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**EXPERT ASSESSMENTS ON THE
AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES:
RESOURCES, STRATEGY, AND TIMETABLE
FOR SECURITY LEAD TRANSITION**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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EXPERT ASSESSMENTS ON THE AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES: RESOURCES, STRATEGY, AND TIMETABLE FOR SECURITY LEAD TRANSITION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
Washington, DC, Friday, June 29, 2012.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 11:03 a.m. in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Rob Wittman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROB WITTMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM VIRGINIA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. WITTMAN. I want to call to order the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. I want to welcome folks this morning.

And today our subcommittee convenes the second of a series of hearings related to the Afghan National Security Forces. And at this hearing we will receive testimony from outside experts about the resources and strategy which the U.S. and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] are devoting to training the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] and the timetable for transitioning security lead responsibility to the ANSF.

Our panel today includes Max Boot, the Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations—Mr. Boot, welcome; Retired General Jack Keane, former Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army; and Michael O'Hanlon, Director of Research and Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution.

General Keane, Dr. O'Hanlon, thank you so much for joining us today. We look forward to your testimony.

My views on these issues have been informed by a recent trip to Afghanistan. And during my visit I had several opportunities to talk with folks in provinces and met with local leaders, including the chiefs of police. I also had the opportunity to talk to our military commanders on the ground, who provided their impressions of the level of support that will be needed to create a self-sustaining ANSF. It is my hope that our witnesses today can provide us some further context to these important issues.

And before we move on, I want to take a moment to highlight the extraordinary efforts of our All-Volunteer Force serving in Afghanistan. These brave men and women are conducting daily combat operations against the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and associated terrorist networks. And earlier this month, I saw their sacrifice first-

hand, and want to convey my appreciation for their service here today, thank them and their families for the service and sacrifice they provide to our Nation.

As an administrative note, I recognize that members of other subcommittees have joined us: Mr. Thornberry, our Vice Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. Thornberry, thank you for joining us.

Pursuant to the committee rules, I will recognize these members after all O&I Subcommittee members have had an opportunity to question the witnesses.

And, with that, I will turn to Mr. Critz, our acting ranking member, for any opening statement he may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wittman can be found in the Appendix on page 25.]

STATEMENT OF HON. MARK S. CRITZ, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. CRITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I just want to say thanks, gentlemen, for coming in. As we move forward with the transition in Afghanistan, what we are trying to do is make sure we have as much information so that we can make the best decision for our country, for our men and women in uniform, and for Afghanistan, for the effort made there.

And I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Critz.

And we will begin with the testimony of the witnesses.

Mr. Boot.

STATEMENT OF MAX BOOT, JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK SENIOR FELLOW FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BOOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for convening these hearings.

Mr. WITTMAN. Is your microphone on?

Mr. BOOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for convening these hearings and casting such an important spotlight on these vital issues which I fear get short shrift in our political culture.

Since the focus of the hearings is the ANSF, let me just say very briefly that I think ANSF capabilities are increasing but we must not exaggerate what they can do. And they still need considerable support from American forces in terms of intelligence, medevac [medical evacuation], air, fire support, clearance packages, all sorts of other things, without which they would not be nearly as effective as they are. And they still have tremendous challenges in securing a country of 30 million people with a force that is only going to grow to about 350,000 in the course of this year.

Now, the Council on Foreign Relations issued this week a policy innovation memo in which I suggested seven concrete steps that we need to take to secure the gains that have been made by our troops—to whom you have rightly paid tribute—the gains secured by our troops, by our allies, and by Afghan troops over the course of the last couple years during the Afghan surge. I fear that if we don't do enough follow-up, the gains will be lost, and we will be

placing too much of a burden on the Afghan security forces to try to expand the tenuous security gains that have been made.

I realize our time is very limited, so let me just run down very briefly the seven steps that I think are important.

The first and the most important is not to reduce funding for the ANSF. This is something that causes me the greatest concern, the fact that currently the Administration plans to reduce funding from about \$6 billion a year down to \$4.1 billion a year after 2014, which will necessitate a reduction in the ranks of the ANSF by about 120,000 soldiers and police.

It is far from clear where these 120,000 could possibly find gainful and legal employment in Afghanistan's economy. Many would no doubt wind up working for drug lords or insurgents. This is perhaps the most calamitous step we could possibly take to destabilize the situation in Afghanistan. And I really do not see the necessity of doing so when all we would be saving is approximately \$2 billion a year, which I realize in the real world is a lot of money but around here is not a significant portion of the Federal budget.

In any case, we don't have to contribute the entire amount ourselves; we should certainly do more to try to get our allies to pay. But I think it is incumbent on us not to reduce and shortchange the ANSF, which could have calamitous consequences for Afghanistan's security.

The second most important recommendation that I would make is not to reduce our own force levels precipitously. By the end of September, we are going to have 68,000 troops in Afghanistan. And unless there is a substantial improvement in the situation on the ground between now and the end of 2014, I would recommend that we keep those force levels at about 68,000.

Because what the troops have been able to do in the last couple of years is to vastly improve the security situation in the south. We have not seen any such improvement in the east, where Haqqani sanctuaries remain intact only a few hours' drive from Kabul, as I am sure you heard, Mr. Chairman, during your visit. This is a very dangerous situation to leave behind which could potentially destabilize and, in fact, lead to the overthrow of the current government unless we do more to establish conditions of security, which will be difficult enough to do with even 68,000 troops and I fear impossible if we go substantially below that number.

We also need to make sure—and this is my third recommendation—we need to make sure that we don't precipitously cut our force levels after 2014. In some quarters of this town, there is some magical thinking going on, I fear, that leaving only a handful of special operators out there by themselves can secure all of our interests in Afghanistan, which is far from the case.

Even if we want to maintain the Joint Special Operations Command at their current or close to their current level of operations, it requires a vast infrastructure of forward operating bases, medevac, air support, all sorts of platforms to enable the men and women of the Special Operations Forces to be as effective as they are. And if we get force levels below, let's say, 30,000 after 2014, I fear we will not have the infrastructure in place to enable us to carry out even the minimal advisory and special operations missions that I think most of us agree need to be performed.

In terms of other recommendations, I will run through them very, very quickly.

I think we need to go slow on peace talks, not try to force the Karzai government into an ill-advised deal with the Taliban that would lead to a backlash from the Northern Alliance.

We need to identify and groom a successor to President Karzai, who is due to leave office in 2014.

We need to end U.S. subsidies for the Pakistani military, which is, in effect, subsidizing the other side.

And, finally, I believe we need to launch drone and/or special operations strikes on Haqqani and Afghan Taliban leadership targets within Pakistan. They cannot have impunity to operate within Afghanistan, as they currently have, if we expect to be at all successful in the long run in Afghanistan.

That concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Boot can be found in the Appendix on page 26.]

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Boot. We appreciate your testimony. Thank you for your viewpoints, and we look forward to questioning.

General Keane.

**STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN M. KEANE, USA (RET.), FORMER
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY**

General KEANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member and the other members of the committee, for inviting me to testify today. It is a pleasure always to be back in front of the House Armed Services Committee and also to talk about an important subject, the Afghan National Security Forces.

I am delighted to be up here with Michael O'Hanlon and Max Boot. I have known these guys for years, and I truly admire and thank them for their continued contribution to national security.

As you know from the submission to the record, I have done four assessments in Afghanistan in the last 18 months for our commanders, and the last one was for General Mattis and General Allen in January. And I spent a considerable amount of time with our forces down at the platoon and company level and the Afghan National Security Forces who are their counterparts.

And I will just say upfront that, you know, we have had much success in the security situation since we applied the surge forces, and particularly in the south, which was the priority of those surge forces. And we have begun, just begun, to turn the momentum in the east. The frustration there is we don't have the force generation, because of the pullout of our surge forces, that we had in the south and southwest, I think, to be able to achieve the same kind of end state.

Also, the other thing is, I believe the ANSF is a capable force, and it is beginning to stand up to the task of taking over from the United States and NATO forces. However, there are many challenges. You know 2014 is a major transition year for us, politically, economic, and also from a security perspective.

Just let me say that on the political and economic side there has been considerable less effort in a successful transition than there has been on the security side, from my perspective, even though

that was not the major part of my assessment in Afghanistan; it has always been security. But you cannot be immune to what is going on around the security situation.

I think there are four key decisions that are facing us in the next year, maybe a year and a half, that are going to be made that will dramatically influence the stability and security of Afghanistan, some of which Max has mentioned. And all four of them will impact dramatically on the ANSF success.

Key decision one is the post-surge U.S. forces. That is the 68,000 that Max mentioned. I totally agree that we cannot prematurely reduce that force. If we do, we drive the risk up far too much in terms of what we are trying to achieve in the east with the forces we have and the side-by-side operations that are so critical to the Afghans. When they are training side-by-side with us, what they get out of that in terms of their own performance and their own growth and development is exponential as opposed to just providing them advice, because they see what “right” looks like every single day from sergeants, soldiers, and officers.

Key decision number two is the funding for the ANSF. You know our plans are a force level of 352,000, which we are about at. We maintain that through 2015 at a cost of \$6 billion, largely provided by U.S. dollars. Discussions are taking place, as we know, right now with options on the table to reduce that to a force of 230,000 beginning in 2016.

Now, think about that. I mean, this makes no sense. How can we expect the ANSF to protect the people with one-third less force only a year after we almost zero out the U.S. NATO force of 100,000? And the issue is about \$2 billion a year. We spent over a decade investing in the training and equipping of the ANSF. By 2014, we will have the results of that investment: an ANSF capable of protecting its people. So why, after all these years of investing, would we gut that force and put the entire security mission at risk?

In terms of the timetable, the ANSF funding should remain through 2020, in my view, as part of our strategic partnership agreement. And, of course, as Afghans are able to pay an even greater share, then that should be expected. And we can reduce that force in size prior to 2020 based on the conditions, but let it be the conditions and not an arbitrary financial number. A 230,000 ANSF force beginning in 2016 would have a disastrous impact on the morale of that force and, I believe, in and of itself, almost certainly guarantees the return of Taliban domination.

The third key decision is the residual U.S. NATO force post-2014. This force should be sized for the missions that are vital to continued success; it should not be an arbitrary number. Those missions are counterterrorism, training assistance, security—those are forces to protect the force itself, which will be largely defensive—and then you need the enablers. The enablers are needed for all three of the forces. For counterterrorism, we need enablers. For training assistance, we do. And we also need enablers for the international community residual forces and the ANSF.

Now, what are some of the things that the ANSF truly needs? Well, first of all, it is primarily Army. And when you look at the Army that is on the battlefield today, it is largely a maneuver force. So it needs major functional support for sometime beyond

2014. What am I talking about? Intelligence, artillery, aviation, engineers, and logistics, to include medical evacuation.

The intelligence function is almost exclusively human intelligence. They are good at it, but they have no technology—no UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], no sensors, no listening devices to monitor cell phone communication and radios. And their aviation fleet, some of which is there, is mostly Russian-made and Italian-made C-27s. Every one of those C-27 aircraft has been broke, on the tarmac, for months. At some point, not initially, but at some point, we should transition them out of those aircraft to U.S. helicopters and C-130s as part of a long-term partnership with the Afghans, some of which, in time, they will be able to pay for themselves.

The other thing is that the ANSF has no route- and mine-clearing equipment, none. And this should be part of an anti-IED [improvised explosive device] package that is provided. If we shut down our intel systems, don't have anti-IED for them, and they are left out there by themselves, their casualty rate will spike rather dramatically.

The last decision is the Afghan Taliban sanctuaries. You know we have one at Miram Shah and one also in Quetta.

And the way you should think about this, think of these sanctuaries as loosely knitted military bases with the following functions resident in both: command and control; intelligence; training; logistics, to include family housing and barracks. At these bases, leaders set the strategy in Afghanistan, brief middle-level leaders to return from the fight to Afghanistan, plan for future operations, provide intelligence to field commanders, train and refit fighters and bombers, and provide resources and logistics.

Furthermore, the Pakistan Army, particularly the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], provides intelligence on U.S. NATO operations in those sanctuaries to those commanders. They provide training and logistics. And as a result, the Taliban have managed to protract a war for over 8 years, which has eroded the political and moral will of the American people and our NATO partners.

