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**THE U.S. PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN
POST-2014: VIEWS OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HEARINGS

2013

	Page
HEARING:	
Thursday, September 19, 2013, The U.S. Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014: Views of Outside Experts	1
APPENDIX:	
Thursday, September 19, 2013	39

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

THE U.S. PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN POST-2014: VIEWS OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

McKeon, Hon. Howard P. "Buck," a Representative from California, Chair- man, Committee on Armed Services	1
Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services	2

WITNESSES

Flournoy, Hon. Michèle, Former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. Department of Defense	3
Keane, GEN Jack, USA (Ret.), Former Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army	6
Lockhart, Clare, Director, Institute for State Effectiveness	10
Neumann, Ambassador Ronald E., President, American Academy of Diplo- macy	8

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Flournoy, Hon. Michèle	47
Keane, GEN Jack	60
Lockhart, Clare	85
McKeon, Hon. Howard P. "Buck"	43
Neumann, Ambassador Ronald E.	72
Smith, Hon. Adam	45
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
[There were no Documents submitted.]	
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]	
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Ms. Speier	101

**THE U.S. PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN POST-2014:
VIEWS OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, September 19, 2013.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. “BUCK” MCKEON,
A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COM-
MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, the House Armed Services Committee meets to receive testimony from outside experts on the United States presence in Afghanistan post-2014.

Today we have with us Ms. Michèle Flournoy, General Jack Keane, Ambassador Ronald Neumann and Ms. Clare Lockhart, all experts on the subject from different areas. We are really appreciative of having you here today, thank you very much.

A discussion of a post-2014 presence in Afghanistan should start with a reminder of why the United States went there in the first place. The most lethal and complex terrorist attack in U.S. history was plotted and perpetrated by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The United States continues to have a vital interest in making sure that never happens again and the Afghan government can secure their own country.

It has been a long fight. The United States has committed a wealth of resources, both blood and treasure, to preserve U.S. vital national security interests. The question before us is whether we should continue to commit resources after 2014. And if so, what level of resources is sufficient to minimize the risk that Afghanistan could be used again as a platform for terrorist attacks against the United States and risk to the remaining troops that we leave behind.

This hearing is timely because in the near future the President will order additional troop withdrawals and announce the United States post-2014 mission set and military posture in Afghanistan. We have received mixed messages from the White House about the President’s commitment to a post-2014 military presence. Many of us have traveled into theater and met with our commanders. We know there is much at stake, but our witnesses have significant expertise in these matters, and their views will help inform our thinking on the matter.

I, for one, am not advocating for a never-ending combat mission in Afghanistan. In fact, we have turned over the fighting at this point to the Afghans. But as recent events have made clear, the President must ensure that our interests are secure after we leave. I believe that requires a credible residual presence to train, advise and assist the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] and counterterrorism operations. We owe nothing less to the victims on 9/11, the U.S. troops and their families, who have served and sacrificed, not to mention our sons and daughters who will have to return if we get this wrong, and our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies and those who have been working and fighting side by side with us. The simple justice that comes from that principled position can not be overstated. I look forward to your testimony and your insights here today.

Ranking Member Smith.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

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

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks to our very distinguished panel. I look forward to your comments and insights and answers to our questions.

I agree completely with the chairman, I think the mission in Afghanistan has always been very, very clear. After 9/11, we want to make sure that Al Qaeda, the Taliban, anyone who threatens us here in the West does not have a safe haven in Afghanistan. And to do that, regrettably, we had to face the challenge of building a sufficiently strong government in Afghanistan to make sure that doesn't happen. And that was a significant challenge after decades of war, very low literacy rate, very low economic position. I think we have done admirable work in cooperation with Afghanistan and our NATO and other partners to get there.

Now, it is time, the difficult time, to make that transition, to transition responsibility over to the ANSF onto the Afghan people. They ultimately have to run their country; we can't do it from the outside and shouldn't do it. I think an enormous amount of progress has been made; that the sacrifices that our men and women who serve us both in the military and in the many civilian jobs as well, that have made to get us to this point is something we should all be very proud of and never forget. Now we want to make sure that we make that transition in an effective way.

And progress has already been made. I was there just a few weeks ago with Congressman Hunter. I was very, very impressed with the progress that the ANSF has made. It will be a very difficult transition, but we have come a very, very long way. I think there is no question that we have a commitment to a post-2014 presence. The challenge, of course—and I am interested in hearing all the panelists' comments on this—is the bilateral security agreement. We have to get that agreement with Afghanistan to maintain the type of presence that we want. I think people are cautiously optimistic that we can get there, but that is an absolute necessity.

Then, of course, the next big challenge is the transition—the other transition from President Karzai to whoever the next president is going to be. Making sure we that have successful elections in April 2014 in Afghanistan is critical. Now those two things—getting a bilateral security agreement, having successful free and fair elections in Afghanistan 2014—are the two biggest blows that we can strike against the Taliban in the next 8 months. If that sort of legitimacy can be shown in the Afghan government, if we can have an ongoing relationship with Afghanistan and a post-2014 presence guaranteed, that will undermine many of the central arguments that the Taliban are making going forward.

So I look forward to your testimony. I think this is a very, very critical time in Afghanistan. The world and the country has been distracted to some degree by Syria, Egypt and other problems, but Afghanistan is still the one place in the world where we have a substantial true presence and where the U.S. is in fact at war. So getting this policy right, I think, is one of the most important national security challenges we face.

I look forward to your help today in getting us to that point.

I yield back, thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 45.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Secretary Flournoy.

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

Ms. FLOURNOY. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much for inviting me back to speak before this committee and this time in a private capacity, but I am honored to be here, especially to talk about such an important topic.

I believe the United States can achieve its strategic objectives in Afghanistan if we maintain and adequately resource our current policy course and if our Afghan partners do their part. This judgment is based on the impressive progress of the Afghan security forces, the significant strides in areas from health, to education, to agriculture, and the promising next generation of Afghan leaders who are poised to gain greater influence over their country's future.

However, the United States and our international partners would risk snatching defeat from the jaws of something that could still resemble victory if, due to frustration with President Karzai or our own internal budgetary pressures, we were to accelerate our disengagement between now and 2014 or under-resource our commitment to Afghanistan after 2014.

It is important, I believe imperative, that Washington and Kabul clarify and solidify their commitment to an enduring partnership as soon as possible. If the United States were to announce its intended size and missions of the U.S. forces plan for post-2014 period, it would greatly reduce Afghan fears of abandonment and put pressure on the Afghan government to agree to an acceptable bilateral security agreement. It would also greatly reduce incentives for hedging behavior in Afghanistan and Pakistan and contribute to a

very constructive atmosphere for the campaigns leading up to the crucial April 2014 presidential election.

In my written testimony, I argue that Afghanistan is not a lost cause, that the United States can still achieve its core goal of preventing Afghanistan from ever again reverting to being a safe haven for Al Qaeda and its affiliates. So in that context, now is the time to lock in hard-fought gains, not cut our losses.

Looking at the security situation, although it is true the Taliban insurgency remains resilient, particularly in the east and south of the country, and though it does retain sanctuary in Pakistan, its momentum on the ground in Afghanistan has stalled. The insurgency is still capable of some high-profile suicide bombing, small-scale attacks, intimidation at the local level, but it has not succeeded in winning over Afghan hearts and minds or expanding its control and influence in the country's major populated areas. It no longer has the strength to overthrow or threaten the Afghan government. Indeed, the greatest threat to the Afghan government today is not the insurgency but the government itself; corruption, the risk that power brokers could seek to rig the coming elections.

Perhaps the most important factor in this security progress has been the development of the ANSF, especially the Afghan National Army, which has been frankly under-reported in the Western press. They have made serious strides in taking the lead for the country's security in the last half decade or so. Afghan forces, as you know, are now responsible for the security of the country nationwide. Almost all, upwards of 95 percent, of military operations in the country are now Afghan led, with the vast majority of those being conducted independent of ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] help. ANSF personnel are now taking most—almost all of the casualties, not ISAF. Eighty-five percent of their training programs are Afghan led. There has been significant success in establishing control over key cities, significant lines of communication and so forth. And Afghan units are becoming increasingly proficient in countering IEDs [improvised explosive devices].

It is true that logistic support remains a huge challenge for Afghans, and that will be an ongoing project, but there has been progress there as well. In the south, for example, which I visited late last spring, Afghan units have been resupplying themselves without significant ISAF help since last December. ANSF special operations forces have achieved very high level of competence and are increasingly capable of conducting sophisticated special operations. ANSF still needs help in important areas, from logistics to intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, air support, artillery and institutional capacity building, but there is, as I said, substantial progress.

The most important thing I saw my last trip there was Afghan forces, different elements really starting to work together, coming to one another's aid when necessary, really operationalizing what I would call a layered security concept. In my written testimony, I also address the political situation, especially the importance of the 2014 presidential elections as a make-or-break event. And I also talk about what the U.S. and international community can do to help.

But in the interest of time, I would like to focus the remainder of my remarks on the importance of clarifying the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan post-2014 and what our so-called enduring presence should look like. While actual deployment of any such force would, of course, be contingent on including an appropriate bilateral security agreement, clarifying the U.S. commitment now would make it clear to Afghans that only their own government's reluctance stands in the way of firming up our partnership. Given Afghanistan's historical fear of abandonment, the impact of such a clear American commitment of intent would be both powerful and positive. It would also help our NATO allies to firm up their own plans and contributions.

This doesn't mean that the U.S. should rush to an agreement or show impatience to conclude one, as that would potentially weaken our negotiating position. But there is absolutely no need to be ambiguous about something that would be so very clearly in the United States national security interests if our Afghan partners do their part.

As for what an enduring force should look like, the United States needs several things as a matter of prudence. First, there needs to be enough force to advise and assist the ANSF effectively, including geographic distribution to cover the ANA [Afghan National Army] corps in Kabul and the four corners of the country, north, south, east, west, and capacity, when necessary, in extremis to go below the Afghan corps level with mobile teams to support Afghan brigades in pre-operational preparations should problems develop.

Second, in the country's north and west in particular, it is critical that we provide enough enablers to support key allies, like the Germans and the Italians, to actually stay in the game and to contribute substantial forces.

Third, the United States needs some counterterrorism capabilities in country for strikes within Afghanistan to keep pressure on Al Qaeda and the insurgents and also along the border.

Finally, for 2 or 3 years after 2014, we may need an additional force package of several thousand personnel to help the Afghans build out their Air Force, their special operations forces and certain enablers in the medical realm, counter-IED capability, and intelligence collection.

Now to achieve this, the United States and its NATO allies should deploy an enduring force size and shape for these tasks. It is not my purpose here today to recommend a specific number. I think of the range of numbers that has been reported—9,000 to 10,000 for the U.S.; 12,000 to 15,000 overall, including NATO contributions of, say, 3,000 to 6,000 allied troops. These are all within the ballpark of what would be acceptable, and I look forward to hearing about General Dunford's recommendation this fall.

In conclusion, despite the very near-term challenges that Afghanistan faces, ranging from security, to corruption, to narcotics, and difficult neighbors, I remain fundamentally optimistic about Afghanistan's mid- to long-term future. True, it will remain one the poorest countries and most corrupt countries in the world for years to come. But the United States and its partners, who have sacrificed so much, we have a chance to ensure that Afghanistan does not return to being a safe haven for international terrorists, that

it has the opportunity to stay on a path toward greater stability, human and economic development. Compared to what we have already invested in blood and treasure, the cost associated with sustaining this future course seems to me to be a very wise investment.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
General Keane.

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

General KEANE. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Minority Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you also for allowing me to testify today on a critical subject, such as the presence in Afghanistan post-2014. I am honored to be here with such a distinguished panel, many of whom I have known for years.

I want to associate myself with what Secretary Flournoy has just said in her remarks. I agree with just about everything she said. And also I think she is absolutely right that sooner rather than later in making a commitment to the Afghans in terms of a bilateral security agreement is really in our interest and certainly in the interest of the Afghans.

Afghanistan is rapidly moving toward its most critical milestone since 2001 when the Taliban were deposed. As 2014 approaches and Afghanistan participates in a political, economic and security transition, it is U.S. and Afghanistan written policy now that both countries will maintain a long-term strategic relationship, which is mutually beneficial.

I am reminded we had a similar agreement with Iraq, titled the Strategic Framework Agreement, which in my judgment, we have not honored. Indeed, we have pulled away from Iraq, allowing Iran to gain influence and encouraging the Al Qaeda to reassert itself. The United States cannot make this mistake again in Afghanistan. Not only is U.S. military presence required but a determined, aggressive diplomatic and political engagement is needed for years to come. It took multiple generations after the Korean War for South Korea to transition from a Third World nation run by military dictators to the world's 12th largest economy and a flourishing democracy.

U.S. and international community presence in Afghanistan is vital to its future success and for overall stability in the region. After 2014, there will have been national elections in Afghanistan. While there are no guarantees, a relatively fair and open election that reflects the people's choices and results in an improved national government will be a significant step forward in the political development of Afghanistan. As such, it will positively impact the confidence of the Afghan people and the international community at large in the Afghan political process. On the contrary, if the election is perceived to be corrupt and basically unfair, it will be a major setback, which will adversely impact the U.S. and international community support.

As part of the post-2014 presence, the United States and the international community should assist the Afghans to move from a

donor economy, with outside sources representing the bulk of the resources, to a self-sustaining economy, focusing on mining, agriculture and transportation. I am going to defer economic engagement to my fellow panel member, Clare Lockhart, who is a recognized expert in the area.

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

Three key decisions post-2014 can mitigate the security risk and provide a hedge. Decision one is funding the Afghan National Security Forces. Currently, their transition from U.S./NATO leading combat operations to supporting a lead of the ANSF in combat operations, frankly, is going better than most expected. The growth and development of the ANSF into an acceptable force which has the respect of the Afghan people is quite an achievement.

While it is still too early to tell how they will do entirely on their own, the preliminary indications are positive. Currently, the ANSF is at a force level of 352,000, which is funded through 2015. Options are under consideration to draw down ANSF post 2015. To draw down the ANSF on the heels of the U.S./NATO drawdown makes no sense and simply drives up the risk. We can mitigate that risk by planning to fund the ANSF at the current 352,000 to 2020. At some point, the Afghans will be in a position to contribute to that funding level.

Decision two, the post-2014 residual force. The size of the residual force should be driven by the missions that are required for the force. Those missions are counterterrorism, training and assistance and enablers to the ANSF. The CT or counterterrorism focus is currently and should continue to be on the Taliban leaders to disrupt their ability to plan, support and lead combat operations. While leaders can be replaced, successful CT operations are very disruptive to the Taliban and definitely adversely impact their operations.

Successful CT operations not only require a direct action force—in other words that is the force that makes physical contact—but also drone crews, intel analysts, helicopter maintenance and flight crews, medical trauma units and security forces. Training and assistance are essential advisors to assist the army and the police with their continued growth and development. These advisors would be mainly at operational headquarters spread over the six corps and the various police provinces and to the Ministers of Defense and Interior.

The enablers for the ANSF is often misunderstood as to its importance. Just about every NATO country in Afghanistan who was involved in fighting requires enablers from the United States in varying degrees, such as helicopters, intelligence, medical, logistics and road and mine clearance. When the Afghan National Army was organized, recruited, and trained, the decision was to build an infantry force or a boots on the ground force. The enablers would be provided by the United States and are similar to what the United States currently provides NATO forces. Eventually, the ANA will have its own enablers but not until years beyond 2014. If the ANA is to be offensive minded, they must have confidence

in their support. Otherwise, they will be paralyzed and be reduced to defending the bases. I will be specific, a summary of the force level requirements for the residual force in my view on counterterrorism, 7,000; advisors training, 5,000; enablers, 8,000; with a total residual force level of 20,000.

Decision three, Pakistan sanctuaries. A third key decision to reduce the risk is to authorize the targeting of the Taliban and Haqqani leaders in the sanctuaries in Pakistan. Priority to the Haqqani sanctuary because the situation in the east is not as stable as the south. This would be an extension of the mission the OGA [Other Government Agency] is conducting against Al Qaeda in the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas]. Once systematic targeting commences, the sanctuary will cease to exist as we currently know it, a place where strategy, training, operational oversight, intelligence and logistics is executed routinely in safe haven. These functions will suffer significantly, which will positively impact operations in the east. Additionally, it would be a huge morale boost for the ANSF.

Let me conclude by saying that if we are to avoid squandering the gains that we have made in Afghanistan, the U.S./international community presence post-2014 is essential. The Taliban are hoping to regain the momentum 2014—post-2014 and will make a major effort to do so. What is key is the U.S. policy commitment to the stability and security of Afghanistan must be clearly stated time and again and moreover reflected in the political, economic and military assistance that is critical to reduce the risk of failure. We cannot afford any equivocation or mixed signals about the strength and resolve of the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan's future.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Keane can be found in the Appendix on page 60.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Neumann.

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RONALD E. NEUMANN,
PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY**

Ambassador NEUMANN. Chairman McKeon, Representative Smith, distinguished members, thank you for inviting me to appear today. The subject of how the U.S. presence is constructed post-2014 is truly important. It directly affects the issues of success or failure in Afghanistan, for which I and so many others have labored, for which some have made an ultimate sacrifice—

The CHAIRMAN. Please pull your mike down.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Sacrifice for which many have labored, billions of taxpayer dollars have been spent and for which many thousand Afghans have also lost their lives and limbs.

Sacrifice creates a cost, but it is not a sufficient reason to continue sacrificing if there is not a reasonable chance of success, but neither is pain and fatigue, of which the American people are showing advanced symptoms, a sound basis for policy.

I believe we will get the base security agreement. But I want to focus on a number of other things for the moment. I think we need to think of the post-2014 presence in terms of events which will happen even before that, events that will take place, actions we can

take to undergird success and how we react to success, or failure, or problematic Afghan performance.

The April 2014 Afghan presidential election is crucial to success. There are things we can do to make that success more likely. We should be pressing Pakistan to reinforce the border, as it did in previous elections, to slow infiltration. We should be planning for election observers. We should be instituting a brief increase in air support to increase Afghan ability to secure the vote. And we should be publicizing far more in Afghanistan our support for elections training and the mechanics of an election. We should also be clear on consequences if the electoral calendar is significantly breached or the election is disastrously mishandled by Afghans.

Governance is a key part of future success. We have demanded improvement but lost credibility through lack of follow-through on our statements of conditionality. Change before the election is unlikely. In our own system, you would be unlikely to see painful major political changes in immediate pre-electoral period. But we should institute some level of pain so that we prove our seriousness now and not when a new government is trying to take hold after an election, that will provide, if we get lucky on the election, that will provide an opportunity to reinforce actions. And we should be positioned to take advantage of that if it happens.

It is essential that we maintain the minimum civilian presence outside Kabul, both to manage program oversight and evaluation of diplomatic developments in governance. Post-Benghazi fear should not cripple our diplomatic effectiveness.

Concerning the military mission—and I associate myself with my colleagues—I want to stress that personnel needs must be related to greater clarity about what the mission actually is. “Train and advise” can mean many things. I believe, and I am joining my colleagues, that we need to be present at all corps and frequently in the brigades. And building the Ministry of Defense and Interior also essential tasks. And this probably means U.S. forces somewhere in the 10,000- to 13,000-man range, but the immediate issue for Congress is to demand that means be logically linked to ends. Further, there are multiple parts of the security mission and each needs to be clearly defined and linked to required resources.

Some support and logistical elements are not finished, and part of the responsibility is ours. I would be happy to talk about that in greater detail, but we need to fill some gaps for a transitional period, and we need to plan for how those forces will be ramped down. Counterterrorist forces with a mission outside Afghanistan quite possibly should be considered on their own merits and not counted against a ceiling built around support for the Afghan mission. Afghan forces need to be held accountable for cleaning up corruption and implementing their promotions. We should be prepared for some cuts if those actions are not taken. We need not go into a frenzy of retaliation, but we need predictable retaliation for lack of performance and threats need to be implemented.

Finally, in closing, let me say that on the basis of repeated trips of my own to Afghanistan, too, this year, I believe that success is still possible. It is very tough, but it is possible if we do not cripple ourselves through indecision and vagueness, and maintain the follow-through required of our policies.

Thank you. I would be happy to take questions.
 [The prepared statement of Ambassador Neumann can be found
 in the Appendix on page 72.]
 The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
 Ms. Lockhart.

**STATEMENT OF CLARE LOCKHART, DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE
 FOR STATE EFFECTIVENESS**

Ms. LOCKHART. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to speak here today.

As my fellow panelists have said, decisions made over the next few months will be foundational for security in the region and U.S. interests for the next decades, possibly generations, ahead. We can all acknowledge the mistakes in policy and implementation that have been made over the last decade: under-resourcing; backing strongmen with disregard to the impact on corruption and governance; allowing an insurgency to emerge unchecked; and perhaps, more recently, a lack of coherence in political strategy. But despite this, it is clear that the commitments that we have made at terrible cost, but the policy course we have followed are now paying dividends; transition and the campaign are now working.

