around that reality. He is the best in the United States Government and will truly make a difference.

We need a red line for President Karzai not staying in power. It is unacceptable that he would manipulate the political forces to do that very thing.

The Strategic Partnership Agreement, or SPA, impacts our success. It anchors our commitment and communicates the same to all of the players in and outside of Afghanistan. The sooner we achieve this agreement, which is being negotiated now, the better.

At a minimum, the 33,000 drawdown no later than September 2012 should be moved to no later than December 2012 to permit all those forces to be used during the entire fighting season of 2012.

While Afghanistan is hard and it is complicated, to be sure, we can accomplish the mission of transition to the Afghan National Security Forces. Protracted wars test the mettle of our great democracy. This war is worth fighting, and it is most certainly worth winning. Our courage, moral and financial support, and political determination to see it through, is essential to success.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Keane can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Barno.

STATEMENT OF LTG DAVID W. BARNO, USA (RET.), SENIOR ADVISOR AND SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN SECURITY

General BARNO. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Mr. Smith, members of the committee, thanks for providing me the opportunity to share my views with you today on the way ahead in Afghanistan.

In addition to my 19 months serving in Afghanistan as the overall U.S. and coalition Commander, I stayed actively engaged in analyzing our efforts across the region. I have traveled back to both

Afghanistan and Pakistan several times in recent years, with my most recent trip being a week-long visit to Pakistan in January of this year, from which I drew some very interesting conclusions about Pakistan's role and as we look at the road ahead here.

Also I have two sons that are Active Duty Army officers who sent many of the last several years shuttling in and out of Afghanistan, and I stay up-to-date on what the war looks like through young officers', young captains' eyes, through their experiences. It also gives me an appreciation of the sacrifices our families are making connected to the military all across this country as they face deployments that continue for their loved ones into this part of the world.

The last time I testified in front of the committee was March of 2009. At that time I gave an assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, and I presented a framework for what I believe would achieve success there. And I characterized it as a math equation, that success equals leadership plus strategy plus resources. Leadership plus strategy plus resources.

In 2009, I outlined in some detail why I thought all three of those categories were falling short in Afghanistan; leadership, strategy and our resources. The good news today is that in each of these three variables, the United States has dramatically improved its position since 2009, much of which General Keane has so carefully articulated.

I would tell you that General Stan McChrystal, Dave Petraeus and now John Allen have brought huge talent and counterinsurgency experience to bear in Afghanistan, and it has had an immensely positive effect on the war. Resources have been increased dramatically, both in dollars and in troops, and they have enabled a new strategy to make our new military and civilian leadership over the last 2 years—to enable them to make substantial, although I think fragile still, gains. That progress was wholly missing, entirely absent in 2009.

Sustaining the success of the last 18 months will perhaps now be even more difficult than the campaign over the last 2 years that have wrenched the momentum way from the Taliban and put them on their back foot. I would suggest that as General Allen and Ambassador Crocker now take the reins of the effort, they face five major challenges.

First, I think we have got to find a way to dispel the uncertainty about U.S. intentions over the long term with regard to Afghanistan and the region. Failing to clearly make commitments that outline a long-term U.S. presence in the region encourages all the actors in the region to hedge their bets, to base all of their calculations on the question, What would this decision look like the day after the Americans are gone?

Such uncertainty about U.S. intentions deeply undercuts our leverage and our long-term goals in the region. And the hard reality is that we cannot protect our vital interests in the region, keeping relentless pressure on Al Qaeda, without at least a limited U.S. military presence.

The second challenge is that we must rebuild our relationship with Pakistan. During the week I visited there in January, we had an American kill two Pakistanis. A third died as a result of that incident. That began a downward spiral of our relations that was

only accelerated by the death of Osama bin Laden with the U.S. Special Operations strike.

While rebuilding these relations is outside of General Allen and Ambassador Crocker's responsibility directly in Kabul, our strategic goals in the region center much more on Pakistan than they do on Afghanistan in the long haul.

Pakistan is the second largest Islamic country in the world. It has somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 nuclear weapons. Its population today is 187 million compared to 30 million next door in Afghanistan, the second poorest country in the world. By 2050, Pakistan will have 300 million Pakistanis, almost as large as the United States is today.

Our new Afghan leadership team, therefore, has got to work closely with our leadership team in Islamabad, our Ambassador there, Cameron Munter, and our U.S. senior military leader, Lieutenant General Ken Keen to think through a regional approach to U.S. policy in this part of the world. Now, one could argue they ought to be implementing a regional U.S. policy, but in reality, as General Keane pointed out, we really don't have a discernible regional security strategy for South and Central Asia, which I think is essential.

The third challenge we have got in the coming months is to rebuild relations with President Hamid Karzai, at the same time opening the doors for his transition in 2014. The U.S. is beginning to think about this now and in midterm planning needs to start look at setting conditions for a constitutional transition of power by President Karzai to some unknown successor.

Part of what Ambassador Crocker is going to need to do is help build that bench of possible candidates out there, or at least encourage the establishment of that in the coming years to ensure a peaceful transition of power to sustain all the political efforts in Afghanistan over the last 10 years. This is a critical part of a political strategy that the U.S. has a fairly limited outline of today.

Fourth, our new team in Kabul has got to focus on continuing the effort to defeat the enemy's strategy, both Al Qaeda's strategy and the Taliban's strategy. I think Al Qaeda has taken very serious blows over the last 18 months, but I also would argue that their looming demise, that their destruction is not something that is imminent; that we still face a very deadly enemy out there who is not only in this part of the world, but has reached his tentacles to the Arabian Peninsula and to North Africa. We have to continue to keep relentless pressure on his headquarters, as it were, in South and Central Asia.

In the case of the Taliban, we have to defeat a strategy that, simply put, is "run out the clock:" Run out the clock on the Americans, await the international efforts departure, and continue the fight. As we continue to signal about our long-term intentions and don't articulate what our plans are beyond 2014, we continue to add a brighter light at the end of the Taliban's tunnel.

And, finally, our new team in Kabul has got to manage a transition to a future over the next few years with fewer U.S. resources, both in troops and in dollars, matched against our war aims, which really have not changed, to achieve our objectives there.

As we know, U.S. troops are going to decline 33,000 in the next 18 months or so, and at the same time those troops go down, the dollars associated with spending for them in country are going to decline as well. We have to be very cautious that this decline in U.S. spending in Afghanistan doesn't completely destroy the Afghan economy and undercut all of our other efforts.

So in closing now, I would just say that the most important point I think we have to consider today is that the U.S. has vital national security interests in this part of the world that transcend our efforts in Afghanistan. As we negotiate this upcoming transition, as we navigate these challenging waters in the next 3½ years towards 2014, we have to make sure this transition ultimately protects those vital interests and doesn't put them at great risk.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Barno can be found in the Appendix on page 62.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General.

Secretary West.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRANCIS J. "BING" WEST, FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. WEST. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for having me. As the token marine today, I will attempt to keep my remarks very brief.

I would like to start by saying that I agree entirely with General Keane that this decision of when to withdraw the troops was manifestly not an operational plan. And it is regrettable, but there we are.

I do believe that our objective has been achieved in Afghanistan and will continue to be achieved provided the Afghan Army holds together. Our objective, in my judgment, is not nation-building. We have gotten beyond that. Our objective is to prevent a terrorist sanctuary. And if you define a terrorist sanctuary as being that you have to be able to live in comfort the way Osama bin Laden did in Pakistan, and that you need electricity, and you need access to some lines of communication and highways, if you define it that way, then there is no way in Afghanistan today that any terrorist can ditty-bop into some house and think he is going to be safe, turn anything on electric and think that he is still going to be alive within 24 to 48 hours.

Our Special Operations Forces, the network of spies, and our extraordinary airborne surveillance and electronics mean, as I believe General Barno was just indicating, that we could sustain this. There will be no sanctuary there indefinitely with a small force provided we had some sort of long-term agreement with the Afghan Government.

The Taliban can be pains in the neck in the rural areas for the next 100 years, but they lack mass, and they lack anything beyond basic weapons. The only way the Taliban can win, defined as taking the cities and becoming a government that supports terrorists, is that the Afghan Army collapses. It is the only way they can do it, whether we are there or not. 2014, therefore, I think, becomes the critical aspect when you are looking forward.

I believe Afghanistan is going to be a mess in 2014 because the coalition economic aid and military aid is going to go off the side of a cliff. I don't particularly care if it is a mess economically and politically, provided the Afghan Army still remains together as an institution. And so I see that both the largest risk, Mr. Chairman, and our core interest, more than anything else, is simply sustaining resources for the Afghan Army.

And the biggest risk I see is the parallel to Vietnam. General Allen is well aware that he is in the position of General Abrams in about 1970. And General Abrams, no matter the good job he did, as we began to withdraw our troops, we slashed the aid to the South Vietnamese Army, and eventually they fell apart.

So I would recommend, Mr. Chairman, that serious consideration be given. We are broke as a country, and therefore serious consideration be given not to adding money in those out-years, but to arranging some sort of trade-off in terms of our near-term economic and military resources in turn for a lockbox. And I know you hear that, and you say, oh, you can never do it, but a lockbox for General Allen and for the commander after him so that he can tell the Afghan Army, we have money set aside for you, and I control that money with the Congress over the next several years, because that is the single greatest signal we can give to the Afghan Army is don't worry about it, we are still going to pay for you after 2014, because he who has the gold rules.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. West can be found in the Appendix on page 72.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

During his testimony before this committee in March, General Petraeus noted that the United States had previously attempted both counterterrorism and counterinsurgency-like strategies, and that both had proven inadequate.

Gentlemen, will we be able to continue a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy with one-third of our troops departing, leaving Afghanistan before the end of the next fighting season? And how does the President's order affect the risk to our forces and to our strategic objectives?

General KEANE. Okay, I will start with that answer.

Well, given the success that we have already achieved in the South, which, as I indicated, is quite dramatic, what the mission there is not to sacrifice that success by prematurely moving forces from there to the East, and that is what the command is assessing right now. I would imagine that they will accept some risk, probably in Helmand Province, and probably keep the forces where they are in Kandahar Province.

And then the issue becomes the counterinsurgency strategy, which is necessary in the East to bring about the defeat of the Taliban and the Haqqani network as it operates in Afghanistan. We cannot do that alone with so-called counterterrorist activities, which, after all, was what we had been doing for many years while Afghanistan was on a diet in terms of resources, and that is what we were doing for 3 years in Iraq, and both of those efforts did not succeed against a reemerging Taliban in Afghanistan and a very significant presence by the Haqqani network.

So, yes, the counterinsurgency strategy must continue to be applied, and I think what the command will do, those—certainly taking down one-third of the forces by September of 2012, make no mistake about it, will have significant impact. What they will try to do is mitigate those force reductions by using a number of enablers in the East; not just additional combat forces, but additional intelligence assets, acceleration of the Afghan National Security Forces for the East, dramatically increasing this program that I mentioned that is not particularly well understood, but it is having quite an effect in Afghanistan, and that is the ALP, Afghan Local Police, program.

So they are looking at all of those things to mitigate that risk so that we can go into the East with a comprehensive, aggressive campaign and achieve the kind of results that we have achieved in the South.

I believe the only way we can succeed is to put in play a counterinsurgency strategy in the East. It remains to be seen whether we will be as successful there as we were in the South. I am cautiously optimistic about it. Why? Because of the sheer talent of the people that we have, the leaders. Our force is a very experienced force, and they do know what they are doing, and also this growth and development of the Afghan National Security Forces.

It's unfortunate they have to accept the degree of risk I am talking about. And listen to what I say about risk and what frustrates me so much about this decision. When you ask our forces, U.S. forces, to do more with less, what that means are more casualties. And that is the elephant in the room that we don't talk about, but that is the truth of it, what is going to happen here. And they will step up to that, and with all the courage and determination that they display every single day. They know what is going on here.

So, yes, counterinsurgency strategy must be applied in the East. The Afghan National Security Forces will be a part of it. The command will find ways to mitigate the reduction of those forces, and it remains to be seen if we can be as successful as we have been in the South when we apply that strategy in the East.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Barno.

General BARNO. I would just add briefly to that. I think the key to answering that question is whether the Afghan National Army can step up to the plate and actually enter the counterinsurgency fight in ways, with U.S. advisors, with U.S. enablers, that can allow Afghan units to substitute for American units.

Right now there are 164,000 soldiers in the Afghan National Army. That is larger than the entire U.S.–NATO force combined. The question is, can those units, are they now at the level of training, of leadership, are they set up with U.S. advisors and adequate trainers to be able to substitute for some of these American units that are coming out? That day has got to come. Between now and the end of 2014, the major change we are going to make in our approach to Afghanistan is not in the counterterrorism arena. That is going to look very much the same in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. What is going to change is how we prosecute the remainder of the campaign, the counterinsurgency campaign, and the big change

there will be Afghan units stepping into the slots that American units are vacating as they come back home.

So the critical element of success here is the capacity and the effectiveness of these Afghan units. If we can answer that question yes, then we can achieve what has been laid out over the next 2 and 3 years. But if they are not, much as Mr. West has pointed out, then we are going to have a very serious problem.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary.

Mr. WEST. I think, sir, we get very confused when we use terms like "counterterrorism" and "counterinsurgency." I don't really know what they mean. And I will say that I have spent a lot of time up in the East, Nuristan and Konar, et cetera. We are not going to take those mountains. We don't have the helicopters to do it. We are wearing a lot of heavy gear; the other side isn't.

That fight in those mountains is going to go on for decades, but we shouldn't particularly care up in those mountains. They are just little pissants up there. I mean, they can give you problems, but they are not getting to Kabul. If they are not really getting down into the plains and coming after you, they can remain rabble up there fighting from tribe to tribe for a long, long time.

What bothers me most about our counterinsurgency is that we have shoveled money at a problem in an astonishing way for no gain. The billions of dollars that we have been spending and spending and spending, saying that every soldier is a nation builder, what we have done is we have caused a culture of entitlement to spread among all Afghans over the last 10 years. And just as President Johnson found out it was wrong to have a "Great Society," when you—the same thing, I believe, has happened in Afghanistan.

You don't get something back when you give something and expect nothing, because then you get nothing back. I don't think we are really going to see what is really going to happen in the East or in the South until we stop doing it for them, and I don't know whether that puts me in the counterinsurgent or counterterrorist camp, but either way, sir, I think as long as the Afghan Army is willing to get after it, it is going to be okay. If the Afghan Army isn't willing to get after it, it is not going to be okay. But on balance I think the Afghan Army is beginning to think, we can handle these Taliban, and we can handle Haqqani. And I think that should be the main effort, not the Americans doing it for them.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ranking Member Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If I could follow up on that actually, General West, I mean, that is kind of the issue. We need to hand off responsibility to the Afghans.

So a two-part question. First thing, I want to get a little better idea from all of you, I guess, about the capability of the Afghan Army and the Afghan Police. We have spent a fair amount of money training them, and this question is not a mere matter of numbers, it is a matter of capability. But I know one of the big focuses in the surge in the last 2 years was to focus on that capability; was to focus on not just cranking them out, but actually give them the type of training to develop leadership skills, you know, to develop, you know, Special Forces capabilities.

