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AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, September 22, 2011.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:10 p.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, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Good afternoon. The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the current status and future challenges for the Afghan National Security Forces.

There is perhaps no issue more critical to our long-term strategic success in Afghanistan than the development of a professional Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

Numerous administration officials, senior military leaders and independent experts have appeared before this committee and attested to the progress made by our troops in securing areas of Afghanistan and in training the Afghan National Security Forces.

Many members of this committee have seen this progress firsthand. However, significant challenges remain to threaten our strategic success. The Afghan National Police remain plagued by serious corruption and some units are alleged to be controlled by warlords or other power brokers.

The ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] continues to be plagued by high attrition rates, as during the first 6 months of this year more than 24,000 soldiers walked off the job, which is nearly 3 percent of the total ANA [Afghan National Army] per month.

Finally significant questions remain about the ANSF's sustainability and whether the Afghan economy will be able to support the envisioned 352,000-man force. This is particularly a daunting challenge in the wake of recent reports at the Department of Defense, responding to Administration pressure for spending cuts is planning to slash U.S. assistance to Afghanistan's army and police by more than half over the next 3 years.

Secretary Flournoy and General Neller, thank you for taking the time to share your views on this issue with us and for your service.

I look forward to hearing your testimony. Finally I would like to acknowledge the presence today of Mr. Dante Acosta, whose son Rudy was killed this March while serving in Kandahar.

Mr. Acosta, thank you for joining us today. On behalf of the committee members and staff I would like to express our sincerest ap-

preciation for Rudy's service, our deepest condolences to you and your family on his behalf. Our prayers are with you and all those who have lost loved ones in this conflict and in Iraq.

Mr. Smith.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

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

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I too pass along my condolences and thank you for being with us here today. And thank you for your son's service.

I have a longer statement which I will submit for the record but I understand we are in a bit of a time crunch so I will just submit that statement for the record and concur with the chairman's remarks about how important this is. Obviously if we are going to be able to transition our troops home we need to make sure that there is a reliable security force left behind and this training is incredibly important and I thank Secretary Flournoy for her work and leadership and General Neller as well. And I look forward to your testimony.

And with that I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 30.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We are going to have a vote any time possibly at 1:30, and there is a Republican conference also at the end of votes, and so we are going to appreciate your indulgence and we will get right into your testimonies and as much of the questioning as we can.

Secretary Flournoy.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHÈLE FLOURNOY, UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Secretary FLOURNOY. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished members of the committee, thank you once again for having me here today.

I want to begin by also expressing my personal condolences to the Acosta family. I also want to express condolences to the family of former Afghan President Rabbani. He was a peacemaker who shared the vision of the vast majority of his nation's people and that is a vision of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

His senseless killing must be seen for what it is. It was a desperate act by an insurgency that overall was losing ground.

As the insurgents' ability to control territory has diminished, they are turning to more asymmetric efforts such as assassinations and high-profile attacks designed to capture public and media attention. Such incidents cannot obscure the larger truth which is that the number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan as a whole is trending downward.

In fact, insurgent attacks in July and August declined sharply in most regions including Kabul compared to the same months in 2010, with the exception of a modest increase in the eastern region.

A major reason for this progress is the development I came to speak to you about today, the improvement in the quantity and the quality of the Afghan National Security Forces comprised of both the army and the police.

This improvement is due in large part to NATO's Training Mission Afghanistan or NTM-A which we established in 2009. Under the command of General Bill Caldwell, NTM-A has brought disparate efforts under one command and established iterative, professional and standards-based training, none of which existed before. So the ANSF is on track to reach its October goal of 305,600 soldiers and police.

As we have been meeting our numerical goals we have also focused intensely on improving the quality of the force, especially in the areas of literacy and operational performance.

NTM-A now estimates that the ANSF will achieve 50 percent overall literacy rates at the third-grade level in 2012 with over 70,000 police and 55,900 soldiers receiving some level of literacy training.

This represents a pretty major accomplishment in a country where the literacy rate of the recruiting population of 18- to 40-year-olds is only 14 percent. Through a range of training and mentoring programs we are reducing the shortage of trained NCOs [non-commissioned officers] and officers. The ANSF NCO and officer corps grew by over 20,000 new leaders just over the last 2 years.

Of equal importance has been our effort to improve the ANSF's operational performance in the field. Partnering Afghan forces and U.S. and coalition forces on the battlefield has greatly accelerated the ANSF's development.

In January of this year there were 124 Afghan battalions and headquarters elements rated as effective with coalition advisers or effective with coalition assistance. As of August there are now 147 units with these ratings out of 184 units assessed. And we expect that trend to continue if not accelerate.

These are not mere statistics. We have seen progress where it matters most which is on the ground in the campaign.

Despite the Taliban's claim that they intend to focus on transitioned provinces the ANSF who are now in the lead in those provinces are demonstrating effectiveness in contested areas such Lashkar Gah, where violence in August 2011 was 60 percent lower than in August 2010, and where the ANSF have been fully responsible for the successful defeat of Taliban efforts to reverse transition.

Most recently, during the attack on the U.S. embassy and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] headquarters earlier this month in Kabul, the Afghan National Police took the lead in responding, and carried out a complex operation that involved clearing placed munitions from each level of a multistory building, and killing all 11 attackers. Tragically, 5 police officers, as well as 11 Afghan civilians, were killed in this attack by Taliban insurgents.

But here I want to note the continuing sacrifices of thousands of dedicated Afghan Army and police officers and their families. Afghan security force casualties over the last year have included over 2,500 killed and 6,000 wounded. The ANSF are increasingly on the

front lines, and bearing the brunt of the hard fighting that continues. Their willingness to fight and die for their country is testimony to the determination we see in the new ANSF that we are helping to build.

Challenges do, however, remain and we are working with our Afghan partners to address them. One of them is attrition which you mentioned. Monthly attrition in the Army has averaged 2.3 percent since November of 2009. Over the past 12 months, ANA attrition has ranged as high as 3.2 percent and as low as 1.9 percent.

Average monthly attrition in the Afghan National Police since November 2009 has been on target at 1.4 percent, and for the past 12 months it has ranged between 1.9 percent and 1.0 percent.

Actual attrition is actually less than what these figures would reflect, as many of the ANSF personnel who have earlier been taken off the rolls actually do return to their units. In addition, working with the Afghans, we continue to implement a number of programs to reduce attrition, including providing "soldier-care" training for leaders, extending the leave policy, and implementing predictable rotation cycles for units.

Another key focus is building the enablers that will ultimately make the ANSF truly capable of independent operations. We have established 12 specialty schools that are training Afghans in the areas ranging from engineering, to intelligence, to logistics and to human resources.

Finally, again, as you mentioned there is the challenge of sustainability. Here, we are doing our part to ensure that we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars and that we can put the ANSF on a financially sustainable footing.

And here rather than saying that I would disagree with the characterization that we had slashed our assistance, rather what we are doing is reducing costs and finding efficiencies through several efforts.

These efforts include "Afghan First" initiatives, including purchasing locally produced furniture, boots, and uniforms. NTM-A has also found efficiencies within Afghan units by reevaluating equipping requirements based on lessons learned from the field. NMT-A has also adjusted building standards to a more sustainable local norm.

Some examples of these Afghan standards are fielding wash basins and clotheslines in place of modern washing machines, and installing ceiling fans instead of air conditioners. These steps clearly reduce procurement costs, maintenance requirements, but they also reduce long-term demand for electricity and fuel.

Due to these and other similar savings efforts, there will be a \$1.6 billion reduction in the fiscal year 2012 budget request for funding to develop the ANSF. But here again I want to emphasize there is no reduction in our commitment and no reduction in the quality of the training of the program. These are cost saving efficiencies that we believe are consistent with the sustainability that we all seek.

We anticipate a decrease in estimated future-year budget requests as well based on further efficiencies going ahead.

The coming years will be critical for the ANSF, as they know that they will be in charge of providing security for the Afghan peo-

ple in 2014. The ANSF has already begun assuming the security lead for over 25 percent of the Afghan population with the transition of seven provinces and municipalities this past summer.

Later this fall, we expect that President Karzai will receive the next set of transition recommendations from NATO and his Afghan ministers. And the next tranche could result in as much as 50 percent of the Afghan population living in transitioned areas, that is, areas where the ANSF is in the lead for security with our support.

In sum, we would say that ANSF development is on track as a central element of our strategy. We are meeting our growth goals and are continuing to improve quality and performance. And the ANA and ANP [Afghan National Police], most importantly, are stepping up to take more responsibility in the field, enabling both the transition process to proceed and the drawdown of our surge forces to get underway.

I want to close by offering my thanks. Your work here on this committee, along with the tireless efforts of our service men and women and the civilian volunteers in the field, is building the foundation for meeting our core goal in Afghanistan, of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating Al Qaeda and ensuring that Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terrorists who could threaten the United States.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Flournoy can be found in the Appendix on page 32.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Neller.

**STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC,
DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS, J-3, JOINT STAFF**

General NELLER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today along with Secretary Flournoy to report on the Afghan Security Forces.

I would also like to add that Mr. Acosta and the families of all that we have lost in this fight. I want them to know that we the Nation and we will never forget the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made in this fight.

The Afghan National Security Force remains the linchpin of our strategy in Afghanistan and as successful as the outcome there depends on their growth and success.

In terms of building this force we have realized some successes that can only, in my view, be described as remarkable, at least in the last 2 years. As Afghan soldiers and police continue to fight side by side with U.S. and coalition forces this upper trend, and not just quantity, has been complemented by a steady improvement in their quality and effectiveness.

These improvements have taken many months. The positive and aggressive actions of both the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan led by General Caldwell and the International Security Assistance Force Command, NTM-A on the front end and with the initial training and the capacity building and now especially training in leader development and the IJC [ISAF Joint Command] later

through aggressive partnering and mentoring efforts in the field have teamed together to create this success.

Now, this building of this force has allowed ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] and the ANSF to transition their focus from force generation, just creating more soldiers, to actually professionalization and effectiveness. This is an important shift in focus.

Ultimately, force professionalization will produce a more effective and credible ANSF, which will in turn lead to better security for the Afghan people and enhance legitimacy for their government and its security forces in the eyes of Afghans everywhere.

Mr. Chairman, this important effort to build a capable and professional and sustainable Afghan security force is directly tied to Afghan forces assuming primary responsibility for security or in its operational term, the transition of security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Progress in the realm of transition, a word that quite frankly, you didn't hear spoken too often 2 to 3 years ago is an assessment of the security situation, the capacity and effectiveness of the ANSF, the capacity of the government at national and provincial levels, and the preference of the Afghan Government can already be seen on the ground in seven initial geographic areas.

Subsequent transition areas will be announced, we believe, by the government of Afghanistan in the next few months. That said, while tangible progress continues, there are challenges. These challenges are real and will require our continued full measure of attention.

Conventional wisdom in Afghanistan labels Afghan leader development as the biggest challenge facing the ANSF today. Attrition, as you mentioned, the unanticipated loss of an officer, or an NCO, or a soldier, also remains a problem, as Afghan soldiers and police are dropped from the rolls, depart to tend to family matters, may die in combat, fight for extended periods in high-risk areas, and react to pay and leave policies, or in some cases just poor leadership.

Literacy is an essential enabler of the professionalization of the ANSF and also remains a challenge considering 28 percent of the Afghan population is literate and 86 percent of the new ANSF recruits are illiterate.

That said, we have seen improvements in these areas, thanks to the superlative and unwavering efforts of ISAF and NTM-A in identifying and aggressively addressing these problems. Additional improvements remain ahead.

In closing, I want to reiterate that an operationally capable and professional Afghan National Security Force is critical to the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan. The resources that you and the members of this committee have made available and continue to make available for this key component of the overall effort remain critical to achieving our ends.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments and be with you today and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Neller can be found in the Appendix on page 38.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before I begin with my questions, I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record my full statement along with Mr. Smith's and a statement that Mr. Acosta has into the record. No objections, so ordered.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

The CHAIRMAN. The safety of the troops is obviously of a foremost concern to all members of this committee. Although, we recognize that military campaigns such as the one our brave service men and women are currently fighting in Afghanistan are inherently dangerous, it is crucial that we do everything possible to eliminate avoidable risk so that they can return home safely to their loved ones.

On March 19th of this year, one of my constituents, Specialist Rudy Acosta, 19 years old, was killed by small arms fire inflicted by an Afghan security contractor on his forward operating base in Kandahar. Tragically, specialist Acosta's death was not an isolated incident.

As of the first half of 2011, there were nine such "Green-on-Blue" attacks by Afghan forces on U.S. troops, whereas from 2005 to 2010 there were 13 such attacks.