Something must be done about these sanctuaries if we intend to succeed beyond 2014. We should start building the target folders now, which would become a major collection item for our intelligence services, which it is not. And then we should start conducting drone attacks against those leaders in the same way we have had success against the Al Qaeda leaders in the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas].

What would be the result? Well, look at what has happened to the Al Qaeda after systematic attacks on leadership. They became largely a defensive organization in Pakistan, no longer able to control their operations or project power outside of it. That would be an absolute game changer in Afghanistan, if we started to systematically change the behavior of the Taliban leadership both at Quetta and Haqqani leadership also at Miram Shah.

Let me conclude by saying that these four decisions that are in front of us are going to determine whether we are going to be successful in Afghanistan or not. We are on the cusp of ending our participation in our longest war. Never before in our Nation have so few served for so long on behalf of so many.

And war is fundamentally a test of wills, and that is why leadership is always at a premium. This effort has enjoyed your support, and it begs for your continued leadership and support as we begin to write the final chapters.

You know, Ryan Crocker, who you all know well, our distinguished and capable Ambassador in Afghanistan and former Ambassador in Iraq and Pakistan, has said, "How we leave a war and what we leave behind is far more important than how we began it."

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Keane can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, General Keane.

Dr. O'Hanlon.

STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL O'HANLON, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, SENIOR FELLOW, THE SYDNEY STEIN, JR. CHAIR OF THE FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAM, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you and the General and Max have framed the discussion beautifully, so I am just going to pick up on one or two points and be brief.

First of all, I would like to underscore my concern, as well, about the projected intention to downsize the Afghan security forces quickly after 2014 or 2015. And I agree, by the way, with the argument that we have to be careful about our own forces. But I am especially concerned about what we are saying now about the potential downsizing of the Afghan forces.

And I just want to give a quick anecdote based on my trips to Afghanistan of how this concept of downsizing rapidly began and, I think, how it has been misconstrued in the ensuing discussion. As I understood things from discussions at the U.S. part of the training command, the United States initiated a discussion about what long-term Afghan forces might have to be, in terms of their size and capability and cost, and did not work through NATO or with the Afghans, just tried to get some notional concepts on the table, one of which was this famous option to go to 230,000 Afghan forces or, in a suspiciously precise formulation, 228,500 Afghan Army and police.

That was one of four scenarios based on a certain assumed threat environment, a relatively favorable one, because, of course, 228,500 is a lot less than we have now. Right now we have about 130,000 NATO troops and about 300,000 Afghan forces in the field, plus another 40,000 or so that are training. So right now we have more than 400,000 combined forces. We are intending to go down, perhaps, to 230,000.

Again, this was one of four scenarios, which the United States did not intend to be a prediction of where we should go, but the idea was to give some concreteness to the planning exercise and also give our diplomats in the State Department, who I think have done a very good job with a difficult portfolio, something to plan for with NATO allies; going to our allies and saying, can you at least consider this to be a minimal requirement, and therefore try

to pony up some fraction of the cost even for this minimal requirement.

But, unfortunately, what was designed as an illustrative scenario and a way to go out and elicit some help from allies has become the default plan. And I don't quite know when or how that happened, but I think it is a bad idea. I think we should assume the Afghan forces need to stay at 350,000 for some number of years after 2015 until proven otherwise.

And Max's point is right on the money, that the \$2 billion, plus or minus, that is at issue here, while it is real money, is nothing compared to the \$100 billion a year we are spending now on our own operations in the field. And if we even had to add 2,000 more American troops post-2014 to compensate for an insufficiently sized Afghan force, that would consume all the savings right there because of the enormous expense of our forces in the field.

So I just wanted to add my voice—

Mr. WITTMAN. Sure.

Dr. O'HANLON [continuing].and also explain the genesis of what I think has become, you know, misconstrued. It was supposed to be an option or a scenario. Now it has become the default plan.

Just four more quick points, then I will be done. And this is in the spirit of reminding some of the broader debate and discussion about some of the good news from Afghanistan. We are all aware of the bad news. I don't in any way trivialize it. I think the bad news is being accurately reported, and it is real. But the good news needs to also be kept in mind. And I think the General and Dr. Boot have done a good job, as have you, of reminding the country in this discussion of what we are able to make progress up against, but let me add four more specific points.

One is—and it is a point that General Allen has made, and others—the Afghan forces are now leading about 40 percent of all operations. And these are typically the easier ones, so, you know, we have to be clear and transparent about that. But they are doing a fair amount even with the more difficult missions—for example, the April 15th coordinated attacks in Kabul and elsewhere, which were handled primarily by the Afghan security forces. And I believe that was also the case in the tragic attacks last week at the hotel resort near Kabul in which Afghan forces took the primary role. Their special forces are getting pretty good, by all accounts, and I think that is worth bearing in mind, as well.

Secondly, the Afghan local police, they tend to make the news when they do something wrong or when somebody else, some militia claims to be Afghan local police and goes out and does something wrong. And I think, however, this force, on balance, is doing extremely well. There have been some investigations of the various alleged misdoings of some of the individual units.

And for those who aren't familiar, perhaps C-SPAN viewers, with exactly what this concept is, these Afghan local police are essentially community-watch organizations under government supervision with American training but, nonetheless, different than the Army or the police. And they defend their own communities; they are not allowed to go beyond their communities, as you well know.

And there have been some cases of abuse, but—there were, I think, nine alleged cases last year. Subsequent investigations sug-

gested that one or two were serious violations of proper procedure or law by the Afghan local police. Overwhelmingly, however, these forces are operating well, and they are holding their own. They are taking the highest number of casualties, percentage-wise, of any Afghan force. And even when they are overmatched, they are holding their ground 80 percent of the time against insurgents, even when they don't have help quickly from Afghan Army or NATO Army forces. So I think they deserve credit.

The bad news here is that the reason they are good is because we are being very careful in how we build them up. And, again, I think members of this committee are well aware of this fact, but that this is not an out-of-control reincarnation of the Afghan militias. We are having American and other NATO special forces operate in the field with these folks for several months at a time before we certify them as ready to go on with their own missions. And that is why there are only 12,000 of them right now.

So I do think we have to bear in mind, this is not going to be the silver bullet that the Sons of Iraq, to some extent, were in Anbar Province. It is not going to be that big of a contribution to Afghan security. But it is still a useful one. That is my second point.

Third point: People talk about sometimes in very loose ways how the Afghan security forces are dominated by the Tajiks or other minority groups. And it is true that we have too high of a dependence on Tajik officers in certain parts of the Afghan security forces. But the overall ethnic composition of the Afghan security forces almost exactly mirrors the demographics of Afghanistan. And, of course, that is because of people like General Caldwell and General Bolger and their associates in the Afghan forces making great effort to ensure that this is so.

And then, finally, my last point: Where we do see misbehavior, corruption, nepotism, and, to some extent, ethnic partiality in the behavior of Afghan leaders, the Afghan leadership and the NATO leadership are trying to get rid of these people and replace them. And, again, as you know from your recent trip, and some of the things I was told on my trip in May, 50 Afghan Army leaders in the east of Afghanistan have been replaced in just the last year—50. And this is often the Americans, having eyes on the operations of these Afghans, reporting up the chain of command, and then General Allen or someone else may go see General Karimi or Minister Wardak or President Karzai, and there is an exchange of views. And the Afghans ultimately make the decisions, they control their own security forces, but we provide them with information, and they take it seriously.

And then, finally, B.K. Mohammadi, the Minister of Interior, some people think that he is a little too aggressive in how he fires people. Some people think he is a Tajik, you know, nationalist of some type. But, for the most part, what appears to be the case is he is firing incompetent leaders of whatever ethnic persuasion they may be. And he has just replaced 70 in Herat, including a number of his own fellow Tajiks.

So I see a lot of signs of hopefulness in the Afghan security forces. The title of my testimony was that the glass is about 55 percent full, and that is the point I will finish on. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. O'Hanlon can be found in the Appendix on page 48.]

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good. Thank you, Dr. O'Hanlon.

Members of the panel, thank you so much. And we will begin with our line of questioning.

I want to go back to my conversations when I was in theater with General Allen and Ambassador Crocker and their assessment of where we are, where they see the need going forward. One of the concerns that I have in looking at, strategically, the plan going forward, as you know, now we are in a situation of a force of 68,000 at the end of 2012, and then making the decision through 2013 as to where we progress by 2014, and doing that in a transition of five tranches.

Now, the concern to me is that, as you look at those tranches, the easier transition points take place up front, the more difficult transition points take place in the end, which, to me, is counterintuitive to drawing down our forces, having less capability there. So you have less capability facing a more difficult transition time, and then not having a full complement there in place of ANSF.

So my concern is, does that logically make sense in how the transition is to take place? So I got their perspective there. They have proposed making some changes, moving some of the more difficult areas of transition into tranche three, which is what they are beginning that effort now.

That being said, as you said, the interesting point is a somewhat of a different approach as far as the total number of ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] forces after 2014 and then a drawdown, as you said, with ANSF forces not long after they are up to the full 350,000. My conversations, too, with Defense Minister Wardak is that he feels that going to 230,000 at that point in time, at the end of 2016, will leave a power vacuum and that they are concerned about being able to transition those 120,000 people into some productive element of society there and not have them become part of the insurgency.

So I think there are a number of different areas there where it looks like, to me, there is some counterintuitiveness about the plan going forward.

All of you all touched on certain parts of that. I want to get your thoughts about what impact that has on our success on the current track and what the contingency should be if these scenarios, as they are planned now, knowing what has been proposed, what should the contingency be if those elements of the plan don't work out as proposed.

And I will go—I will start with Mr. Boot.

Mr. BOOT. Well, I would just reiterate what General Keane said, which is that all of our decisions need to be conditions-based. They should not be imposed based on a timeline dictated in Washington or on budget decisions made in Washington for purely Washington reasons. I think they ought to correspond to the conditions on the ground.

And I think we need to be, as General Keane suggested and I think as Mike would certainly agree, I think we need to be very careful about the drawdown and managing that in a responsible

way so that we don't leave a power vacuum. And I am afraid that could well be the result of the current trajectory that we are on.

So I think we need to be very careful, go slow, and make sure that we are not shrinking the ANSF or shrinking our force presence prematurely, even if conditions have not improved a good deal. And there has been some improvement, certainly, in the last couple of years, but it is very uneven. It has been mostly focused on the south. The east remains very dangerous and still in need of considerable pacification.

So I would, you know, as my colleague said, I would urge a go-slow, conditions-based approach.

General KEANE. You know, it is pretty interesting what has happened to us. I think if the Administration at the beginning asked one of the generals, "I will give you 5 years to solve this war, and I will give you the resources to do it," I think anybody would have taken that. And that is what we have; 2009 to 2014, it is 5 years.

But what is the problem? The problem is, right from the beginning, we start tying their hand. The first tying of the hand was Petraeus and McChrystal recommended a minimal force of 40,000; they got 30,000, which was 25 percent less. What did that do to us? They wanted to conduct a simultaneous campaign in the south and in the east to collapse the enemy, put as much pressure on it. Without that additional 10,000, could not do it. We had to do it sequentially. What did that do? Protracts the war, drives up casualties, evaporates more political will at home.

Second problem we have, another handcuff, is Petraeus wants to keep the surge forces that the President gave him, the 30,000, much longer at a much higher level. They are all gone before this year is out.

So that is where we are at the point of your question now. Given those two things, those dynamics have already happened—and there is pressure on the commanders to stay on a schedule that transitions our combat forces in 2013 totally, not 2014, and then be out of there by 2014. In my judgment, what is happening to support that is far from conditions-based. That is a date that we are moving to, and, by God, we are doing it.

We should take that pressure off of them so that they can come back and say, look, we have to slow this down a little bit. That is the major issue. We have—two major issues, to answer your question, in terms of contingencies is: slow down that transition if the commanders are having problems with it, which I think they will, particularly in the east; and, also, keep the ANSF at the resource level it should be at with its enablers.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good.

Dr. O'Hanlon.

Dr. O'HANLON. Chairman, I will put it in these terms because I agree with what my colleagues have said.