I know then we have had our Special Forces folks over there training Afghan Special Forces for a while. Those numbers have expanded. Logically it would seem that at least in the last 2 years there should have been some sort of increase not just in numbers, but in capability of the Afghan—just focusing on the military and the police for the moment—on the security forces. I wonder if any of you could gauge a little bit how much that capability has increased.

General KEANE. I will be glad to start it.

Well, I think that there has been significant growth and development here. And I have spent a lot of time on this, because for all the obvious reasons everybody sitting here knows that the Afghan National Security Forces eventually will determine whether we are successful in Afghanistan or not. So that is crucial to our future. So, thus, your question is right on the target.

The fact of the matter is the growth of the Army has been more than acceptable, and I just don't use my own judgment about it, I am using the judgment of company commanders, battalion commanders. And what we are doing is we are operating side by side with them, and we did this in Iraq.

And when we started to do that in Iraq in 2007, the growth of the force was exponential. While we have advisors with them, to be sure, when they operate with another infantry platoon, side by side, they see what the sergeant does; they see what the soldier does; they see how they do it; they see how they interact with their officers; they see their discipline, their determination; they see their integrity, all of that on display, it has quite an impact on them. So they have grown as a result of that, and that is going to continue.

The police are still uneven and behind the growth and development of the army, and I think most everyone knows that is true in this room.

I am encouraged by the army in its performance. I mean, there is a question mark out there, and we haven't answered it yet. As we transition to where they are in the lead, totally in charge, we have done that in six districts right now, and we are in the very beginning stages of that.

Based on that transition, that is unfolding right in front of us, those transition decisions have been sound. There is no pushback in terms of the Afghans being in the lead. But none of those areas were real tough areas. That is coming in 2012, when we start to turn over what has been tough areas——

Mr. SMITH. If I could, I want to focus on the question a little bit. I don't want to take everybody else's time here.

I guess the big question is that eventually we have to make that turnover. And then as Mr. West pointed out, you know, part of it is, you know, they have been getting something for nothing for a while. And we all like getting something for nothing, so you want to keep getting it. Isn't there a point at which that transition has to start? And if we were to say, as you suggested—and I am not quite sure whether—I don't think General West was suggesting this as well—that, you know, we shouldn't have—we shouldn't plan on drawing down 30,000 forces over the course of the next 18 months, we should keep it up, but if we had sent that message to

the Afghan Army, if we had said, you know, relax, we are going to stick around for another year and a half, we are going to keep the same numbers, you know, doesn't that have the opposite effect? I mean, that sort of created the problem. Don't we have to do, in essence, what the President has said we have to do?

I mean, we would all like to keep doing it with the most capable force in the world, which is ours, no question. But you can't make the transition if you don't make the transition, if you don't at some point begin to move the numbers back down. And we are talking about reducing by 30,000 over the course of 18 months, leaving a force of 70,000 plus 40,000 in aid or all of that. I mean, isn't that sort of a reasonable transition towards accomplishing what I think all of you acknowledge is the most important thing, and that is getting the Afghan Army to take responsibility for the fight?

General KEANE. Well, before the President's decision, General Petraeus' campaign plan transitions the entire effort by 2014, because that was the Lisbon agreement that NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Orgnization] made, and the United States was part and parcel to that agreement, so——

Mr. SMITH. But we are not going to go 100,000 to zero on December 15——

General KEANE. It is indisputable that we are going to transition by 2014, and which provinces and which districts, you know, they have a detailed campaign planned for that based on what the conditions on the ground are.

The only dispute over the 33,000 is the timing of it.

Mr. SMITH. Sure.

General KEANE. That is the issue, and I don't want to overly dwell on it. That is the issue is the timing of it.

Mr. SMITH. Right. But it is a rather critical point because it is the cornerstone of the message. And if the message is that decision has significantly undermined our ability to succeed, that is a pretty important point to be making.

So I think it is worth dwelling on if we are talking about, you know, total transition, you know, by January 2014, and then by, you know, mid to late 2012 we are dropping 30,000—I mean, I mean, I am no expert in terms of how, you know, you slide down a graph here, particularly when you are talking about, you know, military matters, but it strikes me as reasonable from a basic numbers standpoint in terms of getting towards that 2014 goal.

General KEANE. But it just ignores the operational requirements on the ground in terms of what we were—what we are trying to achieve. We have got two major operational efforts going sequentially versus simultaneously, which any commander would rather do, and the priority is in the East.

I think what you will see the command do, they will try to keep these forces as long as they can keep them. As opposed to a gradual drawdown in 2012, it will probably look more like a waterfall come September.

Mr. SMITH. Right.

General KEANE. So they can keep those forces in the fight and then have them out on the President's timeline to be sure.

Mr. SMITH. Could I just quickly get the other two in here, because I am abusing my privileges here as ranking member. But I

want to get just a couple quick comments from the other two generals about what they think about that analysis.

General BARNO. I don't think that the timeline for next summer is optimal. I think, you know, I have said in other commentary that that reduces the commanders' flexibility on the ground. On the other side of the coin, I don't think it is a game stopper from the standpoint of what commanders have to do. I think it makes it more difficult, it increases the risks.

The more important conclusion, though, I think that needs to happen, or we need to just think about a bit is are we resourcing the effort to get the Afghan National Army into the fight well enough? The numbers I have seen this week point out that the number of trainers that they need in the Afghan National Army is about 2,800. That has been resourced at about 1,600 for the last several years, about 58 percent. So we have not, despite the number of forces we have had in Afghanistan—for whatever reason is partly because of NATO's commitments—we have not fully resourced training the Afghan Army. That needs to change because of the importance of their upcoming responsibility.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. West.

Mr. WEST. As any time you put an American battalion in the field, that battalion is going to fight. As long as the Afghans see us doing the fighting, they are going to let us do the fighting for them.

Yes, I have been out there with them in March down in Sangin Province, which a tough place, Sangin district. I was out with an American platoon, a Marine platoon, that had side by side the Afghans. But every single firefight, of course the marines took the lead. So even though you were side by side, the American being the better fighter just fell into the lead.

We are not going to know, sir, how good they are until they are out there by themselves. And I think they are going to cut a lot of deals, but on balance I am on the same side as General Keane. I think they can do it, but we are not going to know until they do it.

And I took a poll of this Marine platoon just before I left, and I said, okay, guys, if you weren't here, could those Afghan soldiers handle it? And it was a 50/50 toss-up among the group on their arguing. Now, to me, 50/50 was good enough. I would have said, okay, cut them loose, and let us see what they can do.

Mr. SMITH. Right. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Whatever we do in Afghanistan, it will end up the ultimate exercise in futility unless Pakistan controls its tribal border areas with Afghanistan, because under pressure in Afghanistan, the bad guys will simply go to Pakistan and return so soon as we leave Afghanistan, and we have given them a timetable for when we are going to do that.

Does Pakistan have the will and the capacity to control those border areas?

General KEANE. I believe they clearly have the capacity to do it. They have got an accomplished military that is well equipped. They have been spending a lot of time on counterinsurgency training, you know, for an army that, much like ours, was oriented on conventional operations, and we have assisted them with some of that transition, and they have improved rather significantly in the execution of them.

So, yes, they have the capability to do it, but they clearly lack the will to do it.

And, also, certainly as it affects Afghanistan and the sanctuaries themselves, I mean, they clearly see Afghanistan as part of their strategy with India. And there is the thought that as we continue to make progress in Afghanistan, particularly into 2012, that they would be persuaded that some of their goals as it pertains to Afghanistan—these are Pakistani geopolitical goals as it pertains to Afghanistan—can, in fact, be achieved with the incumbent government that is there and also the one that would be there post-2014.

That will be quite a diplomatic effort on our part to be able to achieve that in the face of what is now their national interest, and that national interest is supporting the Taliban and the Haqqani network in those sanctuaries.

I think this whole thing with Pakistan, as I mentioned in my remarks, has got to be relooked because our current policy has not succeeded. And those sanctuaries, as they currently exist, do protract the war and put us in a situation of unacceptable risk, in my mind, as we continue to move towards 2014.

General BARNO. I take a bit of a different view, I think. I have been to Pakistan probably 12 or 15 times. I noted I was there for a week in January. I spent 24 hours up in Peshawar up on the border areas there.

And the first point I make is that Pakistan, when we talk about it, is not a unitary actor; that there are all kinds of factions inside of Pakistan. There are factions inside the army, there are all factions inside the ISI. They don't operate with a singular approach to anything. And so, the idea that there—the will and the capacity problem is not as clear as we might think it to be.

The people I visited in Peshawar, chief law enforcement officer, the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, they both had friends and relatives being assassinated by the Taliban that were attacking inside of Pakistan. The chief law enforcement officer was having to buy ammunition with his own money for some of his troops. They were at war with an insurgency that was very much related to the insurgency right across the border in Afghanistan. So there are several different layers of fighting that is going on there.

As a state, I think Pakistan is conflicted about where it is going and what it wants to do. It does not believe the United States is going to stay in this part of the world, and it is absolutely hedging its bets to be able to have maximum influence after the U.S. is gone. We in some fashion have to break that outlook if we are ever going to see Pakistan improve their policies.

But the tribal areas today broadly are like the wild, wild West was for the United States in the 1800s. It is not an area they have a tremendous amount of control over, nothing like, I think, we expect them to have.

Mr. WEST. Like General Keane, I would do whatever has to be done to shut down those two ammonium nitrate factories. That is just absolutely unacceptable.

I think that the new approach to Pakistan of putting everything on a transactional basis, you get this money only if you do something, is the only way to deal with them, and they need that money for their lifestyles. And so we have more leverage than we think we have.

And, finally, sir, no, I think that that fight in the mountains with Pakistan is going to just go on and on and on. But the Taliban have very rudimentary weapons. I notice that Pakistan hasn't been foolish enough to give them modern weapons. So you could see the border, especially in the mountains, ending up a mess for a long, long time, but you still could have some relative stability in Afghanistan.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, gentlemen. Thank you for your testimony here today, and for appearing before us, and helping us to flesh out a path for a responsible drawdown in Afghanistan. I may have two questions.

Mr. LANGEVIN. First, I have long been concerned about our large troop presence in the country, and that we would be seen more as occupiers than protectors. But now that the apparent military successes, at least some successes, of the surge, it is imperative that we leverage our victories into strategic gains by slowly transitioning security responsibility now to the Afghan people, as we all recognize. While much of the future success of the war lies in the hands of others, including their regional neighbors, the Afghans themselves obviously will bear the burden for what their country looks like and who is involved in helping rebuild after we draw down in 2014.

Now, while numerous reports have highlighted the importance of negotiations with Taliban forces, obviously their resistance to the Afghan Government, the assassination of senior leaders, and their stance on human rights makes this difficult. So I want to ask the panel what your assessment is of the incentives for the Taliban to negotiate, and what points, if any, the coalition should be ready to accept to keep them at the table.

Second, I have specific questions for General Barno. In your testimony, General, you mentioned that one of the challenges facing the United States and Afghanistan is reestablishing working relationships with Pakistan. I would like your thoughts and the opinions, of course, of the other panelists if time permits on our relationship with Pakistan with respect to providing aid.

During General Martin Dempsey's confirmation hearing yesterday, he suggested changing how we view our aid to Pakistan. Specifically he stated that pushing programs on Pakistanis that they don't desire dilutes the value of U.S. cooperation.

So in light of the fact that the Emerging Threats Subcommittee that I sit on recently held a hearing on strategic communications 10 years after 9/11, I believe General Dempsey is right, and that

we should be discussing this critical issue now as it affects how we are viewed in Pakistan as well as the greater Middle East.

So my question is, what are your thoughts about how we currently provide aid to Pakistan, and how could we improve our aid to put the U.S. on a better footing with both the Pakistani Government and the populace in general? If we could, take Afghanistan first.

General KEANE. Okay. I will jump on the Afghanistan one and let Dave do the Pakistan.

In terms of reconciliation or negotiations with the Taliban, it is certainly something that we should pursue, obviously. But I don't think it makes as much sense that we are doing it unilaterally and almost right out of the White House itself. After all, the Afghans have a large say here. The Pakistanis also have a say. And I do think it is a bit of an illusion in terms of any near-term achievement of reconciliation for a number of reasons.

One, the Taliban themselves have not begun to internalize the fact that they cannot achieve their political goals through armed violence and haven't accepted that.

I am not convinced there is a single province in Afghanistan that the Taliban could deliver a cease-fire. I mean, we are tracking 16 different insurgent groups under the general rubric of Taliban insurgency. And so it complicates it quite a bit from their perspective.

The other players have a say here also in these negotiations, certainly Pakistan and the Afghan Government itself, and even the Afghan Government is divided on this issue.

So I think we should be grounded in realism when it comes to reconciliation. I know there have been people in our government that have been pursuing this ever since the Administration conducted a review of Afghanistan and our future policy and a desire to have it. And certainly that desire is understandable, but at times it is not grounded in reality.

We turn this war to our favor, that is Afghan favor and NATO favor, we will have a better leverage for this reconciliation that we are attempting to pursue.

General BARNO. On the question of Pakistan, you know, key issue that Pakistan, I think, is arguably the most dangerous country in the world. And it is also, by polling, the most anti-American country in the world. So changing those perspectives over time I think are essential if we are going to have any kind of relationship with the Pakistani leadership or the Pakistani people.

On how to target and adjust aid, I think clearly that aid needs to be better conditioned, especially in the military sphere. We have been essentially in a lot of ways writing blank checks to the Pakistanis to reimburse them for military operations. That needs to be much more accountable and have more transparency in terms of how those American dollars are being spent by the Pakistanis. I think that there has been some improvements in that here in the last year that the Administration has put into place.

On the civilian side, Kerry-Lugar-Berman money has been a great concept. It has put money in the civilian sphere in terms of development inside of Pakistan. It is underutilized right now. I think we are only spending somewhere in the neighborhood of a 15

or 20 percent obligation rate on an amount that has been actually appropriated. So there is an issue there.

But one of our key objectives should be, I think, to reinforce the civilian government of Pakistan and build their credentials inside the country by using targeted U.S. aid to do that. That is a different set of actors in this nonunitary nation than what we have when we are only reinforcing the military by providing them aid, and I think again we have made some progress in that area.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Barno, several of us were in Afghanistan in the spring looking specifically at the village stability operation, Afghan Local Police initiative. Do you agree with General Keane that it is a game changer or a potential game changer?

General BARNO. I am a big fan of that program. I think it has been very late getting off the marks. Even during my era there, we had programs that were analogous to that that were stopped after I left because of contentiousness between how the State Department looks at this program and how the Defense Department looks at this program in some respects. So I am glad to see that under way. Almost any successful counterinsurgency that we can look back over in the last 50 years had a program like that. So I just hope it is not too late, but it is a program I think we need to reinforce as much as we can.

Mr. THORNBERRY. General Keane, I hear some rumblings that there is resistance to this program, at least outside of the theater. And as you know, General Petraeus seems to be a big proponent of it. The folks who are there on the ground have been very strong. But as General Barno kind of alluded, there is some controversy, whether it is State Department, whether it is within the Pentagon or something. Can you help shed some light on that as far as what are the sorts of institutional resistances that we ought to be looking for on this program?

