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**AFGHANISTAN IN 2016: THE EVOLVING
SECURITY SITUATION AND U.S. POLICY,
STRATEGY, AND POSTURE**

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CONTENTS

	Page
STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	
Sanchez, Hon. Loretta, a Representative from California, Committee on Armed Services	2
Thornberry, Hon. William M. "Mac," a Representative from Texas, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services	1
WITNESSES	
Campbell, GEN John F., USA, Commander, Operation Resolute Support, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan	3
APPENDIX	
PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Campbell, GEN John F.	52
Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services	51
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
[There were no Documents submitted.]	
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
[The information was not available at the time of printing.]	
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Mr. Garamendi	71
Mr. Moulton	71
Mr. Wilson	71

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, February 2, 2016.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William M. “Mac” Thornberry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. “MAC” THORN- BERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

The committee meets today to hear from our U.S. and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] commander in Afghanistan, General John Campbell.

And, General, first, I would want to thank you for being here. You were with this committee in October. And I am not sure we expected to see you again so soon, but I understand that you will be transitioning out of the Army, and so we wanted to take this opportunity to get ourselves updated and get your insights on the status in Afghanistan.

As we do that, I want to express appreciation for your service to the country over many distinguished years. And I especially want to express my appreciation and admiration for the way you have conducted this job in I believe your third deployment in Afghanistan.

It seems to me that you have walked something of a tightrope, because it is clear to me that you appreciate the importance of Afghanistan to our country’s security, as well as the investment in lives and treasure that the United States has made there over the years. And at the same time, in many ways you have had your hands tied by the White House on what you could and could not do. It seems in some ways we have a contradiction for Afghanistan. It was known as the good war, and yet at least some in the White House are unwilling to allow the military to take the steps to actually be successful.

My view is that this is a crucial time in Afghanistan. We all read the press reports about the growing presence of ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria]. We read about the Taliban being more aggressive, partly because of their internal power struggles, I suspect, partly because they are trying to position themselves for any peace talks that may come. There are some who believe that Al Qaeda is regrouping in the area. And there are a number of other groups. And yet, our commitment to Afghanistan seems to come a year at

a time, which causes some question about how reliable a partner we are.

So I think that the committee and the American people are looking forward to an update of the status of the situation today in Afghanistan. I think we are all interested in whether the Afghans are making progress in developing their military and being able to handle their own security needs effectively. And I also think we, the committee and American people, continue to ask: Why are we still here, 14 years later? Why is it important? And so I hope that over the course of the day you can help us explore some of the answers to those questions.

Mr. Smith is not with us this week because of health concerns. Let me turn to the gentlelady from California, Ms. Sanchez, for any comments she would like to make.

STATEMENT OF HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will begin by asking unanimous consent to put Mr. Smith's remarks in for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

Ms. SANCHEZ. And I would like to make a few comments. First of all, to thank General Campbell for your distinguished service and for this time now, as the chairman said, the third deployment that you have as our commander of our forces there in Afghanistan. So thank you, and we wish you luck in your future endeavors.

It is evident that the situation in Afghanistan has become more complex as the Taliban continues to provoke instability in that country and while ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]-affiliated terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in the Khorasan Province, endeavor to gain some influence in Afghanistan.

For the past 14 years, the U.S. has not only fought in Afghanistan, but we have funded and we have invested in so many areas of Afghanistan's society, and no one can deny the progress that we have made in reducing Al Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan. And a lot of that credit goes to, of course, our military men and women, but also to our civilian men and women who have been in there and the groups who have worked on that whole issue of trying to weave together the fabric of society for the Afghan people.

However, when we look at the situation in the Middle East—and I include Afghanistan, because groups are moving back and forth to gain influence or trying to gain influence there—it continues to, I think, threaten the United States security and our security when we look at sanctuaries, in particular in Afghanistan, for some of these terrorist organizations.

General, last week your successor, Lieutenant General Nicholson, stated during his nomination hearing as commander that he would continue to pursue counterterrorism and advise and assist in capabilities in Afghanistan. We have about 9,800 troops deployed in Afghanistan right now, and I know that the plan is to bring them down to about 5,500 by the end of this year.

So considering all of the evolving threats in the country and looking at the progress we have made or the lack of some of the prog-

ress, for example with Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, we are very interested to try to figure out and help and glean some understanding from you about what our real role will be there, because after 14 years, using your own words, General Campbell, an uneven and inconsistent performance from the Afghan forces. And considering this advice-and-assist capability is a significant part of our strategy in Afghanistan, I am concerned that we really still haven't seen the signs that if we were effectively to leave, that the Afghan forces could really continue to create that stability for that country and for its people.