General Neller, is this traumatic rise in attacks an indication that the Taliban is successfully implementing a strategy of infiltrating the ANSF? What procedures are currently in place to vet ANSF for either pre-existing affiliations with the Taliban or extremist groups?

How do we monitor Afghan units or personnel for such affiliations or for more common emotional issues once they are designated for partnership in the U.S. Forces? And given the importance of U.S.-ANSF partnership to achieving our strategic objectives in Afghanistan, are you confident that we are doing everything we can to minimize the risk of such future green-on-blue attacks?

General NELLER. Mr. Chairman, obviously, this is in an area of concern for all leadership and again, our condolences not just to the Acostas but to any member of the Armed Forces who lost their life. But I think it—clearly, this is something that you would not anticipate happening when you are there to support our allies.

That said, it is a problem and it has got everyone's attention and the idea of an inside threat, as it is called, is something that we have to deal with, it is a reality. What are the causes of these—there is any number of causes, I don't think it is necessarily 100 percent Taliban infiltrators. In fact, the evidence that we have to the contrary that it is a variety of things as you mentioned, stress, some are undetermined because in many cases the actor in these cases is killed at the time. So we really can't determine what was their motive.

There are some impersonators. So what have we done? There is an eight-step process that has been put in place some time ago, but I think it has become more and more embedded in the process of recruiting personnel to join both the Afghan army and the Afghan police, starts with proof of identification letters from their tribe or from their leaders, a biometrical introduction—biometrics where

they are introduced in the biometric database to see if they have a record or a police record.

These procedures are now fully indoctrinated. In fact, it caused the Afghan Army in June to not be able to make their recruiting goal for the first time. They had to disqualify at least temporarily but in some cases permanently people that tried to enter into the army.

So I believe that the process is improving and it is working to do a better job of vetting who's applying to join the Afghan Security Forces. There are other things we have also increased, both on our side and on the Afghan side, the number of counterintelligence personnel that are there to canvas and watch the units and check and follow up on people that have concerns about the reliability and motivations of people that they are serving.

Or something as simple as trying to do a better job of controlling uniforms. We know it is not just blue-on-green, but there are a number of green-on-green where Taliban can or someone who would want to do harm to the Afghan Security Forces, could dress up as a policeman or a soldier and gain entrance into a facility.

So, although, it is never going to be 100 percent, I wish I could tell you that it would be 100 percent. I believe that those efforts vetting, the biometrics, the better control of uniforms, the use of counterintelligence, better awareness of the force. I think the situation has mitigated the risk about to the degree that we can.

The real dilemma here though is this, here we are, partnering, mentoring, working with Afghan Security Forces and you—in a way you have got to trust them. And so, Americans, we want to trust people. We want to believe that they have the same motivation we do.

And so, unfortunately, on these few occasions, too many but a few occasions this has happened where it hasn't worked out that way. So we continue to watch this. We continue to be aware of it. It is part of the training that we do making sure that we do what we can to mitigate the risk within our Force, at the same time we still have to work with the Afghans and move forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I will submit my other questions for the record.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to hear a little bit better understanding on how the transition is working as we train the ANSF, how we are transitioning, moving responsibilities that are currently held by U.S. ISAF forces over to Afghan forces because, obviously, that is the ultimate goal is for us to be able to draw down and them to take over security responsibilities.

I think you mentioned some of these in your testimony, but specify some of the responsibilities that had been done by our forces that are now being done by ANSF and what the plan going forward for that transition. Is how—I guess what I am trying to get at is how can we measure the progress here? How can we show, “Look, here is how our responsibilities are coming down because of the capabilities that ANSF now has.” And that is what is going to put us on the pathway to being able to responsibly draw down.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Oh, if I will start out and let General Neller follow. I do think that one of the measures of success is as

we transition, the reduction in ISAF support for the Afghan unit in question will be a gradual process. So, the more independent they become over time is one measure of success. The, you know, needing less and less support from us over time.

A second one is the amount of violence in the area, once it is transitioned and that is why I tried to give a couple of examples of areas that were transitioned that were still contested, that we knew the Taliban would target that were tested once the ANSF was in the lead.

And yet, the ANSF was able to handle the attacks. We—in a couple—in several of these cases we offered assistance and they said, “No, we got it.” And they actually performed quite well because that will also be an—

Mr. SMITH. And what is our presence in those areas when we put—

Secretary FLOURNOY. It really varies from place to place.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

Secretary FLOURNOY. And some of these early transitioners, there is very little ISAF presence historically. In other cases, there—it is quite significant, so it really varies from place to place.

Mr. SMITH. And how do you see that progressing forward in the months and in years ahead? Either, I guess, geographically, would be one way of looking at it. What is sort of our plan when where we think we can begin to transition over to ANSF responsibility? Then what are sort of the hard areas where, you know, you are not sure—well, I don’t want to say, “You are not sure we are going to get there,” but to the greatest challenge, in terms of getting there, in terms of us being able to draw back and really turn over substantial responsibility.

Secretary FLOURNOY. There are a number of conditions-based metrics that are being used to evaluate the security conditions, the governance conditions, this overall readiness of an area to transition. And that will suggest a number of areas that are ready.

In addition, I think there maybe some of the harder areas that we want to transition earlier, or at least get started on while we have more forces in place and so forth. So it is going to be a mixture. It is very much integrated with COMISAF’s [Commander of the ISAF] campaign plan. I don’t know if you want to add anything in that regard.

Mr. SMITH. General.

General NELLER. Yes, Sir. There are a couple of processes that facilitate this. One is that—every unit that is partnered, every coalition unit that is partnered with an Afghan unit does an evaluation called the CUAT, Commanders Unit Assessment Tool. And they kind of lay out how long they think it will before they are ready and they rate them. And Secretary Flournoy mentioned, you know, can they work with partners? Can they work with some partner assistance?

Can they do it independently? Although, I think mostly, independently is pretty difficult because we have closer support and a lot of indirect fire support, ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance], medevac [medical evacuation] capabilities that quite frankly they don’t have.

But they get to a certain point and that it would—the coalition would say, I think they are ready and we are prepared to do this. At the same time, at the governmental level, at the ISAF and the Afghan government level, there is a board called the Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal, which means transition board. And that is the board that is going to meet now or in the next few weeks that will make recommendations on what areas, either provinces or districts will be nominated for the next group of transition.

Some of them, again, as the Secretary said, the last group—Lashkar Gah—if you remember Lashkar Gah not a year ago was a semi-contested area. There was an attack there right after the transition and the Afghans handled the security.

Now, this doesn't mean that we might not still have some advisers or people down there as liaisons to provide coalition effects. That we don't have an adjacent unit in some distance away that is prepared to QRF [Quick Reaction Force] if they ask for it and in most cases, they have not. They have not asked for it.

They might ask for air support or a medevac or things like that. So it is a coherent process where they, we look at the unit. We make a recommendation. We collectively, with the Afghans, look at the areas that we think that are ready security-wise. But it is not just the low-hanging areas.

I think we are going to—I think General Allen's ideas because he wants to get out in front on some areas and be more contested. Now, you ask which areas would be last. I think, right now, just based on the level of violence, probably, areas in RC [Regional Command] East would be the last ones, unless we wanted to transition them now in order to try to get ahead of the game.

Mr. SMITH. Great. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. [Presiding.] The gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

Many of the more junior members of our committee are very faithful in their attendance here. Frequently, time runs out, they don't have a chance to answer their questions. Mr. West is one of the most faithful of these. And since he is the most junior member here at the gavel fall, I would like to yield him my time.

Mr. WEST. Thank you, Sir.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

And thank you, Madam Secretary and General Neller, it is good to see you again in different circumstances, obviously.

From June of 2005 to November of 2007, I had the opportunity to train the Afghan 205th Corps down in Kandahar. We were able to stand up the second and third brigades in the 2.5 years I was there.

I am looking at the rating definition levels, the ones here from February of 2001. My question that I would ask from February of 2001 to now, do we have any, you know, update as far as the progress of let's say maybe the 201st Corps who is a little bit, you know, established a little bit sooner or the 203rd Corps, as far as their abilities to be able to do operations?

Maybe not so much independently, but a little bit better with advisers and also I would like to ask a question about the status of

the commando *kandaks* [battalions], which was something that we stood up.

General NELLER. Congressman West, I have got that data somewhere in this book and—we have got the ratings of all those, I would respectfully ask if I could take that for the record and get back to you on where those units stand.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

Mr. WEST. Okay.

General NELLER. I actually have some personal experience with the 201st Corps. And I believe that there is a chart in here that I can make available to you that will show that they are not at the highest level, but the next one below that, as far as the commandos, I think, the commando *kandaks*—particularly those that are associated with our Special Operations Forces are probably—my assessment is again, I can show you the data but that they are ahead of the regular ANA just because of the kind of the student-to-instructor ratio that they get and that the great number of the actions that are going on with the Special Operations Forces to address specific targets are all involved in 100-percent partner.

So there are Afghans involved. So I think that is a success story just like it is. It was and continues to be in Iraq.

Mr. WEST. Okay. The other question I had back in July we had the opportunity to do a CODEL [Congressional Delegation] and we went open to the Sangin Valley area. And if I could, what is your assessment do you see right now with the Afghan Local Police? And is that—do you think going to be very successful getting down into the district levels with this militia type of groups?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Having just visited two of those sites myself, I will give you some impressions. We now have about 7,800 Afghan Local Police in 46 districts. The sites are often in very rural or remote areas where there is very little Afghan police or army and certainly and often very little ISAF present.

What we have learned over time is importance of oversights for these units. We or they are now nominated by the local shore council. They were vetted by the ISAF members. They are biometrically enrolled. They are trained and monitored and mentored by ISAF units who are paired with them. And there is now a connection to the Afghan Ministry of Interior. So they report to the district police.

In most of these areas, the official ALP [Afghan Local Police] programs that are closely monitored have been extremely successful in denying territory and roots and freedom of movement to the Taliban.

We believe they are covering about 25 percent of the population right now and they are slated to go further, so that's a very important part of the strategy going forward.

Mr. WEST. Do you think we will be able to sustain it?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I do. I think that there have been some allegations coming out in some reports. We are—we take this very seriously. We are investigating those. But most of them pertain to ALP-like programs that aren't actually the programs that are very closely monitored by our Special Operations Forces.

Mr. WEST. And last question, I have 30 seconds. Are we seeing any friction with the different variations of ANP and cop, board of police and now the ALP? I mean, do we still—I mean, are we getting them operating on the same sheet of music because there was some friction between those respective groups sometime ago.

Secretary FLOURNOY. You know, again, what I have seen is that all of these are now, I think, under the Ministry of Interior. I would say there are different stages of development, but I think there is more integration in terms of how they work together than has been the case in the past and some very useful kind of role differentiation among them.

Mr. WEST. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. THORBERRY. I thank the gentleman.

I will just comment. We have heard from a number of people that that is among the most promising developments in Afghanistan, the village stability operations. And as a matter of fact, we had testimony in a subcommittee just this morning that said that.

Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank the witnesses for their testimony.

Under Secretary Flournoy, on the other side of the Capitol today, Admiral Mullen was testifying this morning about the attack in Kabul which you referred to as well. And he was pretty blunt about the fact that he attributed to exported violence from Pakistan so that the Haqqani Network which he described as a virtual arm of the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] was responsible for it. I mean, that wasn't sort of in your testimony in terms of that issue. And I was wondering if you would have any comment on his testimony today.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Well, I would agree that the Haqqani Network's role in recent attacks both on the U.S. Embassy, also on our forces in Wardak province and on the ISAF compound have frankly raised very significant concerns, particularly about their ties to elements of the Pakistani government.

As the Secretary said, as Chairman Mullen has said, these are—these attacks are unacceptable and we are going to do everything we can to defend our Forces and our civilians serving on the ground. And we will not allow these types of attacks to go on. The links between the Haqqani Network and the Pakistani government need to stop. And we are having a very, very frank set of discussions with the Pakistanis at multiple levels about this issue.

Mr. COURTNEY. Because, I mean, as your testimony stated, I mean, the core goal here is disrupting, dismantling and defeating Al Qaeda. But if, you know, the most recent incidents are being driven by other factors, I mean, and, you know, from a country that is receiving aid from the U.S., I mean, it seems that building up the Afghan forces is a good thing and their military. But, I mean, you know, we shouldn't be doing that to deal with the force that we hopefully have some ability to influence.

Secretary FLOURNOY. We agree that we have to address the problem of the sanctuaries in Pakistan. In the case of the Haqqani Network, they are very, very closely aligned with Al Qaeda. And so

they have often provided safe haven and support to Al Qaeda and vice versa.