General KEANE. I am sorry, I can't help. I am not aware of that. I do know that the program is definitely succeeding. It has been embraced by the Afghan Government as well, because all of this eventually is part of the general rubric of the police. The district and provincial governors truly welcome the program. It frankly is succeeding beyond our expectations.

And the reason I am so encouraged about it is because the local fighters are selected by the elders. They are picking who they want to defend their communities. We are giving them some basic training to be able to do that, and then we provide oversight and mentorship, you know, for that execution.

And we are going to have problems with it. I mean, some of them will be abusive, some of them will be corrupt, and we will get an expose of it in one of our newspapers, to be sure. But I think by and large that is going to be aberration. The program is really solid. The Taliban are targeting them because they know how threatening they are to their success.

But I don't know what is going on institutionally back here in Washington. Sorry, I can't help.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, I think it is the sort of thing we may be doing in more places other than just Afghanistan, so I am interested in the capability beyond just Afghanistan.

Secretary West, I want to ask about Pakistan. We are all grappling with this, and you suggest we need much more of a transactional model with them. At the same time, the withdrawal of the troops, the 2014 deadline, perhaps putting more conditions on aid also adds to the insecurity of Pakistan that we are not going to stick around. And if there is one thing you hear over and over again is that they remember when we left. They don't think we are reliable allies.

How do you balance all of this with a country that does seem to have such deep-felt insecurities, but yet is pivotal to our success?

Mr. WEST. I wouldn't bother about the balancing, sir. I would say, I have the money, and if you want the money, this is what you are going to do. And if you don't want the money, don't do it.

Mr. THORNBERRY. You think they need the money bad enough that they will do whatever?

Mr. WEST. Sir, the way they live, I wonder where the money would come from if they weren't skimming an awful lot of it from international aid. So, yes, sir, I do think they need the money.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. I appreciate it.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I certainly appreciate all of you being here.

I think that my colleague got into this a little bit, but could you go back into the training issue and what we are doing to really sustain that effort when we leave? Are we certain that the kind of tools that we are essentially giving them are ones that they are going to be able to use in the future? And to what extent are we not focusing perhaps on some of the things that we should be? General West, could you respond to that?

Mr. WEST. I had a combined action platoon. We fought for 485 days with the Vietnamese in a remote village. I have looked at a lot of the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am absolutely convinced that all a trainer and advisor does more than anything else is he is trying to imbue a sense of confidence into his counterpart that that small unit can dominate on a battlefield and can hold its own. And once he has achieved that, he has achieved everything else. If he can inject in a spirit of dominance, a feeling that they are going to win when they get into a fight with the Taliban, then fine, he has done it.

The dilemma then becomes how much can you do, and how long does it really take you to do that? Wow. We have been at it now off and on for 10 years, but as I indicated earlier, I think we are getting awfully close to having done it. And you can add the VSOs—I am sorry, the village stability operations—to this, fine. The more we can do, the better. But as long as we just give them the feeling they can do it, that is what we have to do more than anything else.

Mrs. DAVIS. Anybody else want to comment?

General BARNO. I would just echo one of the earlier comments that sustaining this financially in the next several years is very important. We heard allusions back to Vietnam 1972–1973, General Abrams and the loss of funding support for the Vietnamese Army. We don't ever like to draw analogies back to that campaign for obvious reasons. But the reality is that unless funding continues to meet the levels required to sustain this Afghan force, then at the same time we are drawing down Americans, we are going to be reducing the capability of the very force that are replacing Americans on the battlefield. So I think continued congressional support for their training and their equipping in the next several years is really important.

Mrs. DAVIS. If you look at the overall effort in terms of financial costs of the war and sustaining it, at least into 2014, where does that training piece fall in numbers and perhaps percentages of what we are doing right now?

General BARNO. The numbers I have seen—I can't absolutely verify these—I have seen in the last couple of days indicate that the amount of money required to sustain the Afghan Army the next several years is about $6 to $9 billion per year. And again, I don't want to put my name against that, but that is the estimate.

And there is it also an illusion that we are going to—actually resource it at about $4 billion a year is the number I saw. So there may be a delta opening open up already between what we know it is going to cost and what we are willing to write the check for back here. That nests within an overall effort somewhere north of $120 billion a year for Afghanistan. So that is a fairly modest increment of our large financial commitment there, if those numbers are accurate.

Mrs. DAVIS. General Keane, did you want to?

General KEANE. Sure. There is very specific things that they need to be able to sustain their effort. I totally agree with Bing West about their heart and their commitment to be able to fight. And we are clearly moving in that direction.

But frankly, they need helicopters to assist them. They are going to need a couple of C–130s [Lockheed Martin Hercules tactical airlifters] to move stuff around. And that is all in the plan. It is already in the financial stream. We just need to continue to make sure that we do that.

The counter-IEDs. The enemy is using that technology and has killed thousands of us and even more of them. That technology that the enemy is using is not going to go away. And when we walk out the door, we cannot just leave them with their rifles to deal with that technology. We need to leave them with those balloons that are up in the air that you have all seen. We need to leave them with the surveillance technology that we have so they can counter that. That is a huge cost savings for us in the long run because we are leaving. But we are leaving them with a capability to be able to execute the mission without us. They need enablers to be able to execute——

Mrs. DAVIS. I appreciate that, General Keane. I guess part of the difficulty, though, is that they have the ability to actually have the mechanics, to have the logistics, to have all the other pieces in ad-

dition to the pilots. And I guess part of the question is then whether—I mean, that is obviously years.

General KEANE. All of those training programs to acquire those skills, obviously the more sophisticated the skill for a society that is 60, 70 percent illiterate is more challenging. It is taking us a year to get someone through a school that requires sophisticated skills that would take 4 to 6 months back here in the United States for one of our soldiers.

But all of those programs are in place. And the cost—to echo what General Barno was saying—the total cost is about $6 billion. Of that, about 3 billion would be for the United States. Now, that scale may move, but that is what I was told as of a couple of weeks ago.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And I want to say I agree with you and my colleagues' concern about Pakistan and what we need to do from a diplomatic standpoint to create a better relationship.

But I want to go to the next 3½ years. I want to start very quickly with on May 26, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Palmer and Sergeant Kevin Balduf, two marines from my district, were shot and murdered by an Afghan trainee. Sergeant Balduf had sent his wife Amy the day before he was killed an email: "I don't trust them. I don't trust them for anything. Not for anything at all."

A marine general who has become a very dear friend of mine, who is retired: "Continued belief that we can train the Afghan Army to be effective in the time we have is nonsense. The vast majority cannot even read. They are people from the villages hooked on drugs, illiterate and undisciplined."

That brings me to a couple more comments, and then I have got one question. Actually, George Will said that—and he was off a little bit, I am sure—that there are probably 20,000—200,000, excuse me, Afghan who are trained to fight and about 20 Taliban. Now, I realize you said, General Keane, it was about 164,000, or maybe you did, General. But the point is that they are trained, but they don't want to fight. So therefore, Sergeant Balduf had to give his life and Colonel Palmer.

Well, the only other point this general who has become a very dear friend of mine, in asking him about staying there to 2014—I am not going to read everything because I want to get to a question—but he said: "Get real with training. And arming a police force? All we are doing is training eventual new members of the Taliban. Trainers are doing a wonderful job, but we don't have the time to make an army. Every day someone dies."

I want to know from one of you experts, because I have written to the Secretary—I mean, the Department of Defense, how many Americans will probably die or be severely wounded in the next 3½ years, in your opinion? And if you will give me a quick answer, I would appreciate it, just your ballpark idea. How many will be killed and how many will be wounded in the next 3½ years, Americans? General Keane?

General KEANE. Well, probably about another 1,000 killed and five or six times that seriously wounded in terms of catastrophic wounds.

Let me just say something——

Mr. JONES. I want to hear from the other two because my time will run out in just about a minute.

General BARNO. I wouldn't dispute those figures, Congressman.

Mr. WEST. I had just written down just about——

Mr. JONES. Sir, Would you speak up, please?

Mr. WEST. I had just written down just about the same figures. About 1,000 will probably die, and about 7,000 would be seriously wounded.

Mr. JONES. Okay. The point is if we are in 2014, let us say President Obama is still President or we have a new President, and they decide, the Department of Defense, that, no, we need to stay just a little bit longer to 2015, 2016. What would you be saying to a committee 3 years down the road about the Afghans? Are they ready now 3 years later to take over the fight, or are we still going to have to be there in large presence to make sure that they fight? And this will be my last question, obviously.

General KEANE. Well, just in terms of some feedback, I mean, I think your characterization of the Afghans, using that very dramatic and tragic example, is overly pessimistic and doesn't square with what we are seeing universally and generally speaking. Exceptions all over the place, to be sure. But our judgment tells us, based on experience that we have had with years in Iraq with that force and years with this force——

Mr. JONES. General, excuse me 1 minute. We are saying to the Iraqis right now, do want us to stay there another year or two?

General KEANE. What our judgment is telling us is that based on what we see now with the Afghan National Security Forces, we should be encouraged, and that we can go forward and begin the transition with them, carefully, but begin that transition with them. And we will find out whether that judgment is correct or not.

Mr. JONES. General.

General BARNO. I think we have a stair step down over the next 3½ years that has already been laid out that takes us to full Afghan ownership. Not all at the end of the 2014, but in steps between now and then, we need to measure that as we go, and we will have a very good estimation of whether that is working or not 6 months from now, 9 months from now, 12 months from now. We need to look at that carefully.

Mr. JONES. Colonel.

Mr. WEST. I have been on record for some time now of saying that I think we should have fewer of our own fighters there and more trainers and advisers with them. But right now the ratio is one American soldier to every two Afghan soldiers. I would like to see it be 1 American soldier to 10 Afghan soldiers.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I admire each one of you gentlemen, but I think there is only one of you who doesn't fit into a bureaucracy very well, and I think that is Mr. West. And I mean that as a compliment. Not only are you a writer, and I would commend to people your book, *Afghanistan: The Wrong War*, but your willingness to be embedded repeatedly at the platoon level is pretty remarkable.

And when I get time sometime, I want to find out—I think you described it as the Nantucket of Afghanistan—exactly what the chain of command was that sent U.S. troops to a village with no strategic importance just because Hamid Karzai wanted them to go there to defend vacation properties for the Kabul elite.

But more serious matters. Here we are 10 years into war, and even if you count all the folks who have come and gone, we can barely muster a majority on the Armed Services Committee to find out what is going on in Afghanistan. General West pointed out that I think we have had 10 generals in command in Afghanistan in 10 years. Several of you are veterans of committee testimony, and you have seen, you know, year in, year out, every time we are hopeful, and we are going to do a little bit better even though troops levels have changed so dramatically, it is hard for folks back home to understand. If we peel back the 30,000 in the so-called surge, we will still have over twice as many troops there as were ever there under the previous administration. Plus you throw in the 40,000 NATO troops, and you kind of wonder what they are doing, too.

It makes me appreciate the plain-speaking approach of General West. He says in his testimony that he thinks that a lot of Afghans are chameleons. And this is not to fault anyone, it is just that, you know, it is the nature of the situation and of the people. And when General Keane says, well, they are getting a divorce from the Taliban, well, some people get remarried. Some people cohabit. Some people didn't really mean it to begin with.

So I think the country is getting more than fatigued with this situation, as my colleague Walter Jones points out. The death toll, the casualty rate for what, is tougher and tougher for people to take, especially when we have such an ambiguous relationship with Pakistan across the border.

I am hopeful that we can have military policies in the future that are more consistent and generals that plan and stick to approaches instead of—we have gone from 10,000 troops there to 130,000 troops, and I am still not sure that we have properly understood the nature of the enemy. We built them a dam in the 1950s that has barely been properly operated. The Russians gave them helicopters, and there are still Russian pilots in country, as you gentlemen know, ferrying people around because the Afghans never learned to pilot those helicopters. The assumption that training will work assumes a Western sort of mind-set that they are literate, and they are trainable, and they will not immediately flip sides to the other side with our money.

So somehow we have to have better solutions, and I think it boils down to understanding the nature of the enemy. And I don't know anybody who understands that better than Mr. West, who has actually been there on the ground, walking the ditches with the troops.

So I hope more Members will pay attention to this issue in general and to his writings in particular. To me at least, they have the ring of truth. I just fly in every year or two to see what is going on. But I don't know anybody, at least on this panel, who has spent more on-the-ground experience than Mr. West. So I appreciate you calling him as a witness, Mr. Chairman. And I hope that we can get a better and quicker solution to this problem.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank all of you for being here today.

General Keane, I was really looking forward to your appearance. Over the years you have been here numerous times, and I hope that people will look back. Every time you have been here, you have been very realistic, you have been very visionary, you have been very accurate. And in the entire Global War on Terrorism, you have added so much to help promote stability and success, protecting Americans at home by having success overseas. I appreciate your fortitude. You have even been ahead of the curve. I appreciate sometimes you have been politically incorrect. So thank you for what you have done.

Then, General Barno, I want to thank you for your personal service, and then you mentioned your two sons. All of us back in South Carolina are very appreciative of your commanding Fort Jackson. You really set a standard for the young people who have the opportunity to serve our country.

Additionally, I want to thank you. In 2003, you were my host as the Commander of Forces in Afghanistan. I want to thank you for your service there. It was really eye-opening. I have been there 11 times. I have seen an extraordinary development of the security forces in that country and the development really of a civil society in the third poorest country on Earth. But as we look at this—and when the President is right, I was very appreciative of commending the surge, and we have seen the success of that, as Secretary Bing has indicated.

With the drawdown does the United States, General Barno, have sufficient forces in place to support the Afghan efforts to hold in the South and clear in the East?

General BARNO. My sense is that they do. I think, as I noted earlier, the commanders are going to be limited in what flexibility they would have had if they had those forces through the end of next year. I think the numbers coming out this year, the 10,000 that will be out by the end of December, that can be readily accommodated by plans that were already in place.

Next year, I think it is going to be much more difficult for commanders not that the troops are departing, but that they are departing early enough in the year that it is going to have an impact over the fighting season. Is that going to cause the effort there to collapse? No. Is it going to increase the risk on the ground and make it more difficult? Yes.

Mr. WILSON. You and I both are very proud fathers of people serving in the military today. At breakfast I had a family member of a person serving in Afghanistan, and they were expressing con-

cern about the current rules of engagement. Do you feel that the rules of engagement enable our forces to be as effective as they need to be and also can protect themselves?

General BARNO. I might ask General Keane to comment on this, who has just come back. My sense is that we had some difficulties with our rules of engagement about 2 years ago, that they were too restrictive, and they were being interpreted too restrictively at lower levels. I think that was changed last summer. General Petraeus reviewed that when he came in and made some significant adjustments. So my sense is that today that those are about right, always subject to misinterpretation by people that are a little overzealous. But General Keane may have a current view on that.

Mr. WILSON. And, General, what message would you have to military families on this issue?