And I have expressed my concerns over and over on the high level of corruption that we have seen in all the Afghan governments since we began 14 years ago there. So I am interested to hear where that is headed and what you think is happening with the whole issue of corruption.

And with that, I will yield back, Mr. Chairman, and thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Without objection, General, your full written statement will be made a part of the record and you are recognized for any comments you would like to make.

**STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA, COMMANDER,
OPERATION RESOLUTE SUPPORT, U.S. FORCES-AFGHANISTAN**

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you.

Good morning, Chairman Thornberry, Ms. Sanchez, and other distinguished members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today while representing the great service men and women of the United States Forces-Afghanistan. And I have been honored to lead and represent them in all that they do for nearly 18 months, and it has truly been my honor and privilege to do so.

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for your steadfast support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians. Due to your leadership and commitment, they continue to be the best trained and equipped force our Nation has ever deployed. Their remarkable performance bears testimony to your backing and the backing of the American people.

I would also like to recognize the unsung heroes of our Nation, and that is our military families. They have stood by us for the last 14-plus years of conflict. They endure the hardships of our frequent absences and allow us to focus on our mission. Without their love and support we couldn't succeed, and we thank them for their continued support.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and honor the over 2,200 service men and women who have died since 2001 and the over 20,000 who have been wounded. Tragically, we recently lost six U.S. airmen to a motorcycle-borne IED [improvised explosive device] just before Christmas and a special forces adviser just after the New Year. These losses remind us that Afghanistan remains a dangerous place. And while we take every measure to reduce force protection threats, our service members, civilians, and coalition partners remain in harm's way.

We also remember the fallen of the Afghan security forces and the loved ones that they leave behind. They now bear the brunt of

this conflict as they fight to bring peace and security to Afghanistan. Every day we honor their memories by assisting our Afghan partners as they fight to improve security and by extension to help protect our homeland. Let me say that again: help protect our homeland.

The men and women I serve with have not forgotten why we are in Afghanistan. We remain there to ensure that another terrorist attack, originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland, will never happen again. That is why the counterterrorism mission remains critical to our mutual security interests.

Yet we recognize the importance of our train, advise, and assist mission as we build a sustainable Afghan security force capable of standing alone in its mission of countering violent extremists and denying terrorist safe haven. This is a shared vital interest among Afghanistan, the United States, and the international community.

Those who serve in this mission understand that Afghanistan is worth our investment. It is their commitment that keeps us focused on our vision for a stable and secure Afghanistan. Together, the train, advise, and assist mission, and the efforts there, coupled with our counterterrorism mission, underpin overall mission success.

Just 4 months have passed since I last appeared before this committee. Even in that short time there have been many developments in the security situation, the progress of the Afghan Government and its security forces, our coalition's commitment, and of course the U.S. way ahead in 2016 and beyond. Today, I will speak to these developments and answer questions you may have on the state of our efforts and the overall situation in Afghanistan.

Specifically, I would like to address a lesson we learned from last year, how we intend to ensure that 2016 is different from 2015, and how we see 2017 and beyond. To assess these questions we must ask ourselves: What else can we do to enable the Afghan security forces, and what else can the Afghans do for themselves to ensure the security of their country?

2015 was fundamentally different than previous years of our campaign. It is important to remember this context as we assess our efforts in Afghanistan. First, Afghanistan's government and security forces have managed multiple transitions in 2015. Second, the U.S. and coalition mission and force structure have significantly changed. And third, changing regional dynamics, including evolving threats, have presented both challenges and opportunities for our success.

As I travel around Afghanistan, I recognize the changes and progress made over the years of this mission. As the chairman said, this is my third deployment to Afghanistan over the span of the last 14 years, and I have served as a senior commander there for the last 18 months. I am ever mindful of how far we have come, but I do remain clear-eyed about the challenges that lie ahead.

Now more than ever the United States should not waiver on Afghanistan. The crucial investment we are making provides dividends that achieve our strategic goals, secure our homeland, and position us well in the region, a region that has been a source of terrorism and instability for decades.

Many of you have heard me say that for every bad-news story we hear, every bad story coming out of Afghanistan, there are 10 good-news stories we don't. While this is to be expected, I think it tints the view of our progress and prospects for success in Afghanistan. Today it is my intent to provide a balanced assessment that not only exposes the challenges that lie ahead, but also illustrates our gains of the Afghan forces.

