AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

ADVANCING U.S. INTERESTS: EXAMINING THE PRESIDENT'S FY 2017 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 27, 2016

Serial No. 114–183

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/ or http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

99–946PDF WASHINGTON : 2016

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EDWARD R. ROYCE, California, *Chairman*

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida
DANA ROHRABACHER, California
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio
JOE WILSON, South Carolina
MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, Texas
TED POE, Texas
MATT SALMON, Arizona
DARRELL E. ISSA, California
TOM MARINO, Pennsylvania
JEFF DUNCAN, South Carolina
MO BROOKS, Alabama
PAUL COOK, California
RANDY K. WEBER SR., Texas
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania
RON DESANTIS, Florida
MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina
TED S. YOHO, Florida
CURT CLAWSON, Florida
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, Tennessee
REID J. RIBBLE, Wisconsin
DAVID A. TROTT, Michigan
LEE M. ZELDIN, New York
DANIEL DONOVAN, New York

ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
BRAD SHERMAN, California
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
ALBIO SIRES, New Jersey
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
THEODORE E. DEUTCH, Florida
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
KAREN BASS, California
WILLIAM KEATING, Massachusetts
DAVID CICILLINE, Rhode Island
ALAN GRAYSON, Florida
AMI BERA, California
ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, California
GRACE MENG, New York
LOIS FRANKEL, Florida
TULSI GABBARD, Hawaii
JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas
ROBIN L. KELLY, Illinois
BRENDAN F. BOYLE, Pennsylvania

AMY PORTER, *Chief of Staff* THOMAS SHEEHY, *Staff Director*
JASON STEINBAUM, *Democratic Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida, *Chairman*

STEVE CHABOT, Ohio
JOE WILSON, South Carolina
DARRELL E. ISSA, California
RANDY K. WEBER SR., Texas
RON DESANTIS, Florida
MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina
TED S. YOHO, Florida
CURT CLAWSON, Florida
DAVID A. TROTT, Michigan
LEE M. ZELDIN, New York
THEODORE E. DEUTCH, Florida
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
DAVID CICILLINE, Rhode Island
ALAN GRAYSON, Florida
GRACE MENG, New York
LOIS FRANKEL, Florida
BRENDAN F. BOYLE, Pennsylvania

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

MATT SALMON, Arizona *Chairman*

DANA ROHRABACHER, California
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio
TOM MARINO, Pennsylvania
JEFF DUNCAN, South Carolina
MO BROOKS, Alabama
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, Tennessee
BRAD SHERMAN, California
AMI BERA, California
TULSI GABBARD, Hawaii
ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, California
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
GRACE MENG, New York

CONTENTS

Page

WITNESSES

The Honorable Richard Olson, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, U.S. Department of State 9
Mr. Donald L. Sampler, Jr., Assistant to the Administrator, Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development 21

LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING

The Honorable Richard Olson: Prepared statement 11
Mr. Donald L. Sampler, Jr.: Prepared statement 23

APPENDIX

Hearing notice 46
Hearing minutes 47
The Honorable David Cicilline, a Representative in Congress from the State of Rhode Island: Prepared statement 48
Written responses from the Honorable Richard Olson to questions submitted for the record by:
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida, and chairman, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa 49
The Honorable David A. Trott, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan 52

ADVANCING U.S. INTERESTS: EXAMINING THE PRESIDENT'S FY 2017 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

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 10:06 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the Subcommittee on Middle East and North Africa) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order.

After recognizing myself, Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Deutch, and Ranking Member Sherman for 5 minutes each for our opening statements, I will then recognize other members seeking recognition for 1 minute. We will then hear from our witnesses.

Thank you for being here today.

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.

Before we begin, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families and friends of those killed by the Taliban last week in Kabul, a terrorist attack which claimed the lives of 64 people and wounded more than 370 others. I know I speak on behalf of Chairman Salmon and all members here today when I say we condemn this attack and all terrorist attacks in the strongest possible manner.

The Chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes.

This hearing represents an important opportunity for both of our subcommittees, allowing members to provide appropriate and necessary oversight of the President's budget request for Afghanistan and Pakistan, each of which fall under our different subcommittee's jurisdictions.

This year the President is requesting approximately $1.2 billion for Afghanistan and about $742 million for Pakistan in the foreign aid budget. For comparison's sake, the combined request for these countries is about 77 percent of the overall request for the South and Central Asia region, and about 4 percent of the entire foreign affairs request for this year. It is critical that Congress under-

stands exactly where this money is going and whether we are getting a good return on our investment, and assesses how we can ensure that these funds are helping achieve U.S. interests in the most effective way possible.

When I led a CODEL to Afghanistan in November 2015, I was struck by the positive changes that President Ghani and CEO Abdullah had made since former President Karzai stepped down. Despite their differences, every official we met with said that Ghani and Abdullah are a vast improvement over Karzai, and that they have proven to be partners who are willing and able to cooperate with the United States, while taking steps to root out corruption and stabilize their country. But last week's terrorist attack in Kabul is a sobering reminder of the challenges that Afghanistan continues to face from the Taliban and other terrorist groups.

While Afghan security forces have had some success since taking the lead last year, the Taliban is resurgent in Afghanistan and is responsible for most of last year's 5,500-plus military casualties and 10,000-plus killed or wounded civilians. The Taliban is adapting to the Afghan military's tactics, moving into new territory as it gets pushed out of others, and using terrorism to inflict the kind of mass violence that we saw in Kabul. The Taliban is also adapting to our restrictive rules of engagement, understanding the extremely limited situations when the U.S. actually does provide air support to the Afghan security forces, and adjusting their tactics accordingly.

When I was in Afghanistan in November, our troops did not have the authority to target ISIS, allowing it to grow in strength and numbers before the President finally authorized ISIS as a target earlier this year. The President needs to allow U.S. forces to target the Taliban as well, and I urge the administration to provide the Afghan security forces with the close air support and surveillance assistance they so desperately need.

It is extremely difficult to negotiate with an enemy who sees its position constantly improving. And as President Ghani said yesterday, the Taliban operates freely because Pakistan refuses to take action against it inside its borders. Pakistan is a direct contributor to the Taliban's success, not only allowing them to use Pakistani territory as a safe haven, but providing it support inside Afghanistan's borders. It makes little sense to continue giving Pakistan billions of dollars if it is going to continue to work against our interests.

We must leverage our aid to Pakistan so that it is a better regional partner with Afghanistan, and also helps us to root out terrorists within its borders. That includes stopping the sale of F-16s that Pakistan does not need and will probably not use in its supposed fight against terrorism. We should instead be prioritizing assistance for Afghanistan which, in addition to its security needs, continues to struggle with an enormous budget deficit, an economy almost entirely reliant on donor aid, and rampant and widespread corruption.

With corruption still a significant issue, I continue to be concerned by our provision of on-budget assistance, and question whether our aid is getting to the right places. Afghanistan has said it needs about $10 billion donated each year until 2025 before it

is self-sufficient. And I fear what will happen to Afghanistan's economy once the donor fatigue that has already set in gets worse.

In addition, not enough attention is being paid to counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan, which already accounts for 90 percent of the world's heroin. And I am concerned that the administration's decision to draw down resources in this area will allow a boom in poppy production, if it hasn't already.

When I was in Afghanistan, the commanders on the ground told us that they do not have the authority to carry out counternarcotics operations. And while DEA's presence has been substantially reduced, INL's footprint is also restricted due to the reduced DOD presence. The Afghan military does not have the resources to focus on counternarcotics while it is concentrated on fighting the Taliban.

So with all that said, the question is who is going to cover counternarcotics operations? With the Afghan counternarcotics chief declaring that no eradication will occur in the Helmand Province this year due to the Taliban's presence, the drug trade is poised to expand even more, fueling both the Taliban's operations and Afghanistan's massive addiction problem. In all of these areas we need to be giving the Afghan Government a chance to succeed, supporting it politically and providing it with the right kinds of security assistance, while helping bolster its economy and redoubling our counternarcotics efforts.

Afghanistan is an important ally in an important region of the world, and its security, its stability, and its success are critical for U.S. interests. We must remain engaged for the long term.

I am honored to now recognize the ranking member, Mr. Deutch, for his opening statement.

Mr. DEUTCH. Well, I thank you, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Chairman Salmon, for holding today's hearing to examine the President's budget request for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Thanks to my fellow ranking member Mr. Sherman for his longstanding and thoughtful leadership in this region of the world.

And welcome to our esteemed witnesses.

For a decade and a half, U.S. troops, along with our international coalition partners, have been on the ground in Afghanistan. After so many years, after so many tragic losses, the American public is understandably weary of continued engagement.

When President Obama announced his intention to draw down troops, many welcomed the end of significant American troop presence in Afghanistan, while others worry that the withdrawal would end the significant gains made in development and leave the fledgling Afghan national defense and security force unable to defend its country from terrorists.

I am extremely sensitive to the idea of long-term troop engagement in Afghanistan. And I want our men and women home safe. But I believe that the President's decision last year to maintain 9,800 troops through the end of the year was correct. The administration must evaluate strategic decisions based on conditions on the ground, not on a preset timetable. And with the rise of ISIS, which has made clear its intent to attack Western targets, we cannot allow Afghanistan to revert to a breeding ground for terrorists.

The United States has committed over $100 billion since ousting the Taliban from Afghanistan. After years of corruption under and difficult cooperation from the Karzai government, we were hopeful that the 2014 transition of power would bring renewed leadership. Secretary Kerry's brokered National Unity Government between President Ghani and CEO Abdullah brought a renewed hope for real reform. And while I believe that both President Ghani and CEO Abdullah want to see their reform agenda succeed, they have been hampered by disagreements among their political backers.

So how can the U.S. best support these reform efforts? For our aid dollars to be effective, we need a country strategy that supports the vision of the unity government, both in development goals and in security. We need to see gains in long-term sustainable projects. We have made impactful gains in areas like women's access to education and healthcare, but we need to see economic gains that will help Afghanistan become self-sufficient.

This is a country that is dependent on foreign aid for 95 percent of its GDP. How can we continue progress toward creating jobs, rooting out corruption, creating an independent fully functioning judiciary, while we enter what could be a very difficult fighting season?

Since the Taliban's incursion into Kunduz last year, the attacks have continued. Fighting in Helmand continued, even throughout the normally quieter winter. The large-scale attack in Kabul last week was a tragic remainder of the past where truck bombings in the city were heard all too frequently. And as we enter the spring fighting season, it is now more important than ever that Afghan troops are prepared.

The continued U.S. role of training, advising, and equipping will be critical. Afghan forces have shown that they can have the capability to defend and hold territory. They are not the Iraqi military. They have not had an experience of cutting and running. And while there is still a long way to go to professionalize the Afghan security force, rooting out corruption, addressing severe allegations of sexual abuse, and making sure that soldiers are getting adequate leave and pay, I don't believe that now is the time to abandon our support for these forces.

At the same time, we have to continue to encourage reconciliation talks. President Ghani has used a tremendous amount of political capital reaching out to Pakistan in hopes of securing cooperation on the Taliban. Yet Ghani has found himself burned time and time again. In a surprising change of tone this week, Ghani stated that if Pakistan does not increase cooperation on preventing cross-border attacks, he may seek referral to the United Nations Security Council. And we are a long way from reconvening reconciliation talks, and there are many steps that need to be taken before those talks can begin.

If Pakistan wants to be a helpful partner, it must take real and actionable steps to combat all terrorism. Receiving $742 million must yield greater cooperation on what should be mutual regional security concerns. Pakistansecurity forces must treat all terrorist groups equally, not choose to turn a blind eye to some.

The conditions set forth in Kerry-Lugar-Berman in 2010 have only been met once. They have been continually waived on the

basis of national security, but we have an opportunity here to seriously consider how to incentivize better cooperation. And I must say that I share the concerns of leadership of this committee about Pakistan's bid to buy F-16s with American financing.

As we go forward in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and our aid dollars decrease, we need to be sure that what we are doing is sustainable. We need to be funding the priorities of the host country, but also ensure that the host country has a vested interest in seeing projects succeed. And USAID must take the lead in prioritizing those projects.

As the number of U.S. personnel in Afghanistan decreases, we must have a clear plan how to remotely monitor existing and continuing projects. And I hope today we can hear more as to whether those efforts have been working and how we can improve on them.