General KEANE. Well, I spent a lot of time on this visit, you know, with platoons and companies who are in the fight, and it was not an issue for them. And it has not been an issue, I think, based on General Barno's comment, since General Petraeus ordered the entire review of this issue. And they did find that as the rules of engagement cascaded down from the top, that there were more restrictive measures being imposed by intermediate commanders. And while I am not going to suggest that that is totally removed, I didn't see any evidence of concern about it.

So in terms of military family members, I mean, first of all, their youngsters are being extremely well led, and highly capable and motivated leaders who are out there working with them day in and day out. And they are very well resourced as well. And this is a resource in a sense, because how you use rules of engagement and apply combat power is crucial to the mission and to their success and to their survival.

So I am pretty comfortable with what I have seen, and the families should be as well.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you for those reassuring words, because there are family members who are very, very concerned. And I shared the same feeling that you did, that the extraordinary leadership really gives you confidence in our troops.

I yield the balance.

Mr. WEST. May I make a quick comment, Mr. Wilson, if I could? There is another part, though, that I think is disturbing. Do you know our soldiers and marines are not permitted to arrest any insurgents? Not permitted to do it. And that gets my pretty darn mad because you are out there, and you can kill somebody, but you can't arrest them. And I think people should look very carefully at how we ever got ourselves in a situation in fighting a war where you can't arrest anybody, because there are fewer people in prison in Afghanistan per capita than there are in Sweden. So we are trying to say that Afghanistan is more stable than Sweden.

We have gotten ourselves, because of the backlash of what happened in the prisons going all the way back to Abu Ghraib, et cetera, we worked ourselves into a corner where we literally, literally have put handcuffs on our own troops along these lines. That has nothing to do with the rules of engagement, it was just I couldn't resist saying it, because it does affect morale, and it should be stopped. Somebody should really take a careful look at what we

are doing to incarcerate and keep in prison those who are killing us.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Actually, Secretary West, maybe you could just sort of tease that out a little bit more. You just said it was not the rules of engagement that was creating that barrier. Is there some other restriction?

Mr. WEST. Bluntly, it is a rule of engagement, and it is a rule of engagement that started because our NATO allies insisted on it, and we gradually picked up on it because they didn't want to have anything to do with anybody being in prison. So you turn them over to the Afghan system, and the Afghan system lets about 9 out of every 10 of them walk free after a little money passes while it is going through the chain of command. So that whole thing, it is a rule of engagement that hurts because it leaves people on a battlefield that still want to kill you.

Mr. COURTNEY. And it is being driven by, again, the NATO Alliance?

Mr. WEST. It is driven on the one hand by the politics of our own NATO Alliance, including our own politics, and on the other hand because it fits in very well with Karzai's hypothesis that there is no such thing as the Taliban, there are just wayward brothers, which has something to do with the whole way in which the Pashtuns do business with Pashtuns. You put it all together, and you end up with very few people staying in jail for over a year, even though they have been part of the IED groups that have killed Americans.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you. I am sure that is going to get some of our attention.

When Mr. Smith was asking questions earlier, General Keane, again this question of, you know, what is the transition balance that works. Admiral Mullen, in his last appearance before our committee on this issue, reflected towards the end of the hearing on the experience in Iraq, which, again, you showed great leadership in your testimony back in '07 and '08. And it reminded us that when the Status of Forces Agreement was negotiated, which again had a timeline for a drawdown, frankly there were a lot of voices even within the military and certainly within the Congress who were questioning whether or not the risk level was too high in terms of the SOFA [Status of Forces Agreement] plan. And his observation was that deadlines really do work; that, you know, pushing the Iraqis to have to step it up and obviously be experienced in the Kurdish North where General Odierno was kind of on the hot seat for a while there about whether or not to follow through with the SOFA, the timeline, and he made a pretty gutsy call to hang tough and stick with it.

In retrospect, Admiral Mullen was actually saying that that was actually a very beneficial factor in terms of forcing an increase in Iraqi capability. And so listening to Mr. West's testimony about 1 to 10 would be his sort of preference right now, I mean, it just doesn't strike me that the drawdown that we are talking about here is really—we are in a zone that should be portrayed that neg-

atively. Because I just feel that, again, using your experience, I mean, we saw that, in fact, deadlines do have a beneficial effect. And I just thought maybe you might comment on Admiral Mullen's observation.

General KEANE. No, I totally agree. And you remember the commanders did, when it came to the Status of Forces Agreement in Iraq, they did agree with those timelines based on experiences they were having. And here we already have the timeline. I mean, the timeline is 2014.

What my comments dealt with is—and I agree with the commanders—General Petraeus and his team wanted to have approximately the same level of forces that we have now through this fighting season that we are currently in and through next fighting season, 2012. That was the issue, to be able to achieve our objectives in the East with the appropriate level of forces and still meet the 2014 drawdown schedule, with the entire Afghan National Security Forces being in the lead by that time. That is the difference that my testimony reflects.

The second thing is dealing with the much larger issue here, and General Barno mentioned it in his testimony, and it is a huge elephant in the room, in terms of our stick-to-itiveness and our commitment to the region and to Afghanistan and, in a sense, to Pakistan, and that is that we are staying. I am not suggesting we are staying at force levels that we have, but we are committed to the future security and stability of Afghanistan and part of the region.

So what is being negotiated right now is the Strategic Partnership Agreement. Think of that as what we did in Iraq with the Strategic Framework Agreement with the Iraqis, which I always thought was actually more important than the SOFA agreement, because it established a long-term partnership relationship. That is what this is. If we get that done, that will be very important, because it will establish an enduring relationship with us to Afghanistan and, in a sense, to the region at large, which people out there clearly have to hear, and that is not what they hear right now.

Mr. COURTNEY. I will follow up with that later.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Coffman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General Keane, General Barno and Secretary West, thank you all for your service.

And I think my question would be how do you define our security objectives in Afghanistan? And let me put out three elements of that and see if you all concur. It is to keep Al Qaeda out, to keep the Taliban from taking over the country, and to provide a permissive environment from which we can strike at targets in Pakistan.

Would you all define our security objectives in the same way, or how would you differ? General Keane.

General KEANE. No, I wouldn't disagree with that. I would just add to that that part of the security objective is clearly to be able to transition the Afghan National Security Forces so that they can protect their own people and their own national interests.

Mr. COFFMAN. General Barno.

General BARNO. The way I would modify that, I think, is to take it up a few feet to a regional level and say in the region what are

we going to try to accomplish through our actions in Afghanistan in the coming years? And I think there are three vital issue interests we have out there, and yours, I think, fall very well within this.

One is prevent Al Qaeda or associated groups from striking the United States again; secondly, to prevent weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons in particular, from falling into the hands of terrorists in this region, read from Pakistan. And the third is to really prevent a nuclear war between Pakistan and India and prevent vast instability in that part of the world that could spill over and impact the United States.

So I think your objectives within Afghanistan very much fit into that, so I would agree.

Mr. COFFMAN. Secretary West.

Mr. WEST. I go along with that.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you.

Well, then, let me ask you this question, because it seems sometimes that we have gone beyond our objectives. And that is it really in our interest, or how does it fit within these objectives, to try to—have we given them a governance that looks more like us and less like them in terms of fitting into their political culture? Are we trying to restructure their society?

When I was there last, there was a program, women's engagement, using military personnel, saying that in a conservative Islamic society, we were trying to raise the status of women, and so restructuring their society and giving them the economy that they have never had through U.S. aid.

First of all, do you think I have accurately described some of our objectives in addition to what—the security objectives that we talked about? And number two, are they achievable? General Keane.

General KEANE. Well, I don't think they are an accurate reflection of what we are trying to do. I think we have scaled down our objectives rather considerably. And that largely deals with security and a capable Afghan National Security Forces that can take over from us.

Are we trying to shape and influence some other things in Afghanistan in terms of the current government, and the incumbency that we have, and the problems of corruption we have with Karzai? Certainly. It makes sense that we do that. Have we supported some of the donor programs to help improve society in Afghanistan? We certainly have.

But I don't see us involved in Afghanistan in a long-term, nation-building exercise, and I think we have scaled back our goals quite considerably.

Mr. COFFMAN. General Barno.

General BARNO. I would agree with that. I think we had some probably extremely optimistic goals in 2001, 2002 in Afghanistan. Some of those have been realized. You have got a reasonable Constitution, one of the most moderate Constitutions in the Islamic world. You have an elected Parliament and President. I was there for the first election of Karzai and helped prepare the second one. Those were very good elections; 10½ million Afghans registered, 8½ million voted.

So democracy in their own version is definitely something that they are actually quite enthused about there, but I also don't think we are now of the opinion that we have the resources nor the time to try and rebuild an entire functioning state there; that we are going to try to look at it more in a much more limited sense than we were 6, 7, 8 years ago.

Mr. COFFMAN. Secretary West.

Mr. WEST. I only wish that were true. I wrote a book called *The Wrong War*, saying that our strategy of nation-building was—that Afghanistan was the wrong war to do that. I haven't seen any evidence that we have changed on the ground. Everything that we were doing last year, and the year before, and the year before we are doing this year. We are still out there doing the governance, we are still out there giving away the money, we are still out there saying we are going to have a rule of law, and we are still out there giving them security. So we are still full-scale ahead in nation-building and spending more money on it.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back.

Mr. JONES. [Presiding.] I recognize Mr. Johnson at this time.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, I recall during the time that the President was considering whether or not to order a troop surge into Afghanistan, there was an appearance on "60 Minutes" by General Stanley McChrystal, who was the Commander of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Do each of you recall that?

General KEANE. I don't recall it.

General BARNO. I didn't see the program, but I recall him appearing.

Mr. JOHNSON. Okay. Do any of you have any knowledge as to whether or not the President actually authorized General McChrystal to take the issue public?

General KEANE. I don't know, sir.

General BARNO. I don't know the answer to that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, would it have been the proper thing to do to gain—for a military officer under the control of the Commander in Chief, would it not have been a breach of protocol, to put it lightly, some might say insubordination, to actually go on TV and tell the American people that we needed a troop surge of 40,000 troops before the President had even made his decision? Was that an act of insubordination or at least a breach of protocol if he did it without authority?

General KEANE. Well, let meet answer that. I know General McChrystal very well, and that is totally out of character for General McChrystal to even suggest that he would try to leverage his President by making public statements.

I do remember this. I do remember him responding to a question, I thought it was at a news conference after he made a speech and he responded to some questions, and they asked has opinion about the level of forces.

Mr. JOHNSON. That is not the interview that I am referring to. It was a sit-down interview.

General KEANE. As I said before, I know McChrystal really well.

Mr. JOHNSON. So you would speculate that he had authority to do that?

General KEANE. No. What I am speculating is that McChrystal had no malice intent here, that he responded to a question honestly, and he was not intending to leverage his President. If he had to do it over again, he would not have responded with that answer.

Mr. JOHNSON. I understand.

Does anybody have a different take on that?

General BARNO. I would just note that military officers, to include our commanders in the theater, make public appearances. And General McChrystal, I know, went to London. He spoke at the International Institute of Strategic Studies. The questions he got were following his speech there. The speech he gave would have been approved, and the fact he was there would have been approved. So I think that may be the context behind what you are asking.

Mr. JOHNSON. So, in other words, then, that was a political—politics was involved in that decision, you are suggesting. And I suggest that we have heard comments today about the decision to draw down the troops was made on a political basis. And I submit that that is wholly in keeping with the decision that was made at the very beginning of this surge, which I believe has been somewhat successful. So the drawdown that the President as Commander in Chief has decided, looking at all factors including political realities, the drawdown is something that he decided, and we should respect that decision.

Does anybody have anything to contest in what I have said?

General KEANE. Well, I don't want to speak for anyone else, but I don't think, given our backgrounds, that any of us would dispute the President's right to make that decision and weigh all the factors in that decision. But we are being asked to come before this committee to provide some advice and counsel about what is the future in Afghanistan and what are the risks. And what I identified, and I would speak for myself, I am saying that decision of 33,000 by next September has considerably increased the risk based on my analysis.

Mr. JOHNSON. Certainly, and I can appreciate that.

General KEANE. And I have got to be straight up about that.

Mr. JOHNSON. I can appreciate that, and I am not demeaning anyone's opinion here about what decision was made, but I am just simply defending the President's right to make the decision, and also putting that decision into the proper light, given what happened at the very beginning of the decision to do the surge was made. And I thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. JONES. I recognize the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Keane, General Barno, Secretary West, thank you so much for joining us today.

I want to go back to one of the strategic questions that was asked and, Secretary West, get your perspective on this. Just as you heard, in the current course of action, the strategic plan currently appears to be in RC–East. And, of course, having visited there and talking to those commanders in both RC–East and RC–

South, I know the effort now is to clear RC–East, go after the Haqqani network, and then in RC–South continue the clear-and-hold policy, and then institute the Afghan National Security Forces in that particular region, all of this going on with a termination date of 2014 and a troop drawdown of 33,000 by 2012.

My question is can we continue to maintain success in that regional strategy of continuing to clear and hold RC–South, but continuing to be aggressive in RC–East to clear under that strategy? Do you believe that we are going to be able to do that under the current troop drawdown framework?

Mr. WEST. Well, sir, if that is what General Petraeus wanted to do, and that is what General Allen wants to do, that is fine with me, because you only have one Commander in Chief at a given time. He has a huge staff. If that is the plan, because I don't know, but if that is the plan, I would fall in on the plan.

Mr. WITTMAN. Okay. Very good.

General Barno.

General BARNO. Again, I am certain that General Allen is going to do an assessment now that he is on the ground out there, and he is going to have to weigh his resources with the plan he was given when he arrived there and make his own decision on that. I can't really prejudge where that is going to go. And again, I go back to the question of the key to this may be how effective Afghan forces are in stepping up to the plate here in the coming year.

General KEANE. Now, that is clearly what the intent is, and General Allen, as General Barno indicated, along with his staff, is assessing all of that as we speak. And listen, we know a lot about the East because we have been there with U.S. forces since the inception. So we know where the major mobility corridors are that really do threaten Kabul and where the major safe havens are.

We are also a lot smarter about what not to do up there, and General West indicated some of that, and that is to get lost up in the mountain with those villages that have been there for centuries, and not much is going to be changed by it. That is not what this effort will be about.

So it will be a priority of effort with the appropriate level of resources and hopefully an acceptable level of risk.

Mr. WITTMAN. General Keane, General Barno, let me get your perspective from a tactical standpoint. If you look at what is going on in RC–East—and, of course, I had an opportunity to visit there and talk to the commanders on the ground, and there are some challenges there obviously. Do you see in the mix of conventional forces and Special Operations Forces—where do you, in your opinion, see that going? Do you there being a 50/50 mix? Do you see there being more of a Special Operations character to the tactical efforts there in RC–East?

The reason I ask that is because I think it is a pretty dynamic environment there, and if we are going to be drawing down forces, we need to make very sure that we are spot on as far as the deployment of the existing forces that we have as that drawdown takes place.

General KEANE. Well, our Special Operations forces actually represent a very small part of our force levels, as you know.