With that in mind, I would like to address the concerns over what many feel is an overall declining security situation in Afghanistan. The situation is more dynamic than a simple yes-or-no answer would adequately address. In fact, as of last week, the units we have on the ground throughout the country reported that of the 407 district centers, 8 of them, or just 2 percent, are under insurgent control. Let me say that again. Out of the 407 districts, only 8 of them are under insurgent control. We assess that another 18, or 4 percent, are under what we call insurgent influence.

Often these district centers are in remote and sparsely populated areas that security forces are not able to access every day and usually not in force. Additionally, at any given time there may be up to 94 district centers, or 23 percent, that we view as at risk.

These figures make two clear points. One, that approximately 70 percent of the inhabited parts of Afghanistan are either under government influence or government control. And number two, the importance of prioritizing Afghan resources to ensure that key district centers do not fall into insurgent influence or control.

Over the last 8 years the Afghan security forces have made advancements, beginning as an unorganized collection of militia and developing into a modern security force with many systems and processes of an advanced military. Too many times we try to compare the Afghan security forces with the U.S. Army. The U.S. Army has been around for 240 years; again, the Afghan army about 8 years. They have proven resilient and continue to make significant strides in only the second year in which Afghan forces assumed the lead for security throughout Afghanistan.

They have demonstrated the ability to successfully conduct effective large-scale, multi-pillar operations across the country, including in Helmand, Ghazni, and Nangarhar. Following insurgent offensives, the Afghan security forces were able to retake key territory, as they did in Kunduz back in October, with strong performances from the security pillar.

Simultaneously, while tactical units were conducting these operations, the security institutions had to continue developing the force. This includes many complex tasks, such as budgeting, force generation, personnel management, national-level maintenance, logistics, and procurement. These are areas that challenge even the most advanced militaries in the world.

I would like to say that what we have accomplished here is akin to building an airplane while in flight. While these systems are far from perfect, the foundation has been laid. We continue to advise and assist the Afghans as they build a sustainable security force that is enduring and capable of standing on its own.

With Afghans in the lead for security for the first time in 2015, the enemy and the naysayers predicted the collapse of the Afghan security forces and the Afghan Government. They sought to cap-

italize on it. Instead, the Afghan security forces fought for the very survival of their country and held firm, they did not fracture, and they kept the insurgents from achieving their strategic goals while inflicting higher casualties on the enemy. They did this while maintaining a significantly higher operational tempo with significantly reduced coalition support.

However, the lessons learned in 2015 underscore that Afghan shortfalls will persist well beyond 2016. Capability gaps still exist in fixed- and rotary-wing aviation, combined arms operations, intelligence collection and dissemination, and maintenance. More prominently, one of the greatest tactical challenges for the Afghan security forces has been overcoming the Afghan Air Force's extremely limited organic close air support capability. Admittedly, we began building the Afghan Air Force late and are constrained by the time it takes to build human capital.

Those capability gaps notwithstanding, I still assess that at least 70 percent of the problems facing the Afghan security forces result from poor leadership. Minister of Defense Stanekzai recognizes this as well. To date, the Afghan National Army has replaced 92 general officers, including the 215th Corps commander in Helmand. The Ministry of Interior is lagging behind in making leadership changes, but we are taking steps to remedy this through our train, advise, and assist mission. But this kind of change takes time.

I have seen the consequences of Kunduz and Helmand still weigh heavily on the leadership of both the security forces and the Afghan Government. They realize that, although not strategically significant in a pure military sense, that those incidents shape media coverage and undermine the confidence in the Afghan Government. Their desire to do better runs deep and is genuine. In many ways these events forced a greater sense of urgency to make the changes they greatly require.

Over the last year there have been many positive trends. However, Afghan security forces have not consolidated significant gains of their own, nor defeated the insurgency across Afghanistan. And suffice it to say, their performance this year was uneven. To be fair, this was not unexpected given the overall conditions.

Ultimately, Afghanistan has not achieved an enduring level of security and stability that justifies a reduction in our support in 2016. That is why the President's decision to maintain current force levels through most of 2016 was welcome and important. This decision set the example for NATO, encouraging other allies and partner nations to maintain or in some cases increase their contributions to the Resolute Support mission.

During this winter lull, we are focusing on steps to best prepare the Afghan security forces for the summer campaign of 2016. Their leadership shares this focus, and they are dedicated to resetting the force, implementing reforms to improve training, equipping, and rebuilding of units that have endured unusually high operational tempos for long periods of time, especially those forces in Helmand. Such reforms are critical and are taking root with the Afghan security forces, but broader reforms remain important to the success in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government, including its security institutions, continues to show progress in battling corruption and achieving other

reforms, such as gender integration. However, much work still needs to be done. We fully understand that many want to see more progress on social and human rights issues before continuing to commit resources to Afghanistan. The national unity government also recognizes this and has welcomed our increased use of conditionality to usher change. They understand the importance of stability, opportunity, and hope—the hope that inspires people to stay in Afghanistan instead of seeking opportunity elsewhere.