Much of the pessimism about Afghanistan reflects news from 2 or perhaps 5 years ago, and despite this, I think there is another story—and many of you have witnessed this in your own travels to the country—in ANSF, that is gaining the trust of the population and capability in carrying out their missions. A surprising fact: Afghanistan has outperformed all other countries on the human development index between 2000 and 2012, it has made more gains than any other country in the world on that index. And most of the challenges have been successfully navigated, the election law has been passed and transition to Afghan political and military control in all 34 provinces has succeeded.

But considerable risks but also opportunities lie ahead, and it is clear that we are at a crossroads. We are looking now at a post-Karzai era. Political coalitions are emerging. A national debate is being launched, and this political transition has every prospect of succeeding if the right commitments are made. If it fails, I think we see the prospect of intensified conflict and the space for extremism to flourish in the future.

I will start by mentioning some traps that I think we need to avoid. I think sometimes analysts get trapped by a forced dilemma between either a perpetual war or a grand bargain. The U.S. can and, in fact, has already ceased its lead role in the war, but it can still maintain a security commitment, as it does to many countries around the world for the years to come.

I think the pursuit of a grand bargain with the Taliban and other elements of insurgency has been something of a red herring. I don't think it is attainable at the current time. Even if it were attainable, I don't think it will be enduring. And even if it were to endure, I don't think it's in either the Afghan or the U.S. interests.

And final trap, a sense that Afghanistan is a graveyard of empires. I had the privilege to serve on the Bonn negotiation team in 2001 and lived for many years in Afghanistan, largely living among

Afghans. And what I witnessed and continue to witness is that the majority of the population want a partnership. The Afghans are capable of building institutions, often at very low costs and perhaps, particularly, at low costs and that they have built a number of institutions over time.

The key factor I believe in the security and stability of Afghanistan and its region going forward are the Afghan people themselves. I was once told by an Afghan civic leader that Afghanistan, he said, like any country in the world, has 95 percent ordinary people, 4 percent thugs, and 1 percent extremists. We get diverted if we focus only on the 4 percent and the 1 percent and trying to construct bargains between them. He said the 95 percent are the real allies of the Afghan people. And these are the people who make up the ANSF, and their families. They run businesses. They run schools, clinics and farms. As we know, the new generation coming of age, 60 percent of the country under 25 or under 30, depending on the statistics, represent an enormous opportunity for a different Afghanistan in the future.

The key factor for the Afghan people to remain the bulwark of stability is confidence. The critical ingredient is their confidence of the Afghan people in their own future and their own security so that they can take the burden of stabilizing and rebuilding their country. They are not asking for a U.S. nation-building effort; they are asking for the stabilizer wheels that enable them to keep their own country on track.

This confidence to keep this on track requires commitment, a sense of commitment, a fulfilling of the commitments that have already been made at Lisbon, Chicago, and Tokyo, in the Strategic Partnership Agreement. If the U.S. and then its allies can hold steadfast on these commitments, this will pay dividends that will allow Afghanistan and its region to stabilize.

The talk of zero option, I am told by many of my Afghan interlocutors, seriously undermines confidence. And Afghan citizens don't always distinguish between official policy and statements by individual politicians and newspapers.

What more concretely should this commitment consist of my fellow panelists I think have articulated extremely well, the security, the economic, and the political components, and I address these in my written testimony. To summarize them in brief, the most important of these is the security commitment, both the post-2014 commitment to forces that is sufficient in number and sufficiently resolutely made to be a credible backstop enabler and trainer to the ANSF and a credible deterrent to countries in the region who may seek to threaten Afghanistan sovereignty or territorial integrity. Commitment to support for the ANSF sufficient that it can secure the country against critical threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and any agreements—the Strategic Partnership Agreement, of course, is already in place. The BSA [Bilateral Security Agreement] is under consideration. I agree that that is an absolutely critical agreement. My only caveat is that if it meets obstacles, this piece of paper should not become an obstacle to the U.S. making the commitments that are in its interests. I think there are legal agreements that have been already made that may provide sufficient legal basis for continued U.S. presence.

I think there are two other critical factors: The economic. I think we can acknowledge that many Members and particularly their constituents, the U.S. taxpayers, have reached the limit of bearing the cost in blood and treasure for foreign wars, and this is very understandable. So I think this makes it all the more critical that Afghanistan move towards economic self-sufficiency. Afghanistan had the most flourishing agriculture in Central Asia. Agriculture provides 80 percent of the jobs and 20 percent of the GDP [Gross Domestic Product], so continued investments in agriculture are critical.

Sometimes the discovery of minerals and hydrocarbons is dismissed as a 20-year project that probably won't come to fruition. I think this assessment is wrong. The recent discoveries of hydrocarbons in the country and the mining that is already happening presents a very realistic revenue base. And the more that this can be developed, the more that Afghanistan can pay for its own security forces and other costs. And I think that development assistance needs to be tailored to those investments that will see Afghan revenue increase. The more Afghan revenue increases, the less it will be dependent on U.S. and other financial commitments.

And then, finally, the political track. As I argued, the focus on the grand bargain I think has been something of a red herring, will bring neither peace nor stability in the short or medium term, but there are other elements of a political strategy that are fundamental to the security success. And the first of these is getting elections right. The second is the national dialogue amongst the non-violent constituents of the country, so that they can agree and particularly between different ethnic groups. How do the different ethnic groups agree on a formula for governance in their country and a sense to share power.

Addressing both the real and perceived grievances of different populations, and here particularly some of the populations in the south and east; the disaffected Pashtun population, not so much a question of bringing the Taliban back in but addressing the grievances of Pashtun communities; continued reform, the bulk of which will be on the shoulders of Afghans, and then a different approach to Pakistan and asking Pakistan to live to its international commitments of respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighbor.

And I think the region, there is a real opportunity to set out a common agenda of regional stability and counterterrorism that they are in concert with the interests of most countries in the region, including critically China, India and Russia.

Finally, I was asked to consider the implications for Afghan women and what will happen to them post-2014, and I think that what is required to protect women are the same factors that are required for the protection of any Afghan citizen, man, woman or child, and it is this commitment to Afghanistan's future security.

The recommendations are not a new set of recommendations; most elements for this are already in place. But I believe all of them are critical to see the campaign succeed.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lockhart can be found in the Appendix on page 85.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I have been concerned that the United States policy in Afghanistan is already focused toward the exits and not sufficiently focused on our own long-term vital interests.

As you know, the President's decision on the post-2014 presence and mission set is forthcoming.

Ms. Flournoy, in your testimony, you encouraged the President to describe the United States post-2014 commitment sooner rather than later to counter the Taliban's narrative of abandonment and bolster the confidence of the Afghan people and security forces.

I know we were in Afghanistan at the same time earlier this year. And that was a message I got also, that it was very important to work on. In fact, I was hoping that we could have had the agreement before now. You also indicated that such a signal of commitment could reasonably be described by a range of U.S. forces. How would a U.S. post-2014 commitment announcement impact other actors in the region?

And is there a troop level at which our commitment would no longer be perceived as credible, either by Afghans, our allies or other regional actors? What is that threshold? I would like each of our witnesses' thoughts on that matter.

Ms. FLOURNOY. So I do think a U.S. announcement of an intended commitment, even if it is announced before the BSA is concluded, would have several positive effects. Number one, it would completely disrupt the Taliban narrative that we are leaving, we are abandoning ship, you know, we will be gone, and so they will be resurgent again.

Second, as several of my colleagues have said, I think it would really bolster the confidence of those Afghan people and those who are invested in a different and more stable and hopeful future for Afghanistan.

Third, I actually think it would affect the environment in which the elections will be held. And it would put an end to some of the hedging behavior that we are seeing from different parties, from Karzai to some of the opposition figures, because of the uncertainty of their future and particularly the U.S. commitment to their future. I think it would send a strong message to Pakistan that would affect their calculations about how they are going to behave and others in the region.

And finally, I think it would actually help us in concluding the BSA negotiations. Right now, you know, Karzai has made some demands that have I think put the U.S. a little bit on the defensive in the negotiations. I think if we were to state a clear commitment of intent, and the only thing standing between realizing that commitment for the Afghan people is the Afghan government being reasonable in the negotiations and coming to a conclusion, I actually think it shifts the burden in the negotiations and puts pressure on Karzai and the Afghan government to get to an agreement, a reasonable agreement. So that is why I think it is so important for us to try to articulate this commitment clearly very soon.

You know, as for what the threshold is, I have to be honest, since I have been out of government I have not been privy to the sort of classified assessments of different levels of forces. I think, I do think there is a band that could work. I honestly don't know exactly where the threshold is, which is why I focused on, what are

the criteria that we should assess a force against, and I would defer to General Keane and others at the table who may have a better idea of a particular threshold.

General KEANE. Yes, thank you.

You know, Ambassador Ryan Crocker made a statement that I think is pretty revealing and insightful for all of us when he said that how you leave a country and what you leave behind is more important than what you began with. And that certainly was the case in point in Iraq, and it is right in front of us again in Afghanistan. War is fundamentally a test of wills and Sun Tzu taught us that the ultimate objective of war is to break your opponent's will. So will is very important here. And what we want to demonstrate to the Taliban clearly, not just in our words but in our actions, that we are committed, that the stability of Afghanistan is real to us, and we are going to see it through to the end. And we are not going to bail out as 2014 approaches and leave the Afghans with far too much risk. So how we act in the next year or so I think is pretty critical to the long-term security.

I believe fundamentally that we should be looking beyond Karzai, put his mercurial personality—he drives us crazy with his statements, you know, with his unpredictability. We have got to look beyond him. We will have a new leader at the end of next year, and I don't think his demands and his personality should be affecting our decisions because we are talking about a long-term relationship with Afghanistan that we have already agreed to, that it is of strategic importance to us, and we cannot let the personality get into this to the degree that it does.

In terms of the numbers, I put them out there. I think 20,000 is what you need to get the job done, and that is done on a fair number of analyses with a lot of people assisting that. If you put a map of Afghanistan down in front you and the size and scale of the country is significant, there is no way that you can put all of our people at a base, secure them and then conduct operations. It takes a couple of hours by C-130 to get to Kandahar, which tells you, you have to have a base there. Our major threat in the east is coming from Miranshah, where the Pakistani sanctuary is. We cannot deal with that threat operating out of Bagram Air Field by itself. That means you have to have another base out there. If you look at the geography of it and then you start to apportion resources, you get to a number actually that is in excess of the number I gave you. And I think that is the minimum number required to meet the counterterrorism requirement, and as I tried to tell you, out of the 7,000 I am recommending, only 2,000 of those go in and kick doors down. All the rest is to support them in their efforts that I tried to enumerate what those functions are that are essential for those that kick doors down to be successful. And we just can't arbitrarily dismiss the numbers, because numbers do matter; they are tied to the functions that are represented.

Iraq is a case in point, the commander in Iraq, Lloyd Austin, now the CENTCOM [Central Command] Commander, recommended a force of 23,000, 24,000. The personal envoy for the President of the United States came into Iraq and in final negotiations and put 10,000 on the table. No one took that number seriously and that

went to 6,000, to 3,000 to nothing. And it began because the number put on the table was not a serious number. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ambassador.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Thank you. It is a really important question and one that I have looked at in some detail, although not probably as closely as General Keane, but I very much agree with his basic points. I think the starting point is to understand that we are such a big player in Afghanistan, that everyone, to some extent, takes position on us. Friend, enemy, neutrals, they all condition their approach in part by what they think we are going to do. And a lot now think that we are going to bolt and leave. And so that produces what Michèle talked about, hedging behavior; that is if you are an Afghan and you are trying to survive and you are making decisions on that basis, whether that is, do I have to steal more because I am going to have it to run? Do I have to tighten ties with militia groups instead of work on professionalizing the army, because I have got to have somebody I can rely on to fight with me? All these so-called hedging behaviors are counter-productive, but they are survival driven, and you get them when you are vague—when we are vague about what we are doing.

We have a lack of clarity. We have a policy which has a number of commitments in Tokyo, in Chicago, to maintain forces in the last defense ministerial. And we have a public discussion that emphasizes departure and rarely mentions any of the commitments. It doesn't take brilliance to figure out that there is a lack of solidarity in this piece.

You asked, is there a number below which we lose credibility. I am sure there is. I don't know that I could or any of us could exactly say because it a psychological question; it is about will. But if the number of forces at the end of the day is manifestly incapable of carrying out the missions we have talked about, then I think that will become readily evident in our public discussion, in a lot of other people's discussion, and it will lead to reinforcing the view that what we are doing is heading for the door. I don't know that that number is exact. But at this point, there is so little clarity on what these missions mean. General Keane has talked quite correctly about what they ought to mean, but I don't know what this administration actually intends to accomplish with these missions. I think that discussion is going to be illuminating if we get there.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Lockhart.

Ms. LOCKHART. Chairman, to your first question, how does the announcement affect our countries in the region, I think the first is it affects, within Afghanistan, as Ms. Flournoy articulated. It seeks to mitigate the hedging behavior that is so prevalent at the moment because of the uncertainty. I think the more certain and resolute the announcement can be, it is this that will help the moderate middle to rally around the future in such a way as to do the hard work of marginalizing the extremes.

In terms of the region, I think it is particularly to the calculus of Pakistan that it is relevant, but also to other countries, India and China, and send a clear sign of the type of post-2014 future that they could also rally around. And I think here again, the clear

interests that they have in both stability and seeing the threat of extremism marginalized.

To the troop level, I have not seen the detailed analysis and can't give a specific number, but I think I talked to two factors: First is the troop-to-task analysis; what are the missions and tasks, and what are the numbers that are required to carry them out? It is clearly an important factor in the analysis. And then the second is the symbolism, is the credible signal that the commitment would send both to the Afghans and to the region and perhaps the possibility to be considered of leaving the door open to consider additional contingent forces should the threats of insurgency or neighbors materialize to provide a deterrent effect. And that may not be politically feasible, but I think that may help send the kind of signals to the region.

And the final comments here I think the vision of a minimalist CT mission should not beguile us. This is pretty much what we tried in 2002 to 2004. A minimalist CT mission in the countryside partnered with strong men and their militias, but it was precisely this type of approach that so alienated the Afghan population because of the behavior of the militia groups and the lack of attention to the basic fundamentals of governance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just following up a little bit and directly, General Keane, some of your comments about the numbers. I think the will that is most important here is the will of the Afghan government and ANSF and the Afghan people, and that is really the fight here, is will they stand? Will they maintain their government? And part of our mission has been to help them but also not make them dependent, and that is the difficult balance, because we cannot stay there forever. In fact, to some degree, our goals in Afghanistan are undermined if we stay there forever.

One of the things that has happened recently is that the Taliban have been presenting themselves first and foremost as fighting off a foreign invader, which is a pretty popular thing generally in Afghanistan. But now, certainly for the last 6 months to a year, they have primarily been killing other Afghans, which undermines that argument, and that is where we have got to get to, is the Afghan people being responsible for their own security.

Now I will grant you, it is a tough balance. You don't want to leave them too soon. But if we stay there—if we look at this solely from the standpoint of—obviously, we are more capable than they are. If the analysis was simply that, we would keep 100,000 troops; we would keep 150,000 troops there if that is the sole equation. But the real equation is, how do we transition?

And also, I just want to say, on Iraq, the reason things fell apart in Iraq was not because we didn't sufficiently commit the numbers; it is because the Iraqi people didn't want us there. And it was a democracy. And their members of parliament knew what their people wanted. They weren't willing to give us the agreement, give us the immunity that we wanted to, and ultimately, whether it was 2,000, 3,000, 10,000 or 100,000, they weren't willing to give us

what we needed to stay there, and that is a different equation. That is the difficulty of sovereignty.

So when you were running through the numbers of the need to be in Kandahar, the need to be in the east, one piece of that is the ANSF. I mean, the way you stated that sort of assumes that we are the only fighting force there. I will grant you, we are vastly more capable. And I was just in Afghanistan, as I mentioned, and there is a lot of improvement that they have made, but I still have questions about the capability of the ANSF, certainly in terms of their air support, in terms of what they have.

But in analyzing the chairman's question, if you could talk a little bit about what the ANSF presence, how does that help us in Kandahar? How does that help us in the east? How do we balance what they are able to bring to the fight with the number that we need to bring to the fight? Your 20,000 and up number, how does that factor in with what you think the ANSF is going to be capable of, keeping in mind, they have got to get capable at some point. It has been at least now 4 years since we moved in with a very aggressive train-and-equip mission. And I think they have shown improvement. I think all of you have acknowledged that. So how do you see their capability as being able to fill some of those gaps that you described?

General KEANE. Well, certainly, I think we have had the most success in the south, and we had some success in the east that exceeded our expectations as well, but there are still more challenges in the east. Look, the ANSF is clearly doing a good job, and the fact of the matter is, they are able to hold onto the gains that we made when we cleared out the Taliban in the Arghandab Valley in the south. It was the toughest fighting we have been involved in, in Afghanistan, and they have been held—they have held, and that is a good thing. But all I am—I think we are just arguing over X thousands of numbers here, which in of itself could detract from the will issue, because it—the Afghans will perceive that the number is not sufficient, and they understand what they need.

The fact of the matter is, what I tried to illustrate, the Afghans are in the lead. They have an infantry-based force, and they need some enablers to help them do their job day in and day out, so we have to give them some of that because they don't have it. They will eventually get it, and as they get it, we bring that number down.

The counterterrorism mission is you cannot run counterterrorism in the south to attack Taliban leaders, which would be very helpful in disrupting operations, out of Bagram Air Base. It is just not going to work. So you got to have some capability down there, and that means, okay, then we got to bring helicopters. We got to bring drones down there. We have to bring intel analysts and do all of that. We have that there now.

And then the other thing is, those forces say—I am just using the south as an illustration. Those forces in the south that are operating there, admittedly capable, we would like to have some advisors stay in those headquarters to assist them in the planning of their operations and also to provide them feedback into the execution of it.

So, those are the three things that would be there, and they get you to the kind of numbers that I am providing to you. Can we take that down to 10,000 and say that is going to—we are going to make due with 10,000? I think that would—I don't believe the analysis would support that number, and I actually think what you get from that is a sense of a lack of support from the United States.

Mr. SMITH. I think that is—

General KEANE. Our force level right now is 87,000, counting NATO and U.S. U.S. is about 60,000, and we were coming from a high of 130,000, so there is no doubt we are leaving, and we are pulling out forces. What we are arguing over, what is an acceptable force to meet the requirements that still exist there in terms of our responsibilities.

Mr. SMITH. Right. But I think if you look, look at the analysis the way you do, I mean, we should leave 100,000 based on your analysis. If it is simply a question of will, if that is the only analysis, then why are we drawing down at all. I just think that there is that other piece to it is limiting the dependency and building up, you know, Afghan sovereignty, which I think is an enormously important goal as well.

But, Ms. Flournoy, you want to get in there.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I just wanted to interject.

I think in terms of based on press reports, the—the initial discussions and estimates from, coming in from commanders in Afghanistan have been more in the range of 12,000 to 15,000, and I think that number is inclusive of NATO contribution. So I think that has been the band that has been most focused on so far as a sort of trying to find that—the balance between what I think you rightly pointed out, what do we need to successfully do all of the tasks that have been outlined but still ensure that we are really enabling the ANSF to be in the lead and stay in the lead and build up their capacity over time.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Could I join that for just one second?

Mr. SMITH. If you could do it quickly. We have got a lot of other members here. I don't want to monopolize.

Ambassador NEUMANN. The fact that we have begun to pull down has pushed the Afghans to better performance. That is very clear. The question is, how do you keep that momentum within a realm of possibility? If you move it too quickly where they can't do something, then you diminish the will. That is the only point I wanted to make.

Mr. SMITH. Absolutely. I think that is the exact analysis. I agree. Thank you.

Mr. WILSON [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Smith.

We now recognize Vice Chairman Mac Thornberry of Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask briefly about a couple of issues that we have talked about in previous hearings that we really haven't talked about today. One is force protection.

General Keane, as you are looking through these numbers, I assume we are—our folks, who would remain, would rely upon the

Afghans for force protection. Is that true? Are you comfortable with that?

General KEANE. I think we would rely on—yes, it is true that we would rely on them, but we would also rely on some of the bases that we are running. We would continue to use contractors to help us with the security that we have. And I am assuming that they would not be, obviously, in our numbers. So, some of that security can be taken care of using ANSF and also contractors.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I think that is an important point because there is lots of contractors doing a variety of things in Afghanistan, and while it may not be on some of our numbers, still, it plays a role in how many Americans are there for the future.

The other issue that we talked a lot about is Afghan Local Police [ALP] program. And I would be interested in—as a matter of fact, it may have been Secretary Flournoy who has testified in the past, it was one of the most promising things going on in Afghanistan. So, where is that now and where does that head 2014 and beyond?

Madam Secretary.

Ms. FLOURNOY. So, the ALP program has been a very important part of shifting the momentum on the ground. It is the most feared element of the ANSF by the Taliban because it is so organically of the local population and, you know, so much rooted in the local population.