We have spent a tremendous amount of blood and treasure in Afghanistan, and as we continue to pour billions of dollars into the region, we have to have a clear strategy that can adapt to the kinetic security situation on the ground. We owe it to the men and women who have given their lives to protect the security of this country and to the future of the Afghan people.

And I yield back. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Amen. Thank you so much, Mr. Deutch.

I now would like to yield to the other subcommittee chairman, Mr. Salmon, for his opening remarks.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you, Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, for working with me to convene this important joint subcommittee hearing on U.S. foreign assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As we all know, Afghanistan and Pakistan make up one of the most complex foreign policy and security challenges we have. Subsequently, they are one of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign assistance. But even after the billions of dollars we have spent following the 9/11 attacks, I still have serious concerns about the administration's strategy for the region, about the effectiveness and efficiency of our aid programs, and about our partner governments' alignment with our interests and values.

As chairman on the subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, I will focus my attention and my remarks on Pakistan, which presents a number of difficulties for our foreign assistance partnership.

Conduct by the Pakistani Government raises serious doubts about the country's trustworthiness as a partner for peace and change in the region. And too often they seem to do the bare minimum to keep the money flowing without committing to any real change. Today, I look forward to hearing from our administration witnesses about the value of our programs in the region, and their strategies for meaningful and lasting improvements.

One area of concern in Pakistan is foreign military financing, FMF. It has been a contentious topic in Congress recently, especially with the administration's recent attempt to subsidize, with taxpayer dollars, the sale of F-16s to Pakistan. Fortunately, an effort paused by the Senate. Many Members of Congress, including me, seriously question the judgment and timing of such a sale.

Additionally, India/Pakistan tensions remain elevated, and some question whether the F-16s could ultimately be used against India or other regional powers, rather than the terrorists, as Pakistan

has asserted. I would ask the panel to clarify the underlying purpose and timing of the intended sale, and how is it in the best interests of the United States?

Despite giving Pakistan enormous amounts of counterterror assistance over the years, over $25 billion since 9/11, terrorist organizations continue to operate with impunity in Pakistan. Pakistan has used terror as a tool of statecraft and terrorist proxy groups where the Pakistani military have carried out fatal attacks inside India. The Pakistani Taliban is showing signs of unification. Pakistan argues that this may work to its advantage, but the United States maintains that this is detrimental to regional security efforts.

This is just one example of how Pakistan's priorities and values regarding terrorist groups are seriously misaligned with our own.

In another instance of our priorities not aligning, the Pakistanis are holding Dr. Afridi, who aided the United States in finding and eliminating bin Laden, on dubious charges. Like many of my colleagues, I am deeply disappointed we have not been able to find a solution to his imprisonment. I look forward to hearing the panel's comments on these issues.

USAID has prioritized health and education programs in Pakistan. An example of the challenges that exist was demonstrated just last week when the police escorts of healthcare workers distributing vaccines were killed. Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only places in the world with an ongoing polio endemic. And according to Pakistan's own press, upwards of 45 percent of Pakistanis are intellectually stunted due to malnutrition. While that number is distressing in and of itself, it also has the potential to add to the region's instability and should remain a top priority for our aid efforts.

After spending billions in U.S aid in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is important to ask, exactly how much leverage has our investment really bought us? Are we undermining our own security interests by supporting a military that props up terrorists? Have we bolstered the wrong leaders, complicating meaningful reform efforts?

We have not always focused on this carrot approach to aid in Pakistan. In the 1990s, we tried the stick approach with sanctions which were largely ineffective at curbing Pakistan's nuclear programs. But the stick approach after 9/11 did work, at least for a time, resulting in the capture of some notorious terrorists.

I am concerned that our current strategy lacks resolve and clarity, and as a result, taxpayer dollars are not being used in a way that furthers our national security interests and protects our citizens.

I look to our panel's testimony in justification for both the nearly $2 billion in funding this year and the strategy for these relationships going forward.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

And I would like to recognize the gentleman in the audience who is the Afghan Ambassador to the United States. And we welcome you here today, sir. Thank you.

I now would like to turn to our other ranking member, Mr. Sherman, for his opening statement.

Mr. SHERMAN. I thank the chairwoman and the chairman for holding these hearings.

With the tragedy of September 11th, we understood that Afghanistan can have a profound effect on the United States. We have lost 2,300 service members killed, over 20,000 wounded. We spent $100 million in foreign assistance, and our total costs have exceeded $1 trillion, including our military costs. Pakistan is a nation of 180 million people with a history of terrorist activities, roughly 100 nuclear weapons, and a very confused body politic.

The administration's requested $740 million in assistance for Pakistan, more than $265 million of this is for military assistance. As noted by the chairman of the Asia subcommittee, we have got to be concerned what military assistance and whether the F-16s constitute the least expensive, most efficient way for the Pakistani Air Force to go after the terrorists, and the least disruptive weapon system to the balance of power between India and Pakistan. We need to offer to Pakistan those weapon systems well crafted to go after terrorists and not crafted for a war with India.

I join also the chairman of our subcommittee on the importance of Dr. Afridi, and would not be surprised if Congress made a big portion of this aid contingent upon the release of Dr. Afridi and his family.

One question I hope the gentlemen answer for us historically, and that is, why we did not install in Kabul a government acceptable to Islamabad back 15 years ago, or whether there are elements in the Pakistani military who look at the pushed-on population of both countries and have reached the conclusion that they want a weak and divided Afghanistan, under any circumstances, as a matter of Pakistani national unity and national security.

Many Americans wonder why we are still involved in Afghanistan. Many say why don't we just turn our back on the greater Middle East? I should point out that we were under-involved and under-responded when our Embassy was bombed in East Africa, both Embassies. We under-responded when the U.S. Cole was hit in Yemen, and then we faced 9/11. We can and did and may again ignore the Middle East, but the Middle East will not ignore us.

The way for a terrorist organization to hit the—to be in the vanguard of some mythical world conflagration is to attack the United States. We have to win over the people of the Muslim world, and in order to do that, we need to speak their language. That is why many on this committee have heard me talk of the importance of broadcasting in the Sindh language of southern Pakistan, and in the other languages where for $1 million, $2 million a year we can reach out to huge segments of the Pakistani population.

But not only the linguistic language, but the language of Islam must be understood by our State Department. I worry that for every—that there is a lot more understanding of Metternich and the European power moves and diplomacy of the 1800s in the State Department than there is of the Koran.

We will never pronounce the words of the Sindhi language without an accent. We will never be the last word in Islamic interpretation. But the fact that we don't have a half a dozen—we don't have anyone in the State Department whois paid, not to issue a fatwa, but to read one and to understand the subtle allusions to particular

events in the life of the prophet indicates that we don't speak their language, aren't learning their language, and are not in a good position to win what will be a continuing effort against certain elements in Islam.

Finally, on human rights, the brother of a dear friend of mine, Anwar Leghari was assassinated in Sindh. Other Sindhi activists, including Kausar Ansari, have been detained. And it is important that we speak out for human rights, the rights of religious minorities in Pakistan. The VOA is asking us for another $16 million, yet they have not detailed how they are going to reach out to the Muslim world in the various different languages that they should be communicating in.

And my time has expired. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Ranking Member Sherman.

And now we would like to turn to Mr. Rohrabacher for his opening statement.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am very upset today, more than normally. There it is. The fact is——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Drinking a lot of Red Bull?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And I am sorry if I—and I will try to contain myself.

The State Department and this administration has again decided to slap the face of a person who we rely upon to defeat radical Islamic terrorism. The administration has again targeted a prominent enemy of radical Islamic terrorism in order to humiliate to his own people. I am talking about this administration's denial of a right to the Vice President, the Senior Vice President of Afghanistan, to come here and talk to the Congress. This is a slap in the face to the Congress as well.

Who is going to trust us to be on our side in the fight against radical Islamic terrorism if we treat those people who are allies in this way? Yes, he is an imperfect person. The fact is that he is fighting—that Vice President Dostum of Afghanistan happens to have been essential in the defeat of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces after 9/11.

Shame on this administration for that. Shame on them for slapping the face of other people trying to help us defeat the radicals who would kill our own people.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Dr. Bera.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And, again, I thank the chairman and the ranking members for this hearing. I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses as well.

When you think about South Asia, the interconnected nature obviously is very complicated, you know, between Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and increasingly China's presence in South Asia as well. You know, I look forward to listening to the witnesses.

As our mission changes in Afghanistan, you know, and as the missionhas changed over the last decade, the reduction in foreign troops and their presence really has left an economic hole in Af-

ghanistan. And as our mission changes, you know, I do have real worries about Afghanistan's economy and the impact there.

India has had a major presence in Afghanistan in terms of, you know, pumping over $2 billion into major projects in Afghanistan. The complexity of India's role in Afghanistan posts our change in mission, you know, is going to be important to weigh vis-a-vis Pakistan as well. So I look forward to hearing that.

Thank you.

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

Seeing no other requests for time, I will now introduce our panelists.

First, we would like to welcome back the Honorable Richard Olson, thank you, sir, who is the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the U.S. Department of State. Ambassador Olson previously served as the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan and the coordinating director for development and economic affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan. Thank you, sir.

And thank you also as we welcome back the Honorable Donald L. Sampler, who is assistant to the administrator in the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, OAPA, at USAID. Mr. Sampler previously served as senior deputy assistant to the administrator in that agency, and he has traveled to Afghanistan and Pakistan over 60 times since 2001 and lived in Kabul for several years.

As I had said, your prepared statements will be made a part of the record. Please feel free to summarize.

And we will begin with you, Mr. Olson.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD OLSON, U.S. SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Sherman, and members of both subcommittees, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss Fiscal Year 2017 foreign assistance priorities for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

First and foremost, I want to commend the men and women of the armed services, the foreign service, the development agencies, and intelligence community stationed in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I am honored and humbled to have served with them in Kabul and Islamabad over the past 4 years.

My written testimony, which has been submitted for the record, touches on many of the topics that I expect we will discuss today, including updates on Afghanistan and Pakistan, prospects for peace and reconciliation, and our budget priorities.

With regard to Afghanistan, a great deal has been achieved over the past 14 years. However, Afghanistan faces very real and daunting challenges, challenges that affect our own national security. Afghanistan will need our support as it continues to strengthen its institutions and become increasingly self-reliant. It is essential that we help prevent it from ever again serving as a safe haven for international terrorists that would threaten the United States.

This year, two vital international donor conferences aimed at shoring up Afghanistan's security and development will take place

in Brussels and Warsaw. Robust U.S. and international financial support and sustained diplomatic engagement are critical to ensuring that the Afghan Government is able to enact needed reforms, spur a stagnant economy, and consolidate the gains made over the past 14 years.

Our relationship with Pakistan, a growing country with more than 190 million people, a nuclear arsenal, terrorism challenges, and a key role to play in the region will remain a critical one. In Pakistan, we see the government in a concerted and difficult fight against terror groups that threaten Pakistanis. But, unfortunately, Pakistan does not take equivalent steps against groups that threaten its neighbors.

Our core initiatives in Pakistan include promoting economic growth, countering terrorism, fostering regional stability, and promoting the consolidation of democratic institutions.

Let me emphasize. We have repeatedly and, frankly, underscored with the most senior leaders of Pakistan that the Haqqani Network must be part of their wider counterterrorism operations in order to keep their commitment not to discriminate between terrorist organizations. Effective engagement with Pakistan is grounded in our national interest.

We have carefully calibrated our Fiscal Year 2017 budget request, balancing global funding constraints and our interest in stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our overall combined request is just under $2 billion, with $1.25 billion requested for Afghanistan and $742 million for Pakistan. While this is a 14-percent reduction from the President's Fiscal Year 2016 request, and an approximate straight line from Fiscal Year 2015 enacted levels, these levels will enable us to stay engaged in a critically important region, while also responsibly rightsizing our commitments.

We believe we are on the right track to achieve our goals in the region, but we fully recognize serious challenges remain.

Thank you for the opportunity to address your subcommittees. I look forward to our discussion today and welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Olson follows:]

Testimony of Richard G. Olson
Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
Before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa,
and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Sherman, and members of both subcommittees – thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 foreign assistance priorities for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Thanks to the sacrifice and dedication of so many Americans, Afghans, and other partners, a great deal has been achieved in Afghanistan over the past 14 years. However, Afghanistan today faces very real and daunting challenges – challenges that affect our own national security – and will need our support as it continues to strengthen its institutions and build sustainable self-reliance.