As we all remember, when President Obama was inaugurated, he had been adamantly against the Iraq war but he gave his field commanders time to execute the drawdown over the next 19 months and wound up keeping 50,000 troops, which I think was a good decision on his part, rather than the original intention to go very small. And he gave the field commanders time, as well, to figure out what the drawdown path would be. And as we all recall,

they were allowed to keep the forces through the Iraqi elections of early 2010 and do most of the drawdown a year and a half into the Obama presidency.

I think something similar is going to be necessary and advisable with whoever is in the White House come January. Whoever does a policy review in the late fall, early winter, I hope they give the field commanders the same leeway. Because the answer to your question, in my mind, is that as we do this transition to Afghan lead, we need to have substantial capability that we still retain to be able to back them up if they get into trouble, as they likely will.

So what I would anticipate is that, if we stay at 68,000 through the fall, which I hope will be the case, then we do a review by the newly elected President, whether it is Governor Romney or President Obama, and then early in 2013 the President largely defers to field commanders and keeps probably most of those 68,000 through much of the fighting season of 2014, if that is what field commanders recommend. That is my instinct about where I think we need to go to address the problem that you mentioned.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good, members of the panel.

I want to welcome Ranking Member Mr. Cooper and turn to him if he has any opening statements, and if not, turn to him for questions.

Mr. COOPER. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since I was late getting here, let me defer to my colleague, Mr. Critz, who was more prompt than I was. I apologize for having been slow.

Mr. WITTMAN. No problem.

Mr. Critz.

Mr. CRITZ. Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. O'Hanlon, you made a statement that there has been, I guess, some issue that maybe more of the commanders were Tajik, but if you look at the entire force, it really, demographically, matches the country.

Is the leadership geographic? In other words, is the Tajik leadership in Tajik areas? Is it tribal almost in the way it is set up, that maybe we are looking at something further down the road, that Tajiks are in command in Tajik areas and then other tribal areas have other commanders?

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you, Congressman. Let me briefly answer and, if you don't mind, invite my colleagues who may know certain aspects of this better than I do to correct me if they see any place where I am wrong.

Generally speaking, I believe that while many of the Tajik leaders of course come from the northern and eastern parts of Afghanistan, they are deployed throughout the country in current operations. And the main additional problem—I mean, there are ethnic issues, as you well know, and challenges. The other one is that it is hard to recruit southern Pashtun from the provinces like Kandahar. And we haven't been able to do very well with that, even when we try to incentivize them, feeling that they can stay in their own home district or province for a certain period of time.

So there are challenges. I don't want to trivialize that. And sometimes we have to rely on commanders or recruits from other provinces to fill more of a given part of the south than we would like.

But, overall, the Tajiks, even though they come from the north and east, they are deployed throughout the country. And they are serving well throughout the country, as best I know.

Mr. CRITZ. And you are saying that we have—maybe we are lacking in Pashtun commanders, then?

Dr. O'HANLON. In certain parts of the force. I think, for example, the Afghan police, the ANCOP [Afghan National Civil Order Police] forces, sort of the elite paramilitary, I think those are 50 percent-plus Tajik-led, if I am remembering my statistics correctly. That is not true of every kind of unit in the Afghan security forces, but that is one concrete example. And that causes you some concern.

Mr. CRITZ. Yeah.

Dr. O'HANLON. But on the other hand, the units are individually integrated. And there is a balance, a relatively good balance, if you look throughout the force. There is still, I think, 40 percent Pashtun leadership out of a Pashtun population of 45 percent.

So it is not bad if you look nationwide across all different aspects of the Afghan security forces. But the Uzbeks and the Hazara are somewhat underrepresented, and the Tajiks are overrepresented, especially in a couple wings of the military.

Mr. CRITZ. Okay.

Mr. BOOT, you made a statement that part of the seven points was that—one of them was that we should discontinue subsidy to the Pakistan military. What is your prediction as to what that would yield?

Mr. BOOT. Well, I can't say for certain what would happen if we stopped subsidizing the Pakistani military, but I do know that we have given them tens of billions of dollars in subsidy over the course of—

Mr. CRITZ. Well, if you are going to make that statement, though, you have to figure out it is going to have some impact. So—

Mr. BOOT. No, no. Absolutely.

Mr. CRITZ [continuing]. What is the impact?

Mr. BOOT. What I was going to say is that we have tried very heavily subsidizing them over the course of the last decade, an effort basically to wean them away from the Taliban, the Haqqanis, to basically bribe them, in a way, into becoming our allies, and that effort has totally failed. And I think, as a starting point, we need to recognize that effort has failed, that the Pakistanis remain as deeply committed to the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network now as they were a decade ago. And so, for that reason, I think it has been counterproductive to give all the subsidies that we have given to the Pakistani military, which, in essence, has been basically indirectly subsidizing the very forces that are killing our personnel in Afghanistan.

So I think—I am not saying cut off all aid to the state of Pakistan. I think we should certainly continue to fund civil society in Pakistan and an alternative to the military-dominated, ISI-dominated foreign and national security policy they pursue. But I think we need to recognize that Pakistan is not our friend here and that giving further subsidies to the military will be counterproductive.

And I don't think it would lead to the kind of consequences that some people fear, such as a jihadist takeover of the State, because I believe that the Pakistani military is still very good at internal

control and will still be able to remain in power. But the resources that they use in large part for preparing for war against India and for subsidizing jihadist groups that attack ourselves and our allies, those resources will be decreased.

Mr. CRITZ. Okay. Thank you. I have no further questions.

Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Critz.

We will go to Mr. Brooks.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In reviewing your written statements that have been provided to our staff, one thing stands out, in particular, by Dr. O'Hanlon: "I do not believe it likely that this Congress or a future Congress will sustain up to 20,000 GIs in Afghanistan at a cost of perhaps \$25 billion a year and add another \$3 billion to \$5 billion annually in direct security and economic support for the Afghan Government and people." Then he concludes with, "But given American politics and budget constraints, it would be likely that we are not going to be able to do some of the things that have been suggested."

On the other hand, I am looking at other testimony of Mr. Boot and General Keane. One wants us to "provide \$6 billion a year for the Afghan National Security Forces." We also have a request of perhaps up to "\$25 billion to \$35 billion" annually for United States support personnel and Special Operations Forces. We have the comment that it "costs approximately \$6 billion" to properly fund the ANSF. "Discussions are ongoing to reduce the funding to approximately \$4 billion, which results in an ANSF reduction from 352,000 to 230,000 beginning in 2016. This makes no sense."

That is quoting from some of the excerpts of the testimonies provided.

Let me see if I can try to interject some financial reality to the position that the United States of America is in. Then I am going to ask you to think about where the money is going to come from that you are asking for.

We blew through the \$15 trillion debt mark in November. This year we are going to blow through the \$16 trillion debt mark. We have had three consecutive deficits in excess of a trillion dollars a year. We are going into our fourth one of a trillion dollars a year. We have seen what has been going on in Italy, Greece, and Spain; they are on the verge of insolvency and bankruptcy. But for other communities in Europe, they would have already been in insolvency and bankruptcy. I don't know of anyone similarly situated that would help the United States avoid insolvency and bankruptcy if we continue on this path.

If we do continue on this path, there is one outcome and one outcome only, and that is an American insolvency and bankruptcy, which, in turn, means that we may have no money for national defense. Think about that. No military personnel at all. Even with the sequestration, which is a tip-of-the-iceberg kind of situation, you are looking at laying off 700,000 American uniformed personnel and/or civilian DOD support workers and/or private contractors who are supporting our military with a gee-whiz-bang weaponry that is so desired by other nations elsewhere but they don't have and which gives our military capabilities far above and beyond what our enemies typically can field.

So, given this kind of situation, given the Afghan economy—I have been to Afghanistan, as have you. Personally, I don't think that their economy in the next decade will be able to support their own defense needs, which means it is going to have to be America, if we are going to continue to put money into this, as you all acknowledge in your testimony.

Where do you think the money ought to come from to pay for the sums that you suggest are desirable or needed to stabilize the Afghan situation as we continue to draw down our troops? Do you want to cut other parts of national defense? If so, where? Do you want to cut the welfare programs, entitlement programs? If so, which ones? Please give me ammunition or guidance on the priorities so that we can get our financial house in order and do what you want us to do.

Mr. Boot first, then General Keane, and then Dr. O'Hanlon.

Mr. BOOT. Well, Congressman, I agree with you about the dire state of our finances, but I don't agree that defense is the primary contributing factor to it. Clearly, as we all know, it is entitlement spending. Defense is only taking about 4 percent of our gross domestic product and less than 20 percent of the Federal budget. That is the entire defense budget; that is not the part for Afghanistan.

And no matter what happens, we are going to dramatically reduce our spending in Afghanistan from about \$100 billion today down to some lesser level. And even at the levels that General Keane and I and Michael O'Hanlon recommend, you are talking about a two-thirds reduction in the amount of money that we are spending in Afghanistan, down to, let's say, \$30 billion, \$35 billion a year. And, yes, that is a lot of money, but the question in my mind is, what is the alternative?

And if we are, in fact, trying to desperately stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, and not only in Afghanistan but also in Pakistan—because our presence in Afghanistan also allows us to effect developments in Pakistan, which, if that were to fall, would be the ultimate nightmare, a nuclear-armed state—and we are able to prevent Afghanistan from falling back under the control of the Taliban and their Al Qaeda allies, in effect, to prevent—

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Boot—

Mr. BOOT [continuing]. A recurrence of the conditions that led to 9/11.

Mr. BROOKS [continuing]. I am going to interject for just a moment. I agree with you that national defense shouldn't take the hit that it has taken. That is why I voted against the Budget Control Act that imposes the sequestration.

You have mentioned entitlements. Is that where you think we ought to cut because you believe that is a lesser priority than national defense? That is my question. Where would you cut?

Mr. BOOT. Well, I think entitlements are driving the out-of-control deficits. And so, if we are going to address the deficits, we need to go where the money is, which is in entitlements, not in defense.

Mr. BROOKS. Well, you other two, the gavel has hammered, so you all get off the hook.

Thank you, Mr. Boot.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Brooks.

I will ask that the witnesses, if you would, provide your comments in writing back to the committee for Mr. Brooks' question. [The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 59.]

Mr. WITTMAN. And we will go to Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank the witnesses.

In view of the pending vote, I want to be brief. I want to explore two issues: one, the vulnerability of our troops to cutoff of supply through Pakistan, particularly if we make a dramatic curtailment in aid to Pakistan; and, second, the allegiance of ANSF troops. What risk do we face that we may be training a force that could turn against us?

So if you would help me with both of those questions, that would be great.

General KEANE. I will be glad to jump in.

Well, obviously, we have had our main supply route closed for a number of months now, and we are able to sustain the force that we have. Two means to do that is the other supply route in the north and also the air line of communication that we have established. I think it is overstated, our dependency on that main supply route. It certainly is desirable because it is a lot easier to use, it is less costly, although the Pakistanis certainly want us to pay through the nose for the challenges that we had between them.

So I think we could actually take the issue off the table, in my judgment, in terms of our relationship with Pakistan on this issue because we do have alternatives. And, most dramatically, our force size is coming down rather significantly, and therefore there is less requirement.

And we have issues inside the ANSF, clearly, in terms of what we refer to as green-on-blue atrocities. And there is no doubt that the Taliban have looked at, how do we get at U.S. forces? Their major means of doing that has been, by and large, on the roads or on footpaths using explosive devices. And we are painfully aware of that. Their other strategy is infiltration into the security forces to be able to attack U.S. forces. And that has taken place.

The good news is, in talking last night to General Bolger and also to Minister Wardak, General Wardak, who you know is—they believe that they are stopping about 75 percent of what has happened by increasing their intelligence, by vetting people better, et cetera. They are very much aware of the challenge that we have.

And I think the way our forces look at it is, as debilitating as that is, it is something that—a tool that the enemy is using. As the enemy is using an IED against us, they are using that kind of infiltration against our forces. It is frustrating for our forces to deal with that, but at the same time, look, our soldiers are pretty tough, and their resilience is extraordinary. And that does not diminish their performance nor the quality of that performance nor the extraordinary morale that they have had for all these years.

