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

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

OF THE

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2014

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

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 2 o'clock p.m., in room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. This joint subcommittee hearing will come to order.

After recognizing myself, Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Deutch for 5 minutes each for our opening statements, I will then recognize any other member seeking recognition for 1 minute. I know that we will have votes, but we hope to get through some of this.

We will then hear from our witnesses. Thank you, gentleman, and without objection the witnesses' prepared statements will be made a part of the record and members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules.

I see Mr. Delaney has joined us, and I ask unanimous consent to allow Congressman Delaney to question the witnesses and participate in the hearing after all the members of the committee have had the chance to ask their questions. Welcome.

The chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes.

This is the third and final hearing this session in a series of hearings these two subcommittees have had aimed at examining the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan after the U.S. withdrawal.

In addition, the Middle East and North Africa subcommittee has held hearings on how our counternarcotics efforts will be impacted by the withdrawal and our relief and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and what needs to be done to address the waste, the fraud, the abuse that the Special Investigator General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, SIGAR, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO, have found over the years.

As of Monday, the U.S. and NATO coalition have officially closed their Afghanistan combat command, and we now have transition from military to a civilian-led presence. A maximum 10,800 U.S. troops will remain in Afghanistan for the first 3 months of 2015, and with that number dropping to 5,500 by the end of next year, and down to just a few hundred by the end of 2016.

But we must ask, has the administration made the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2016 based on a political decision or a strategic decision, and are we leaving the security of Afghanistan and our own national interests in the hands of a capable, trustworthy government and security forces? As we take a back seat to the Afghan National Security Forces and leave in its hands the fate of Afghanistan's security, we have many reasons for concerns.

This past year the security forces taking the lead and conducting many of its own operations, we witnessed the bloodiest year in Afghanistan since 2011 as the security forces suffered over 5,000 casualties. U.S. military leaders in Afghanistan, including the outgoing top international commander, Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, have called this casualty rate and the rate of desertion in the security forces unsustainable. And as the U.S. began its transition out of the lead last year, the Taliban and an abundance of other terrorist groups and factions across the country have stepped up their attacks, and the rate of attacks are only likely to increase now that they know that the U.S. and our allies have ended our combat operations.

But terrorists inside Afghanistan's borders are not its only challenge. Pakistan continues to harbor and host insurgents and other extremists in the Afghan border regions. Making matters worse, Pakistan's intelligence service is known to cooperate with the Taliban as it works to undermine Afghanistan's stability.

Even more concerning, Pakistan's nuclear weapons stockpile is reportedly growing faster than any other in the world and is notoriously insecure.

Security concerns with Pakistan are not only helped—are also not helped when the Afghan Government cannot form a cabinet, including key positions like Defense Minister.

A weak and corrupt government combined with incapable security forces does not indicate a positive path forward.

Another threat that gets constantly ignored is counternarcotics. Opium cultivation and production again increased sharply this year. Afghanistan is responsible for over 90 percent of the world's opium supply. This is an estimated $3 billion industry that generates immense profits, finances terrorism in and outside of Afghanistan, and feeds the rampant corruption that continues to plague its government.

As we approach this new phase in Afghanistan, we must be honest with ourselves and the American people. Even though the U.S. has closed its combat command, President Obama has reportedly changed the rules of engagement so that all remaining U.S. troops will be allowed to carry out combat missions instead of just training and advising.

Combat aircraft drones will now be allowed to provide air support. President Ghani is pleading with the administration for addi-

tional support, for additional troops, for additional funds, desperate to ensure that his country does not become another Iraq.

The administration likes to pretend that Iraq and Afghanistan are different, or at least as Secretary Hagel claimed yesterday, that the differences outweigh the similarities. But Secretary Hagel and the administration cannot hide from the facts. Since the withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Iraq in 2011, we have seen the brutal terrorist group ISIL take over large portions of both Iraq and Syria, displace millions of people, leave thousands dead, and threaten the interests of both the U.S. and every ally in the region.

The fact is that U.S. troops have returned to Iraq, and although we continue to lack a comprehensive or coherent strategy there, the stakes are even higher in Afghanistan. If we do not leave behind a stable strong Afghan Government with capable security forces, the Taliban will not hesitate to reclaim its lost territory and quickly establish another safe haven for terrorists to thrive.

The United States has paid too much in blood and treasure to allow this to happen. We owe it to our brave men and women who have sacrificed everything to protect our values and way of life, and to whom we are forever indebted, we owe it to heroes like Christian Guzman Torres, a Marine Corporal from my Congressional district who gave his life in the name of freedom and democracy and whose memory and legacy will live on forever at a post office that the Congressional delegation named in his honor in South Dade in Princeton, Florida.

We owe it to all of those who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that we do not let the gains we have made slip away, and that we do not allow the Taliban to re-establish itself and further destabilize the region.

I now turn to my ranking member, my good friend, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Chair Ros-Lehtinen and Chairman Chabot for calling today's hearing.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding work of one of our colleagues, a ranking member and former chairman of the Asia and Pacific subcommittee, Eni Faleomavaega. We are thankful for his years of service to this country and his leadership in this critical area of foreign policy.

This is our third hearing examining the future of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan. The hearing comes on the heels of the administration's announcement that it will leave an additional—it will leave 1,000 troops in Afghanistan to conduct operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda linked targets.

As we look forward to the beginning of Operation Resolute Support, focused on training and advising and assisting, we are reminded that for a decade we have been focused on destroying al-Qaeda, building a secured and civil society capacity of the Afghan Government with the goal of turning over responsibility for their Nation to the Afghans.

The questions is have we achieved these goals? We have effectively dismantled al-Qaeda's stronghold in Afghanistan, but will the surge in extremism in the neighboring Middle East impact Afghanistan.

We have turned security control of the country over to the Afghan security forces, yet there continue to be high rates of deser-

tion. Can the Afghan national security force pick up where international coalition forces have left off and ensure that al-Qaeda cannot regroup and again use Afghanistan as a safe haven?

At our hearings in March and October of last year, we focused on Presidential elections as an indicator of progress. Would we see free and fair elections lead to a peaceful transition of power? I am pleased that President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah were able to come to a power-sharing arrangement, but I would also hope that the State Department will comment on the recount results so that we might be able to look toward assisting Afghanistan in making sure the process for future elections is both credible and transparent. Electoral reform should be a high priority for Afghanistan going forward.

This past year has been one of transition, and we now look to President Ghani's government to articulate its agenda, including much needed reforms for both the security and civilian sectors in a timeline in which he would like these reforms to move. Such a timeline would send a strong signal to Afghanistan's international partners that the President means business and is willing to hold himself accountable.

New leadership brings renewed hope of addressing longstanding issues of corruption and patronage. I am encouraged by some of the positive steps President Ghani has taken in the 10 weeks he has been in office, including the signing of the bilateral security agreement, but at the same time, we have challenges remain. One looming is how this new government can engage with the Taliban.

U.S. support and assistance will continue to be a key component of our engagement with Afghanistan, but as our presence decreases, we have got to focus greater attention on how we will continue to monitor this assistance. How can we ensure that years of training Afghan security forces and civil society will result in stability and productive governing?

As Secretary Kerry noted last week, the U.S. will have provided $8 billion of economic assistance to Afghanistan between 2012 and 2015, but what happens when the assistance from the outside slows? How will the new government create an economy that can sustain itself without such levels of international assistance? What will be the drivers of Afghan economic growth going forward?

And I would like to take a moment to commend the State Department, including the Special Representatives Office and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs for its work on that CASA–1000 project, a joint energy initiative that connects energy resources from the Kyrgyz Republic in Tajikistan with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

And the reason that we do these hearings jointly is because it is near impossible to address the challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in many instances, in isolation from the rest of South Asia. It might be time for the State Department to follow this cue and realign its Bureau of South and Central Asian affairs to better reflect this reality.

Many of us continue to have longstanding concerns over the ability of insurgents to operate in Pakistan and cross the border into Afghanistan. I have been encouraged by Pakistan's military operations in North Waziristan. Even the most skeptical among us

have to acknowledge that it has disrupted operations emanating from the North Waziristan agency, especially for the Pakistani Taliban.

At the same time, while progress has been made in disrupting the Haqqani networks's operations in the tribal areas. Both of these designated—both the Haqqani network and Lashkar-e-Taiba are responsible for the deaths of Americans. The question is can Pakistan rid its country of terrorism without going after terrorists wholesale? And despite the mistrust and tensions, we need cooperation from Pakistani security services as well as strong communication with Pakistan's civilian leadership.

The Congress authorized $7.5 billion via the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill to assist in strengthening Pakistan's civilian institutions, so I am concerned about the message sent to the people of Pakistan and Pakistan's civilian leadership when Secretary Kerry meets with Pakistan's chief of staff, Mr. Blanc, and I hope that you today will be able to shed some light as to who really is in charge of Pakistan's foreign policy, and particularly its policy toward Afghanistan.

Finally, I would just say that, as I said previously, there is too much at stake for us to just simply turn our backs on these critical relationships. Continuing engagement in a supporting role in Afghanistan is critical to ensuring terror networks can't re-establish roots, and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses today as to how our policy in both places will address the challenges of these relationships.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch.

And if you will excuse us, our subcommittees will suspend while we vote, and then when we come back, we will have Mr. Chabot chair, and he will give his opening statements.

We will recognize our members for their opening statements and then introduce our witnesses, and with that, subcommittee——

[Recess.]

Mr. CHABOT [presiding]. The subcommittees will come back to order.

I want to again thank our witnesses for being here, and who that are in attendance this afternoon. I want to thank the chair for calling this important joint hearing between the subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and the subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

I am please to join her efforts to discuss the current situation in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region and the United States' critically important role in securing Afghanistan's future stability during the next few months.

Afghanistan has seen many changes this year both promising and, unfortunately, worrying in many instances as well.

On the positive end of things, the bilateral security agreement was finally signed in September, which I am hopeful will both lay out and secure the U.S. role in the post-2014 Afghanistan.

Also somewhat encouraging is the relative clarity we have of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, as least for the next couple of years. The last time we examined the situation in Afghanistan back in October of last year, that picture was not so clear.

Today, we know that Afghan security forces hold primary security responsibility in the country, while the U.S. maintains a force of 20,000 for the time being. That number will decrease to 9,800 next year, then further decrease to 4,900 in 2016. At least that is what we think.

But even with clarity on the numbers, I am concerned about future stability there because Afghan forces will undoubtedly need continued support. The plan for an eventual U.S. Military exit from Afghanistan after 2016 is troubling because I don't believe that Afghan security forces will be able to secure Afghanistan if left on their own, at least not in that time frame.

Events in Iraq this year depicted one such scenario. ISIL captured Mosul and Iraqi security forces collapsed. We can't afford to let this happen in Afghanistan after so many years of investment and sacrifice. In fact, I believe General Campbell's statement where he expressed his confidence that "Afghan forces have the capability to withstand the fight internally" is premature.

With the ISIL threat in the region spreading its talons east, we have no way of knowing what the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan will look like in 2 years time. With this in mind, it is prudent for us to keep the option of a bigger post-2016 U.S. And NATO force presence on the table.

It is widely acknowledged that stability in Afghanistan necessitates close engagement and cooperation with Pakistan. However, Pakistan's sustained tolerance and support of Afghan Taliban forces in Qatar and the federally-administered tribal areas means a peaceful, stable, independent, and united Afghanistan is in the distant future.

Despite some advances in the U.S./Pakistan relationship and the Pakistani military's launch of a major offensive against Islamist terrorist groups in the federally-administered tribal areas, the end results of these efforts are not certain.

Limited capacity, rampant corruption, distrust, disorganization, and divergent security interests between various sectors, both civilian and military, make promises from Islamabad unreliable, if history tells us anything. In fact, the political protests in August aptly illustrate the case in point. Prime Minister Sharif's control over the military is not strong. But the military's influence over Pakistan's foreign and national security policies is rather solid. I urge the administration to exhibit caution.

Pakistan's ongoing support for sectarian extremist groups to expurgate Indian influence in Afghanistan will not end well if the current trend continues. This path will only be to the detriment of the region and U.S. security and foreign policy interests.

I also continue to be concerned about Pakistan's ongoing persecution of religious minorities. Pakistan is ranked among the most religiously intolerant countries in the world, and Prime Minister's Sharif's Government continues to tolerate the oppression of Christians, Hindus, Shiites and Hamotzis, among many others. However, the State Department has yet to designate Pakistan a country of particular concern for its violations of religious freedom.

Between 2012 and 2013 there were over 200 attacks among religious groups, and 1,800 casualties resulting from religion-related violence. The highest rates in the world. And just over a month ago

on November 4th, two young Christians were murdered—burned alive—accused of blasphemy by a Muslim mob of 4,000 people. One of them was a pregnant mother of four. We cannot continue to ignore this horrific behavior and the plight of these groups due to discriminatory laws, forced conversions, terror attacks and blasphemy arrests. Ongoing religious persecution in Pakistan and its government's paltry efforts to recant its support of Islamist extremist groups makes it increasingly difficult, I believe, to justify the administration's billions of dollars worth of aid to Pakistan.

I hope our witnesses will discuss what the administration is doing to support religious minorities in Pakistan and demand that the Sharif Government ensure the human rights of minorities in that country.

I want to again thank Chairman Ros-Lehtinen for calling this hearing. I look forward to hearing testimony from our distinguished witnesses today.

And I would also like to associate myself with the remarks made by the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Deutch, relative to Eni Faleomavaega who I have had the honor to lead the subcommittee with for the past 2 years. Eni is just a tremendous individual. He served our country in Vietnam, and we are really going to miss seeing him. So we wish him only the best in the future.

And if there are any other members whowould like to make open statements, I believe Mr. Bera would like to make an opening statement. So the gentleman is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Chairman Chabot.

About 1½ years ago I had a chance to visit Afghanistan with Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, and at that juncture there was uncertainty. You know, we were in the midst of negotiating a bilateral security agreement. Afghanistan was going to undergo their elections and so forth, and while everything wasn't smooth from that point to where we are today, at least there is a little bit more certainty at this juncture.

And at that time too, real questions came up and concerns from my perspective as we start to draw down the economic impact on Afghanistan. There is no way to replace the presence of our troops there in terms of what it means to the Afghan economy, and in conversations with the—and in government, they have obviously made some significant investments there.

You know, when I think about Afghanistan and South Asia in general, it is this intricate web between Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and I do look forward to hearing the comments of the witnesses on how we continue some of that economic investment that Afghanistan will need and how we move forward from here.

Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

And believing that no other members would like to make an opening statement, I would like to at this point introduce our panel for this afternoon.

First, I am very pleased to welcome the honorable Jarrett Blanc who serves as Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the Department of State. Prior to joining the State Department, he was the senior policy analyst for multi-lateral affairs at the Open Society Institute. He has worked for the United Na-

tions and has managed governance operations in conflict and post-conflict areas such as Afghanistan, Kosovo, Lebanon and Nepal.

We welcome you here this afternoon.

Our next witness, we would like to welcome back the honorable Donald L. Sampler who is Assistant to the Administrator in the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs at USAID. Mr. Sampler previously served as senior deputy assistant to the administrator in the OAPA. He has lived in Kabul for several years and has traveled to Afghanistan, Pakistan over 60 times since 2001.

And we welcome you here this afternoon, Mr. Sampler.

And our last but certainly not least witness this afternoon, we are pleased to welcome Mr. James Soiles. Mr. Soiles has served with the DEA since 1983, rising through the ranks until reaching the current duties as Deputy Chief of Operations in the Office of Global Enforcement for the Drug Enforcement Administration. In the past, he has served as the DEA section chief of Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East, and Canada section overseeing operations in 125 countries.

And we, again, want to welcome all three of you here this afternoon. You are probably familiar with the committee rules. You will each have 5 minutes to give your testimony. We have a lighting system. The yellow light will let you know that you have 1 minute to wrap up, the red light will come on, and we would ask that you cease your testimony as close to that point as possible. Give you a little bit of leeway, but not a whole lot, so we would ask you to try to stay within that if at all possible, and then we will follow up with questions.