So we see them in the same category, if you will, as a very close affiliate that needs to be dealt with inside Pakistan. Truth be told, these groups are very much a threat to Pakistan as well. Pakistan has had enormous sacrifices as a result of terrorism turned inward in their own cities. So this is an area where we believe we need to have strong cooperation and we are working very hard towards that end.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you. At one of our last hearings on Afghanistan, we had retired Under Secretary of the Army Bing West, I think, testified who, again, was very strong in terms of his support for training Afghani forces. He was somebody who spent quite a bit of time in Afghanistan on the ground with our military.

But he raised a pretty strong point about whether or not we need as large a footprint to accomplish that goal as well as the goal of, you know, what our interests are there. And I guess, you know, again, he had sort of posited some ideas about trying to create some funds for the Afghan government for future security force funding so that they would have some confidence that we are not sort of leaving abruptly.

But, again, he was very adamant that, you know, we don't need the troop levels even after the President's announced drawdown to accomplish those goals. And just I guess I would ask you that question is whether or not the progress that we have made, the horizon ahead of us, whether or not we need to have the size of footprint that exists today and into next year.

Secretary FLOURNOY. There are two elements of the President's strategy that really have to work hand in hand. One is our efforts in ISAF with the Afghans to degrade the insurgency, the other is our effort to build up the ANSF.

And the truth is we have to help degrade the insurgency to a level such that the newly developed ANSF can handle it. And so it is striking that balance that is so critical in continuing with the campaign and the transition and the beginning of the drawdown of our surge forces. And so we have to keep those things in balance.

I think the President's decision about the scope and scale of the drawdown was very much based on keeping those elements in balance so that we certainly transition to the Afghans as soon as they are ready and able to be successful, but that we don't go—we don't run ahead of or outstrip their capability and therefore create space for the insurgency to be revived.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Flournoy, General Neller, thank you so much for joining us today. I want to build a little bit on a series of questions that you have been asked about ANSF capability and I hear a lot about transition. But to me, there needs to be some more definition.

When do you believe that the Afghans will be able to act independently of U.S. and NATO forces in several levels? One is in planning and executing missions. And will they be able to do that without U.S. and NATO forces? In other words, can they plan and execute missions by themselves?

NATO's been there now for 2 years in training security forces and the Army. We want to look at how much longer is that effort going to be needed to make sure that ANSF has the capability to function independently. We talk about transitioning as they are capable. The question is when do we believe that they will be fully capable to do this on their own?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I will ask General Neller to weigh in on this as well. But, you know, I think that many of the units that are improving their capability going from, you know, effective with coalition assistance to effective with advice to independent.

When they get to that independent level, that means they are capable of planning and executing missions on, you know, by themselves with one caveat. And this is where the continued support of enablers.

Some of—we have begun this effort to develop Afghan enablers, that will take some time. So for a while, they will continue to be dependent on our enabling capabilities.

But we expect that by the completion of the transition period, the vast majority of Afghan units will be either in that independent category or simply effective with just some advisers embedded to assist but without a lot of other support beyond enablers.

Mr. WITTMAN. How many units right now are categorized as being able to operate independently? That is both mission planning and execution. General Neller.

General NELLER. I am aware of one that is categorized as independent. Now, there are a number that can operate with advisers—in the adviser role, I think that you asked two questions, Congressman, at least that I heard. Can they plan independently and can they operate independently?

I think many of the ones that are operating with just advisers, they are doing their own planning. Now, they may have some oversight and assistance from their advisers or if they are partnered—have a partner unit and they may have the lead and they have a lead for over half of the operations when we go out with coalition forces.

Actually, they will function independently in the pure sense of the word. I go back to what the Secretary said. You know, until they develop their own fixed-wing close air support capability, their flyers' capability, medical, medevac, ISR and those things, then those are the capabilities that there is—they—I think they will still be dependent upon us at least until 2014.

And I think that is why there are discussions ongoing now as I understand it to develop a longer term relationship with the Afghanistan government so that we can continue to support them and they know that we are there, that we are not at 2014, that this is just—we are out, completely gone.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask this, too. We look at the current force structure, the number we hear on ANSF, there is about 352,000. The effort, though, is—of their—of that force—is questionable since there is still a fairly high attrition rate from around 32 percent.

So the question is of that force structure, how many of those individuals are able to fight, shoot, communicate, do all the basic tactical efforts that are necessary on the ground for them to either function under direction or independently.

And then a greater question is with our efforts there, obviously, we have a number of Special Operations folks on the ground. Are we doing anything to provide special training to groups within ANSF that have shown that they have the propensity to be trained to pursue these asymmetric warfare efforts because as we leave, obviously, we have been effective on the ground with lot of these Spec Ops [Special Operations] operations? Is there a capability that is being planned with ANSF to provide their capability after our presence wanes?

General NELLER. I will address the last question first. I think that clearly the instate of the Special Operations Forces that are partnered with Afghan—Congressman West mentioned the command or battalions or their own special forces I think. The instate, just like it has been in Iraq, is that eventually when we leave, then they will be able to function on their own.

Now, those other enablers are still critical. And I would just mention those enablers are not just critical for the Afghans, they are also critical for our coalition partners. You know, as they draw down, their concern is as we draw down, “Hey, you want to make sure that we still have rotary wing support. We still want to make sure you are going to be there with the medevac.”

And because quite frankly, we—the ability to get soldiers of all Afghan coalition and our own forces off the battlefield in proper medical attention is a huge combat multiplier for everybody.

So I am confident that on the soft side for the Afghans that that is the end game. As far as for the conventional force, I think it will be a little bit more challenging. That said, the current effort with the NATO training mission Afghanistan in order to make those things happen is to focus on those things you mentioned—shoot, move and communicate. And that is going to come through our equipping process, is going to come through better training, for example.

Two years ago, I think the rifle qualification rate for the Afghan Army was around 35 percent. Now, it is 95 percent. They had different types of weapons. Now, we have standard weapons. They had different kinds of uniforms. They had it. Now, the Afghan—they are produced in Afghanistan, they got standard uniforms.

So they had NTM-A—yes, we may have lost some time, but we are building this thing on the fly or they are building this thing on the fly. And I believe they should be commended.

Now, at the end it is going to be about the next part of this build and that is the leadership. So whether they are able to operate, whether they are able to shoot, move and communicate with some assistance from us, and I will call that independent, I think this is going to be dependent on the next few years as we—now we have got numbers, we—I think the leadership will cause the attrition. I would assess—

If leadership improves, the quality of NCOs improves, the quality of officer training and performance improves, that will make sure that the soldiers are better taken care of, that they are better equipped, I believe we will see this attrition go down which will affect the thing that you are looking for which is better performance on the battlefield.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Flournoy, one of the statements that I want to clarify is the fact that the funding that we have been giving to the ANSF which is a combination of both the army plus the police force. And it is, I think, in your statement it said it is about \$11.7 billion for 2011 and that is expected to be the highest amount that it will ever reach. Is that correct?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Yes. We expect future years funding to gradually go down as we complete building infrastructure, equipping units and so forth and the major, sort of capital investment if you will goes down.

Ms. HANABUSA. Now, one of the issues in terms of building sustainability is, of course, to have an Afghan force. But I noticed that when we talk about sustainability, we are not really making a distinction at that point between the army and the—basically like the police force.

So how is it that we are envisioning that they will begin to share that responsibility, if at all? And in addition to that, who do we intend to give the support after 2014 to?

Secretary FLOURNOY. So I think that the different kinds of police and the army are evolving to a pretty well-defined division of labor. But as the, you know, as we are increasingly successful against the insurgency, the nature of the environment is going to change and I expect those roles to evolve further.

For example, you have police right now that are involved in counterinsurgency. Over time, I would expect them to have more normal sort of peacetime police roles in time. But in terms of financial sustainability, it is going to—the Afghans are making progress in terms of revenue generation but it is very small and they are nowhere near being able to support their security forces independently as yet.

Over time, the ability of the Government to generate resources will grow. Over time, the cost of these forces will come down. And we have challenged our allies in ISAF to ensure that they make a long-term pledge to help support the continued development and sustainment of the ANSF.

So the U.S. will not be alone in footing this bill. The bill will go down. We hope that our allies will step up more as they transition some of their force commitments out. And we also expect the Afghan government will be able to pay for more and more.

That said, we do envision a sustained security assistance contribution from the U.S. beyond 2014 but at a much lower level.

Ms. HANABUSA. I guess, I read somewhere that like 90 percent or 90 some odd percent of the Afghan economy is really related to the Allied Forces and—in other words, the sustainability of Afghanistan. So as you say that we are trying to—as we withdraw and our, quote “allies” also withdraw then we hope that the economy picks up, assuming that it doesn’t in the worst-case scenario as you sit here today, what do you think that amount will be come 2015, that the United States is going to have to cover?

Secretary FLOURNOY. We do not have a definitive number. We are still scrubbing that to bring it down. But we are working that and I believe it will be much lower than the—

Ms. HANABUSA. How much lower, what is the range?

Secretary FLOURNOY. You know, again, we don't—I don't have anything that we can rely on. I think we are, you know, we are aiming to get it to a much more sustainable rate that is commensurate with some of our other major security assistance programs elsewhere around the globe.

But I would just say that, you know, right now the Afghan economy is somewhat dependent on international aid and so forth and that will continue for some time. But what we do see is growth in their agricultural sector, which is about 80 percent of the economy.

Long-term, they also have a vast mineral and energy wealth that as that—as they extract that, as they develop industries to do that, that will be a very important source of income as will customs taxation and other revenue-generating mechanisms.

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired but I would like to ask that once the Secretary has scrubbed down her numbers as low as she could get them if she would forward it to me. Thank you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 54.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. I think we would all be interested in that. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here. I wanted to follow up really on the sustainability question if I may. And I think that in addition to having the forces available and having the mid-level officers and all that is important in terms of going forward—

The whole piece of logistics is also an important one. I know of—maybe a year ago, a few years ago, we continued to read stories that either the engineers were not available and you didn't have enough people trained to actually work on the equipment.

And some of that equipment you couldn't find the parts in Afghanistan. How are we doing with that so that the logistics piece itself is part of the sustainability and where are the improvements coming? Where are the gaps?

General NELLER. Congresswoman Davis, I would say that is a work in progress, and it is probably not where we would want it to be or even the Afghans. But I think in the last 2 years, again, NTM-A's effort to develop what really didn't exist before, what we call branch schools to include logistics to train professional logisticians, to train people who are operating the equipment, whether they be artillery or armor or aviation or all those things, those capabilities we are developing for the Afghans so that they understand the importance of maintaining the equipment.

Simple things like accountability, knowing how many weapons you have, how many trucks you have. I am aware that General Caldwell right now is trying to get them to turn in vehicles that have been damaged. And he is forcing a function for that at least as what he put in his weekly newsletters, he is going to tell them he needs to have this count, otherwise he is going to cut back on their fuel.

So, there is a number of initiatives whether it be education, I know because I am involved in my current billet in the force

sourcing business that they requested what they call this oversight teams that we send people over to help him go around and kind of do Inspector General type things on Afghans to make sure they have property books, that they know where their equipment is and they are actually maintaining it.

Mrs. DAVIS. General, what I am worrying is how do we go about, do we try and backfill that post-2014 or do we feel that we are going to have that capability available? Can I just follow up quickly, also with the health care piece of the military?

I know in the comments, about 6,000 or so have been injured in addition, of course, to the deaths that the Afghan Army has suffered. And are we seeing the training for, caring for their soldiers has increased or is that also something that we will be forced to follow up on as the date, you know, comes closer.

General NELLER. Let me talk about the equipment first. I think your question is—as in the previous question was—okay, whatever this cost is after 2014, does it include the ability to replenish and replace equipment that is worn out or damaged or destroyed in the fight.

And I would say that whatever that number is you would have to have some budget line there to do that. Right now, we are just trying to find out exactly where we are, what the baseline is, you know, how much do they have because if there is still money there to replace things and you can't replace it unless they report that it has been damaged or broken.

So the accountability thing is going to come first before the sustainment. On the medical, I know that they are working on an organic medical capability but I believe right now they are predominantly dependent upon, at least for battlefield evacuation, that we are the ones that are going to provide the primary source of medical care.

But that is probably another area—I would have to get back to you because I am not aware of their long-term plan for that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

Secretary FLOURNOY. Having to, if I could, on the medical I think the model is training medics and first responders, if you will, inside the military. But they are really relying on their hospital structure for higher level care for their military members who are wounded.

Mrs. DAVIS. While they do have a national hospital, I think that a lot of the soldiers as I understand it do not go there but maybe there are other hospitals in the area.