Mr. COOPER. Would the witnesses generally agree with General Keane's assessment there, that we should take the Pakistan supply route off the table in negotiations with the Pakistanis and that there is not that significant a worry about green-on-blue?

Dr. O'HANLON. Well, I certainly agree that, logistically speaking, we are in a much better place vis-à-vis Pakistan. And my hat is off to our military logisticians and our diplomats who have developed the Northern Distribution Network. It is an amazing alternative. It still increases slightly uncomfortably our dependence on Vladimir Putin, but some of those routes don't require his explicit permission, and, in any event, we are in a much better place.

I think the green-on-blue situation is still very troublesome. I don't think the General would trivialize it either. And I think it does run a risk of really eroding our ability to cooperate well with Afghan forces. General Allen was very concerned about it when he testified in March. I think it has risen to being a strategic concern. But I agree with General Keane that there are serious efforts being undertaken to try to at least cap it. That is not good enough, but that may be the best we can do in the short term. That would be my reflection there.

If I could briefly comment on to whom the Afghan forces are loyal, because I think you asked a great question on that, Congressman, as well. A lot of this is going to turn on the 2014 elections in Afghanistan, which are crucial, as we all recognize.

I talked to a top Afghan general when I was visiting last month, and we asked him, what is your number-one concern about security in Afghanistan? And he said the 2014 elections, because we get the wrong person elected and all bets are off.

And even though I don't think President Karzai has been a stellar leader, there are a couple of things he has done correctly that I believe the next leader needs to emulate, and one of them is to have non-Pashtun vice presidents. Now, preferably someone of greater repute than Fahim Khan, who is, of course, his first vice president. But the basic concept of having maybe a Tajik as the first vice president and made a Hazara or Uzbek as the second is a solid concept that I think probably needs to be adopted. I think a Pashtun will win in 2014.

Then the other point is in terms of the ministers of security. You need at least one non-Pashtun in those top two positions, as well. These are some of the elements that I think will be important.

And then, of course, the President can't be more corrupt than Karzai's family. There are two or three people whose names I heard mentioned frequently as potential contenders who I think we need to find a way, quietly or explicitly, to veto. And that is the point I was trying to get at in my testimony, where I can't imagine this Congress funding \$5 billion a year for Afghan aid if the next President of Afghanistan is even more problematic in this domain than the Karzai regime. And I think we need to send that message soon.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

We will go to Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank the witnesses for their preparation and their testimony this morning.

Dr. O'Hanlon, especially thank you for the advice you have given us over the weeks and years on strategic issues. You have been invaluable. We appreciate that very much.

Mr. Boot, in the last sentence of your testimony, you say, "Most Afghans have no desire to be ruled by the Taliban. They simply need our continuing aid to consolidate their post-2001 efforts to create a more inclusive and more moderate state."

How committed to a more inclusive and moderate state do you think the Karzai regime is in Afghanistan?

Mr. BOOT. Well, as Mike suggested, obviously President Karzai and his family are deeply problematic. There are obviously deep issues of corruption there, although it is possible to work with them, as we have seen in the recent agreements that were reached on night raids and the handover of the Parwan Detention Facility.

And, basically, at the end of the day, I mean, I think there is no question that the Karzais, like a lot of the elites in Afghanistan, are trying to get the most they can out of the state. And a lot of them are doing very well, with Dubai bank accounts and so forth. But I think we are, in a lot of ways, encouraging that by not having good controls over our spending. And by also setting deadlines for our departure, what you are basically saying is, get as much as you can now because the country is going to go—

Mr. ANDREWS. But isn't the other half of that argument saying that, you know, we will stay indefinitely and keep writing checks, isn't it encouraging that kind of behavior?

Let me ask you this question: I completely agree that, obviously, an extension of Taliban rule in any part of that country is wholly undesirable, and it is the reason we are still there; it is what we are trying to prevent. I am concerned, though—I want to know if any of the witnesses are concerned—that the present regime might find it quite acceptable to have an unwritten agreement where they would stay in power but there would, in fact, be parts of the country that would be ruled by the Taliban and do whatever they want.

I mean, aren't we at risk that this regime would double-bank us, preserve their own control of the country, their own wealth, and just look the other way as the Taliban rules certain parts of the country and perhaps once again is the host for the Al Qaeda parasite? What is wrong with that hypothesis?

Any of the witnesses.

General KEANE. Well, first of all, this regime is going, and thank God for that. You know, Ryan Crocker, I think, has worked—you know how capable he is as an ambassador. He is the best in the business—

Mr. ANDREWS. He sure is.

General KEANE [continuing]. In this part of the world. And he is confident that there will be a political transition. And that was not always the view. There was some speculation, as you know, that Karzai would find some means to sort of hang on here by constitutional reform. Not happening. He is going.

I don't think we will get a transformational leader, but I do believe we will get a leader who clearly understands the legacy of the past and the problems it has caused his country and they will try to make some incremental improvements, much more along the lines of what we had seen take place in Korea over a number of years.

So I am not of the mind that the regime is going to get worse, although there is potential for that. And I clearly believe that we

should be all-in helping to influence that situation, as Michael has suggested, and do a much better job of it here than what we did in Iraq.

Mr. ANDREWS. If I could paraphrase my question, what I am really asking is, how confident are we that the Afghan regime's interests are truly aligned with ours? And to the extent that they are not, what can we do to influence the regime in becoming aligned with it?

And the specificity of this is that it is absolutely not in our best interests for the Taliban to control a square inch of Afghanistan. I agree with that. But they may see it as being somewhat in theirs. How do we make sure that our interests are aligned?

General KEANE. Well, I don't know—just to finish up, I was going to answer that question. I don't know political leaders in Afghanistan that I have dealt with who would be willing to cede any of that country to the Taliban, and for all the obvious reasons in terms of tyrannical rule, violation of human and civil rights, and what that would mean inside of their country. There would be absolutely no toleration for political leaders doing something like that, in my view.

You know, one of the most remarkable things that took place was the loya jirga that took place last summer asking for the special relationship with the United States. The participation in that came from virtually every province in the country—

Mr. ANDREWS. My time is about to expire. I appreciate the answer.

Let me just close, Mr. Chairman, by saying this, that I sometimes think, through our majority and yours and through the Republican administration and the Democratic administration, we have been asking the wrong question, which is, how competent are we at transitioning over to Afghan security? I think the question is, how willing are they to accept it?

And, you know, our troops are doing a fantastic job there under very difficult circumstances. I think these gentlemen have given us very sage tactical advice on how to achieve it. But tactical measures fail if there isn't strategic uniformity, and I really wonder if it exists here.

Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Andrews. We appreciate that.

Gentlemen, thank you so much for spending your time with us today. As you can see, we are on the front end of a vote series, and I want to make sure that we have an opportunity, if there are any questions that the panel has to ask, that they be able to submit those in writing and to ask that you be able to answer those for the committee.

Mr. WITTMAN. And, with that, again, thank you for appearing before us today.

And, with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:59 a.m. the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JUNE 29, 2012

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JUNE 29, 2012

Statement of Hon. Rob Wittman
Chairman, House Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations
Hearing on
Expert Assessments on the Afghan National
Security Forces: Resources, Strategy, and
Timetable for Security Lead Transition
June 29, 2012

Today the Oversight and Investigations subcommittee convenes the second of a series of hearings related to the Afghan National Security Forces.

At this hearing, we will receive testimony from outside experts about the resources and strategy which the U.S. and NATO are devoting to training the ANSF and the timetable for transitioning security lead responsibility to the ANSF.

Our panel today includes:

- Max Boot, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations;
- Retired General Jack Keane, Former Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army; and
- Michael O'Hanlon, Director of Research and Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution.

Thank you for your participation. We look forward to your testimony.

My views on these issues have been informed by a recent trip to Afghanistan. During my visit, I traveled to several provinces and met with local leaders, including the chiefs of police. I also had the opportunity to talk to military commanders, who provided their impressions of the level of support that will be needed to create a self-sustaining ANSF. It is my hope that our witnesses today can provide further context on these important issues.

Before we move on, I want to take a moment to highlight the extraordinary efforts of our All-Volunteer Force serving in Afghanistan. These brave men and women are conducting daily combat operations against the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and associated terrorist networks. Earlier this month, I saw their sacrifice firsthand, and I want to convey my appreciation for their service here today.

**COUNCIL *on*
FOREIGN
RELATIONS**

June 29, 2012

Prepared statement by

Max Boot

*Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies
Council on Foreign Relations*

Before the
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
*United States House of Representatives
2nd Session, 112th Congress*

Afghan National Security Forces: Resources, Strategy, and Timetable for Security Lead Transition

Chairman Wittman, Ranking Member Cooper, and members of the subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me, along with my distinguished colleagues, to testify about the capabilities of, and outlook for, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Our testimony is particularly valuable, I believe, to act as a corrective on some of the overly sanguine testimony you received at last week's hearing from two representatives of the Department of Defense: Major General Steven Townsend and Deputy Assistant Secretary David Sedney.

I have no quarrel with the major points that they made. The ANSF is indeed growing in size and capability. It is slated to reach an end-strength of 352,000 by the end of this year. Its attrition level is going down, and its literacy level is going up. The ANSF, and in particular the Army (ANA), are also increasing in combat effectiveness, although I would take with a grain of salt some of the statistics tossed out by General Townsend. He said, for example, that "the percentage of Afghan-led partnered operations increased from 33% in January 2012 to 59% in April." In reality, I have found on my regular battlefield circulations in Afghanistan (most recently in March) that the definition of "ANSF-led" is notoriously elastic and can vary widely from one Area of Operations to another. In some cases it means that the ANA planned and executed an operation entirely on its own; in other cases it means that the American unit planned and executed the operation and stuck an Afghan officer in the lead MRAP as they went out to the gate.

The same elasticity applies when you hear generals and administration officials tell you that the ANSF has transitioned, or is about to transition, to take lead responsibility for almost all areas of the country. The ANSF is genuinely in command in areas of northern and western Afghanistan where there are few coalition troops—but the "ANSF lead" is largely a polite fiction when it comes to eastern and southern Afghanistan, where there are still tens of thousands of American troops.

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The same might be said for the much ballyhooed turnover of the Parwan detention facility to Afghan control and the agreement to give Afghans control over Special Operations Forces' "night raids." In reality, what we have given Afghans is the symbolism of control without the substance. U.S. troops still perform oversight of the Parwan detention facility and U.S. agreement is still needed to release any prisoners. As for night raids, they continue largely as before, albeit with greater Afghan participation, thanks to a clause which allows the ex post facto issuance of warrants from Afghan judges to make the raids fully legal.

This is not a criticism, mind you. I think that the U.S. has done precisely the right thing by not granting Afghans too much control at this stage, given the operational deficits they still suffer from and the corruption which is endemic in their government. But we should not be fooled by the rhetoric about Afghan competence and control coming from the administration. This is largely happy talk to appease both the government of Afghanistan and American voters who want to see the U.S. role in Afghanistan decrease—although I would add that, while American voters do want all American troops brought home, the government of Afghanistan does not, because it knows that the U.S. will continue to play a vital role in preventing a Taliban takeover or a renewed civil war.

The members of the committee should not be deceived. You should realize that while the ANSF has indeed made impressive strides over the last several years, it still has a long way to go before it is fully capable of securing Afghanistan's vast territory on its own. The ANSF remain reliant on American support for planning, surveillance, reconnaissance, intelligence gathering and analysis, logistics, route clearance, medevac, fire support, air support, and other functions. There is no question that the ANA, in particular, is showing greater tactical competence and greater willingness to get into the fight—casualty figures (which are higher than for coalition forces) attest to that. But the Afghans, as one might imagine of one of the world's poorest countries, still struggle with higher-level functions that are needed to support forces in the field—and they will do so for years to come. They also struggle with morale because they know that the U.S. commitment is temporary and time-limited, whereas the Taliban, with secure sanctuaries in Pakistan, show no signs of going away anytime soon.

The signing of a U.S.-Afghan Security Partnership Accord in April and the Chicago Summit Declaration in May alleviated some of the uncertainty about the post-2014 period—but only some. President Barack Obama and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) heads of state agreed to remain committed in Afghanistan after 2014. However, the nature and extent of that commitment remain opaque, and that in turn feeds anxiety in Afghanistan, contributes to capital flight, buoys the confidence of our enemies, and leads many Afghans to sit on the fence for fear of joining the losing side.