So we will begin with you, Mr. Blanc. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JARRET BLANC, DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. BLANC. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Afghanistan and Pakistan. With your permission, I will briefly summarize my remarks for the record.

Mr. CHABOT. Without objection, the full report will be included in the record.

You might want to pull the mike, if you can, a little closer there, just so everybody in the room can hear you.

Mr. BLANC. I will pull myself closer.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. BLANC. Please allow me to begin by thanking the members of the subcommittee for your continued support for our mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also to thank the thousands of Americans, military personnel, diplomats and assistants, professionals who have and continue to serve in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The American people have been generous, steadfast and brave in their support for this region. I would like to particularly note the service of Ambassador Jim Cunningham who has finished his term as Ambassador of the United States to Afghanistan and to welcome

the confirmation by the Senate last night of Ambassador Michael McKinley.

Starting with Afghanistan, it is important to remember why we are so deeply involved in that country today. It was in Afghanistan that the attacks of September 11, 2001 were planned, and we remain there because we understand the importance of ensuring that Afghan soil not again be used to launch attacks against us.

As part of a military coalition of more than 50 Nations, we have helped make the world, Afghanistan, and the region more secure. We should also be proud that we have helped the Government of Afghanistan build the capacity and start to build the capacity to provide security, education, and jobs for its own people moving forward.

Today's hearing is timely. Having long talked about 2014 as the critical year of transition, it is appropriate now to talk about the way ahead as the year draws to a close. Politically, Dr. Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah have forged a political compromise amid an electoral process that, while imperfect, honored the participation of millions of Afghans and led to the first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history.

All eyes are now on them to deliver on the promises of security, better governance, accountability, women's rights and realizable sustainable development goals.

The media have focused on the challenge of the government naming its new ministers. We should not allow this important issue to distract us from the impressive start that the government has already made in actually governing on issues ranging from corruption to security. And I would also note that we hope that Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah will soon have an opportunity to speak to you directly about their priorities and vision of the way forward.

On security, the United States combat mission with come to a close this year, and the International Security Assistance Force will be replaced with a more limited international mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces.

To a large extent, though, Afghanistan's security transition has already taken place. In June 2013, the ANSF took responsibility for security throughout the country, and its performance, while despite the violent attacks of the Taliban and other insurgents, has been impressive so far.

I would also note as you did in your opening that the BSA has been signed and ratified and just today we have been informed that the final formality is the Afghan legal system has been completed so that it can come into force on January 1st.

Afghanistan, of course, faces continued economic challenges, but at the London Conference on Afghanistan last week, the international community and the Afghan Government renewed our set of mutual commitments to continuing support that country as it charts its own path to greater sustainability.

I would also note that Afghanistan's economy and security are inexorably tied to the broader region which remains one of the world's least integrated, and as the ranking member noted, it is a welcome sign of progress that earlier this month the region finalized negotiations on key agreements for the CASA–1000 electricity transmission line project.

Perhaps most importantly in this context, there is real potential for improving Afghan/Pakistan relations.

Turning to Pakistan, we have a bilateral relationship that is full of both opportunity and challenge. The bottom line is that our relationship is vital to the national security of the United States. We have many shared long-term interests in both economic and security cooperation, and our policy of sustained engagement to date has yielded tangible, if incremental, results.

Due to the importance of our relationship, we have invested in a substantial civilian assistance program in Pakistan which complements our robust security assistance program.

It is easy to criticize imperfect progress in Pakistan. However, it is also easy to overlook its successes. In May of last year, Pakistan made its first ever democratic transition from one civilian government to another. It has made progress in stabilizing economy and in implementing reforms, but obviously it has further go to realize its economic potential.

Pakistan's military operations in North Waziristan have disrupted militant activities in the tribal areas and resulted in important seizures of weapons and IED materials. This operation is the latest and most extensive phase of Pakistan's effort to extend greater government control throughout its territory.

We recognize that Pakistan has suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists and its sacrifices are laudable.

It is also clear that their job is not done. Militant groups such as the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban, including the Haqqani network, continue to pose a threat to Pakistan, its neighbors, and to the United States. It is vital that these groups not be allowed to find their footing, and we will hold Pakistani leaders to their commitments in this regard.

Our constructive engagement with Pakistan has garnered results, and it will be continued to be an important component of our national security strategy going forward.

And with that, I thank you and look forward to your questions.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Blanc follows:]

Testimony of Jarrett Blanc
Principal Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
Before the House Subcommittee on
The Middle East and North Africa
And Asia and the Pacific

December 10, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Faleomavaega, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the future of Afghanistan following the conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force mission at the end of 2014 as well as the current state of the United States bilateral relationship with Pakistan

Please allow me to begin by once again thanking the members of the Subcommittee for your continued support for our mission. The American people have been generous, steadfast, and brave in supporting Afghanistan. I would particularly like to again honor the dedication of thousands of American military personnel, diplomats, and assistance professionals who have served – and continue to serve – in Afghanistan.

The Situation in Afghanistan

Before I begin, I think it is important to remember why we are so deeply involved in Afghanistan today. We began this mission in late 2001 because it was in that country that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were planned. We remain there today because we understand the importance of ensuring that never again will Afghan soil be used to launch attacks against us. In doing so over the past 13 years, as part of a military coalition of more than 50 nations, we have helped make Afghanistan, the region, and the world more secure. Over that same period of time, as an architect and funder of an international civilian assistance effort, we have helped the Afghan government build the capacity to provide security, education, and jobs to its own people. We should be proud of what we have helped Afghans accomplish simply in terms of the contributions we have made to alleviating human suffering, realizing human potential, and expanding human capital. In doing so, we have strengthened partnerships with the Afghan government and the Afghan people in the struggle against extremists who would threaten us all.

Today's hearing is timely. Having talked about 2014 as the critical year of transitions – political, security and economic – it is appropriate to talk about the way ahead as the year draws to a close. Politically, Dr. Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah forged a political compromise amid an electoral process that, while imperfect, nevertheless honored the participation of millions of Afghans and led to the first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history. Their challenge in the new year will be to finish forming an effective and inclusive government capable of implementing the reforms laid out last week in London and responsive to the needs of all Afghans. On security, we are just a few short weeks away from December 31, when, as President Obama has made clear, the U.S. combat mission will also come to a close and the International Security Assistance Force that brought together nations from around the globe in support of the Afghan security forces and people, will be replaced with a new, more limited, international mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces who by then will have taken full responsibility for the security of their country. (I will describe this mission, called "Resolute Support," in a moment.) With respect to Afghanistan's economic future, just last week in London, the new government put forward an ambitious plan to make the country more competitive, transparent and sustainable.

These are important, significant milestones, and it is important to recognize that change is coming. At the same time, it is important to talk about what will not change on January 1, 2015.

Security Continuity and Change

In fact, to a large extent Afghanistan's security transition already took place in July of 2013. For nearly eighteen months now, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have been in the lead on security throughout the country. For nearly two full fighting seasons, Afghan soldiers have been in front, protecting civilians, disabling improvised explosive devices the Taliban have come to rely on as their appeal among ordinary Afghans dwindles, and securing the tens of thousands of polling stations in this year's elections. We and our international partners have supported these efforts, while also supporting efforts to build Afghan capacity to take on the complex challenges of running a modern and professional military.

What is more, although ISAF will come to an end at year's end, the international community will continue to stand by Afghanistan. On January 1, NATO and partners from around the globe will begin the Resolute Support

Mission (RSM), charged with training, advising and assisting the ANSF. We will be the largest contributor to RSM, and we will also work bilaterally with our Afghan partners to continue our important counterterrorism efforts. Also unchanged is that the majority of Afghans want us there – the overwhelming endorsement the two houses of the Afghan parliament recently gave our Bilateral Security Agreement and the counterpart NATO Status of Forces Agreement was the latest testament to this fact.

A Government Focused on Governing

Also unchanged on January 1, 2015 will be the challenges Afghanistan faces, from endemic corruption to an insurgency that can only be ended through dialogue. New, however, is a government committed to confronting these challenges and to taking the difficult decisions needed to succeed. The first proof of this commitment was the agreement reached between Dr. Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah this past summer to put aside their political competition, abide by the outcome of an unprecedented audit of the results of the presidential election, and form a government of national unity committed to an ambitious reform agenda.

All eyes are now on President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah to deliver on the promises of security, better governance, accountability, and realizable, sustainable development goals. Both men understand the enormous tasks with which they have been entrusted by the Afghan people. The media have focused on the challenges of the new government in naming ministers. This is important. At the same time, we should not allow this to distract us from the impressive start the government has made in actually governing. Looking at a track record of less than ten weeks in office, it is clear that President Ghani and CEO Abdullah intend to get things done and take concrete steps to improve democratic governance. This is new. It is important. It has the potential to transform how Afghanistan interacts with the rest of the world.

I hope that President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah will have the opportunity in the near future to discuss their plans and their accomplishments themselves. I want to note a few of the concrete results they have produced in their short time in office thus far. As I have already noted, President Ghani authorized the signing of the BSA and NATO SOFA the day after he was inaugurated, and he and Dr. Abdullah worked together closely to shepherd these crucial agreements through the two houses of parliament. President Ghani announced the reopening of the Kabul Bank investigation, signaling an earnest desire to make good on the

promise to hold accountable those who have enriched themselves at the expense of the Afghan people.

Money laundering legislation that had been languishing was revived and redrawn, allowing the international Financial Action Task Force to upgrade Afghanistan's status in that grouping. The government pushed through the lower house of parliament changes to the country's mining laws to make this important industry more attractive to private sector investment. We have already seen the intent to solidify the gains of the last decade on human rights, including women's rights, with both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah making efforts to consult constructively with various sectors of civil society. President Ghani's commitment to advancing human rights is reflected in his pledge to nominate women to senior government and judiciary positions, as well as Afghan First Lady Rula Ghani's public role urging men and women alike to defend the protection of human rights. We will continue to work with the Afghan government to maintain this forward movement on human rights.

It is also encouraging that at the London Conference the Afghan government recognized the need to intensify and broaden their efforts to control the production and sale of narcotics. Our experience around the world shows that successful counternarcotics (CN) efforts require a long-term, multi-faceted approach, well integrated within the broader context of supporting good governance and sustainable economic growth and dependent upon security and stability. The United States looks forward to working with renewed commitment with the new Afghan government to build upon the CN capabilities that have been developed over the past decade.

Economic Challenges and Prospects

Afghanistan also faces continued economic challenges. At the London Conference on Afghanistan held last week, the international community renewed its commitment to continue supporting Afghanistan as it charts a path to greater sustainability. For their part, the Afghan representatives – including President Ghani himself – acknowledged the need to enact policies that provide an enabling investment climate that allows the private sector to grow the Afghan economy and provides jobs for a growing population of educated youth. Still more important, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have committed to implementing reforms that improve governance, decrease corruption, increase transparency, accountability and efficiency, and to increase government revenues to address a dangerous budget shortfall. The onus is on the Afghan government to develop a plan and a budget

that will work within current realities while also setting the stage for the kind of economic growth Afghanistan needs to gradually reduce the need for international aid.

And as I said before, Afghanistan's economy – and indeed its security – is inextricably tied to events impacting the broader region. Afghanistan's neighborhood – the "Heart of Asia" – is one of the least integrated regions in the world, and the United States has been supporting greater regional economic cooperation and connectivity through its New Silk Road initiative. Regionally-led fora round out efforts to promote regional cooperation, including the Afghan-led Istanbul Process, launched in November 2011 and representing a step forward in terms of dialogue and cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbors. This emerging consensus is an important development in terms of the political and security trajectory of Afghanistan. The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process enables diverse countries in the region, as well as their the northern neighbors in Central Asia, to come together in the spirit of cooperation and mutual trust to identify areas where we can work together on shared interests. And there is no greater shared interest in this region than Afghanistan's stability and prosperity. As the participants in this process declared in Beijing in October, economic development, along with mutual respect, is key to stability of a region," and therefore committed "to enhance regional economic cooperation" for "the long-term development of Afghanistan."

In a welcome sign of progress in the region's growing economic cooperation, earlier this month Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan finalized negotiations on power purchasing and master agreements for the CASA-1000 electricity transmission line project. Combined with the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) regional electricity project, CASA-1000 and TUTAP would make real the idea of a regional energy market connecting South and Central Asia.

These projects are important because Afghanistan's economic future depends on improved connectivity with regional and international markets. To facilitate that broader goal, I am pleased to report that the United States and Afghanistan have agreed to improve private sector links between our countries by issuing visas that will be valid longer and will allow for multiple entries for eligible business travelers, students, exchange visitors and tourists.

The Situation in Pakistan

Turning to Pakistan, we have a bilateral relationship that is full of both opportunity and challenges. But the bottom line is that our relationship is vital to the national security of the United States, we have many shared long-term interests in both economic and security cooperation, and our policy of sustained engagement to date has yielded tangible incremental results. A stable, prosperous Pakistan that plays a constructive role in the region is in both our countries' interests, and has an acute effect on the region. Pakistan is a complex democracy, representing 190 million people and grappling with substantial security challenges. It is often easy to criticize its imperfect progress; however, it is also easy to overlook its successes. In May of last year, Pakistan made its first democratic transition from one civilian government to another in its history. This year, the military undertook multiple operations seeking to root out terrorism, including a major operation in North Waziristan. Pakistan concluded an agreement with the IMF last year and has made progress in stabilizing its economy and implementing reforms, but has further to go to realize its economic potential. Protests this year have challenged Pakistan's democratic institutions but they appear to be weathering the storm. In the aggregate, it is a positive trajectory, both in terms of Pakistan and our bilateral cooperation.

The U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue is the mechanism that underpins our intensive cooperation on these shared interests, from counterterrorism to energy to economic growth and defense. We expect that this dialogue and cooperation will not only continue, but increase, well beyond the transition in Afghanistan. We also recognize that our engagement with Pakistan is critical to advancing our regional objectives. The region, despite its challenges, is one of potential and growth, and encouraging regional integration is central to our approach.

Due to the importance of the relationship, we have invested in a substantial civilian assistance program in Pakistan, which complements the robust security assistance program. Both assistance programs underpin our long-term engagement and U.S. national security objectives, and must continue beyond transition in Afghanistan. For example, U.S. civilian assistance supports our cooperation with Pakistan as it addresses its energy crisis. It has helped Pakistan foster stability and trade while expanding the writ of the government in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions. These efforts will only grow in importance as Pakistan concludes operations in North Waziristan and elsewhere. Our security assistance, which is focused on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency support, has aided Pakistan in its fight against militants.

As mentioned previously, in June Pakistan undertook a counter-militancy operation in North Waziristan, after a period of ultimately unsuccessful peace talks and many years of planning. The operations have disrupted militant activities in the tribal areas and resulted in seizures of weapons caches and significant quantities of IED materials. The affected groups had been using the area to plan and launch attacks into Afghanistan and within Pakistan. Our security assistance has aided Pakistan in prosecuting the North Waziristan campaign, with a case in point being its ability to strike with precision, including with F-16s, and limiting collateral damage in the process. The operation is the latest phase of Pakistan's efforts to extend greater government control in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), beginning with Bajaur Agency in 2008 and is the most extensive of the FATA operations conducted to date.. We recognize that Pakistan has suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists, and its sacrifices are laudable.