Okay. Thank you. I appreciate your comments and just quickly, we have a group of Afghan parliamentarians who will be coming at the end of October into November from the Defense Committee. And so I would just like to say there may be some things that we can be helpful with here and if you would like to pass that along, that would be great. Thank you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, General, thank you for doing a very difficult job very well, we appreciate both of you and your service. I want

to ask some questions about the strategic context in which these decisions are being made.

Secretary, I think this would be a question for you. What was the basis of the alliance between Al Qaeda and the Taliban?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think the basis was a combination of shared ideology and the fact that the Taliban were willing to provide safe haven for Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. But Mullah Omar, the head of the Taliban was very much the spiritual—one of the spiritual leaders that Osama bin Laden followed or looked to.

Mr. ANDREWS. I don't want to overstate this, but do either of you think it is a correct statement generally that Al Qaeda's presence within Afghanistan has been dramatically reduced from what it was a decade ago?

Secretary FLOURNOY. That is a true statement.

Mr. ANDREWS. And Al Qaeda's capabilities around the region, around the world, are existent but severely degraded?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think we have seen Al Qaeda senior leaders and their corps that is in—predominantly in Pakistan under tremendous pressure, severely degraded. I think some of the affiliates elsewhere in Africa, in the Arabian Peninsula are actually rejuvenating.

Mr. ANDREWS. I agree with that and—General, to you and those that you work with and the Secretary, to you—that you work with, this is a tremendous credit to both the civilian and military uniform side of the Defense Department, job well done.

Is there any evidence that the Taliban, independent of Al Qaeda, has ever engaged upon threats against Americans in the United States outside the borders of Afghanistan?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think it depends on how broadly you define the Taliban. But their affiliated groups certainly have. But the Taliban's primary focus has been on attacks in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

Mr. ANDREWS. That is my understanding as well. And let me ask you a question that—I don't mean to be rhetorical—I mean it to be literal. What is the nature of the risk then that exists today within Afghanistan? Are we there to fortify the Karzai government or are we there to protect our own people against a significant risk to us?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I believe we are there as the President has stated for the core goal—that is disrupting, dismantling, and defeating Al Qaeda and preventing Afghanistan from returning to become a safe haven.

I think if we were to withdraw without degrading the insurgencies sufficiently, without building up the ANSF sufficiently, you could see either the fall of the Afghan government or a return to civil war that could put the Taliban back in power and once again recreate the safe haven for Al Qaeda.

Mr. ANDREWS. Do you agree with the proposition that we severely degraded the Taliban in 2001 and 2002, that they were in pretty bad shape after that?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Yes. Yes, I do. But many of them fled across the border.

Mr. ANDREWS. And do you agree with the proposition that they certainly bounced back and are a very virulent force by 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009?

Secretary FLOURNOY. In the absence of adequate pressure.

Mr. ANDREWS. Yeah. Now, do you think—to what extent do you think that was absence of adequate pressure and to what extent do you think that was a civil, legal, economic, social vacuum that was created within Afghanistan that they filled?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think it is a combination of the two, which is why we are trying to both apply pressure and create a different set of governance and other conditions on the ground that will be very inhospitable to them over time.

Mr. ANDREWS. I think you are a very able—of that position. I will tell you that the burden of proof you have to meet is this one that the American people have and I frankly increasingly have.

In the last decade in Afghanistan, we spent a couple thousand of American lives, 10 years and hundreds of billions of dollars to give the Afghans a chance to build a stable society. They have not done so to any significant degree of success.

And I think that our collective patience to continue that effort if wearing pretty thin. What would you say to that?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would say that I understand the weariness and the impatience and I think everyone who is involved in this mission shares that impatience. The President has been very clear that this is not an open-ended commitment.

Unfortunately, between the years 2003 and 2008, we did not adequately resource this mission. This was an economy of forced effort. We lost ground and we lost time.

Mr. ANDREWS. My time has expired—

Secretary FLOURNOY. We are now making tremendous progress that we believe can reach our core goal.

Mr. ANDREWS. My time has expired. I would simply say in closing though, that I hope we don't repeat the mistake of that period and not apply pressure in Africa and other venues where Al Qaeda may be strengthening itself because we are stuck in Afghanistan.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think our broader global counter-terrorism efforts are very much focused on those affiliates and going after exactly—

Mr. ANDREWS [continuing]. I think it should be our principal focus. Thank you very much.

Mr. THORBERRY. I had yield to myself. And that is part of the reason isn't it, Madam Secretary, that when we talk about significant budget cuts, understanding the impact of this global effort which we must maintain, is one of the things all of us must keep our eye on.

We had a hearing earlier today with Admiral McRaven talking about the Special Operations Command part of that across the world and so I think the point the gentleman makes that we can't take our eye off any of these points is exactly right because of the concern.

Let me just try to understand something a little bit better. In your statement you talked about efficiencies and cost savings efforts that allow there to be a \$1.6 billion reduction in the fiscal year 2012 budget request to develop the ANSF.

That seems like a big decrease, that is like a 10-percent efficiencies because we are doing fans and not air-conditioners. Can you help me understand this a little bit better, and upfront my con-

cern is we could be penny-wise and pound-foolish about doing this job right.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Right let me start by saying there is no lessening of the commitment to the ANSF as a critical part of the strategy. There is no sort of taking our foot off the gas in this respect. What has happened is General Caldwell has done a masterful job of really focusing on the stewardship of these resources.

And so, he has renegotiated dozens, if not hundreds of contracts to reduce the margins, to reduce overhead, to get more value for our investment. We, with experience, have actually seen these units in the field. We have adjusted equipment tables associated with units.

When you actually found that the unit wasn't using something at the rate you thought or didn't need as much, we have adjusted those equipment tables which were set up in theory and now are informed by practice and are better matched to the units.

We have gone for this "Afghan First" initiative which is everything that can be produced of quality in Afghanistan should be produced in Afghanistan. So clothing, boots, basic equipments, those kinds of things now in Afghanistan, much, much, much more cost effective to do it that way, and by the way, helpful to their economy and more sustainable.

And then on the construction piece this is sort of you know, so much of the construction is done. This is really affecting the last third or so of the facilities construction. But we discovered is that using traditional Afghan building methods, it can be 120 degrees outside, you walk into the building and it is adobe, it is 80 degrees inside with a ceiling fan. And, you know, next door you have an air-conditioned facility that is struggling with lots of fuel and air-conditioning trying to get it to 80 degrees.

So if we can build something that gets the same result but is less costly and more sustainable in an Afghan context that is the way to go. So these are the kinds of things that he has been doing to bring the cost down but there is no reduction in the sort of the quantity and quality, the output in terms of the actual capability we are going to get for that money. So there is no reduction in commitment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, you will get cheers from everybody for doing as a good a job or better job for less money and using local methods and then so forth as you described I think. But what we just want to keep asking about is, are we increasing the risk to our troops and are we making it more difficult to accomplish the mission?

So I appreciate—your understanding is we continue to ask those questions. Let me go back for just a second to the Afghan Local Police and village stability operations that Mr. West brought up.

As I understand that some folks have expressed interest in growing the Afghan Local Police program to as many as 30,000 participants. You said where it is 7,000 to 8,000 now.

Do you have a goal for where to go with that and a path on how to get there, understanding the limitations of our Special Operations Forces that we were just talking about and so forth?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I don't think there is any ceiling on how far this can go based on its success, but I think the rate of growth has

to be paced by whether the conditions are right with the support of the local shura and whether you have the resources necessary for the oversight.

The oversight and the partnering is key. And General Neller can speak to this. But one of the things we have done is we have actually put conventional forces under the Special Operations Forces to fill out their ranks and enable them to cover more territory but I will let him speak to that.

General NELLER. As I understand it, Congressman, there is—I think there are 77 sites that have been approved and we man 46 and that comes out to about to 7,600 people. And initially it was just the Special Forces team that would split and go to the village and we realized we just didn't have the capacity to get as much coverage.

And so then General Petraeus requested a couple of conventional units and what they did basically is he just kind of broke up the Special Operators and gave them a group of soldiers in this case to give them the security and ability to move around.

And so, you basically doubled and tripled your capacity, and so, that has gotten you to this point. So whether or not these other ones are dependent upon I couldn't tell you, I can find out if we are not doing the rest of them that have been approved because we don't have capacity.

I do know that SOCOM [Special Operations Command] the other day reported, for the first time, they had actually transitioned the oversight of one of these operations to Afghans. So part of the transition process is to put Afghan police in with the ALP so now we have police working with police.

So, I mean, everything is really being transitioned, not just the security operation of the police and army. We are transitioning the education and all the stuff that currently coalition trainers are doing, this being transitioned to Afghans. We are evaluating all the ministries and there are people in there that are advising them.

So I mean, this is a whole government effort here and it is going to take some time but I think it is paying off. So the ALP thing I had just seen the number 30,000 as far as what the—but I haven't seen as a goal but the issue probably would be capacity and who we would get to do that.

Mr. THORBERRY. Well, I agree with you it is encouraging to see, in effect, one of these sites graduate to where they can completely stand on their own two legs. I would be interested, if there is a projection for growth and what that would be, and understanding again the deal is to do it right and not just to do a lot of it and we are limited on our side. But if you all have something like that I would be interested to just kind of see that projection, because again, I hear over and over it is one of the most promising developments going on and so therefore it is of particular interest to us.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Reyes, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both for being here. I apologize, I had a conflict and so I couldn't get here for the full hearing but I did want to ask hopefully just a brief question.

People are critical of the President's policy to reduce forces by the end of the year. Some people think it is too much, some people think it is not enough.

I am curious to hear you comment on how the scheduled reduction in strength by the end of this year is going to impact or affect our ability to continue to do the training of the Afghan forces.

I am sure somebody has been tracking that, so can you comment on how that might impact or is it going to impact it at all?

General NELLER. We are waiting for General Allen to come back with his plan on how we are going to get down to 91,000 by the end of this year. I would imagine based on what I am seeing though, that because we are training thousands of Afghans to be instructors at these schools, where we have kind of stood them up and we mentored the instructors and help with the training, that the number of people involved with NTM-A might go down somewhat, whether that would be part of the reduction.

Right now we are just under 98,000 and so we have to drop about 7,000 to get to 91,000 by 31 of December. That remains to be seen. I don't have any concerns this year that that will significantly impact the quality of the instruction. I think the metric I would be looking for is how many instructors, how many schools have we transitioned, you know, how many Afghans.

So it is kind of like they stand up, we stand down, we might keep people there to watch and quality control their instruction to make sure they continue to do the stuff for a period of time. But eventually we are going to—they are going to have to do it by themselves.

As far as the number in general I don't have any concerns that will negatively affect either the training or our operations through the end of this year.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Sir, just to give you one example. Last weekend I was in Kabul and I went to the police training academy. All of the trainers and those who run the school are Afghans. Standing in the background are a mixture of ISAF forces, Italian carabinieri, Canadians, et cetera.

So monitoring, you know, helping to mentor some of the trainers, it is already happening. This is the number one training academy for the police in the capital city. It is already Afghan-run, Afghan trainers, so we are well down the line in many of the training areas.

Mr. REYES. Very good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I think we are done. Thank you all again for being here, and with that the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:15 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

**Statement of Chairman McKeon
Hearing on Afghan National Security Forces**

September 22, 2011

There is perhaps no issue more critical to our long-term strategic success in Afghanistan than the development of a professional Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. Numerous administration officials, senior military leaders, and independent experts have appeared before this committee and attested to the progress made by our troops in securing areas of Afghanistan and in training the Afghan National Security Forces. Many Members of this committee have seen this progress firsthand.

However, significant challenges remain that threaten our strategic success. The Afghan National Police remain plagued by serious corruption, and some units are alleged to be controlled by warlords or other powerbrokers. The ANSF continues to be plagued by high attrition rates, as during the first six months of this year more than 24,000 soldiers walked off the job, which is nearly three percent of the total ANA per month. Finally, significant questions remain about the ANSF's sustainability and whether the Afghan economy will be able to support the envisioned 352,000-man force. This is a particularly daunting challenge in the wake of recent reports that the Department of Defense, responding to Administration pressure for spending cuts, "is planning to slash U.S. assistance to Afghanistan's army and police by more than half over the next three years."

Secretary Flournoy, General Neller, thank you for taking the time to share your views on this issue with us and for your service. I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the presence today of Mr. Dante Acosta, whose son Rudy was killed this March while serving in Kandahar. Mr. Acosta, thank you for joining us today. On behalf of the Committee Members and Staff, I would like to express our sincerest appreciation for your son's service, and our deepest condolences on you and your family's loss. Our prayers are with you and all of those who have lost loved ones in this conflict.

The safety of our troops is obviously of foremost concern to all the Members of this committee. Although we recognize that military campaigns such as the one our brave servicemen and women are currently fighting in Afghanistan are inherently dangerous, it is crucial that we do everything possible to eliminate avoidable risks so that they can return safely to their loved ones back at home.