Our relationship with Pakistan, a growing country with over 190 million people, a nuclear arsenal, terrorism challenges, and a key role to play in the region, will also remain a critical one. Indeed in Pakistan, we see the government engaged in a concerted and difficult fight against terror groups that threaten all Pakistanis. Pakistan's relationships with its neighbors have peaked and troughed, but are trending toward greater dialogue to resolve differences. Effective engagement with Pakistan, grounded in our important national interests, is critical to promoting the consolidation of democratic institutions and economic stability while supporting the government's counterterrorism capabilities. In that context, we have repeatedly and frankly underscored with the most senior levels of the Pakistani leadership the need to target the Haqqani network as part of their wider counterterrorism operations, in keeping with their commitment not to discriminate between terrorist organizations.

Overall, as we discussed in December, our core initiatives in Pakistan – promoting economic growth, countering terrorism, and fostering greater regional stability – are vital to U.S. national security interests.

For Afghanistan, two major international donor conferences will take place this year – at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July on security assistance, and the Brussels conference in October on development. Our continued financial support, as well as our sustained diplomatic engagement, is critical to ensuring that Afghanistan remains a democratic partner that never again serves as a safe haven for terrorists that would

harm the United States or regional stability. Our leadership on the importance of continued support to Afghanistan will boost international confidence and give the Afghan government the resources and opportunity to enact needed reforms, spur a stagnant economy, and consolidate the gains made over the past 14 years.

Before I detail our budget priorities, let me also take this opportunity to commend the men and women of the armed services, the foreign service, development experts, and intelligence community stationed in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I have had the honor to serve in both Kabul and Islamabad over the past four years and am honored and humbled to have worked alongside such dedicated public servants.

Budget Priorities

We have carefully calibrated our FY 2017 budget request, balancing global funding constraints and our national interests in stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our overall combined request is just under $2 billion, with $1.25 billion requested for Afghanistan and $742 million for Pakistan.

While this is a fourteen percent reduction from the President's FY 2016 request and an approximate straight-line from FY 2015-enacted levels, these levels will enable us to stay engaged in a critically important region, while also responsibly right-sizing our commitments.

The $1.25 billion request for Afghanistan is seventeen percent below the President's FY 2016 request. We deem this level as necessary to maintain and expand the development gains made over the last fourteen years and to honor our public commitments for assistance to Afghanistan through 2017. However, the reduction also reflects our policy of responsibly shifting to more sustainable levels, as Afghan capacity increases.

Our FY 2017 request for Afghanistan is essential to achieving our continued goal of ensuring that Afghanistan develops the security, stability, and resiliency to prevent it from ever again serving as a safe haven for international terrorists. We will use the requested FY 2017 resources to assist Afghanistan in consolidating its role as a reliable and stable partner in the fight against international terrorism in the region, while also working to strengthen its democracy, and continue to help improve the lives of the Afghan people.

For Pakistan, our request is $742.2 million, which includes $472.4 million in civilian assistance and $269.8 million in security assistance. This request strikes the appropriate balance between long-term development and strategic military-to-military cooperation, both of which are in our national security interest, and is at a level that we can responsibly implement. This request is considerably lower – indeed, over 60 percent lower – than our peak funding for Pakistan in FY 2010, the first year under the Kerry-Lugar-Berman authorization.

While this decrease is warranted given urgent needs around the globe, the requested resources remain crucial to advancing cooperation on core areas that matter to us: bolstering Pakistan's counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations; empowering women and girls; enabling the return of internally displaced persons; and facilitating private sector investment in Pakistan's economy and energy sector.

The U.S.-Afghanistan Partnership

We have invested significant blood and treasure in Afghanistan since 2001. More than twenty-two hundred U.S. service members and seven American civilians working with the U.S. embassy made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, and the cost in Afghan lives has been vast.

We honor their legacies by protecting our investments in Afghanistan. It is imperative that we renew our commitment to ensuring Afghanistan's stability and self-reliance. A sustainable outcome in Afghanistan is possible, and absent continued, strong U.S. support and leadership, Afghanistan risks again descending into chaos.

Earlier this month, Secretary Kerry and I were in Kabul to participate in the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission, which is the implementing mechanism of the Strategic Partnership Agreement. Our partnership is strong, and Afghanistan is on the right track.

Afghan soldiers are fighting bravely in difficult conditions throughout the country. Afghan businessmen and women are working to make profits and create jobs. Civil society, the free media, and women's rights leaders are vocal participants in public discourse. All of these developments owe their genesis to the investments and sacrifices we have made in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government

President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah understand that they have an obligation to build on our investments and sacrifice. They recognize that the Afghan government and the Afghan people have a responsibility to demonstrate their commitment to self-reliance.

We cannot underestimate the challenges and our expectations have to be realistic. Nonetheless, there are signs of progress. The government is beginning to achieve results and live up to the potential we saw when it took office in Afghanistan's first democratic, peaceful transfer of power in 2014.

We strongly support President Ghani and CEO Abdullah and believe they are making progress, but we are doing more than simply investing in them as individual leaders. We are focused on helping the government transform Afghanistan into a country with strong democratic institutions that will be stable and successful well beyond the end of the President Ghani's term in 2019.

Last year, despite the continued withdrawal of international soldiers, Afghan security forces were able to hold off the Taliban's best efforts to retake control of large portions of the country. They also were able to respond to a new threat in the form of Da'esh in the east.

In this tough security environment, the government realizes it must address other challenges, especially the blight of corruption, and it is taking action. Despite broad economic challenges in 2015, the government increased its revenues by 20 percent, largely by implementing more efficient procedures and cutting down on corruption.

The government also established a new national procurement commission. This commission, headed by President Ghani, has already saved the government millions of dollars—for example by reducing waste in a recent food contract for security services. Every dollar the Afghan government saves through greater transparency and accountability lessens the burden on the United States and compounds the impact of our assistance.

Afghanistan is committed to building upon the progress already made by Afghan women. Last year we launched a massive multi-year program in cooperation with civil society and the government to create opportunities in the public and private

sectors for 75,000 educated Afghan women. At the same time, the government began implementing its action plan for women, peace and security.

Warsaw and Brussels

The Afghan people are working hard to secure and build their country, but they still need our help. They need our continued support to succeed and we should follow through on the commitments we have made.

At the NATO Warsaw Summit in July, we are urging other donors to continue security assistance to Afghanistan at or near current levels through 2020. We need a strong U.S. commitment to show leadership and assure our partners that Afghanistan remains a vital priority for all of the international community.

Our leadership is also essential in showing the continued importance of development support. In October, the European Union (EU) will host a donor conference on Afghanistan in Brussels. As recent events in Europe have showed, the threat of international terrorism remains very real, and the conference in Brussels should underscore that none of us can afford to see Afghanistan slip back into chaos.

At the Brussels conference, the EU is encouraging donors to commit to providing development assistance at or near current levels through 2020. We are pressing this same message with our allies and partners around the world. In order for our message to have salience and credibility, we need to show that the United States continues to lead and will make a robust pledge to Afghanistan's ongoing development.

Lessons Learned and Progress of Reforms

We have a strong plan for the resources requested for FY 2017, strategically focusing our resources on a limited number of goals. In Afghanistan, among our core goals, we want to encourage more effective governance, continue to build a sustainable base for the economy, and improve upon gains in health, education, rule of law, and the rights of women and girls. This also includes continued efforts to improve the justice system, promote a greater role for Afghan women in all aspects of society, and address the serious problem of Afghanistan's narcotics trade. In the coming year we are also initiating new projects to improve Afghan security forces' respect for human rights.

We recognize the challenges of working in Afghanistan and have learned numerous lessons in the last decade. We know that for success to be sustainable we must empower the national government. The government and international donors agreed last September to focus on a specific set of measurable reform goals in the Self Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework.

The United States is encouraging progress on these goals with incentive programs like the New Development Partnership (NDP), which rewards Afghan achievement of specified development results. The NDP is one way we are working to increase the capacity of the government while encouraging self-reliance and reform through the availability of incentives. USAID can provide more details, but I will say that the NDP was successful in its first year, with the Afghan government reaching 90 percent of the reform benchmarks we had set as incentives.

Another lesson we have learned relates to monitoring our programs in a difficult security environment. We are confident in the multi-tiered monitoring systems we have in place to ensure proper oversight, and we are committed to improving them. We asked the USAID Inspector General (IG) to review our monitoring procedures last year. The IG made constructive recommendations on how we can improve. We took swift action to implement those recommendations and stand by our monitoring approach.

Regional and Reconciliation

In addition to advancing our bilateral relations with Afghanistan, encouraging a constructive relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is enormously important to the future of the region. This is something the two governments have prioritized, and we have seen significant progress on this front, particularly since President Ghani's inauguration. Further, Afghanistan and Pakistan, with support from the United States and China, are working in cooperation to bring about direct reconciliation talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Although the path to securing an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process is fraught with many challenges, I have heard directly from a wide range of Afghan and Pakistani leaders that a negotiated settlement is in everyone's interest. In this, Pakistan has an important, and constructive, role to play. In particular, we expect Pakistan to live up to its commitments made in the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, and to take deliberate and meaningful action against any and all militant groups that seek to destabilize Afghanistan, including the Haqqani Network.

Pakistan

Since 2011, we have worked through many difficulties in our relationship, and doggedly pursued our national interest. While much more work remains, I am convinced our engagement with Pakistan – despite the challenges – advances that national interest. Continued cooperation with Pakistan is essential if we are to achieve our objectives in the region: a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan; strategic stability in the subcontinent; fostering greater economic connections; countering violent extremism; and defeating terrorists that threaten the U.S. and the region. Pakistan is strategically vital, due to its role in issues that matter to us, as well as its location at the crossroads of Afghanistan, India, China, and Iran. Pakistan is clearly a challenging partner; that said, it is incumbent on us to redouble our efforts to steer this relationship so that it advances regional objectives important to us.

We will continue our discussions – sometimes very difficult discussions – with Pakistan's civilian and military leadership. We will continue to seek to build on areas with shared goals, while speaking clearly to our areas of concern. While acknowledging where our strategic objectives do not align, pursuit of our national interests requires that we stay engaged as Pakistan charts its long-term future. By adopting this approach and through our continued work, I believe it is possible to continue to achieve meaningful progress in areas of our core national interests over the coming years.

We discussed Pakistan at length in December and thus I want to avoid repetition, but instead focus today on relevant recent developments. In the last hearing, I recounted how Pakistan has made real strides in stabilizing its economy since 2013. Today, the government is continuing its operations against certain extremist and militant groups that threaten Pakistanis. The national and provincial governments have taken some cautious but positive steps on religious freedom and protection of women from domestic violence, expanding investment in education including for girls, and devoting more of its own resources to joint U.S.-Pakistan cooperative initiatives, including contributing to the Fulbright program in Pakistan. Engagement in education, including university partnerships, science and technology cooperation, and academic exchanges like Fulbright advances our foreign policy goals by helping Pakistan as it strengthens its own higher education as a foundation for growth, and by fostering emerging leaders and U.S.-Pakistan professional linkages in priority fields. These alumni become part of a self-sustaining network of Pakistanis with strong ties to the U.S. and an understanding of our values.

Pakistan has taken some notable actions in recent months. Punjab province passed an unprecedented law to protect women from domestic violence, mandate jail time for their attackers, and empower law enforcement to intercede in domestic disputes. Over the protests of Islamic extremists, following a judicial process the government carried out the execution of Mumtaz Qadri, who killed a prominent politician who was a critic of the country's blasphemy laws. For the first time, Pakistan this year declared Easter and the Hindu holiday of Holi as national holidays.

These actions have met strong and sometimes violent resistance from extreme elements within Pakistani society. This year's Easter suicide bombing in Lahore killed scores of innocent Christians and Muslims, including many children. Simultaneously, protesters objecting to Qadri's execution besieged Pakistan's parliament and demanded that the government uphold the blasphemy law and sentence those guilty of violating it to death. Voices opposed to the strengthened legislation to address gender-based violence in Punjab continue to take measures designed to overturn the law. However, the Pakistani government has broadly stayed the course. It is in our interest to continue our work with those actors seeking positive change – both civilian government and civil society – through U.S. civilian assistance.

As you know, in 2014, the Pakistani military launched an ongoing operation that has significantly disrupted many terrorist safe havens. However, the operation has resulted in more than 700,000 internally displaced persons. Supporting the dignified return and reintegration of the displaced, including through U.S. civilian assistance, will also diminish the allure of militants and promote stability in this volatile area.