This week the Council on Foreign Relations released a Policy Innovation Memorandum that I wrote (appended at the end of this testimony) which spells out what I believe it will take for the U.S. to succeed in Afghanistan in the years ahead—success being defined as President Obama did when he ordered the troop surge. The president said on December 1, 2009, that he intended to "deny Al Qaeda a safe haven," deny the Taliban "the ability to overthrow the government," and "strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government." Those goals may sound minimal, but they will require a substantial, long-term commitment to achieve.

I would like to highlight here a few of the points I make in the Policy Innovation Memo. My two most important recommendations are: (1) don't cut funding for the ANSF and (2) don't cut U.S. troop levels prematurely.

Regarding the first point: The United States and its allies should commit to provide \$6 billion a year for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) indefinitely to support a force of 350,000 soldiers and police. The administration's plan calls for a cut in funding to \$4.1 billion after 2014, from \$6 billion this year. The administration claims this figure was the result of consultations with the Afghan government and our allies, but as far as I can tell it was unilaterally imposed by Washington *despite* the apprehensions of our Afghan allies. Gen. Abdul Rahim Wardak, the Afghan Minister of Defense, is right to worry about this proposed cut in funding because it would necessitate laying off 120,000 soldiers and police. Many would no doubt find work with insurgents or narco-traffickers, further exacerbating the security situation.

Even as things stand, the ANSF is probably too small on its own to police the entire country. COIN math (the popular rule of thumb being 1 counterinsurgent per 20 people) suggests a need for a force of at least 600,000, roughly the same size as the Iraqi security forces reached in 2009. Arguably, the Afghans can manage with less because the insurgency is strictly confined to Pashtun areas and Pashtuns make up only 42% of the population. But I have seen no plausible argument for how the ANSF, currently stretched to the limit of its resources and beyond, could manage with 120,000 fewer personnel unless peace miraculously breaks out—which, at this point, I would judge to be a vanishingly unlikely prospect.

The administration defends its plan in the interests of fiscal prudence. But while \$2 billion in savings will not make much difference in the context of a \$3.8 trillion U.S. budget, that sum could make a huge difference on the ground in Afghanistan. It could, in fact, be the difference between success and failure. If there is one thing that Congress can do to ensure that the gains which so many Americans have fought so hard for—and which all too many have sacrificed life or limb to achieve—are not lost, it is to make sure that ANSF funding is not cut precipitously.

This does not mean, I should add, that the US will have to pay for Afghanistan's security forces in perpetuity. Once violence decreases and stability improves, Afghanistan will be in a better position to exploit an estimated \$1 trillion in mineral resources that would allow the government to finance its own security forces. But that will take years to bring to fruition. Until then, Afghanistan needs support from the US and its allies to maintain substantial security forces. There is no reason for the US to pay all of the cost by itself—we need to do a more effective job of soliciting contributions from allies who either have not sent troops or are bringing their troops home.

My second major recommendation is that we need to avoid reducing US troop numbers precipitously—both before 2014 and afterward. US troop levels will fall to 68,000 by the end of September, smaller than General David Petraeus and other commanders had judged prudent. I believe that the next president—whether it's Barack Obama or Mitt Romney—should hold off making any further cuts before December 2014 unless conditions on the ground improve. For all the dissatisfaction with the war effort revealed in polls, there is little intensity to the opposition—there are no antiwar demonstrations and the war has not become a major political issue. Thus the next president will have a relatively free hand to maintain current troop levels until

2015 even though the move will not be popular. But maintaining troop levels will at least give commanders a chance to sustain security gains in the south, which has seen a rapid decline in Taliban control since 2009, and to spread security to eastern Afghanistan, where Haqqani sanctuaries remain intact only a few hours' drive from Kabul.

Moreover I believe it would be dangerous and counterproductive to pull too many troops out after 2014. Washington will be tempted to leave the smallest possible presence and to confine troops to safe bases. This would be a mistake. A force of, say, five thousand troops would have a hard time defending itself, much less carrying out its mission. And advisers who are confined to base would not be able to effectively mentor the ANSF or gain "situational awareness." It would be safer and more effective to have a more robust presence so that U.S. troops could protect themselves while also helping the ANSF with logistics, planning, air support, medevac, route clearance, and other important functions. Retired Lieutenant General David Barno and Andrew Exum of the Center for a New American Security have estimated that we would need a force of 23,500 to 35,000 advisers, support personnel, and Special Operations Forces, which would cost \$25 billion to \$35 billion annually. That sounds right to me. Such a commitment should be sustainable for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, even with reduced end-strength, because they have left Iraq and do not have a major role in most Pacific Command contingencies. It would also be sustainable fiscally since it represents just 0.2 percent of U.S. GDP (\$14.6 trillion) and 0.8 percent of the federal budget (\$3.8 trillion).

I know that the measures I recommend will not be popular on Capitol Hill—or among the American public. We would all rather secure Afghanistan with a lesser commitment. But we cannot sustain security on the cheap. The ANSF will not be able, on its own, to prevent a Taliban resurgence. And if the Taliban stage a resurgence, a tiny US Special Operations contingent would not be able to operate effectively on its own.

We are not obligated to make the commitment that I advocate but if we do not, we will not be able to prevent a recurrence of the conditions that led to 9/11. The Taliban have not severed their links with Al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups, and there is every reason to think that, should the Taliban come back into power, they would once again provide a sanctuary for these organizations. If that were to occur the U.S. would suffer a geopolitical disaster—not only would jihadists be able to boast that they had defeated another superpower in Afghanistan but they would be emboldened to step up their attacks in Pakistan as well. Indeed the Pakistani Taliban staged an attack from Afghan territory just a few days ago into Pakistan where they killed 13 Pakistani soldiers. That is a harbinger of things to come if we abandon Afghanistan—the collateral damage will undoubtedly include a further loss of stability in the already unstable state of Pakistan.

The good news is that we can readily avoid a disaster with a significant but decreasing amount of U.S. aid to Afghanistan. Most Afghans have no desire to be ruled by the Taliban. They simply need our continuing aid to consolidate their post-2001 efforts to create a more inclusive and more moderate state.

What It Will Take to Secure Afghanistan

Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 23

Author: Max Boot, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies

Afghanistan is approaching a major inflection point in its long and turbulent history. In 2014 most of the foreign military forces are due to pull out. With them will go the bulk of foreign financing that has accounted for almost all of the state's budget. Twenty fourteen is also the year that Afghanistan is due to hold presidential elections. Hamid Karzai, the only president the country has known since the fall of the Taliban, has said he will not seek another term in office. Thus Afghanistan is likely to have a new president to lead it into a new era. This era will be shaped by many factors, principally decisions made by Afghans themselves, but the United States has the ability to affect the outcome if it makes a sustained commitment to maintain security, improve the political process, and reduce Pakistani interference so as to build on the tenuous gains achieved by the U.S. troop surge since 2010.

The Problem

The signing of a U.S.-Afghan Security Partnership Accord in April 2012 and the Chicago Summit Declaration in May alleviated some of the uncertainty about the post-2014 period—but only some. President Barack Obama and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) heads of state agreed to remain committed in Afghanistan after 2014. However, the nature and extent of that commitment remain opaque. At times Obama has depicted the U.S. mission in Afghanistan in fairly narrow terms—designed, as he said in announcing the troop surge on December 1, 2009, to "deny al-Qaeda a safe haven," deny the Taliban "the ability to overthrow the government," and "strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government." The Chicago Declaration commits the United States to the more ambitious goals of helping craft "a democratic society, based on rule of law and good governance." However attractive the maximalist position, it would require an increased deployment of foreign troops and political advisers, and changes in Afghanistan's political culture, that are unlikely to occur. Yet even the minimalist objective, designed to prevent a return to power by the Taliban (which has consistently refused to renounce its long-standing ties with al-Qaeda and other transnational terrorist groups based in Pakistan and would be likely to provide them a safe haven in Afghanistan), will be impossible to achieve absent a substantial commitment. Attempts to safeguard U.S. interests "on the cheap" are likely to fail. If the security situation deteriorates, a small number of Special Operations Forces (SOF) would have difficulty operating—as they do today in Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan. The Kabul government is only likely to extend cooperation to SOF if, in return, it receives substantial support to maintain its fragile authority. This memo recommends seven specific steps the United States can take to buttress the fragile forces of authority in Afghanistan, grouped into three categories: security, politics, and Pakistan's role.

The Way Ahead

Security

The United States and its allies should commit to provide \$6 billion a year for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) indefinitely to support a force of 350,000 soldiers and police. The administration's plan calls for a cut in funding to \$4.1 billion after 2014, from \$6 billion this year. This would necessitate laying off 120,000 soldiers

and police from the current force of 350,000 soldiers and police, which the Afghans are able to manage with U.S. help. Many would no doubt find work with insurgents or narco-traffickers, further exacerbating the security situation. The administration defends its plan in the interests of fiscal prudence. But while \$2 billion in savings will not make much difference in the context of a \$3.8 trillion U.S. budget, that sum could make a huge difference on the ground in Afghanistan.

Hold off making any further cuts to the force of sixty-eight thousand U.S. troops between September 2012 and December 2014 unless conditions on the ground improve dramatically. There will be pressure in Washington to announce another troop drawdown in late 2012 or early 2013. The next U.S. president—either Obama or Mitt Romney—would be wise to resist that pressure. Only the presence of large numbers of American troops can ensure that security continues to improve. For all the dissatisfaction with the war effort revealed in polls, there is little intensity to the opposition—there are no antiwar demonstrations and the war has not become a major political issue. Thus the next president will have a relatively free hand to maintain current troop levels until 2015 even though the move will not be popular.

Pledge to maintain a substantial advisory and counterterrorism presence after 2014 of twenty-five thousand to thirty-five thousand troops. Washington will be tempted to leave the smallest possible presence after 2014 and to confine troops to safe bases. This would be a mistake unless peace breaks out between now and then. A force of, say, five thousand troops would have a hard time defending itself, much less carrying out its mission. And advisers who are confined to base would not be able to effectively mentor the ANSF or gain "situational awareness." It would be safer and more effective to have a more robust presence so that U.S. troops could protect themselves while also helping the ANSF with logistics, planning, air support, medevac, route clearance, and other important functions. The estimated force size of 23,500 to 35,000, which would cost \$25 billion to \$35 billion annually, is based on work by David Barno and Andrew Exum of the Center for a New American Security. Such a commitment should be sustainable for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, even with reduced end-strength, because they have left Iraq and do not have a major role in most Pacific Command contingencies. It would also be sustainable fiscally since it represents just 0.2 percent of U.S. GDP (\$14.6 trillion) and 0.8 percent of the federal budget (\$3.7 trillion).

Politics

Go slow on peace talks. U.S. officials want a peace deal with the Taliban that would enable a faster U.S. drawdown. But a grand bargain on acceptable terms—with the Taliban giving up their arms and becoming a normal political party—is unlikely. Taliban foot soldiers in Afghanistan may feel coalition pressure, but their leaders remain safe in Pakistan, and Pakistan's generals are loathe to permit the Taliban to sign a peace treaty that could allow them to slip out of Islamabad's grip. Under those conditions, putting too much pressure on Kabul to reach a deal with the Taliban could backfire by causing the Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks to recreate the Northern Alliance and renew the devastating civil war of the 1990s. A better course of action would be to pursue deals with individual Taliban commanders—offering them incentives to stop fighting—and thus try to split the insurgency.

Identify and groom a successor to Karzai. Afghanistan would benefit from a leader more committed to fighting corruption and establishing the rule of law. But the political process is unlikely to produce such a leader on its own. Iran, Pakistan, and various Afghan warlords will back their favored candidates. The United States

should do the same. It is doubtful that an ideal candidate can be found, but, at a minimum, it should be possible to identify the "least bad" one. Admittedly American policymakers erred in picking Karzai in late 2001 and they may err again—but they at least know much more about Afghanistan than they did then. And to avoid making any choice is to cede the decisive vote to malign actors.