On average, we conduct 10 or 15 operations a night, most of them at night, going after what you know we refer to as high-value targets, and sometimes it is an individual, sometimes it is more than an individual.

Those operations will continue for some time, and the overwhelming number of operations in terms of Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF forces operating in RC–East or RC–South will dominate by far what our Special Operations forces are doing.

But I think what you will see, as we get closer to 2014, that we are transitioning the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces], and we are having less involvement ourselves. Our Special Operations forces I would imagine will still have a pretty full plate, just as they do in Iraq today.

Mr. WITTMAN. Sure.

General Barno.

General BARNO. Yeah, I would defer to how General Allen looks at that and what kind of trade-offs he makes. But I think that is exactly right. One of the things I do project us seeing in Afghanistan is a steady-state commitment of our Special Operations Forces while our conventional forces draw down over the next several years and are replaced in many ways by Afghan forces.

Mr. WITTMAN. I follow up with quick question on that. How do you see, collectively, the U.S. evaluating the efforts of the surge from 2009 through 2011? And looking at what needs to happen in RC–East, do you see a similar surge scenario having to happen in RC–East in order to combat the Haqqani network, which, as you know, is really the big challenge in that particular region?

General KEANE. I think, to use the term that we are most familiar with, the operation in the South became our main effort, to include Helmand and Kandahar Province. And by that we mean it normally is a greater application of resources against an opponent, and it is given a series of priorities of effort.

That is what will happen in the East. It will become main effort. It will receive priority of resources, priority of surveillance, lots of effort in that area.

Not all of it will necessarily mean additional brigades that have to go there. A lot of enablers will go there that are now in the South or someplace else. So it will become main effort, and it will receive the priority of effort of the command.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. JONES. I recognize Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary West, when you made the statement you don't know what counterinsurgency or counterterrorism mean, you made me feel really good because I have the same problem.

So to the two generals, I would like to ask you what—when we say that we are changing the military strategy from counterterrorism, from counterinsurgency, what exactly does that mean to you? Or you can explain it to me and maybe to Secretary West. And, in addition to that, can you tell me what that is going to look like for our—basically our strength, our end strength, or what the forces are going to look like, and also what the composition may be, so that as we see the drawdown in Afghanistan and this new military strategy that is being employed now, what is it

that we need to understand as to what the needs may be or the reduction would result?

So, any one of you. And I don't mean to be insulting to you.

Mr. WEST. No, I am very interested, too.

General KEANE. You know, these choice of words have been unfortunate from the very beginning, that people started to use them and started to use them as different strategies in particular. And I think that is where they become quite—they are just not useful.

To be frank about it, I think to maybe understand the difference, as we are applying these terms, counterinsurgency, the emphasis is on protecting the people as job one, and certainly there is an enemy out there that we have to deal with. But the principle involved is the protection of the people.

In counterterrorism the focus is exclusively on the enemy. And the way we apply it, it is mostly focused on individuals, what we call high-value targets, and less on organizations. And we are able to execute those targets based on very specific intelligence that we receive.

Actually, to conduct a successful campaign against the insurgents in Iraq or in Afghanistan, you would have to do both of these to be successful. I cannot for the life of me see how we could just conduct operations against high-value targets and believe that we could be successful and ignore the rest of the problem.

But I think the terms are not particularly useful in trying to understand what we are doing.

Ms. HANABUSA. General Barno, do you have anything to add?

General BARNO. I guess the only thing I would add—and I will talk about maybe future forces since you asked about that, too—but I viewed, when I structured a counterinsurgency strategy when I was there, the first one that we had really applied there—I had the counterterrorism element of that as one of the pillars of the strategy; that focusing on the enemy was one of the aspects of a broader counterinsurgency strategy within which you had a governance pillar, within which you had a build Afghanistan Security Forces pillar, within which you had a regional pillar, and you looked at protecting a population and having an integrated overall effort.

But you always have to have both. I mean, again, I agree, you can't have a counterinsurgency that doesn't have striking the enemy as part of it, but the broader context has to do with protecting the population from the enemy and separating the population from the enemy.

To your question on the future, very briefly, I think that ultimately where this will take us is that we are going to see the counterinsurgency element of what we are doing, the population protection countering the Taliban element, become more and more Afghan-centric.

I think we are going to continue our own counterterrorist forces, striking at both the Taliban leadership and the Al Qaeda leadership for a long time. Our end game there may be mostly, if not exclusively, seek heat forces, Special Ops Forces, with the Afghan Army with some advisers, and I think that is where our strategy ultimately takes us at the end of 2014.

Ms. HANABUSA. Just so that I am clear, General Keane, when you said that it is to protect the people, the counterinsurgency, I guess, strategy, is that the Afghan people, or is that our people in uniform?

General KEANE. No, that is certainly the Afghan people are center stage there. And that is a shorthand way of explaining the more complicated strategy.

Ms. HANABUSA. So given that you are both retired—and I hope I can get some candid answers—so why would we in Congress, who latch onto these nice little terms of art, so to speak—you know, we have been told that there is a change, we are going from the counterinsurgency strategy to the counterterrorism strategy, and some of us have used it because of testimony that we receive. So can you tell me why, then, if it is really sort of both two sides of the same coin almost or yin and yang, you know, both necessary, why is it that we are being told that the military strategy has now changed its focus, if you know?

General BARNO. I don't think that the military strategy has changed its focus in Afghanistan. I think there has been a debate over the last 2 years whether the military should simply abandon counterinsurgency, remove the bulk of the troops, and then only have Special Operations Forces doing counterterrorism against Al Qaeda, maybe even doing it from offshore, not in Afghanistan.

Ms. HANABUSA. Like Libya.

General BARNO. Well, hopefully not like Libya in some ways. But the outcome of that debate was, no, that is not adequately going to protect U.S. security interests, and that we had to have boots on the ground, and we had to be able to prosecute both components of this campaign.

So I think, again, ultimately post-2014 we may have a counterterrorist strategy focused on Al Qaeda. But between now and then, we are looking at having both of these very much interconnected to each other.

Ms. HANABUSA. So, quickly, will we then, of course, see the reduction in force? The end strength will, of course, naturally reduce because of that nature and that change?

General BARNO. Absolutely. And that is the game plan right now is that we move from, you know, a large number of American boots on the ground we have today to a much smaller number by the end of 2014 that will ultimately simply be focused on counterterrorism and Al Qaeda, with the Afghans taking on all the ownership, with some American support of the counterinsurgency effort against the Taliban.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired so I yield back.

Mr. JONES. I thank the lady.

I recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Platts, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to first thank all three of the witnesses for being here and for your service to our country.

Mr. Wittman from Virginia touched on a good part of what I wanted to focus on, and so I will try not to be repetitive.

I guess the one issue, and, General Keane, in your testimony you address specifically the drawdowns of 10,000 and 23- additional by September of next year. And my position on the issue of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan has always been based on facts on the ground. And when we had the surge in Afghanistan, December of '09 with the announcement, it was that we were going to increase with the hope of drawing down by this summer, but with a caveat: Facts on the ground will guide what we do.

If the President believes that facts today justify the 10,000, that is one thing, but it is the fact that we are already assuming what the facts will be in 2012 and saying we will draw down another 23,000 raises concern to me. In your testimony you talk about—I forget how you exactly word it, but at a minimum, I think you said, delaying it to December of 2012. I read from that that you think that planned 23,000 is premature or too much based on what we know today versus what may happen in the coming years. Is that a fair understanding?

General KEANE. Yes, I do. I mean, I think the number is excessive, given what the conditions on the ground are would need to be done, and it drives up the risk considerably. And obviously General Petraeus, who had considerably more knowledge than all of us, you know, felt the same.

The point I was making, that we now have the decision, and we are obviously to going to make—mitigate that risk as much as possible. One of the ways we could mitigate it, it would seem to me, is to keep the 23,000 that we are going to take out next year in the fight through the fighting season, which will end in the fall. And that would require going back to the Secretary of Defense and to the President and asking for 90 days extension on that number. And that keeps that force level high through the fighting season, and obviously we would get the kind of results, you know, from that and reduce the risk. That is something that I think is not unreasonable. Whether the President would entertain that or whether General Allen believes that is necessary, I don't know. He is doing an assessment as we speak.

Mr. PLATTS. The other point, maybe for all three of you, is one of the keys as training up the Afghan Security Forces certainly is it benefited them being partnered with our forces, so not just through the basic training, but actually in the field. And the drawdown this year of 10,000 and 23,000 means there is going to be significantly less opportunities for that type of partnering to occur in the field versus just making sure they have good training, basic training.

Is that a fair concern to have, that that is going to be an impact of what we are doing, that that in-the-field partnering, so that we don't kind of finish the job in the training up the of who alternately is going to need to provide for the security, the Afghans themselves?

General BARNO. I think it is not entirely clear that that will be the direct effect. I mean, and that will be based on where the forces are that are drawn out. If they are drawn out, in the case of this year, from northern Afghanistan, for instance, the necessity of partnering there may be less important than it is, obviously, in the South and the East.

And then the other thing, I think, to point out is that unless things have changed, a large number of American forces aren't currently partnered with Afghan forces. So it is not initially going to be a one-to-one correlation, I don't believe.

Mr. PLATTS. Okay. All right. Thank you.

General KEANE. I don't see it as a major issue. The main effort will be in the East, and I think they will accelerate the number of Afghan Security Forces, probably there much more so than they had originally intended to do, because of this reduction of ISAF forces. And I think there will be plenty of opportunity to partner with Afghans and for them to get the benefit that that partnership, at least to this date, has been pretty positive.

Mr. PLATTS. Great. I thank again all three of you for your testimony, but especially your service over many years.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. JONES. I recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Garamendi, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, Generals, thank you very much for your long service to America and your continued concern and participation in helping us define our strategies.

General West, your view that we ought to be drawing down our troops is one that I share, but very little discussion here today about negotiations amongst the Taliban. We talked a little bit about the role of Pakistan in that process.

Could you, General West, expand on the issue of negotiations? Should there be negotiations? What are we going to do? I know General Keane said there are 16 different groups out there that we generally lump as Taliban. Could you talk to me about this?

Mr. WEST. Sir, I have no competence in it, so I will just say that I am, you know, a typical marine hard-nose. Beat them first and then negotiate with them would be my attitude. We certainly don't want to see any Mr. Kissinger having peace like he did in 1972.

I would use the word "Hezbollah." I can't conceive of the Taliban really being honest negotiators with you that they are going to give up their right to shoot you in the back. So I look at them, even if they were part of a government or anything, as being just like the Hezbollah in Lebanon; that they and the Afghan Army will remain, under any conceivable circumstance, mortal enemies.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Did you say the Afghan Army?

Mr. WEST. Yes, sir. The only institutional force that I can see in Afghanistan that can hold it all together—and we are well on our way to doing it—is the Afghan Army. So if you have this institutional force that believes it is protecting the nation, and then you bring in people like the Taliban, one group or another, and you know that regardless of what they promise, they still somehow are a group that is sinister, then you are going to have this tension whether or not you have negotiations.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Now, the Afghan Army is made up of multiple ethnic religious groups; is it not?

Mr. WEST. I certainly hope so, yes, sir.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Their allegiance is to whom?

Mr. WEST. See, that is really interesting, and we won't know until they are put to the test without us being there holding their hands.

Mr. GARAMENDI. It seems to me their current allegiance may be to the paycheck that we are providing.

Mr. WEST. Well. That is why I suggested a lockbox so that they know that General Allen can continue to pay them, and the person after General Allen can continue to pay them, because he who has the gold rules.

Mr. GARAMENDI. That is a very dicey situation, that the allegiance of the army is really to the paycheck that America gives to them, and that is some $8 to $10 billion a year forever more.

Does the institute, U.S. Institute of Peace, play any role in trying to resolve some of these issues and move us forward?

Mr. WEST. I don't know, sir. Maybe General Barno will know.

General BARNO. I have actually worked with them quite a bit over the last several years, and I have found them to be very useful. They don't got a lot of publicity about what they are doing, but they have a tremendously useful behind-the-scenes role in reaching out and touching some of these groups, bringing them together and convening elements that wouldn't have the opportunity to do that, and organizing some of these efforts that I think may ultimately be very helpful to our long-term transition in Afghanistan.

So I am a fan of them. I think they are a pretty effective organization——

Mr. GARAMENDI. I think also Pakistan would be similarly situated. They play a role there.

General BARNO. They certainly do. And I have been involved with some of their efforts with Pakistan.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you.

One final question in the last minute, 7 seconds, and that has to do with the penultimate goal here. Is it to build a nation, or is to it protect America and our allies from terrorist attacks? Let us start with General West.

Mr. WEST. I would say it is the latter, sir. I think that is why as long as we have a strong Afghan Army——

Mr. GARAMENDI. I am not sure your microphone is on.

Mr. WEST. I would say that we are there for our own interests to avoid terrorist attacks against us. The way to do that is to have a strong Afghan Army even if the politics over there are all screwed up.

General BARNO. Yeah, I would agree. I think the United States is in this region to protect U.S. vital national security interests, and those transcend just what we are doing right now in Afghanistan.

General KEANE. This has always been about the American people. Our troops understand that. That is why they are willing to go back time and time again. It is our security that is at stake here.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank you, gentlemen. It seems to me that it is the terrorist attacks that took us there in the first place. Building a nation there is a difficult task, one that has never been achieved by anybody, and that we should continue our focus like a laser on the terrorists wherever they happen to be.

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Mr. JONES. I recognize the gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. Griffin, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for your service. Thank you for being here today.

I will address this question initially to you, Secretary West, but if any of you all want to chime in, that would be great.

We have heard someone here today, I am not sure exactly who it was, allude to the possibility of infiltration of the Taliban into the ANSF. And I am wondering if you think the threat of infiltration, of the Taliban getting into the ANSF, if you think that is a—those are isolated incidents, if you think there is a threat of significant infiltration particularly as we are drawing down. And I would be interested to know what specific—if you do think it is a threat, what specific steps we are taking to make sure that we are tracking this.

Mr. WEST. Sir, it is a problem. I don't think it is hugely significant, but it is a problem, because if it begins to get in the minds of our advisers, then it becomes a bigger problem.

But I have been out with the Afghan Army, with our advisers, when they have grabbed different guys, and they are trying to find out if they are Taliban, and I was surprised to see how difficult it is. One Afghan lieutenant just turned to me one day and he said, they are magnificent liars. So you can have some of them in there, and you wouldn't even know it.

I know that we are trying to take steps to guard against that. In the end you can never guard against it 100 percent. I don't see it being that large a problem, but you can't let it start to play with your mind.

General BARNO. I think right now they are isolated incidences, but they are very concerning because they do undermine American confidence in the Afghan units they are working with. That is very dangerous. I think broadly the Afghan Army has a very strong internal inoculation against sympathy towards the Taliban. They are the bulwark in that country between the Taliban and Taliban taking over their government outside the international forces. So I think there is some very strong DNA they have that are going to make them broadly very institutionally resistant to this taking any roots there.

General KEANE. I don't see it as a future major problem at all. And quite the opposite is happening, not on the scale we found in Iraq certainly, but it is beginning to grow now in Afghanistan, and that is Taliban fighters turning sides and coming over and being—the word is "reintegration" is the policy term that describes it.