We need to continue to support Pakistan's counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT) capabilities. U.S. security assistance has already proven to be of significant benefit to Pakistan's military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where Pakistan has deployed more than 180,000 soldiers to clear out militants and reestablish government control over the area. The Pakistan Air Force reports having flown thousands of sorties, dropping more than 800 U.S.-provided Guided Bomb Units (GBUs), and killing more than 1,700 terrorists. The use of precision munitions has greatly minimized collateral damage, including civilian casualties.

Pakistan has achieved some measure of greater security and stability, with deaths due to violence dropping 40 percent in 2015, sectarian violence dropping 35 percent, and the lowest number of militant attacks since 2008. Pakistan continues to work with us in dismantling al-Qa'ida, including the arrest last week of senior al-

Qa'ida leader and financier Abdul Rehman Sindhi, who was one of the key suspects in the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl, and was placed on the United Nations Security Council al-Qa'ida sanctions list in 2012. We continue to press Pakistan to take action against *all* terrorist groups, including the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

We share the subcommittees' disappointment in progress against these groups and continue to voice our concerns with Pakistani leadership often. We will not be satisfied until Pakistan makes a decisive shift in its policy toward these externally-focused groups, nor will Pakistan's struggle with terrorism come to an end.

As Pakistan takes modest but important steps on issues like terrorism, gender-based violence, religious freedom, and its economy, it is important that we remain engaged. Robust civilian and security assistance is key to sustaining cooperation and progress in areas that support our interests. Our security assistance supports Pakistan's counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Our civilian assistance is helping Pakistan boost growth and development but also working to transition Pakistan from needing assistance altogether – through programs that encourage economic reform, support to small and medium enterprises, and efficiency upgrades to its energy sector.

As part of a wider endeavor to support vulnerable populations in Pakistan, we fund civil society and support shelters for victims of gender-based violence. And we facilitate, through our assistance, increased trade and investment that brings together the business communities of our two countries.

Challenges

While I am optimistic that we are on the right track to achieve our goals in the region, I also want to acknowledge the many challenges we face.

Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world, and it is an extremely difficult environment for development work. We continue to confront opposition from a resilient Taliban; limited capacity among many of our government partners constrains the pace of progress; and, pervasive corruption risks eroding public trust in the government.

We, and the Afghan government, are working to address these issues, and we are seeing positive change. Yet, we need realistic expectations about the pace of these changes. We should anticipate some rough patches. There will be moments in the

weeks and months ahead when the news will be bad. There will be reports of Taliban battlefield successes, and we will see stories about official corruption and political infighting.

We have learned over the past fifteen years that developments in Afghanistan seldom follow a linear path. There are good days and bad days, but we are also certain that the overarching trend is positive. Afghanistan today is hardly recognizable in comparison to the war-ravaged country in 2001.

In Pakistan, we will continue to see instances where our cooperation is difficult, and our interests do not immediately align. Regional relationships, between both India and Pakistan, and Afghanistan and Pakistan, will remain challenging. You may become frustrated by these discouraging signals, and feel that our resources could serve us better elsewhere.

But sustained engagement with Pakistan is critical to a reconciliation process in Afghanistan, to bolstering their economic reforms, and to supporting brave Pakistani men and women who fight to advance human rights, including religious freedom, against stiff resistance. This is where sustained assistance and engagement has paid dividends and provided encouragement to Pakistanis, inside government and out, that positive, tangible results are in our shared interest and compatible with our democratic values. We expect setbacks, but we will continue to work hard to facilitate stability, and a durable peace in the region, where Pakistan plays a productive role.

Thank you for the opportunity to address your subcommittees. I look forward to our discussion today, and welcome any questions you may have.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.
Ambassador Sampler.

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

Mr. SAMPLER. You are very kind.

Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Salmon, Ranking Members Deutch and Sherman, and members of the subcommittees, thank you for inviting me to discuss the administration's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request for the U.S. Agency for International Development's assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is again an honor to appear before you with Rick Olson, the special representative.

I too will begin my testimony by recognizing the sacrifices made by our sons and daughters and their families in the military and in the civilian agencies who have served and sometimes died in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their tireless efforts alongside those of our allies, as well as of our Pakistan and Afghan brothers and sisters, make our work today possible. I have also submitted written testimony for the record that gives considerable detail about the work that USAID has done and expects to continue. But in the interest of time, I will summarize.

USAID's mission is to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient Democratic societies, while advancing America's own security and prosperity. I can think of no other region in the world today where this mission is more relevant.

The President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request for Afghanistan and Pakistan reflects our Nation's efforts to advance political stability and economic prosperity, which will further strengthen and advance our peaceful partnerships with both countries.

Over the past several years, with vital support from Congress, we have taken firm steps to ensure that our assistance in the region is more efficient, more effective, and impactful. No one, least of all me, will say that our work in these two complex countries is easy or without challenges. Wracked with conflict and instability for much of the last three decades, the region remains one of the least economically integrated in the world, with the majority of its human capital and economic potential still untapped.

Despite the challenges, on behalf of the American people, we have accomplished a great deal. There is a growing understanding and appreciation of our support in the communities where USAID's programs have had an impact. USAID has worked to increase awareness of our assistance, for example, in Pakistan. Our most recent polling data showed that an awareness of U.S. assistance among Pakistani citizens has increased over the 3 years from 34 percent to 47 percent.

Whether it is a shop owner in Lahore, whose sales have increased because of more reliable electricity, a result to USAID's efforts to add over 2,300 megawatts of electricity to the grid; or whether it is an Afghan seed provider who now, because of USAID programs, is linked to specialty baking industries around the world, millions of people in the region have longer life spans, in-

creased access to health and education, improved economic opportunities and brighter futures because of America's assistance in their countries.

Sustainable development will require the regions leaders to make some hard and fundamental choices. Our assistance programs act as catalysts and incentive to promote that change and are delivering measurable results that contribute to this potential transformation. The Fiscal Year 2017 request reflects our continued push toward expanding progress that will build local capacity in facilitating private sector growth, access to essential social services, and transparent governance that, in the long term, can undermine the support for insurgent groups and help stabilize the region.

There are inherent risks in doing business in many parts of the world where USAID operates. But USAID around the world prioritizes the effective and accountable use of taxpayer dollars. There is no acceptable level of fraud, waste, or abuse in any of our programs. All of our projects receive proper monitoring and oversight, and we adjust our efforts as necessary to respond to dynamic security and operational environments where we work.

In addition to standard oversight procedures and measures implemented worldwide, specifically in Afghanistan and Pakistan, our project managers rely on multiple data sources to provide information on the progress and the effectiveness of USAID activities. We triangulate this information to determine whether adjustments to programming are required. We have also taken specific measures to prevent funds from being diverted from their development purpose to malign actors. Since 2011, our vetting efforts in Afghanistan have kept over $660 million from being awarded to organizations who did not meet our vetting standards.

As USAID looks to 2017 and beyond, the agency is committed to making every effort to ensure that our programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan are sensible, sustainable, and developmentally sound. And we will continue to support our national security objectives in this complex but important part of the world. It is an honor to be able to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sampler follows:]

Testimony of Donald L. "Larry" Sampler
Assistant to the Administrator and Director
of the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs
United States Agency for International Development
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
"The Administration's FY 2017 Budget Request for Assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan"
Wednesday, April 27, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Chairman Salmon, Ranking Members Deutch and Sherman and Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for inviting me here to discuss the Administration's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is an honor to appear before you with the Department of State's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Olson.

I want to begin this testimony by recognizing the sacrifice made by our sons and daughters – and their families – in the military and civilian agencies who have served, and sometimes sacrificed their lives, in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their tireless efforts, along with our allies, our Afghan and Pakistani partners, make our work today possible.

USAID's mission is to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. I can think of no other region in the world where this mission is more clearly applicable. The President's FY 2017 Budget request for assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan reflects our nation's efforts to advance political stability and economic prosperity which will further strengthen and advance our peaceful partnership with both countries. Over the past several years, with vital support from Congress, we have taken firm steps to ensure our assistance in the region is more efficient, effective and impactful. We appreciate this support from Congress, which reflects the recognition that USAID's development programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan are critical components of U.S. national security objectives in the region.

No one, least of all me, will say that our work in these two complex countries is not without challenges. Wracked with conflict and instability for much of the last three decades, the region

remains one of the least economically integrated in the world, with the majority of its human capital and economic potential untapped.

Despite these challenges, on behalf of the American people, we have accomplished a great deal. There is a growing understanding and appreciation of our support in the communities where USAID's programs have had an impact. USAID has put forth a concerted effort to increase awareness of our assistance in Pakistan. Our most recent polling data show that awareness of U.S. assistance among Pakistani citizens increased over three years from 34 percent to 47 percent in 2014. Whether it is the shop owner in Lahore whose sales have increased because of more reliable electricity – thanks to USAID's efforts to add approximately 2,300 megawatts of electricity to the national grid, which has benefitted 26 million Pakistanis since 2011 – or the Afghan seed provider who, because of USAID, is now linked to the specialty baking industry, millions of people in the region who have longer life spans, increased access to education and health care, improved economic opportunities, and brighter futures because of America's assistance in their countries.

Sustainable development will require the region's leaders to make fundamental changes. Our assistance programs act as catalysts and incentives for change, and are delivering measurable results that contribute to this potential transformation. The FY 2017 request reflects our continued push toward expanding progress that will build local capacity in facilitating private sector growth, access to essential social services and transparent governance that, in the long term, can undermine support for insurgent groups and stabilize the region.

Although there are inherent risks in doing business in many parts of the world where USAID operates, the Agency prioritizes the effective and accountable use of taxpayer dollars. There is no level of acceptable fraud, waste, or abuse in our programs. All of our projects receive proper monitoring and oversight, and we adjust our efforts as needed within the dynamic security and operational environments within which we work.

In addition to standard USAID oversight measures implemented worldwide, in Afghanistan and Pakistan our project managers rely on multiple data sources to provide information on the progress and effectiveness of USAID activities, triangulate this information, and determine whether adjustments to programming are required. We have also taken measures to prevent funds from being diverted from their development purpose to malign actors. Since 2011, our efforts have kept over $660 million from being awarded to those who did not meet our vetting standards.

AFGHANISTAN

The stability of Afghanistan will require sustained effort to cement the important development gains that have been made over the past fourteen years. I know from personal experience that the progress made in Afghanistan is remarkable, yet fragile – and we have seen the dire consequences of neglect and disengagement play out in this region before.

Weaning Afghanistan from U.S. and donor assistance is a necessary requirement, and essential for the country's long-term stability. To achieve this goal without triggering further instability, it is essential to continue to provide assistance in areas critical to Afghan economic and political development. We are making tough decisions and prioritizing investments that have the greatest potential for long term sustainability.

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 U.S. along with our international partners, the Afghan government and the Afghan people. The key elements of USAID's Afghanistan strategy going forward are a focus on significant achievements in health, education, and women's empowerment; further economic growth focused on private sector development; and supporting effective, transparent Afghan governance.

For Afghanistan, our foreign assistance request totals $1.25 billion, of which $1.027 is comprised of Economic Support Fund, Overseas Contingency Operations (ESF-OCO) funds. This request will support critical objectives we share with our Afghan partners in achieving a democratic, secure and sovereign Afghanistan where Afghans find peace, security, and prosperity. FY 2017 resources will prioritize the maintenance of gains made in health, education, and gender equality by strengthening the Afghan government's capacity to deliver social services, increase investments in human capital, and advance and solidify the empowerment of women while supporting improvements in agriculture for long term sustainable development of the country.

USAID Contributions to Development in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, USAID–in coordination with other donors–has helped Afghans achieve extraordinary gains for a country that in 2002 had virtually no access to reliable electricity,

modern telecommunications or paved roads. We have significantly helped empower women–who are almost half of the Afghan population–to be full contributing members in Afghan society.