On March 19, this year, one of my constituents, Specialist Rudy Acosta, 19, died from small arms fire inflicted by an Afghan security contractor on his Forward Operating Base in Kandahar. Tragically, Specialist Acosta's death was not an isolated incident, as in the first half of 2011 there nine such "Green-on-Blue" attacks by Afghan forces on U.S. troops, whereas from 2005 to 2010 there were only 13 total such attacks.

**Ranking Member Adam Smith's Opening Statement
Hearing on Afghan National Security Forces**

September 22, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I would also like to thank our witnesses here today, Under Secretary of Defense Michèle Flournoy and Lieutenant General Robert Neller, the Director for Operations on the Joint Staff, for their testimony.

This is an important hearing. First, the program to develop the Afghan National Security Forces is one of the largest, in dollar terms, programs the United States currently has under way. Even after the Administration revised the FY12 budget request for ANSF downward by \$1.6 billion, we're still likely to be providing over \$11 billion for this program next year. Further, as many observers have pointed out, even if everything works according to plan, the Afghan government is not going to be able to provide sufficient funds to support and maintain the ANSF, so we will be providing billions more each year for years to come. Let me be clear—I am not suggesting that we should not spend this money. But if nothing else, the sheer amount of current and future funds that will be provided for this program demands that this committee conduct vigorous oversight of the effort to develop the Afghan National Security Forces.

Secondly, this hearing is important because we simply have to get this effort right. Even leaving aside that ineffective Afghan Security Forces would represent a colossal waste of funds, the reality is that Afghan National Security Forces incapable of increasingly taking responsibility for the security of the Afghan people and the Afghan state would represent a colossal policy failure. If the Afghan Army and Afghan police cannot become effective organizations, respected by the Afghan people, and, over time, responsible for the fight against the Taliban, our strategy will have failed.

Neither of these potential failures is an acceptable outcome. I believe that the President was right to begin redeploying troops out of Afghanistan and to begin to transition lead responsibility for security to the Afghan National Security Forces, where appropriate. It is in our interests to ensure that this transition happens as quickly as it can without taking undue risks.

I hope the witnesses here today can help us understand the progress being made by the Afghan security forces, where there are challenges, and what the way forward looks like. The NATO Training Mission --Afghanistan's 180 day review from May 2010 noted significant problems and concerns, including high attrition among the Afghans, shortages of NATO-provided trainers, a lack of quality leaders in the fielded forces and the supporting ministries, and lagging development in the rule of law including corruption. In May 2010, the International Crisis Group noted problems with ethnic friction and political factionalism in the Army. All of

these are serious concerns, and I hope our witnesses will help us understand where we have made progress and where we still have work to do.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and thank you Secretary Flournoy and General Neller for appearing here today.

HASC Hearing on Afghan National Security Forces

Opening Remarks for Under Secretary Flournoy

Chairman McKeon (R-California), Ranking Member Smith (D-Washington), and distinguished Members of this Committee:

I would like to begin by expressing my condolences to the family of former President Rabbani – a peacemaker who shared the vision of the vast majority of his nation’s people: the vision of a peaceful, stable Afghanistan.

This senseless killing must be seen for what it is: a desperate act by an insurgency that is losing ground.

As the insurgents’ ability to control territory has diminished, they are turning more toward asymmetric efforts, such as assassinations and high-profile attacks designed to capture public attention.

Such incidents cannot obscure the larger truth, which is that the number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan as a whole is trending downward.

In fact, insurgent attacks in July and August declined sharply in most regions—including Kabul—compared to the same months in 2010, with the exception of a modest increase in RC-East.

A major reason for this progress is the development I came to speak with you about today: the improvement of the quantity and quality of the Afghan National Security Forces, comprised of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). This improvement is due, in large part, to the “NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan”— known as NTM-A —which we established in 2009.

NTM-A, under the command of General Bill Caldwell, brought disparate efforts under one command and established iterative, professional, and standards-based training, none of which existed before.

The ANSF is on track to reach its October goal of 305,600 soldiers and police.

As we have been meeting our numerical goals, we have also focused intensely on improving the quality of the force, especially in the areas of literacy and operational performance.

NTM-A estimates that the ANSF will achieve 50 percent overall literacy rates at the third-grade level in 2012, with over 70,000 police and 55,900 soldiers having received some level of literacy training.

This represents a major accomplishment in a country where the literacy rate of the recruiting pool of 18-40 year olds is only 14 percent.

Through a range of training and mentoring programs, we are reducing the shortage of trained ANSF NCOs and officers. The ANSF NCO and officer corps grew by over 20,000 new leaders over the last two years – from 42,500 officers in 2009 to 61,800 in 2011.

Of equal importance has been our effort to improve the ANSF's operational performance. Partnering Afghan forces with U.S. and Coalition forces on the battlefield has greatly accelerated the ANSF's development.

In January of this year, there were 124 Afghan battalions and headquarters elements rated as "effective with coalition advisors" or "effective with coalition assistance". As of August, there are now 147 units with those ratings, out of 184 units assessed, and we expect this trend to continue. if not accelerate.

These are not mere statistics. We have seen progress where it matters most – in the field.

Despite the Taliban's claim that they intend to focus on transitioned provinces, the ANSF are demonstrating effectiveness in contested transition areas such as Lashkar Gah, where violence in August 2011 was 60 percent lower than August 2010, and where the ANSF have been fully responsible for the successful defeat of Taliban efforts to reverse transition.

Most recently, during the attack on the U.S. embassy and NATO headquarters earlier this month in Kabul, the ANP took the lead in responding, and carried out a complex operation that involved clearing placed munitions from each level of a multi-story building, and killing all 11 attackers. Tragically, five police officers, as well as 11 civilians, were killed in this attack by Taliban insurgents.

I want to note the continuing sacrifices of thousands of dedicated Afghan Army and Police officers and their families. Afghan security-force casualties over the last year have included over 2,500 killed and 6,000 wounded.

The ANSF are increasingly on the front lines, and bearing the brunt of hard fighting that continues. Their willingness to fight and die for their country is testimony to the determination we see in the new ANSF that we are helping to build.

Challenges remain, however, and we are working with our Afghan partners to address them. One is attrition. Monthly attrition in the ANA has averaged 2.3 percent since November 2009, as compared with our objective of 1.4 percent. Over the past twelve months, ANA attrition has ranged as high as 3.2 percent and as low as 1.9 percent.

Average monthly attrition in the Afghan National Police since November 2009 has been on target at 1.4 percent, and for the past twelve months has ranged from a high of 1.9 percent to a low of 1.0 percent.

Actual attrition is less than what those figures reflect, as many of the ANSF personnel who have earlier been taken off the rolls actually return to their units. In addition, working with the Afghans, we continue to implement programs to reduce attrition, including providing "soldier-care" training for leaders, extending the leave policy from 20 to 30 days, and implementing predictable rotation cycles for units.

Another key focus effort is building the enablers that will ultimately make the ANSF truly capable of independent operations. NTM-A has established 12 specialty schools that are training Afghans in areas ranging from engineering and intelligence to logistics and human resources. This will take time.

Finally, there is the challenge of sustainability. Here, we are doing our part to ensure we are good stewards of U.S. taxpayer dollars and that this investment is financially sustainable.

NTM-A is reducing overall costs of the ANSF through several efforts. These efforts include "Afghan First" initiatives, including purchasing locally produced furniture, boots, and uniforms. NTM-A has also found efficiencies within Afghan units by reevaluating equipping requirements. NMT-A has adjusted building standards to a more sustainable local norm. Some examples of these Afghan standards are fielding wash basins and clothes lines in place of modern washing machines, and installing ceiling fans in place of air conditioners. These steps reduce procurement costs, maintenance requirements, and long term demands for electricity and fuel.

Due to these cost saving efforts, there will be a \$1.6 billion reduction in the Fiscal Year 2012 budget request for funding to develop the ANSF. This will mean that Fiscal Year 2011 ANSF spending of \$11.7 billion will be the high point of our spending effort. We anticipate a decrease in

estimated future-year budget requests until we reach a sustainment level, which we are still defining.

The coming years will be critical for the ANSF, as they know that they will be in charge of providing security for the Afghan people in 2014. The ANSF has already begun assuming lead security over 25 percent of the Afghan population with the transition of seven provinces and municipalities this past summer.

Later this fall, President Karzai will receive the next set of transition recommendations from NATO commanders and his own ministers. He will then announce his decision, which could result in as much as 50 percent of the population living in transitioned areas in the coming months.

In summation, ANSF development is on track as a central element of our strategy. We are meeting our growth goals and improving quality and performance. And the ANA and ANP are stepping up to take more responsibility in the field, enabling both the transition process and the drawdown of our surge forces.

I want to close by offering my thanks. Your work on this Committee, along with the tireless efforts of our servicemen and women and civilian volunteers in the field, is building the foundation for meeting our core goal of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating Al Qaeda and ensuring that Afghanistan is never again a safe haven from which terrorists can attack the United States. ###



Michèle Flournoy
Under Secretary of Defense for
Policy



Michèle Flournoy was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on February 9, 2009. She serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy and the integration and oversight of DoD policy and plans to achieve national security objectives.

Prior to her confirmation, Ms. Flournoy was appointed President of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in January 2007. Before co-founding CNAS, she was a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she worked on a broad range of defense policy and international security issues.

Ms. Flournoy previously served as a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU), where she founded and led the university's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) working group, which was chartered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop intellectual capital in preparation for the Department of Defense's 2001 QDR.



Prior to joining NDU, Ms. Flournoy was dual-hatted as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy. In that capacity, she oversaw three Policy offices in the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Strategy; Requirements, Plans and Counterproliferation; and Russia, Ukraine and Eurasian Affairs.

Ms. Flournoy was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service in 1996, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1998 and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 2000. She is a former member of the Defense Policy Board and the Defense Science Board Task Force on Transformation.

Ms. Flournoy earned a bachelor's degree in social studies from Harvard University and a master's degree in international relations from Balliol College, Oxford University, where she was a Newton-Tatum scholar.

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STATEMENT OF

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER, U.S. MARINE CORPS

DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS, J-3

THE JOINT STAFF

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 SEPTEMBER 2011

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, along with Secretary Flournoy, to report on the progress of the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF).

Bottom Line Up Front

No member of this committee would disagree with the assertion that an operationally capable and professional Afghan National Security Force, to include both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), is critical to the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan. That is why ANSF development remains central to our overall strategy in Afghanistan. While tangible progress continues, real challenges remain, to include leader professional development, decreasing attrition, development of an Afghan culture of accountability, improving literacy, and others. Overall, enough positive gains were made to realize the transition of security responsibilities to Afghan lead in seven initial geographic areas. Future transition of security will require these gains to be maintained and expanded across all of the ANSF.

Training and Recruitment

The Afghan National Security Force has sustained an upward trend in quantity, quality, and operational effectiveness over many months. The positive and aggressive actions of both the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command (IJC) have contributed greatly – NTM-A on the front end with initial recruit training and capacity building, and IJC through partnering and mentoring efforts in the field. Where there is robust partnering, there is noticeable improvement in ANSF operational

capability. We have been particularly successful in conducting operations with Afghan Special Operations Forces, where both U.S. and Afghan Special Forces have shown equal desire to participate jointly in all operations. We continue to develop Afghan Special Operations capacity to realize 100% partnered operations – and we are close. Overall, ISAF remains committed to partnering as a complement to NTM-A's superb efforts in building the force.

The ANSF routinely exceeds established goals for growth as a result of recruiting successes and increased retention, and is close to meeting the Fiscal Year 2011 manning requirement of 305,600 personnel. In July, the ANP exceeded both their monthly and their Fiscal Year 2011 recruiting goals. That said, July was the second time in 12 months that the ANA did not meet their recruiting goals, reaching 95% of their target. These shortfalls were due primarily to the application of more stringent selection criteria applied to ANA recruits. Approximately 1,600 recruits were turned away because of improved recruit vetting procedures. We see this as a net-positive since improved vetting of the recruit base helps improve the quality of fielded Afghan soldiers and police, and helps safeguard U.S. and coalition forces and their ANSF counterparts by reducing the insider threat.

The ANSF's training capacity also continues to grow. The ANSF is in the process of assuming greater responsibility for the training of its own forces. The ANSF's "Teach the Instructor" courses have resulted in an increase of more than 2,200 instructors in the ANA alone, while the ANP has increased by more than 900 instructors. This is significant, as Afghan instructors and Afghan-led training provides the ANSF with a long-term capacity to enhance and professionalize its forces.