But it is also clear that the job is not done. Militant groups such as the Pakistani Taliban and Afghan Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, continue to pose a threat to Pakistan, to Pakistan's neighbors, and to the United States. As such, it is vital that the operation continues and that every effort is made not just to disrupt safehavens and militant networks, but to prevent them from being re-established in the tribal areas and from operating elsewhere in Pakistan. We are concerned about public reports of groups being assisted in leaving these areas prior to the operation. Pakistani leaders have told us that they are targeting all militant groups, including the Haqqani Network, and we will hold them to these commitments. In particular we have been very clear with the Pakistani leadership about the need to prevent the re-establishment of Haqqani safehavens, and Pakistani leaders have said publicly that they will not allow this to happen. I know that many in Pakistan have been surprised by what they discovered in Miram Shah and Mir Ali – networks, tunnels, IED factories, and munitions. These discoveries underscore the risks of safehavens on either side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

This hearing has a regional focus. In that vein, improved relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and indeed between Pakistan and the United States, stand to improve more quickly if Pakistan continues efforts to eliminate the safehavens from which militants in Pakistan plan and execute attacks not just on Pakistanis, but also on U.S., Afghan, and other personnel and facilities whether in Afghanistan or around the world. This is why we continue to focus on counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan, where we have made good progress, particularly in our joint counter IED efforts. Importantly, Pakistan is taking direct

action to interdict and disrupt IED networks, helping to stem the flow of IEDs into Afghanistan and within Pakistan.

Indeed, there is real potential for improving Afghanistan-Pakistan relations under the new government in Kabul, and it will be up to both countries to build on the initial goodwill generated through President Ghani's visit to Islamabad and earlier visits by Pakistani officials to Kabul. We are encouraging them to do so through concrete steps, and offering support where appropriate. For example, on the security front, Pakistan and Afghanistan are moving forward with improving their security and military cooperation to manage the border as a key priority to reduce tensions and eliminate militant safehavens on both sides of the border. On the economic front, they have committed to streamlining cross-border trade and strengthening transportation linkages between the two nations. Whether it is on the security relationship, on the economic and trade relationship, on a full range of other issues and through multiple channels, I think that there is an alignment of interests here between Afghanistan and Pakistan which we have not had for quite a while and we need to encourage them to take advantage of it. Indeed, it is for these two countries to take the initiative, and as we have seen both on recent agreements on the CASA-1000 regional electricity transmission project and a range of cooperative projects coming out of President Ghani's visit, early indications are that both countries' leaders are striving to do so. South and Central Asia is one of the least economically integrated regions in the world, and all countries stand to benefit from increased linkages.

Again, all of these issues present both opportunities and challenges that directly impact our long-term national security and are being addressed at the highest levels of our governments. For example, Secretary Kerry discussed these issues with Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif in late November, and again with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif earlier this month in London. We are planning for a Strategic Dialogue Ministerial session early in 2015. Our constructive engagement with Pakistan has garnered results, and will continue to be an important component of our national security strategy going forward.

With that, I again thank you for your attention and look forward to your questions.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Sampler, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONALD L. SAMPLER, ASSISTANT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN AFFAIRS, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. SAMPLER. Mr. Chairman, members, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today about USAID's civilian assistance in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I am proud to represent USAID at this pivotal time in the history of our engagement with these two countries.

Today, as a matter of fact, in Oslo, Norway, Malala Yousafzai was awarded a Nobel Prize for her remarkable courage and advocacy on behalf of education for girls in Pakistan and around the world. Her recognition is made even more notable because she shares the Prize with an Indian advocate for the rights of children, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi. As she herself said as she accepted the award, "I am glad that we can stand together and show the world that an Indian and a Pakistani can stand united in Peace and stand together to work for children's rights."

In Afghanistan, as the international military forces transition away from direct combat, and as their numbers and their political and economic impact diminishes, the roles of civilian agencies become increasingly more important, and rightly so.

I am clearly aware of our commitment in and to Afghanistan. A week from today marks the 13th anniversary of the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. At that ceremony in 2001, Jim Dobbins, an outstanding diplomat and a personal role model for me, noted that with the reopening of the United States mission in Kabul today, America has resumed its diplomatic, economic, and political engagement with Afghanistan. He continued and finished by saying, "We are here and we are here to stay."

I first worked in Afghanistan in 2002 and played a role in the emergency and constitutional Loya Jirgas that constituted the founding of the new Government of Afghanistan. I have been more or less engaged in supporting U.S. efforts there ever since. I have worked with and for USAID, the Departments of State and Defense, the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, a think tank, an NGO, and for-profit, all in support of U.S. national interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But as we enter the holiday period here at home, I am reminded that there are over 2,300 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who were killed in Afghanistan, and whose families will miss them this holiday season. There have also been over 400 USAID contractors killed, and over 1,000 of our colleagues wounded during this same period of time.

I have participated in Fallen Hero ceremonies for USAID and State Department colleagues who were killed in Afghanistan in the line of duty, and just last week met with the family of Mike Dempsey, one of my employees killed last year, and I last saw his family when I visited Detroit, Michigan for his visitation and funeral. So I have firsthand experience in pain—I have firsthand experience with the painful consequences and costs for the progress we have made in Afghanistan.

I am also cognizant of the fiscal costs, the treasure that we invest in Afghanistan and Pakistan each year. I and my staff take very seriously our stewardship of taxpayer resources, and we work tirelessly to ensure that these dollars are spent appropriately and effectively, and that they support the national interest and development goals we have set for ourselves.

In support of our national interests abroad, USAID partners to end extreme poverty and support resilient democratic societies while advancing U.S. security and prosperity.

Afghanistan and Pakistan represent a range of development challenges, but in both countries, USAID works to implement programs that are sensible, sustainable, and developmentally sound.

In Pakistan, we work in five sectors. They are energy, economic growth and agriculture, health, education, and stabilization. In Afghanistan, our programs range from humanitarian assistance to infrastructure, which includes energy, health, education, and governance capacity building.

In both countries, assuring and advancing the gains made by women and girls are essential cross-cutting themes of our work, as is building the capacity of local partners to ensure sustainability.

As USAID navigates to the 2014 transition and looks to 2015 and beyond, the agency is committed to making every effort to safeguard taxpayer funds and ensure that the remarkable development progress made in Afghanistan and in Pakistan is maintained and made durable in order to secure our national interests in that part of the world.

It is an honor to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sampler follows:]

Statement for the Record

United States Agency for International Development

Donald L. "Larry" Sampler

Assistant to the Administrator and Director of the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs

Before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittees on the Middle East and North Africa and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Joint Hearing:

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

Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Faleomavaega and Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s civilian assistance activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is an honor to appear before you today with the Department of State's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Jarrett Blanc, and the Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration's Deputy Chief of Operations, Office of Global Enforcement, James Soiles.

I have been working in the region in both civilian and military capacities since 2002. In addition to having worked with the Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga and the Afghan Emergency Loya Jirga, I have served as a representative of an international non-governmental organization for programs in Afghanistan, and as chief of staff of the U.N. Assistance Mission to Afghanistan. I bring these perspectives to USAID's work today.

Our work in Afghanistan and Pakistan is emblematic of our agency's overall mission: USAID partners to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. USAID's civilian assistance programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan are also a critical component of our core U.S. national security objective of a stable South and Central Asia free of al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Afghanistan and Pakistan, and consequently the region as a whole, present both enormous opportunities and enormous challenges. This region,

wracked with conflict for much of the last three decades, remains one of the least economically integrated in the world, with the vast majority of its human and economic potential untapped.

As we have noted before, this does not have to be the case, but it will take fundamental changes by regional leaders to transform these dynamics. Our U.S. civilian assistance programs can be an essential catalyst and incentive for change, and our efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan today are delivering real, tangible, measurable results that contribute to this potential transformation. Our efforts to spur investment in small Afghan enterprises; expand trade ties in the region; and connect the restive tribal areas of Pakistan to the economy and government, are creating economic opportunity, interdependence, better governance, and accountability—all of which contribute to our effort to marginalize al-Qaeda and stabilize the region.

We remain committed to an assistance program in Afghanistan and Pakistan that is effective, accountable, and sustainable. The importance and impact of effective, accountable, and sustainable development assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan is more essential than ever in this period of transition. The Afghan national unity government used last week's London Conference to articulate to its partners a broader strategy for the future, a plan for how to get the highest return on the investments made during these past thirteen years. We reaffirmed our partnership and recognition of the need for mutual accountability to achieve these returns.

The stability of Afghanistan, amidst the drawdown of U.S. and other International Security Assistance Force combat forces, will require sustained effort to cement the important development gains that have been made over the past thirteen years and mitigate the economic consequences of the reduction of the military presence. We have seen the dire consequences of neglect and disengagement play out in this region before, and the Obama administration is committed to not letting history repeat itself.

USAID's central goal in Afghanistan is to promote a stable, inclusive and increasingly prosperous country. During the past decade, Afghanistan has made remarkable development gains across multiple sectors, thanks to the whole-of-government efforts of the United States, along with our international partners, the Afghan government and the Afghan people. The key

elements of USAID's Afghanistan strategy going forward calls for making durable the significant achievements in health, education, and for women; focusing on economic growth and fiscal sustainability to mitigate the economic impact of the troop withdrawal and declining levels of civilian assistance; and supporting legitimate and effective Afghan governance, and in turn promoting stability.

Likewise, Pakistan remains a critical partner for the United States in the region. Pakistan's engagement with Afghanistan during this transition period, and its efforts to deal with extremist militancy, transnational terrorism, and nuclear security, are of paramount importance to U.S. national security. Pakistan's economic and political stability is an essential foundation for these efforts. U.S. development work in Pakistan has delivered important outcomes for the United States and Pakistan that directly support U.S. national security interests. USAID is implementing a civilian assistance strategy for Pakistan that focuses efforts in five key sectors – energy, economic growth including agriculture, stabilization, education, and health.

This five-sector work seeks to increase the capacity and efficiency of the energy sector to help bridge the gap in supply and demand that undermines stability and growth; foster private sector-led economic growth and agriculture assistance to help Pakistan's economy and provide licit employment for its growing population; stabilize regions susceptible to violent extremism, particularly on the border with Afghanistan and in Karachi; increase access to and the quality of education, helping Pakistan provide skills necessary to grow its economy and counter violent extremism; and improve maternal and child health. In the years ahead, USAID will look to support key priorities, including: (1) progress on the Government of Pakistan's reform agenda, which includes support to its implementation of its International Monetary Fund program; and (2) more robust Pakistani economic integration into the South/Central Asia region. Progress on these priorities will not only promote Pakistan's stability, but will have a positive impact on Afghanistan's as well.

With regard to the issues facing the new Afghan government and the implications of the U.S. troop draw down, I know from personal experience that the dramatic progress made in Afghanistan is remarkable, yet fragile. USAID has been planning and adjusting its programming

in anticipation of the transition, to maximize sustainability and ensure oversight and accountability of the resources the American people have provided in support of Afghanistan.

We understand fully that the fiscal reality our nation faces at home means that resources available for Afghanistan will decline over time. Weaning Afghanistan from unsustainable levels of assistance is necessary for us, and essential for them. To achieve this goal without triggering a crisis, we believe it is essential to continue to provide assistance in areas critical to Afghan development and stability. To do this with fewer resources, we are making tough decisions and prioritizing investments that have the greatest potential for long term sustainability.

USAID Impact and Results

In Afghanistan, USAID's development assistance, which represents approximately 3 percent of the total military and civilian financial cost of the war, has helped Afghans achieve extraordinary gains for a country that in 2002 had virtually no access to reliable electricity, roads or modern telecommunications, and disadvantaged almost half of its population - women and girls - by prohibiting them from contributing fully to Afghan society and the economy. Specific examples include:

- Health: Life expectancy has increased from 42 years to over 62 years since 2002; the maternal mortality rate has declined by 80 percent from 1,600 to 327 deaths per 100,000 births; and child mortality decreased by 44 percent from 172 to 97 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- Education: In 2002, there were approximately 900,000 Afghan children in school, and virtually none were girls. Today, approximately 8 million children are registered to attend school and more than one-third of them are girls.
- Mobile Technology: in 2002, there were few fixed telephone lines and making calls outside of Afghanistan required a satellite phone. Today, the combined phone network covers 90 percent of the Afghan population. Eighty-five percent of women have access to a mobile phone. The telecommunications sector is Afghanistan's greatest source of foreign direct investment, largest remitter of taxes to the government, and biggest licit employer, providing jobs for over 100,000 Afghans.

In Pakistan, since 2009, USAID has partnered with that country to achieve significant development impacts, including:

- Energy: Added over 1,400 megawatts (MW) to the national system, benefitting about 16 million people. By 2016 USAID's programming is expected to contribute 2,400 MW to the power system, benefiting 26 million people;
- Stabilization Linkages: Constructed over 935 kilometers of road in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, speeding travel time, reducing transportation costs, and increasing access to markets.
- Strengthening Economic Opportunity: Completed the Gomal Zam dam. Located in South Waziristan Agency, an area vulnerable to extremism, this dam now supplies electricity to more than 270,000 people, prevents life-threatening flash floods, and creates water storage for households and farmers in the area. The dam supplies irrigation water for approximately 191,000 acres of farmland in KP province to create job opportunities and increase the incomes of an estimated 30,000 farming families in the region.

These support our own national security interests in helping Pakistan foster long-term stability, growth, and reform.

Supporting Women and Girls

Women and girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan are integral to ensuring the future stability and economic prosperity of both nations and the broader region. In both countries, USAID is implementing gender-focused programming and ensuring that gender is a cross-cutting priority across all program areas.

In Afghanistan, USAID recently launched its largest gender program in the world, known as "Promote." Promote, a five-year program, builds on the achievements women and girls have made since 2001 by developing a cadre of 75,000 educated Afghan women between the ages of 18 and 30, empowering them to fully participate in the economic, political, and civil society sectors of Afghan society. It will help women establish and/or expand small-to medium-sized businesses; help civil society organizations increase their knowledge and skills so they can better

support women's rights, outreach and advocacy campaigns; facilitate fellowships with relevant Afghan government ministries and agencies with a goal of achieving a critical mass of women in the civil service; and train women in the public, private and civil service sectors in management and leadership.

In Pakistan, USAID created the Gender Equity Program (GEP) that works to improve women's access to justice as well as address and prevent gender-based violence by providing small grants to the Pakistani government and non-government organizations. GEP is a $40 million grant-making program implemented by the Aurat Foundation. In support of Government of Pakistan efforts, 40 percent of GEP's funding is dedicated to addressing gender-based violence. The Government of Pakistan has set up 42 government-run women's crisis-shelters, thirty-four of which are in Punjab, along with 23 crisis response centers. Through GEP, 1,298 women and 468 children have received support services through the eight private shelters, and 524 women have received support through crisis centers over the last four years.

Afghanistan and Pakistan Programming Moving Forward

In Afghanistan over the past three years, USAID has shifted the focus of its programs from a focus on stabilization and infrastructure to a focus on creating the basis for sustainable, long-term development. As noted above, USAID's strategy in Afghanistan is threefold:

- Maintaining and making durable the gains made in health, education, and for women;
- Supporting continued economic growth and employment through a focus on the agriculture sector and private sector development, operations and maintenance of infrastructure investments, and responsibly developing the extractives industry, all key to ensuring future fiscal sustainability; and,
- Fostering legitimate and effective Afghan governance, the rule of law, and a robust civil society.

Operationally, USAID has adjusted its implementation model to improve sustainability and meet the challenges presented by the transition.

- Developing a multi-tiered monitoring strategy to address reduced mobility and decreased

field staff that, along with other monitoring and evaluation efforts, will continue to ensure appropriate oversight of projects;

- Transforming USAID's approach in Afghanistan to one of mutual accountability that incentivizes Afghan reforms by conditioning an increasing percentage of our assistance to the government on progress on reforms and that continues to increase government involvement and ownership of development needs; and
- Focusing on long-term sustainability through implementing three key principles of: (1) increasing Afghan ownership and capacity; (2) contributing to community stability and public confidence in the Government of Afghanistan; and (3) implementing effective and cost-efficient programming.