Specific achievements include:

- Afghanistan's GDP is now nearly two and a half times greater than it was in 2002 and is currently over $20 billion; per capita GDP has increased by 70 percent in only 12 years.
- Approximately 57 percent of the population now lives within a one-hour walking distance of a health facility, up from only 9 percent in 2002. USAID has also trained over 2,000 midwives.
- USAID has helped over 84,000 Afghan girls attend community-based education classes, and worked to eliminate the need for Afghan girls to travel long and sometimes dangerous distances to attend school. Over one million Afghan students now attend school, as a direct result of USAID-assistance, and millions of primary grade students have benefitted from USAID-support for new textbooks, teacher training, and educational facilities.
- Women-owned businesses now number over 3,000, with more cropping up every day.
- Independent and privately owned media have flourished, with now over 75 TV and 200 radio stations. In addition, there are 57 officially licensed Internet Service Providers including six Mobile Network Operators functioning in Afghanistan.
- In 2002, only six percent of Afghans had access to reliable electricity. Today that number has increased to approximately 27 percent.

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

- Developing a multi-tiered monitoring approach to address reduced mobility and decreased field staff that, along with other monitoring and evaluation efforts, will continue to ensure appropriate oversight of projects;
- Incentivizing the Afghan Government to make policy reforms and service delivery that improves government involvement and ownership of development results; and
- Focusing on long-term sustainability through implementing three key principles: (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.

The United States' Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan

The United States is committed to strengthening its partnership with Afghanistan over the coming years to ensure that our development assistance continues to achieve positive results that align with Afghanistan's priorities and support the country's path to self-reliance. Over the past few years, we have increased the use of more flexible, timely, and targeted assistance, such as through the use of multi-donor trust funds, which increase donor coordination and leverage development dollars.

We also incentivize a portion of our assistance by linking funding to achievement of specific reforms and development results by the Government of Afghanistan, including ensuring fiscal sustainability, governance and anti-corruption, reducing poverty and enhancing inclusive growth. These incentivized funding mechanisms demonstrate our commitment to sustainability and Afghan ownership and are a cost-effective use of our development assistance.

In certain cases, we provide direct assistance through the Afghan government to implement specific projects, but only with strict oversight and careful safeguards in place. This approach increases the Afghan government's capacity to sustain the investments and gains made over the last decade and reduces its dependence on donors.

As USAID looks ahead, we welcome the leadership of the European Union and Afghanistan as they host a ministerial conference on Afghanistan's development in Brussels this October. The conference will build on the 2012 Tokyo and 2014 London Conferences, where the international community declared that we will not abandon Afghanistan, and labeled 2015-2024 as the "transformation decade." The Afghan government understands that it must make a compelling case for continued extraordinary support. Indeed, we are using the conference as an action-forcing event, encouraging the Government to take action now so that it can highlight Afghanistan's increasing self-reliance commitment to reform in Brussels.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan continues to be an important partner for the United States. While our countries do not always see eye-to-eye, our relationship with Pakistan is vital to U.S. national security and strategic interests. In Pakistan, barriers to accessing education, a lack of essential services and limited prospects for employment contribute to regional instability and violent extremism.

Consistent engagement with Pakistan–both its government and people–is the best way to address these challenges, advance our core interests, and help positively impact Pakistan's long-term future.

The President's FY 2017 Budget request continues to assist Pakistan and implement long-term solutions to meet its major challenges, helping Pakistan reform its energy sector, adding sources of clean energy generation capacity to Pakistan's power grid, enhancing U.S.-Pakistan trade and private investment, expanding educational opportunities, and advancing health services

For Pakistan, the FY 2017 Foreign Assistance request is $742.2 million, of which $400 million is ESF-OCO funds and $22.5 million is Global Health Programs-USAID (GHP-USAID) funds. This assistance intends to help develop a more stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan. ESF funded programs build long-term cooperation with Pakistan on all five priority sectors that are key to Pakistan's stability and growth: energy, economic growth, stabilization of areas most vulnerable to extremism, education, and health. The FY 2017 request includes funds for the voluntary return of IDPs displaced by counterterrorism operations and support long-term efforts to rehabilitate conflict-affected regions. .

USAID Contributions in Pakistan

USAID's work supports shared U.S. and Pakistan national security interests by implementing programs to help create a more stable, democratic, healthy, educated, and prosperous Pakistan that is integrated into the region and is a strong economic partner.

Specific achievements include:

- Since 2009, USAID has leveraged Pakistan's investments in its energy sector to add the equivalent of about 2,300 megawatts of electricity to Pakistan's system, benefitting over 26 million Pakistanis.
- In the same period, USAID helped tens of thousands of Pakistan's small and medium-sized enterprises access new markets.
- To date, USAID's projects have resulted in $151 million in increased sales of agriculture and manufactured goods, including $58.7 million in increased exports of targeted commodities and directly supporting over 911,000 rural households.
- Since 2009, USAID has constructed or rehabilitated over 1,000 schools, improving education access for over 110,000 children.

- In 2015, the White House's Let Girls Learn global initiative was launched; in Pakistan its goal is to empower, educate and improve livelihoods for more than 200,000 Pakistani adolescent girls.

REGIONAL

The Department of State and USAID work together to encourage regional connectivity, build economic ties, and support increased partnership between Afghanistan and Pakistan and their neighbors on their many shared economic and security interests. The entire region stands to benefit substantially from increased economic integration, and USAID is laying the groundwork for this by facilitating trade and providing technical assistance for regional energy projects.

For example, USAID works in close coordination with the Department of State to further the goals of the New Silk Road vision to strengthen connectivity between Afghanistan and its neighbors in Central and South Asia, bolstering Afghanistan's economic growth and stability. Since FY2012, $53.9 million has been committed to programs to improve outcomes across a range of regional energy, trade, water and food security work. Also, in October 2015, USAID sponsored the 4th annual Central Asia Trade Forum, bringing together approximately 400 entrepreneurs, traders, businessman, policymakers, diplomats, and journalists from across Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India to identify trade opportunities.

Furthermore, anticipated water shortages in Central and South Asia present a particular threat for the region, since hydropower plays an important role in energy production. USAID is working with other partners in the water sector, supporting programs that are building a cadre of experts who can better manage water resources across the region. Building these skills is an important element in promoting cooperation on more efficient transboundary water use across Central and South Asia.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by thanking the individuals in our military who have served in Afghanistan – and in some cases given their lives – as well as their families. No less deserving of our gratitude are those thousands of brave American civilians who have served in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, whether they are development workers from the U.S. Agency for International Development, diplomats of the U.S. Department of State, or the thousands of men and women working shoulder to shoulder with us as contractors and grantees implementing U.S. programs in

the region. I would also like to recognize the local Afghan and Pakistani citizens who work – and sacrifice – alongside us to ensure their countries' futures are ones filled with increased access to opportunities, enhanced stability, and a hopeful tomorrow for their children.

As USAID looks to 2017 and beyond, the Agency is committed to making every effort to ensure there is continued and durable development progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This progress is essential to secure our overall national security objectives in this complex region. We will continue to make these important contributions while also safeguarding taxpayer funds.

It is an honor to be able to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard. Thank you and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much to both of you.

Ambassador Olson, last week's terrorist attack in Kabul highlighted the limits of our policy in Afghanistan, especially our restricted rules of engagement. The Taliban is increasingly using terrorism as a tool as it targets and adapts to the Afghan military and coalition forces. But as General Campbell testified in February, U.S. forces are not allowed to target the Taliban in an offensive manner to get ahead of the attacks like the ones we saw last week.

Can you explain why U.S. forces are not allowed to target the Taliban? And is the administration discussing whether the Taliban should be authorized for targeting in the future?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, let me join you in robustly condemning the attack of 19 April. These clearly undermine the efforts to make peace in the region. And I would just add that we have pressed the Government of Pakistan on its commitment not to discriminate amongst terrorist groups. We believe there across the region must be zero tolerance for safe havens.

With regard specifically to the question of combat authorities, I think I would have to refer you to my colleagues in the Department of Defense for a more detailed discussion of what they are seeking and the state of deliberation on those questions. But I would emphasize that the administration's position, the President's position, is that our combat operations in Afghanistan ended in December 2014. And so we will continue to work on a policy on that basis.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

President Ghani made a good-faith effort to engage Pakistan and enlist its assistance in eliminating the Taliban from within Pakistan's borders. And yesterday, he called again on the Pakistani military to eliminate this threat.

What are we doing to press Pakistan to take action against the Taliban? And besides giving it safe haven, what kind of support is Pakistan providing to the Taliban?

Mr. OLSON. Madam Chair, I think that Pakistan is at a strategic crossroads. We have made very clear at the highest levels that we believe, first of all, that Pakistan has made great progress over the past couple of years in addressing its domestic counterterrorism priorities. That is to say, it has taken robust action against those groups, principally the TTP, the Pakistani Taliban, that threaten Pakistanis.

Their stated policy, which we agree with, is not to discriminate amongst terrorist groups. We believe there is considerable room for improvement in the application of that policy on the ground. And we believe, in particular, that Pakistan has not taken as vigorous action against groups that threaten its neighbors as it has against those that threaten it domestically. So Pakistan has also been very helpful in the reconciliation process, but I do believe that there is a strategic choice right now. With the Taliban having refused to come to the table, it seems to us that it is time to address more robustly the question of groups that threaten Afghanistan.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. And I have two remaining questions. One is about the F-16s sale to Pakistan. I think that we need to leverage our military sales to Pakistan in order to get some more cooperation within the region.

Can you please update us on the status of the F-16s sale, and how would you describe our ability to leverage our aid to Pakistan?

Mr. OLSON. Madam Chair, the administration is supportive of the F-16 sale to Pakistan. This has been developed between our military coordinating groups over the course of time. It is consistent with our overall program of support for the Pakistan military, which is based on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

The Pakistanis have developed a precision strike capability that they use in the F-16s they have right now to take out targets. As I mentioned before, these are principally the Pakistani Taliban. But we think that that is a good thing.

The Pakistani Taliban has been involved in attacks against Americans at FOB Chapman in Afghanistan in 2009, and indeed in supporting the Times Square bomber. So we applaud the actions that the Pakistanis have been taking against their domestic terrorism threat, even as we call upon them to take more robust action against those groups that threaten their neighbors.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. And lastly, when I was in Afghanistan last year, officials described the SIGAR report of a $47-million gas station as inconsistent with their understanding of the situation. What can you tell us about that gas station, how much did it cost, what is the status of it? Do they give free towels and detergent or anything good? Car wash?

Mr. OLSON. Well, my understanding, Madam Chair, is that the total number referred to several different projects, including the rehabilitation of the Sheberghan gas fields, some of which were funded through, I believe, through USAID, but much of which was funded actually through the Department of Defense and the TFBSO operations.

I was involved in this when I was in Afghanistan, and I think we would have to get you a more detailed breakdown for a response.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Deutch is recognized.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks, Madam Chairman.

It has been reported that refugees of Afghan origin represent the second largest group of refugees trying to enter Europe. Just a couple of questions there.

First, what are the numbers of refugees? And secondly, howis the U.S. responding both politically and, Mr. Sampler, programmatically as well?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Ranking Member Deutch. With regard to numbers, I think I will have to get back to you on that. Our understanding is that it accords with yours, that Afghans have represented a significant number of refugees that have shown up in Europe.

I think it is worth noting that our impression, and we don't have hard numbers, but certainly our impression is that many of them are actually coming from other countries than Afghanistan. In other words, they are coming from countries where they have been resident for some period of time. But that is not to suggest that there aren't ultimately some Afghan causes for this.

I think the downturn in the economy, the transition, the economic transition that accompanied the security transition in 2014

is still being felt. We have been at a diplomatic level very supportive of our European allies' approaches to the Afghan Government to see if there are ways that we can assist. The Europeans are seeking arrangements for the return of those who don't qualify for refugee status, and we are supportive of that.

And, of course, ultimately I think this highlights the importance of continuing engagement on the development side with Afghanistan to strengthen the Afghan economy so that it can absorb the population coming on the market.

Mr. DEUTCH. But, Mr. Sampler, and then I have a followup, please.

Mr. SAMPLER. Yeah, please. The—very specifically, $50 million in Fiscal Year 2015 in previous year money is allocated specifically to helping the Afghans address this issue. I would define the issue as having two components that they have to address. The most fundamental, of course, is growing their economy. If there is a silver lining in this issue, it is that the pressure on the economy is being driven by 200,000 young Afghans graduating from high school and entering the job force every year. That is a positive thing, but only if there can be jobs made available for them.

So this $50 million is intended to help grow the economy through internship programs, which will allow some of these students to move straight from high school into employment, as well as the National Solidarity Programme that the Afghans themselves have designed to generate employment and economic growth across the country.