Quality vs. Quantity – The Shift

Quantity alone, however, is insufficient for any appreciable level of near- or long-term success and stability in Afghanistan. Fielding of the Afghan National Army's programmed infantry Kandaks is near completion. Recruitment and retention efforts will need to continue so as to maintain the size of the force, but completion of the infantry Kandaks will allow ISAF and the ANSF to transition their focus from *force generation to force professionalization and effectiveness*. Ultimately, force professionalism will produce a more effective and credible ANSF – which in turn will lead to better security for the Afghan people and enhanced legitimacy for the Afghan government and its security forces in the eyes of Afghans everywhere.

Improving ANSF leadership and enabler capacity is also critical to the overall improvement of the force. Improvements in leadership and enabler units will help the ANSF deal with the issue of attrition that, like literacy, remains a challenge for ANSF development. The ANSF continue to expand the quality of their Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer corps. The ANSF's branch schools have also recently begun building a cadre of officers, NCOs, and soldiers focusing on engineering, signals, logistics, and other specialized skills. This has allowed the ANSF and ISAF to focus on building sustainment and enabler capacity that will better posture the ANSF as it assumes the lead, over time, for security across Afghanistan.

We have seen evidence of the more effective and credible ANSF we seek. The ANSF responded very effectively to the 31 July attack at the police headquarters in Lashkar Gah shortly after the area was turned over to Afghan lead as part of the first tranche of transition areas. Similarly, during the 19 August attack on a British diplomatic compound in Kabul that lasted over six

hours, the Afghan National Police responded immediately with reinforcements provided by British forces and New Zealand SAS. Most recently, the ANSF response to the attack on NATO Headquarters and the American Embassy in Kabul on 13 September effectively contained and dealt with the security threat. While all aspects of ANSF responses to situations like these were not perfect, there was evidence of Afghan bravery, skill, and tactical effectiveness. General Allen and his team continue to do routine after-the-fact assessments of these events and others like them in order to highlight ANSF performance and, most importantly, target and then correct deficiencies.

Afghan Institutions as Enablers for Sustained Success

Ambassador Crocker highlighted clearly the importance of Afghan institutions at his swearing in on 25 July, and his comments are applicable to today's discussion. A stronger, more capable ANSF will not impact the security and stability of Afghanistan in a lasting and meaningful way without equally capable and supportive institutions at the Afghan ministerial level. To that end, significant efforts, to include mentoring and advising efforts, are being made to address this. In May 2009, all assessed departments within the Ministry of Defense (MOD), except for two, were rated as "requiring *significant* coalition assistance to accomplish their missions." Fast forward to July 2011: under Defense Minister Wardak's leadership, nineteen departments within the MOD and the General Staff (out of 46 total assessed departments) achieved a rating of "can accomplish its mission with some coalition assistance," eight had achieved a rating of "capable of executing with minimal coalition assistance," and one had been recommended for a CM-IB rating in the Capability Milestone Rating System - meaning the assessed department is "capable of executing functions with coalition oversight only." The Ministry of Interior (MOI) also continues its

institutional growth and development, with three departments projected to reach the CM-1 rating and another fifteen projected to reach a rating of “can accomplish its mission with some coalition assistance” by the end of the 2011. In this regard, MoI leadership has been impressive, and the specific leadership of Minister Mohammadi has been instrumental. We will continue to focus on strengthening ministerial capacity as an absolutely necessary complement to our efforts to sustain the growth of the ANSF well into the future.

Transition

Mr. Chairman, this entire effort to build a professional and sustainable ANSF is tied to enabling Afghan forces to assume primary responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Progress in the realm of transition - a conditions-based process that factors in assessments of the security situation, the capacity and effectiveness of the ANSF, the capacity of the government at national and provincial levels, and, ultimately the preferences of the Afghan Government – can already be seen on the ground in Afghanistan. ISAF and the Afghan Government have made tangible progress in arresting the insurgency’s momentum and reversing it in key areas such as Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. This was recently demonstrated by the 20 July transition ceremony conducted in the capital city of Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. This was one of several transition ceremonies conducted in various parts of Afghanistan during the month of July and sends a powerful signal to the insurgency that the Afghan Government and the ANSF are together becoming increasingly capable in bringing security and stability to the most restive parts of Afghanistan. Progress continues: the second tranche of transition locations is expected to be announced by President Karzai by the end of this month.

Challenges Remain

Despite the successes outlined here, real challenges remain that will require the full measure of our attention. Our professionals in Afghanistan label Afghan leader development as the biggest challenge facing the ANSF. Currently, according to July numbers, Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) staffing lags, with less than 46,000 of the nearly 56,000 Afghan National Army NCO positions on-hand as of July. Similarly, ANA officer staffing lags, although not as significantly. These are not insignificant statistics, as growing professional and competent leaders is vital to stemming attrition of the force, contributing to development of oversight institutions, and forging a mentality of Afghan stewardship necessary for continued growth.

Attrition, the unanticipated loss of an officer, NCO, or soldier, also remains a problem, as Afghan soldiers and police are dropped from the rolls, depart to tend to family matters, die in combat, fight for extended periods in high risk areas, and react to pay and leave policies. The Afghan National Army attrition, at 2.2% in July of this year, exceeded the ANSF attrition goal of 1.4%. Although current attrition rates will not impede attaining growth goals in the near term, attrition could pose a problem for sustaining and professionalizing the force in the longer term.

Literacy, as an essential enabler to the professionalization of the Afghan National Security Forces, also remains a significant challenge considering 28% of the Afghan population is literate and 86% of new ANSF recruits are illiterate. Concerted focus has produced progress and trends appear positive. Of note, literacy training is mandatory in every initial training course, and additional literacy training is also provided in all professional development courses. In concert with our efforts, Afghan instructors are also teaching Afghan students. Literacy rates continue to

increase in both the Afghan Army and police, as almost 120,000 students have graduated from first-, second-, and third-grade literacy programs through August of this year.

In closing, I want to thank the committee for your continued support for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces. Our support for Afghanistan and the ANSF – to include significant support from the international community – must continue if we wish to posture Afghanistan to defeat internal threats. The ANSF remains the linchpin of our strategy – and a successful and lasting outcome depends on ANSF growth and success. The resources that you have made available – and continue to make available – for this key component of the overall effort remain critical to achieving our ends. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement today. I look forward to answering your questions.



Lieutenant General Robert B. Neller **Director for Operations, J3, Joint Staff**

Lieutenant General Neller was promoted to his present rank and assumed the duties of the Director for Operations, J3, Joint Staff on 11 January 2011. A native of Camp Polk, Louisiana, he graduated from the University of Virginia and was commissioned via the Platoon Leaders Class program in May 1975.

Lieutenant General Neller's assignments in the operating forces include: Rifle and Weapons Platoon Leader and Company Commander with Company L, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, 3d Marine Division, Commanding Officer, Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion and 6th Marine Regiment. While with 3d LAI he participated in Operation "Restore Hope" in Somalia. Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Security Force Company, Panama, where he participated in Operations "Just Cause" and "Promote Liberty". Additionally, he served as Executive Officer, 7th Marine Regiment, G-3, II Marine Expeditionary Force and G-3, 2nd Marine Division.



Other assignments include recruit series officer, aide-de-camp and as Director of Special Training Division MCRD San Diego, CA. Lieutenant General Neller served as Student Company Executive Officer and Tactics Instructor at The Basic School, Quantico, VA, and in Special Projects Directorate HQMC. Additionally, he served as a Staff Officer in the Policy Division of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Casteau, Belgium.

As a general officer, he has served as the Assistant Division Commander of 2d Marine Division; the Director, Operations Division, Plans, Policies (PP&O) HQMC; as the Deputy Commanding General (Operations), I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) during OIF 05-07, and as the Assistant Division Commander for 1st Marine Division. Lieutenant General Neller commanded 3rd Marine Division and most recently served as President, Marine Corps University.

Lieutenant General Neller is a graduate of The Basic School, Advanced Armor Officer Course, Marine Command and Staff College, NATO Defense College, and the Armed Forces Staff College. He holds a BA in History and Speech Communication from the University of Virginia and a MA in Human Resource Management from Pepperdine University.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

Statement for the Record
Submitted by Congressman McKeon (CA-25) on behalf of Dante and Carolyn Acosta
Hearing on Afghan National Security Forces

Wednesday, September 22, 2011

Six months ago, on March 19th our eldest child, Specialist Rudy A. Acosta, was killed while on duty as a Medic with the U.S. Army at FOB Frontenac, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. This was made all the more tragic by the fact that he was killed by a local Afghan guard employed by a contractor identified as Tundra Security hired by the U.S. military to provide base security.

It has been brought to light that this was but one in a series of many such incidents involving local Afghan guards killing or injuring our troops that they were hired to protect.

We as a family and the entire community that Rudy hails from are outraged that this policy is still being allowed to continue even after many incidents that have cost our nation so many young, promising lives.

In Rudy's incident alone there were two KIA; Rudy and Cpl Donald Mickler from Bucyrus, Ohio as well as four WIA. Wounded in the same incident were Sgt. Christopher J. Hemwall from Monroe, Mich.; Sgt. Zack Hombel from Deer Park, Wash.; Sgt. Patrick W. Shelley from Marana, Ariz.; and Spc. Curtis L. Cole from Kingsport, Tenn.

As published in *Stars and Stripes*, their review of media reports reveals at least 14 incidents since March 2009 in which Afghan security forces turned their weapons on coalition personnel, killing 38 American, British, Spanish, German, and Italian soldiers and personnel. *Nine* U.S. soldiers were killed by rogue Afghan security force members, whether uniformed or private security contractors, in just the two months prior to this incident, according to the Department of Defense. This is an outrage - steps should have been taken immediately to prevent these deaths.

It is difficult to understand or accept a policy that has anyone other than U.S. troops guarding our bases. This nation spends billions of tax dollars each year on our military. It appears that we are penny-pinching on such a basic function of our military as protecting their own. Our troops deserve better.

Too many soldiers have died at the hands of those that were supposed to protect them. As a nation we have let these men down in the worst way imaginable. When they are on post they should be able to feel some element of safety while they shower, eat, re-supply or have some down time.

As the parents of Specialist Rudy A. Acosta, we formally request that the Department of Defense investigate the use of private security contractors to protect U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. We appreciate the Department's thorough examination into this matter and look forward to their conclusions.

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. WEST

General NELLER. Overall, the Afghan National Army (ANA) continues its institutional and operational development, with some progress made towards greater professionalization of the force and development of critical enablers. Currently, there are seven Corps headquarters fielded as of September 2011. The ANA achieved a net growth of over 1,700 personnel during September 2011 and is on track to achieve its November 2012 growth goal of 195,000 personnel.

As of 1 October 2011, the 201st ANA Corps currently has fielded just over 14,000 of its authorized strength of 16,194. The 201st Corps continues to make operational progress. The Corps, and its subordinate elements, operate in many of the most dangerous geographic areas in Afghanistan. The Corps is healthy with respect to fielded weapons; its health with respect to communications equipment continues to improve. Overall, the 201st ANA Corps is rated as “effective with assistance,” placing them in the top three ratings for ANSF units.

Commando units, formerly under ANA Corps control, have now been consolidated underneath the Afghan Special Operations Command. The 1st Commando Brigade is the only currently fielded Commando Brigade in Afghanistan, and it is the proponent for all Commando programs, policies, procedures, and training within the Ministry of Defense. The 1st Commando Brigade is a sub-command of the recently established Afghan Special Operations Command—it has (9) subordinate Commando *kandaks* stationed throughout Afghanistan. The mission of the 1st Commando Brigade is to conduct specialized light infantry operations in support of regional Corps counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, and the brigade provides a strategic response option for the Afghan government. Its specially organized, equipped, and trained soldiers provide the Ministry of Defense with the capability to rapidly deploy a credible military force to any region within Afghanistan. [See page 11.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. DAVIS

Secretary FLOURNOY. It would be most appreciated if you might convey the importance of the NATO–Afghanistan Enduring Partnership Declaration, noting that the U.S. and other NATO member nations are committed to a sovereign, independent, democratic, secure, and stable Afghanistan that will never again be a safe haven for terrorists. You could convey our commitment to continuing support for Afghanistan’s future.

You might also reinforce the message that—as members of Afghanistan’s Parliament—they provide oversight and crucial support to the Ministries of Defense and Interior. We expect the Ministries of Defense and Interior to rely increasingly on a budget that these Parliamentarians provide for them in future years.

Additionally, you could state that the Afghan Parliament will play an increasingly important role in generating revenue for the Afghan Government through the laws passed on taxation and laws that govern the business environment in Afghanistan. Clear and consistent laws will be important to encouraging private investment, which will bring more economic growth to Afghanistan over the long-term. [See page 18.]