Afghanistan is at an inflection point. I believe if we do not make deliberate, measured adjustments, 2016 is at risk of being no better and possibly worse than 2015. To place this in context, I would like to emphasize the uniqueness of 2015 and some dynamics I think we should consider as we assess our way ahead.

The enemy has also changed this year. Unlike previous years, the Taliban extended the fighting season and has continued to conduct operations in Helmand, as called for by the Taliban leadership. Even so, the Taliban recognized they have no lasting gains to consolidate from last year. They cannot afford to cede the limited ground they do hold. They also are coming out of a year that saw a fracturing of their organization, competition from among insurgent groups resulting in a loss of legitimacy, and high casualty rates, probably their highest casualty rates in years.

As I meet with Afghan soldiers and police, I remind them that the Taliban are not 10 feet tall and are not bulletproof. They face significant challenges and they can be defeated. This fact is often forgotten in prominent media reports. The brief notoriety that the Taliban have gained in Kunduz and Helmand is still overshadowed by the significant cost of those efforts, compounded by the loss of credibility and the unity as enemy infighting continues to this day.

The Taliban's public narrative in Afghanistan is waning too. It is not lost on the people of Afghanistan that the Taliban are killing Afghans, security forces and innocent civilians alike. Recent public information campaigns have also been more forceful, stressing to the public that the Taliban, they have no plan for the development of Afghanistan, they are here to kill you, they are against women, they are against education, and they are against progress for the nation of Afghanistan.

As these messages resonate, the government must show that it is the only viable option for Afghanistan. At the city, district, provincial, and national levels the people of Afghanistan see that the return of the Taliban represents a return to brutality, criminality, and oppression.

The operating environment is also evolving for the Taliban due to emergence of insurgent and terrorist groups. One such group is Daesh in Afghanistan or Islamic State-Khorasan Province. Daesh continues to conduct brutal attacks against civilians and directly competes with the Taliban for resources to establish a foothold in the country. They have focused their efforts on establishing a presence in Nangarhar and in recruiting in other areas.

We recently gained the authority to strike Daesh. Since then, we have had considerable success in degrading their capabilities. The rejection of Daesh by local leaders who are working with Afghan security forces has also slowed the enemy's progress. The strikes have been effective in mitigating their growth. We must maintain

constant pressure on Daesh and dedicate intelligence resources to prevent strategic surprise.

The Taliban has had to adjust their strategy this year in order to counter the emergence of Daesh and other insurgent groups. This dynamic has served as a distraction to the Taliban, requiring them to shift precious resources from fighting the Afghan security forces to countering opposition groups. More than just consuming resources the infighting and resultant inability to maintain cohesion also has severely damaged the credibility of the Taliban's core narrative of being a strong, united organization.

Groups aligned with the Taliban, such as Al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, continue to threaten our national security interests. Al Qaeda has been significantly weakened. But as evidenced by the recent discovery of an Al Qaeda camp on Afghanistan's southern border, they are certainly not extinct. The Haqqani Network remains the most capable threat to the U.S. and coalition forces, planning and executing the most violent, high-profile attacks in Kabul.

These are certainly not residual threats that would allow for a peaceful transition across Afghanistan. Instead, they are persistent threats that are adapting to a changing operational environment. Ultimately the threats Afghanistan faces requires our sustained attention and forward presence.

Reconciliation is a path needed to obtain a negotiated settlement and end the conflict in Afghanistan. Current reconciliation efforts are an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned initiative, recently renewed with a quadrilateral meeting in mid-January that included Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and China.

It has been over a year since the formation of the national unity government. It has faced institutional and political difficulties, yet can lay claim to some meaningful reform and progress during its first year. The unity government may be fragile, but it is holding. Despite being challenged, it is making progress and building momentum to create increasingly a viable future for the Afghan people. Politically, Afghanistan is postured for both progress and a continued strategic partnership with the United States.

We have strong and willing partners in President Ghani and CE, Chief Executive, Abdullah. And as all of you know, this has not always been the case in our relationship in Afghanistan.

So as I said at the beginning of this statement, we now ask ourselves: What else can we do to enable the Afghan security forces and what else can the Afghans do for themselves to secure their country? A strategic stalemate without end is not the goal of this campaign. Let me say that again. A strategic stalemate without end is not the goal of this campaign. Nor is it true to the reason we came here over 14 years ago. And our men and women on the ground know that.