Second point I will make that they also have to address is strategic communications. If young Afghans graduating from high school now with critical thinking skills, access to the Internet, and understanding that there is a bigger world out there, which they didn't have in the past, that understanding, that access, and that critical thinking is going to lead them to make very hard decisions about do they stay or do they go. So the Afghans must do a better job at messaging to their own young age bulging population that there are prospects for you to stay in Afghanistan.

Mr. DEUTCH. Well, if we don't—if we think that, Ambassador Olson, that the significant number of those, the majority of those are coming from other countries where they have lived, are we—I guess again for both of you, if we have seen an uptick, is it because they are looking at what is happening on the ground in Afghanistan realizing that they are not going back? And shouldn't there be a coordinated effort to address this refugee issue, given the numbers and regardless of where they are coming from, since they are ultimately all—they all originated in the same place?

Mr. OLSON. Well, if I may, Congressman, I think these are excellent questions. And I think we are still in the process of working with our European allies to identify what exactly the nature of these movements are. I mean, obviously the immediate response, and this is outside of our purview here, but has been to be supportive of our European friends and allies. I know my boss, Secretary Kerry, is extraordinarily focused on this topic. But I think these questions probably do require a greater degree of analysis and beyond the immediate sort of crisis management we need to be thinking about how we can respond.

Mr. DEUTCH. I couldn't agree more. And I would urge that that analysis, to the extent that it is being done, be done as quickly as possible and that you share it with the members of this committee.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You are welcome very much, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. Salmon.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

Pakistani Dr. Shakil Afridi assisted U.S. efforts in tracking down Osama bin Laden, and later was jailed for 23 years for alleged links to terrorist groups. Congress has, in the past, withheld aid to Pakistan to encourage the release of Afridi. What progress has been made on the effort, and what more can we do to aid this friend of the United States in his freedom? Should we look for any other possible restrictions on aid?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me say that we share your sense of outrage with regard to the plight of Dr. Afridi. I can assure you that we have raised this issue at the very highest levels of our Government. It has been the subject of very direct conversations. We have requested the release of Dr. Afridi, and we continually request updates on his health and his status.

So far, I have to say we have not—those result—those approaches have not yielded any results, but we will continue to raise them. There are already conditions, as you know, on assistance. And we make the point to our Pakistani colleagues that the very strong sentiment on Capitol Hill in particular, which is completely shared by the administration.

Mr. SALMON. If they are listening today, I just want to tell them for the record that as I talk to different members about financial support, financial aid for Pakistan, it is the single biggest impediment to members wanting to be supportive. And if they are truly interested in furthering relations, strong relations with us, I would really hope that they take a second and a third and a fourth look at the incarceration of this man and look to his expedited release.

One of the biggest drags on Pakistan's economy has long been corruption. In Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perception Index, Pakistan ranked 117 out of 168 countries. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was one of the world leaders identified in the recently leaked Panama Papers. How is the United States assisting Pakistan in reducing corruption, and how do we ensure our own programs and activities do not suffer because of corruption within Pakistan?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the question of the Panama Papers, we actually would not, the administration would not have any comment on these allegations that have surfaced. Globally, of course, we are in favor of greater financial transparency. With regard to corruption efforts in Pakistan, there have been, I think, an uptick in anticorruption efforts, particularly in conjunction with some of the military operations that have been taking place in the settled areas of Pakistan. There was a strong anticorruption drive in Karachi at the same time that there were operations to round up miscreants.

These are primarily conducted by the National Accountability Bureau, and, of course, as long as these investigations are done in accordance with due process, the U.S. Government is supportive,

and we do have some links with the National Accountability Bureau. I think I would probably defer to my colleague, Larry, if he had anything to say on the assistance piece.

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, just to your specific question about how do we ensure this doesn't affect our programming, our programs are very aggressively monitored and overseen. We asked our own inspector general, in fact, to create a hotline, and there is now the equivalent of a 1-800 number in Pakistan that implementing partners, suppliers, and even Pakistani citizens, are encouraged to use. It was intended to use that hotline to report on our own programming, but it has become much broader, and this anticorruption hotline is actually quite popular in Pakistan.

I am reasonably confident the programming we are doing is not just safeguarding our own programs, but it is serving as an example to the government and the governments within Pakistan as well.

Mr. SALMON. Thanks. I am out of time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Salmon. Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. I want to join with the ranking member of the Asia Subcommittee and everyone else in Congress in talking about Dr. Afridi. I think the Pakistanis understand that you will give them the money whether they turn Afridi over or not, but I hope you convey that Congress probably won't, and next year, I would suggest Congress is much less likely to.

So what would happen if we simply didn't provide the aid until Dr. Afridi and his family were released? We could reprogram that money to other parts of the war on Islamic extremist terrorism, and defend ourselves perhaps much more effectively than aid through Pakistan. What would be the Pakistani response if we cut all aid until Dr. Afridi was released?

Mr. OLSON. Well, Congressman, first of all, let me say that your message has been received loud and clear, and we will indeed convey it as we have conveyed it, to the Pakistanis on Dr. Afridi. I would just respectfully suggest to you that our assistance program is crafted to advance our national interests.

Mr. SHERMAN. There are many things we could do with that money that don't involve giving it to the people who are holding Dr. Afridi. Your focus is Afghanistan and Pakistan. There are things we could do in the war on terrorism outside your jurisdiction that could perhaps do more to safeguard America and its interests. And the Pakistanis shouldn't think that we have unlimited resources so we might as well spend them on anything that seems useful.

I want to shift to Sindh. Vice Chairman Kehar Ansari has been kidnapped, arrested. He is the vice chairman of the leading Sindh party. We have got assassinations that have not been investigated, including Anwar Laghari, but also a host of others, Mr. Raja Dahir, Mr. Samiullah Kalhoro, Mr. Sirai Khuhawar, and Mr. Maqsood Qureshi. Is this something you are bringing up in Islamabad or just leaving to the Karachi Consulate?

Mr. OLSON. Well, first of all, our Consulate in Karachi is tracking this closely but with the full support of our Embassy in Islamabad——

Mr. SHERMAN. Have you personally raised either Mr. Laghari's case or Mr. Ansari's case? Well to how high a level have you personally conveyed it to Pakistanis?

Mr. OLSON. Yeah. The Laghari case we have raised at the provincial level, and——

Mr. SHERMAN. So you personally haven't engaged with the top officials in Islamabad on these issues?

Mr. OLSON. No, sir, I have not engaged on them.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay. I want to go on to another question. The administration routinely declined to certify that Pakistan is cooperating with the United States in counterterrorism against the Haqqani Network and others, and that it is not supporting terrorist activities against the United States or coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Why is the administration unwilling to make that certification? And does it make sense to just waive that and send them the money even if you can't make the certification?

Mr. OLSON. Congressman, we believe that all of the programs, again that we are talking about, are in our national interests, and we have to balance the national security interests of the United States and——

Mr. SHERMAN. But can you say that they are not cooperating with the United States on counterterrorism and they are not supporting terrorist activity? What are the facts that make it impossible to make these certifications?

Mr. OLSON. We have long had concerns about the fact that despite Pakistan having a stated policy of not discriminating between terrorist groups in the application of that policy, they have, in fact, not moved against actors that threaten their neighbors. And we have raised this with them very directly, and we share the concerns that have been expressed about the Haqqani Network and also about Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and other groups.

Mr. SHERMAN. My time is expired. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I don't want to cut you off if you have another question.

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Chairman, that would be a dangerous precedent——

Mr. ROS-LEHTINEN. Okay. You are right. All right. What was I thinking? Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Obviously from my opening 1 minute, I am very disturbed about a major slap in the face to someone who is Vice President, Senior Vice President of Afghanistan, who was instrumental in defeating the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces shortly after 9/11, and I just don't understand that. But it seems to be a pattern in this administration where they go after the people who are the most friendly to the United States and use a very soft approach and conciliatory approach toward those who would slaughter Americans by the thousands if they had a chance.

Let's go to Dr. Afridi and why we have to provide F-16s and military equipment to a country, that Dr. Afridi's imprisonment continues to be basically an act by the Pakistani Government to basi-

cally thumb their nose at the United States and the people of the United States.

Here is the man who permitted us with his activity to bring to justice the criminal who slaughtered, the criminal terrorist who helped slaughter, not helped but planned the slaughter of 3,000 Americans on 9/11, and here we can't grant a passport to the man who helped defeat the radical Islamists in Afghanistan, but we are going to give aid, continue to give aid to the country that holds Dr. Afridi, the person who helped us defeat, or bring to justice the man who murdered our people, that we can't even demand that he be freed from the dungeons he is being held in.

That makes no sense. Can you make some sense out of that for me?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you very much, Congressman. First of all, with regard to the question of visas, privacy laws prohibit us from commenting on the details of any particular consular application, but I can tell you that First Vice President Dostum is reported to have decided not to travel to the United States in order to remain in Afghanistan to deal with the security situation, especially in the——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You don't believe that he really decided that on his own? I am happy to see that you are towing the line. It is your job to be here and say that to us, but nobody buys that.

I mean, the bottom line is we have slapped him in the face. Let me just put it for the record, General Dostum, now Vice President Dostum, was pivotal after 9/11 in organizing the Northern Alliance. He put together a force that defeated the Taliban. When his forces, by the way, removed the Taliban from Kabul, there were only 200 American troops on the ground at that time. That was a very hard-fought battle. He was in front of the troops most of the time leading the way. This is a very brave man and a very yes, flawed man, no doubt. We are all flawed.

And what they are saying that he committed, the horrible crime he committed was in Afghan tradition when someone surrenders, they surrender and pledge not to try to overpower their captors. The captors pledge not to kill the people they have captured. That is so ingrained in the Afghans that otherwise their whole history would be killing all the prisoners.

After the Taliban forces were defeated in one of the first major battles, General Dostum had hundreds of prisoners who had surrendered. They were a holed up in a French fort. I happened to have visited that fort. We had one CIA agent there trying to figure out what was going on. And the prisoners broke their pledge, broke the word, committed the atrocity of rising up against their captors and murdered a number of General Dostum's men, as well our own CIA agent. And yes after that, Dostum took more lives to defeat, more lives to defeat, those forces who were now in charge of that fort. And once they captured those men again, he didn't know what to do with them. He put them into container trucks and drove them off somewhere, and, yes, they probably died a horrible death.

They made the decision to rise up against their captors. They made the decision to kill an unarmed American CIA agent who was there trying to get a figure about what was going on. And for this administration to withhold a visa from him and slap him in the

face because of that, knowing that he helped defeat the people who slaughtered 3,000 Americans, is insane.

And then we go to Pakistan, and they have Dr. Afridi in jail. And the Pakistanis, we know, what do they use their own weapons for? To kill the Baloch by the thousands and to attack their neighbors by supporting terrorist incursions into India.

One last question. Okay. What more can Pakistan do that would have us cut off the military aid? What other evil deeds could they possibly do that would put us to the point where we won't any longer give them the weapons they need to kill innocent people and undercut the security of the region?

Mr. OLSON. Congressman, with regard to Vice President Dostum, we are certainly well aware of the historic role that he has played, and let me assure you that we do treat the Vice President, as the First Vice President of Afghanistan with all the respect that his office carries. And we are in touch with him at the appropriate level. As I say, I cannot comment on the particulars of the status of the visa because of Privacy Act considerations.

With regard to Pakistan, as I have said, I think Pakistan is at a strategic crossroads, and I think it needs to make a choice. It has been helpful to the United States and the international community in trying to bring the Taliban to the table for reconciliation talks, but the Taliban have rejected that. And our view is that the Taliban need to face the consequences of their decision. So it does seem to me that Pakistan right now has some very serious challenges and difficult decisions to make.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. What about the Pakistanis suffering the consequences of their decisions? No. We are just going to keep the money flowing no matter what they do. It is debatable whether or not they have encouraged the Taliban leaders that you are talking about to actually go and try to do something or whether they are financing the Taliban leaders with our money. This is insanity. This administration has a—it is not just this administration. This started when we forced Karzai down the throats of the Afghan people, a man with no popular support whatsoever, a man who has family deeply involved with various criminal activities. We laid the groundwork before this administration, and this administration continues this type of insanity that is leading to many deaths by Americans throughout this country.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher. Thank you. Dr. Bera is recognized.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I am going to shift toward my concerns about Afghanistan's economic development and the need to maintain some sort of economic growth for stability. We have invested billions of dollars obviously and lost hundreds of lives in the last decade. I do support the administration's current position in terms of maintaining a troop presence to help complement the Afghan security forces because obviously as we talk to multinational investors, Indian companies, and others, one of their chief concerns is the security risks in terms of making major investments in Afghanistan.