There have been some problems with individual units, either units that were calling themselves ALP but were really militias or a few units who had human rights transgressions and so forth. I think those have been addressed. The real problem—the real challenge for the ALP going forward is to—the transition. These are forces that have been mentored by our Special Operations forces. They are now being transitioned to oversight by the district police chiefs, the Afghan police.

That makes sense as a long-term solution, but I think right now the capacity of those district police chiefs to actually effectively have that oversight is very uneven in the country, so I think this is something that is very important for us to get it right, but we have to watch it very carefully and sort of hand tool each of these transitions so that we don't end up with rogue elements that are not responsive to the Afghan government. But they have the potential to continue to play a very positive and important role going forward.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Anybody else like to comment on that? Ambassador.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I just spent the last 2 weeks looking specifically—

Mr. THORNBERRY. If you would punch your button, please.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I just spent 2 weeks looking intensively at ALP, particularly with a number of colleagues, but I was particularly in Zabul, Kandahar, and Helmand. There are a lot of positives. There are some places where they are really good. There are a lot of problems, and there are a lot of political issues that are also intertwined with ALP. I am all in favor of doing—supporting what we have got so far, but in order to do exactly what Ms. Flournoy was just saying, be careful. We should not be trying a rapid expansion of those forces. That exceeds our capability. If we

are going to fix and sustain the positives in what we have created now, we have to focus down on that and not try to go in two directions at once. I am convinced we do not have the capability to do that.

Mr. THORNBERRY. And the danger is we rush this through, and so what you end up is someone—or units that may be more like militias than otherwise, and I worry about that rush—

Ambassador NEUMANN. You have some of those already. You have some areas that are tremendously positive. You have some areas that are incredibly politicized; some where they are not actually from the villages at all. And you, frankly, have to go at a very high level of detail. I think the only thing I can conclude is that any generalized single statement about the ALP is wrong.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. Thank you all.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Thornberry.

We now proceed to Congresswoman Susan Davis of California.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, and thank you all so much for being here.

I suspect the American people who are watching this, and you can just tell partly from attendance and the fact that we have no media here, that it is a little bit of a yesterday's war to people, but I also, and we know that men and women are still dying there, and so it is not for us.

But I just wonder about that, you know, and the ability that we have even as Members of Congress to convince constituents that we—there is still a very important role that we are playing there, and that is difficult.

What I would like to focus on is the election, because, on the one hand, we know that it is very important. On the other hand, we are also suggesting that it is not a panacea, of course, that we can't predict a positive outcome necessarily, but I hope that you can address what—what are the levers that we have there? Because for us to speak to it being an inclusive election when we, on our last trip to Afghanistan over Mother's Day, I can assure you that one of the biggest concerns is the election and whether or not there are going to be people at the polls to help women to vote because they have to, you know, be inspecting people as they come to the polls. They may not have enough people to do that. We have our own services that are being drawn down, and we want to be sure we have them as well as the police, and Afghan military is helping as well.

What—what ought we be doing? We don't have a lot of time, and I certainly wouldn't want us to say, well, you know, we are not going to put all of our efforts in there, even though we know it is important, because if it fails, we—you know, we don't want that to be taken as the failure of the future of Afghanistan. What ought we be doing?

Ambassador NEUMANN. You are asking?

Mrs. DAVIS. Ambassador.

Ambassador NEUMANN. In my written testimony, I have made four specific recommendations about the election. The question of people going to the polls, and women going to the polls, the first piece is the security piece; will they feel they can go there at all?

Mrs. DAVIS. Exactly.

Ambassador NEUMANN. That is why I believe we need a time-limited reinforcement of air during the election period, because the Afghan forces are going to be responsible for security. But giving a little more combat air cover, transport and helicopters would incredibly extend their reach and their self-confidence in providing that security, which I think is the first key to people actually going to the polls.

Helping women go to the poll is a very complex issue. We do have some programs, and I think they need to be reinforced, but I am dubious that there is anything within our power within the next few months beyond the selection itself. But showing that the election is important to us also makes the issue to the Afghan politicians, because a bad vote is one catastrophe, an election that is—whose results are not treated as legitimate is also a disaster. So, too, would a very narrow victory and a hard-fought emotional election where you don't have a tradition as we do of accepting the winner and you get recrimination, and so, for that, we need to be pushing also on Afghan politicians. We need to make clear that a really disastrous election is going to have consequences for them, because I think that is the reality of our political support of what you were just talking about.

Mrs. DAVIS. And should that be done in terms of resources in addition to the air cover? You know, what are the specifics, because we get a lot of lip service for this, but it worries me that we are not acting on that.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Two specifics: One is to continue, reinforce and publicize the amount that we are working with the Afghan electoral commission, the electoral complaints commission, the training—well, three suggestions. The second is mobilize international observers, including Americans. The Afghan observers will be key because internationals will not get too far out of cities, but international observers will give a huge megaphone to Afghans who will otherwise have a great deal of trouble having their voice heard, and that also focuses on the correctness of the election.

So, observers, the force, publicizing what we are doing and making clear in our public statements that if this is a fraudulent mess, if the Afghan politicians can't come together and you have got 20 candidates dividing up the vote, expect that this is going to have consequences in our support because much as I support this mission and have spent a lot of time on it, I think the reality is we will have trouble maintaining that support if this election is a disaster, and we ought to make that clear.

There is a lot of fear driving the Afghan politicians momentarily to get together. The fear is correct, and we ought to make sure they understand it is correct.

Mrs. DAVIS. I was going to go to Ms. Lockhart, but I am sorry that our time is up. Maybe you can pick up on it.

Thank you.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

I have the unique opportunity to recognize myself, and I have actually—I am really grateful to be here with this panel because I have had the privilege of working with you over the years, and I want to thank each of you for your service, commitment, dedica-

tion. Each of you are extraordinary people, and I have been looking forward to the hearing.

Additionally, I sincerely believe that this is so important because the attack of September the 11th originated in Afghanistan. The security and success for the people of Afghanistan is important for the people of America. My home State particularly appreciates this. South Carolina, my former National Guard unit, the 218th Brigade, served in Afghanistan. It was the largest commitment, 1,600 troops, since World War II, and the leader, General Bob Livingston—we still have battalions there—he has described it that, indeed, we have created a warm relationship with our Afghan brothers, and so I—it is very meaningful to the people that I represent.

Ms. Flournoy, your opening statement, I thought, was very positive. I appreciate your efforts to fulfill the President's commitments, understanding the extraordinary relationship between our success for the people of Afghanistan and a nuclear Pakistan.

With that in mind, what do you see the status of the Bilateral Security Agreement? Are there any timetables that we can look for?

Ms. FLOURNOY. My understanding is that the informal negotiations at the working level on the Bilateral Security Agreement have actually made a lot of progress. The—I think the two outstanding issues from—that President Karzai has publicly spoken to are the desire for an explicit U.S. security guarantee for Afghanistan, comparable to what we have with some of our treaty allies around the world, and promises of much more sophisticated and advanced military weaponry for the future, which, frankly, at this point in time, the Afghan security forces would have trouble integrating, and trying to do so would sort of take their eye off the ball of getting to proficiency in the—on the ground and with current threats.

But I think those are the two sticking points from the Afghan perspective. I think from the U.S. perspective, the most important issues are immunity for our soldiers from prosecution in Afghanistan and also the ability to lease the Afghan infrastructure and bases that we need. So, I think there has been a lot of progress made. My—I think everybody is aiming towards—at least the American side is aiming towards October/November timeframe. Again, I think that would be facilitated by an announced commitment, the nature of our commitment going forward, but, you know, will—to be determined in terms of how those negotiations conclude.

Mr. WILSON. Well, I greatly respect your judgment, and indeed, General Keane, as a veteran myself of 31 years in the Army and son of a Flying Tiger but very grateful dad. I have four sons currently serving in the military. I have great respect for you. You have already really hit on this, but why is Afghanistan important to the American people?

General KEANE. Well, you—you mentioned it. It was a sanctuary from which the Al Qaeda attacked us, and we certainly want to prevent another sanctuary from being established there. We deposed a regime, and in deposing that regime, we had some responsibilities to what comes after that. We certainly didn't invent the reemergence of the Taliban that came—tried to come back and take power, but I do believe we contributed to it because Iraq distracted

us from the priority that Afghanistan had, and they immediately went on a diet starting around as early as 2002. And the truth is, we never got the force level right to deal with the reemergence of the Taliban until 2009 when President Obama made the decision to escalate.

So that contributes, you know, to the whirlwind. It's our policy decisions that contributed to it. We could have dealt with this a lot sooner, but it matters to us because of stability in the region and it matters to us also because of the threat that is in that region, and we don't want them back establishing a sanctuary again in that region.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, and Ambassador Neumann, I have had the privilege of seeing you firsthand in Kabul, and I know your extraordinary work. How do you perceive the influence of Pakistan in the future of Afghanistan?

Ambassador NEUMANN. Pakistan's influence is going to remain very strong. They are sewing the seeds for a really bitter harvest. The Afghan resentment of sanctuaries in Pakistan has always been large, but it is, in my judgment, getting even larger, and some of that Afghan fear of Pakistan drives the commitments that they are asking for the BSA.

But Pakistan's operations also come out of a mixture of, frankly, weakness and also fear that they will have to deal with chaos in Afghanistan. So that if one wants to change Pakistan's policy, I think we have to change their fundamental belief that we are going to abandon the place and leave a mess because that is—and they have been very explicit about that at least in private—that is what drives their views. So when people say, for instance, why doesn't Pakistan see the stability of Afghanistan is in their interest? The answer is that they don't believe that that is something within their means to influence because they think we will leave too early and we will leave chaos, and so they base policy on that as a starting point.

If we want to change their actions, we need to change the paradigm in which they are viewing the world around them.

Mr. WILSON. And I appreciate all of you all's perspectives, and thank you, again, for your service.

Congresswoman Niki Tsongas of Massachusetts.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here. Since becoming a Member of Congress, I have had the chance to visit Afghanistan five times, and on my last trip with Congresswoman Davis and a group of us that went over on Mother's Day and have done so for a number of years with a twofold emphasis, one, to meet our women serving in our behalf and to thank them and to see what their experiences are but also to sort of see where Afghan women are. And in every instance, but in particular, in this time, you know, we always meet with an impressive group.

We met with female cadets at the country's military academy. We met with women working at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. We met with a whole host of students and teachers, university students in Herat, government officials, and community leaders, and their stunning accounts really of life in Afghanistan before and after Taliban rule really makes so real for us something that we

already know, that Afghan women, in the course of our being there, are now broadly participating in Afghan society, particularly in urban areas, and that they are vital to the stability of their country.

Countless studies have shown that gains for women have a direct positive effect on sustainable development, economic growth, and most importantly, peace. Women's equality is more than a moral issue. The investment in women and girls is a matter of national security for Afghanistan and I think for our country. Significant gains have been made over the past decade, and I think it is really important for us to make sure that they are protected to the greatest extent possible as we continue to draw down.

We also heard, really, their—talk about the whole notion of abandonment and how concerned the Afghans are that they will be abandoned as we draw down. This was particularly true with many of the women that we met with. They have taken advantage of the opportunities that have been offered. They have brought great talent and professionalism to what they do in Afghanistan. They are deeply committed to their country and very worried as we draw down as to where they will be left.

And it actually troubles me that today, other than Ms. Lockhart, that I haven't really heard, except in response to a question, any of you really mention that—mention Afghan women, because we also heard over and over again how important it is that, at the very least, we talk about women as we do all that we need to do.

So, you all have mentioned a lot of facets to our drawdowns. It is the elections, I think, we should be talking about, what we do to have women fully participate. We did, with Congresswoman Davis' question, negotiations of the Bilateral Security Agreement, how do we put these issues on the table, participation in the security forces and the police. We met with young cadets who are participating in the security forces. We hear some of the alarming incidents that are visited upon them as well as on the—on the police. And even in terms of the conditionality, as we draw down, you know, what do we put in place to hold the new government's feet to the fire.

So, my question is really—is for all of you. I won't have time really, but I would like to ask you, Secretary Flournoy, that understanding the current situation for Afghan women, both plus/minus the very fragile nature of their gains, do you believe it is possible for Afghan women to play the necessary role in shaping Afghanistan's future, and how do we make that happen? What is it that we, in particular, can do, not just broad statements, but are there metrics we should put in place so that we can actually measure and hold—hold all of us accountable as we draw down?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Absolutely.

And Congresswoman, I couldn't agree with you more. In fact, in my written testimony, I do actually address this issue and agree with many—make actually some of the same points you just made about the importance of women in the overall development of Afghanistan.

I do think it is important that we track very carefully women's participation—access to education and healthcare, participation in the economy, everything from their, you know, roles as entre-

preneurs to more broadly and also participation in politics as more and more women have done. They have taken real risks to become more fully part of Afghan society again, and they are—they will face substantial danger if there is any sort of rollback of that trend.

I agree with Clare that the biggest thing we can do is shore up our commitment, but I think tracking metrics associated with women, reaching out and engaging, as you have been doing, as other officials travel, people to people, but building those ties and ensuring that we are supporting them and then trying to ensure that there isn't any kind of backsliding as we draw down and the transition occurs, I think it is a very, very important element of our policy.

Ms. TSONGAS. I am sorry I don't have a chance to hear from all of you, but just a hedging that might be going on for Afghan women as they are trying to calculate what lies ahead for them. At the very least, if we don't bring them up in public discussion, that that will be a self-fulfilling prophesy. They will begin to withdraw on their own.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Ms. Tsongas.

And I have had the privilege of being with Ms. Tsongas to see how inspiring it is to see little girls going to school. It just is a heartwarming experience.

We now recognize Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank all of you being here.

General Keane, if it is alright, I will begin with you, sir. Thank you for your lifetime of service to protecting human freedom. I have 5-year-old twins, and I know that they have a better chance to walk in the light of freedom because of people like you, and I appreciate it.

General Keane, al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al Qaeda recently issued directives named "General Guidelines for Jihad," and the first point he made is, is as follows: He said, it is not a hidden secret that our work in this stage has two aspects; the first is military, and the second is propagational.

And you know, I have no doubt that, after 12 years of war with Jihad, we have become more tactically inclined in fighting the enemy in armed combat. In fact, I think we have engaged them on a kinetic and tactical level in unsurpassed success, but I am concerned that we perhaps have not engaged them on the strategic level, mainly, the narrative of why they do this. You know, we try to play down that there is an ideological core when yet it is obvious that this enemy feels transcendentally justified to do what they are doing.

And I kind of fear that Al Qaeda might be winning in their second most important tactic, which is the propaganda war, and I am wondering, you know, as a general you know better than anyone that it is not just about destroying your enemy, it is about converting the observers and those country populations of that particular country so that you don't have to, to fight everybody. We have to somehow win this battle of ideals.

And with that in mind, could you sort of elaborate on the importance of winning this anti-propaganda war with Al Qaeda and lay

out some budgetary realities that may affect this effort and how do we sustain this in a post-2014 Afghanistan.

General KEANE. Thank you, Mr. Congressman.

You know, the Al Qaeda declared war on us in the early 1990s, and we sort of ignored it until 9/11 certainly, and we treated that kind of activity as criminal activity when it always was an act of war. I think the Israelis had this right, right from the beginning, but we have to draw back and look at Al Qaeda strategically.

I mean, it is essentially a political movement. It has a fundamental ideology, and it uses religion as part of its belief system to educate and inform, motivate and inspire its members. And their near-term goals are to establish a caliphate in the region where Muslims live, to dominate and control that region. To be able to do that, their number one objective is to drive the United States out of the region, and they began in earnest of that in the 1990s with a series of attacks, and it culminated in 9/11. And I think what shocked them was the speed of which we came into Afghanistan to get rid of that sanctuary that they had.

All that said, Al Qaeda has had to adjust, and they have adjusted. Remember, the—we have gone after central Al Qaeda leadership, but their intent was always to decentralize and to move into other countries, which is what you see happening as we speak, as Al Qaeda has reemerged in Iraq. And yes, we know how to defeat this movement from a military perspective. We did that in Iraq.

The problem we have is we take a tactical approach to Al Qaeda. Tell me what is the comprehensive U.S. strategy to defeat Al Qaeda and radical Islam? We don't have it.

Mr. FRANKS. That is right.

General KEANE. We don't even have a competent military strategy. A military strategy isn't the use of drones. That is a tactic, and we are using that tactic against the leadership of Al Qaeda central. But we have no comprehensive strategy in this nation, as a matter of policy, to deal with the defeat of a system that is spreading through the Middle East. That is our fundamental core problem.

And not only that, we do a very poor job, and the previous administration is as guilty as this one, in not educating the American people properly on what is this movement, what are the tenets of it, what are their objectives, and what are we doing about it ourselves and what our strategy should be to deal with that.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, General, I am in violent agreement with you, sir, and I think perhaps you ought to come out of retirement because we certainly need the voice of clarity that you so ably put forward here today.

And with that, I am out of time. Thank you, sir.

Mr. WITTMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Franks.

We now go to Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Lockhart, I wanted to touch on a little bit more on what my colleague Ms. Tsongas was talking about in terms of Afghan women. Specifically, you know, I am thinking of the nature and structure of our presence post-2014 in terms of what are we doing to improve rural development, agricultural development, business

development, education, all of those specific to women. I went on my very first trip, and I have had more senior Members tell me that the most dangerous person in Congress is a brand new freshman who went on their first CODEL [congressional delegation], and that was me, and so I am full of all these ideas.

One of the things I heard from Afghan women time and again is that the infrastructure simply is not there, either administratively or actually physical infrastructure, so that a woman in a rural region cannot go to the local police or report a crime that has been committed against her, simply because there is not a barracks there for female police officers so that we can actually station female police officers in those regions. And so we are really disenfranchising the Afghan women and are not helping them do that.

Can you speak a little bit to both the administrative and actual physical infrastructure, look at what we are doing post-2014 for women?

Ms. LOCKHART. Certainly. And with a starting point, as I said in my testimony, that I think what we need to do for Afghan women is similar as to what we need to do for all Afghan citizens, which is the commitment to security.

But having said that, I think I agree wholeheartedly with you, there is much, much more that can be done for women across the different sectors.

I think women in politics is actually a good news story. The 25 percent seats that are reserved for women in parliament has meant that hundreds of women have served in positions of leadership in the Afghan parliament and in provincial councils, and this has been a tremendous step forward for the country. There has been some backsliding on this. The number has now gone down, but that is still there.

Women in government has been something of a—an achievement. There are women in positions of senior leadership, women serving as ministers, but also in the bureaucracy, and of course, this did not happen pre-9/11. And then women serving as teachers, as health workers across the country and as beneficiaries of those services has been a tremendous advance over the last decade, but there is much more that can be done.

In terms of the rural areas, there is a program, National Solidarity Program. It is a program that gives a block grant to now nearly every village in the country. Each village elects their own village council, the Community Development Council, and 100,000, well, more than 100,000 women now have served in positions of leadership on those village councils, so the infrastructure, that platform at the village level is there, and Congress has played a tremendously important role in ensuring support for that program, so I think that is one of the very concrete things that could continue.

Women in the police force and the armed services, as you know, is a challenging issue. Recently, there have been very tragic assassinations of women police officers in Helmand and one in Kabul, so it is not—it is a position of high risk, but as you say, if there aren't women in the police force, women are not going to feel able to go to stations and report on crime. But I think going forward,

it is women in politics, in administrative positions, in the armed services, and then the health, education, agriculture, and economic programs that are going to be critical. If, I think, men see that women can contribute to the household income, this does a lot to change the balance of power within the household and thus within the country.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you. I think I want to touch a little bit on the women in politics and in government. One of the things that was brought up by a woman parliamentarian to our group was the fact that there were not enough female poll station workers on election day so that when a woman went to the polling booth, she could not go in by herself because her husband or her brother or her father had to go in with her, unless there was a female poll worker who could then go with her, and that she truly could not independently vote.

Are we looking towards the politics towards that portion of the work? Is there any attention being placed towards trying to get more female poll workers trained and then having them located more widespreadly across the nation?

Ms. LOCKHART. I believe there has been some activity there. I think a lot more—and as your colleague, Ms. Davis, raised also, to ensure that women can, to the extent possible, participate in the elections, both as candidates and the candidate protections in terms of security that may be required, and as voters, and it is instructive. In the 2004 elections, a lot was done. The 2009 elections, this type of activity really fell through the cracks, and we all, I think, we saw Afghans really suffer the consequences of this. I think there is enough time between now and the elections in spring 2014 that these type of actions and programs could be put in place if adequately resourced and paid attention to

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Ms. Duckworth.

I now go to Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Keane, on page 6 of your testimony, you list out the 20,000 troops that you think would be necessary to remain in Afghanistan. How long do you expect they would need to remain and does that include diplomatic security?