General NELLER. Training for the care of wounded ANSF members has increased since 2005 and is continuing to increase. Improved care is being pursued simultaneously at several levels in the ANSF Health System (AHS) as ISAF continues engagement with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan works with the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI). In order to provide the best care for wounded warriors, both are working with the senior command structures in the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) to optimize command, control, and coordination between these ministries—each with interdependent health functions. The Surgeon Generals and Medical Commands of the ANA and ANP are being mentored and guided to enable them and their organizations to provide appropriate care to their wounded warriors.

The ANSF regional medical command teams, aided by ISAF mentors, are developing plans for evacuation and use of appropriate hospitals for casualty care (ANSF

or MoPH). As coalition force support draws down, the ANSF will be better prepared to provide medical services organically.

At the ANSF hospital and Troop Clinic level, the numbers and skills of doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals are being increased through a combination of mentoring and formal instruction programs. This includes specialist medical training for trauma care—both within and external to their systems. The management of hospitals, including quality management, is being developed through training and mentoring.

Geography currently dictates which facilities provide care. Currently, the ANSF operate the ANP and ANA National Hospitals in Kabul with four ANA Regional Hospitals in Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif and Gardez. An additional ANA hospital is planned for Gamberi/Jalalabad. In Lashkar-Gah, in Helmand Province, we are exploring innovative shared facilities between the ANA, the ANP, and potentially the MoPH and NGOs in the region. Several of the ANSF hospitals offer basic intensive care; this capability is being developed across the enterprise.

At the battlefield level, we are continuing to train combat medics and physician assistants in sufficient quantities to staff both company and battalion aid stations, ambulances, and troop medical clinics. At this level, Damage Control Resuscitation can be carried out prior to transfer to the nearest hospital for surgery—be it an ANSF or MoPH hospital. ANSF medics on the ground are already proving capable and have impressed their coalition partner units with their skills and dedication.

Presently, most ANSF evacuation from the field is performed by coalition MEDEVAC aircraft. As the capability and capacity for ground evacuation by ambulance and forward casualty care are developed, more evacuations will be performed by the ANSF. This proportion will be managed downwards in a planned and staged fashion. The percentage will be further decreased as the capabilities of the military hospitals continue to mature and MoPH hospitals are integrated into the evacuation system. We are taking ANSF injured directly to ANSF hospitals where feasible (approximately 25%). Those that start their treatment in Coalition Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs) are transferred to ANSF facilities as soon as possible. [See page 18.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. HANABUSA

Secretary FLOURNOY. Detailed planning for the long-term sustainment of the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) is an ongoing, active effort. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan is collaborating with NATO to analyze the long-term requirements for ANSF capability in light of current fiscal constraints. We are looking, for example, at how to reduce the remaining development costs and long-run sustainment costs. We are evaluating changes to the force size and shape that might be possible in a post-counterinsurgency environment, as well as ensuring that we are avoiding redundancies and building only to the standards required in Afghanistan. Due to these cost saving efforts, there will be a \$1.6 billion reduction in the Fiscal Year 2012 budget request for funding to develop the ANSF. This will mean that Fiscal Year 2011 ANSF spending of \$11.7 billion will be the high point of the U.S. spending effort on the ANSF. Future years' costs will decline further as the mission shifts from force development to sustainment.

It is important to be clear, however, that we envision an ongoing role for the United States and expect continued contributions from international donors. To that end, before retiring, then-Secretary of Defense Gates challenged our partners in the International Security Assistance Force to contribute a combined 1 billion euros annually to the NATO Afghan National Army Trust Fund.

Although international support for the ANSF will likely be required for some time to come, ultimately, Afghanistan must continue to increase its funding for its own security. This will depend on continued economic growth and governance in Afghanistan, which, in turn, will benefit from the security that a properly sustained ANSF can provide, as well as from the stabilizing effects that can result from a strategic partnership between Afghanistan and the United States and the continued presence of U.S. forces. [See page 17.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MCKEON

Mr. MCKEON. Why do we trust non-Americans to guard our troops in a war zone?

Secretary FLOURNOY. In some situations, we must rely on Afghans and third-party nationals as part of the overall scheme for force protection. These private security contractors add to our organic force protection capabilities and can provide important additional operational benefits to the U.S. Government through extensive local experience and unique skills that the U.S. security workforce sometimes lacks. Such experience and skills include critical knowledge of the terrain and culture, the development of vital contacts with the local population, and the ability to converse in the local languages. Thus, the use of contracted security personnel to assist with the installation access control and guard services is consistent with operational objectives of maintaining security while building trust and respect with the local population and our allies and partners.

Leveraging on private security contractors for services in which they specialize limits the requirement to divert our deployed forces from combat and other mission essential tasks. Absent these contractors, we would need to dramatically increase the size of the military forces we would deploy in theater.

All private security contractors are vetted and trained according to guidance and procedures developed by the Geographic Combatant Commander consistent with Defense Department Instructions and Federal statute.

Mr. MCKEON. What are the other options to having private security contractors, like Tundra Security, assigned to protecting our troops in wartime and in foreign lands?

Secretary FLOURNOY. In most overseas locations, our armed forces use contract security to provide access control at our military bases. This outer layer of protection is in addition to interior layers our forces provide for themselves. Contracting for these services in which the private contractors specialize, leaves more of our deployed forces available to carry out other mission essential tasks. Options other than contracted security to provide access control to the bases include increasing the deployed U.S. force strength and relying on host nation government security forces.

The first option, increasing U.S. force strength, would incur additional costs beyond the number of military personnel performing guard functions. This option would increase housing and life support costs, affect readiness in the non-deployed force, and put additional strain on our reserve component forces.

The second option, relying on host nation security forces, is not a practical option in most contingency areas. In these situations, U.S. military presence is required because of a breakdown or lack of government capacity, including with regard to police and military forces. Until conditions have improved enough that the host nation can build up its police and military beyond the levels necessary to secure its own civilian population, diverting host nation government forces to protect U.S. bases is not realistic.

In Afghanistan, the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), under supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, is under development as a fee-for-service organization, and is being expanded to replace functions currently provided by private security companies (PSCs), which were banned by the President of Afghanistan. There is a bridging strategy for transition from PSCs to APPF that was effective as of March 22, 2011 and terminates March 22, 2012. ISAF bases and construction sites have an additional year to transition from reliance on PSCs to reliance on the APPF.

Mr. MCKEON. Who is directly responsible for approving the private security contracts and implementing this policy?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Geographic Combatant Commanders provide tailored Private Security Contractor (PSC) guidance and procedures for the selection, training, accountability, and equipping of such PSC personnel and the conduct of PSCs and PSC personnel within their area of responsibility. The Geographic Combatant Commander is the sole authority who can approve the use of contracted security to guard U.S. or coalition military supply routes, military facilities, military personnel, or military property during contingency operations where major combat operations are ongoing or imminent.

Within a geographic Combatant Command, sub-unified commanders (or Joint Forces Commanders) are responsible for developing and issuing implementing procedures. In Afghanistan, this would be the Commander, U.S. Forces—Afghanistan.

Mr. MCKEON. Is DOD aware of any ties between Tundra Security and any U.S. government or foreign governments?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Other than U.S. Central Command's contracts with Tundra Security, DOD does not know of other contracts or ties between Tundra Security and the U.S. Government or foreign governments.

Mr. MCKEON. What criteria must be met by a contractor to be awarded a private security contract such as this?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Contractors must submit a proposal that describes their capability to meet the criteria described in the request for proposal (RFP) and how they intend to fulfill those requirements. The RFP includes elements that are specific to the particular contract, but also includes elements common to all contracts for security functions as described in Part 159 of Chapter 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations and DOD Instruction 3020.50, "Private Security Contractors (PSCs) Operating in Contingency Operations, Combat Operations or Other Significant Military Operations." These elements include, but are not limited to, matters such as background vetting and screening of personnel, training programs—including weapons training programs, weapons qualification, weapons procurement and storage—and appropriate licenses and certifications, and other requirements of local law. The proposal, or bid, must also indicate that the contractor can begin operations at the required start.

Mr. MCKEON. Now or in the past have former employees of Tundra Security ever worked for any agency of the U.S. Government?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Other than U.S. Central Command's contracts with Tundra Security, DOD does not have information regarding whether former employees of Tundra Security currently work for, or have ever worked in the past for, other U.S. Government departments or agencies.

Mr. MCKEON. Why are these guards (private security contractors) allowed on base with loaded weapons? Is there threat to them or the convoys they escort on the base?

Secretary FLOURNOY. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics has primary oversight of this issue. Department of Defense regulations require each contractor employee to have individual arming authorization approval by Commander, U.S. Forces—Afghanistan, through the Armed Contractor Oversight Directorate. Static security guards are armed for their own self-defense and the defense of others against a lethal threat posed to themselves, others in their vicinity, and—as a last resort—to stop unauthorized access to the installation that would threaten the lives of our service men and women. Convoy security is required to be armed from the point where the convoy is formed until the point where the convoy has arrived at its final destination. This is to provide seamless security to the convoy and its personnel and to avoid a vulnerability gap as the convoy begins or ends its journey. Weapons are loaded and unloaded at designated positions immediately before leaving the secured perimeter and again after re-entering a secured perimeter.

Mr. MCKEON. What kind of supervision are these guards under?

Secretary FLOURNOY. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics has primary oversight of this issue. Individual guards are under the routine supervision of the contractor's management staff. These include guard team supervisors, shift supervisors, and site managers. These supervisors are required to be sufficiently fluent in speaking, reading, and writing English. Site managers cannot be local nationals; they must be citizens of the United States, Australia, a NATO Member State, or an approved third country. The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) is responsible for technical administration of the project to ensure proper government oversight of the contractor's performance. The COR is required to evaluate contractor performance according to the standards set forth in that contract. The Installation Commander and COR have the authority to relieve and/or permanently remove contractor personnel for any acts that put at risk the life, safety, or health of installation tenants.

Mr. MCKEON. How are the guards trained and who trains them?

Secretary FLOURNOY. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics has primary oversight of this issue. The contractor is responsible for providing and documenting all necessary training for the guards, as specified in the terms of the contract and according to a training program approved by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). The COR is required to evaluate that the required training has been performed to standard and is properly documented. Training must address the following tasks, at a minimum:

1. Security Common Tasks
2. International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (November 9, 2010)—Specific Principles Regarding the Conduct of Personnel
3. Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC)
4. Rules for the Use of Force (RUF)
5. Distinction among Rules of Engagement (ROE), LOAC and RUF
6. Host Nation Laws and Regulations
7. Ministry of Interior Instructions for Armed Security Guards
8. Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (August 12, 1949)
9. Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIPS)
10. Local Customs and Courtesies
11. Civil and Criminal Liability under U.S. and Afghan Law
12. Standards of Conduct
13. Installation Policies/Rules
14. Compound (Base) Defense Plan
15. Combat First Aid
16. Health, Safety, and Hazardous Materials associated with Armed Security Guard duties and military installations
17. Weapon Familiarization, Safety, and Qualification (Training must be completed to an existing U.S. military service standard)

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. OWENS

Mr. OWENS. General Neller, you indicated in your testimony that the ANSF and the ANP both need to have improved close air support to fully function. I would appreciate it if you could describe the length of time that it would take to develop a close air support capability and what the anticipated cost would be to accomplish this goal. Additionally, I would like to know if this cost has been built into existing funding mechanism.

General NELLER. The fielding of the Afghan Air Force is projected to be at 50% fill for equipment and personnel in November 2011. The AAF is scheduled for completion in 2016. The current estimate for long-term sustainment costs of the AAF is approximately \$295 million. ISAF and NTM-A are currently re-evaluating all cost drivers for long-term ANSF sustainment in order to reduce costs. Projected costs will be adjusted as ISAF identifies cost savings and operational efficiencies.

Specifically, a fixed-wing Close Air Support (CAS) platform, the Fixed-Wing Light Support Aircraft (LAS), is scheduled for acquisition beginning in 2013. The LAS program has a projected award of November 2011. The \$366M cost of the LAS program has been built into the existing funding mechanism. Initial operational capability is planned for October 2013, with final delivery scheduled for February 2015.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. FRANKS

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you for your testimony and being here today. In today's *Wall Street Journal*, there's an editorial about the recent assassination of Rabbani. This assassination came just days after the U.S. Embassy was attacked by the Taliban, and is mounting evidence that the Taliban are able to attack even heavily guarded areas in Kabul. Quoting the article, the author states, "As Tuesday's killing shows, the Taliban doesn't want to reconcile. It wants to murder and maim its way to victory." To support this statement, the author quotes former Afghani presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah and Coalition commander General Allen, respectively, "This is a lesson for all of us that we shouldn't fool ourselves that this group, who has carried out so many crimes against the people of Afghanistan, are willing to make peace," and "Regardless of what the Taliban leadership outside the country say," he noted, "they do not want peace, but rather war."