In Pakistan, USAID will continue to pursue the five-sector strategy, but in 2015, USAID is preparing to increase its engagement in helping the Government of Pakistan address the civilian impacts of Pakistan's military operations in the North Waziristan Agency (NWA). More than five years of Pakistani military operations in the FATA and KP have displaced 1.9 million people. This includes the recent displacement of roughly 900,000 people from NWA as a result of the Zarb-e-Azb operation that began in June 2014. In addition, this past fall, government forces expanded the operations to include the neighboring Khyber Agency. As of December 3, 2014, over 500,000 individuals have been registered as internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Khyber Agency alone.

The following three-step engagement plan is being considered for NWA:

- Help Pakistan meet IDP needs by providing short-term humanitarian assistance, which includes support from USAID's Offices of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food For Peace, continued Mission support to United Nations entities, and supporting host communities in KP
- Support Pakistani efforts to address impediments to IDP returns, including the following:
    - Small community-based projects for immediate income generating opportunities
    - Support family livelihood needs
    - Reconstruction/repair of damaged housing and public infrastructure
    - Support re-establishment of public administration, human, and institutional capacity
- Augment Government of Pakistan commitments to strengthen public administration in

the FATA where security and governance can be maintained

Central and South Asia Regional Integration Programming

USAID is also working in coordination with the Department of State to encourage regional integration and strengthen economic ties between Afghanistan, Pakistan and their regional neighbors in an effort to bring greater prosperity and stability to one of the least economically integrated regions in the world. USAID is laying the groundwork for a more economically connected region by facilitating trade; providing technical assistance for regional energy projects such as the World Bank's Central and South Asia (CASA)-1000 project, in which the Central Asian countries of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic will provide surplus summer hydropower to Afghanistan and Pakistan; promoting business-to-business networking; and helping countries address cross-border trade impediments, as well as countering trafficking in persons.

USAID's Afghanistan Trade and Revenue (ATAR) project provides technical assistance for Afghanistan's accession to the World Trade Organization. ATAR works to ease transit constraints, modernize the customs agency, and create international business opportunities. In November, USAID brought together 80 members of the public sector to meet with government officials in Kabul to discuss ways to improve the implementation of the Transport Internationaux Routiers (TIR) convention of 1975. The convention simplifies cargo transport across international borders. This project reaches beyond Afghanistan's borders with Afghanistan's Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) to create commercial opportunities. For example, in late October and early November, 2014, USAID supported business exhibitions such as the Central Asian Trade Forum and the World Food Exhibit in Almaty, Kazakhstan which were well attended by Afghan business people.

USAID is also strengthening regional integration through programming based in Pakistan. The Pakistan Regional Economic Integration Activity (PREIA) is a follow-on activity to the Trade Project that will focus on facilitating regional trade and will promote Pakistan's regional economic integration. This new program will continue its technical support to the Government of Pakistan, including the Federal Board of Revenue/Customs and the Ministry of Commerce.

By building the Government of Pakistan's capacity to implement pro-trade reforms, improve customs facilitation measures with regional and bilateral trading partners, and support business connectivity, PREIA will help increase Pakistan's trade and transit volumes with regional trading partners. Among other things, PREIA will provide technical assistance to help the government implement the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) tariff framework, and facilitate expansion of Pakistan's trade with India. PREIA, it is expected, will come online by late spring of 2015.

USAID is also drawing on its expertise and knowledge across the region by coordinating its Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asian activities. These include a regional nutrition program to help decrease the prevalence of malnutrition in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, as well as an energy linkages program that will help coordinate regional energy initiatives and provide technical support and management to a Regional Energy Secretariat supporting the CASA-1000 project.

Oversight and Accountability

USAID has learned important lessons over the course of its engagement in Afghanistan, and has drawn on experiences in other challenging environments – including Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, and Colombia – to put in place strong oversight of U.S. assistance funds.

In addition to standard USAID oversight measures implemented worldwide, in Afghanistan USAID has implemented the Accountable Assistance for Afghanistan (A3) initiative, designed to prevent funds from being diverted from the development purpose to malign actors. Some of the approaches USAID is employing under A3 include:

1. Award Mechanisms -- We are utilizing assistance awards that provide the most visibility on project costs, such as cost-reimbursable contracts and limiting layers of subcontracts to two.
2. Partner Vetting – The USAID Mission established a Vetting Support Unit in February 2011. The unit conducts checks on non-U.S. companies and non-U.S. key individuals for

prime contractors, sub-contractors, grant recipients and sub-grantees to determine whether or not they are associated with known malign entities or individuals. We have kept approximately $100 million from being awarded to those who did not meet our vetting requirements.

3. Financial Controls – We are enhancing controls on project funds, such as promoting electronic funds transfers in lieu of cash payments, using independent financial monitors to verify appropriate usage of funds, ensuring close review of recipients' claims prior to payment, and performing audits of locally incurred costs.

In addition, USAID is implementing a multi-tiered monitoring approach that allows us to use reporting data from multiple sources to make further programmatic decisions. Supporting this approach is the Implementation Support Team (IST) located in the mission. This team is charged with providing an additional layer of critical review and analysis, on a cross-sectoral basis, to ensure there are sufficient streams of monitoring information collected for providing USAID leadership and program managers with advice for addressing challenges in project implementation. The levels of monitoring include: (1) direct hire personnel overseeing and meeting with implementing partners; (2) feedback from Afghan officials; (3) local civil society organizations; (4) monitoring and evaluation strategies employed by USAID implementing partners; and (5) the use of independent verifying agents in the field who can attend events, take photographs and report back to USAID officials when travel to a region is prohibitive.

Building on past monitoring and evaluation experience in Afghanistan, USAID is in the process of reviewing proposals for the new Monitoring Support Project. This request was issued following extensive consultations with international donors, Congress, and USAID implementing partners, as well as a comprehensive analysis of USAID's experience using independent monitoring around the world. This project will utilize a variety of monitoring methods to verify project data, including site visits, GPS and time/date stamped photos, interviews, and crowd sourcing. Independent monitoring, however, is not the sole source of monitoring data. Moreover, it will not take the place of USAID staff as project managers. Instead, it is one tool that USAID can use to validate reporting data from other sources. Should USAID determine that its multi-tiered monitoring approach cannot provide adequate oversight

over project activities, it will not hesitate to terminate or de-scope projects.

Although there are inherent risks in doing business in a country like Afghanistan, we prioritize the effective and accountable use of taxpayer dollars and do not assume that there is any level of acceptable fraud, waste, or abuse in our programs. This means that oversight must be a process of continual re-examination of ongoing efforts, and that there must be flexibility to adjust to new circumstances as they arise.

Pakistan is also a challenging environment in which to work. Recognizing that fact, the USAID program emphasizes transparency through rigorous oversight measures we have put in place for the assistance we provide. We have made important progress over the past five years, even while experiencing a series of challenges in the bilateral relationship. USAID carefully tracks and monitors all assistance funds in Pakistan in accordance with agency and U.S. Government guidelines. USAID has established a nationwide Anti-Fraud Hotline managed by the USAID Office of Inspector General, whereby anyone in the country can call in to report any corruption, mismanagement, or complaints about any USAID-funded project activities. While there is no way to eliminate risk completely or guarantee a result in undertaking development programming in Pakistan, USAID, in the field and in Washington, is acutely conscious of the trust that has been placed with us to safeguard taxpayer funds while implementing development programs in support of the national interest. We are always looking at ways to refine and adopt improvements to our oversight systems.

Direct Assistance in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Direct assistance to the Afghan and Pakistani governments is used to build the Afghan and Pakistani governments' ability to sustain the investments and gains made over the last decade and to reduce its dependence on donors. Afghanistan and Pakistan must continue to build their capacity to govern and provide services to their people. Providing direct assistance is an important mechanism for accomplishing this goal.

At the same time, USAID has put in place stringent measures to safeguard taxpayer funds, and

only works with those Afghan and Pakistani ministries in which USAID believes it can responsibly mitigate risk. This is in keeping with commitments made by both the previous and current U.S. Administrations to increase our work through local governments and organizations, not just in Afghanistan and Pakistan but around the world. Such work is crucial to fulfill the ultimate goal of assistance, namely helping countries become self-sufficient. While the process of providing direct assistance needs to be done in accordance with strict oversight and accountability that can often slow implementation of programs, the results promise to create a more sustainable development outcome.

Conclusion

USAID knows well the risks and the sacrifices that Americans, our troops, diplomats, and their families take every day to serve in Afghanistan and Pakistan, whether in a military capacity, as a government civilian, or as an implementing partner. Since 2001, 447 people working for USAID partner organizations in Afghanistan have been killed and another 785 wounded.

As USAID navigates through the 2014 transition period and looks to 2015 and beyond, the agency is committed to making every effort to safeguard taxpayer funds and ensure that the development progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan is maintained and made durable, in order to secure our overall national security objectives. It is an honor to be able to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Mr. CHABOT. And, Mr. Soiles, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES SOILES, DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENFORCEMENT, DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. SOILES. Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Chabot, and distinguished members of the subcommittees, on behalf of Administrator Leonhart and the Drug Enforcement Administration, I appreciate your invitation to testify today regarding DEA's counternarcotic strategy and the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

DEA's core principle is to secure our Nation and protect our citizens by relentlessly pursuing our mission of disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations, their networks and financial infrastructures, preventing the diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances and listed chemicals from legitimate channels, leading the collection and dissemination of drug-related information and strengthening the strategic partnerships with our domestic and foreign law enforcement counterparts and extending the rule of law globally.

A recent report by the Special Inspector General of Afghanistan Reconstruction indicated that the United States and our allies have all but abandoned our focus on combating Afghanistan's drug trade. I can say unequivocally that DEA and our partners have not and will not abandon our focus on addressing the drugs threats in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or anywhere else. In fact, in some ways we have sharpened our focus on the threats.

The United Nations has estimated that the international drug trade generates $400 billion per year in illegal revenue, making drug trafficking the most lucrative illicit activity by far.

Because drug trafficking is so profitable, terrorist organizations are increasingly tapping into the revenue stream. The DEA has conservatively linked 22 of the 59 foreign—designated foreign terrorist organizations to drug trafficking. Approximately one quarter of these are based or operate in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Many of these organizations and other insurgent groups operate in or receive drugs or drug-related funding from drugs that are produced in or transited through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Over 80 percent of the world's illicit opiates are produced in Afghanistan, and approximately 160 tons of heroin and 80 tons of opium are smuggled across the Afghan/Pak border every year.

Afghan-produced heroin is primarily destined for world markets. Only a small percentage reaches the United States.

In order to address these challenges, DEA leverages existing programs such as our specialized vetted units, our Foreign-Deployed Advisory and Support Teams and the Special Operations Division to support, mentor, and advise foreign counterparts and coordinate, de-conflict, and synchronize ongoing investigations.

Based in large part on DEA training, mentoring and assistance, the capacities and capabilities of our counterparts in Afghanistan have increased. They can now independently conduct drug investigations. In Fiscal Year 2014, they initiated and led over 2,600 operations resulting in the arrest of over 2,700 individuals, and the seizure of over 109 metric tons of drugs.

Since January 2014, our counterparts in Pakistan seized over 960 kilograms of heroin, 25,000 kilograms of opium, and 52,000 kilograms of hashish.

DEA's Special Operations Division directly supports ongoing investigations throughout the world, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Bilateral Investigations Unit of the Special Operation Division work closely with our office to leverage U.S. Extraterritorial authority against the world's most significant drug trafficking and narcoterrorist organizations.

We have successfully used these laws to indict and incarcerate several Afghan-based international drug trafficers, including Haji Juma Khan, allegedly Afghanistan's largest heroin trafficker with ties to the Taliban; Haji Bagcho, one of the first defendants ever extradited from Afghanistan to the U.S.; and Khan Mohammed, who intended to ship heroin to the United States and use his profits to assist the Taliban.

Thanks to our efforts and those of our partners at the U.S. Attorney's Offices in New York and Virginia, all of these significant drug traffickers, many with ties to the Taliban, faced justice in the United States.

The reality of being held to account for crimes in the U.S. courtroom is a powerful and complimentary tool that must be used to the fullest extent possible.

Due to the immediate and dire consequences of international narcoterrorism crimes, DEA does not have the luxury of adopting a reactive response to this existing criminal threat. Only a proactive investigative response with the prospect of incarceration in the U.S. can address the threat posed to U.S. national security. Unfortunately, prior to leaving office, President Karzai suspended extraditions of indicted individuals from Afghanistan to the U.S., therefore foreclosing U.S. prosecution.

President Ghani could send a clear message to the international drug traffickers and narcoterrorists that operate in Afghanistan by appropriately allowing them to face justice in the United States and thereby complying with international agreements, enhancing Afghanistan's security and strengthening the U.S. national security. Quite simply, a safe Afghanistan means a safer U.S.

Administrator Leonhart and the men and women of the DEA are committed to standing with our interagency colleagues and domestic and foreign counterparts to build and sustain effective counternarcotics programs to protect U.S. national security interests around the world.

Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Soiles follows:]

Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

JAMES SOILES
DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEES OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, AND ASIA AND PACIFIC
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FOR A HEARING ENTITLED

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

PRESENTED

DECEMBER 10, 2014

Statement of James Soiles
Deputy Chief of Operations, Drug Enforcement Administration
Before the Subcommittees of the Middle East and North Africa, and Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
December 10, 2014

Introduction

Chairmen and Ranking Members, and distinguished members of the Subcommittees, on behalf of Administrator Leonhart and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), I appreciate your invitation to testify today.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's core mission is to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug trafficking organizations posing the greatest threat to the United States. Terrorist organizations and insurgent worldwide, including groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan, benefit from drug trafficking. Terrorist organizations require money to operate, train, and execute attacks and are increasingly turning to the estimated $400 billion per year global drug market as a source of financing.[1] DEA has linked 22 of the 59 foreign terrorist organizations to drug trafficking. One quarter of those foreign terrorist organizations that have been linked to drug trafficking operate in or are associated with Afghanistan and/or Pakistan.

Many of these organizations and other insurgent groups operate in or receive drugs or drug-related funding from drugs that are produced or transit through Afghanistan and Pakistan. DEA's objectives in these countries are designed to establish or enhance strategic partnerships with foreign counterparts, deny drug-generated revenue to terrorist organizations and insurgent groups, promote government stability through the rule of law, and expose and reduce corruption.

In order to fulfill our objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan, DEA leverages our existing programs, such as specialized vetted units; our Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Teams (FAST); the Special Operations Division to support, mentor, and advise foreign counterparts and coordinate, deconflict, and synchronize ongoing investigations; and support from the Departments of State and Defense.

Background

On October 30, 2014, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) released a quarterly report to Congress warning that "opium production in Afghanistan is at or near an all-time high." The report also indicated that the United States (U.S.) and our allies have

[1] Congressional Research Service Report to Congress "Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy," April 5, 2004, p. CRS-2.

deemphasized counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. However, DEA and our partners have continued to address the drug threat in Afghanistan.

Afghan-produced opium, morphine base, heroin, and hashish frequently transit Pakistan before reaching global markets. It is estimated that 160 tons of heroin and 80 tons of opium are smuggled annually across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In addition, currently there are 24 Afghan and 15 Pakistani individuals and/or entities designated as significant Foreign Narcotics traffickers under the Kingpin Act.[2]

In response, DEA identifies, investigates, infiltrates, indicts, and incarcerates members of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) responsible for the production and distribution of illegal drugs around the world. In order to accomplish these activities, DEA establishes and enhances strategic partnerships with foreign counterparts, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Situation Today

Afghanistan produces an estimated 80 percent of the world's illicit opiates; however, only a small percentage of Afghan-produced heroin is destined for the United States.[3] The primary markets for Southwest Asian opiates continue to be in Europe, Russia, Iran, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, China, and, increasingly, Africa. In order to reach these markets, Afghan-produced drugs must transit through other countries. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that 42 percent of the opiates that exited Afghanistan transited Pakistan.

The drug trade in Afghanistan continues to undermine economic development, enable corruption, erode government stability, facilitate other forms of transnational organized crime, and threaten the rule of law across the region.