Pakistan's Role

End American subsidies for the Pakistani military. The Obama administration cut \$800 million in U.S. military aid to Pakistan in the summer of 2011 after the two countries clashed over the Osama bin Laden raid and other issues. But the administration has held out the prospect of restoring that funding, and it wants to budget roughly \$2 billion for aid to Pakistan in fiscal year 2013. Some payments for the use of Pakistani territory to move supplies to Afghanistan make sense even at the expense of continuing a small degree of reliance on Islamabad, but all other military aid should be terminated because Pakistan has consistently shown that it is a foe of U.S. interests in Afghanistan. Further subsidizing the Pakistani military sends an indirect subsidy to the Taliban and Haqqani Network. Contrary to Washington's worst fears, even after an aid cutoff, Pakistan's army would remain strong enough to keep jihadists from seizing power in Islamabad—an outcome that is opposed by most Pakistanis and, more to the point, most Pakistani generals.

Launch drone and/or SOF strikes on Haqqani and Taliban leaders in Pakistan. Though the CIA and SOF have long targeted terrorist leaders in Pakistan, primarily using drones, their targets have been mostly confined to al-Qaeda. A few Pakistani Taliban and Haqqani leaders have also been eliminated, but senior Taliban figures have not been targeted, because Washington wants to avoid antagonizing Islamabad. But U.S. forces, even at the current force level of eighty-seven thousand, have shown they can survive without the Pakistani logistics line; they have done so since November 2011. Pakistan may also withdraw cooperation in drone strikes on al-Qaeda, but that organization has been so weakened that the strikes are less important now than a few years ago. Regardless of Islamabad's reaction, it is necessary to undertake an aggressive campaign of drone strikes to increase the pressure on the Taliban and the Haqqani Network to prevent them from taking advantage of the NATO drawdown.

Conclusion

Most or all of these steps will be necessary to secure Afghanistan's future, not as an ideal state—a Switzerland of Central Asia—but as a minimally functioning state with security forces that can prevent the reemergence of Taliban rule and the likely reestablishment of al-Qaeda sanctuaries given the close ties between the two organizations. U.S. policymakers may decide that they would rather commit scarce resources elsewhere. But, if so, they should be under no illusions about the ability of the United States to prevent the reemergence of the conditions that led to 9/11. It is difficult enough to shape events in Afghanistan with a substantial U.S. commitment; it will become nearly impossible without it. The good news is that the vast majority of Afghans do not want a return to Taliban rule, and with continuing American support, their post-2001 state should be able to survive the challenges ahead.

Max Boot is one of America's leading military historians and foreign-policy analysts. The Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Max Boot is also a contributing editor to *The Weekly Standard* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and a regular contributor to the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary*, and other publications.

Max Boot is now finishing *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, which will be released by W.W. Norton & Co. in January 2013.

Max Boot's last book, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (Gotham Books, 2006), has been hailed as a "magisterial survey of technology and war" by the *New York Times* and "brilliantly crafted history" by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Max Boot's previous book, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (Basic Books) was selected as one of the best books of 2002 by numerous newspapers, won the 2003 General Wallace M. Greene Jr. Award from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation as the best nonfiction book pertaining to Marine Corps history, and has been placed on Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy professional reading lists. More than 100,000 copies of his books are in print.

Max Boot has served as an adviser to U.S. commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was also a senior foreign policy adviser to John McCain's presidential campaign in 2007-2008 and is currently serving as a defense policy adviser to Mitt Romney's campaign.

Max Boot is a frequent public speaker and guest on radio and television news programs, both at home and abroad. He has lectured on behalf of the U.S. State Department and at many military institutions, including the Army, Navy, and Air War Colleges, the Australian Defense College, the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School, and West Point.

In 2004, Max Boot was named by the World Affairs Councils of America as one of "the 500 most influential people in the United States in the field of foreign policy." In 2007, he won the Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Opinion Journalism, given annually to a writer who exhibits "love of country and its democratic institutions" and "bears witness to the evils of totalitarianism."

Before joining the Council in 2002, Max Boot spent eight years as a writer and editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, the last five years as op-ed editor. From 1992 to 1994 he was an editor and writer at the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Max Boot holds a Bachelor's degree in history, with high honors, from the University of California, Berkeley (1991), and a Master's degree in history from Yale University (1992). He was born in Russia, grew up in Los Angeles, and now lives with his family in the New York area.

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION**

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: Max Boot
Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

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

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0			

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0			

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0			

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

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

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: 0 _____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: 0 _____.

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

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: 0 _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: 0 _____.

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

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

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

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

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

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

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

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

**Congressional Testimony
Afghan National Security Forces**

**House Armed Services Committee
2118 Rayburn House Office Building**

By

**John M. Keane
General
US Army, Retired**

29 June 2012

1100 hours

Congressional Hearing
Testimony
29 June
1100 hrs

Mr. Chairman, ranking minority and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on such an important and critical subject-- the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

I have conducted four assessments in Afghanistan over an 18 month period, the first three for Gen. Petraeus and the last one for Generals Mattis / Allen in January 2012. During those trips I spent considerable time with US / NATO forces and the ANSF. Let me just say up front that we have achieved much success in the security situation, particularly, in the South which was the priority of the surge forces and we have begun to turn the momentum in the East to our favor. Also, the ANSF is a capable force and is up to the task of taking over from US / NATO forces. However, there are many challenges ahead.

2014 will be a major transition year with political, security and economic transitions all taking place near simultaneous: there will be a national election and a new government and this represents a huge opportunity for Afghanistan and for NATO to move to a more effective and represented government while a significant financial reduction is taking place, largely, due to the transition of US / NATO security forces. I will not comment on the political and economic transitions because they are not the subject of the hearing, but I will say there has been considerable less effort applied to their successful transitions than to the security transition.

There are four key decisions, all to be made within a year's time, which will determine if we can sustain the security success achieved and be able to move Afghanistan to a secure and stable country where the ANSF is capable of protecting its sovereignty and its people.

1. The Post Surge US Forces. After the surge forces are withdrawn, later this year, approximately 68 thousand U.S. forces will remain. These forces should not be reduced until well into 2013 as they are needed to continue the campaign in the East and conduct side by side operations with the ANSF.

Reducing these forces prematurely puts the security transition at risk and will have a negative psychological impact on the ANSF.

2. Funding for the ANSF. Current plans reflect decisions to fund the ANSF at a force level of 352K through 2015 which costs approximately \$6B, largely U.S. funded with some international community (IC) support. Discussions are ongoing to reduce the funding to approximately \$4B which results in an ANSF reduction from 352K to 230K beginning in 2016. This makes no sense. How can we expect the ANSF to protect the people with one third less force only a year after we almost zero out a US / NATO force of 100K. The issue is less than \$2B a year. We have spent over a decade investing in training and equipping the ANSF. By 2014 we will have the results of that investment, an ANSF capable of protecting its people. Why, after all these years of investing, would we gut that force and put the entire security mission at risk. It is even more difficult to understand when you consider that U.S. and NATO countries spend trillions of dollars every year, yet clearly some of that funding does not enjoy the priority of a secure and stable Afghanistan. In terms of a timetable the ANSF funding should remain through 2020 as part of our Strategic Partnership Agreement. Of course, as Afghans are able to pay an even greater share, then that should be expected. A 230K ANSF beginning in 2016 would have disastrous impact on the morale of the force and, in of itself, almost certainly guarantees the return of Taliban domination.
3. The Residual US / NATO Force Post 2014. This force should be sized for the missions that are vital to continued success. It should not be an arbitrary number. The missions required are :
 - a. Counter-terrorism – sufficient force with enablers to conduct daily missions against high value targets in partnership with Afghan special operations forces.
 - b. Training assistance – forces required to assist in the continued growth and development of the ANSF.
 - c. Security – forces required to protect the residual forces. This is a defensive not an offensive mission.
 - d. Enablers – there are three forces that require enablers yet not necessarily the same type of enablers. Those forces are counter terrorism, the IC residual forces and the ANSF. As to the ANSF, and in their case we are really talking about, the Army, it is primarily a ground maneuver force which needs support from the following

functions: intelligence, artillery, aviation, engineers and logistics to include medical evacuation. The ANSF intelligence function is almost exclusively human intelligence and they are very good at it but they have no technology: sensors, UAV's, listening devices to monitor radio and cell phone communication, etc. The plan for ANSF aviation is a fleet of Russian made attack and utility helicopters and the C27 (Italian made), fixed wing, for transport. All this equipment is inferior and difficult to maintain and, in time, it should be switched out to US helicopters and the C130 as part of the US / Afghan long term partnership. The ANSF has no route and mine clearing equipment and this should be a part of an anti-IED package that is provided.

The remaining key decision which will greatly impact overall ANSF success is the decision to target Afghan Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan.

4. Afghan Taliban Sanctuaries – Ever since the Taliban regime was deposed in 2001, and the Taliban and the Haggani networks were driven out of Afghanistan, two sanctuaries have existed in Pakistan. One at Miram Shah for the Haggani network and the other at Quetta for the senior Taliban leadership. Think of these sanctuaries as loosely knitted military bases with the following functions: command and control, intelligence, training and logistics to include family housing and barracks. At these bases, leaders set the strategy, brief middle level leaders who return from the fight in Afghanistan, plan future operations, provide intelligence to field commanders, train or re-fit fighters and bombers and provide resources and logistics to their field units. Furthermore, the Pakistan Army, particularly the ISI provide intelligence on US / NATO operations, training and logistics support. As a result, the Taliban have managed to protract a war for over eight years which has eroded the political and moral will of the American people and our NATO partners. The ANSF is willing but not capable to do anything about it, while the US is capable but unwilling. Indeed, we have permitted Afghanistan to be destabilized because we are unwilling to force Pakistan to withdraw its support for the sanctuaries or for the US to attack the sanctuaries. We are paralyzed by our fear of Pakistan reaction which could entail increased support for the insurgency inside of Pakistan and a risk to regime change, closing the ground main support route, denying use of the port of Karachi and denying use of the air LOC over Pakistan. While I am not dismissing these concerns as real, I am saying the relationship with Pakistan should change from a normal ally relationship of cooperation to a condition based partnership. Support for Pakistan's fight against the

insurgents, support with the IMF and World Bank, support to sustain the military and the regime with financial aid should all be conditional, based on their withdrawing support for the sanctuaries. We should be clear to the Paks that we would not only withdraw the support listed above but we would attack the sanctuaries without their permission. If the US / NATO permits the sanctuaries to exist post 2014 without impeding their functions then there is little chance of long term success in Afghanistan. The Taliban will eventually regroup, regain territory and influence over the people in Afghanistan and begin to dominate once again.

A drone campaign against the leaders in the sanctuaries would have a similar effect that our drone campaign has had against the Al Qaeda (AQ) in the FATA i.e., the AQ is defensive and can no longer control or project operational capability. A similar effect against the leadership in the sanctuaries would be a game changer in Afghanistan, breaking the effectiveness and morale of the Taliban while significantly enhancing the morale and impact of the ANSF.

In conclusion, these four key decisions I discussed will determine the future stability and security of Afghanistan. This has been our longest war in our history, and most of that is of our own choosing, because the war in Iraq enjoyed a higher priority, the Taliban reemerged, and it was not until 2008/09 after we finally achieved success in Iraq that we were able to devote the kind of resources and priorities that Afghanistan always deserved to have. Now we are on the cusp of ending our participation in our longest war. Never before in our great nation, have so few, served for so long, on behalf of so many. War is fundamentally a test of wills and that is why leadership is always at a premium. This effort has enjoyed your support and it begs for your continued leadership and support as we begin to write the final chapters.

Ryan Crocker our distinguished and capable Ambassador in Afghanistan and former Ambassador in Iraq and Pakistan has said: "how we leave a war and what we leave behind is far more important than how we began".

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

General John M. Keane, United States Army, Retired

General Jack Keane is president, GSI, LLC (consulting). He is a director of MetLife and General Dynamics, chairman of the Institute for the Study of War, chairman of the Knollwood Foundation, a member of the Secretary of Defense's Policy Board, the George C. Marshall Foundation, the Center for Strategy and Budget Assessment, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Smith Richardson Foundation, a trustee at Fordham University, and an advisor to two foundations assisting our veterans: Welcome Back Veterans and American Corporate Partners.