A. Are the Afghan forces capable of autonomously succeeding against this enemy?

B. If not, in your assessment, will they ever be capable?

C. And given these statements quoted above, do you think it is prudent that we continue on the same timeframe for withdrawal of our troops? Or do these circumstances warrant a reassessment of the situation?

Secretary FLOURNOY. A and B. Since November 2009, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) has made tremendous progress with its Afghan partners in developing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The sum result of its efforts—which include consolidated training, and an intense focus on literacy, leadership, and operational performance—is that the ANSF has been successful in taking the lead responsibility for security in areas of the country that have entered transition. The ANSF has already demonstrated its growing capability in areas where we have transitioned to Afghan security lead. Despite the Taliban’s stated intent to disrupt security in transitioned provinces, the ANSF has consistently performed well and has been fully responsible for defeating Taliban efforts to reverse the transition in areas like Lashkar Gah, for example, where violence in August 2011 was 60 percent lower than in August 2010. By the end of 2014, this increasingly-capable ANSF will have the lead security responsibility throughout the country.

Coalition partners will continue to provide “high-end” combat enabler support, such as close air support, medevac capabilities, and intelligence to support ANSF operations in the near-term. As the ANSF—with NTM-A support—builds its own enabler capacity, requirements for coalition support will decline, and Coalition forces will be able to shift to an over-watch role.

C. Undeniable progress in many key areas—both operationally and in the development and professionalization of the ANSF—gives us confidence that the timeframe for completing the withdrawal of our surge forces by the end of summer 2012 and the transfer of lead security responsibility to the Government of Afghanistan by the end of 2014 is achievable.

The Department of Defense continually reassesses the situation in Afghanistan, and would make a recommendation to the President should the situation change and threaten our overall success. However, the strategy is working. Insurgent attack figures have been lower in the past two months than they were during the same time period last year. ISAF has assessed that the Taliban’s “inner shura” has admitted that their summer campaign to take back Kandahar and Helmand failed. The Taliban’s use of assassinations and high profile attacks, while concerning, is designed to capture public attention, following the failure of their broader operational campaign. Additionally, the enduring partnership between NATO and Afghanistan, and the strategic partnership the United States and Afghanistan are negotiating mean that Afghanistan will not be abandoned and time is not on the insurgents’ side.

Ultimately, we see the conflict having a political solution, and we will continue to support the Afghan-led reconciliation efforts that remain part of that process, despite the recent assassinations that show how difficult it may be. At the same time, progress on the military strategy is not predicated on reconciliation, and we will also continue to degrade the insurgency to levels the increasingly capable ANSF can handle, while reintegrating lower-level fighters who want to return to Afghan society and are prepared to sever ties to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, renounce violence, and support the Afghan constitution.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you for your testimony and being here today. In today’s *Wall Street Journal*, there’s an editorial about the recent assassination of Rabbani. This assassination came just days after the U.S. Embassy was attacked by the Taliban, and is mounting evidence that the Taliban are able to attack even heavily guarded areas in Kabul. Quoting the article, the author states, “As Tuesday’s killing shows, the Taliban doesn’t want to reconcile. It wants to murder and maim its way to victory.” To support this statement, the author quotes former Afghani presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah and Coalition commander General Allen, respectively, “This is a lesson for all of us that we shouldn’t fool ourselves that this group, who has carried out so many crimes against the people of Afghanistan, are willing to make peace,” and “Regardless of what the Taliban leadership outside the country say,” he noted, “they do not want peace, but rather war.”

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C. And given these statements quoted above, do you think it is prudent that we continue on the same timeframe for withdrawal of our troops? Or do these circumstances warrant a reassessment of the situation?

General NELLER. The concerted focus of the ISAF campaign remains to reduce the level of the insurgency while simultaneously increasing the operational effectiveness and capacity of the ANSF. As transition of geographic areas to Afghan control continues, the Afghan security forces will continue to demonstrate their capability to address these threats. In the future, existing ANSF capability will be bolstered by support from U.S. and coalition partners in the form of mentorship, advising, assisting, and the provision of various battlefield enabling capabilities.

Growth in the operational capacity and professionalization of the ANSF remains vital to campaign success. This growth is being realized now. The ANSF is being properly trained and equipped and is developing the leaders and the people with the right vocational skills and the institutions and systems to make the ANSF an enduring force. This growth in ANSF capacity will mitigate the risks associated with the drawdown of U.S. forces into 2012 and beyond.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCHILLING

Mr. SCHILLING. Looking to the future U.S. presence in Afghanistan, there are concerns about how its government will move forward both with security capabilities and financial sustainability with a proposed decrease in U.S. presence and support. How much are the incoming diplomats getting out and actually achieving the types of connections that the DOD has done in the past so that the proposed changes in operations goes smoothly and trust from the Afghani locals is maintained?

Secretary FLOURNOY. While I defer to the Department of State for the details, I will say that incoming diplomats and other U.S. Government civilian officials are getting out, achieving connections and building trust with the Afghan people—especially in the areas of governance and development. And, the Department of Defense is working closely with these civilians to help facilitate their work, which is centered around the mission to enable the Afghan Government and the Afghan people to: counter the insurgency and prevent the use of Afghan territory by international terrorists, build a state that is accountable and responsive to its people, and establish a foundation for longer-term development.

Mr. SCHILLING. Can the attrition rate of Afghan forces be better addressed by focusing in increasing literacy rates, or is the culture more of a stumbling block?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Continuous combat operations, repeated assignments that are far from home, and leadership shortcomings in the fielded force are among the principal contributors to attrition in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

Monthly attrition in the Afghan National Army (ANA) has averaged 2.3 percent since November 2009, as compared with our objective of 1.4 percent. Over the past twelve months, ANA attrition has ranged as high as 3.2 percent and as low as 1.9 percent. In the Afghan National Police (ANP), the average monthly attrition since November 2009 has been on target at 1.4 percent, and for the past twelve months has ranged from a high of 1.9 percent to a low of 1.0 percent. (It should be noted, however, that actual attrition is less than what those figures reflect, as many ANSF personnel who were taken off the rolls earlier end up returning to their units.)

The Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior—in partnership with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)—are working to address the attrition challenge.

For example, with a DOD combined assessment showing that 98 percent of attrition in combat units is a function of poor leadership, the Ministries, coalition, and Afghan forces are working to identify and replace poor leaders. Additionally, the coalition and Afghan Government have made ANSF leader development a top priority. To that end, the Afghan Government recently reached an agreement with the United Kingdom (U.K.) to develop a one-year officer candidate school—modeled after the U.K. Sandhurst Academy—to train 1,200 high-quality officers beginning in 2013. In the Afghan police force, nearly 3,000 police OCS candidates began training—to include leadership studies—in July at a number of sites, including the National Police Training Center-Wardak, the Regional Training Center-Mazar-e-Sharif, the ANP Academy, and a new, overseas police training center in Sivas, Turkey.

Also central to the leadership development effort has been the building of a cadre of Afghan trainers that help set a disciplined, professional example for fellow Afghans. The NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan teaches these ANSF personnel to be trainers and leaders, and then mentors them as they train new Afghan recruits—thereby creating a professional, Afghan-owned foundation for long-term ANSF development. Today, there are more than 3,200 Afghan trainers, and we plan to add 1,300 more by November 2012.

Additionally, we are working with the Afghans to implement a number of attrition-reducing programs, including providing “soldier-care” training for ANSF leaders, extending the leave policy from twenty to thirty days, placing Ministry pay mentors in the corps, and implementing a predictable rotation cycle for units.

Mr. SCHILLING. How much can the rest of the coalition forces take on in terms of the funding necessary to maintain Afghan safety and security as U.S. troops leave? Will the Coalition Countries be able to take on the same percentages or possibly more? What are we likely to see in terms of their financial support?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Our allies and partners have contributed a total of 334 million euros to the Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund since 2007. Countries other than the United States have also contributed nearly \$1.37 billion since 2002 to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which supports the Ministry of Interior. Although future annual operating costs for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will be less than what we are currently spending, Afghanistan will continue to rely, in part, on international assistance to sustain the ANSF for many years to come. In order to reduce the gap between ANSF sustainment needs and available resources required, former Secretary of Defense Gates challenged our allies to provide 1 billion euros annually to the ANA Trust Fund as part of the burden sharing and to help make the ANSF capable of sustaining security beyond transition. Secretary Panetta supports this initiative and looks forward to receiving firm commitments that can be announced at the NATO Summit in Chicago next May.

Mr. SCHILLING. What are the likely issues that will come up that State Department will need to mitigate as U.S. security forces leave?

Secretary FLOURNOY. As U.S. forces draw down, they will transfer lead responsibility for security to the ANSF through 2014. We expect some enduring U.S. military presence to remain in order to continue ANSF training/assisting and counterterrorism operations. The drawdown will be fully coordinated and implemented with the Department of State, which will continue its key civilian activities.

During this period, the U.S. and its coalition partners will be supporting the Afghan Government's 2014 presidential election and transition of political power. An election process and new president that are perceived as legitimate will be important to maintaining the Afghan population's support for the Afghan Government.

The State Department will also adjust the U.S. civilian footprint and mission, realigning the civilian presence in areas where civilians had been co-located with the military, and transitioning from stabilization-focused activities to a longer-term development approach.

Mr. SCHILLING. What is the state of Afghan intelligence capabilities at this point in time? Will they be able to continue without the amount of support that the U.S. provides?

Secretary FLOURNOY. The Department of Defense—in close cooperation with other U.S. Government agencies—continues to work with the ANSF and Afghan intelligence units to improve their intelligence capabilities. Based on this support and the lessons learned from our own intelligence community, the Afghan Government's capacity to conduct intelligence-related operations has improved considerably. These improvements—along with their steadily increasing military and counterinsurgency skills—will allow them to increasingly take the lead for security within their country. Nonetheless, intelligence is an area in which Afghans will likely continue to require U.S. support which we consider in our own interest to provide.

Mr. SCHILLING. Looking to the future U.S. presence in Afghanistan, there are concerns about how its government will move forward both with security capabilities and financial sustainability with a proposed decrease in U.S. presence and support.

- a. How much are the incoming diplomats getting out and actually achieving the types of connections that the DOD has done in the past so that the proposed changes in operations goes smoothly and trust from the Afghani locals is maintained?
- b. How much can the rest of the coalition forces take on in terms of the funding necessary to maintain Afghan safety and security as U.S. troops leave? Will the Coalition Countries be able to take on the same percentages or possibly more? What are we likely to see in terms of their financial support?
- c. What are the likely issues that will come up that State Department will need to mitigate as U.S. security forces leave?
- d. What is the state of Afghan intelligence capabilities at this point in time? Will they be able to continue without the amount of support that the U.S. provides?

General NELLER. The issue of continued funding contributions from coalition countries is an extremely important one and is being examined closely by ISAF and the interagency community. Future U.S. and coalition force contributions are not definitively known at this point. Within the context of the development of an Afghan economic strategy, however, there are robust efforts underway to analyze the impact of Transition to Afghanistan's economic development. As Transition unfolds in Afghanistan, diplomatic efforts continue, with the following goals:

- (1) encourage the Afghan government to develop a sustainable and achievable economic strategy;

- (2) clarify our long-term commitment to Afghanistan's economy, consistent with U.S. resource constraints;
- (3) secure donor support for continued investment in Afghanistan;
- (4) mitigate the economic impact of Transition on Afghanistan's economy;
- (5) reinforce a common message from the international community to Afghanistan and countries in the region to take policy actions to attract private sector investment and promote growth and trade.

Afghan intelligence capabilities continue to develop. The U.S. remains committed to continued support to the development of Afghan intelligence capabilities.

Mr. SCHILLING. Can the attrition rate of Afghan forces be better addressed by focusing in increasing literacy rates, or is the culture more of a stumbling block?

General NELLER. The primary factors influencing attrition rates in the ANSF are: (1) pay issues; (2) irregular leave; (3) prolonged periods in high-risk areas; and (4) poor leadership. ISAF and NTM-A are working with the ANSF to address these issues. The ANSF, with assistance from ISAF, is implementing an electronic pay system to ensure all members of the ANSF receive their pay and opportunities for corruption are reduced. The ANSF is in the process of implementing leave and mandatory rotation policies to allow soldiers time to visit their homes and limit time in high-risk areas.

The issue of leader development within the ANSF is being addressed by NTM-A; it remains the first priority of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A). Effective and professional leaders (officer and Non-Commissioned Officer) within the ANSF that are trained and educated with an ethos of service are deemed absolutely essential to overcoming all challenges, especially those posed by attrition.