The nexus between drug trafficking and the insurgency in Afghanistan is not a new concept. Insurgent groups in Afghanistan have long utilized drug-related proceeds to advance their political agenda and corrupt and destabilize the country and region.

Successfully addressing this threat must include actions to interdict the transit of drugs out of Afghanistan. Pakistan is one transit country for drugs exiting Afghanistan and precursor chemicals, such as acetic anhydride which is an essential chemical in the conversion of morphine to heroin, entering Afghanistan. Since January 2014, DEA counterparts in Pakistan seized approximately 960 kilograms of heroin, 25,000 kilograms of opium, and 52,865 kilograms of hashish. During fiscal year 2014, the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan initiated and led 2,684 operations, arrested 2,771 individuals, destroyed 38 clandestine drug labs, and seized over 109 metric tons of drugs, over 50,000 liters and approximately 50,000 kilograms of precursor and other chemicals used to produce illegal drugs. Additionally, in fiscal year 2014, DEA and our counterparts denied over $51 million in drug-related revenue to organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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[2] Includes individuals and entities with a SDNTK designation under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R.part 598 Available: https://sdnsearch.ofac.treas.gov, numbers pulled November 20, 2014.
[3] https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2014/World_Drug_Report_2014_web.pdf, Page 21.

Staffing

DEA currently has approval from the Department of Justice and the Department of State for 30 permanent positions in Afghanistan, down from 82 in FY 2013 as part of the Administration's staffing draw down. In addition to the 30 permanent positions, DEA is authorized 12 temporary duty positions, consisting of two pilots and ten Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Team members. Additionally, the DEA Kabul Country Office is supported by 18 contract employees, including nine intelligence analysts, three pilots, five air wing mechanics/avionics technicians, and one office network technician.

The Islamabad, Pakistan Country Office is currently staffed by six DEA employees and two foreign service nationals. DEA anticipates reassigning two special agent positions from the Islamabad Country Office to the Karachi, Pakistan office when it re-opens. In the interim, DEA is using temporary duty deployments to staff the Karachi office.

Vetted Units and Capacity-Building

Vetted Units serve as a DEA force multiplier in the foreign arena. Currently, DEA has 13 Sensitive Investigative Units (SIUs) operating worldwide. The members of these specialized units, established in partnership with the host country, have successfully passed extensive screening requirements, and received basic and advanced training designed to increase their capacity and capability. Our capacity-building efforts include: training, providing equipment and infrastructure, and mentoring by DEA enforcement, intelligence, and training personnel. These efforts support larger U.S. policy objectives promoting regional stability and rule of law.

DEA special agents and intelligence research specialists, serving as mentors, work side-by-side with these units throughout the world. Through this program, DEA is currently mentoring over 1,000 foreign counterparts assigned to SIUs and Vetted Units worldwide. Historically, members of DEA-sponsored SIUs are frequently promoted to high-ranking positions within their organizations, which further strengthens the strategic partnerships with our foreign counterparts. For example, in Colombia, two of the active duty 2-star Generals in the Colombian National Police were former commanders of a DEA SIUs while two other 3-star Generals had divisional oversight of DEA SIUs.

In Afghanistan, the Kabul Country Office, with the support of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and the Department of Defense, is engaged in a decade-long effort to assist the Afghan government by developing Ministry of Interior specialized units of the Counternarcotics Police-Afghanistan (CNP-A) and working to disrupt and dismantle trafficking organizations and break the country's nexus between narcotics and the insurgency. DEA, with support from the Department of Defense and the Department of State, has developed the specialized units of the CNP-A, through training and mentoring, to be able – on their own – to investigate, arrest, and assist in the prosecution of high-level drug traffickers.

DEA was also instrumental in standing up the Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) currently staffed at 536 members. DEA is also assisting with the Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) and the Technical Investigative Unit (TIU) currently staffed at 77 members. An additional 159 civilian Afghan translators support the TIU.

In Pakistan, the DEA has entered into a letter of agreement with the Anti-Narcotics Force of Pakistan. This unit is composed of approximately 100 vetted personnel who have been selected to work with foreign law enforcement representatives based in Pakistan. DEA's relationship with the ANF/SIC is supported by the U.S. Department of State/Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement-Pakistan (DoS/INL-P).

Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Teams (FAST)

The DEA also supports Afghan counterparts with our FAST. The teams are comprised of ten special agents who have received specialized training by U.S. Special Forces. FAST rotates into Afghanistan every 120 days. FAST augments DEA's workforce and capabilities in Afghanistan and partners with the National Interdiction Unit to identify, target, disrupt, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations.

Special Operations Division (SOD)

DEA's Special Operations Division directly supports Afghan and Pakistani law enforcement activities, including SIU efforts directed against significant drug trafficking organizations. The Bilateral Investigations Unit, within SOD, works closely with the Kabul Country Office to leverage U.S. extraterritorial authorities against the most significant drug trafficking organizations in Afghanistan. SOD also assists DEA offices worldwide with case deconfliction, synchronization, and coordination. SOD supported investigations have led to the apprehension of several traffickers in Afghanistan, including Haji Juma Khan, who was reputedly Afghanistan's biggest drug kingpin, with ties to the Taliban and the leader of one of the largest drug trafficking organizations in the Central Asia region; Haji Bagcho, an Afghan heroin kingpin who was one of the first defendants ever extradited to the United States from Afghanistan; and Khan Mohammed, who intended to ship heroin to the United States and use profits from that trade to assist the Taliban. A dangerous narco-terrorist, Khan Mohammed would have used the profits to purchase rockets to attack American and coalition soldiers who were risking their lives to stabilize Afghanistan.

Looking Ahead

Moving forward, the scope of DEA's counterdrug operations in Afghanistan will be reduced consistent with U.S. military and coalition forces drawdown that supports field operations throughout Afghanistan, particularly in areas more prone to instability such as parts of Helmand and Kandahar.

As the U.S. military continues to drawdown forces in Afghanistan, the Kabul Country Office will more closely resemble a traditional DEA foreign office. We will remain close partners with the SIU and support operations by the NIU.

In Pakistan, DEA and our foreign partners have identified numerous heroin shipments departing from the Makran Coast of Pakistan and Iran destined for east Africa. These shipments, which usually involve hundreds of kilograms of heroin, enter Africa before being transported to their final destinations. In order to address this emerging threat, DEA initiated a containment strategy designed to stem the flow of heroin entering East Africa. As part of this strategy, DEA sought

and received approval to re-open an office in Karachi, Pakistan. Once fully operational we anticipate our office in Karachi will work closely with our office in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Special Operations Division to coordinate the disruption and interdiction of many of these heroin shipments.

Additionally, DEA offices in Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue to assist domestic DEA offices with bilateral investigations, collect and disseminate drug-related intelligence, and train and mentor foreign counterparts.

Lastly, the difficulty in securing the extradition of wanted criminals from either Afghanistan or Pakistan limits our ability to bring defendants to a U.S court of law. DEA has had past success in gaining legal custody of defendants on a case by case basis, and will continue to work with our host nation counterparts to see that justice is done.

Conclusion

DEA's continuing presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan is designed to preserve security gains made over the past decade and to continue to fulfill our core mission of disrupting and dismantling the most significant drug trafficking organizations posing the greatest threat to the United States. DEA, through a strategic partnership with our host nation counterparts in the region, continues to disrupt and dismantle DTOs, contain the flow of drugs from Afghanistan, disassemble threat networks, and work with external partners to coordinate counternarcotics efforts in the region.

These efforts are an important aspect to long-term security, development, and good governance, but political will and the assistance of other countries in the region are critical to manifest and mobilize a well-coordinated, multilayered approach to this extremely complex issue.

The opium trade in Afghanistan is the single largest funding source for the insurgency and undermines economic development, erodes government legitimacy, and threatens stability and security of Afghanistan and the region. Afghan-led counternarcotics programs, reinforced with support from DEA and other international partners, play an important role in preserving the progress made over the past 13 years, while advancing Afghanistan's long-term security and strengthening institutions and governance.

In Pakistan we must continue to pursue a collaborative and productive relationship with the government. Cooperation and information-sharing with our counterparts continues to improve as we tackle a shared threat. Moving forward we will pursue a regional interdiction approach whereby we work with our international counterparts to further disrupt the insurgency-narcotics network.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and we look forward to working together with you on counternarcotics operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere.

Mr. CHABOT. And members will now have 5 minutes to ask questions, and I will begin with myself.

Mr. Blanc, I will begin with you. The Inter-Services Intelligence Directory, ISI, has come under intense scrutiny for its alleged ongoing links with and even material support for Islamic militant/terrorist groups operating in Pakistan, perhaps including the Haqqani network of Afghan insurgents.

What is your assessment of the security, intelligence and political roles played by the ISI? Does that organization play a double game with the United States as many assume is the case?

Mr. BLANC. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I think that what we have seen most recently in Pakistan with the North Waziristan operation is a real disruption of all insurgent and militant activity in Pakistan, including the Haqqani network.

Now, that is not to say and it remains the case that Afghan-focused militants continue to operate from Pakistani territory, and that is to the detriment of Afghan security. It is to the detriment of our security. It is to the detriment of Pakistan's security.

The Pakistani authorities, all Pakistani authorities, including intelligence authorities, military authorities, civilian authorities, have repeatedly said to us that they will prevent the reconstitution of these disrupted groups as their operations continue and conclude, and it is part of our continuing dialogue with Pakistan to make sure that that is the case.

So we are very focused on making sure that the disruption that we have seen over the last few months becomes a more permanent fact.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. That is a nice answer, but I am not sure if you answered my question, but I won't press you on that.

Let me turn to you on this, Mr. Soiles. I really believe that if the international community does not continue to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the economic development, stability, and rule of law assistance we have provided there all these years will become null and void.

You mentioned in your testimony that you will continue to pursue a collaborative and productive relationship with the Pakistani Government to support DEA efforts.

Can you discuss the state of your agency's relationship with the Pakistani Government and the extent of cooperation you receive from local law enforcement? Rampant corruption is known to be a huge problem in virtually every sector in Pakistan. So how does that affect your ability to interdict and shut down drug trafficking networks?

Mr. SOILES. Well, our relationship with Pakistan, as you all know, has been prickly, but——

Mr. CHABOT. Has been what?

Mr. SOILES. Prickly. Difficult.

Mr. CHABOT. Tricky. Okay.

Mr. SOILES. Yeah. But the DEA has always had a relationship with the anti-narcotics force of Pakistan. We have a vetted team that we use that we work with.

Recently we got authorization to open our office in Karachi. Of course, as you probably know 45 or 50 percent of the heroin pro-

duced in Afghanistan comes through Pakistan down to Karachi and then out the Makran Coast.

We are—that is part of our containment program. We have—we have worked really hard, not only with the Pakistanis, but with all Afghanistan's partners to build the capabilities to contain the flows going across the Afghan borders.

The Pakistanis are working hard with us to look at those organizations. We are working not only in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but in Central Asia, and also in East Africa where a lot of this stuff ends up on—on the Makran Coast and go down to East Africa and get off, flow into Tanzania and Kenya.

So we have a presence in these areas. We have vetted teams. We have established vetted teams, and we will continue to do that. The vetted teams give us an immediate capability to deal with the investigations that we need and deal with the problem, but it also has a long-term institution-building, capacity-building capability.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

I have only got about a minute to ask my question and get a response. Let me come back to you, if I can, Mr. Blanc, on a different question.

GAO recommended in 2012 that the State Department direct the U.S. mission in Pakistan to enhance its counter-IED performance measures to cover the full range of U.S.-assisted efforts. I understand that this recommendation remains open.

Can you explain why there has been so little action on this and share with us what steps, if any, the State Department plans to take to address these recommendations that would serve to benefit U.S. soldiers and our allies in Afghanistan and development efforts in Pakistan as well?

I think we all know that that is one of the most dangerous things that we face in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and that is IEDs.

Mr. BLANC. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And, actually, there is a report out today from JIEDDO because this is the—the counter-IED effort goes across both of our missions and a number of military organizations.

And, if I may, I am just going to refer to some of the specifics in the report——

Mr. CHABOT. Okay.

Mr. BLANC [continuing]. Because, actually, there is some good news here.

So it is assessed that the actions of the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistan industry are steadily decreasing the amount of HME material necessary for IEDs available to the insurgency, increasing the cost of IED components, and forcing the insurgency to extend its supply line deeper in Pakistan, making it more vulnerable to, essentially, Pakistani efforts.

Information has become available that insurgent forces are having difficulty obtaining the IED precursors that used to be more easily available on the market, and the lack of availability is a likely link to the voluntary ban on the sales of some these materials in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by Pakistan's sole producer of one of the key precursors, Pakarab.

We will—we can submit the rest of this report to you for the record. Your staff probably already have it. But where this broadly

points is that the whole-of-government effort that we have undertaken with both Embassies with the Department of Defense I think is actually showing results on thecounter-IED effort.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

My time is expired. But if you could make the report available to the committee, we would appreciate that, and then all members would have access to it. And, as I say, my time is expired.

The gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. Cicilline, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding this important hearing.

And thank you to the witnesses for being here.

I would like to begin, Mr. Blanc or Mr. Sampler, when you consider the level of funding in foreign assistance that has been provided to Afghanistan and the expectation that they will continue to rely on foreign assistance for at least the next decade, what are the plans that the new Government—this new coalition Government has developed, if any, to really begin to build an economy in Afghanistan that might ultimately be able to actually provide goods and services that the Afghan people require? And what is the likely timeline for this—the country to wean itself from almost total subsistence from foreign aid?

Mr. SAMPLER. I will begin, Congressman. Thank you for the question.

The new Government is still establishing itself. I came just this past week from London, where President Ghani and CEO Abdullah presented their aspirations. We have the benefit in Afghanistan now of having a President who is himself a well-known international economist of developmental countries.

Dr. Ghani wrote the book, "Fixing Failed States," which literally addresses how to do these things in a very measured and predictable and deliberate way. Now, taking his academic aspirations and translating them into operational reality is the challenge that he faces.

I will give you a very small example, though, that gives me reason for optimism. In Afghanistan, they realized back in 2006 that they needed to have an electric power utility, not unlike Duke Power or Georgia Power, and they created DABS, which is the Afghan power utility. At the time, it received subsidies from the government of around $50 million a year to become functional.

I am pleased to say that, with USAID support and other donor support, DABS is now actually turning a profit. It is actually regarded in the region as one of the more well-managed power utilities.

So if Dr. Ghani can identify the kind of talent that he has found in DABS and if he can replicate that kind of competence in the ministries of Afghanistan, I think there is reason for optimism.

Mr. CICILLINE. But do we have—have we developed specific measurements and timelines so that we can be certain that these kinds of improvements in governance and anti-corruption efforts actually happen?

I mean, is that a condition of our assistance or at least an implicit expectation that we are measuring that we have some delineated outcomes that we expect over a certain period of time?

Mr. SAMPLER. At the tactical level, it is. And what I mean by that is, in each of the ministries in which we work, we have very specific metrics for what we expect that ministry to develop.

You have to remember that 10 years ago they were not a literate society; so, it literally began with teaching some of these staff to read and to operate computers.

But in each of the ministries, we make sure that they have the prerequisite requirements to manage funds before they do, and that is, in effect, building this government and building the institutions from the ground up.

In terms of timelines, that would be irresponsible of me to suggest. I think you are right to say it will be measured in 5-year increments or decades. It will not be quick.

But President Ghani has said publicly one of his primary goals is to build an economy that will allow government revenues to grow and allow him to wean his government off of international subsidies as quick as——

Mr. CICILLINE. I think what would facilitate that progress is for us to be setting those expectations as a condition of our support and assistance.

I think what is irresponsible is for us to continue to spend unlimited amounts of money on an effort without some clear expectation of what we expect the Afghan people to do.

And I have been very critical of our failure to really demand that the Afghan people take responsibility for their governance and their security and really begin to take on those responsibilities.

But I just have a minute left. So I want to turn to you, Mr. Soiles, for a moment on the question of the illicit drug trade.