And more of that is happening. I mean, the program is constipated by the bureaucracy in Afghanistan Government, to be frank about it, but there are plenty of opportunities now, particularly for local fighters who are less ideologically aligned, to go back to what they were doing before they became a fighter and to reintegrate into society.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I was there in Afghanistan over Memorial Day, and there was a lot of talk about reintegration, and particularly, as you say, for folks who may have been in the Taliban for practical reasons, they are just local and looking for a group with whom—with

which to be affiliated and are not real interested in the ideology. It had been pretty easy to pull those folks back.

So you are not concerned as we draw down that this would be a problem in the leadership ranks, because that is where I could see there being a substantial erosion of the police force. But it sounds like you are not too worried about it.

Thank you all.

Mr. JONES. I recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Andrews, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service to our country, and thank you for your contributions to our committee over the years. You have really been a great source of information. We appreciate all three of you.

General West, you state something that I agree with, which is our fundamental national security goal in Afghanistan is preventing a terrorist safe haven inside Afghanistan. I agree with that. And I would sort of ask the question these days, a safe harbor for whom?

Recent news reports have indicated substantial degradation in Al Qaeda's capabilities. I would like to ask each of the panel your own assessment of Al Qaeda's capabilities today, whether you agree or disagree with those reports; and, second, if there are other forces besides Al Qaeda that you worry about taking root in those sanctuaries and using them to attack the United States.

General, if you would like to start, I would like to hear from all three of you.

Mr. WEST. Well, this will be very brief, sir, because I am not in that intelligence loop, but I can tell you when they get on the battlefields inside Afghanistan, I noticed both in the South and in the North you get the immediate rumor that there is somebody who is speaking either with a Pakistani accent, and occasionally you get a rumor that there is an Arab. So they don't exactly fit in. So I see them as being pretty isolated when they come into Afghanistan.

Mr. ANDREWS. General.

General BARNO. I think that I am a bit of a skeptic on the prevailing wisdom that seems to imply that Al Qaeda is now on the ropes, maybe down and out, and that they have been decimated as an organization. They have been very badly damaged. The death of bin Laden adds to that. But I also think that they are keen to reassert themselves and attack the United States again. And I think one of the lessons over the last 10 years, if there is any lesson, is that they are a very adaptive, survivable organization and one that remains committed to attack the United States.

Mr. ANDREWS. Are there other organizations you think are similar and would be a threat to us?

General BARNO. We are seeing the growth of those, Lashkar-e-Taiba for one, inside of Pakistan. A number of these groups inside of Pakistan are beginning to take on international objectives they never did before. I think we have to be very cautious about that.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you.

General Keane, what is your take on this?

General KEANE. Yes, Al Qaeda has been hurt rather significantly with—certainly in its leaders and also, frankly, in a lot of its fight-

ers. But they remain a dangerous organization, and we can't keep our eye off the ball here.

And one of the things that they still have people that are attracted to it is because of their ideology. And so the organization lives beyond its iconic founder, bin Laden, because people fundamentally believe in the ideology.

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, Al Qaeda is really an idea, it is not about a person, isn't it?

General KEANE. Yes.

Mr. ANDREWS. The idea that our way of life is a threat to their beliefs, and, therefore, as long as we perpetuate our way of life, which, God willing, we will, they are going to be a problem.

Now, the second thing, General Keane, that you made reference to is your view of the complicity of the Pakistani leadership in maintaining these safe harbors. What would you suggest that we do about that? In other words, what tools do we have to alter the behavior of the Pakistani leadership?

General KEANE. Well, I personally believe we have got to take the gloves off with them because we have been dealing with this relationship, and I call it the soft diplomatic approach, for a number of years, and we have made no dent whatsoever in the capacity of those sanctuaries.

And let us put the cards on the table. I mean, out of those sanctuaries every single day comes a capability that kills and maims our troops, as well as the Afghan Security Forces. So we have got to relook the strategy.

Mr. ANDREWS. What does "take the gloves off" mean, though? Does it mean that we ourselves attack the area? What does it mean?

General KEANE. No. I think, first of all, admit to ourselves that Kayani and Pasha and other members of their government lied to us routinely, much like the Soviets used to in trying to manipulate us. And, too, clearly, we have got national security objectives in that region. We should be in pursuit of those. Pakistan is part of that, I am not suggesting it is not.

But I think we have got to get a lot tougher with them than what we have been. They are dependent on financial aid, and we have all suggested up here that there should be some kind of conditions associated with it.

Mr. ANDREWS. Let me play a quick devil's advocate for a minute, it is not my view, but withdrawal of aid or other conditions against the Pakistani Government would have give way to a more radical and even less friendly Pakistani Government that would have access to nuclear weapons. What is your answer to that?

General KEANE. Well, we have been spooked by this issue ever since bin Laden ran into Pakistan. I was not convinced of it then, and I am not convinced of it now.

The military in Pakistan, we have checked on this, are—those sites are very secure by that military, and it is the number one institution in Pakistan.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JONES. I want to thank you, General Keane, General Barno and Secretary West, for being here today. It has been a great hearing, and thank you so much for sharing your expertise.

I would like to say to the former chairman of this committee, Duncan Hunter, Sr., thank you for being in attendance today.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:25 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 27, 2011

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 27, 2011

Opening Statement of Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Committee on Armed Services

The Way Ahead in Afghanistan

July 27, 2011

The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the way forward in Afghanistan, particularly in light of the President's recent decision to withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year and the remaining 23,000 surge forces by next summer.

As I noted during our hearing with DoD last month, I am deeply concerned about the aggressive troop withdrawals proposed by President Obama. Every witness before this committee this year has testified that the comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy the President committed to in December 2009 is bearing fruit. In recent Congressional testimony, both Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen and (now former) International Security Assistance Force commander General David Petraeus stated that the President's formulation went beyond the options they had recommended. Both Mullen and Petraeus noted that the approaches they had recommended would have assumed less risk.

I'm particularly concerned about the specific timing of the redeployment of the surge forces. General Petraeus reportedly recommended that the bulk of the surge forces be redeployed by the end of 2012, thereby making them available through the end of the 2012 fighting season. Instead, many of the redeploying units will be tied up making their logistical preparations for redeployment during the height of the fighting season. This suggests that the redeployment deadline did not reflect a carefully conceived operational plan, but rather was devised to conform to the political calendar.

Although troop strength is not the only variable in determining strategic success or failure in Afghanistan, it affects all other variables by shaping the perceptions of America's commitment to that country and its people. Fears of wavering resolve will further incentivize Afghan corruption, as the possibility of renewed civil war may cause Afghans to seek short-term profits. Such doubts would also undermine efforts to end the war through some sort reconciliation process.

U.S. commanders reportedly have until October 15 of this year to submit a plan regarding the details of the remaining 2012 redeployments. However, on a July 6 press conference, then ISAF Joint Command (IJC) commander Lieutenant General

David Rodriguez, identified units that were coming out of Afghanistan starting this month. It is not entirely clear whether these units were never intended to be replaced, and therefore not part of the President's plan, or if the redeployment is occurring in advance of October 15th.

Thus, this hearing comes at a particularly opportune time to consider the strategic alternatives for the war effort in Afghanistan. Can we maintain the current balance between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in light of the troop reductions? Will we be able to shift the focus of operations from RCs-South and Southwest to RC-East as originally planned? What are the implications for our reduced footprint on our training, advise, and assist missions? These are merely a few of the strategic considerations this committee must consider in exercising its oversight role in this critical conflict.

Fortunately, today we have three uniquely expert witnesses to discuss the way ahead in Afghanistan:

- General Jack Keane is former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, one of the authors of the successful 2007 Iraq Surge, and has recently returned from an assessment trip to Afghanistan;
- Lieutenant General (Retired) David Barno commanded Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan from 2003-2005, and is co-author of the study: "Responsible Transition: Securing U.S. Interests in Afghanistan Beyond 2011"; and
- Former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Marine Colonel Bing West is the author of the counterinsurgency classic "The Village" and, more recently, "The Wrong War" drawn from his experiences embedded with units in Afghanistan.

Gentlemen, thank you for taking the time to share your views with us this morning, and for your nearly 100 years of service to this country. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith
Committee on Armed Services

The Way Ahead in Afghanistan

July 27, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank the distinguished panel for appearing here today. Your hard work and thoughtful comments on this issue have been of great help to this committee over the years, and I am confident that your presentations today will be of equal value.

Let me be clear upfront—I support the President's decision to begin to withdraw our forces from Afghanistan as rapidly as we responsibly can do so. For almost ten years now, the United States has invested considerable resources to address the national security threat we face in Afghanistan. And that investment is paying off—as both General Petraeus and the President have stated, the surge forces we sent to Afghanistan have helped to make real and substantial progress. And I believe that this progress will allow us to begin to withdraw those same troops.

Having said that, we must not lose sight of the fact that this redeployment must be responsible and not undermine the progress we have made. The Taliban's momentum in the south and southwest of Afghanistan has been halted and reversed. Osama bin Laden is dead, and Secretary Panetta has stated that we are "within reach of strategically defeating al Qaeda." But "reversing momentum" and being "within reach" do not mean the same thing as "we won." While we have made great strides, that progress, as General Petraeus likes to say, is fragile and reversible, and so we cannot redeploy our troops precipitously. Instead, our redeployment must be in a gradual and responsible manner that forestalls the Taliban from retaking control of the country, allows the Afghan army and police to assume responsibility for their own country, and enables us to continue the fight against al Qaeda. I believe that the President's plan does this.

I expect that some of the witnesses here will have reasonable criticisms of the President's plan. There have been observers, on both the left and the right, who have criticized the pace as too slow or too fast, the timing as not quite right, or the

number of troops as too large or too small. But in general, I think we all have to acknowledge that any decision about the redeployment is a judgment about how to best balance risk, and that ultimately, this is an art, not a science. Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Petreaus, the outgoing commander in Afghanistan, and General Allen, the new commander in Afghanistan have endorsed the decision. And in fall 2012, once the surge forces are fully redeployed, we will still have almost 70,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, tens of thousands of NATO troops, and somewhere around 350,000 members of the Afghan National Security Forces. I personally tend to believe that those military commanders would not have endorsed the President's decision if they didn't believe that those troops, totaling somewhere around 450,000, weren't a sufficient hedge against the Taliban.

What I do hope the witnesses will help us address here today is, where do we go from here? The Afghan government is, frankly, rife with conflict and corruption at the moment and many observers question the ability of the central Karzai government to end the insurgency and build a stable Afghanistan. There are news reports about preliminary negotiations with people who represent the Taliban, but those talks do not appear to be progressing rapidly and may or may not bear fruit or could potentially reignite the civil war. Afghanistan's neighbors continue to influence various parties in Afghanistan, often in ways that are unhelpful to achieving U.S. goals in the region. Afghanistan's economy is, at the moment, based on narcotics, international funding, and U.S. contracts, and utterly incapable of providing jobs for the Afghan people or even paying for the Afghan security forces. And to some extent, all of these problems have to begin to be addressed if a stable Afghanistan is going to emerge and we will begin to achieve our goals. So, how do we address these dilemmas?

Again, let me thank the witnesses for appearing here today. I hope they can help us think through these problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congressional Testimony

John M. Keane
General
US Army, Retired

House Armed Services Committee

27 July 11

1000 a.m.

2118 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC

House Armed Services Committee
Testimony
27 July
1000 hrs

Thank you Mr. Chairman, ranking minority and members of the committee, for allowing me, once again, to testify today on the War in Afghanistan.

I just completed, this month, an assessment for Gen. Petraeus, in Afghanistan and briefed Gen. John Allen, Gen. Petraeus' successor who is now the Commander, ISAF. This is the 3rd assessment in less than a year. Let me, briefly, provide some highlights from that assessment, which we can explore further in Q & A, if you desire.

- The President's recent drawdown decision of 33,000 troops no later than Sept. 12, 2012 has increased the risk significantly and threatens overall mission success. The ISAF command is conducting detail assessments of the drawdown impacts and what can be done to mitigate the risk.

- The Taliban have suffered a stunning defeat in the South, in Kandahar and Helmand providence. So much, so, that it is not reversible unless we drawdown ISAF troops in those provinces, prematurely. I am making the

statement it is not reversible after considerable analysis and there are 3 major reasons:

1) We own the ground and are staying on it, with the ANSF, and not departing as we have done so many times in the past. The Taliban have tried to come back and have failed time and time again during the spring and summer offensive.
2) We have destroyed the Taliban's logistical infrastructure (IED factories and caches) which prevents the Taliban from sustaining their operations.
3) The people are aligned with ISAF and the ANSF and as such are providing assistance with tips, early warning and cache locations. In fact, a highly respected intelligence chief with considerable experience believes the Taliban and the people in Kandahar province after many years, "are getting a divorce".

- In the south, therefore, we have a much improved security situation which in time the ANSF will be able to take over and lead.

-- The security situation in the south improved dramatically because of the POTUS decision to escalate the war and provide much needed additional resources. Most of the so called surge forces were applied in the south, the birthplace and center of gravity of the Taliban.

-- Secondly, the ANSF have improved in quality and quantity and, now, number about 300,000, with a final force level of 352,000. This proves, once again, that quantity does have a quality all of its own.

- Moreover, the Afghan Local Police (ALP), essentially part time village police, selected by village elders, trained by the special forces, to protect villages in the contested areas, after the Taliban have been driven out - - is a potential game changer and one of the most successful programs we have enacted.

- And finally, there is a noticeable improvement in governance in the South with better leadership in district and sub district governors and the numerous elected councils at the village and district levels. Government capacity has improved but there is a long way to go before the national government is providing effective services at the local level.

- Our next major contested area is the East from Kabul to the Pakistan border. We have been conducting a defense in depth from the Pakistan border to Kabul which has been successful, in that, Kabul is, relatively stable and the legitimacy of the national government is not threatened by the insurgency. All that said, to defeat the Taliban and the Haggani Network in the east, it must become our main effort, and it will require an aggressive, comprehensive campaign. Those plans are in the making as we speak.

- Remember, the campaign in the South and the one in the East are not being conducted simultaneously, but sequentially, because the POTUS 2009 decision did not provide the 40,000 requested forces by Gen's McChrystal and Petraeus. The command received 30,000. Indeed, the campaign in the East is further threatened by the imminent withdrawal of 1/3 of U.S. forces by September 2012.

- We cannot discuss the security situation in Afghanistan without mention of the sanctuaries in Pakistan, which are the "engine of the insurgency". They are Charman and Quetta in the South and Mirham Sha in the East. Almost all of the middle and senior level leaders of the

insurgency come from these sanctuaries, many of the fighters and 80% of all the material for IED's originate in Pakistan factories.

- To succeed in Afghanistan, something must be done about the sanctuaries. A few points of emphasis:

-- Recognize our "soft" policy with Pakistan as it pertains to the sanctuaries has failed. There is NO doubt that Gen. Kyani and Gen. Pasha, the Chief of Staff and the Director of ISI are complicit in supporting the sanctuaries. We need a new approach diplomatically that recognizes their manipulation of the United States government and frankly, how destructive the military oligarchy is to the future growth and development of Pakistan. They are paranoid about their political struggle with India, but the Pakistanis have clearly, lost, India is a democracy which is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Pakistan is moving in the opposite direction.