General KEANE. No, it would not include diplomatic security. The—I think how long they stay is condition based. I mean, clearly, as Afghan security forces increase in capability as they—and the trajectory is all positive, you pull back the number of advisors. And as the Afghan infrastructure begins to take hold, in other words, the development of what we call combat service support units, their logistics units and their medical units begin to take hold, and there are plans for all of this, you bring those forces down. So it is conditioned based on the advancement of the Afghan National Security Forces primarily.

The counterterrorism mission, I would suggest, would probably stay the longest, and I think we are transitioning to a capable force that the Afghans are developing. They are not quite there.

Mr. SCOTT. General, if I may, I am going to run out of time here. As you know, we are on a clock. Thanks for the answer

All of these would be uniformed personnel. There are no contractors.

General KEANE. No. In those numbers, I have no contractors.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. Do you anticipate contractors being there as well?

General KEANE. Well, I would assume they would, because we use a lot of contractors now to protect our bases as opposed to putting, you know, fighters up on there, maintaining guard point and access control points and the like. We did that. We began that in Iraq, and we continued it here so we could put maximum boots out on the ground.

Mr. SCOTT. Do you expect any other countries to maintain a significant presence in the country or just the United States?

General KEANE. Well, I would hope so. I mean, we have 87,000 troops there now; 60,000 of the 87,000 are U.S., so obviously, there is international community presence. I would see them participating in this. I think they—they are going look at our commitment that it will help drive their numbers as well in terms of the resolve that we are demonstrating.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you for that answer. I guess one of—I have two primary questions with the U.S. and the investment that is going to occur over there going forward in money and potentially in lives. One is, as other countries are being brought in, China, for example, to develop the country, why should the United States taxpayer and the United States soldier provide the security and pay the price if other countries are going to be developing that nation?

Shouldn't they play a role in the cost of the security in that nation as well? And that is one of—one of my serious concerns as we go forward.

The other is that—and you alluded to this with regard to Iraq, we expected to have tens of thousands of troops there until the Iraqis refused to exempt our soldiers from being subject to their courts. And I was over there just before the withdrawal. And some of the comments made from the Iraqi leadership, well, we know we can't hold it without you, but we are not going to exempt you from our laws, so you have got a potential to run into that same system in Afghanistan where, you know—sir, I know what I was told, but it—

Ambassador NEUMANN. Could I speak to that because I served at both Iraq and Afghanistan?

Mr. SCOTT. Sure.

Ambassador NEUMANN. And the moods were very different. I spent 16 months in Iraq before my reward was to go to Kabul, and I have been back quite a few times.

At the best of times, the Iraqis never liked us being there, and I am generalizing, but even those who knew they needed us really, really didn't want us there. In Afghanistan, you have an over—still an overwhelming view that our presence is the last thing that stands between them and descending back into the nightmare that they have gone through for 30 years.

Mr. SCOTT. Fair enough.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I am utterly convinced that they—that we will not face the kind of issue we faced in Iraq of this being politically impossible for them to vote for the immunities that are

necessary. We have a problem with President Karzai that I will leave for now, but that—

Mr. SCOTT. Ambassador—

Ambassador NEUMANN. That is one we will get past.

Mr. SCOTT. I am out of time. I certainly respect your opinion. I know what I was told and as someone in both countries.

And Ms. Flournoy.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Sir, if I could, on your concern about the U.S. being the only country sort of shouldering the burden. Several billions of dollars have been committed to the future of Afghanistan post-2014 at the Tokyo conference, various international donor conferences. Yes, the U.S. has signed up to support some of that, but the vast majority of that international support is going to be non-U.S. So there are many, many other countries who are signed up to provide financial assistance and also troops if, in fact, we can negotiate the basis for a post-2014 mission. So I just wanted to reassure you on that point.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you for that answer, ma'am, and I know I am out of time. If I may, I know you obviously have a close relationship with the administration, but when the President came out with a zero option, I think it threw a lot of us for a loop. I think it threw this committee for a loop. I think it threw the soldiers for a loop, and maybe he was trying to send a message to President Karzai, but I think that message went to a lot of other people as well that were working toward a common goal, and I say that respectfully to you. So, thank you.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

We now go to Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And once again, I appreciate all of you in attendance here today. Your information and your opinions are very insightful to us.

One of the things that most of you have said is reference to a clear policy from this administration as to where we are trying to go in Afghanistan, and more importantly, I think what we learned from this last debacle with Syria is, isn't it the President's responsibility to talk to the American public about where we expect to be and how we expect to get there, because as 2014 is closely approaching us, it is kind of hard to do it when you are in the midst of making a decision as to what our footprint is going to look like in Afghanistan and what we are supposed to accomplish. Do any of you have a clear indication that the President is willing to do that?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Again, I am speaking as a private citizen and no longer as a member of the administration, but you know, I think the President has spoken about our strategy in Afghanistan a number of times, and I believe that, you know, there is a very good chance we are going to stay on that articulated path going forward. That is certainly my hope.

I think as those decisions get fleshed out this follows: He gets the recommendation from General Dunford; as decisions, as the BSA is concluded, as decisions are made, I fully expect that he will be talking to the American people about the longer-term future in Afghanistan and what the U.S. commitment is going to be.

Mr. NUGENT. Don't you think, though, that to preface that, you would actually be talking about today what you think Afghanistan could look like if things go correctly versus waiting until the military comes out, you know, Department of Defense comes out, Pentagon comes out in regards to the force structure because then you are trying to play catch up, I think. Is that it would be much easier when you—when that comes out to have articulated what you would hope to accomplish. You know what I am saying? It is sort of like having a game plan before you actually find out who your players are but at least you have a game plan as to how you are going to move forward or what you expect to move forward.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Again, I think that this President has articulated a vision for the whole—you know, from the beginning of the Afghan strategy and his administration where we are trying to go with Afghanistan. I think re-articulating that in the context of these additional steps would also be important. It is also part of a broader counterterrorism strategy, and as someone who spent 3 years actually executing the strategy, there is a counterterrorism strategy. We can argue about whether it is, you know, a properly balanced resource, et cetera, but there is a clear strategy. This has actually been a strong suit for the administration, and I think the President's NDU [National Defense University] speech recently talked about how to put that on a more sustainable footing beyond just the kinetic piece, which is important, but really focused on building the partnership—the capacity of partners, including places, like Afghanistan, to deal with these threats going forward.

Mr. NUGENT. I appreciate your comment.

Ambassador, what is your take? Have we articulated our positions strong enough to move forward to convince the American people as to what our course of action should be in Afghanistan?

Ambassador NEUMANN. No. I would dearly like to see more of it. We have a range of statements to a range of audiences. We—we are going to—if the President is serious about the policy that he has articulated, then he is going to have to lead it both with this body and with the American public, and I devoutly hope he will, but we are not there yet.

Mr. NUGENT. Well, and I think that is the point I am trying to drive through is I would like to see the President be much more passionate and articulate in regards to what he sees the end game is in Afghanistan based upon, you know, what we have done over the last 12 years.

You know, I can remember back in, I think it was 2009 or 2007, 2008 when “Charlie Wilson's War” came out and our older son was in Afghanistan for 15 months in combat, and I recall with my wife saying, you know, if we had only done just a little more, maybe our kid wouldn't be there risking his life, and so I am worried that we are heading down the same path.

So, I appreciate all your comments, and General, I certainly do appreciate your leadership. Thank you.

Mr. WITMAN. Thank you, Mr. Nugent.

I now go to Ranking Member Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow up on that last train of thought because I really believe the President, without question, has had a very clear strat-

egy on both combatting Al Qaeda and on Afghanistan. I have two caveats to that. The first of which is I do not think that he or his administration have done a very good job of explaining it or of building support for it, and you know, you talk about the American people. My own personal pet peeve is I don't think he has done a good job at all of explaining it to us, to Congress, or including us in it, and I think that has hamstrung this effort.

But I think, without question, there has been a clear strategy. I will agree with the ambassador on Afghanistan is that, you know, I think a greater commitment to that strategy and a greater commitment to explaining it is necessary, but just in Al Qaeda, and there is a question at the end of this, but I think the strategy has been clear, and I agree with Ms. Flournoy that this has been a strength.

I mean, number one, there are certain identifiable people within Al Qaeda that are plotting and planning attacks against us. That is priority number one. There is a whole lot of other stuff going on, but stopping them from hitting us has to be at the top of that list, and the best way to do that, quite frankly, is get them before they get us, and you know, I wouldn't dismiss drones quite so quickly. A drone is but a mechanism for taking, you know, for putting the policy in place of getting them before they get us.

It was Afghanistan first, and then it was Pakistan, still Pakistan. Then Yemen came up, so we put together a very, you know, I think a robust plan to get them there, and I think that has been reasonably effective, so that has been number one.

Number two, we can't simply leave Afghanistan to fall back into the hands. So, in 2009, the President committed the resources and committed to a new strategy to try to figure it out, and it is a mess. Don't get me wrong. It is not an easy problem to solve, but they actually committed the resources for the first time in 8 years to go in there and train the ANSF to, you know, try to give the Afghan government a chance to stand on its own, which ultimately it has to, and to accomplish that, we had to draw down on Iraq because the resources that were being spent in Iraq were simply not worth the benefit that we were getting from them, and they were consistently undermining some of these other missions.

You know, the two final, I think, components to this have been, number one, we need to try to appeal to moderate Muslims. We try to fight the ideological war, counter the Taliban AQ [Al Qaeda] narrative, find moderate Muslims. Now, the biggest problem with that has been that they are not easy to find in terms of, you know, them actually articulating it. Thomas Friedman had a good column this weekend, I think, talking about how, you know, think about the fact that, in Syria, you have got jihadists coming from all over the Muslim world; people going there to help Al Qaeda. Where are the people from the Muslim world coming in to help the Free Syria movement, to help build a reasonable alternative? It is not there, and that is, I think, you know, part of the challenge. But the President has tried to articulate that message. It is a difficult message to deliver.

Then the final piece of it is, work with the international community, because if we are going to focus on what I think is our greatest threat, and I think the President has articulated it that way,

which is Al Qaeda and the threat they pose, we've got to figure out how to get along with China. We've got to figure out how to get along with Russia. You know, we've got to build those support. Again, that is not easy. They are not looking to get along with us, and I think there have been some missteps there. So I think it is just wrong—one of the things that has really frustrated me about both the drone issue and Afghanistan, is I consistently hear people say we don't know what we are doing; there is no strategy. And I am like, pay attention for 10 seconds. There is a strategy. You may disagree with how it is being implemented, but we absolutely know what we are doing in Afghanistan, much better than a lot of other places.

Now, the final caveat that I will throw out there is the Arab Spring sort of threw a wrench in all this, and this is where the administration has got to get its stuff together. It is, you know, on Egypt, on Syria, on a bunch—on Libya. It has been kind of doing this, yeah, we are kind of doing that. You don't set policy in response to a reporter's question. Just as a general rule, I would say you shouldn't try and do that. So I think they need to better understand how to respond in Syria and elsewhere, and that is my question.

How do we respond to the Arab Spring? Because I will cut the administration a little bit of slack, it is difficult. You want to support democratic values, but you also don't want to cast important countries into chaos because they can't handle democracy. On Egypt and the other, what would be the best response on Syria, on Egypt, on all these other places?

General KEANE. I will take a stab at it, but let me just say, you know, on your position on strategy. Killing Al Qaeda leaders doesn't defeat an Al Qaeda ideology or a movement.

Mr. SMITH. Agreed. That was the only piece of it—

General KEANE. Those leaders are replaced.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

General KEANE. But that is our focus.

Mr. SMITH. But you still think we should be doing that, don't you?

General KEANE. Of course, we should be doing that.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

General KEANE. We should always hold this horrific behavior liable.

Mr. SMITH. Stop it.

General KEANE. And we should use drones, but it is not a strategy is what I am suggesting.

Mr. SMITH. It is a piece of a strategy.

General KEANE. With an ideological movement like this, killing them actually will not defeat them.

Mr. SMITH. But again, though, are you suggesting that we don't?

General KEANE. Listen, I am all for killing them.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

General KEANE. But what is going to defeat them is rejection of them by moderate Muslims. That is—

Mr. SMITH. Absolutely.

General KEANE [continuing]. What is—but our strategy should be fashioned around a long-term goal that will remove the conditions that permit Al Qaeda to thrive.

Mr. SMITH. Forgive me, but do you have some secret formula for accomplishing that because my position is that the President is trying to do precisely that. It is just that it is very, very difficult.

General KEANE. I don't hear it. I am glad that you hear it, but I don't hear it. Getting to the Arab Spring. The drivers of instability in the region have fermented and brought about the Arab Spring, the lack of political and social justice, the lack of economic opportunity, and I think the Arab Spring surprised most analysts and experts who deal with the Middle East. Not surprising, it began in the most repressive of the regimes.

And the fact of the matter is, is that we cannot control the Arab Spring, nor should we try, but I do believe we should try to influence, and I do believe we should try to provide support. When millions of people are willing to stand up against a military machine in a brutal dictatorship like Assad has in Syria or a lesser one but nonetheless brutal in Libya, I do believe we should try to support that. I am not talking about military commitment. I am talking about providing moral support. I am talking about helping them solve the problem. They wanted weapons. They told us specifically what they wanted. I have listened to them speak to me about it. They said, We don't want your troops; we don't even want your airplanes; just help us with these weapons.

Mr. SMITH. I agree with you completely on that.

General KEANE. And 2 years later, we are now finally giving them something. I mean, something morally good was happening in Syria in terms of watching those people struggle against a mighty machine like he had and been willing to die in large numbers to deal with it. I am not suggesting that is enough motivation to commit us to war. It is not. But I do believe strategically Syria matters because of its relationship to Iran and the regional hegemony that Iran is trying to achieve there.

Mr. SMITH. And the larger ideological struggle that you described.

General KEANE. Absolutely.

Mr. SMITH. Very important.

General KEANE. I don't want to steal anybody's thunder.

Mr. SMITH. No, that is very helpful.

Ms. Flournoy

Ms. FLOURNOY. I certainly agree with the point that we cannot control the events that are unfolding on the ground. This is a history being rewritten, and the pen is in the hands of the people of the—in the region. But I do agree that we do have important and in some cases vital interests at stake. We do want to use our influence and all of our tools, from diplomacy to economic tools, to I think a more robust use of assistance to moderate elements of the opposition in Syria, to moderate elements elsewhere. We have to walk a line trying to support the long-term arc of reform, which will ultimately provide security in the region, with the need for some degree of stability on the way.

And I think the most important thing I would focus on right now is trying to actually contain the Syrian civil war. I am very con-

cerned about the overflow of instability into Iraq, Lebanon, potentially Jordan and other countries in the region.

Mr. SMITH. One of the things that we should have done I think a long time ago—but certainly, there is still time to do it—is a DOD [Department of Defense] train-and-equip mission.

And people have said, Well, we don't know who is who? Look, if there are 10 people in Syria that are from the Free Syria movement that we think we can trust, well, start helping those 10 and build from there. I think there are more than 10. There are not the tens of thousands that some have said, but there are hundreds and not thousands. They are our friends, and they are looking at us, saying, You are not doing anything for us. It can be small, but it has to be something. And it is something that I think DOD has got to be part of. It is something I will be working on.

I am sorry, I don't want to take too much time. I want to give the other two a chance to say something.

Ambassador NEUMANN. A couple of just quick comments. Syria, obviously, poses the problem that it has only lousy choices, but not making a decision is also a lousy choice.

Mr. SMITH. Even if there are only bad choices, there is still a best one.

Ambassador NEUMANN. And there is the need to explain that, that takes a lot of explanation, because we don't like to deal in nuance. But I think one place we are not looking at enough, nearly enough is the one that Michèle just raised and that is the consequences for the neighbors. If we cannot find a way that this is going to end and the stability of Jordan and Turkey—I would add Lebanon, but I think our resources are going to be much more—

Mr. SMITH. And I am not sure the word “stability” applies to Lebanon—

Ambassador NEUMANN. Exactly.

Jordan, we have the issue—particularly, it is a fragile state. It has a large nonnative population already with the Palestinians. That needs both a lot of economic support, but it needs thought about, how are you going to keep these people from bleeding into the rest of the economy as a destabilizing force? How are you going to keep them from becoming deeply resentful against us as well as others. There, there are policies that are possible, Turkey also, regional policies where I see a need for more articulation, thought, because ultimately, those things are going to cost money, which means coming back to you, gentlemen, and they are going to go on for a lengthy period of time. They are not going to be short-term fixes. And so if we are going—I say “we” as though I were still with the government and I am not. If there is going to be support for those kinds of thoughts and policies, then they need to be articulated, I believe, much more explicitly, beginning with you all—or to you all, I should say.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Lockhart.

Ms. LOCKHART. I believe that the Arab Spring calls for a robust diplomacy tied to a security policy. I think too often we see diplomacy and security as alternatives and sometimes mutually exclusive. I think, like in Afghanistan and many countries across the Middle East, the street represents our best allies. It is the young men and women who came out in the thousands and sometimes in

the millions who are asking for the very things that we stand for, economic opportunity, political inclusion and democracy. And this is really the time in this century to stand with them. It is going to require robust tools of economic and diplomatic assistance that are missing in action; perhaps not the business of this committee, but other committees.

But I think we, from the security perspective, were suffering from the lack of investment in those tools. And this ties to your question of strategy for the defeat of Al Qaeda and extremism. It is ways to engage with citizens and the next generation that is going to provide the bulwark for stability.

I agree with the ambassador on the question of Syria. We have focused too much on the risk of action and not enough on the risk of inaction, and what is now most likely that the conflict will continue to spiral out of control and spread and the consequences that this will have for the survival of the state system and the region as a whole for decades will be one for which we will pay a very heavy price.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, appreciate your indulgence

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Smith, and I want to go ahead and thank our panelists for today.

I do have a few questions as we close, and I want to focus on some of the logistical elements there. We know where we are right now as trying to move lots of things out, about 70,000 vehicles, about 130,000 containers. We have seen the challenges with the opening and closing of the Pakistani ground line of communications. We also know the limitations of the northern distribution network. We also know historically, too, that this for the United States is the largest logistical movement of goods and equipment in our history, but we also see historically, you go back to 1842, when the British were leaving Afghanistan, of the 17,000 troops that they had, very few survived that effort to leave, and you saw how bloody the effort was for the Russians when they left. The concern is as we are pursuing this effort, not only to get our troops out, but also logistically to look at how we are going to get this done, I wanted to get the panelists' viewpoints on what do you see as the greatest challenges, what are the greatest risks and how do we manage those risks? I want to get your perspective on that.

General KEANE. Well, we have learned a lot in the last 20 years or so with major logistical retrograde operations, as we like to refer to them as. In 1991, coming out of Kuwait and a portion of Iraq, it was a logistical nightmare, and we learned a lot from our mistakes. Leaving Iraq post-2010, 2011, was very much a success and a lot of effort has gone into that. The logistical planners who are working in Afghanistan to do this are building on all of the lessons that they have learned there. I think this operation, despite the formidable challenge it is to move that much equipment over that kind of terrain in a limited period of time, I think it is going to go much better than people expect it to be. And I don't believe that the Taliban is going to expend much effort in dealing with this. They are not going to focus on that. They are going to focus on controlling areas and where people are located and not on that logistical operation. For them to do that would take them away

from what they believe is their center of gravity, and their resources have been expended rather considerably in the last few years.

So I don't think it is going to be the security issue that people believe it will be. And I do think that, based on all the things we have learned in this, we are going to do this pretty good.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good. I know when I was visiting there, there was quite an effort going into the logistical workup to make this happen. Obviously, talking to the folks there, they realized what the limitations are.

General Keane, do you believe that this can be accomplished by the focal point for us to be leaving Afghanistan, which is 2014? Is that something that we can realistically accomplish by then, or will it continue after January of 2014?

General KEANE. I think some of it realistically will continue after. And so those will have to be taken and counted, the numbers that are still there. But there are enormously detailed plans on all of this, and we have got some real experts who know what they are doing in this area and they have been working on it now for 18 months. This has been detailed, strategic, operational, and tactical plans for some time to get this done. I am expecting it to go well.

Mr. WITTMAN. Obviously, there is still a lot of discussion about what presence will be, both ISAF forces and U.S. forces as a part of that post-2014. Have we got any indication from our allies whether parts of our or any of our allies are willing to stay post-2014, is there a commitment there, Ms. Flournoy?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, I think both the Germans and Italians have indicated that they would be willing to continue in leadership roles in the north for the Germans and the west for the Italians and play an important role in those areas with other NATO allies and support. So I think they need to have a U.S. commitment in place, U.S. BSA in place, that then allows them to make their own commitments, understanding what kind of enablers we can provide to them and then negotiate their own SOFA [Status of Forces Agreement] with the Afghan government.

Ambassador NEUMANN. If I can just add, the Canadians, while they are taking out their troops, are still at this point committed to retaining a police training presence, which is also an important piece of the security posture. The Brits are not—British are not fully clear at this point. But I think chances of keeping some—right now, the single biggest impediment to leading and getting an answer on that is our piece.