In fact, the recently submitted NATO Strategic Assessment makes recommendations for adjustments to the current NATO OPLAN [operation plan] that, in my best advice, will help push the campaign past this inflection point and increase the prospect of increasing our shared goals and achieving our shared goals.

The measures that NATO is considering include advisory adjustments to give commanders more flexibility on the ground and shift-

ing from a yearly outlook to a 5-year vision to give all donor nations, and especially Afghanistan, the confidence that comes with predictability of support.

The United States must consider and must continue to show flexibility with our mission in 2016 and beyond. As the commander, I am responsible for aligning our national objectives with ways and means while managing risk.

Now that we have been allocated our resources for 2016, I am assessing the ways in which we ensure that 2016 is not a rerun of 2015. Based on conditions and the performance of the Afghan security forces during this winter lull, I am also reviewing how well those forces will likely perform in 2017 and the United States and coalition resources required for their continued development.

This is all part of a broader process of which my assessment is only one part. I will provide my assessments of our strategy to my military leadership, as well as my successor, Mick Nicholson. I think it is important to remember that this time last year our plan was to transition to a 1,000-troops, Kabul-centric footprint. Due to conditions on the ground, the President made the decision to extend 9,800 through most of 2016 and increased our posture to 5,500 in 2017. This decision provided flexibility to make adjustments and represents the kind of conditions-based approach that is so important for our mission in Afghanistan.

The key to this long-term success in the region is the resiliency of the Afghan Government and its security institutions, and the ability to serve as a regional partner in our combined efforts to counter violent extremism. It is important to remember that the national unity government welcomes our assistance. They are dependable and steadfast counterterrorism partners in South Asia.

2017 marks a significant change in our approach as we focus our efforts to capitalize on the gains of the past decade and build the capacity of the Afghan security institutions. We now have a window of opportunity to increase our likelihood of achieving strategic success. Of course our support should not be open-ended and I believe our approach is sound. This year we will apply greater conditionality to the Afghans in managing the resources we give them.

We are also developing a 5-year vision out to 2020 to help better define what we are trying to accomplish and avoid a year-to-year mentality. I believe that by changing our and the Afghans' mindset from a cyclic "fighting season to fighting season" view to a really genuine long-term outlook, it really best reflects our commitment.

We need to provide the Afghans the time and space for them to continue to build their resiliency and capability. Through their spirit and fortitude they have proven worthy of our continued support. The actions we take now, combined with their resolve to improve, will over time develop a sustainable force capable of securing the nation and, in turn, help us secure ours.

Sir, thank you again for having the opportunity and for your steadfast support of this campaign. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Campbell can be found in the Appendix on page 52.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir. And I know that members of the committee will have a number of aspects that you mentioned that they will want to follow up on.

Let me just pursue one issue right quick. You made the point that one of our key goals is to prevent another terrorism attack on the homeland. About a month ago, there was an article in The Wall Street Journal that pointed out that 5 years ago the U.S. military and its allies operated 852 bases and outposts in Afghanistan, many with their own informants, drones, and surveillance balloons. Now all but about 20 of them are closed. Then it goes on to talk about the Al Qaeda training camp that was 30 square miles in southern Kandahar that was a complete surprise to us.

So it just seems to me as a matter of common sense that when you go from 852 installations to 20, that it is harder to keep up with the enemy and to prevent another attack on our homeland. Isn't that true?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it is true as we downsize we lose sensors, we lose force out in other regions of Afghanistan to be able to detect that. The intent, though, is to continue to build the Afghan forces so they can take over many of those places that we departed, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I am concerned that we are not giving you the resources or the leeway to protect the homeland and advise and assist the Afghans to take care of security so that we can turn it over to them.

Let me just ask one other thing. You mentioned that NATO is looking at a 5-year vision to replace the "fighting season to fighting season" and I hope to replace the year-to-year U.S. decisionmaking on whether we are going to be there or not. What is that decision going to rest on? What is going to decide whether NATO has a 5-year approach to Afghanistan versus this lurching from a few months to a few months?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think again—and, sir, thanks for the question—we approached NATO through the chiefs of defense a week or two ago, we talked about Afghanistan as we moved toward the Warsaw conference in July of this year, where all the nations come together, the donor nations will come together and look at providing funding for Afghanistan for 2018, 2019, and 2020. So tying Warsaw and the funding that they have to the narrative that we have to have a long-term commitment just made sense.

And I think with the donor nations, NATO will continue to look at: Are the Afghans getting at what we need them to get at? Are their security forces improving? Are they getting after corruption? Are they trying to work women into the security institutions? Are they going after the insurgents that have caused problems in Afghanistan?