-- Moreover, covert and overt military options against the sanctuaries should be on the table.

- Let me conclude by saying significant progress has been made in Afghanistan, but success is far from guaranteed. The consequences of

failure and the direct impact to the security of the U.S. are unacceptable. Many challenges remain:

-- We lack a coherent political and economic strategy for Afghanistan. Ryan Crocker who will be taking his post shortly as the U.S. Ambassador will do much to turn around that reality. He is the best in the U.S. government and will truly make a difference.

-- We need a Redline for President Karzai not staying in power. It is unacceptable.

-- The strategic partnership agreement (SPA) impacts our success. It anchors our commitment and communicates the same to all of the players in and outside of Afghanistan. The sooner we achieve this agreement, the better.

--At a minimum, the 33,000 drawdown no later than September 2012 should be moved to no later than December 2012 to permit all those forces to be used during the entire fighting season of 2012.

- Protracted wars test the mettle of our great democracy. This war is worth fighting, and it is most certainly, worth winning. Our courage, moral and financial support and political determination to see it through is essential to success. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

General Jack Keane

Most recently, he held the position of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. During his four years in this job as Chief Operating Officer of the United States Army, he managed operations of more than 1.5 million soldiers and civilians in over 120 countries and an annual budget in excess of $110 billion dollars. Throughout his tenure in this position the Army has fought and won wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, while supporting numerous worldwide peace operations, maintaining readiness, and transforming to a faster, more deployable force.

As the Vice Chief of Staff, General Keane developed and maintained strong relationships, on behalf of the Army, with Congress, the media, opinion leaders, national security policy makers, and the American people. In doing so, he delivered over 400 speeches in four years, communicating critical Department of Defense and Army messages. He testified before Congress on 18 separate occasions on subjects as diverse as the war in Iraq, Military Health Care, the Budget, Environmental Law, Army Readiness and Army transformation.

General Keane was a career paratrooper who commanded at every level to include the 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, NC; the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Fort Campbell, KY; and the Joint Readiness Training Center. He also served as the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the United States Atlantic Command prior to becoming the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, and was featured in Tom Clancy's book, AIRBORNE.

General Keane is a combat veteran having served as a platoon leader and company commander in Viet Nam. His units deployed to Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo.

General Keane graduated from Fordham University business school in 1966 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting and holds a Masters of Arts Degree in Philosophy from Western Kentucky University. His military education includes the Infantry Officers Basic and Advanced Courses, the United States Army Command and General Staff College, and the United States Army War College. General Keane is the recipient of an honorary PH.D in Law from Fordham University and an honorary PH.D in Public Service from Eastern Kentucky University.

General Keane's Army awards and decorations include: two Defense Distinguished Service Medals, two Army Distinguished Service Medals, the Silver Star, five Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Ranger Tab, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

Since his retirement from the Army, General Keane is currently President GSI, LLC, is senior advisor to Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts and Co. and advisor to Chairman and CEO, URS Corporation. He is a director of METLIFE, Inc and General Dynamics Corporation.

General Keane serves as a member of the Department of Defense Policy Board. He is also a military contributor and analyst for ABC News.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

Witness name: GEN. JACK KEANE

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

X Individual

___Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: N/A

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
N/A			

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
N/A			

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
N/A			

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

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Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
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List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011): N/A;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

The Way Ahead in Afghanistan
Prepared Statement of
Lieutenant General David W. Barno, USA (Ret.)

Center for a New American Security

July 27, 2011

Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee

Prepared Statement of Lieutenant General David W. Barno, USA (Ret.)
Senior Advisor and Senior Fellow, Center for a New American Security

In my 2009 Congressional testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee (February 2009), HASC Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs (March 2009), and full House Armed Services Committee (April 2009), I had the opportunity to outline my assessment of the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan and offer some prescriptions. This written submission updates that report and looks at the road ahead.

Progress Amidst a Changing U.S. Strategic Context

In early 2009, it became evident the international effort in Afghanistan was "drifting toward failure" and success could be achieved only if dramatic changes were applied – most of all, a dramatic re-assertion of American leadership. Success required "Leadership plus Strategy plus Resources." In 2009, our efforts were falling deeply short in all three components of this equation.

While much has changed in Afghanistan since 2009, even more has changed in the global strategic context for the United States – within which the Afghan conflict is being fought. The impacts of the U.S. housing, auto and financial meltdowns in late 2008 continue to be keenly felt domestically today. U.S. debt and deficits have reached unprecedented levels, impacting our ability to sustain costly military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in ways not felt even two years ago. In Europe, the Eurozone economic crisis combined with deep declines in nations' military spending across the NATO alliance offer scant support for any expectation that the U.S. will get more out of our allies, in Afghanistan or in future military endeavors; Libya offers further evidence of NATO shortcomings daily. Osama bin Laden has been killed in a daring U.S. strike into the heart of Pakistan, killing the perpetrator of the 9-11 attacks on the United States, but also calling into deep question the efficacy of our fraught ally in Islamabad. The American people are weary of war, and polls indicate majorities of Americans favor ending the Afghan war rapidly. Around the world, friends and allies worry about a United States in decline, and seek reassurance about the long-term commitment of the U.S. to sustained engagement as a global leader as they view our economic troubles with grave concern. As a nation, the United States is clearly navigating in much different waters today than two years ago – and our policies in Afghanistan must be shaped in light of these indisputable facts.

That said, the United States continues to have vital national security interests at stake in South and Central Asia – interests that transcend Afghanistan itself. The vital importance of protecting these interests must not become obscured by a too-narrow focus on Afghanistan or our impending drawdown

there. ***In fact, our drawdown must be shaped with the ultimate protection of long-term vital U.S. interests foremost.***

Protecting three vital U.S. security interests should dominate our thinking as we begin to drawdown forces in Afghanistan: 1) Preventing the region's use as a base for terror groups to attack the United States and our allies 2) Ensuring nuclear weapons do not fall into the hands of terrorists and 3) Preventing a nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan. Protecting these vital U.S. interests in the coming years must be the penultimate objective of our coming transition in Afghanistan. If the outcome of this transition ultimately puts these vital U.S. interests at grave risk, we will have failed entirely in our mission in Afghanistan – one that has cost the United States over 1,300 lives, hundreds of billions of dollars and over ten years of great sacrifice.

The Situation: Summer 2011

An assessment of our efforts in Afghanistan in July 2011 suggests re-examining the three variables of the success equation posed in early 2009. In each of these variables – leadership, strategy and resources – the United States has dramatically improved its position in the last two-plus years. Generals Stan McChrystal, Dave Petraeus and now John Allen have brought immense talent and counter-insurgency experience to bear in Afghanistan, and their exceptional military leadership has had a markedly positive effect on the war. At the same time, our strategy has shifted from a muddled, NATO-centric "don't fracture the alliance" approach to one focused on counter-insurgency principles, tailored for the unique environment of Afghanistan, and infused with assertive American leadership of the heretofore fractured multi-national effort. Finally, resources have been increased dramatically, enabling this new leadership armed with a new strategy to make substantial gains toward a successful outcome. President Bush began, and President Obama dramatically increased, a major reinforcement of troops shifting the U.S. component from 33,000 to nearly 100,000 troops on the ground today. Our allies have also increased their numbers during this period, although in limited ways that are now declining. Aid and development dollars have grown, and increased numbers of civilians have deployed to work with the U.S. military in the counter-insurgency effort. The combination of these significant changes in leadership, strategy and resources have turned around a mission that was on the road to failure in early 2009 – reversing a period of decline wherein the whole of NATO's effect was far less than the sum of its parts, and one in which the Taliban had escalated their attacks and seized the initiative, putting NATO on its back foot. All this has now changed.

An infusion of nearly 70,000 additional U.S. troops has dramatically reversed the Taliban's momentum and taken away their de facto control of large swathes of southern Afghanistan, notably Kandahar and Helmand provinces, the birthplace of the Taliban. The results of fighting in the East have been more mixed, largely as a result of coalition efforts directing the military "main effort" to the south. Major upticks in "kinetic" operations targeting the Taliban leadership have badly damaged the continuity of the organization, while creating important leverage toward bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

While the ultimate effect of this campaign against the diverse groups that comprise the Taliban is not yet certain, there is little question that sustained military pressure remains a crucial component in incentivizing any negotiations.

In the areas where the Taliban has been rolled back, Afghan governance has improved, businesses have returned, and prosperity and personal security has been notably improved. Sustaining these fragile and hard-won gains is likely to prove to be the top challenge of 2012 and beyond – and will ultimately be a central test for growing Afghan security forces and government.

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have also dramatically gown and improved during this period. Under the dynamic leadership of Lt. General Bill Caldwell, commander of NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan, the ANSF now comprise 164,000 Army and 126,000 police, up from 79,000 and 95,000 respectively in early 2009. More importantly, their quality, training and equipment has steadily improved, posturing them to take on the counter-insurgency fight as the U.S. transition begins this summer and continues into next year and beyond.

Yet while the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan today has largely seized the battlefield initiative from the Taliban, serious difficulties remain. Sustaining the success of the last 18 months will be perhaps even more problematic than the campaign that has wrenched the momentum away from the enemy, and now has put him on his back foot. Corruption and lack of Afghan capacity remain crippling problems, and little progress has emerged in these areas. Next door, relations between the U.S. and Pakistan have declined to their lowest point in recent memory, a development that will have immense potential influence on the shape of the next several years in Afghanistan. Similarly, cross-border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan remain a significant barrier to a comprehensive regional security framework.

As General Allen and Ambassador Ryan Crocker take the reins of the effort, they unquestionably face major challenges. The United States is well served by having these two incredibly skilled and experienced professionals at the helm in Afghanistan during this critical period. America has chosen well in selecting these two dedicated and exceptional leaders – and their talents are about to be tried.

Five Challenges Facing the United States in Afghanistan

Five significant challenges stand out as Crocker and Allen look to sustain and build upon the success of the last eighteen months in Afghanistan:

First, the United States must dispel the widespread uncertainty in the region regarding long term U.S. intentions in Afghanistan. Despite the President's rhetoric in both his December 2009 speech and his most recent June 2011 address, the Administration has been opaque about the substance of a long-term U.S. commitment to Afghanistan and the region. Will U.S. troops stay beyond 2014, how many, and for

what purpose? Vague declarations asserting U.S. resolve, interests or staying power simply lack any credibility in light of the U.S. history in the region. Convincing both regional friends and adversaries of the seriousness of a long-term U.S. commitment requires a strong, public assurance of some level of residual U.S. troops after December 2014, the date of the full transition of security responsibility to the Afghan government – something the Administration has yet to explicitly propose. Our Center for a New American Security (CNAS) reports in December 2010 (authors Barno and Exum) and June 2011 (authors Barno, Exum and Irvine) argue that a long-term residual U.S. force presence of at least 25,000 troops is necessary to defend U.S. interests and establish unequivocally that the United States is not going to once again abandon the region. These troops – mostly special operations forces and "enablers" – would be dedicated to maintaining relentless pressure on al Qaeda and its affiliates, and advising and supporting the Afghan Army as it continues to battle the Taliban. Failing to clearly make such a commitment about long-term U.S. presence encourages all actors in the region to hedge their bets – to base all of their calculations on the question: "What would this decision look like the day after the Americans are gone?" Such uncertainty about U.S. intentions encourages our adversaries, undermines our friends and deeply undercuts our leverage and long term goals in the region.

Second, the U.S. must re-establish working relations with Pakistan. While this mission falls largely outside the direct remit of Ambassador Crocker or General Allen, U.S. strategic goals in the region center far more on the stability of nuclear-armed Pakistan – the second largest Islamic country in the world, one projected to have 300 million people by 2050 – than they do on Afghanistan, a nation of only 30 million. Our new leadership team in Kabul must work closely with U.S. Ambassador Cameron Munter and Lt. General Purl Keen in Islamabad to understand this region through the same lens, and integrate their thinking and efforts to best deliver U.S. long-term regional objectives. Here in Washington, we must avoid the tendency to look at Afghanistan through the soda straw as an "island" in U.S. policy, and start working toward a set of more clearly defined regional goals. Again, our June 2011 CNAS report "Beyond Afghanistan: A Regional Security Strategy for South and Central Asia" lays out our ideas for a coherent regional security strategy for the United States anchored on vital national security interests in the region.

Third, the United States must re-build relations with President Hamid Karzai while at the same time opening the door for the growth of the next generation of Afghan leaders. Karzai's second five-year term ends in 2014, and U.S. planning must begin now to think through setting conditions for this constitutional transition of power. In the near-term however, the United States must do more to partner with Karzai, re-build the important personal relationships of trust upon which so much credibility and influence in that part of the world rest. The U.S. country team must also begin joint planning on both the transition of military operations and the less apparent drawdown of the dollars connected to supporting large numbers of international forces. The U.S. team in Kabul must work with Karzai and his ministers to buffer the Afghan economy from the shocks coming as international funding streams decline from

current levels by as much as 30-50% in the next three years. With an Afghan economy centrally fueled by these resources, the risks of economic collapse are real – with the ensuing disastrous effects on both U.S. policy objectives and ordinary Afghans.

Fourth, the U.S. must continue to focus on defeating the enemy strategy – both al Qaeda and the Taliban. While al Qaeda has taken some serious blows in the past 18 months, reports of its imminent demise are vastly overstated. We should be wary of underestimating its dangers in the euphoric aftermath of bin Laden's death. Al Qaeda remains potent, and has proven resilient in its ability to adapt, rebuild and survive over the last ten years. U.S. bases in Afghanistan will be required to successfully prosecute a long-term campaign against al Qaeda – especially given what we have now seen of Pakistan's inability or unwillingness to take on this deadly adversary, largely headquartered from inside its borders. Regarding the Taliban, defeating their long-term strategy of "run out the clock" can only be done by dispelling the uncertainty regarding sustained U.S. military presence and support in the region. If Afghan security forces are to take over this battle against the Taliban, they must know that they can count on sustained U.S. support – advisers, trainers, air power and logistics. This ultimately saves the United States lives and dollars, and rightfully puts the war in the hands of the Afghans. It effectively shuts out the light at the end of the Taliban's tunnel – which today is very much left shining by expectations of a full U.S. withdrawal by the end of 2014. We have done astonishingly little to dispel this widespread regional belief in a coming and complete American departure.

Finally, the United States must manage a political, economic and military transition to a future with far fewer U.S. resources matched against a set of aims that remain largely unchanged. During Crocker and Allen's tenure, U.S. troops will decrease by at least 33,000 out of a 100,000 total, with more withdrawals likely after these first increments depart by summer's end in 2012. U.S. dollars which directly and indirectly support the Afghan economy will decline commensurately, threatening economic stability. Numbers of deployed U.S. government civilians will also begin to recede. This same period will mark a tumultuous Afghan political evolution as President Karzai looks to the (presumed) end of his term in 2014, and other actors start to emerge. Partnering closely with the Afghan government and military in this setting will be essential to catalyze their efforts to both take charge of their own governance and the war as the U.S. begins to draw down. It will require breaking a decade-long dependence on "Americans in the lead." This will be an immense leadership challenge at every level from Kabul to district capitals in the most remote provinces – and will in many ways define our efforts over the next 3 1/2 years.