I would note, on logistics, that since, by all accounts, somebody is going to be there—where this is not the Russian withdrawal over the bridge, and I do have an enormous respect for what we are doing in logistics—but I don't think we absolutely have to be in a panic or unnecessarily spend the taxpayers money to get everything out by the time the troops pull out. There is no really good reason why that process can't finish some time after, because we are not pulling out in our entirety. And if there are some cost savings that could be undertaken by being a little slower and more deliberate, I would be all in favor of it.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask you this, assuming we get a Status of Forces Agreement going forward for all those that would be in-

volved post-2014, do you see that as an enduring mission, either for the United States or for ISAF, if there are partners there that continue in that operation?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I see it as a long-term mission. I think some pieces of it, as General Keane was talking about, will come down fairly rapidly, particularly on the support for enablers. That is a comparatively short-term mission. Some of the training will be long term. NATO is already looking out to 20—10-year vision and let me pass it to Michèle.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think, at some point, when ANSF reaches a certain degree of self-sufficiency and mastery over its equipment and institutions and processes, I think you transition to a more normal security cooperation agreement, where you would have training, visits, exercises, security cooperation, foreign military sales. At some point, it would transition to a more normal sort of security, long-term security cooperation relationship.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good. Well, panelists, thank you so for joining us today, we appreciate you spending your time. It was very, very helpful to get your perspective. If there are no further questions, and considering there is nobody else here but me, there probably will not be, I hereby adjourn the House Armed Services Committee.

[Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

**Statement of Hon. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
Hearing on “The U.S. Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014:
Views of Outside Experts”
September 19, 2013**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The House Armed Services Committee meets to receive testimony from outside experts on the United States’ presence in Afghanistan post-2014. Today, we have with us Ms. Michèle Flournoy, General Jack Keane, Ambassador Ronald Neumann, and Ms. Clare Lockhart. Thank you for joining us today.

A discussion of a post-2014 presence in Afghanistan should start with a reminder of why the United States went there in the first place. The most lethal and complex terrorist attack in U.S. history was plotted and perpetrated by al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The United States continues to have a vital interest in making sure that never happens again and the Afghan government can secure its country.

It has been a long fight. The United States has committed a wealth of resources, both blood and treasure, to preserve U.S. vital national security interests. The question before us is whether we should continue to commit such resources after 2014. And if so, what level of resources is sufficient to minimize the risk that Afghanistan could be used again as a platform for terrorist attacks against the United States?

This hearing is timely because in the near future, the President will order additional troop withdrawals and announce the United States’ post-2014 mission set and military posture in Afghanistan. We’ve received mixed messages from the White House about the President’s commitment to a post-2014 military presence. Many of us have traveled into theater and met with our commanders. We know there is much at stake, but our witnesses have significant expertise in these matters and their views will help inform our thinking on the matter.

I, for one, am not advocating for a never-ending combat mission in Afghanistan. But as recent events have made clear, the President must ensure that our interests are secure after we leave. I believe that requires a credible residual presence to train, advise, and assist the ANSF and conduct counterterrorism operations. We owe nothing less to the victims on 9/11, the U.S. troops, and their families who have served and sacrificed – not to mention our sons and daughters who will have to return if we get this wrong. The simple justice that comes from that principled position cannot be overstated.

I look forward to your testimony and insights.

**Statement of Hon. Adam Smith
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services
Hearing on "The U.S. Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014:
Views of Outside Experts"
September 19, 2013**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing here today. Syria may be driving Afghanistan out of the headlines these days, but we still have more than 60,000 U.S. service men and women there, and success in Afghanistan is still vital to our national security.

I recently returned from Afghanistan; I travelled there with Duncan Hunter and Derek Kilmer of this committee. It was apparent on our trip that our men and women in uniform, the Afghan National Security Forces, and our partners participating in the International Security Assistance Force have made tremendous progress in pushing back the Taliban and giving Afghanistan a chance for success in the future. High-profile attacks still happen, the Taliban still controls or influences pockets of Afghanistan, but the Taliban are simply not, at least for now, in any position to overthrow the government of Afghanistan.

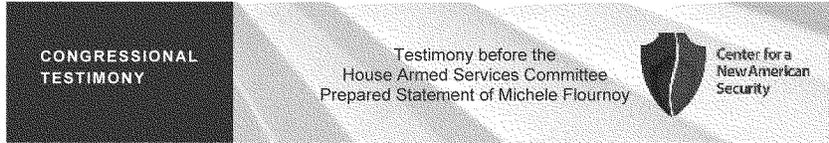
The next year will show if this situation can be maintained or if Afghanistan will slide back into civil war. Before October 2014, the United States and Afghanistan will have to conclude negotiations on a new Bilateral Security Agreement and the Afghans will hold presidential elections and need to have a peaceful and legitimate transfer of power -- all while U.S. troops levels are greatly reduced. If these challenges can be met, Afghanistan's future prospects will be substantially brighter and U.S. national interests will be protected by an Afghanistan that can prevent the return of al Qaeda.

These outcomes are far from guaranteed. There are issues that could certainly derail the Bilateral Security Agreement negotiations. Domestic politics, either in Afghanistan or even here, could interfere. The Afghan election process could be

corrupt, illegitimate, and widely rejected by the Afghan people. Or the next Afghan government could ultimately be rejected by large swaths of the population if it is seen as illegitimate and not inclusive. Any of these would threaten the current progress in Afghanistan and undermine prospects for success.

The United States is in a position to help Afghanistan through these transitions. I returned from our trip believing that it is in the interests of the United States to announce a sufficient post-2014 presence in Afghanistan to reassure the Afghan people and the Afghan National Security Forces. I believe we should continue to support the security forces through funding and the provision of training and advising for the next few years, albeit at declining levels over time.

Signaling our continued support should enable the Afghan political system to make the changes necessary to increase the legitimacy of the government and undermine the public perception that large parts of the Afghan government are abusive, incompetent, and corrupt. But our aid must be conditional; a blank check of support will not further reform in Afghanistan and the American people will not support lives and funding wasted on behalf of an Afghan government that drives people into the arms of the Taliban. Conditioning our aid and assistance on governmental improvement will reinforce those elements in Afghanistan who want to make the government work better and defeat the Taliban. I hope our witnesses today can help us think through these questions — specifically, what sorts of aid are appropriate going forward? What reassurances do we need to provide to the Afghan government and people? How do we properly condition such aid to reinforce the efforts of Afghan reformers?



HASC Testimony on Afghanistan¹
Prepared Statement of Michele Flournoy
Co-Chair of the Board of Directors, Center for a New American Security
September 19, 2013

The United States can still achieve its strategic objectives in Afghanistan if it maintains and adequately resources its current policy course — and if our Afghan partners do their part, including by successfully navigating the shoals of their presidential election and transition in 2014. This judgment is based on the impressive progress of the Afghan security forces, the significant strides made in areas such as agriculture, health and education, and the promising next generation of Afghans who are poised to gain greater influence over their country's future.

However, the United States and its international partners would risk snatching defeat from the jaws of something that could still resemble victory if, due to frustration with President Hamid Karzai or our own budgetary pressures, we were to accelerate our disengagement between now and 2014 or under-resource our commitment to Afghanistan after 2014.

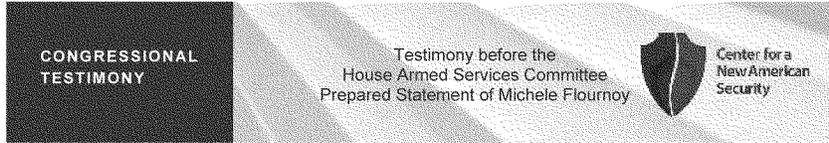
In the meantime, it is important that Washington and Kabul clarify and solidify their commitment to an enduring partnership as soon as possible. If the United States were to announce the intended size and missions of the U.S. forces planned for the post-2014 period, it would greatly reduce Afghan fears of abandonment and put the pressure on the Afghan government to agree to an acceptable Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA). It would also greatly reduce incentives for hedging behavior in Afghanistan and Pakistan and contribute to a constructive atmosphere for the campaigns leading up to the crucial April 2014 Afghan presidential election.

Afghanistan is not a lost cause

Although media coverage of the war has led many Americans to believe that Afghanistan is a lost cause, this is not the case. It is certainly true that this long and costly war has achieved only partial results, corruption in Kabul has remained a serious problem, Pakistan's cooperation with the war effort has been fickle at best, and the insurgency has proved quite resilient.

Nevertheless, the United States now finds itself with a reasonable "Plan B" for achieving its core goal of preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for al Qaeda and its affiliates. The United States can still likely meet its fundamental objectives by continuing to work with partners to degrade the Taliban-led insurgency and create a strong enough Afghan state to hold the country intact. President Obama has been careful to articulate a clear and limited set of objectives

¹ This testimony draws heavily on a CNAS publication Ms Flournoy co-authored with General John Allen, USMC (Ret.) and Michael O'Hanlon, *Toward a Successful Outcome in Afghanistan*, May 2013.



for Afghanistan, and these are still largely within reach — even if at greater cost and with somewhat more fragility than initially hoped.

Future American policy should therefore be motivated not by a desire to cut our losses but with a determination to lock in hard-fought gains.

The security situation

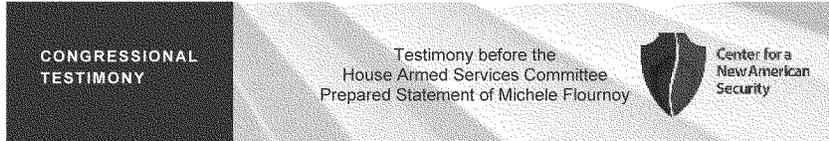
Although the Taliban insurgency remains resilient, particularly in the east and south, and though it retains its sanctuary in Pakistan, its momentum on the ground in Afghanistan has stalled. The insurgency is still capable of high-profile suicide bombings, small-scale attacks and intimidation tactics at the local level, but it has not succeeded in winning over Afghan hearts and minds or expanding its control and influence over the country's major populated areas.

Moreover, the Taliban's shift to more brutal tactics, such as assassinations of Afghan officials and perceived government or foreign collaborators, is having a polarizing impact. Specifically, it is engendering harsh retaliation measures by some Afghan power brokers and creating the conditions for anti-Taliban uprisings. These include local movements in places such as Zhari and Panjwa'i, in western Kandahar province, and Andar, in Ghazni province between Kabul and Kandahar.

At this stage of the war, the central security question is: Have the United States and its partners degraded the Taliban enough and built the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to be strong enough so the insurgency no longer poses a threat of overrunning the central government? The short answer is: yes, as long as we continue to support the Afghan government and armed forces as planned. Some 80 percent of the population is now largely protected from Taliban violence, which is increasingly limited to the country's more remote regions. More than half of the country's violence is concentrated in just 10 of the country's 400 or so districts. In addition, almost all of the country's major cities are now secured by the Afghan security forces rather than foreign troops — and the biggest cities have all seen substantial further improvements in security in the last year. Life is generally buzzing in these places; the war is a concern, but not the predominant reality in people's daily lives.

Certainly, where the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) has shown itself to be corrupt, feckless or absent, the Taliban has gained or maintained influence. But it no longer has the strength to threaten or overthrow the Afghan government. Indeed, the greatest threat to GIROA is probably not the insurgency but GIROA itself, and the risk that key power brokers may seek to rig the coming election.

To be sure, there remains cause for concern. Insurgents continue to threaten some areas near big cities and major roads. And there is good reason to think that many Taliban, having survived more than a decade of attacks by ISAF, are feeling encouraged and confident as these troops largely redeploy by the end of next year. The Taliban might even expect the government to collapse from



within just as the Najibullah government did more than two decades ago, after the Soviet withdrawal.

But for all the problems afflicting this government, today's GIROA is nothing like the communist regime imposed by the Soviets. Today's government is a deeply flawed but clearly independent entity. It is elected, even if the elections were less than free and fair. Its president scores reasonably well on public opinion surveys (typically enjoying 60 to 70 percent popularity) even if many also criticize Karzai for his administration's shortcomings. It is representative of all major ethnic groups, with a Pashtun president, interior minister, finance minister and foreign minister; a Tajik first vice president and minister of defense; a Hazara second vice president; and an Uzbek minister of mines, among others. And the government is about to step down from office as the country's constitution requires it to do next year.

Perhaps most of all, the government has, with ISAF help, created multiethnic army and police forces that fight hard for their country as a cohesive whole. Many Afghans, including strong critics of the current government, describe the security forces as "our national pride." Normal Afghan citizens agree; Asia Foundation annual surveys routinely show the army in particular to enjoy more than 80 percent favorability ratings.

The development of the ANSF, especially the Afghan National Army (ANA), has been fundamentally underreported in the Western press. But the ANSF has made serious strides in taking the lead for the country's security in the last half-decade or so:²

- Afghan forces are now responsible for the security of the entire Afghan population nationwide;
- Some 99 percent of military operations in the country are now Afghan led and almost all are independent of ISAF help; most ANSF units are planning and executing operations largely on their own, and this year's campaign plan was written principally by Afghans;
- ANSF personnel are now taking almost all of the casualties;
- More than 90 percent of ANSF training is Afghan-led;
- There has been success in establishing control over key cities and significant lines of communication; most Taliban violence has been pushed farther away from population centers;
- Afghan units are becoming increasingly proficient in countering roadside bombs or improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In Regional Command-South, ANSF now has a

² See Department of Defense, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress in Accordance with Section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008, December 2012, pp. 20, 40, 46; Briefing at ISAF NTM-A, Kabul, Afghanistan, March 16, 2013; Briefings at ISAF Headquarters, Kabul, Afghanistan, March 10 and 13, 2013; Briefing at ISAF RC-East Command, Kandahar, Afghanistan, March 14, 2013; Briefing at ISAF Combined Joint Special Operations Command, Kabul, Afghanistan, March 11, 2013; and Statement of General Joseph Dunford, Commander, International Security Assistance Force, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, April 16, 2013.

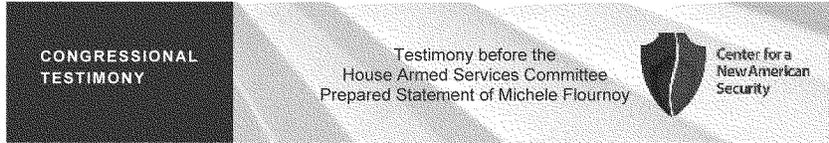
70+ percent success rate in finding and clearing IEDs. This is due less to high-technology equipment than to an increase in tips from the local population;

- Most Afghan Army Corps commands (the 201st and 203rd in the east, the 205th in and around Kandahar, the 215th in Helmand, the 207th in the west and the 209th in the north) are now implementing an operational readiness cycle for their soldiers to allow for predictable leave periods and thereby to reduce attrition (otherwise known as AWOL) rates;
- The Ministers of Defense and Interior have strengthened their focus on replacing or removing Afghan security force leadership that has proved incompetent or corrupt;
- While logistical support remains a huge challenge for Afghans, who are not used to the idea of making requests or delivering orders up and down a chain of bureaucratic or military command, there is progress. In the south, for example, Afghan units have been resupplying themselves without significant ISAF help since December;
- ANSF special operations forces, within the Ministries of Defense and Interior, have achieved a very high level of competence and are increasingly capable of conducting sophisticated special operations.

These kinds of specific improvements collectively have enabled a broader positive trend: Different elements of the ANSF are starting to work together more cohesively and often without ISAF support. They are beginning to operationalize a layered security concept. The army clears insurgent strongholds (sometimes now without much ISAF help). The Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), an elite unit with gendarme-like qualities, then moves in and establishes stability. Over time they hand off to regular Afghan uniformed police -- admittedly still the weak link in the chain in many areas.

In remote areas, this pattern may be somewhat different. The first stages may be similar, but then the army or the ANCOP hand off responsibilities to Afghan Local Police, essentially armed community-watch organizations of 200 to 300 locals each. Most Afghan commanders like the ALP concept enough that they are building it into their campaign plans for the coming year and planning to use it as their "hold" force in certain remote but important areas of the country.

There are admittedly problems with some ALP. They can be undisciplined; in the worst case, they can reinforce tribal factionalism and rivalry in a given area. Questions about the ALP may grow, in some cases, as the American special operations forces teams that have been working with them to date gradually come home or are re-missioned in the next couple of years. But the ALP continue to inspire fear in the Taliban perhaps more than any other part of the ANSF, and they suffer more attacks accordingly. This is perhaps because the Taliban recognize that the ALP deprive them of their fictional but powerful narrative that the existing Afghan government and its security forces are illegitimate concoctions of foreign occupiers having little to do with traditional Afghan mores. As such, while the idea of expanding the ALP from the present planned end strength of some 30,000 "guardians" to as many as 45,000 will have to be handled with care, and while a few problematic ALP units may need to be reformed or even disbanded, the United States should continue to focus on helping ALP be more effective and more tightly managed. This requires better integration with



district chiefs of police in some places and greater programmatic oversight by the Afghan Ministry of Interior as the U.S. role diminishes. The decision for the centralization of ALP training in the regional training centers should go a long way to professionalizing the force.

Rounding out the picture, the Afghan border police work the country's borders, and the Afghan air force provides limited air support. These organizations are not as central to the population's daily security. But they need improvement just the same, as they are still afflicted by too much corruption and lack the capacity they need to be effective.

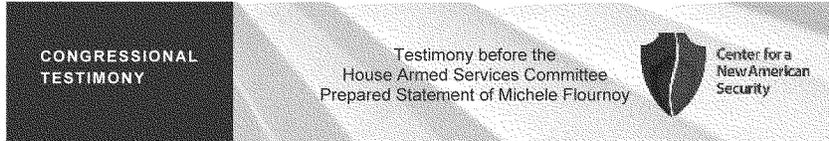
For the most part, though, the ANSF are working well as a team. All of these cooperative efforts are now mapped out in joint campaign plans. And when crises arise, the ANSF employ Operational Coordination Centers in the various provinces to coordinate their operations. The new norm is that Afghan forces are coming to one another's aid without ISAF involvement, a development that bodes well for the future.

The Political Situation

In the American media coverage of the war, all eyes tend to be on President Karzai and the crises of the day. But the real make-or-break political event for Afghanistan will likely be the 2014 election. An illegitimate process or outcome could polarize the country ethnically, spark a descent into civil war and so frustrate outside donors that they cut off aid or substantially downsize their long-term security commitments. A legitimate process and solid outcome could make Afghans, who feel great pride in their country, commit further to building up their nation after a generation of warfare and uncertainty. Already, most Afghans are encouraged by the enormous progress they have experienced in the last dozen years, with GDP growth rates averaging 8 to 10 percent annually and many improvements in the quality of life as well — and they generally do not want to lose these gains.

In light of this situation, what should be the international community's role during the coming year? Although the United States and other key outside nations should not and will not try to pick a winner, America should do what it can to ensure that the next election is freer and fairer than the last. Since the United States has promised at least \$5 billion a year in future aid (for half a decade or more) and is considering spending \$10 billion a year or more on a post-2014 military presence, Americans have a stake in the electoral process and outcome. The aid figures are based in part on the commitments made in Tokyo last summer by Washington and other key capitals, as well as the plan to keep Afghan security forces around their current level of 352,000 personnel through 2018 or so at an annual cost of about \$5 billion in total — expensive, to be sure, but roughly half the annual costs the United States has been incurring to build the force in recent years, and only about 5 percent the pace of recent American military expenditures.

If Afghans fail to secure the election, hold a fraudulent election or elect a corrupt leader, the odds of the U.S. Congress providing the expected aid are slim. This is also the case for other countries.



Washington should, therefore, voice its views now rather than simply cut off aid later if the election goes badly (or if the election is canceled or overturned by a coup — unlikely but not unthinkable outcomes that the United States also needs to contemplate).

As Afghans remember, the Soviet-installed government of Mohammad Najibullah fell not when the Soviet Union initially left Afghanistan in 1989 but when Moscow withdrew its advisers and cut off the money three years later. When the Taliban overran Kabul in 1996, Najibullah was tortured and murdered. All too aware of this history, Afghan reformers, opposition politicians and members of civil society are asking Americans and others to help them make their election a success.

No one has yet officially announced a candidacy for next year's election, but many names are being floated. They include current or former chiefs of staff to the president, Karzai's brother Qayum, Minister of Education Ghulam Farooq Wardak, Minister of Finance Omar Zakhilwel, Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul, former Foreign Minister and presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah and former Minister of Interior Haneef Atmar. These names are all Pashtun, but any plausible candidate would likely announce a multiethnic team, starting with his two vice presidents, before the actual vote.

Indeed, there is a good deal of talk now in Kabul and other places about the desirability of finding a "consensus" candidate or slate. The idea is to use Afghanistan's consultative traditions to avoid a divisive election while the country's democracy is still so fragile. This is a reasonable and even appealing idea in theory. But the devil will be in the details of the consensus candidate — or, perhaps more accurately, the consensus slate of candidates for various jobs within a new government.

