Asks if that meant the United States would not necessarily withdraw all combat troops by 2014, Mr. Crocker said, "I don’t know what we’re going to be doing in 2014. Currently, the Afghan government is the key player here, and they will make decisions in consultation with NATO partners.

We have been clear that any post-2014 presence by the United States would be at the invitation of the Afghan government and aimed at ensuring that we are able to target terrorists and support a sovereign Afghan government so that our enemies can’t outlast us." She added, "We have also been very clear that we do not seek permanent bases in Afghanistan or a long-term military presence that would be a threat to Afghanistan’s neighbors.

Military leaders have been quietly pushing to keep as many troops in the country as they can during the next two years as a safeguard while responsibility is transferred to Afghan forces.

On Wednesday, The Wall Street Journal reported that R. Allen, the United States and NATO commander in Afghanistan, had been promoting the view that the withdrawals should stop after next year, with 30,000 regular soldiers to be left in Afghanistan through 2013, before cuts resume in 2014. The article said he had not formally recommended that course of action, however.

Mr. Crocker noted that General Allen had made it clear that trainers and advisers would be likely to remain after 2014. Mr. Crocker added that in some cases "major weapons systems will not reach Afghanistan" until after 2014, so Afghans will need assistance learning how to operate and maintain them.

He said he did not expect America’s diplomatic presence to be reduced along with the military pullback. The number of civilian American government employees in Afghanistan increased more than threefold from 2009 to 2011, to more than 1,130, from 320.

"The decisions get made in Washington, but it’s my intention that we’re going to stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the military draws down, I think our role will stay pretty steady," he said. "As the
And it's not just the Bible. It's not just as to how you're going to be judged. I'm not talking about Matthew, where Jesus said our clergy. I'm not talking about the issues that we should be hearing from how we tax people, but it is a moral issue that we should be doing.

And so, as we move into the holidays, please don't think that we've got the other side convinced that they should give relief for unemployed people who paid into a system that lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Please don't think that they want to protect Social Security and that they want to protect Medicaid and Medicare. That's our job to do it. But it's your job to remind us that we have this obligation to do it.

And so you're right if you stop us in the street and say that we've lost credibility—all of government, the President, the candidates for President, the Republicans and the Democrats. But what about you? Will you be able to say that you joined in this effort? Will you be able to say made that telephone call or visited that office? I hope you do. And you can count on me to be waiting for that type of support. We need it. Thank you. God bless America.

HOUSE HOLIDAY HUMBUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, as families prepare for the holidays, many will gather to watch some of our favorite holiday movies. In my family, we always enjoyed watching “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” tuning into “A Christmas Carol,” and one of my favorites, “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, it won't be necessary to visit the local Redbox or scour the TV Guide listings or order the movies on Netflix. Americans across this country can tune in to C-SPAN and watch our own version of the Grinch and Ebenezer Scrooge and Henry Potter, our House holiday humbugs right here on the floor of the House of Representatives. The American people can only hope, however, that they can redeem themselves, our holiday humbugs, the way these characters did. But I fear that's not possible.

Yesterday, House Republicans brought to the floor a payroll tax credit and an unemployment insurance proposal trimmed in controversial riders and decree. The holiday humbugs, the GOP leadership, decorated the payroll tax credit and unemployment insurance bill with a controversial Keystone pipeline rider to sweeten the deal for their caucus. But that wasn't enough. The majority gilded the proposal with cruel cuts to Medicare, an unemployment fund, a freeze in Federal employee pay for yet another year, and a cut in the length of emergency unemployment insurance and blocking the administration from moving forward on environmental protections that will help our families breathe, drink, and live more healthfully.

Now, today, we heard from the House holiday humbugs that the big problem the Republicans tried to fix yesterday was drug testing for the unemployed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem for the unemployed isn't drugs, it's a job. And in the absence of a job, it's an unemployment check.

So for the holidays, my Republican colleagues put on their list a proposal that would dip further into the pockets of low and middle-income families that buy health insurance in the new health exchanges. And during this holiday season, at a time in our Nation's economy when consumption has grown by only 5 percent since June 2009, our Holiday Humbug proposal by Republicans would cut holes in the pockets of millions of our Nation's consumers.

The legislation passed in the House yesterday would freeze the compensation of 2.6 million Federal employees all across this country. Federal employees who are consumers, Mr. Speaker. So while the special interests and the Wall Street fat cats and the big oil companies are enjoying their large Christmas bonuses, Federal employees who have already contributed $60 million in forgone pay for deficit reduction will be required to give up even more.

The Republican plan hits struggling families even harder. In fact, the bill passed yesterday by our holiday humbugs eliminates 40 weeks of unemployment insurance. The funding for this program not only helps families check off items on their Christmas list—things like rent, things like childcare, and things like groceries—but the funding brings money back into the American economy. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that every dollar of benefits spent on unemployment compensation generates about $2 of additional economic activity. That's money directly into our economy.

The Republican proposal passed in the House yesterday would eliminate over $22 billion in economic growth and the loss of 140,000 jobs in 2012. That's what happened in this House yesterday. My colleague, SANDER LEVIN from Michigan, recognized that the legislative “holiday gift” that the Republicans thought they were providing the American worker this Christmas is just one big lump of coal. Their proposal would leave millions of Americans out in the cold this holiday season while imposing additional barriers to receiving assistance and diminishing the protections of unemployed workers.

Throughout the day yesterday the holiday humbugs kept trying to point to places where we could compromise.