General Keane, a four-star general, completed 37 years in public service in December 2003, culminating as acting Chief of Staff and Vice Chief of Staff of the US Army. As the chief operating officer of the Army for 4½ years, he directed one million, five hundred thousand soldiers and civilians in 120 countries, with an annual operating budget of 110 billion dollars. General Keane was in the Pentagon on 9/11 and provided oversight and support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. He serves as a national security analyst for Fox News and speaks throughout the nation on national security and leadership. Since 2004, General Keane conducted frequent trips to Iraq for senior defense officials having completed multiple visits during the surge period. He played a key role in recommending the surge strategy in Iraq and is featured in many articles and a number of books to include Bob Woodward's The War Within and Tom Rick's The Gamble. Still active in national security, Gen. Keane continues to advise senior government officials on national security and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He recently completed an assessment in Afghanistan in January 2012.

General Keane is a career infantry paratrooper, a combat veteran of Vietnam, decorated for valor, who spent much of his military life in operational commands where his units were employed in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo. He commanded the famed 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and the legendary 18th Airborne Corps, the Army's largest war fighting organization.

General Keane graduated from Fordham University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy from Western Kentucky University. He is a graduate of the Army War College and the Command and General Staff College.

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Witness name: JOHN M. KEALIE

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Individual

Representative

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

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) /	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0			

contracts			

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0			

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0			

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

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

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;

Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;

Fiscal year 2009: 0 _____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;

Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;

Fiscal year 2009: 0 _____.

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

Current fiscal year (2011): NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

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

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

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

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

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES: A GLASS 55% FULL

By Michael O'Hanlon (coauthor of *Toughing It Out in Afghanistan* with Hassina Sherjan, *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy* with Martin Indyk and Kenneth Lieberthal, and "Towards a Political Strategy for Afghanistan" with Gretchen Birkle and Hassina Sherjan)

For a hearing before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, June 29, 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and other members of the committee for the honor to testify today. As the Afghan National Security Forces (the ANSF) near their desired size and structure, and take lead responsibility (at least nominally) for up to 75 percent of the country later this year, it is an excellent time for this committee to consider the crucial question of how well they are doing. Crucial decisions about the Afghanistan mission loom—not only about how fast to reduce U.S. forces once the current drawdown schedule is completed later this year, but also about how to plan and fund and support long-term Afghan forces.

My overall assessment is that the Afghan security forces are probably going to be good enough to fend off any attempted Taliban takeover of the country come 2014 and beyond—at least in terms of holding onto major cities and major transportation arteries. That assessment is contingent, however, on several factors: a patient NATO troop drawdown that gives us more time for training and mentoring over the next 30 months; adequate U.S. and NATO troop presence even thereafter to provide mentors and trainers and some special capabilities; adequate financial support for the ANSF from the international community; and an Afghan political system that survives the 2014 election without fracturing along ethnic lines. In addition, I would offer a caveat: as former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and I wrote last year, one needs to accept something like a "Colombia standard" of success for Afghanistan (harkening back to Colombia of several years ago in particular). That is, the insurgency will continue even after 2014 in all probability, and may even control substantial swaths of territory, but will not be in a position to regain control of the country and will over time be gradually whittled away. That is the optimistic vision; if things go wrong, the outcome could of course be much worse.

PROGRESS WITH THE ANSF

As official witnesses have testified recently before this Committee, and as COMISAF General John Allen testified before the Congress in March, there are some encouraging signs in regard to Afghanistan's various security forces:

- Afghan security forces have almost reached their envisioned full size of 352,000 counting army and police.
- Although there are still too few southern Pashtuns joining the ANSF, and too high a proportionate representation of Tajiks in certain leadership roles, the overall ethnic

balance and cohesion of the nation's security forces are reasonably good. My sense is that ethnic conflict will not be generated from within the ANSF.

- Afghan soldiers and police are fighting, too. They are now collectively taking at least twice the casualties of NATO forces, participating in at least 90 percent of all operations, and leading some 40 percent of operations themselves (albeit usually the simpler ones at this point). And they repulsed the April 15 Haqqani network attack on Kabul and other cities largely on their own. New accords have them take the lead on night raids, too.
- While the security forces still suffer from political patronage appointments and corruption, the problems are being partially addressed. Some 50 Afghan army leaders in the east of the country alone have been replaced over the last year; 70 police officers were just fired recently in the country's west for poor performance. The Ministry of Defense has opened a full criminal investigation into the problems that produced corruption and theft at Afghanistan's main military hospital last year. To be sure, such efforts could be too little too late. And some of the firings and hirings raise concerns of ethnic bias. But on balance the progress is picking up.
- Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior leadership are generally well regarded, and the Ministry of Defense inspector general is respected and competent, too.
- NATO is belatedly also cleaning up its own act—no longer unwittingly funding nearly as many corrupt actors or insurgent groups as it did before. Task Force 2010, the ISAF organization designed to increase transparency and accountability in how NATO awards contracts for logistics services and related activities in Afghanistan, is finally gaining steam. More than 100 companies or individuals have now been debarred from ISAF contracting. Transparency requirements make it easier to check on who is involved in these companies. It often takes a couple months to develop good intelligence on new companies, so when they reorganize or rename themselves, they can sometimes evade notice for a short time. But overall this set of problems is getting serious attention, thanks in large part to the earlier oversight and investigative work of the U.S. Congress.
- More than 10 percent cost savings have been achieved to date, normalized for the relevant workload, by the reforms in contracting. More important than simply saving us money, this is a promising indicator of fewer funds being diverted to malevolent actors who don't actually do the work we hire them to carry out, but pocket the money instead.
- The Afghan Local Police, a form of armed community watch overseen by NATO troops, is generally proving its mettle. These lightly armed and locally organized forces, who now number some 12,000 in all, are holding their ground in some 80 percent of all firefights, even when sometimes outgunned by the Taliban, taking the highest rate of casualties of any part of the Afghan security forces in the process.

There have been a handful of cases of abuse within this program, and a number of illegal militias are falsely adopting the name Afghan Local Police to disguise their true nature (which is sometimes to attack their neighboring tribes or communities). But U.S. special

forces have monitored and worked with the actual ALP forces effectively, and stepped in to address problems when needed. They only allow the formation of ALP units after several months of getting to know an area and working with local elders to try to ensure tribal balance. The admittedly daunting challenge in coming months and years will be to keep growing the program while also handing oversight to Afghan special forces.

I disagree with those who want to disband the ALP because I believe critics tend to understate the degree of care taken in overseeing it. I disagree also with those who exaggerate its significance in Afghanistan and see it as a major game changer, because they tend to forget how small it is and must be in order for that oversight to remain vigilant. But as a tool of the broader effort, it has its place and should in fact be gradually expanded as now planned.

- A spirit of hopefulness, more than fear, characterized most of those I spoke with in Kabul. The recent signing of the U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement to guide cooperation after 2014 reassures many Afghans that they will not be left to their own darker angels—or the mercy of their neighbors—when ISAF’s transition is complete. Although implementing protocols and a status of forces agreement for the SPA may prove difficult to negotiate, the accord has definitely given a boost to the strides of many Afghan reformers who continue to work hard for their nation’s future.

REMAINING CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO THE MISSION

Yet each of the above areas of progress with the Afghan security forces underscores the fragility of the situation:

- While Afghan forces are much bigger and better than before, they are nowhere near good enough, so professionalism and discipline must not only be maintained, but improved in the future. As noted, even though Afghan forces are now leading more than 40 percent of all operations, I was told on a recent trip to Afghanistan that these are generally the simpler operations.
- While a large number of incompetent or corrupt leaders within the security forces’ ranks have been replaced, many remain, and under the present government, uniformed leaders and ministers of interior and defense only have so much power to replace poor leaders on their own given the political interests still at play in many appointments. For example, cabinet ministers can replace officers down to the rank of perhaps colonel, and top uniformed leaders can only replace officers down to the rank of perhaps captain.
- The Afghan Local Police can only be effective in the future if Afghanistan’s own special forces are increasingly able to play the oversight role that NATO has provided to date. This clearly assumes a level of competence and integrity within the Afghan special forces that will not survive poor national leadership, should the wrong person wind up in charge after President Karzai.

- The wrong president or even the wrong type of presidential campaign in 2014 could also generate ethnic tensions that weaken and divide an overall security force that, to date at least, has not shown any major proclivity itself towards civil warfare. In other words, even if the ANSF do not generate a civil war, they may not be invulnerable to one that begins outside their ranks.
- The Border Police (within the Ministry of Interior) and the Air Force (within the Ministry of Defense) still suffer from the influence of strong criminal patronage networks within their institutions.
- Western impatience with the mission and pursuit of the false of a smaller, cheaper ANSF after 2015 could leave a force unable to handle the challenges that are likely to face it then. In particular, the idea of reducing the ANSF from 352,000 down to 228,500 shortly after 2015 is probably premature at best, as former Ambassador Ron Neumann and I wrote last month in the *Washington Post* after our trip to Afghanistan in May. The idea came from some American military officers in the training command in Kabul, not formally from NATO or the Afghan government, and it was but one of several concepts for future Afghan force sizing that built on the premise of a much safer threat environment. Absent such a safer security situation, moving to such a smaller force quickly just to save perhaps \$2 billion a year in U.S. financial support would jeopardize the investment of some \$700 billion—and more than 2,000 American lives—we will have made by that point. Indeed, it will risk requiring us to keep more U.S. forces in Afghanistan after 2014, at an incremental cost of more than \$1 billion annually per thousand American GIs, than we would have to do otherwise. It would be a false economy. An Afghan force of such a size should be viewed as a floor on requirements, not a most likely case.

CONCLUSION

Beyond specific issues in working with the ANSF, American policy in Afghanistan needs one new big idea: we need to convey to Afghans clearly that our willingness to support them financially, developmentally, and militarily after 2014 will be a function of the quality of their governance and the character of their leaders.

I do not believe it likely that this Congress or a future Congress will sustain up to 20,000 GIs in Afghanistan at a cost of perhaps \$25 billion a year, and add another \$3 billion to \$5 billion annually in direct security and economic support to the Afghan government and people, if the next Afghan government is badly corrupt. In such an event, while our own strategic interests might not lead us to pull the plug on the effort entirely, I would predict that our commitment would be scaled back dramatically. Of course that would be your decision here, but my speculation is that levels of American assistance might wind up perhaps one third to one fifth the amounts sketched out above, or even less. That would be regrettable. But given American politics, and budget constraints, it would be likely.

We should not try to pick a winner in the next Afghan election. But for the good of the country's security forces and everything else crucial to the mission, we may need to identify and seek to veto informally a few losers. Congress can and must play a key role here. Thank you for the chance to testify.

BROOKINGS

QUALITY. INDEPENDENCE. IMPACT.

Michael O'Hanlon

Michael O'Hanlon is a senior fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, where he specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force, and American foreign policy. He is also director of research in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. He is a visiting lecturer at Princeton University and adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University, and a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. O'Hanlon is a member of General David Petraeus's External Advisory Board at the Central Intelligence Agency. He is a commentator on Alhurra TV and also blogs for Fareed Zakaria's Global Public Square site at cnn.com.



O'Hanlon's latest books are *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy* (with Martin Indyk and Kenneth Lieberthal, Brookings, March 2012); *The Wounded Giant: America's Armed Forces in an Age of Austerity* (Penguin Press, 2011); *A Skeptic's Case for Nuclear Disarmament* (Brookings, 2010), *Toughing It Out in Afghanistan* (with Hassina Sherjan, Brookings, 2010), and *The Science of War* (Princeton University Press, 2009). He continues to coauthor Brookings' Afghanistan index. He and Bruce Riedel wrote "A Plan A- for Afghanistan" in the Winter 2010/2011 issue of *The Washington Quarterly* and published a paper on Afghanistan and Pakistan for Brookings' Campaign 2012 project.

O'Hanlon's other recent books include *A War Like No Other*, about the U.S.-China relationship and the Taiwan issue, with Richard Bush; a multi-author volume, *Protecting the Homeland 2006/2007* (Brookings, 2006); *Defense Strategy for the Post-Saddam Era* (Brookings, 2005); *The Future of Arms Control* (Brookings, 2005), co-authored with Michael Levi; *Neither Star Wars nor Sanctuary: Constraining the Military Uses of Space* (Brookings, 2004); and *Crisis on the Korean Peninsula* (McGraw-Hill) with Mike Mochizuki in 2003.