With this in mind, the United States and the international community can help by focusing on a few goals:

First, we should remind Afghans that Americans and others will exercise their own sovereign rights to determine future aid levels once Afghanistan exercises its sovereign right to choose a new leader. The quality of the election process and the quality of the new president's leadership will directly affect international donor decisions on aid. This is just common sense, not a threat.

Second, the international community should help ensure the independence and integrity of the Afghan watchdog groups charged with overseeing the electoral process. For all the criticism of past Afghan elections, it was these Afghan groups — the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission — that uncovered the fraud and threw out the bad ballots in 2009 and 2010. Whether or not they include foreigners, future appointees to the commissions should be selected with the input of parliament, and President Karzai should not be able to dismiss them once appointed. This issue is more important than many others being debated in Kabul, including redoing voter registration and issuing new voter cards.



Third, the international community should watch carefully how the election campaigns play out starting later this year. Afghan state media need to give reasonable time to all candidates, including the opposition. Vote-buying and voter intimidation need to be deterred and prevented through timely investigations of allegations. The electoral commissions will do the investigating, but the international community must stand behind them. To that end the principal role of ISAF during the election will be to enable and assist the ANSF to take the lead in securing the electoral process, by not only fighting to spoil and disrupt potential Taliban interference in the election, but also helping the ANSF secure the balloting itself as Afghan citizens go to the polls.

Fourth, the international community should give technical, moral and if necessary financial support to fledgling Afghan political parties — provided they have inclusive, multiethnic memberships and platforms and promise to eschew violence. The United States and others should encourage the Afghans to develop platforms based on ideas rather than personalities or patronage networks alone.

Fifth, when U.S. officials visit Afghanistan, they should meet not only with members of the executive branch but also with a broad range of Afghan politicians and civil-society members, particularly next-generation representatives, who are the real hope for the country's future.

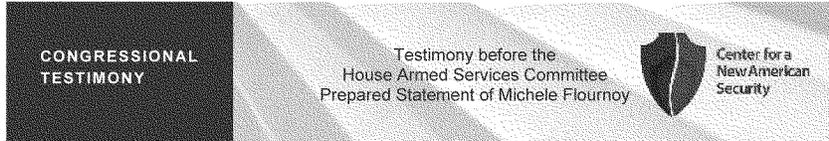
American passivity in the coming Afghan elections could be just as counterproductive as certain aspects of perceived American assertiveness were last time around. The verdict on the war in Afghanistan may be settled less on the country's battlefields than at its polling stations next spring.

2015 and Beyond

With his decision to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan by half between February 2013 and February 2014, President Obama answered most remaining questions about American military strength in Afghanistan through the end of the ISAF mission in 2014. Most of the planned reductions from the current strength of some 66,000 American troops to 34,000 will occur this fall and winter. After that, the force levels will probably hold relatively steady through the Afghan elections in April and perhaps a bit longer, before the drawdown to the "Enduring Force" begins in late summer or fall of next year. Already, the U.S. force presence is focused on supporting the ANSF — American brigade combat teams and Marine regiments have been replaced now by security force assistance brigades, which essentially oversee, support and help enable the work of individual small-unit security force assistance teams.

But there are still a number of critical questions to be worked through, some military and others political. Specifically:

- What will the Enduring Force do and how large should it be in 2015 and beyond?
- Should the United States move straight to the Enduring Force, or have a somewhat larger "bridging force" for two to three years after 2014?



- How many allied forces are needed? What is politically realistic in various foreign capitals, especially in Europe?
- Should the ANSF be sustained at the level of 352,000 troops beyond the beginning of the currently planned drawdown at the end of 2015? Say, to 2018 or 2020?
- What should come first, a clear U.S. commitment to a given Enduring Force (premised on reasonable Afghan elections and governance), or a deal on legal immunity for American troops through the Bilateral Security Accord?

On the last point, I favor stating the rough contours of an American force as soon as possible. Actual deployment of any such force would of course be contingent on an acceptable immunity/status of forces agreement being concluded. But clarifying the U.S. commitment now would make it clear to Afghans that only their own government's reluctance stands in the way of firming up the partnership. Given Afghanistan's historical fear of abandonment, the impact of such a clear American commitment of intent would be both powerful and positive. It would also help persuade NATO allies to firm up their own plans. This does not mean that the United States should convey impatience to conclude a Bilateral Security Accord on a rushed basis, which would potentially weaken Washington's negotiating position (since some Afghans wrongly believe that the United States desperately wants bases on their nation's territory for broader regional purposes in multiple directions). But there is no need to be ambiguous about something that would clearly serve American national security interests if Afghans do their part, too.

As for what the Enduring Force package should include, the United States needs several things as a matter of prudence. First, there should be enough force to advise and assist the ANSF effectively, including geographic distribution to cover the ANA corps in Kabul and the "four corners" of the country, and capacity to get below the Afghan Corps level with mobile teams if necessary, to support Afghan brigades in pre-operational preparations, and should problems develop here or there. Second, in the country's north and west in particular, there should be enough enablers to keep U.S. allies in the game, as their logistics capabilities are not adequate to sustain small forces without modest U.S. help. (Germany and Italy seem ready to step up with their contributions, for example, but need assurance of certain U.S. support.) Third, the United States needs to maintain some counterterrorism capabilities in country, for strikes within Afghanistan or in some cases along the border. Finally, for two to three years after 2014, the United States may need an additional force package of several thousand personnel to help the Afghans finish building their air force, their special operations forces and certain other enablers in medical realms, in counter-IED capability and in intelligence collection. This might be viewed as an additional but temporary bridging force, above and beyond the Enduring Force.

To achieve this, the United States should deploy an Enduring Force sized and shaped for these tasks after 2014. It is not my purpose to recommend a specific figure here, and in fact a band of numbers is probably acceptable, as suggested by some of the parameters staked out in the recent public debate on this subject — though greater risk would be associated with smaller force sizes. With clear U.S. commitments, allies would likely contribute an additional 3,000 to 5,000 uniformed personnel themselves.

CONGRESSIONAL
TESTIMONY

Testimony before the
House Armed Services Committee
Prepared Statement of Michele Flournoy



Center for a
New American
Security

Despite the near-term challenges in realms ranging from security to corruption to narcotics to difficult neighbors, I remain fundamentally optimistic about Afghanistan's mid- to long-term future. My greatest cause for hope is the next generation. Youth make up 60 percent of Afghanistan's population, and they are being educated in unprecedented numbers. Some 180,000 students are in university this year, with nearly 10 million overall in school. Beyond the numbers, there is the passion, the commitment, the patriotism and the resilience that distinguishes this community of remarkable individuals.

In Afghanistan, many of these next-generation leaders have formed a "1400 group," based on the Afghan Islamic calendar (it is now 1392, so 1400 is roughly the time when this new generation will begin to step up to run the nation). They include individuals who left Afghanistan during the wars of the last 30 years, as well as some who stayed; they include activists and members of civil society, as well as professionals and technocrats; they include Pashtuns and Tajiks and Hazaras and Uzbeks and others, though all tend to see themselves first and foremost as Afghans.

Most encouraging, perhaps, is the growing role of women in Afghan society. Girls make up more than 40 percent of this new generation of students, and women are an increasingly important voice speaking on behalf of minority rights, countering corruption and embracing the rule of law. Experience in other post-conflict societies suggests that countries able to assimilate women into the mainstream of society were far better able to transition into developing societies. Without the Afghan women playing a major role in the future of Afghanistan, I would not be optimistic that real reform can occur in this traditional society.

Despite its promise, one cannot forget, of course, that Afghanistan will remain one of the poorest, least developed and most corrupt countries in the world for years to come. But the United States and its partners, which have invested and sacrificed so much, have a chance to ensure that the land of the Hindu Kush does not return to being a safe haven for international terrorists and that it stays on the path toward greater stability, as well as human and economic development. Compared to what the international community has collectively invested already -- in blood and in treasure -- the costs associated with this future effort to lock in gains seem a wise investment.

Biography

www.cnas.org

Michèle Flournoy
Former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy



CNAS BIOGRAPHY



Michèle Flournoy served as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from February 2009 to February 2012. She was the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense in the formulation of national security and defense policy, oversight of military plans and operations, and in National Security Council deliberations. She led the development of DoD's new Strategic Guidance and represented the Department in dozens of foreign engagements, in the media and before Congress.

Prior to confirmation, Ms. Flournoy co-led President Obama's transition team at DoD.

In January 2007, Ms. Flournoy co-founded the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), a non-partisan think tank dedicated to developing strong, pragmatic and principled national security policies. She served as CNAS' President until 2009.

Previously, she was senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies for several years and, prior to that, a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU).

In the mid-1990s, she served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy.

Ms. Flournoy has received several awards from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She is a member of the Defense Policy Board, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Aspen Strategy Group.

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

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Witness name: Michele Flournoy

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Individual

Representative

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

FISCAL YEAR 2013

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

FISCAL YEAR 2012

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FISCAL YEAR 2011

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**Congressional Testimony
U.S. Presence Post 2014
Afghanistan**

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

by

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

19 September 2013

1000 hours

**Congressional Hearing
Testimony
19 September 2012
1000 hrs**

Mr. Chairman, ranking minority, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on such a critical subject as the “presence in Afghanistan post 2014”. Am honored to be with such a distinguished panel who I have known for many years. Given there are four oral statements, I will keep my remarks very brief.

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

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

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

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

the bulk of the resources to a self-sustaining economy focusing on mining, agriculture and transportation. I will defer economic engagement to my fellow panel member Clare Lockhart, who is a recognized expert in the area.

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

Three key decisions post 2014 can mitigate the security risk and provide a hedge:

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

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

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

2. POST 2014 RESIDUAL FORCE

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

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

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

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

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

A summary of the force level requirements for the residual force are:

CT – 7,000

Advisors / Trainers– 5,000

Enablers – 8,000

Total – 20,000

3. PAKISTAN SANCTUARIES

--A third key decision to reduce the risk is to authorize the targeting of the Taliban and Haggani leaders in the sanctuaries in Pakistan. Priority is to the Haggani sanctuary because the security situation in the EAST is not as stable as the SOUTH. This would be an extension of the mission the OGA is conducting against the Al Qaeda in the FATA. Once systematic targeting commences, the sanctuary will cease to exist as we currently know it; a place where strategy, training, operational oversight, intelligence and logistics is executed, routinely, in safe haven. These functions will suffer significantly which will positively impact operations in the EAST. Additionally, it will be a huge morale boost for the ANSF.

Let me conclude by saying that if we are to avoid squandering the gains we have made in Afghanistan, US/IC presence post 2014 is essential. The Taliban are hoping to regain the momentum post 2014 and will make a major effort to do so. What is key is the US policy commitment to the stability and security of Afghanistan must be clearly stated time and again and moreover reflected in the political, economic and military assistance that is critical to reduce the risk of failure. We cannot afford any equivocation or mixed

signals about the strength and resolve of the US commitment to Afghanistan's future.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.

General John M. Keane, United States Army, Retired

General Jack Keane is president, GSI, LLC. He is a director of MetLife and General Dynamics, chairman of the Institute for the Study of War, chairman of the Knollwood Foundation, a former member for 9 years 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 war in Afghanistan.

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: JACK KEANE

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Individual

Representative

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FISCAL YEAR 2012

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Testimony
THE MISSION SHOULD DRIVE THE NUMBERS
House Armed Services Committee
US Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014 – Views of Outside Experts
By
Ronald E. Neumann
September 19, 2013

Chairman McKeon, Representative Smith, thank you for inviting me to appear today. The subject of how the US presence is constructed post-2014 is truly important. It directly affects the issues of success or failure in Afghanistan for which I and so many others have labored, for which some have made an ultimate sacrifice, for which billions of tax payer dollars have been spent and for which many thousand Afghans have also lost their lives and limbs. Sacrifice creates a cost but it is not a sufficient reason to continue sacrificing if there is not a reasonable chance for success. But neither is pain and fatigue--of which the American people are showing advanced symptoms--a sound basis for policy.

Summary of recommendations:

We need to think of the post-2014 presence in terms of events that will take place, actions we can take to undergird success, and how we react to success, failure, or problematic Afghan performance.

The April 2014 Afghan presidential election is crucial to success. We should be pressing Pakistan to reinforce the border, planning for election observers, instituting a brief increase in air support to increase Afghan ability to secure the vote, and publicizing our support for election training. We should also be clear on consequences if the electoral calendar is significantly breached or the election is disastrously mishandled.

Governance is a key part of future success. We have demanded improvement but lost credibility through lack of follow-through on our statements of conditionality. Change before the election is unlikely but we should institute some level of pain so that we prove our seriousness now, not when a new government is trying to take hold after an election.

It is essential that we maintain a minimum civilian presence outside Kabul to manage program oversight and evaluation of developments in governance.

On the security mission personnel needs must be related to greater clarity about what the mission actually is. Train and advise can mean many things. I believe we need to be present at all corps and frequently in the brigades. Building the Ministries of Defense and Interior is also essential. Although this probably means US forces in the 10-13,000 range the immediate issue for Congress is to demand that means be logically linked to ends. Further, there are multiple parts of the security mission and each needs to be clearly defined and linked to required resources.

Some support and logistical elements are not finished and part of the responsibility is ours; we need to fill some gaps for a transitional period and we need a plan for how these forces will be ramped down.

Counter terrorist forces with a mission outside Afghanistan possibly should be considered on their own merits and not counted against a ceiling built around support for the Afghan mission.

Afghan forces need to be held accountable for cleaning up corruption and implementing merit promotions. We should be prepared for various cuts if these actions are not taken. We need not go into a frenzy of retaliation but we need predictable retaliation for lack of performance and threats need to be implemented. [End Summary]

Much of the current debate seems to take simplistic forms; “all is lost so we should leave now” is one such. It is based heavily on the contention that Congress will run out of patience and defund the exercise soon so we should quit first. On the other side we hear that “the mission,” often not well defined, requires such-and-such a level of forces but the discussion has left few able coherently to understand how troop numbers are related to missions. In the face of these many voices I would like to clarify my views on four basic issues and then explain my reasons for the views summarized above.

On basic issues let us be honest. We are not “winding down the war.” We are reducing but not eliminating our presence in a war that will continue. The President’s policy calls for us to continue to train, advise and fund that fight. Thus we need to clarify and detail what we intend to achieve with the continuing forces.

Second, I do believe that there is a continuing and important strategic objective to be gained in moving Afghanistan towards stability and away from a descent into the chaos that could destabilize all of Central Asia and Pakistan for decades and give new life to extremism, particularly of al-Qaeda. I do believe that these risks are real.

Third, I do not believe that these dangers are worth any cost in lives or dollars to the United States. Political reality is that we will not endlessly pay and that realization must be part of policy.

Fourth, on the basis of repeated trips to Afghanistan, including two this year, I think it is still possible at reasonable cost to achieve a sustainable Afghan state.

What this brings me to, however, is that it is a mistake to think of the post-2014 presence in fixed terms of dollars and people for fixed years. Rather, I think that we must think in terms of a series or cycle of actions that are going to take place, driven by both our desires and Afghan performance. We need to tailor our involvement to these actions, first to give each one the best chance of succeeding but subsequently to react to failure as well as the potential for progress. I think it is possible to look out two or three years in this manner, albeit with

decreasing certainty. However, the relationship of action and staffing to policy needs to begin now, not post-2014. Present decisions for post-2014 need to relate to what happens in the next year and not be determined in the abstract.

The events I see as determinative are the Afghan presidential elections of 2014; the development of better governance after that election; how we state and resource the military mission post-2014, which is now defined in such general terms as to be inadequate for military planning and useless for political reassurance to Afghans; the need for transitional support as the last of Afghan combat support and logistics systems are built; and our willingness to reduce what we propose to do if Afghans will not carry their own share of the responsibility. Each event has actions we can take to increase the chances of success. And each event has actions for which we need more clearly to hold Afghans accountable.

Our civilian presence will be a comparatively small part of the total but is critical for project and policy oversight. Thus it also needs careful examination. Some missions need to be seen as joint rather than separate.

The immediate test is the Afghan presidential election of 2014. It is critical that it lead to a new president who has sufficiently broad legitimacy to be able to lead a majority of the Afghan people and reassure the international donors. This is a significant opportunity to show friends and enemies that our strategy is succeeding and to breathe new hope into donors and allies alike. Ultimately, this test can only be met by Afghan political leaders. If they fail we will need to consider a faster departure with less assistance. Since that is a political reality of our own domestic scene we might as well gain the value of clarity by making it a staple of our policy statements. Doing so would help to focus Afghan energies that are already aware of the possibility of chaos if the election is a failure and are seeking a measure of political consensus. This is a result devoutly to be desired. Since it is one spurred by fear then making clear that the fear is well founded is all to the good.

At the same time we should do as much as we and the allies can to support a successful election. There are some modest signs of progress. The Afghan parliament has finally passed essential electoral laws that President Karzai signed, a new voter registration process has begun and vacancies in the various electoral bodies are being filled. None of these were certain to occur even two months ago.

There are four steps we should consider. First we should continue substantial support for the electoral bodies and training. Greatly enhanced publicity about what we are doing will help show Afghans the seriousness of our support for the election. Such publicity will not amount to interference since it is directed to process, not who wins.

Second, we should consider a modest, time-limited increase in military support for the electoral period, particularly in fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft. The Afghan security forces are going to have to handle security for the election but intensified airlift and combat air to provide essential support would give them greater reach and far more chance of success.

Third, we should press the Pakistan government to deploy large numbers of troops to the border to reduce infiltration during the election. They have done this before and it helped. We should be prepared to be clear, initially in private, that failure to do so will be a hostile act resulting in serious reductions of aid and that we will compensate for a lack of Pakistani troops with increased air strikes in border areas whether approved by Pakistan or not.

Finally, we should plan for and encourage donor governments and organizations to send election monitors. Realistically, foreign monitors will not be able to operate much outside the major metropolitan areas. But by being closely linked to Afghan monitors they can give far more voice, publicity and force to the latter than they can have by themselves. Domestic monitors are the real eyes and ears of an election as my colleagues in the democracy business always assure me. But without the foreigners to provide an amplifying megaphone they can also be shoved aside and ignored as one voice among many that will clamor in a post election.

We should be making it clear that if the electoral calendar is seriously breached or if for some reason the election is not held all our commitments, including those already reached like the strategic partnership, are null and void and we expect our troop presence and financial assistance to decline rapidly. This is a result that virtually every American observer believes would happen under such circumstances so we might as well draw the benefit of being clear about it in advance.

From the election to the end of 2014 will be an important period of governance. It is pointless to expect better governance between now and the election. No western government I know, and certainly not ours, would expect to make major and painful political reforms in an immediate pre-electoral period. But after the election is different.

We do need to understand that a new government will likely be a coalition and will need some time to get organized. It is likely to be weak initially. But since time and US domestic political patience are running out we have to demand more coherence. And we will have to do so at a time when we have lost credibility through repeated demands and assertions of conditionality that have not been backed up by action. This means we will have to inflict some serious pain to regain credibility. Pain could take a number of forms from cutting salaries at the Presidential palace to abruptly cancelling some particularly valued projects but we need to make these decisions coldly, and for political effect and not in a fit of anger or in a spirit of bureaucratic defense against the latest finding of the Special Inspector General.

There is a possibility that an election might go well. New ministers will be appointed and new opportunities to improve governance will arise. In that case we should be thinking about some modest ways to help the new government. One way would be to implement some painful conditionality now—fully understanding that the Karzai government is unlikely to change—so that we can both demonstrate seriousness of purpose now and have the possibility of beginning our relations with a new government on a more supportive basis by relaxing pressure for a time.

One further decision now is critical to the events of the next year and our posture post-2014 and that is clarity of the security mission. This has three parts, what is needed to train and advise, what is needed for support, and what we intend for essentially US-only counter terrorist goals. The first part of the mission—training and advising—has no visible public definition and seems to be still a matter of contention within the administration. If, as I believe, it is necessary to train at the higher staff functions and help get the support services moving better and integrated into operations, then we will have to be consistently present at corps levels and fairly frequently in contact with Afghan brigades. Advising at those levels is critical for influencing operations, increasing coordination among Afghan security forces, improving combat support, and accurately assessing what is happening in the war.

This has consequences for positioning of aviation assets, reaction forces, staffing and headquarters. My understanding is that such a mission would take somewhere in the neighborhood of 10-13,000 US troops with NATO nations contributing accordingly but, frankly, the opinion of a civilian outside the policy process on specific numbers is not worth much. What the congress must demand are clear answers from the administration about what missions it seeks to achieve and how the numbers decided on support those missions. At present there is a serious danger that the numbers will be decided on a political basis alone; a process likely both to lead to policy failure and an unforgivable loss of American troops' lives without a reasonable chance of success in their mission.