As you said in your testimony, Afghanistan is responsible for 90 percent of the world's opium, and despite the fact that we have spent $7.8 billion in counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan since 2002, Afghanistan has, in fact, produced an all-time high—record-high amount of opium.

And it really calls into question—if they are going to build an economy, it is going to require that there be—it be replacing this opium economy, and it doesn't seem like we are having great success with record-high production and a huge expenditure of American taxpayer dollars.

What can you recommend that we do differently or better to produce better results?

Mr. SOILES. We are—the Drug Enforcement Administration is an investigative agency. We are not eradicators, but eradication would be an important issue. But that causes other issues that our USAID and our State Department people could—are more adept at explaining.

The reality is you got to have—we have to have a counternarcotics capability in that country. The reality is, when we first went in in 2002—and DEA did go in there in 2002—there was no one. There was no institution at all.

And, as a result, we have had to build the institutions from ground up, everything, the buildings and—along with our interagency partners, because it was—it was State and DOD and USAID. It was a real U.S. interagency effort to try to build those

institutions so they can actually perform the duties that they were given.

We had to establish their legal systems. We had to establish the judicial process in Afghanistan. We have done that. And it is working. It is working.

Mr. CICILLINE. Except it is not working. I mean, this is one of the challenges I think we face when we try to build countries and those kinds of institutions. They are producing opium at the highest rate that they have ever, and we have expended, you know, billions—$7.8 billion since 2002.

And it just strikes me that it is—I am not assigning blame to this, but it strikes me that it demonstrates the futility or the almost near impossibility of taking on the responsibility of building another country from the ground up, that that responsibility ultimately has to rest with the Afghan people.

And we have now been at it for 13 years, and it calls into question how much more lives and Treasury should invest in this effort.

And, with that, I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Thank you very much, Mr. Cicilline.

And now Mr. DeSantis from Florida.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

The President exchanged five very high-ranking Taliban detainees, very lethal terrorists, in exchange for the Bowe Bergdahl trade. The assurances were that they would be in Qatar and be monitored.

So what have those detainees been doing in Qatar since they have been transferred there?

Mr. BLANC. Congressman, thank you for the question.

There are limits, of course, to precisely what I can say in this forum. You are exactly right to——

Mr. DESANTIS. Can you say, though, that—without going into detail, that you—we are in a situation where we can monitor them so that they are not reengaging in terrorist activity?

Mr. BLANC. Yes, sir.

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay.

Mr. BLANC. And I would actually like to further add to that that the Qataris have been scrupulous in their adherence to the terms and conditions of their agreement with us.

Mr. DESANTIS. President Obama has reportedly changed the rules of engagement for the remaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan so that now troops will be allowed to carry out combat missions instead of the initially reported train-and-advise role.

What are the rules of engagement for U.S. Troops and personnel in Afghanistan.

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I would defer to the Department of Defense to describe the rules of engagement in particular.

The announcement that you are referring to regards the missions of the troops. While it is true that we have—we have moved from—or are moving from a combat mission to a train, advise, and assist mission, there, of course, have always been things the troops are going to be able to do, including continued counterterrorism missions in conjunction with the Government of Afghanistan, our own force protection requirements, and a new thing that the President

has announced, which is that, in certain extreme situations, we will be able to provide support to the Afghan National Security Forces as they are conducting their own operations.

Mr. DESANTIS. So if we want to get the actual rules of engagement, are those—I understand the DOD is the one that promulgates them.

Are those classified? Do you know?

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I am sorry. I actually don't know the answer to that question.

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay. What is the impact of the 24 elections in—2014 elections—excuse me—in India have had on India and Pakistan relations, specifically with regard to the conflict in Kashmir? And do you think that the 2014 elections has had a noticeable effect on India-Pakistan relations?

Mr. BLANC. Well, sir, I will be careful in what I say about India because my colleagues from the Bureau of South and Central Asia, which is responsible, are not here with me today.

What I will say is that the elections in both Pakistan a year ago and then in India this year do create a window of opportunity with new Governments, both with strong mandates.

And to some extent, we have seen some hopeful signs from both sides, including Prime Minister Modi's invitation for Prime Minister Sharif to attend his inauguration, an invitation which Prime Minister Sharif took up.

We would like to see more focused improvement along the line of control in other areas of the conflict. We would like to see more focus on building some of the trade links which we think are essential for both countries and essential for the region. But there have been at least some positive indications since those two elections.

Mr. DESANTIS. My constituents will say, "Man, India"—or "Pakistan and Afghanistan, what is going on over there? Why do we even need to be worried about it?"

And one thing I will always say is, "Well, Pakistan has nuclear weapons and, in a very dangerous part of the world, those in the wrong hands could be catastrophic."

So what efforts is the administration pursuing to influence Pakistan to cooperate on nuclear nonproliferation and security in the region?

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I think you have put your finger exactly on it, that it is a complicated relationship with Pakistan, but one that for a number of reasons is vital for our national security interests.

And those interests, including nuclear weapons and assets, including the safe haven that some militants have found, those are the center of our dialogue with Pakistan.

And so it is what drives every conversation that we have. It is what drives the strategic dialogue that the Secretary of State has with his counterparts in Pakistan. And that will continue to be structuring our engagement with Pakistan moving forward.

Mr. DESANTIS. My final question is—I think we have learned some lessons in Iraq, well, from the beginning, but particularly over the last several years.

Is the administration looking at Iraq and saying, "Okay. In Afghanistan, if we withdraw too soon, that could create a situation in which jihadists will be able to gain more territory"?

You know, we are having to now put more troops back into Iraq and we are much more engaged there than we were 2 years ago. Is there a similar danger in Afghanistan?

I know the mission end date has changed a little bit, but I still think the President's goal is to really radically withdraw. If that happens, are we going to just leave behind another Jihadistan?

Mr. BLANC. Sir, you know, as far as withdrawing lessons from different operations, I can only tell you my perspective as part of this discussion. And I served in both Afghanistan and Iraq for a number of years and have always believed that the comparisons drawn between the two countries are misleading guides to policy-making, that there are tremendous differences between the two countries.

There differences between the way the politicians in the two countries have come together or not come together. There are differences in the way that the Afghan——

Mr. DESANTIS. And I agree with that. My time is almost up.

So I agree with that 100 percent. But what would you say in terms of—Is there a danger that, as the U.S. presence wanes, that terrorism and jihadist groups are able capitalize on that?

Mr. BLANC. I think that we need to be very focused on filling in the gaps that the Afghan National Security Forces still has so that they are able to take responsibility—fuller responsibility for security across their country and make sure that Afghanistan does not again become an international threat.

And I believe that we are on track doing exactly that, that the Afghan Security Forces, since taking lead responsibility across the country in June 2013, have done a good job despite very forceful efforts on the Taliban to disrupt them.

And, actually, I would just like to underline this. I think it is often missed. The Afghan National Security Forces took lead responsibility across the whole country in June 2013. That was really the transition point.

And the fact that there hasn't been the sort of catastrophic effect that some people might have feared I think is an indication that the strategy of standing the Afghan forces up and helping them fight their own fight is working.

Mr. DESANTIS. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. DeSantis.

Dr. Bera is recognized, even though I have the esteemed and much revered colleague Mr. Connolly breathing down my neck next to me——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Who once worked in the Senate.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. Who once worked in the Senate as a staffer.

Dr. Bera, you are recognized

Mr. BERA. Well, I appreciate my esteemed colleague from Virginia deferring to me.

The political complexity of South Asia, the political complexity of the interrelations between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, you know, are not easy. You know, when we were there 1½ years ago, you know, my impression when we met with President Karzai was, in many ways, he did not make it any easier, playing one country out against the other.

Perhaps, Mr. Sampler, with the new administration in Afghanistan, have you seen a shift in how Afghanistan is interacting both with India and Pakistan and how that administration is engaging?

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes. Certainly. I will begin and then yield to Jarrett from the State Department for the diplomatic level.

But, you know, India is the fifth largest donor in Afghanistan. And in that regard, they have done remarkable things for the Afghans, and particularly for Afghan women in some cases.

Allowing Afghan women, for example, to travel out of the country is a challenge. But if they are going to a place like India, where many of their family and relatives have been before, they are allowed to go.

And so India has taken it upon themselves to train Afghan women in some basic life skills and confidence-building skills and then in some vocational training skills that allow them to work from their homes.

Similarly, at a more—at a higher level, they have—USAID has worked with the Government of India to host a number of bilateral business development conferences where Afghan businessmen have gone to India.

Specific to your question, President Ghani has thus far—and it is very early days—been very adept at talking about the importance of a regional approach to solving the problems and not two separate bilateral approaches, and I think the steps we have seen on the development front have been very sensitive to that.

But I will yield on the diplomatic front to Mr. Blanc.

Mr. BLANC. I think, you know, Larry has done a terrific job of laying out the need for economic integration and the critical role that India, in particular, can play in Afghanistan in that respect.

Looking more to the political and the diplomatic issues, it is clear that regional diplomacy is one of the President of Afghanistan's most important and hardest jobs, and President Ghani has really grabbed hold of it in his first 65 or 70 days in office.

He has visited Saudi Arabia. He has visited China. He has visited Pakistan. He has welcomed key Pakistani leaders to Afghanistan. And I think he has struck a new tone in terms of trying to find ways to cooperate bilaterally with these key countries, but also as a regional grouping.

And it is early days yet, obviously. There is a lot of work for him to do. There is a lot of reciprocation from these partners to do. But I think he has approached it in a very open and intelligent way.

Mr. BERA. I would imagine, as we go into this transition phase in 2015, you know, in conversations with Indian multi-national companies and others that have made significant investments in Afghanistan, one of their major concerns obviously is the security climate there.

And, you know, as the ANSF, you know, gains further capabilities, I think one thing we can certainly do to continue to encourage investment in Afghanistan infrastructure and a favorable investment environment is to continue to offer some of that—at least security training and security confidence.

You know, shifting gears to Mr. Soiles, it does—it appears to me that the narcotics trade and narcotics trafficking go hand in hand

with counterterrorism. That would be an accurate assessment and——

Mr. SOILES. Absolutely. The UNODC's recent study suggests that 50 percent of the Taliban revenues come from the trafficking of narcotics.

Mr. BERA. So if we are looking at other situations where we can kind of—you know, let's take Colombia, for instance, where I would imagine we encountered a very similar situation.

Are there lessons to be learned from how we approached Colombia and our engagement there that we can apply to Afghanistan?

Mr. SOILES. Absolutely. But Colombia was a lot more progressed as a nation than Afghanistan was. They didn't have decades of internal strife. I mean, the whole country was devastated because of the internal stuff that was going on in Afghanistan. But yes.

In fact, we used the model of Colombia in a lot of ways to see what was needed in order to build the kind of narcotics forces of Afghanistan, and we—not only Afghanistan, but in some of the neighboring countries, for instance, some of the central Asian countries that we are dealing with to try again to stem the flow of the narcotics that are going out.

Mr. BERA. Right. And one last question.

One of the big successes in Afghanistan, perhaps for you, Mr. Sampler, is that we have educated a decade of girls, and those are real gains. Yet, one of my concerns is, as we start to transition out, how do we hold on to those gains and, you know, empower this generation of girls that are now becoming women in leadership? And I would be curious about your perspective.

Mr. SAMPLER. And that is one of the core interests of USAID, is making stable and advancing the gains for women and girls thus far.

One of the best metrics for the success we have had in educating women and girls over the preceding 12 years is that there are now roughly 40,000 girls who have enrolled in universities in Afghanistan and others who have enrolled in the regions. We have various scholarship programs and various incentive programs to keep them engaged.

There is a tension in Afghanistan, though. Families choose to marry their daughters and—not even prematurely, but choose to see young women married as opposed to entering professional circles. So we are working to create opportunities and set-asides for women in some of these circles.

We have, as you may be aware, a $400-million program which we are funding to the level of $200 million over 5 years called "Promote," and it is specifically focused on women from the age of 18 to 30 who have taken advantage of at least their primary education. We can assist them with secondary education, vocational training, and then placement in either the private sector, in government, or in civil society.

So we are looking to seize and make permanent those gains to achieve sort of a tipping point that women can't be set back from.

Mr. BERA. Right. Thank you.

And I will yield back.

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

The chair recognizes herself. And I apologize to the witnesses if the questions that I am going to be asking have been already asked. I was in another—some other few meetings. So I thank you. I read your testimony.

So I'll start with Mr. Blanc.

In testimony before our Middle East and North Africa subcommittee last month, former CIA Director Michael Hayden posed a scenario of what he said, "A Pakistani nuclear guarantee for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the face of Iranian nuclear weapons programs."

Do you think that Pakistan would sell Saudi Arabia a nuclear weapon? What can you tell us about their nuclear cooperation? Where would other players in the region acquire the technology for it? We know that—we have heard reports that other countries in the region as well might be interested.

And, Mr. Sampler, during a previous hearing with SIGAR and GAO, we discussed the fact that State and USAID were moving to give Afghanistan more and more in direct assistance, and this was despite warnings from these agencies that the Afghans were not remotely capable of handling the massive amounts of assistance and that the Afghan leaders lacked a system to manage the endemic corruption.

Now, you testified that USAID has, with regard to direct assistance, "put in place stringent measures to safeguard taxpayer funds."

And so I will ask you: Are these stringent measures the same recommendations that SIGAR recommended before USAID started providing direct assistance? And how much money are we providing in direct assistance in dollar amounts? And what is that in terms of percentages of what we are providing in total?

Also, what steps have State Department and USAID taken to mitigate the risks of providing direct assistance that GAO and SIGAR highlighted?

And, lastly, have State and USAID addressed all of the recommendations of these agencies? And which ones have yet to be recommended and why? Because I know it is a long list that they had.

And, lastly, sir, Mr. Soiles, in your testimony, you describe the connection between drug trafficking and terrorist financing in and outside the country.

Can you elaborate on the fact that 24 Afghan and 15 Pakistani individuals have been designated by OFAC under the Kingpin Act. Will we see more of that? Less of that? Is that about average?

And what does this tell us about the scope of drug trafficking in the region and the threat posed by the nexus between terror and drug trafficking?

So, Mr. Blanc, we will begin with you. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BLANC. Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is, of course, true that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have important and deep ties. I have seen no indication of the scenario that you have described. And we would——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You have seen what, now?

Mr. BLANC. I have seen no indication of the——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No indication.

Mr. BLANC. And we would look very negatively on any indication of proliferation of any kind, including that. Certainly a large part of our national security dialogue with Pakistan is focused on nonproliferation issues.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Did I select the wrong country? Would there be such collaboration between Pakistan and some other country or Saudi Arabia and some other country?

Mr. BLANC. Ma'am, Saudi Arabia I couldn't speak to. But, no, we are not—we are not seeing ongoing proliferation concerns of that nature. And within the limits of what we can discuss here, I would just say that we are—nonproliferation is an important part of our dialogue with Pakistan.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. So you feel fairly confident that, were these other countries to acquire the technology, the material, et cetera, it would not be provided by Pakistan?

Mr. BLANC. We—I haven't seen indications of that scenario. And we are very focused in our dialogue with Pakistan on keeping them away from any kind of proliferation of that or any other nature.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And would you—was our intelligence good enough during the A.Q. Khan era that you would have also had indications that something was happening?

Mr. BLANC. Ma'am, that was before my time in this office and, I imagine, probably something that we couldn't discuss in this forum in any case.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Sampler.

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes, ma'am. I will try to address your questions in the order I remember them and, if I miss some, please—I will go back.

With respect to on-budget support, we have about——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Sampler, could I just ask you to bring this closer to you. I am sorry.

Mr. SAMPLER. Certainly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The acoustics are not good here.

Mr. SAMPLER. Certainly. Is this better?

With respect to on-budget support, $2.4 billion of the $21 billion that we have been appropriated has been shared with the Afghans to what we call on-budget support.

I don't use the phrase "direct support" because, in development circles, that typically means money given carte blanche to a government, and we don't do that.