So I think as they see the Afghan security forces continue to improve, that gives the donor nations continued hope that they will continue to improve, and I do believe they will. But as they move towards this 5-year plan, I do think, for the U.S. as well, that we have to come to a longer-term plan.

You know, as early as 2009 when we were surging, we were also talking about coming down. And for many of the Afghan people and the security forces as I talk to them, they remain skeptical that we

will continue to be there. We tell them that, they know by the decision in October 2015 by President Obama that we will have a longer-term commitment. And as you would suspect, many of the Afghan security forces want larger numbers, they want more resources. They understand they have gaps and seams that they need to continue to work on, and they see NATO, and especially the United States, as the only ones that can really help them get to the level they need to get to.

But I think if we have a narrative, that we show them that we have long-term commitment, not only in the money but in people on the ground, in the systems and equipment and the training that continue to come into the country, it will build more confidence for the Afghan security institutions and for the people in Afghanistan.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I hope the U.S. provides that leadership, because it seems to me that the concern that we are not going to be there very long has made the job of you and our troops more difficult, whether it be counterterrorism or the train-and-assist mission.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, in Iraq we had left Iraq pretty much and we had left a trained-up Iraqi Army and police forces. And over the years that we were there, hundreds of thousands of people were trained and equipped into those forces over the decade or so that we were doing that. And yet, when ISIL came to the battle, the Iraqi forces ran, left their weapons and the armaments that we had given to them. And we find ourselves in the situation in Iraq now fighting a strengthened ISIL and trying to rebuild what we thought we had built in Iraq.

Tell me how Afghanistan differs. Tell me why you think those that we are training up will not run or leave the weapons behind should there be a strong ISIL-type force that tries to take land there for their training camps or whatever their desires are. Why would we not expect the same thing to happen in Afghanistan if we would withdraw?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you for the question, ma'am.

I spent about 19 months in Iraq as well, and I have watched the Afghan forces since I was a colonel in 2002–2003, all way up to four-star now in 2016. The Afghans are fighters. They have a different sense of pride, I think, and nationalism in their country. In Iraq it was about Sunni, Shia, Kurd issues. In Afghanistan they see themselves, although different tribal affiliations, they are one Afghanistan force fighting for their country, fighting for their survival.

So as I talk to the Afghan senior leadership, it is obvious to me that they will not do what happened in Iraq based on what is coming from their heart from Afghanistan to protect their country.

We continue to work with them. We have had a glide slope over the last 3, 4, 5 years, as we have come out of the kandaks, the battalion level, the brigades, that we would just focus on the ministerial level and on the corps level, and then we would do tactical-level TAA—train, advise, assist—at the special operating level and we would continue to build those forces there.

So I see a continued commitment by the Afghan forces over 2015 where they have been on their own, where they have been challenged, that they have not dropped their weapons and run. The only case—actually two cases—I have been disappointed was in Kunduz. There are a lot of other reasons on Kunduz and why that happened. And then in Helmand, where there have been some isolated district centers where, even though they may have had some of the requisite force, they didn't have the right leadership that inspired the Afghan soldiers or police to stay there and fight. Some of them felt threatened, some of their families were threatened, so they left a few of those district centers there. So only two cases where I have been disappointed.

But the change is that they have gone back and they fought for those, they regrouped. In Kunduz, within a couple of days, they retook Kunduz, which is a city of over 300,000. Same thing in Helmand. They continue to fight today in the district centers. The ones that they have lost they have fought for. So I see that change.

The other difference between Iraq and I think Afghanistan is the national unity government. They want us there. President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the people I deal with in Afghanistan that I talk to want the United States, they want NATO. They see us as a foundational partner, not only in counterterrorism to build their capability so they can fight that in that region, but also to continue to build on the rest of their conventional army.

President Ghani, and you all heard him when he was here last March when he addressed Congress about how he thanked the American people for the sacrifice of their men and women, how he thanked the American taxpayers for their continued monetary investment in Afghanistan, he and the rest of the government know how important we have been. I just don't see Afghanistan as Iraq. I don't see the Afghans running. But it is going to take continued train, advise, and assist, persistent train, advise, and assist in many of those gaps and seams that we said would be hard for any military to grow, logistics, intelligence, and especially, as I talked before, their close air support capability.

Ms. SANCHEZ. General, how much longer do you think it will take? Because I am looking at the budget numbers and it looks like from 2015 to 2017 the U.S. and its NATO allies have committed to providing \$5.1 billion for the Afghan National Defense and Security Force of 352,000 personnel; 4.1 billion of those dollars is the responsibility of the United States.