One piece of the advisory mission concerns strengthening the key ministries of defense and interior. We have varied over time from substantially under-resourcing this task to trying to achieve everything at one time. The Administration should make clear what it sees as key tasks over time, how this relates to military and senior civilian advisors (some of whom should come from other NATO states) and how this might be ramped down over time. Selecting civilian and military advisors with the right skills will be as critical as the numbers. Experience in other countries suggests that the development of ministerial competence is a long-term task. It should be approached carefully and not jammed into whatever is left of an arbitrarily selected number. Support for women in the Afghan forces is important for certain aspects of security and needs to be part of our program.

These numbers should not be for all time. We should expect and demand Afghan improvement and this should be geared to an expectation that we will reduce advisory teams over some defined time. That time needs to be set and a follow-on mission defined so that the public has some sense of what is being asked.

At the same time, numbers must be linked to far clearer reporting on progress and our strength needs to be at least partly a function of performance. One of the greatest weaknesses in the Afghan military in my observation is the excess of political balancing in senior ranks to the detriment of quality and merit. While there are limits on what we can demand of Afghan sovereignty there are also limits to what incompetence for Afghan political purposes can demand of our treasury. We should not demand perfection or even massive improvement all

at once. But we should make our own assessments of the numbers of truly incompetent senior Afghan officers in important jobs. We should make that assessment clear to the Afghan authorities, and we should be prepared to reduce our funding if it does not show modest improvement from year to year. At the same time, improvement should be publicized and celebrated by keeping up the funding levels. This is another way in which dollars and personnel should be related to performance, both positive and negative, and not defined in a policy vacuum. If performance falls so should the dollars and the mission should be altered accordingly. Again, we need to set the benchmarks now and not tailor the reporting to defending a budget.

A second area of troop strength refers to support services; enablers in military terms—logistics, air force, helicopters, casualty evacuation and so on and their integration into operational support. The criticism of inadequate Afghan progress is somewhat unfair. We only made the decision to create these forces in 2009 and work began later. When I visited Afghanistan in 2010 all military briefings I received, and there were many, made clear that the construction of enablers would not be completed before 2016 or 2017. That we later changed our goals to focus on 2014 is true but failing to be ready at a time never contemplated and never possible is neither an Afghan nor a US military failing.

Because we have changed the goal posts I believe we have a responsibility to fill some of these gaps for a limited period of time. Casualty evacuation aircraft ought to continue some support of Afghan forces until at least some greater ground evacuation and a forward casualty receiving system has a minimum chance to develop. Where our own contracting procedures have delayed the arrival of transport aircraft we should help fill the gap for a year or two beyond 2014. Once again, as a civilian outside the decision process I cannot provide the numbers. I can say with certainty that there are a small number of critical support functions we ought to maintain for a few years, that they can be steadily diminished, that Congress should insist these be defined or their lack justified, and the numbers of personnel be derived from the description of mission. What should not happen is to let these critical questions go unanswered.

Again, while I believe we have responsibilities, so too do the Afghans. There is a serious problem of corruption. One example is in the Afghan air force. That this is not cleared up is a top-level political problem. Therefore, if there is not radical improvement in this regard there should be cuts. However, they should occur where they are meaningful, perhaps in the budget for presidential security, salaries, presidential air fleet, or some similar place. The point in all of these examples is that we need public reporting, predictable retaliation for lack of performance, and the threats need to be carried out. It is the public linkage of cause to action that needs to be established over time to raise our credibility. At the same time, the number of demonstrations needs to be kept limited so that it is clear we are seeking reasonable improvement and not simply suffering from excessive and unrealistic demands based on “a period fit of morality” (with apologies to British author Thomas Babington Macaulay from whom I have borrowed the expression).

A third force component is counter terrorist forces. To the extent that their mission focus is outside Afghanistan it is not clear to me whether it is part of our Afghan strategy or ought to be considered separately as part of our worldwide counter terrorist operations. In the latter case the numbers of personnel should be considered separately rather than competing within some narrow ceiling with the Afghan mission.

The civilian presence post-2014 will be much smaller than now but needs careful consideration as well because it is directly related to oversight and understanding what is happening in governance. Right now it is clear from my visits that as our military and civilian presence is contracting, so too is our understanding of what is happening in the country. Without understanding we will be less and less able to know either how our money is spent or how best to prioritize how we use our remaining influence. Afghan governance operates at all levels and is experienced by most Afghans in their daily lives. Understanding something of what is happening at this level is critical to our ability to judge political support for the government. Reporting is thus inextricably linked to sound policy. This poses two related but different problems; one about security and one about oversight.

The post-Benghazi fears of loss are increasingly paralyzing our diplomacy. We need not be suicidal or confuse diplomats with soldiers but neither can we learn what we need to make sound policy with a policy of zero risk tolerance. We must keep a modest political reporting presence in various parts of Afghanistan. Diplomats on the ground must have some freedom to make risk-benefit calculations about when to go to meetings without being constantly second guessed or having to risk their careers in addition to their lives. What is more, we need to continue to invest in the language and cultural skills of the officers we have in the provinces. Personally, I think we would do much better with a third of the numbers if they stayed three times as long and had twice the training they get now. Where they cannot move much they need large representation budgets to host Afghan visitors in Afghan fashion, thus becoming an accepted stop when a variety of characters pass through. They need to rethink how and where to meet so that essential Afghan contacts are not shamed and embarrassed by our security screening. This is difficult but it is not impossible as I have seen in Algeria, Afghanistan, and Iraq; all critical threat posts. We need far more creative partnerships between military and civilian personnel. With fewer personnel, missions of training and doing political and economic reporting need to be shared. All this is less about the numbers of personnel than about how we conceptualize, train, deploy and support them. However, it does tie into the second task of oversight.

This is a problem that the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan has identified. As personnel levels fall our capacities for oversight decline as well. Yet to translate this into only providing economic assistance that we can directly oversee would be to confuse ends and means; aid would be largely separated from purpose and reduced only to what would fit into the procrustean oversight bed no matter how far removed from strategic goals. Squaring this circle is going to take creativity more than numbers. On the one hand we, especially USAID, will need to refine our measurements of progress; improvements need to be measured in what children learn rather than how many schools are built, in how ministries function and the

quality of their work rather than in the numbers of sub-projects completed. These are actually very difficult judgments to make. They need intellectual effort first. Then they will need dedicated USAID staff with the capacity to do this work, not just contractors. Our present process of setting goals for which we then ask contractors to devise means and then try to supervise through multiple indirect layers is unlikely to respond to the current challenge. I think that any really coherent answer on the number of USAID personnel will come only after this sort of rethinking takes place. But to do that will require help and intellectual cooperation from Congress to come to acceptable answers.

It is possible as some analysts predict that the mission will fail, either because Afghan forces are not up to the task, the politics remain deficient, or our will and our money give out. But this is much too far from certain for us to bolt now. At the same time however, the centrality of Afghan performance is too critical to ignore. It is particularly important that we understand that our actions are major drivers of Afghan actions. Therefore we need above all to show that our actions are related to what happens on the ground.

We need to spell out now the mission we expect to undertake in 2015 and the numbers we would use to accomplish this but be frank in saying we will reduce certain aspects if Afghan performance in key areas is not sufficient. The mission needs to drive the numbers. If required numbers for the mission are too large to be politically supportable then the administration needs to change the mission, not play word games with insufficient numbers. Our lack of clarity on both mission and numbers is increasing destabilization in Afghan politics, leading many to assume failure and thus ignore performance or governance in order to save for themselves whatever they can. Our inability to connect purpose to numbers is increasingly and directly making any success less likely.

We need to differentiate a short-term gap-filler support mission from a longer-term advisory and training mission. Some of the fixed-wing combat and transport support probably can continue to be based outside Afghanistan; for example in the Gulf as some now is. This will affect both costs and numbers. Once again, clarity of mission should drive numbers, or at least provide enough clarity to make the discussion coherent.

We need to do everything we can to make the election a success while making some painful reductions now on the basis of corruption so that our message of consequences is clear. We need now to come to closure on a civilian presence adequate to political reporting and some measures of oversight. I would guess that such numbers outside Kabul could be small if we pay attention to training, collocate with the military, leave our people on the ground more flexibly in making security decisions, and keep a minimum number in place long enough to become real experts.

Whatever side of the Afghan policy one is on, I hope the Congress in general, and this committee in particular will encourage and press the administration to provide you with the clarity about mission and its relationship to numbers to allow staffs to have a coherent understanding. People like to talk about strategy and goals. In pedestrian terms this is all

about how means relate to ends; whether the two are logically connected, whether there is a reasonable case that the means are sufficient to ends, and whether there is sufficient information to decide that one or the other must be adjusted if the policy is not working. That discussion is not yet happening. I hope the future political discussion in this town and this building will be worthy of the sacrifices we ask from our civilian and military personnel who have and will serve in Afghanistan. Thank you for allowing me to appear. I will be happy to respond to questions.

(Ronald E. Neumann is president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, was ambassador to Afghanistan 2005-07 and is the author of *The Other War; Winning and Losing in Afghanistan*. He has no direct government contracts but is on retainer from one consulting company with such a contract to provide occasional advice to the sponsor.)



THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY
STRENGTHENING AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Ronald E. Neumann
President, American Academy of Diplomacy

Formerly a Deputy Assistant Secretary Ronald E. Neumann served three times as Ambassador: to Algeria, Bahrain and finally to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from July 2005 to April 2007. Before Afghanistan, Mr. Neumann, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, served in Baghdad from February 2004 with the Coalition Provisional Authority and then as Embassy Baghdad's principal interlocutor with the Multinational Command, where he was deeply involved in coordinating the political part of military action.

Prior to working in Iraq, he was Chief of Mission in Manama, Bahrain (2001-2004). Before that, Ambassador Neumann served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near East Affairs (1997-2000), where he directed the organization of the first separately-funded NEA democracy programs and also was responsible for the bureau's work in developing the North African Economic Initiative for Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. Before that assignment, he was Ambassador to Algeria (1994 to 1997) and Director of the Office of Northern Gulf Affairs (Iran and Iraq; 1991 to 1994). Earlier in his career, he was Deputy Chief of Mission in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and in Sanaa in Yemen. Principal Officer in Tabriz, Iran and Economic/Commercial Officer in Dakar, Senegal. His previous Washington assignments include service as Jordan Desk officer, Staff Assistant in the Middle East (NEA) Bureau, and Political Officer in the Office of Southern European Affairs.

Ambassador Neumann is the author of *The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan* (Potomac Press, 2009), a book on his time in Afghanistan. He is the author of a number of monographs and articles. At the Academy he has focused particularly on efforts to expand State and USAID personnel to enable these institutions to carry out their responsibilities.

Ambassador Neumann speaks some Arabic and Dari as well as French. He received State Department Senior Foreign Service pay awards in 2004, 2003, and 1999 as well as individual Superior Honor Awards in 1993 and 1990. He served as an Army infantry officer in Viet Nam and holds a Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal and Combat Infantry Badge. In Baghdad, he was awarded the Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal. He earned a B.A. in history and an M.A. in political science from the University of California at Riverside. He is married to the former M. Elaine Grimm. They have two children.



**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 113th 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 Committee on Armed Services 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: Ronald E. Neumann

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Individual

Representative

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

FISCAL YEAR 2013

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contract 2006*1147909*009	DNI	\$3,750	Consulting

FISCAL YEAR 2012

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contract 2006*1147909*009	DNI	\$6,500	Consulting

FISCAL YEAR 2011

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

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

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

Current fiscal year (2013): 1 as above _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2012: 1 as above _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A _____ .

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): DNI _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2012: DNI _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A _____ .

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 (2013): Consultation as requested _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2012: Consultation as requested _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A _____ .

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2013): As above _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2012: As above _____ ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A _____ .

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 (2013): N/A ;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): _____ ;
Fiscal year 2012: _____ ;
Fiscal year 2011: _____ .

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

Current fiscal year (2013): _____ ;
Fiscal year 2012: _____ ;
Fiscal year 2011: _____ .

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2013): _____ ;
Fiscal year 2012: _____ ;
Fiscal year 2011: _____ .

**Prepared Testimony
House Armed Services Committee**

The US Presence in Afghanistan post-2014: Views of Outside Experts

**Clare Lockhart
Director, ISE**

Thursday 18 September 2013

INTRODUCTION

Many members of Congress as well as the American public are deeply concerned about the prospects for the women of Afghanistan, and rightly so. For Afghan women, the gains of the last decade are under threat. Key issues for Afghan women include the prospects for the stability of the country as a whole, the protection of their own safety and basic rights, their ability to participate in political and civic life, and to access basic needs including healthcare and education. The conditions that will meet the fundamental needs and aspirations of Afghanistan's women are substantially the same as those that will keep all Afghan citizens secure from risk and threat – maintaining sufficient security in the country to counter the threats of criminality, extremism and civil and regional conflict.

Achieving stability and security is not only in the interest of Afghan women, but in the key long-term interest of Afghanistan, and of the United States. In this testimony I will consider components to stability and security, how the post-2014 US presence can underpin them – and draw attention to any risks that could undermine the process.

In Section 1, I review the current context for the security and stability challenge. I consider in turn: why confidence is so central leading into and beyond the 2014 watershed, what type of commitment is required to maintain this confidence, and how a false dilemma between a perpetual war and a “Grand Bargain” has detracted from attention to a more nuanced set of policies. In Section 2, I consider the gains that have been made and the opportunities to consolidate and maintain these gains, together with the nature of the risks and threats to US and Afghan interests in the years ahead. In Section 3, I will address the policies that could counter these threats in the areas of security, politics and economics.

1. BACKGROUND

a. Confidence

As many astute participants and observers of Afghanistan have noted, the critical ingredient for stability leading to and beyond the 2014 watershed is *confidence*. Afghan leaders and citizens alike are ready to assume the responsibility of securing

and governing themselves. To fulfill this responsibility, they need the confidence that their partners will stand by them and maintain the commitments that have already been made to them, through the commitments made at Lisbon, Chicago and Tokyo, and in the Strategic Partnership Agreement.

The greatest ally of the United States in Afghanistan is its citizenry: the vast majority of Afghans who are moderate and law-abiding, and want the same stability and security for their own families that will also satisfy the interests of the US and the broader international community. A wise civic leader from Afghanistan once observed:

"We have 95% ordinary people, 4% thugs, and 1% extremists, perhaps as in any country. The problem comes when outsiders focus on the 4% and 1%, and cut a deal between them, overlooking the interests of the 95%."

The real foundation of stability will come from this moderate middle, which will bear the burden of maintaining order and countering extremism, if they have sufficient confidence. These are the people who form the basis of the Afghan Security Forces and their families, the state institutions, the businesspeople, front line service providers and civic actors who keep the country working. Polled numbers today are not as overtly pro-American as they were in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001. Nonetheless it is the moderate middle who look for stability, rule of law, and order, not necessarily those who are overtly pro-American, that will provide the bulwark of stability.

b. Commitment

How can the United States and Afghanistan's international partners bolster, rather than undermine this confidence? It is through standing by commitments that have already been made, and making enduring commitments to Afghanistan's security sufficient that Afghans can shoulder the burden of securing and governing themselves. The Bilateral Security Agreement could form a foundational element of such a commitment post 2014. It is not strictly necessary, however, as existing legal frameworks suffice to permit an international presence. Should negotiations on the BSA fail to reach a satisfactory final conclusion, this should not in itself be considered fatal to securing a long-term commitment to the country and its region.

Perhaps as important as the legal agreements are the international statements of commitment to Afghanistan's survival as a state. When Afghans hear talk of long-term commitment, they are willing to stand firm and take the risks and actions that mean that stability is likely to prevail, and those commitments are unlikely to be called into action. When they hear that the US wishes to withdraw completely from the region, talk of a "zero option", or talk of concessions made in negotiations that will close the space for ordinary citizens to live and operate, this leads to hedging behavior that cause the unraveling of institutions and stability. To Afghan ears, it echoes hauntingly with the story of abandonment of the region that followed the victory of the Mujahideen over the Soviet presence, and the end of the Cold War.

To reinforce Afghanistan's ability to defend itself over the medium term, both continued financial and material support to the ANSF- until such time as the domestic revenue of Afghanistan can cover the essential costs of the force - and a residual international force will be required. This force should not take a front-line combat role - which has now been assumed by Afghan forces as of the completion of the Transition process. But it should be present to provide back-up and support, as trainers and mentors, as reinforcements and to provide a deterrence to those who might wish to challenge the survival of the Afghan state and the integrity of Afghan territory. It is the threat of use of force, rather than actual use of force, that is likely to have the highest value.

A civic leader who has mobilized hundreds of thousands of citizens to counter extremism called me to ask whether the US is going to stand by its commitments. If so, he said, then my colleagues can keep their work going. If not, he said, then we might as well go into exile now, as we are sure to be overwhelmed. When there is talk of abandonment, Afghan citizens close their businesses, sell their houses, send their families into exile, and cease to confront the extremism and criminality around them. In security, as in finance, fear of collapse is often the key element that actually precipitates collapse.

There is an important distinction to be made between the United States' continued commitment to Afghanistan's security and viability as a state, and the United States' ongoing direct involvement in a war. It is possible to end the US's direct and leading role in a war, whether defined as a war on terrorism, extremism, or insurgency, and let Afghans take the front role in the domestic wars and struggles that they will inevitably face in the years to come, while still maintaining a commitment to the security of the country, as the US has with dozens of countries all over the world.

The United States' involvement in Afghanistan has been characterized as a decade long war, but for those living in the country, it is a different case. There was a three week war in 2001 that saw the collapse of the Taliban government and its flight into exile. Then there was a several year effort, variously characterized as humanitarian assistance, security force assistance, and counter-terrorism, that looked little different to efforts in Yemen, Somalia, Mali, Colombia or Southern Sudan. It was drastically under-resourced. The Bush Administration had vowed that there would be no nation-building, preferring to meet US security interests through a minimal presence of counter-terrorism operators in the countryside. To those who would advocate similar security plans now, I think the first step would be to look back at similar plans and assess how well they worked in the past. Minimalism and partnering with unsavory warlord militias did not work; security declined, and US involvement in a war was restarted with a decision in 2009 to commit troops for a limited period to a counter-insurgency campaign. Current suggestions to maintain security through a minimal counter-terrorism force in the countryside appear similar to the security posture of 2002-4, that saw the Taliban regroup and re-emerge. The fragile Afghan State was unable to withstand the onslaught. Recasting

our understanding of the United States' varied involvement over the last decade in a more nuanced way might allow for a more objective consideration of the policy instruments that have worked and might work in the future.

c. "Grand Bargain" versus "perpetual war"

Talk of US involvement in Afghanistan is sometimes reduced to two extremes: either perpetual war, or striking a "Grand Bargain" with the Afghan Government's primary opposition forces, the Taliban. As argued above, framing the US engagement primarily through a war footing is not necessary or appropriate. It is rather commitment to the Afghans' own ability to counter the threats that they will face that is the critical factor. Furthermore there are important factors other than security force assistance that will bolster stability over the medium to longer term, in the political, economic and civic domain that are important complements to robust security forces.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who argue that the "Grand Bargain" will end the war and bring stability to Afghanistan. As the centerpiece of a political strategy, it is highly unlikely that such a bargain is attainable, or if reached, will endure, or if it endures, will provide a basis for moderation and stability. Such a pursuit has been based on flawed analysis, seeking an end to hostilities in bringing a proxy group to the table, rather than addressing Pakistan, on the terms that will satisfy their underlying concerns. The armed opposition has no incentive to reach a deal before Transition, with a Government they perceive to be lame duck, and an international commitment they perceive to be departing or at least waning. They are unlikely to be able to govern so as to address the factionalism and criminality that threaten stability. Further, it is the very pursuit of such a bargain that has helped undermined the confidence of those who are opposed to extreme ideologies, and the institutions and forces needed to counter them.

There is a paradox that a so-called "peace deal" would likely not bring an end to war, and also that an end to war will come without a deal; and thus the pursuit of the deal has been a red herring. It is without question that a political strategy is required to bring stability and counter the threats in Afghanistan – and without it military force will be rendered useless – but it is an alternative political strategy that will both honor the gains that have been made, go some way towards meeting the interests of the 95%, and counter the risks and threats that confront both Afghan citizens and the international community.

2. GAINS, OPPORTUNITIES, RISKS AND THREATS

What are the elements, then, of a strategy that could consolidate and maintain the gains that have been made and counter the threats to US and Afghan interests in the years ahead? First, I will consider the nature of the gains that have been made, and the threats that are faced. Then I will address the policies that could counter these threats, across security, politics, and economic engagement.

a. Gains of the last decade, current opportunities

The media has tended to focus on the negatives and challenges. While these challenges are real, this narrative has overshadowed the substantial gains that have been made. Foremost among these have been the re-establishment of state institutions. The ANSF has made remarkable progress, and the core functions of the executive are robust – relative to many countries in the world. Health, rural development, telecommunications, finance and agriculture ministries form and execute policies. Between 2000 and 2012, Afghanistan climbed the Human Development Index faster than any other country, rising on its indicators at an average annual rate of 3.91%. A Parliament has been formed, and a vibrant media is largely free of censorship. Compared to the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, the trust of people in the state is high. As important as the institutional gains, are the attitudinal changes. A new generation has come of age, forming the basis of a moderate, middle class who wish to protect and defend these gains, and see the extremist trends in the region as an existential threat to their lives.