O'Hanlon has written several hundred opeds in newspapers including *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Japan Times*, and Pakistan's *Dawn* paper. O'Hanlon has appeared on television or spoken on the radio about 2,000 times since September 11, 2001.

O'Hanlon was an analyst at the Congressional Budget Office from 1989-1994. He also worked previously at the Institute for Defense Analyses. His Ph.D. from Princeton is in public and international affairs; his bachelor's and master's degrees, also from Princeton, are in the physical sciences. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Congo/Kinshasa (the former Zaire) from 1982-1984, where he taught college and high school physics in French.

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION**

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: Michael O'Hanlon

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

- Individual
 Representative

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

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Middle East TV	BBG	\$60K	TV consultant/ SVRIF

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
SAM 5J 2011			

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
SAME AS 2011			

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

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

Current fiscal year (2011): 1;
 Fiscal year 2010: 1;
 Fiscal year 2009: _____;

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): Middle East Broadcasting / BBC;
 Fiscal year 2010: ";
 Fiscal year 2009: ";

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

Current fiscal year (2011): TV consulting / appearances;
 Fiscal year 2010: _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: _____;

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): \$0;
 Fiscal year 2010: ";
 Fiscal year 2009: ";

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

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

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

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

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

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

JUNE 29, 2012

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. BROOKS

Dr. O'HANLON. I believe that deficit reduction must be broad-based to be politically feasible and mathematically practical and economically wise. That means entitlement spending, discretionary spending, and revenues must all be on the table. Our current deficit is roughly \$1 trillion a year, perhaps a bit less if one adjusts for where we stand in the economic recovery. I believe that, beyond declining war costs in Afghanistan, the core defense budget can absorb those cuts scheduled in the first tranche of the Budget Control Act without serious prejudice to our national security, as I explained in detail last year in my book *The Wounded Giant: America's Armed Forces in an Age of Austerity*.

I agree that American deficits and the economic weakness they engender have become a major threat not only to our economy and our future way of life, but to our national security as well. Admiral Mike Mullen was right on this point. Indeed, this has been an important theme of my two latest books—*The Wounded Giant* in 2011, where I looked for economies in the defense budget, and *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy* this year (with Martin Indyk and Kenneth Lieberthal), where we argued that even though President Obama's foreign policy record is reasonably good in one sense, it is built on the shaky pillar of an American economy that is going through extremely difficult times. Economic renewal must be the agenda of the next Congress and the next presidential term, be it under Governor Romney or President Obama. Otherwise our national security will likely suffer.

In terms of deficit reduction strategies, I believe on policy and political grounds that the only way to move forward is to create a climate of shared sacrifice. While I support the defense cuts in the first tranche of the Budget Control Act, as reflected in the Obama administration defense strategy document of 2012 and budget proposal for FY 2013, I am troubled by the BCA's almost exclusive focus on so-called discretionary budget accounts. More effective deficit reduction efforts require tax and entitlement reform that slow the growth of the latter and lead to net revenue increases in regard to the former, in my judgment. The entitlement reforms need not be cuts per se, and the tax reform need not involve higher rates if sufficient loopholes are closed, but we need to spend less and take in more revenue than current projections imply.

On Afghanistan, we need to do what it takes to prevent the return of Al Qaeda to a sanctuary in that country, as the threat of Al Qaeda is much greater than the \$25 billion a year in steady state costs I would project for the mission there from 2015 through 2020. But this continued investment in Afghanistan only makes sense if Afghans do their part as well, particularly with their 2014 election and governance reforms. [See page 16.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

JUNE 29, 2012

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CRITZ

Mr. CRITZ. What is your understanding of the breakdown of \$4.1B spending proposed for ANSF? Does it include train and equip, SFA (Security Assistance Force) or only direct costs to train, equip, and pay for salaries and operations of the ANSF?

Dr. O'HANLON. The \$4.1 billion/year figure for post-2014 expenses is for just the Afghan security forces. I consider it unrealistically low by comparison with likely needs.

Mr. CRITZ. What are your thoughts on the Security Force Assistance (SFA) model: numbers, ROE, etc. Where are we with the planning for this? Do you think it will work?

Dr. O'HANLON. I believe we will need some 20,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan after 2014 to do the job right—at least for a few years, or until Pakistan begins to clamp down more effectively on the Taliban sanctuaries on its soil, or until there is a peace accord between major elements of the Afghan Taliban and Afghan government.

Mr. CRITZ. Is the ANSF respected by Afghans? Is it respected by the Taliban? Are there differences in perceptions about the various elements of the ANSF?

Dr. O'HANLON. Yes the ANSF is generally respected by Afghans according to all polls I have seen, but there are also concerns about corruption within its ranks. I believe the Taliban is gaining more respect for the ANSF, particularly its special forces and certain other units. But the Taliban also probably still thinks that on balance it can defeat the ANSF once NATO is gone.

Mr. CRITZ. What are your thoughts on why the poppy crop is down? How much is due to environmental factors (drought, blight, etc.) and how much due to ISAF or GIROA efforts? Can this lower level of production be sustained once U.S. forces withdraw?

Dr. O'HANLON. My understanding of the reasons for reduced poppy production suggest that we should consider this only a modest success to date (in other words, blight and related causes account for much of the decline—and production is in fact still rather high).

Mr. CRITZ. How do we deal with the Pakistan safe havens? Is Pakistan currently taking actions to eliminate safe havens for the Haqqani Network, the Quetta Shura Taliban, or HiG? Do we expect such actions in the future? Why or why not?

Dr. O'HANLON. Pakistan is not doing much yet to shut down sanctuaries on its soil. Bruce Riedel and I wrote about our ideas in a new Brookings book, *Campaign 2012*. Basically we advocated being tougher on the Pakistani military (e.g., less aid) and more supportive of the Pakistani economy and civil society (e.g., more development aid and greater efforts to move to a free-trade accord).

Mr. CRITZ. How do we deal with Afghan government corruption? What are the impacts of corruption? What level of confidence should NATO members have that corruption will be controlled post-2014? Does corruption currently undermine the effectiveness of GIROA and the ANSF? Is governmental corruption linked at all to the Taliban's ability to recruit new fighters?

Dr. O'HANLON. Yes Afghan government corruption is still serious and yes it helps the insurgency. I favor focusing on the looming 2014 elections in Afghanistan and underscoring to President Karzai how important it is that he and his supporters NOT try to engineer the election of a successor who may make the problem worse. I also believe that modest reductions in our aid budget are a good thing not a bad thing, for this same reason.

Mr. CRITZ. In your opinion, what will determine ANSF success? What factors could undermine ANSF capability and success in the future?

Dr. O'HANLON. To be successful, the ANSF needs to avoid ethnic fights from within its ranks, have adequate western financial support and mentoring and combat backup even after 2014, and get a little help from Islamabad in terms of Pakistan at least partially curtailing the ability of the Afghan insurgency to use Pakistani sanctuaries.

Mr. CRITZ. Can the Afghan Local Police (ALP) be sustained when we leave? Who will fund and train? Does the Afghan Ministry of the Interior have the ability to effectively oversee and control the ALP sites and units in the absence of USSOF?

Dr. O'HANLON. I am a supporter of the ALP, yes, but I would not grow it so much that we can't help oversee it after 2014 ourselves, at least to a degree.

Mr. CRITZ. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the ALP?

Dr. O'HANLON. The ALP is a good fighting force overall but it can be sucked into tribal politics locally and its effectiveness can be compromised as a result, or it can even be used to settle tribal scores rather than fight the Taliban. Also negative perceptions of the ALP can grow even if the ALP units themselves get better, because of the rumor mill.

Mr. CRITZ. Can you please explain your understanding of the procedures by which we control ALP funding and make sure it won't be misspent.

Dr. O'HANLON. The ALP is a good fighting force overall but it can be sucked into tribal politics locally and its effectiveness can be compromised as a result, or it can even be used to settle tribal scores rather than fight the Taliban. Also negative perceptions of the ALP can grow even if the ALP units themselves get better, because of the rumor mill.

Mr. CRITZ. General Allen has stated there are three key factors for successful transition in Afghanistan: 1) security, 2) governance, and 3) development. Do you agree? Are there any other factors that you believe are significant?

Dr. O'HANLON. Yes, beyond what General Allen has cited, Pakistani help, or at least less Pakistani damage to our efforts, would be a 4th leg of the effort in my eyes.

Mr. CRITZ. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Taliban insurgency?

Dr. O'HANLON. The Taliban is unsophisticated and has lost lots of its midlevel commanders over the years and has an unappealing ideology for most Afghans. But it has intact high-level commanders and sanctuaries in Pakistan, great tenacity, the ability to play off perceptions of Afghan government corruption to recruit, and a smart use of tactics that minimize harm to most of the population while employing assassination and precise strikes against government officials and security forces. It is alas an impressive enemy on balance.

Mr. CRITZ. How would you define a successful outcome of the American/coalition effort in Afghanistan?

Dr. O'HANLON. A minimal but perhaps adequate definition of success is an Afghanistan that does not fall apart and that controls most of its territory and thereby precludes return of extremist sanctuaries (at least big ones) to its own territory. To make this sustainable, the government will need greater legitimacy among its own people, too.

Mr. CRITZ. Lieutenant General Bolger stated that if the ANSF is reduced below 352,000 he believed many of those that leave ANSF will go into civilian positions with the Afghanistan government. Do you agree? Will there be any program to facilitate such placements? Do those personnel have skills that would be directly applicable to such positions? Can GIROA support such an increased number of personnel?

Dr. O'HANLON. I think unemployment will be a big problem in Afghanistan for many years to come. Many will compete for government jobs because the private sector is weak and will remain weak for a long time to come. I am not sure that most soldiers who leave the ANSF will find other government work.

Mr. CRITZ. Please describe your understanding of the operational assessment process used to evaluate the ANSF in the 1230 reports? What data is collected? Who evaluates the data? What method of analysis is used to evaluate the data? Who makes the final decision as to a CUAT determination? Is there any additional information the 1230 reports should include in the future?

Dr. O'HANLON. I think the CUAT system is better than what preceded it but still relies too much on the judgment of the NATO commanders who work with any given Afghan unit. This unintentionally biases the data. I am more interested in demonstrated field performance by Afghan units than in CUAT scores.

Mr. CRITZ. What areas of ANSF should the subcommittee focus its investigation on?

Dr. O'HANLON. The subcommittee should keep focusing on ANSF field performance, corruption, and ethnic cohesion.

Mr. CRITZ. How willing is the Afghan government to accept the transition?

Dr. O'HANLON. The Afghan government wants the transition. At least it feels that way now!

Mr. CRITZ. How confident are we that the Afghan government is aligned with U.S. interests? How do we make sure our interests are aligned?

Dr. O'HANLON. Our interests are adequately aligned over the long term because we both want a functional, stable Afghanistan. But on the means to get there, we often diverge a good deal.

Mr. CRITZ. Is there any evidence that old members of Northern Alliance are re-arming for possible civil war after transition, as suggested by CRS?

Dr. O'HANLON. I do believe the worries of civil war among Afghans are greater now than say 5 years ago. I do not believe they are acute or continuously worsening, however. At least not at this point.

Mr. CRITZ. Could you please identify any provinces or locations where you are concerned local militia may cause problems for the national Afghan government?

Dr. O'HANLON. I am most worried about the south and east, naturally, but also Baghlan and parts of the north where there are Pashtun pockets of population.

Mr. CRITZ. How have the most recent Parliamentary elections (2010) impacted the opinion on Afghans on the legitimacy of the government and the its ability to provide security?

Dr. O'HANLON. I am a guarded optimist about the Afghan parliament. I think it is gradually doing a better job. I would encourage the U.S. Congress to "partner" more with the parliament to help it develop further.

Mr. CRITZ. What is your opinion about governing capacity at local levels?

Dr. O'HANLON. Provincial governance is getting better all the time, as I learned from a visit to the Asia Foundation (among other research efforts) when last in Afghanistan in May. District governance is still spotty and very uneven.