So given that we have been there for 14 years and we can't leave yet, how many 4.1 billion times are we going to do this before we can figure out that we can get out? I mean, I know we have tried all sorts of strategies. We went in initially because the Taliban had given lands in whatever way for Al Qaeda to train to come after us in something like a 9/11 attack. Then we went in and fought. Then we put in Karzai—we worked with Karzai. Then we went back to the Taliban and we cut deals with the Taliban.

So, I mean, how much longer? I mean, you are our expert because you are there and you are leading our forces in conjunction with what is going on there. How much longer, how many more \$5.1 billion couple of years are we going to have there?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am. Put in context, a couple years ago it was about \$12.5 billion. So what we try to do and what we have been able to do over the last several years is continue to bring that cost down. And we are committed to continue to get an affordable, efficient, and sustainable Afghan security force. And to do that we take a look at how we can save money, how we can make them more efficient. And the \$5.1 billion, through all of the donor nations, we are going to continue to try to bring that down over the years.

But I do believe we are going to need the 352,000 for the Afghan security forces at least through 2020, and that is what we are talking about at Warsaw when we go for 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, to get the money to fund that.

But the amount of money we are putting in infrastructure to build them their training ranges, to build them their compounds that they live at, we are not doing that anymore. We have come way off of that. So the money that we provide continues to pay for the salary of the Afghan police and the army, and then we continue to look at life-cycle management of equipment, of ammunition, of those kind of things.

So I think other reports will tell you that the Afghans will not be able to pick up that bill totally based on their economy until probably about 2024. Five hundred million they are required each year to provide to their security forces. That is the commitment that was made in Chicago in 2012. And we want them to continue to raise that every single year. And they have done that the last 2 years.

And so we are really pushing them to continue to grow their commitment, to show that they are doing that. But at the same time, we have to look at ways to make their military more affordable, sustainable, and efficient as we move forward. And so I think the \$5.1 billion will continue to come down and we will still be able to hold the 352,000 at that level at least for the next 3, 4, 5 years there.

Ms. SANCHEZ. But if I heard you correctly, you believe personally that we have to be committed at least till 2020 and that from a budget standpoint, if all goes well in Afghanistan, they might be able to sustain their own army without us helping in 2024.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I believe that we need a long-term commitment to Afghanistan both in a forward presence and also in the money that not only the U.S., but the rest of the donor countries provide.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Yeah, I know the rest of them do, but when I am looking at \$5.1 billion, \$4.1 billion of it is coming from us. So, I mean, we are the majority stakeholder.

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time. Just trying to get some clarification on where we are and where we are going.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And, General, I did listen to your testimony, I read your testimony, I have great respect for you. And my frustration is the same that Ms. Sanchez is talking about. You know, there is an article,

you have pretty much verified this in a way, it says the U.S. was supposed to leave Afghanistan in 2017, now it might take decades. That could be 20, 30, 40 years.

I have heard people in the same position that you have and you will soon be leaving, who I have great respect for, to continue to talk about for the 14 years of training the Afghan security forces, and we are making progress, but we have been making progress for 14 years. And now we are talking about more years to train the Afghan security forces. The American people are just—they are not upset with the Afghans, they are upset with Congress. We are spending all this money over there.

Let me just very quickly, John Sopko to the Senate this past week testified that among the more egregious examples of boondoggles, he cited importing rare, blond, Italian goats to boost the cashmere industry. The \$6 million program, including shipping nine male goats to western Afghanistan from Italy, setting up a farm, a lab, and a staff to certify their wool.

This has nothing to do with you or our great military, but this is where the American people are just sick and tired. And Mr. Sopko testified we don't know if we used the wool for the fur from the goats or we ate them, meaning the Afghans.

This is why this has got to come to a satisfactory end and there has got to be someone who follows behind you, in my humble opinion, that is going to say to the Congress we are going have a benchmark, and if the Afghan security forces cannot meet that benchmark we are not going to continue to bankrupt the American people.

We right now are \$18.9 trillion in debt. We will this year hit \$19 trillion. It was the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mike Mullen, who said the biggest threat to our military is the debt. And he said it when we were a heck of a lot less than \$19 trillion.

So along with Ms. Sanchez, I want to say that you have been an outstanding leader of our military, like so many. But when you really come down to it, the responsibility, we take your advice and are supposed to make the best decisions that we can. But when I look at all the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan, much of it coming from the Pentagon, not just the Afghans, but the Pentagon, it is not fair to the American people. It is not fair to our military.

Right here in the Military Times they are talking about that here we go again possibly giving our military a 1.6 percent increase. That is just way under the private sector. They deserve the very best, and I know you believe that because you have advocated for them, and I want to thank you for that.