Conclusion

The upcoming period for the U.S. in Afghanistan will be one of transition and change. It also risks being marked by enduring uncertainty about the United States' ultimate plans in the region. But we must remain alert during this demanding and potentially difficult phase to not lose sight of broader long-term

U.S. strategic objectives. Our transition in Afghanistan must be structured in ways to support and serve the strategic objectives related to U.S. vital national interests, not be seen as an end in and of themselves. Our strategic objectives in the region extend well beyond the borders of Afghanistan. We now must necessarily focus upon finding ways to help maintain regional stability and contain the threat from al Qaeda in light of an impending far smaller (and today, undefined) long-term U.S. presence.

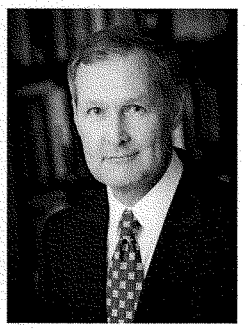
Protecting vital U.S. interests in the coming years requires one or more U.S. bases in the region from which to keep relentless pressure on terror groups who target the United States and our allies. Such a long-term, if modest, U.S. footprint could also serve as a nexus from which to exert positive steadying influence across this volatile region, helping to underwrite stability in an extraordinarily dangerous part of the world. Afghanistan presents the most logical and likely location for such a sustained, limited, military presence.

As we begin the transition of U.S. forces in Afghanistan to this as yet unspecified end state, we must keep these longer-term objectives uppermost in our policy horizon. Ten years of sacrifice by the United States and our allies, thousands of lives lost, and untold billions of dollars invested in this small country in Central Asia demand an accounting – and a failure at the end of this long and costly road to protect enduring U.S. vital interests in the region over the next decade and beyond would be wholly unacceptable to the American people.

Lieutenant General David W. Barno, USA (Ret.)
Senior Advisor and Senior Fellow

Center for a New American Security

CNAS BIOGRAPHY



General Barno, a highly decorated military officer with over 30 years of service, has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the United States and around the world, to include command at every level. He served many of his early years in special operations forces with Army Ranger battalions, to include combat in both the Grenada and Panama invasions. In 2003, he was selected to establish a new three-star operational headquarters in Afghanistan and take command of the 20,000 U.S. and Coalition Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. For 19 months in this position, he was responsible for the overall military leadership of this complex political-military mission, devising a highly innovative counterinsurgency strategy in close partnership with the U.S. embassy and coalition allies. His responsibilities included regional military efforts with neighboring nations and involved close coordination with the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations, NATO International Security Assistance Force, the U.S. Department of State and USAID, and the senior military leaders of many surrounding nations and numerous allies.

From 2007 to 2009, General Barno served as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans and Families. He frequently serves as an expert consultant on counterinsurgency and irregular warfare, professional military education and the changing character of conflict, supporting a wide-range of government and other organizations. General Barno is widely published and has testified before Congress numerous times.

A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as part of its famed Class of 1976, General Barno also earned his master's degree in National Security Studies from Georgetown University. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College. General Barno has received numerous awards for his military and public service.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

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Witness name: DAVID W. BARNO

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

✓ Individual

___Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: N/A

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
NONE *			
			* OCCASIONAL HONORARIA FOR SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AT WAR COLLEGES

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
NONE *			
			* OCCASIONAL HONORARIA FOR SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AT WAR COLLEGES

FISCAL YEAR 2009 -

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
NONE - FEDERAL EMPLOYEE			

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): NONE;
Fiscal year 2010: NONE;
Fiscal year 2009: NONE.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

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Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): NONE*;
Fiscal year 2010: NONE;
Fiscal year 2009: NONE.

*OCCASIONAL HONORARIA FROM SPEAKING AT FEDERAL ENTITIES (e.g., US NAVAL WAR COLLEGE)

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

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Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Statement to the House Armed Services Committee
The Way Ahead in Afghanistan

July 27, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

It is an honor to appear before this committee. My name is Bing West. I was an infantryman in Vietnam and later served as assistant secretary of defense. I have made numerous trips to Afghanistan, and have written six books about combat in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Permit me to address where we have been and where we are going. On balance, the news is tentatively positive.

- Where we have been. According to US counterinsurgency doctrine, our soldiers and marines were expected to be "nation-builders." Afghanistan, however, was the wrong war for that strategy of democratic nation building - for three reasons.

First, a foreign power cannot build a democratic nation, while having no control over that nation's authoritarian leaders. In 2002, the US and the UN handed full sovereignty to Afghan leaders who proved to be venal and selfish. We conceded all leverage over Afghan leadership. That was a fatal mistake.

Second, a duplicitous Pakistan has maintained a 1500-mile long sanctuary. The recent decision to give Pakistan money only on a transactional basis – do this if you want to be paid – is commendable. It will influence behavior, because Pakistani officials cannot maintain their comfortable life styles without American money.

Third, our benign counterinsurgency strategy did not win the commitment of the people. In Iraq, the Sunni tribes did eventually reject the insurgency. In Afghanistan, the Pashtun tribes have not done so. Most Pashtun villagers survive by being chameleons; they expect the Taliban to return.

By giving away $18 billion over ten years, we created a culture of entitlement. Afghans from President Karzai down to village elders came to expect that we would fight for them and give them money. The US military alone undertook 16,000 economic projects, as if its mission was that of a giant Peace Corps. This money resulted in no change in the war; however, it did weaken the willingness

of Afghans to rely upon themselves. When you give something for nothing, you receive nothing in return.

- Where are we today. Our fundamental national security goal has already been achieved - and can be sustained. That goal is preventing a terrorist safe haven inside Afghanistan. Today, no such safe haven is possible, due to our Special Operations raids, a network of spies and our astonishing airborne surveillance and electronics. A small US force with those capabilities can prevent a safe haven indefinitely, as long as the Afghan army controls the cities and highways. This approach is sometimes called 'counterterrorism', as distinct from counterinsurgency.

- Where we are going. The outcome depends upon one dominant factor: the cohesion of the Afghan Army. A collapse of the Afghan Army is the only Taliban route to Kabul. Hence the spirit and leadership of the Afghan Army dwarf all other concerns.

A few days ago, General John R. Allen took command in Afghanistan - the tenth American commander in ten years. He will be the first commander to focus primarily upon placing Afghan forces in the lead, rather than having American troops fight the war for them. Allen is a keen student of history who has studied the role of General Creighton Abrams, our commander in Vietnam forty years ago. What was then called "Vietnamization" can today be called "Afghanization."

Like General Abrams, General Allen understands his central task. Afghanistan is not large-scale combat; instead it is a war of intimidation - brief fights and bombings intended to instill fear, causing the Afghan troops to pull back. Allen will take steps, like deploying more advisers, to infuse the Afghan soldiers with a sense of confidence. Advisers provide the transition out of Afghanistan. Currently, there is one American soldier for every two Afghan soldiers. Gradually that ratio must change to one American adviser for every ten Afghan soldiers.

The harder task is changing Afghan Army leadership. There is a tribal skein to promotions that we do not understand. Every adviser team can tell you who are the poor Afghan officers. But the US has scant influence in selecting Afghan military leaders.

What can Congress do to help? Congress has been unstinting in its support of our troops, in pay, equipment, care and genuine concern. In addition, I would offer two suggestions.

First, enhance leverage by the power of the purse. The US should pay the Afghan Army without going through corrupt ministries in Kabul. In return for authorizing this pay, Congress should insist that General Allen's command have an institutional voice in promotions – and firings – at the Afghan battalion level and above, including district police chiefs. President Karzai is certain to object, but it is American taxpayer money, not Karzai's.

Second, Congress should determine what level of Afghan Army aid is sustainable. After 2014, international aid will plummet and, as a consequence, Afghanistan will be a political and economic mess. That is unfortunate but tolerable, as long as the Afghan army remains intact.

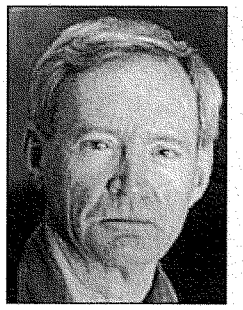
When our forces left South Vietnam in 1973, Congress slashed the budget for the South Vietnamese army and disaster followed. Conversely, if our commander in Afghanistan can assure the Afghan army of modest resources for the long term – if he is the conduit - then he retains enormous leverage over the selection of Afghan army leaders. He who has the gold, rules.

I'm not advocating more spending; we are broke as a country. The current bill for the Afghan forces is over ten billion dollars. While that must be reduced, the Afghan Army must remain confident of US support. I suggest that our elected officials and policymakers consider a tradeoff: that is, reducing some current economic and military projects in return for placing, say, $25 billion for the Afghan army in a lockbox for 2015 and beyond.

Thank you.

The Honorable Francis "Bing" West

Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense



Bing West, a Marine combat veteran, served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs in the Reagan Administration. A graduate of Georgetown and Princeton Universities, he served in the Marine infantry. He was a member of the Force Recon team that initiated attacks behind North Vietnamese lines.

A contributor to *National Review*, he is the author of *The Village, No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah*, and *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq. The Village*, a classic about counterinsurgency, has been on the Marine Corps Commandant's Reading List for forty years. West's books on Iraq have won the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's General Wallace M. Greene Jr. Award for nonfiction, the Colby Award for military nonfiction, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars News Media Award for journalism. He has been on hundreds of patrols and operations throughout Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Bing is a member of St. Crispin's Order of the Infantry and the Council on Foreign Relations.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

Witness name:____Francis J Bing West_____

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

_X__Individual

___Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:_____

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____1_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____1_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____1_____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____DHS_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____DHS_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____DHS_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011):___exercise support_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_ exercise support_____;_____ _____;
Fiscal year 2009:_exercise support_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011):___0_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____70,000_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____70,000_____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011):___0_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____0_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____0_____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

JULY 27, 2011

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. BORDALLO

Ms. BORDALLO. When I was in Afghanistan in February, we had dinner with Ambassador Eikenberry and several Afghan legislators. They discussed with us, at length, the problems with President Karzai's attempt to unseat a large number of non-Pashtun legislators and replace them with Pashtuns. This action, which the legislators said was unconstitutional, seems like it could easily result in increased strife between ethnic groups and lead to the breakdown of the Afghan government.

a. What do you believe the United States should be doing about this if anything?

b. Will Afghanistan turn out well in the long run if the President of Afghanistan takes actions that lead to ethnic strife and loss of faith in government?

General KEANE. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. BORDALLO. Many observers have pointed out that much of the Afghan government is made up of former mujahidin commanders of the '80s and the Northern Alliance commanders of the '90s. Many of these commanders financed their activities in those days through the narcotics trade and other activities that most people would consider to be organized crime. Now that they are in power, a lot of people believe that they are continuing their activities and have formed ethnic mafias, that are sometimes referred to as "criminal patronage networks." These mafias have been accused of sometimes dealing with the insurgents and sometimes fueling the insurgency by using government positions and power to exploit common Afghans who have to turn to the Taliban for protection and revenge.

a. Do you believe that an Afghanistan where these mafias dominate large parts of the government can ever end the insurgency and create a stable country?

b. If not, what should the U.S. be doing to combat them?

c. How far can we push them, given that some of the leaders of the mafias hold very senior positions in the Afghan government?

General KEANE. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. BORDALLO. When I was in Afghanistan in February, we had dinner with Ambassador Eikenberry and several Afghan legislators. They discussed with us, at length, the problems with President Karzai's attempt to unseat a large number of non-Pashtun legislators and replace them with Pashtuns. This action, which the legislators said was unconstitutional, seems like it could easily result in increased strife between ethnic groups and lead to the breakdown of the Afghan government.

a. What do you believe the United States should be doing about this if anything?

b. Will Afghanistan turn out well in the long run if the President of Afghanistan takes actions that lead to ethnic strife and loss of faith in government?

General BARNO. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. BORDALLO. Many observers have pointed out that much of the Afghan government is made up of former mujahidin commanders of the '80s and the Northern Alliance commanders of the '90s. Many of these commanders financed their activities in those days through the narcotics trade and other activities that most people would consider to be organized crime. Now that they are in power, a lot of people believe that they are continuing their activities and have formed ethnic mafias, that are sometimes referred to as "criminal patronage networks." These mafias have been accused of sometimes dealing with the insurgents and sometimes fueling the insurgency by using government positions and power to exploit common Afghans who have to turn to the Taliban for protection and revenge.

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General BARNO. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. BORDALLO. When I was in Afghanistan in February, we had dinner with Ambassador Eikenberry and several Afghan legislators. They discussed with us, at length, the problems with President Karzai's attempt to unseat a large number of non-Pashtun legislators and replace them with Pashtuns. This action, which the leg-

islators said was unconstitutional, seems like it could easily result in increased strife between ethnic groups and lead to the breakdown of the Afghan government.

a. What do you believe the United States should be doing about this if anything?

b. Will Afghanistan turn out well in the long run if the President of Afghanistan takes actions that lead to ethnic strife and loss of faith in government?

Mr. WEST. I do not know; I believe Ambassador Crocker is best qualified to answer. Karzai is erratic beyond our control. We are spending too much in that country. We should pay the Afghan Army directly, not through Karzai. That is the single most powerful lever to prevent strife.

Ms. BORDALLO. Many observers have pointed out that much of the Afghan government is made up of former mujahidin commanders of the '80s and the Northern Alliance commanders of the '90s. Many of these commanders financed their activities in those days through the narcotics trade and other activities that most people would consider to be organized crime. Now that they are in power, a lot of people believe that they are continuing their activities and have formed ethnic mafias, that are sometimes referred to as "criminal patronage networks." These mafias have been accused of sometimes dealing with the insurgents and sometimes fueling the insurgency by using government positions and power to exploit common Afghans who have to turn to the Taliban for protection and revenge.

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b. If not, what should the U.S. be doing to combat them?

c. How far can we push them, given that some of the leaders of the mafias hold very senior positions in the Afghan government?

Mr. WEST. a. No.

b. The only hope is for the U.S. to create and to pay directly an Afghan Army that in turn will have to impose its will through force.

c. He who has the gold, rules. The U.S. should pay the Afghan armed forces, cut out the middle men and ignore the yelping.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CONAWAY

Mr. CONAWAY. When President Obama announced the United States would draw down forces in Afghanistan by 10,000 by the end of this year, he reiterated the core U.S. goals: To disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and its extremist allies and to prevent their return to Afghanistan or Pakistan. Do you believe killings such as that of Kandahar's mayor, Ghulam Haider Hamidi, is an indication of further events we can expect as American troops are leaving?

General BARNO. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. CONAWAY. Based on the current fiscal environment in the U.S. and the necessity to reduce spending, realistically, what role should the U.S. and the international community be playing in Pakistan to ensure stability in this region?

General BARNO. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

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