On-budget support is a very specific mechanism that we use with a particular office or ministry, and it is very tightly controlled.

So to answer your question, about 11 percent of the money that we have spent in Afghanistan has been spent in this on-budget mechanism. It is a mechanism that, from a development perspective, we quite like because it builds government capacity.

But it is one from a fiduciary accountability perspective that we don't trust because it means that we are putting more of our faith in the local government.

So to the second point, then, of SIGAR's recommendations for how we account for and how we control this on-budget support, they made 18 recommendations, and I am—17 of the 18 we either already were or are now implementing.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. So out of the 18, 17 have already been put in place or will be put in place?

Mr. SAMPLER. Have already been put in place.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Have already been put in place.

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes, ma'am.

And then with respect to the discussion about the——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. What is that last one?

Mr. SAMPLER. I don't know. I was afraid you would ask that, but I am happy to find out.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No. Don't worry about it.

Mr. SAMPLER. With respect to the broader question of safeguards in these ministries, we don't give money to the Government of Afghanistan. We give money to particular ministries or offices. And we only do that after they meet a very exhaustive list of preconditions.

And, in fact, we embed in that ministry what is typically called a grants and contract management unit, and these are people who work for us on our payroll, but are embedded in the ministry to oversee this ministry as they build their capacity.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Are they American citizens?

Mr. SAMPLER. No, ma'am. Typically not.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Typically not.

But they work——

Mr. SAMPLER. They work for us and under our supervision.

And they are qualified to international standards. If they are an accountant, they are an internationally certified accountant. If they are a bookkeeper, they meet international standards for bookkeeping. And they don't work for the ministry, but they work in the ministry alongside the ministerial team.

Their roles are twofold. Primarily, they are there for our accountability. But, secondarily, they are there for mentoring and to help this Government as they build these institutions' capacity.

I will stop there. And if there is something I missed, I am happy to go back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No. Thank you so much.

Mr. Soiles.

Mr. SOILES. The OFAC Kingpin Designation Act, which was passed in 1999—since that time, we have had about 3,500 designations on kingpins. And it is a drug—it is a Treasury action against drug traffickers—international drug traffickers.

And, basically, what it does——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. How many total did you say, sir?

Mr. SOILES. Since 1999, 3,500.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But that is throughout the world?

Mr. SOILES. Yes. Throughout the world. Throughout the world.

And it is an interagency process that you—you appoint someone and it has to go through a review process in order to become OFAC or Kingpin.

Obviously, when we first started the process in 1999, our threat was Colombia, Mexico, Western Hemisphere, and it is geared toward looking at—initially, it was geared at looking at traffickers out of that region, out of this—the Western Hemisphere. And a lot of their assets were in the United States. So, the process actually freezes their assets.

As it went global because of the—how drugs became global, we have used it around the world. But, more importantly, by designating the Afghan-Pak, what we do is we use it with our foreign counterparts, our partners, to say, "These people are drug traffickers. If they have assets in your country, you should be looking at it," and we can provide the assistance in order for them to freeze those assets. Okay. So that is the first part of your question.

The second part of your question is the drug terror nexus and how does it work. As I stated earlier, 50 percent—according to UNODC, 50 percent of the Taliban funding comes from drug trafficking.

We have seen not only in Afghanistan, but in other areas of the world—the FARC down in Colombia and other places of the world, where the terrorist organization starts off basically taxing the farmers. That is what happened in Afghanistan. They taxed the farmers.

But they have progressed beyond taxing the farmers. They provide security to the labs. They do transportation. They are involved in actual moving roles just like the FARC did, the FARC being one of the largest drug-trafficking organizations in the world. That is what has happened—what happened in Afghanistan.

The real problem with all that, of course, you know, the terrorists have funding to do their operations. But in addition to that, a collateral bene—or problem comes where they use the money to corrupt various governments along the routes. And that we have seen, too. Forget the corruption in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but even in Central Asia. We have seen it in the Balkans. We have seen it in Africa.

And all—a lot of these countries that are—experience the threat as the drugs move out of Afghanistan and through these territories are developing democracies. So they don't need another problem.

So—and, ultimately, what happens is, if they corrupt the governments, then they have a weak—weak institutions and it gives the terrorist organization safe havens. And that is the real threat.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. It is a real threat.

Now, of these 24 and 15—24 Afghans, 15 Pakistani, is that the largest number that we have ever had? When were—when were those designated as kingpins? And how has the level of cooperation changed with the new Government in place in Afghanistan?

Mr. SOILES. They are designated over time. As investigations are developed and we can identify our organization and a network, we designate them along the way. Of course, it is an interagency process and it takes time to do. So those are over time.

Now, also, part of the process is, at some point, if they are not a threat, they get removed from the list. So—but the 24 and 15 have been there for awhile. We are working with the Afghans on the targets. The Afghans have initiated a financial investigative team that we are mentoring, that we are working closely with together.

The new President has—has stated openly and publicly that counternarcotics is a priority for his administration. He has taken steps. We have seen significant steps for him—showing that it is a priority for him, and we will continue working with the new—with the new administration.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Let's hope so. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Yes, Mr. Blanc.

Mr. BLANC. Ma'am, if I could just add one thing to that, which is that, again, it is very early in President Ghani's administration.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Blanc, you have got to pull that closer to you, too, please.

Mr. BLANC. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Mr. BLANC. It is very early in President Ghani's administration. But one of the things that he did in literally his first weeks of office was to remedy some failings in their anti-money laundering law in order to address concerns raised by the Financial Action Task Force, or FATF.

And that, of course, relates to the counternarcotics issue. It relates to the counterterrorism issue. And I think it is—again, it is an indication that this Government is taking very seriously some of our shared concerns.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, gentlemen.

And now my good friend, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Chairman, if I may, I would like to give my colleague from Maryland the opportunity to ask his questions if he—he is on a tight schedule.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Absolutely.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And then I would reclaim my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Delaney is recognized.

Mr. DELANEY. I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia for giving me the opportunity.

And I want to thank the chair and the ranking member for allowing me to sit in and participate in this important hearing about two countries that will obviously be very important for our national security for a long time.

The reason I was particularly focused on sitting in on this hearing is because one of my constituents is a gentleman named Warren Weinstein, who was captured in Pakistan over 3½ years ago.

And, as Mr. Sampler probably knows, he was a contractor for USAID at the time and has had a long career—he is 72 years old at this point. He has had a long career working for the Peace Corps and for USAID and for helping people around the world on behalf of our Government. And he has been over there for 3½ years now, and we know he is being held by al-Qaeda.

And so my question for you, Mr. Blanc, is: In your opinion, is the Government of Pakistan, its civilian and military leadership, cooperating with us to the full extent possible in our efforts to try to secure Warren Weinstein's release back to the United States?

Mr. BLANC. Thank you very much for that question, Congressman.

Our hearts go out to Dr. Weinstein and to his family. I think it is a measure of the nihilism of his captors that they would hold somebody who is so dedicated to the welfare of the people of Pakistan.

We are cooperating with the Government of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan is cooperating with us in this investigation. As you know, there is a terrible kidnapping problem in Pakistan——

Mr. DELANEY. Yes.

Mr. BLANC [continuing]. That affects Pakistanis as well.

There is always more that we can do. There is always more that they can do. But, yes, we are cooperating.

Mr. DELANEY. But, in your opinion, are they—for example, if we want to interview individuals that they have detained as part of their police processes that are familiar with Mr. Weinstein's kidnapping, are we provided unfettered access, in your opinion, to these kind of resources?

Mr. BLANC. We have been getting access in those cases. Yes, sir.

Mr. DELANEY. Are we conditioning various assistants we provide to the Government, whether it be civilian and defense assistants, on full and complete cooperation as it relates to not only Mr. Weinstein's situation, but, obviously, other hostages that may, unfortunately, be held in the region?

Mr. BLANC. I think that we look at our assistance, both civilian and military, in Pakistan as, really, an investment that we are making in our own national security.

So while we wouldn't—we don't and wouldn't want to specifically condition pockets for specific actions, we want to be able to look at that leverage and use it to best improve our relationship with Pakistan and the assistance they provide us.

I think again, in this case, we really are getting cooperation out of them and—within the confines of their abilities because, again, they face a very serious problem of their own.

Mr. DELANEY. Right.

And I understand how we can condition our aid on the release of hostages like Warren because they may—you know, at least their representations to us is they don't know where he is.

And, as you have said, many—there is many even high-ranking—children of high-ranking Government officials in the country who have been kidnapped.

But it seems to me information that is completely under their Government's or military's or police control, there should be no hesitancy about providing us with complete and, as I said, unfettered access to that information.

And I guess my question is: Why is it not a condition to the cooperation that we provide? Again, I understand why certain things can't be a condition because it is out of their control.

But access to information, intelligence they may have about a specific American who is captured and left behind over there, it would seem to me that is the low-hanging fruit of things we can use our significant leverage to obtain.

Mr. BLANC. And, again, I guess the most important answer I would give to this question is that we are cooperating with the Government of Pakistan and they are cooperating with us, including on access to detainees and other issues.

Mr. DELANEY. Just a separate question: Do you believe—you know, because we have a broader issue with respect to Americans that have been kidnapped in the region and, quite frankly, other parts of world.

Do you believe the coordination—because the United States Government in a whole variety of ways provides assistance to countries all over the world and, in my opinion, why we have—while we obviously have a policy against negotiating with terrorists for the release of Americans, which is a policy I obviously support, we have many partners around the world who can help us in finding and identifying and locating and securing the release of Americans.

Do you think that we are coordinated enough as a Government and have made this a big enough priority? For example, should we have a hostage czar who is looking at every touchpoint that the United States has with partner nations around the world who might have information that are useful to us to get these people home? In your experience, what is your answer to that question?

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I would be reluctant to comment on that particular proposal partially just because I haven't thought it through.

I have been very involved in the hostage cases that we have addressed in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and what I would say is that they certainly—again, going back to the premise that we can always do more, these cases have received a tremendous amount of attention at the highest levels and I think have been the focus of creative diplomacy and thoughtful efforts to find the leverage that we can and use it to—to secure the freedom of these individuals.

Mr. DELANEY. With the chair's permission, one more question.

Is there anything that this Congress can do to put in place a system so that the resources and leverage the United States Government has is used more fully to help identify—we will stay with Warren Weinstein, for example—to help find where he is and bring him home?

Mr. BLANC. I am grateful for that question.

I don't—it is not something I can pull off the top of my head. But, with your permission, I would like to take that back to our counterterrorism teams and come back to you with a considered answer.

Mr. DELANEY. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much for making such a valuable contribution to this debate. Thank you.

Mr. DELANEY. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. It is a terrible situation.

Mr. Perry is recognized.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Gentlemen, thank you for your time today.

Mr. Blanc, the question will be related to you.

But, first, you know, although December 8, 2014, marked the official end to the U.S. and NATO combat mission in Afghanistan, the violence and threats to U.S. interests in the region are certainly far from over.

As a matter of fact, as I understand it, 2014 is the bloodiest year in Afghanistan since 2001 and, to date, the administration reportedly has not altered its post-2016 troop planning for Afghanistan, asserting that only successful Afghan governance can keep Afghanistan stable over the long term.

Now, I am concerned that, similar to the power backing that allowed ISIL's rise in Iraq, the Taliban is waiting to reclaim lost ter-

ritory and establish another safe haven for terrorists to thrive in Afghanistan.

So, with that, is this administration willing to be flexible? And can you give any assertions in that regard with planned American troop levels in Afghanistan after 2016?

Mr. BLANC. Congressman, thank you for the question.

We are operating along the plan the President announced, which is precisely as you have outlined it, and our view is that that plan is working, that the Afghan National Security Forces, which hardly existed 6 years ago, have been in lead responsibility for the security of their country since June 2013, and despite the extremely violent efforts of the Taliban insurgent groups against those forces, despite the need to protect two rounds of Presidential elections, despite the need to protect the loya jirga to confirm the BSA last year, the Afghan National Security Forces have held.

And so what we think is necessary for our national security is to continue to fill in some of the gaps and needs that the Afghan National Security Forces have—that is the train, advise, assist mission—so that they can—they can continue to take the last bits of responsibility that we have essentially already given them over the course——

Mr. PERRY. But if there are setbacks in the successes that you have enumerated that requires a more robust effort, a little bit of a longer stay as opposed to a date-based withdrawal, is this administration—are you able to say now, without equivocation, that the administration is flexible enough to change its policy based on troop and basing levels?

Mr. BLANC. You know, I think I can point to some flexibility that the administration is showing, for example, in moving from a 9,800-troop level for the end of this year to a 10,800-troop level in response to specific requirements. And I think it is clear the President stays in very close touch with his commanders and will continue to do so.

That said, I think everything that we see confirms our confidence in the plan that we are on to have a more normalized security relationship with Afghanistan with them leading the fight in their own country in 2017.

Mr. PERRY. With all due respect—and I hope you are right—but from many Americans' views and certainly partially mine, that—the flexibility that we have seen recently in the administration is more borne out of events in Iraq than events and facts on the ground in Afghanistan.

Be that as it may, the flexibility is there. But I would like to get some kind of confidence and an answer that says that that flexibility will remain regarding Afghanistan, specifically notwithstanding other events in the world that might politically make it more plausible, more agreeable, to do what needs to be done based on the facts.

Let me ask you this: Post-2016, can you give us any indication of what metrics will be used to determine the size of a residual force?

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I would have to defer that to the Department of Defense that has been working on plans for a security assistance office in Afghanistan.

Mr. PERRY. So does that mean that there will be no political component to assessing troop strength size in Afghanistan?

Mr. BLANC. I think that, of course, there is a political component. The conflict is political. And so we will have a discussion about what the requirements are, which is essentially a political discussion.

But in terms of planning for what the numbers would be and what that more normalized security relationship requires in terms of people to oversee assistance and other factors, I think there are—we have—we have planning experts, and DOD will be much better suited to answer those questions.

Mr. PERRY. I would agree with you.

And I would just urge the State Department and the administration to take the advice of the military planners in this regard based on the facts as opposed to the political considerations, not the ones in Afghanistan as—or the ones in Afghanistan more than the ones in this country that—that might call for a hasty withdrawal based on the considerations of what somebody's campaign speeches might have been or political narrative might have been to secure the gains that many American lives and Treasury have spent to retain.

Appreciate your time.

And I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Excellent point. Thank you, Mr. Perry.

Mr. Connolly.

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

Before I begin, Mr. Soiles, what part of New England are you from?

Mr. SOILES. From Massachusetts.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Where?

Mr. SOILES. Lowell, Mass.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Lowell. Oh, my God. All right. I had a primary opponent from Lowell.

Mr. SOILES. I thought I lost the accent.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Oh. You lost the accent. He said "Colombier," he says "oughta," and he thinks he lost the accent. But thank God you probably still root for the Red Sox.

Mr. SOILES. Oh, absolutely.

Mr. CONNOLLY. God bless you. All right.

Put my time back to 5, please.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes. Move it back.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I want to ask about efficacy because I think, really, that is what all of us ought to be concerned about in Iraq and Afghanistan, holding in abeyance Pakistan.

Mr. Blanc, for example, we spent apparently something like $61.5 billion in equipping, training, recruiting personnel for the Afghan National Security Forces.

Would you say that investment has been a successful investment?

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I think that the investment——

Mr. CONNOLLY. You need to speak directly into the mic. The acoustics in this room are really among the worst. I am sorry.

Mr. BLANC. I am very sorry, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. That is all right. That is great.

Mr. BLANC. I would say that our investment in the Afghan National Security Force is paying off and that, in particular, the investment that we have made really since 2008, 2009 is paying off, that, from a point, you know, at the beginning of this administration, where there hardly was an Afghan National Security Force, we are now at a point where, since June 2013, they have been in the lead in providing security across the country through some very difficult months and through some very challenging periods, including two rounds of Presidential elections.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would you say they are equipping themselves well against, for example, the Taliban?