I applaud the Indian company's investments in major infrastructure projects, like the Salma Dam, and the concern I have is how do we continue this economic growth? India, as the major economy

in South Asia, clearly has a role in helping increase trade between India and Afghanistan. And I am interested in, you know, kind of the perspective there.

Also, as the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement kind of moves forward, I know India is very interested in also participating in there for the movement of goods and services. In Afghanistan's interests, I think Afghanistan is certainly interested in making the flow of goods and services easier with India. Obviously Pakistan has taken a very different position in terms of the overland transit of goods and services. And I do think it is in our interests as the United States to push Pakistan to be more open to a trilateral trade agreement that makes India's participation available.

Mr. Sampler, maybe you want to start, or Mr. Olson?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you. Thank you, Congressman Bera. Let me first say, as you mentioned in your opening remarks, we greatly appreciate the approximately $2 billion that India has invested in Afghanistan in development assistance. I wanted to let you know that I traveled to Delhi about a month ago myself and briefed, along with General Nicholson joined me, and we briefed on the situation in Afghanistan with regard to the security situation, and also development, and reconciliation, Afghan reconciliation.

I think that it would be particularly helpful, and we made this point, to Indian Government officials if India were able to participate in some of the development conferences that are taking place later this year, especially the Brussels. The EU-hosted Brussels Development Conference focused on the development of Afghanistan, focusing on the years 2018 to 2020, and I think the Indian Government is considering that right now. In our view, it would be a useful way for them to get some credit for what they are, in fact, already doing.

In terms of regional connectivity, absolutely the U.S. Government favors, and the administration favors, everything we can do to promote regional connectivity. As you note, APTTA has so far been a bilateral agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We have been very focused on the implementation of that agreement. There has been some discussion of extending that to Tajikistan. I think that Pakistan has signalled that it is not prepared to extend that to India at this point. But, of course, we as a matter of policy favor regional connectivity all across the region.

Mr. BERA. I would continue to encourage the administration and the State Department to push for that regional connectivity. Certainly through trade, through transit of goods and services, you do have the opportunity to try to start creating some interconnected economies, create some stability. The big worry there is tensions between Pakistan and India, and you have two nuclear-armed countries, two countries that have a history of tension, but through economic development, through trade, through transit of goods and services, you can create some stability and connectivity. And, again, I would encourage State to continue to push that agenda.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Dr. Bera. Mr. Weber of Texas.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, ma'am. This is going to be for Mr. Olson. I guess we will start with you. And I had to step out, so forgive me if this has been answered.

What is the funding gap between what the Afghan Government raises on its own versus what it needs to operate? What other countries are contributing to that Afghan Government in order to close this gap? And what percentage does the U.S. have?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Congressman. I would say a rough order of magnitude would be the Afghans raise about $2 billion a year in terms of government revenues. This has actually been improving of late. The Finance Minister has made it an essential effort of his administration to improve revenue collection, and he has won high marks from the IMF and the international financial institutions generally for undertaking that.

But as you correctly point out, there is a shortfall in terms of what we are planning for for the Warsaw and Brussels Conferences, the Warsaw NATO Conference and the EU Brussels Development Conference. We think that funding the Afghan National Security Forces will require about $4 billion a year for——

Mr. WEBER. The $2 billion they raise, is that for just funding the Afghan forces?

Mr. OLSON. The $2 billion they raise is revenues.

Mr. WEBER. Total revenues?

Mr. OLSON. Total revenues of all government operations, of which they devote, I believe, about $500 million to the Afghan National Security Forces. They devote another $200 million to the National Directorate of Security, which also plays a critical role in the defense of Afghanistan, and in their accounting they would count that as a defense cost, so that is about $700 million.

And then the remaining $1.3 billion, roughly somewhat less than that, is what they use to fund the civilian, the government. The shortfall, if we want to call it that, would be on the military side, about $4 billion a year, and on the civilian side, about $3 billion a year. So going into Warsaw and Brussels, our position is that we would like the donors to contribute at or near their current levels of funding to accommodate the need to fund——

Mr. WEBER. Who are those donors?

Mr. OLSON. Principally for Warsaw, it is primarily NATO, NATO allies, and some partners, including Japan, contributes significantly to certain security measures, in addition to NATO allies.

On the civilian development side, it is a combination of obviously the international financial institutions, World Bank, the IMF, but also the European Union is a very significant donor. The EU and all the EU member states together probably at or perhaps slightly exceed our contribution.

Mr. WEBER. Which is what percentage?

Mr. OLSON. It would be roughly, you know, in terms of the targets, it would be about 1 billion each for the years going forward, but I would have to get back to you with specific percentages.

Mr. WEBER. Get those for me if you would. There is some discussion, an Afghan official said they need at least $10 billion in donated funds until 2025, at which time according to this, Afghans expect to be self-sufficient. Is this predicated on U.S. troops being there that whole time? And then furthermore, there is discussion that Afghanistan's counternarcotics chief said there would be no eradication efforts in the Hellman Province, which is because of the Taliban's presence, this is their major drug trafficking area, and is

that going to impact their ability to be self-sufficient in 2025? Are U.S. troops going to have to be there until 2025?

Mr. OLSON. Congressman, the President has been very clear that we will have 9,800 troops through this fighting season and a residual force of 5,500 by the beginning of next year. It will, of course, be up to the incoming administration to make decisions about future troop levels.

Mr. WEBER. Fair enough. Just get that percentage to me if you would, and I would also like the answer on if they are not going to try to eradicate, I guess that would be the heroin production, in that one province, why not, and what is that going to do to us?

And Madam Chair, I will yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Weber. Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I would ask unanimous consent to have my opening statement submitted.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you. Thank you to our witnesses. Ambassador Olson, with President Obama's October 2015 decision to keep a larger U.S. military presence in Afghanistan for a longer period of time, would you tell us what results, if any, you have seen from this change in administration policy and what your expectations are going forward?

Mr. OLSON. Well, I think that the President's decision to extend 9,800 troops through the fighting season, and maintain a residual force of 5,500 has had a very stabilizing effect on the region. I think there is a great concern on the part of Afghans and in the region more broadly that the United States would disengage from the region.

I think Mr. Sherman talked earlier in his opening remarks about the legacy of the 1990s when the United States did disengage, and that is I think one of the contributing factors to the rise of the Taliban and ultimately to our own great losses on September 11 of 2001. I think there is a great deal of anxiety in the region about the potential of U.S. and NATO departure, and so the President's decision to keep forces in place I think has done a lot to assuage those concerns.

Mr. CICILLINE. Okay. Would you also, I think this could be principally Mr. Sampler, how is our assistance improving the human rights situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan? We still hear horrible stories of abuses, ranging from bacha bazi to sexual abuse of young boys by some Afghan Security Forces, the recruitment of child soldiers by the Taliban and physical attacks on the women and religious minorities. Are any of our programs really addressing the root causes of this kind of violence and abuse? Are there things we should be doing differently to more effectively reduce these horrific situations?

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, thank you for the question. At the macro level, I would say that virtually all of our programs are working to address the root causes of these issues because all of our problems are working to advance Pakistan and Afghanistan civil society to a level of self awareness and self respect where this kind of behavior isn't tolerated. The United States doesn't have the ability or the authority to go into either of these countries and police this sort of inappropriate and illegal behavior. What we have

to do is build communities and then institutions within the state that can on their own and in an appropriate way police this sort of inappropriate behavior.

There are two things I will talk about that actually I think are having a direct impact. One is the connectivity, particularly in Afghanistan, but also in Pakistan, where rural women in particular now have access to cell phone technology that they didn't have 10 years ago. This is partly just because of the advances made and the decrease in price of cell technology. But USAID is helping civil society learn to use this technology in ways to integrate at-risk populations, whether it be women or children.

The second point is our support of rule of law and making sure that women and at-risk populations have both access to rule of law and then an understanding and advocates who can help them make use of those systems of rule of law.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you. Ambassador Olson, I want to turn for a moment to Pakistan's blasphemy laws. As you well know, these laws are widely used and have long been a source of deep concerns to international rights organizations and others as they sometimes are used to settle feuds, grab land, or persecute religious minorities by making false allegations. It seems impossible to change or repeal these laws, and, in fact, the Governor of Punjab Province sought to make it more difficult for false cases to be registered, and he was assassinated by a bodyguard, a murder that was celebrated by the public who was opposed to changing these laws.

Is there anything we can do? Are there any incremental changes that can be made to these laws that would improve the situation as this continues to be the source of some very serious both human rights violations and rule of law violations?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you very much, Congressman. First of all, just I would provide a little bit of an update. As you may have read, the man who killed Governor Taseer was recently executed by the Pakistani authorities. The Supreme Court upheld the death penalty in the case of Qadri, and I think this was seen as a, widely interpreted in Pakistan, as a signal of resolute opposition obviously to vigilantism and to those who would take the law into their own hands. There were protests, but the protests at the execution of Qadri, but they have not been successful.

I think it illustrates the divide in Pakistan. There are a lot of people in Pakistan who see things the way we do and share your concern. I think that they are feeling a bit more emboldened now by some of the actions by the Pakistani Supreme Court to limit the abuse of blasphemy laws and to also extend fuller protection of law to religious minorities. So this is very much a work in progress, but I think there are a lot of people who think of these things the way we do, and I think we need to do everything possible to encourage them as we do.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you. And I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Perry of Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ambassador Olson, to what extent is Iran a player in Afghanistan affairs? If you can inform us on the policy tools that Tehran employs to further its goals in Afghanistan and elucidate those goals in particular, what their

presence is in Iran, and whether they supply assistance or support for the insurgent groups in Afghanistan and to what extent?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Congressman Perry. Iran has by and large played a constructive goal with regard to Afghanistan, and we would encourage them to continue to play a constructive role. There have been some press indications that because of their concern about the emergence of Daesh in Afghanistan, they may be tempted to support the Taliban against Daesh. We think that would be a mistake, and we would encourage the Iranians to continue to support the Government of Afghanistan, which, of course, is taking action against both Daesh, ISIS, and the Taliban.

Mr. PERRY. So then is it kind of your feeling or your testimony that they don't supply assistance to insurgent groups, or do they? Maybe you need to define or I need to define what we would consider an insurgent group in the context of that discussion, that question.

Mr. OLSON. Congressman, there have been some press reports suggesting that they are thinking about supporting the Taliban against Daesh. We think that that would be counterproductive and mistaken.

Mr. PERRY. Do you consider the Taliban an insurgent group?

Mr. OLSON. Yes, I would consider it an insurgent group, yes.

Mr. PERRY. Are you saying right now that they are not supporting the Taliban but just considering it?

Mr. OLSON. I think this is a subject that would probably require us to be in a different setting to really have a thorough discussion of this topic, but I would just say as a matter of policy, we would encourage the Iranians to focus their energies on supporting the Government of Afghanistan.

More broadly, I think what we would want to see from the neighbors of Afghanistan in general is three things: Its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan and the idea that there will be no restoration of the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan, that is the Taliban, but a recognition, of course, of the Islamic nature of Afghanistan; and, thirdly, the idea that the only way and the best way to resolve conflicts in Afghanistan is through negotiation and the peace process.

Mr. PERRY. So how actively are you monitoring their conversations with the Taliban or would-be conversations? Are they having conversations, and are they materially supplying currently, or is that stuff that you cannot discuss in this forum?

Mr. OLSON. I really cannot discuss it in this forum, sir.

Mr. PERRY. All right. I got it. Moving on quickly. The President, Ashraf Ghani, recently threatened to file a complaint with the U.N. Security Council if Pakistan failed to take military action against Taliban leaders operating within Pakistan. The question is, what is Pakistan doing to pressure the Afghan Taliban to come to the negotiating table, and how has Pakistan used its influenced with the Afghan Taliban to bring a reduction in violence to Afghanistan? And have we specifically asked Pakistan to do this with regard to exerting its influence on the Afghan Taliban?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Congressman. Pakistan has actually been a good partner to Afghanistan and to us in the search for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process. We have been

partners in the so-called quadrilateral process, which involves the United States, China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which has called for several times direct, face-to-face negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan Government in a publicly acknowledged process.