Opportunities for US interests in Afghanistan include: (i) the prospect of a relatively democratic and stable state which is a US ally in the region, in between a nuclear power to its east and a potential nuclear power to its west, (ii) in a next generation which is moderate and tolerant, and vested in order and stability, as a bulwark against extremism and criminality, (iii) the real and symbolic value of seeing the enormous investments made result in a degree of order and prosperity rather than unraveling, and (iv) providing catalytic investments in economic growth that could see Afghanistan move rapidly towards revenue self-sufficiency.

b. Threats and risks

Despite the gains, many challenges remain. The most evident threat to peace and stability in Afghanistan is the armed insurgency, of which the foremost grouping is the Taliban. Careful analysis shows that the insurgency is composed of several groupings, including the Haqqani network, and localized militia groupings. Many of the violent incidents against the Afghan Government, NATO forces and Afghan citizens have been discovered to be factors of criminality and disputes over land, water and other elements.

As argued by many leading political actors and analysts, the insurgency may not be the greatest threat to stability in the country and region, and may have overshadowed our focus on other risks and threats, which include:

1. The failure of the political elite to adhere to political practices that will lead to a peaceful transition to a new regime that will be a responsible steward of Afghanistan;
2. The failure of non-violent groups within Afghanistan to agree on a formula for shared governance of the territory;

3. The criminal activities of various armed and non-armed groups, including those linked to state institutions, that prey upon ordinary citizens, business actors, and the activities of the state;
4. Fostering of extremism, particularly through spreading education and ideology among the youth of the country.
5. Pakistan's policy of destabilizing the Afghan state and maintaining strategic depth through its proxies, which are provided safe havens on Pakistan's territory;

A strategy to promote stability and the viability of the Afghan state over the medium to long term will need to take all these factors into account.

3. POLICY

a. Security

Commitment to Afghanistan's internal security and ability to defend against threats from its neighbors is the most important element of maintaining stability. In line with the US strategy for the last several years, building and maintaining Afghan National Security Forces so that they can meet internal and external threats is the key means of maintaining stability. Considerable ground has been made, with a force 330,000 strong, able to operate as the lead in security operations, and inspiring the trust of the majority of the population.

The US will remain the cornerstone of such a commitment: without US leadership others will not step forward. To be effective and credible, the commitment needs to be manifested in three ways: first through the legal and political commitments, including the SFA that has already been agreed, and if possible, a BSA. Second, through material support to fund and equip the army. I will defer to others as to the nature of this support, but it seems quite clear that air capabilities whether operated by Afghan or international forces will be essential to counter the threats for some time. Third, through policy commitments to back up the forces should contingencies arise which threaten the state's integrity and survival.

b. Politics

As described above, there has been a tendency by some analysts to argue for a political track that is centered on reaching a "Grand Bargain" between the Afghan State and its opposition. I will argue instead for a political strategy that in my view carries a far higher likelihood of protecting US interests and the hard-won gains of the last decades. It rests on a number of blocks, most of which are already in place and so do not require new policies or resources, but rather a difference in emphasis.

The first element seeks to address the foremost political risk to the viability of the political order: the transition of political power from one regime to the next in 2014. This will require a focus on both the process and outcome of the election. Some will argue that the US and its partners have no business in the elections; the reality is

that the US, as the major underwriter of the state and funder of the elections process is already an influential actor in this activity – at issue is how it chooses to use this influence. Getting the process right requires the reality and appearance of a fair playing field. It will also require civic education for the population that stresses the individual's right to form a personal choice; a careful examination of the chain of custody of votes; and sufficient support to voter monitoring groups to scrutinize this chain of custody. In a context where some actors are likely to have private militias and deep pockets from illicit activities, a fair playing field will require a minimum floor of public financing – perhaps in the range of \$5m for each ticket, together with in kind facilities - to allow candidates access to transportation, media and advertising. The nature of the outcome will obviously have deep impact on the future characteristics of the Afghan State and the ability of the country to cohere and consolidate security. Characteristics of a winning slate that would be in the interests of the majority of Afghans and their international partners would be: ability to form a broad-based, cross-ethnic ticket that would unite rather than divide the country; and ability to formulate and execute a credible agenda for governing. Whether or not Afghanistan's political elite can overcome their fragmentation and rivalries to field such a team or teams is still an open question. Even if a winning ticket is not a perfect one, building an inclusive agenda, and a broad-based team of ministers and governors around the winning team will be critical for the stability of the country.

The second element seeks to address the second risk – the failure of non-violent groups to agree on a formula for governing Afghanistan. A successful elections process could, through political dialogue, consensus-building and deal-making, go some way towards reaching such a formula. However, elections can also be divisive and exacerbate competition between individuals and groups. Whereas negotiations have been commonly framed as between the government and insurgents, perhaps a more important set of negotiations are those between the different ethnic and other groupings that are non-violent, on how they can put aside their differences and work for a viable future for the country. There have been important steps taken towards this set of negotiations, in the shape of a “National Dialogue” that has framed a set of core political questions that Afghans need to confront or reach agreement on. While a formal process is desirable, perhaps running alongside the elections process, others have pointed out that Afghans are engaged in a national dialogue every day. Nonetheless, some encouragement and facilitation of this process could be critical to keeping it on track.

The third is to bolster the legitimacy and capability of state institutions, and counter the criminality that so threatens this legitimacy. State institutions – like the ANSF – do not need to be perfect, and discussions among Afghanistan recognize that their process of transformation will take another decade, and the burden of this efforts rests on their shoulders. But the better they function, the more they can shoulder the burden of securing, governing and confronting the security challenges within the country. Much progress has been made in establishing and reforming state institutions, but with considerable frustration, setbacks and expense. Much of this expense is driven by an unsustainable model of aid and technical assistance that

often back-fires and exacerbates the very goals it is meant to pursue. A real challenge lies ahead in formulating the conditions for a more lightweight and coordinated means of providing technical assistance. A critical factor will be the commitment of the political leadership to an agenda of rule of law and nurturing institutions. The experience of Plan Colombia, and specifically the Colombian Government's agenda of rule of law, in rallying the people and countering both insurgency and criminality, can perhaps provide if not a blueprint, some relevant examples.

The fourth challenge is to address the growing extremism at the margins and among the youth of the country. Perhaps surprisingly, countering extremism among citizens has not been a major policy goal of the last decade. There are lessons from around the world of programs that work and those that work less well. Engaging the education systems to ensure the reach and type of education will be an essential plank in this regard; other types of outreach can be effective. Maintaining the space for the moderate middle, and a vibrant civil society and media, and engaging with and supporting civic groups ranging from professional associations, to youth groups and religious leaders is another critical platform for stability.

The fifth is to address relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Many argue that Pakistan's policy of the last years has been to seek to prevent the consolidation of a stable Afghan order, and to provide sanctuary and even support to an insurgency against the Afghan State. The medium to long-term stability of the region will rest on Pakistan's willingness to accept a sovereign and stable Afghanistan and relinquish any support to armed factions as a means of controlling or influencing its neighbor, in accordance with international law. This will likely not happen for some time, and will depend on advances in India-Pakistan relations, but there are steps that can be taken towards a "reset" of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, many of which are already underway. Afghanistan could do much to reassure Pakistan that the national government will respect Pakistan's legitimate interests in the region, including taking into account and taking steps to reassure Pakistan's concerns regarding encirclement by India, and establishing confidence building measures between Afghanistan's new government and Pakistan's civilian and military leaderships. Further, Afghanistan could take steps that advance Pakistan's economic interests, including facilitating access to cheap electricity and gas in the Central Asian republics through Afghanistan. In turn, Pakistan could be asked to adhere to international law in respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbor. These discussions naturally take place within a broader regional context. A framing of promoting regional stability – rather than pursuit of specific short-term goals – is likely to provide a common framework that satisfies the interests of major regional powers including China and India, as well as the US.

Armed groups are normally asked to put down their weapons if they are serious about participating in negotiated peace settlements and ongoing democratic processes. The post-2014 transition offers the balance of incentives and checks to ensure that if this process occurs it does so on realistic and practical terms. The

correlative of seeking power within a democratic state is to surrender to that state's monopoly of force.

c. Economics

The sooner the Afghan State can collect sufficient revenues to pay for its own security and other programs, the less it will depend on the international community. This strategic goal of enhancing domestic revenue should be prioritized over other developmental goals, many of which should wait until such time as the Afghan State can resource them. The exception to this should be support to security and stability, life-saving humanitarian assistance, core social programs that provide basic health, education and assistance to the marginalized, and those investments that have an ROI that put Afghanistan closer to the goal of self-sufficiency.

What are the elements required for Afghanistan to increase and ultimately reach revenue self-sufficiency? Customs revenue from cross-border trade, and taxation of citizens and businesses provided \$2.2bn out of \$4bn regular (non-military) expenditures in 2012. Business growth that can augment the taxation base include commerce and industry, agriculture and mining.

Much attention has been paid to the extractives sector. While skeptics are right that seeing some mines reach profitability is years away, there are also some near term opportunities that can start Afghanistan on a real path towards revenue growth. In particular, the hydrocarbons sector shows great potential, with revenues from sites already tendered or in process of tendering that could provide \$1bn / year revenue within the decade, and more if the governance of the sector has an intensified focus. Mining revenues would come on top of this, and would also have the major benefit of catalyzing and subsidizing the infrastructure especially in power and transportation that would benefit the wider Afghan economy and society. A focus on mining should be complemented by one on light industry and agricultural production and processing. Mining will not provide large numbers of jobs, but the agriculture sector currently provides 80% of the employment but only 20% of the share of the economy.

Integrating Afghanistan economically within its region, through extractives investment as well as regional energy, trade and transportation corridors, will not only bear economic returns in the form of growth, jobs, and increased revenue, but also pay political dividends. If both China and India are vested in Afghanistan for economic dividends, this will also provide dividends in stability. India and China have already each made major commitments to Afghanistan's growth through both public and private investment. Near term opportunities for regional integration also include a regional energy grid, that will take power from the Central Asian Republics that are willing to sell excess power produced by their hydro and gas-fired facilities at very low prices, through Afghanistan, to the energy-hungry Pakistan and India. As the Central Asian Republics are winter-peaking and South Asia summer-peaking, this power trade carries even more logic. This is not a call for large US-funded aid

projects: the Asian Development Bank and private investment can in my view carry the costs of investing in the transmission line.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan has moved through cycles of instability, invasion, internal conflict, and eventually, post-conflict neglect as the spotlight shifts. In turn that neglect has generated renewed instability - and the cycle has repeated itself. The challenge, post 2014, is how to break the cycle, and transition to long-term stability. What role should the United States play to bolster such a transition? How should it best allocate its resources to achieve this? How does such an objective align with the United States own objectives, both in Afghanistan and in the wider region?

Answers to those who question why this matters are amply provided by the lessons of recent history. The vacuum left in the post-Soviet period, and the inexorable slide into factions, with rival warlords and eventual civil war, created an environment ripe for the emergence of the Taliban and their government - which provided shelter for international terror networks. A neglected and unstable Afghanistan is simply not an option that the United States can risk again.

Clare Lockhart is co-founder and director of ISE, which focuses on development across the institutions of state, market and civil society. She also directs the Market Building Initiative, which works to identify approaches to creating jobs, revenue and economic growth. These programs are currently working with governments and leaders across a range of countries including Afghanistan, Kosovo, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Southern Sudan and Syria, and studying successful transformations across a number of cases including Singapore, EU Accession countries, Malaysia, Indonesia and Gulf countries.

She is co-author of "Fixing Failed States" (OUP, 2008) and author of several articles on development, institution-building and citizenship. She is a regular contributor to the media, including Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, the Financial Times, Foreign Policy, New York Times, PBS, Sky News, the Times and Washington Post. She has lived and worked in Asia, Africa, the US and Europe. She has lectured widely at universities, public debates and think tanks on issues of state and market functionality, accountability and development.

She is frequently called upon to serve on advisory panels and task forces on security and economic issues, including the World Bank on its fragile states strategy and the United Nations Peace Building Commission and the UN's strategy for development post-2015.

In 2001 Ms. Lockhart was a member of the UN negotiation team for the Bonn Agreement on Afghanistan and spent several years living in the country as UN and World Bank Adviser, where she helped steward numerous initiatives including the Afghanistan Development Forum, National Development Framework, National Solidarity Program, and a framework for coordination. Prior to 2001, she managed a program on institutions and strategy at the World Bank.

She is a barrister (member of the Bar of England and Wales) and has degrees from Oxford University (a double first in Modern History) and Harvard University (MPA, Kennedy School, Kennedy Memorial Trust Scholar). Ms Lockhart was named as among the 100 most influential global thinkers of 2009 and 2010 for her work on fragile states. Ms. Lockhart was selected for the 2011 Forum of Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum and was selected as Chair of the Global Agenda Council on Fragile States for 2011-2012. She has been appointed to the Board of the Asia Foundation and the Women's Regional Network.

**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 113th 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 Committee on Armed Services 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: Clare Lockhart

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 2013

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

FISCAL YEAR 2012

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

FISCAL YEAR 2011

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

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

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

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

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 (2013): N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
 Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

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 (2013): N/A ;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A ;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

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

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A ;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A ;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A ;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A .

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. A New York Times article this week highlighted a UN report on female police officers which found that about 90 percent of the policewomen interviewed described sexual harassment and sexual violence as a serious problem, and that about 70 percent of the policewomen said that they had personally experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence themselves. Do you believe that this horrific problem will get better or worse after 2014?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Any incidence of sexual harassment or sexual violence within the Afghan police force is cause for great concern and must be addressed by the Ministry of Interior as an urgent priority. Whether or not this problem improves or worsens after 2014 may depend, in part, on the extent to which some international forces remain in the country as trainers, advisors and mentors to Afghan police forces. The presence of international advisors can help to teach and uphold international standards of conduct and to ensure that incidents of sexual harassment or violence are reported and investigated, and that those responsible are held accountable.

Ms. SPEIER. It says a lot about who the Afghani government is negotiating with, that taking away women's rights is a high valued bargaining chip. Do you have the expectation that once our presence in Afghanistan diminishes, the Taliban's presence and power will increase? Do you believe that this won't precipitate a serious erosion of the rights gained by women?

Ms. FLOURNOY. If the United States and the international community do not provide an adequate post-2014 presence to continue advising, assisting and supporting the Afghan National Security Forces in holding their ground and protecting the population, there is a significant risk that the Taliban-led insurgency will regain previously lost territory and influence, particularly in the South and East. In areas where Taliban regains dominance, the rights of women would likely be endangered. This would be a serious reversal of progress for women's education, health, and ability to participate in the Afghan economy and politics. The best way to prevent this from occurring is to ensure that the United States and the international community provide an adequate post-2014 presence to help the ANSF continue to develop and secure the population nationwide.

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

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Ambassador NEUMANN. Equal rights for women in Afghanistan still face many social pressures although there is certainly a growing understanding of the need for equal rights and protections for women. I expect these strains and pressures to continue after 2014. To the extent that the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior face serious financial pressure as our aid declines there is the potential for the problems you describe to get worse as they believe they have to shift funding to immediate combat requirements. Therefore, we should be careful to maintain both general support levels for the Afghan security forces as well as funding for programs

to develop training for women and broader education about the need for women in the security forces.

Ms. SPEIER. It says a lot about who the Afghani government is negotiating with, that taking away women's rights is a high valued bargaining chip. Do you have the expectation that once our presence in Afghanistan diminishes, the Taliban's presence and power will increase? Do you believe that this won't precipitate a serious erosion of the rights gained by women?

Ambassador NEUMANN. Overall the Afghan Army is fighting well and taking a very high number of casualties as a result. However, there are areas they do not control and these may get more numerous. If Taliban power increases the condition of women will almost certainly get worse. I think this is far less a concern about what the Afghan government will give away in negotiations, in part because they understand the negative effect on foreign support, and much more about whether the Afghan forces will be able to hold their own militarily. If we want to keep Taliban power from increasing, with all that implies for women particularly and for the development of a more tolerant society generally, then we must maintain our support for Afghanistan in the years after 2014. It is also important to understand the interrelationship between fighting and negotiating. The worse the military situation the more desperate the Afghan government will be and the stronger the Taliban hand in negotiations. On the other hand, the more it becomes clear that the Afghan forces will not lose the more incentive the Taliban will have to reach a reasonable agreement without excessive demands, including those which would imperil the status of women. The Taliban is already showing some sensitivity to this in their public statements but statements are not necessarily the reality of what they would actually negotiate. The military balance, and hence the need for our assistance, are a critical part of the picture.

Ms. SPEIER. A New York Times article this week highlighted a UN report on female police officers which found that about 90 percent of the policewomen interviewed described sexual harassment and sexual violence as a serious problem, and that about 70 percent of the policewomen said that they had personally experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence themselves. Do you believe that this horrific problem will get better or worse after 2014?

Ms. LOCKHART. As the UN report (as reported by the New York Times article, "Afghan Policewomen Say Sexual Harassment Is Rife", September 16, 2013, highlights, the incidence of sexual violence and harassment is indeed a tragic and critical issue for women in Afghanistan.

Sadly, it is possible that this problem will get worse after 2014, especially if those segments of society who are opposed to women's rights and protections are emboldened. The ISAF and international presence in my view played a strong role in advancing the status and role of women in society in general and professional positions in particular, and enhancing protections for women.

It would be sensible to look at the post-2014 period in terms of different scenarios. There is sadly one scenario where violence and conflict in general spiral, as a consequence of an emboldened insurgency, actions of neighbors, and/or failure of the political process to result in a smooth transfer of power to a broadly accepted and legitimate authority. There are also other scenarios, including where the constitutional order increasingly takes root, and while violence and conflict continue, a broadly accepted election outcome results in a leadership team able to build consensus on Afghanistan's future trajectory. There are strong signs that a new generation, increasingly urbanized and integrated with global networks, is coming of age and impacting societal transformations (see for example the work of Alliance in Support of the Afghan People, www.afghanalliance.org for documentation of these evolving trends). If there is a sufficient security bridge to give this generation time to grow into leadership positions across government, business and society.

Some measures can be taken to mitigate the incidence of violence against women, including continued international force and civilian presence in partnership with Afghan forces and the Government to counter extremist and militia elements; building training and awareness measures as well as sanctions into training and management procedures for the army and police; and supporting those organizations and procedures designed to protect women including the Human Rights Commission, and specialized police units focused on protection of women in general as well as domestic violence in particular.

Ms. SPEIER. It says a lot about who the Afghani government is negotiating with, that taking away women's rights is a high valued bargaining chip. Do you have the expectation that once our presence in Afghanistan diminishes, the Taliban's presence and power will increase? Do you believe that this won't precipitate a serious erosion of the rights gained by women?

Ms. LOCKHART. If the power of the Taliban and other groups within Afghanistan opposed to the enfranchisement of women in politics, government, the economy and society grows, it is certain that the rights gained by women will be seriously at risk. This fear is well documented by a number of surveys and reports investigating the status of and prospects for women. The issue, as reported by women's and citizens' groups, is extremist and conservative forces in general and not those specific to the Taliban.

The question of whether the Taliban's presence and power will increase will depend on what scenario develops post 2014, which in turn depends in large measure on the commitments made and actions taken by the United States Government in the coming weeks and months, as different scenarios unfold. In my view, the scenarios that might unfold are: first, a scenario where the fragile gains are eroded by an erosion of trust and confidence of citizens in the political order, increasing hedging behavior by key factions who align behind militias and insurgent groups, leading to an exacerbation of conflict and a growth of extremist elements in politics and society. This scenario is most likely to develop should the commitment of the U.S. especially in the form of a sufficiently robust continued presence and continued commitment to the ANSF not materialize or remain in question. Second, a scenario of continued consolidation of the constitutional order, with a successful transfer of power to a broadly legitimate government in spring 2014 is possible. This is most likely to materialize should commitment of the U.S. to the post 14 era be resolute and have the confidence of the Afghan citizenry. A third scenario is possible of continued insecurity and conflict but where the center holds together; one can imagine this scenario unfolding with limited commitment of the US, an acceptable although imperfect election, and continued interference by neighbors.

In the first and third of these, growth of extremist groups and erosion of women's rights are likely. To minimize this risk, a U.S. commitment to an enduring presence and financial support to the essential functions of the state including the ANSF, in line with commitments already made in the Strategic Partnership Agreement and at Chicago, is critical. Additionally, the U.S. should focus its diplomatic efforts to bolstering the moderate middle rather than at the extremes, by focusing on supporting free and fair elections; the formation of an inclusive and acceptable government and Parliament; and supporting the next generation of leaders and managers who are now coming of age. The U.S. should focus its economic interventions on those elements which will increase domestic revenue collection, so that Afghanistan can underwrite its own costs. With this set of policies, Afghanistan will stand a fair chance of maintaining the gains that have been made.