Mr. BLANC. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And maybe we could agree, maybe not, in sharp contradistinction with the Iraqi Armed Forces that melted away in the face of ISIS.

Mr. BLANC. Sir, I haven't been to Iraq since 2005. And so I want to stay away from comparisons in which I am not an expert. But I will say——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, I am not an expert either, but I can read a newspaper. I can see the television.

I do understand that ISIS is now one of the best-equipped, best-financed terrorist groups on the planet because precisely of the comprehensive collapse of the Iraqi Armed Forces in the face of a military threat. And we paid for it.

We—remember history. We rebuilt the Iraqi military after Paul Bremmer took it apart. God knoweth why, but he did. So we rebuilt it to the tune of tens of billions of dollars.

Surely you could agree, based on what you know, not being an expert, and what I know, not being an expert, that that is hardly a success model.

Mr. BLANC. My colleagues in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs would probably be unhappy with me if I wade deeply into this.

What I will say is—as I said in response to Mr. DeSantis earlier, is that, from my experience in both Afghanistan and Iraq and having spent a couple of years in both, I think that the comparisons between the two are overdrawn and—and I think that the nature of the security forces is one place where the comparisons are overdrawn.

I certainly believe that the Afghan National Security Forces, having taken lead responsibility for security in their country in June 2013, have weathered a predictable, but very violent, storm and deserve a tremendous amount of praise and credit for that.

There are still areas where they need our support, and that is what the train, advise, assist mission is about. I think that, if we can finish that mission, we will redeem the investment that you have described and leave behind a security force that is able to secure its country and, therefore, provide critical security for the region in the world without our combat mission.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I hope you are right.

But, again, I began by saying my questions of all three of you are going to be about efficacy. And they are not—they are hard questions and they are not easy answers and, you know—but I think we, as a country, have to ask ourselves this. Was the invest-

ment—did it pay off? And when it doesn't, we have to be honest with each other that it didn't—it didn't work.

And maybe you are right that, with the military in Afghanistan, in contradistinction to a nearby place that you are not an expert on and I am not either, it is working. I hope you are right. I sure hope that $61 billion—it is working.

Mr. BLANC. And I want to let Larry make a very compelling case he is going to make about the tremendous gains that we have seen in Afghanistan from the civilian assistance.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The what?

Mr. BLANC. Tremendous gains we have seen in Afghanistan as a result of our civilian assistance.

But before—before he does, I just want to underscore that one of the things that is unique about our engagement in Afghanistan is that the planning for 9/11 took place in Afghanistan. We are engaged there because there was a threat from there, and our continued engagement there is inexorably linked with our national security.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am well aware of that. But we, of course, took our eye off the ball to invade Iraq that had nothing to do with 9/11. I am very well—very aware of the history.

Mr. BLANC. But on Afghanistan and the focus that I believe we have brought to Afghanistan since 2009, I think that standing up their security forces so that they can take over from us and be a provider rather than a consumer of international security—I think it is—we are on the right track and we are seeing signs of success.

Mr. CONNOLLY. All right. Well, we will hold you to it.

Before you answer a question you haven't been asked, let me ask you a question and then you can answer, including Mr. Blanc's lead in.

We had a hearing in June, this subcommittee, and we heard from Mr. Sopko, the SIGAR, and we heard from Mr. Johnson from GAO. And they actually testified they could not provide metrics for the percentage of funds that were well spent or wasted because—in Afghanistan because the raw numbers did not exist.

Is it your testimony that they are wrong, that, as a matter of fact, you have got metrics and you have got numbers that would demonstrate the efficacy of the domestic investments we have made in reconstruction and relief and civil engagement in Afghanistan?

Mr. Sampler.

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, it absolutely is. As the question is asked, it is a very simple answer.

We do have metrics for success. And I can start with a very concrete and appreciable on the ground kind of metrics all the way up to more strategic what we call developmental objectives that we are pursuing.

So I will answer that question first and then, with your permission, I will address Jarrett's question as well.

In Afghanistan, for example, with respect to health care——

Mr. CONNOLLY. If I may just for a second, Mr. Sampler.

If the chair will indulge us, this is, I think, the last hearing of the——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Sure.

Mr. CONNOLLY [continuing]. Of this Congress. At least I hope it is my last hearing of this Congress. And so if she will indulge us to allow Mr. Sampler to——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Please go right ahead. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. SAMPLER. I will be brief and I will let you ask followups, if you wish.

But with respect to health care, for example, an area in Afghanistan that is often raised and criticized because of the amounts of money invested, our efforts have helped raise the average life expectancy by 22 years in Afghanistan. So Afghans who would have died as they had children in elementary school can now live to see grandchildren.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Good metric.

But, Mr. Sampler, do you directly take issue with the testimony of the SIGAR that says, "I can't tell you how much money was wasted and I can't tell you how much money was well spent because we don't have the raw numbers in Afghanistan"? That was his testimony. And remember what his charge is. So be careful here.

Are you taking direct issue with the SIGAR?

Mr. SAMPLER. I have in the past. And I will. We certainly have the numbers, and we share all our data with SIGAR. If there are particular issues that he would like to explore, we are happy to share the information that we have.

There are times when the special Inspector General takes a different view of success than we do or he takes a different view of the risk of particular programs we are pursuing than we do. But we don't do programs that don't have metrics.

That is not something that I would come before Congress and defend or go before my boss, Dr. Shah, and defend. We do have metrics on all of our programs. And if—if we have been remiss in not sharing our numbers broadly enough, I am happy to address that.

If you would allow me to address——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, I would just say—and I know you want to go on, and I welcome it.

I would just say to you there is a profound difference between your testimony right here and now and what we heard in June—profound—and one is true or the other is true. They can't both be true.

I take your point that we have metrics, but some metrics are meaningless and some metrics are meaningful and—but he claims—and so did GAO, by the way; he backed it up—that, "Sorry. We don't have those. We can't have metrics. We can't even establish metrics. That is how bad it is. We can't account for billions of dollars in economic assistance to Afghanistan."

And you are here testifying that is not true, and you are wearing your AID hat asserting that. Is that correct?

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, I don't know the context under which they said that, but I will stand behind my assertion that we have metrics for the programs we perform in Afghanistan.

Mr. CONNOLLY. All right. You wanted to——

Mr. SAMPLER. Very briefly.

Several of the members raised the issue that 2014 has been the most violent year in Afghanistan of the last 5, and that is actually certainly true. Our numbers show attacks up 83 percent over the average of the previous 5 years. But I wanted to give you a customer's perspective of security in Afghanistan.

In the last 15 days, there were about 10 or 12 attacks just in the greater Kabul area alone. And I called some of my partners working on the ground in Afghanistan to make sure that they were—that they had what they needed to assure their own safety, and the partners made the following observation.

They said that the Government of Afghanistan doesn't control the number of incidents of violence that occur. The Taliban has a vote in that regard. And so they recognize that the number of incidents may not be immediately something the government can manage.

But two different partners spoke very highly of the professionalism of the police who had responded to attacks on their compounds and who had dealt with their Afghan staff and their international staff in what they described as a very competent and a very professional way.

So I would just propose for your consideration that, as we evaluate the Government of Afghanistan's ability to secure its population, we focus on their response to violent incidents more right now than on their ability to prevent them.

Preventing violence is maybe a graduate-level task that we expect them to eventually achieve, but right now I am thrilled to see, given my 12 years in Afghanistan, that the police in Afghanistan are someone someone—that they are partners welcome into their compounds as opposed to refuse to deal with.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Sampler. We will explore this in more depth. Thank you.

My final question, with the indulgence of the chair, has to do with the DEA and drugs.

Mr. Soiles, in the time we have been in Afghanistan, given our commitment to fighting poppy production and narcotics trafficking and cross-border transshipment of illicit drugs to Iran, what has happened in that time period is, I believe, Afghanistan is now the world's number 1 heroin-producing country and Iran is now the number 1 heroin addict-consuming country, despite us spending $7.8 billion in counternarcotics funding.

How—again, the efficacy question. So we feel pretty good about our investment and the payoff?

Mr. SOILES. The DEA part of that—the DEA part of that is a very small budget. I mean, our vetted teams there that we have that we have trained—we have 77 vetted members.

We have what we call the National Interdiction Unit, which is our kind of SWAT team types that go out and project out with our FAST teams into—outside of Kabul that—that is only about 530 members.

And then we have what we call the Technical Investigative Unit, which is our intercept program that we have there in order to go after the command-and-control structures of organizations.

You have to be able to intercept their communications. To intercept their communications, you need a—we have a judicial process in Afghanistan that we helped build and, as a result, we use that as evidence.

Those units have been very effective. We—we stood up this—the counternarcotics police of Afghanistan from scratch along with our partners from State and our partners from DOD. We have trainer training programs, and now they are training——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Soiles. Mr. Soiles. You are representing the United States Government here, too. I mean, yes, you are DEA and Mr. Blanc is State Department, where we have a narcotics matters bureau. Presumably, you are coordinating with all of the U.S. entities in a coordinated anti—you know, counternarcotic strategy for Afghanistan.

When I was in Afghanistan, I remember getting briefed by DEA and State Department and the Embassy and so forth in Kabul about what we were planning and what we were doing and the interdiction and all that good stuff.

But the fact of the matter is, I think, the narcotics trade—well, poppy production has grown, not decreased, and the narcotics trade has grown, not decreased, both in volume and in value.

So don't we have to ask ourselves that—you know, what—do we need to do something different. Because it doesn't seem to have worked.

And it is hardly like the United States didn't have a footprint in Afghanistan. I mean, the longest war in our history was in Afghanistan.

Mr. SOILES. True. Bottom line is we do. We ask that question every day.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And are we satisfied with the answer?

Mr. SOILES. We don't see an alternative other than to continue building the capabilities of the Afghans for them to have a sustainable ability to solve their own problem, and that is what we do.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Do you believe the current Afghan Government is committed to "solving their own problem" with respect to narcotics?

Mr. SOILES. I think the former government had a big issue of—not the guys—not the people that we work with, quite honestly, the rank and file counternarcotics police officers that we deal with, but I think there was some significant lack of political will from the former administration. With Ashraf Ghani in, the new President, when are hopeful.

Mr. CONNOLLY. All right.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am not sure I am satisfied with the answers about efficacy, but I am glad we had the hearing to explore it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. It is a good theme.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And I am glad that we had the hearing as well. I am glad that we had all of the hearings this session.

We thank you gentlemen for your service to our country. We know that this is a very troubling situation, the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We could be at this all day and all night

and not come up with the answers, but we thank you for what you are doing for our country.

Thank you. And with that, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:26 p.m., the subcommittees were adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

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

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

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

December 2, 2014

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held jointly by the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade and the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa in Room 2176 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Wednesday, December 10, 2014

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

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

WITNESSES: The Honorable Jarret Blanc
Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable Donald "Larry" Sampler Jr.
Assistant to the Administrator in the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs
USAID

Mr. James Soiles
Deputy Chief of Operations for the Office of Global Enforcement
Drug Enforcement Administration

By Direction of the Chairman

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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

Day *Wednesday* **Date** *11 December 2014* **Room** *2167*

Starting Time *2:00 PM* **Ending Time** *4:26PM*

Recesses [*0*] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen; Chairman Chabot

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan (Part III)

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Chabot, Raking Member Deutch, Reps. Bera, Cicilline, Conolly, Higgins, Kennedy, Meng, and Schneider.

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

Rep. Delaney

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

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

SFR - Rep. Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *4:26 PM*

Subcommittee Staff Director

Statement for the Record
Submitted by Mr. Connolly of Virginia

Our military and foreign assistance strategies in Afghanistan and Pakistan must reflect the reality that there cannot and will not be an overwhelming U.S. military presence in Afghanistan in perpetuity. Self-sufficiency in the areas of security and economic development must be our goals for Afghanistan. Domestic and foreign threats to Afghan stability and hindrances to effective reconstruction and relief initiatives should be considered direct threats to our mission and our personnel that do remain in country. We cannot be satisfied to trudge along in Afghanistan amassing an ever larger number on our ledger for investment, while ignoring the forces that actively undermine the effectiveness of U.S.-led assistance.

Indicative of the current self-defeating dynamic is that it is currently the policy in Afghanistan for the U.S. Army to exclude classified information when evaluating potential in-country participants in U.S. government contracts. In our haste to assign relief contracts today, we might be funding the opposition networks that will destroy those projects tomorrow.

There have been some positive developments in Afghanistan in the previous year on which we should hope to build. The first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history occurred when President Hamid Karzai handed the presidency to Ashraf Ghani, who then installed his campaign opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, as Afghanistan's chief executive officer. The following day, President Ghani completed the Bilateral Security Agreement with the U.S. and a Status of Forces Agreement with NATO which authorize 9,800 U.S. troops and at least 2,000 NATO troops to remain in Afghanistan after Dec. 31. While the U.S. has since augmented anticipated troop levels for next year with an additional 1,000 personnel, the plan remains to reduce troop levels to 5,500 in 2016 and have only an embassy presence in 2017.

The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have received $61.5 billion from the U.S. for equipment, training and personnel. The Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) received $25 billion dollars for the same purposes and collapsed earlier this year in the face of a sweeping offensive by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Without equating the two unique theaters in Iraq and Afghanistan, certainly there are lessons learned from the failure of the IAF. Comparing the parallel efforts to build effective security forces has always been essential to improving our support and avoiding a duplication of errors. For this reason, I echo the lament of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) regarding the classification of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) report assessing the capabilities of the ANSF. This report includes only aggregated data and has traditionally remained unclassified. This is an especially troubling lack of transparency as we seek to revisit our practices in the wake of the IAF's collapse.

Cumulative appropriations for relief and reconstruction in Afghanistan total approximately $103.17 billion since FY2002. This is more than the U.S. has ever spent to rebuild a single country, and by the end of the Afghanistan transition, SIGAR estimates that only 21% of the country will be accessible by oversight personnel. The U.S. will be relying heavily on Afghans to provide effective oversight in what is, by some measures, the 4th most corrupt country in the world.

However, the problems with oversight are not limited to our Afghan partners. In a June 10, 2014 MENA Subcommittee hearing, SIGAR Sopko and Mr. Johnson from GAO stated that they could not provide metrics for the percentage of funds that were well-spent or wasted in Afghanistan, because the raw numbers did not exist. This is a systemic failure that must be addressed; especially as increasingly rely on indirect oversight.

Reconstruction and relief projects and quality security forces have the potential to provide a framework for a functioning Afghan economy. Economic development is needed to offer Afghans with opportunities that serve as alternatives to violence and provide the government with the revenue it needs to sustain national institutions. A functioning domestic economy is the piece that transforms U.S. relief and security assistance into a self-sufficient Afghanistan, and considering SIGAR Sopko has deemed U.S. economic development efforts "an abysmal failure," many would surmise that our relief and security assistance efforts have been an exercise in futility. Are we building a house of cards?

All of the shortcomings of U.S. initiatives in Afghanistan are further frustrated by Pakistan. Afghanistan shares a 1,600 mile border with Pakistan, and it is in the mountainous border regions of both countries that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have taken refuge. The U.S. has significant leverage with Pakistan. The U.S. is the Pakistan's largest trading partner and has provided $4.4 billion in assistance since 2009. The U.S. must use that leverage to demand cooperation from Pakistan in meeting the dual threats of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

I hope our witnesses can share their insight into how the U.S. is working to prevent the development of another transnational terrorist state that disregards the borders of existing countries in a pursuit to establish a refuge for illegal activity and oppressive rule. Can Afghanistan and Pakistan cooperate on anti-insurgent activities and combat the illicit opium trade that has grown to historic levels despite $7.8 billion in U.S. counternarcotics funding? What is our plan for oversight with a reduced footprint in Afghanistan if we have proven absolutely ineffective in doing so with hundreds of thousands of personnel in country? I look forward to testimony that provides a way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan informed by our lessons learned and directed by an overarching mission to create a self-sufficient Afghan economy and government.

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