Unfortunately, the Taliban have refused to come to the table, so it is our view that they should face the consequences of that decision. We have long expressed our concerns to the Pakistanis about their reluctance to go after terrorists that threaten their neighbors with the same degree of assiduousness that they go after their own terrorists, and we think that they are at a moment of needing to make a very strategic and fundamental choice.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. We thank you for an excellent record of public service on behalf of our country. Thank you so much. We look forward to getting your answers to some of the members' questions in writing.

Thank you, gentlemen. And with that, the subcommittees are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:37 a.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
Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Chairman

April 20, 2016

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 the Middle East and North Africa and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Wednesday, April 27, 2016

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Advancing U.S. Interests: Examining the President's FY 2017 Budget Proposal for Afghanistan and Pakistan

WITNESSES: The Honorable Richard Olson
U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
U.S. Department of State

Mr. Donald L. Sampler, Jr.
Assistant to the Administrator
Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development

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 *the Middle East and North Africa/Asia and the Pacific* HEARING

Day *Wednesday* **Date** *April 27, 2016* **Room** *2172*

Starting Time *10:06 a.m.* **Ending Time** *11:36 a.m.*

Recesses *0* (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairmen Ros-Lehtinen and Salmon

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

Advancing U.S. Interests: Examining the President's FY 2017 Budget Proposal for Afghanistan and Pakistan

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairmen Ros-Lehtinen and Salmon, Reps. Rohrabacher, Weber, Perry, and Zeldin
Ranking Members Deutch and Sherman, Reps. Connolly, Cicilline, and Bera

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

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.)*

Mr. Cicilline

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *11:36 a.m.*

Subcommittee Staff Director

Statement for the Record
Submitted by Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island

Thank you to Chairmen Ros-Lehtinen and Salmon and Ranking Members Deutch and Sherman for calling this hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Proposal for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Given the large portion of the U.S. foreign assistance budget that goes to these two countries and our sustained commitment to them, this hearing is very important in understanding our strategies towards these two countries. I would also like to thank our witnesses for their participation.

After more than 15 years of military engagement, thousands of U.S. lives lost, and approximately a trillion dollars spent on Afghanistan, I am very eager to learn more about Afghanistan's ability to operate, build, and maintain its own civilian and military capacity. I believe our commitment to Afghanistan is justified, our military cannot be engaged in operations without an end in sight. We owe it to the American people and to the people of Afghanistan to ensure that our foreign assistance programs are achieving our goals to help maintain long-term security and peace in the region through efficient, effective, and meaningful investments.

We know that our goals for Afghanistan and the region as a whole can only be achieved if we work in accord with other countries in the region, especially Pakistan. Pakistan is and will continue to be a critical partner in helping to support security, peace, and stability in the region. We must do everything we can to encourage Pakistan's genuine cooperation.

I look forward to hearing the perspectives of the witnesses we have assembled to discuss our relationship with Afghanistan and Pakistan, what we can learn from our actions over the last decade, and how they will shape our future relations with these two important partners. Thank you.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Richard Olson by
Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
April 27, 2016

Question:

It's been a priority to tackle the poppy production in Afghanistan. It is a major source of income for the Taliban and other terror groups, and ultimately, the source for the heroin that floods Europe and the U.S. in near epidemic waves. Nearly three-quarters of Afghanistan's population lives in rural areas. At one point, USAID and the Department of State considered mining to be the key sector capable of driving economic growth and development in Afghanistan. That never came to fruition and now we're being told by the same officials that it is agriculture that is the key to developing a sustainable economy.

What concrete steps have you taken to help farmers plant the right crops, harvest their produce in a timely manner and process and store it for export, and open foreign markets like India or elsewhere? Is Pakistan helping or hindering efforts to developing trade between Afghanistan and India?

Answer:

Following a comprehensive review in 2011, The United States has employed a consistent strategy to facilitate sustainable economic growth in Afghanistan. This strategy advises the Afghan government to enact targeted reforms to improve the business environment, strengthen financial systems, and grow the private sector. At the same time our strategy focuses on development of Afghanistan's agriculture and extractives sectors, and support for small and medium-sized businesses as the basis for long-term economic growth in Afghanistan.

We strongly agree that Afghanistan's production of illicit narcotics poses a major challenge to stability in Afghanistan and the broader region. The United States and the Afghan government are working together to address this challenge through joint planning. The U.S. government is currently developing a new counternarcotics strategy that will support the Afghan National Drug Action Plan that President Ghani signed in October 2015. Our approach to countering the narcotics problem in Afghanistan includes work with law enforcement to eradicate crops and prosecute traffickers, as well as programs such as the Kandahar Food Zone that work to improve irrigation and production processes so that farmers have viable alternatives to growing poppy.

Counternarcotics efforts are closely coordinated with broader U.S. funded projects in the agriculture and business sectors and focus on providing sustainable economic alternatives to illicit poppy production. Beyond conventional agricultural development assistance, enabling farmers to opt out of poppy requires a state presence that provides credit, transportation and irrigation infrastructure, protection from intimidation of opium buyers, as well as enforcement of laws against poppy production. In addition to the Kandahar Food Zone, USAID implements three regional agriculture

development projects and a horticulture project that are working to improve production of high value crops and improving access to markets in Afghanistan and in the region. For example, since 2010 with USAID assistance, Afghanistan has exported approximately 45,400 metric tons of fresh and dried fruit and nuts worth an estimated $49 million to international markets including Pakistan, Bahrain, Canada, India, the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Saudi Arabia. Many of these crops, such as grapes, raisins, and pomegranates return a higher income to farmers than poppy. USAID's alternative development strategy includes an intensive community-engagement approach in project design and implementation to gain access to some of Afghanistan's densest poppy growing areas. This includes engaging community members in consultations about their economic challenges and potential remedies. These efforts have seen success. Between 2002 and 2015, USAID has facilitated more than $300 million in increased sales of licit farm and non-farm products, and conducted alternative livelihood activities on over 315,000 hectares, making certified seed and fertilizer available, improving agronomic practices, and increasing the sales and export of high value crops resulting in increased incomes and employment.

Pakistan is one of Afghanistan's largest trading partners but is also a major competitor, producing many of the same products produced in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit and Trade Agreement (APTTA) governs transit trade between the two countries. APPTA allows for the export of some Afghan goods through Pakistan to India via the port of Karachi, however, implementation has provided limited benefits. APPTA does not allow Indian goods to transit Pakistan to Afghanistan, nor does it allow bilateral trade between Afghanistan and India via the Pakistan-India Wagah border crossing. Negotiations on this issue are on-going between the two countries.

Question:

In 2010, Task Force 2010 (TF 2010) was formed to help inform our leaders on the ground in Afghanistan and to ensure that they were aware with whom they were doing business with, but also to ensure that contracting actions did not undermine USG efforts in Afghanistan. TF 2010 provided commanders and acquisition teams with added insight regarding the flow of contract funds and recommended actions to deny criminal actors, networks and insurgents the opportunity to benefit from the illicit revenue or stolen property. Many regarded TF 2010 as a success in these endeavors, including the SIGAR and the UN, and TF 2010's work helped bring about common sense reforms to limit our exposure to contracting with the enemy. Do we have currently a similar ongoing effort to ensure that U.S. and other international donor funds are not being diverted to the Taliban, al-Qaeda, ISIS or other terror groups? If not, why not, and is this something that the Afghan government is opposed to?

Answer:

The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have each implemented extensive and continuing vetting programs in Afghanistan to help ensure U.S. resources do not benefit extremists or other enemies of the United States.

The Department of State has implemented the Risk Analysis and Management (RAM) program in Afghanistan. This program enhances the Department's review of organizations, entities and individuals seeking U.S. government funding from the Department of State through contracts, grants or other funding instruments. This program utilizes a centralized database to support the vetting of "key employees" of organizations, entities or individuals who apply to the Department of State for contracts, grants or other funding. The information collected is used to conduct screenings to mitigate the risk that Department of State funds could be used to provide support to entities or individuals deemed to be a risk to national security.

USAID uses the Partner Vetting System (PVS) to help mitigate the risk that USAID funds and other resources could inadvertently benefit individuals or entities that are terrorists, supporters of terrorists, or affiliated with terrorists, while also minimizing the impact on USAID programs and implementing partners. Since 2011, USAID in Afghanistan through its partner vetting system, has reviewed over 7,000 partners and found 289 to be ineligible, and prevented over approximately $667 million in taxpayer funds from going to malign actors.

In addition, both the Department of State and USAID use a multi-tiered monitoring approach to manage projects performance and help prevent fraud, abuse or mismanagement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Richard Olson by
Representative Dave Trott
House Foreign Affairs Committee
April 27, 2016

Question:

How do you see the Political & Ethnic victimization of Muhajir's residing in Pakistan's largest metropolis, Karachi?

Answer:

We routinely engage the Government of Pakistan on the importance of inclusive democracy, and also support efforts, including through our assistance programs, to strengthen the rule of law and democratic, accountable processes throughout Pakistan, including in Karachi. The United States considers promotion of an inclusive and pluralistic democracy in Pakistan to be a key component of our bilateral relationship.

In that context, we remain engaged with the Government of Pakistan at the highest levels to emphasize that all communities must be protected from discrimination and violence.

Question:

What part can the United States play to ensure democratic forces prevail in Pakistan, and ensure that controlled form democracy is done away with?

Answer:

It is notable that in 2013, Pakistan undertook its first peaceful democratic transfer of power from one elected civilian government to another in the country's history. In that sense, Pakistan's democratic institutions are still nascent, and helping Pakistan strengthen those institutions is an important part of our policy.

Specifically, the U.S. government strengthens civilian-led democratic governance through consistent diplomatic engagement with civilian leaders and organizations, and a robust civilian assistance program. The United States has committed $6 billion of civilian assistance, including $1.4 billion of humanitarian assistance, since 2009.

Civilian assistance includes programming that specifically helps Pakistan strengthen its democratic institutions and processes. For example, USAID supported Pakistan's parliamentary elections in 2013 by providing training for 480 master trainers who went on to train thousands more polling agents to monitor election day activities at polling stations around the country. USAID also supported an international observer delegation that made recommendations for future reforms. Before the 2013 election, USAID worked with the Election Commission of Pakistan to lay the groundwork for a five-year reform plan of the Election Commission of Pakistan, an updated and improved voter registry, and a new computerized national identity card. USAID supported civil society organizations that helped roughly 350,000 women to vote by attaining national identification cards.

One important element in increasing accountability and democratic governance is helping political parties be more responsive to citizen demands. USAID is working with political parties on a non-partisan basis to engage members and citizens through a policy development process that assists parties in forming skills and mechanisms to channel concerns into proposals. The program helped political parties implement Policy Working Groups, which bring together party leadership and grassroots members to cooperatively draft policies based on research. USAID programs are already in place to support the next round of national elections, expected in 2018.

In addition, civilian assistance implemented through the Department of State also helps strengthen democratic institutions and capacity in Pakistan. For example, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor currently supports a $22 million portfolio in Pakistan in areas such as the protection and enhancement of human rights and strengthening civil society organizations and free media institutions. This work is complemented by exchange programs for civilian leaders inside and outside the government.

Question:

What role can the United States play to ensure the end of Extra Judicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances of political workers in Karachi, Pakistan? The State Department's Human Rights report noted 55 Extrajudicial Killings, and 151 Enforced Disappearances, as of August; all belonging to one ethnic race.

Answer:

The United States remains concerned about allegations of violations of human rights in Pakistan. Among the most significant of these are arbitrary detention and extra judicial killings, which we have reported on for several years in the Human Rights Report. As part of our ongoing bilateral dialogue, we continue to engage the Government of Pakistan – in both civilian and military channels –at the highest levels on human rights issues. We also support efforts to strengthen the rule of law and democratic, accountable processes in the country. We emphasize that any excessive or extrajudicial use of force or breaches in due process and the rule of law ultimately undermine Pakistan's democracy, stability, and long-term efforts to counter violent extremism.

In February 2016, the Government of Pakistan approved an Action Plan for Human Rights, a step we welcomed. In our engagement with Pakistan on human rights issues we continue to support efforts, such as the aforementioned Action Plan for Human Rights and the November 2015 reconstitution of the Ministry of Human Rights, to strengthen the rule of law and democratic, accountable processes in the country – including in Sindh and Karachi. We also engage with the Sindh provincial government, alongside a broad swath of civil society organizations and political parties, to underscore our concerns related to arbitrary detention and extra judicial killings.

○