So since the chairman knows sometimes I run over, I don't even have a question today. I just want to make my point for the citizens of the Third District of North Carolina who pay their taxes, love the military in eastern North Carolina, the home of Camp Lejeune Marine base, as you know. But they know that our policy in Afghanistan, there is no endpoint to it. It is just going to go on for the next 20 or 30 years.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, to make you happy, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Will the gentleman yield? Will the gentleman yield?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to you, General Campbell, I certainly want to thank you for your dedication. Those of us who have had a chance to work with you and visit with you in Afghanistan really know and understand that.

I particularly wanted to thank you really for your understanding, and more than that your direction in the empowerment of Afghan women, looking at gender issues, not just really as it supports the women, the education, the health care, but as it really addresses their own national security. And we know that that is so critical. And I think their role in law enforcement and also in the military now has changed as a result of many of your efforts, and I appreciate that greatly.

I also understand, I think we should have and were really negligent in not looking at 5-year plans previously. And I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about that. How is that going to be different than what we have done? And what are those priorities that you would appeal, I think, to General Nicholson in how he structures that, and it is not just the next 5 but the 5 after that, to try and help not just all of us and Americans understand that, but also signaling to the Afghan people?

Because I think that is really critical. And it is those political objectives that we also need to be worried about since we know Afghans are leaving in great numbers because they don't have confidence in their own government right now.

How would you structure that? What would you do differently?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am, for the question. And thank you, as many members here have traveled to visit our great men and women over there. I know that makes a big impact on them. So thank you. And I think you can almost tie this into what Mr. Jones said as well. Emanating out of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other parts of that world is this thing called terrorism. Terrorism knows no boundaries. And terrorism is going to be a generational thing.

And so if we think we can just stop and it is going to go away where people are not going to continue to try to attack Europe or attack our homeland here then we are just, we are naive, we are kidding ourselves. And so we have to be able to continue to have a long-term commitment.

We are the most powerful country in the world. We can do anything we want. If we want to stop this terrorism that kills innocent men and women, that has come to the United States on 9/11, that is killing millions and millions of people throughout the world, we have to stand together. This has to be a global effort not only from Afghanistan, but throughout the world. And President Ghani is trying to work a regional issue and showing that all the countries around Afghanistan need to stay committed to building their own capability to fight terrorism.

Again, it is not going to go away whether we put \$10 billion for the next 10 years or \$4.1 billion. We have to get united, we have

to fight this as a global force. And Afghanistan wants to be part of that force and Afghanistan has the leadership in President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah to be good partners to do that. And that is what inspires me to continue to work with their military as they do that.

Talking in terms of a 5-year plan, what that does for Afghanistan, it provides the men and women there, the boys and girls going to school, the businesspeople that, hey, we are committed, we going to be there, they are not looking over the shoulder that we are going to make another decision or downsize or leave or lose money.

The impact of the number of forces we had to where we are today in the last couple of years has had a huge impact on the economy of Afghanistan as we have come out and they are trying to recoup from that. President Ghani has some good measures to look forward. But it is not just the security. He has got to look at the political dimension inside of his national unity government, he has got to look at the economy and continue to build on the economy from a regional standpoint. And he is reaching out to get railways, to get power, to get business investment from the Gulf countries into Afghanistan. He is doing all of that. It is just going to take time.

So I think my 5 years piece would say longer-term commitment. It means to the Afghan security forces, we are there, we are going to continue to have your back. It means to the people in Afghanistan that we are going to be there, we have commitment, we are going to work on their security, help build their security. It means to the Taliban that, hey, we are going to be there, you need to come to the peace table, you know, we are not leaving. It means to people like Pakistan and the other countries that we need regional partners there to continue to fight this thing.

Mrs. DAVIS. Could you, General—I think my time is up—I wanted you to just address the conditionality for a second in terms of these issues. What will be different?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. We started last year, we are doing much better now, on conditionality. President Ghani welcomes conditionality. And all the money that we have, that we put in the MOI [Ministry of Interior] and the MOD [Ministry of Defense], we put conditions on it: You must do this, this, or this or you don't get this or that. We are trying to do better on incentives as well, to have incentives both the carrot and the stick there. They welcome that. It helps drive them to maintain better, efficient use of the money that we have there. We know we have to do better.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, I want to thank you for your service to our country and the great job that you are doing, and we all feel that way. It has been said before, but I wanted to echo that.

A previous question implied that we made a good handoff to the Iraqis, and I think that that is the farthest thing from the truth possible. I think we abandoned them and really put no effort into a status of forces agreement and an American presence that would have supplied some kind of advising and backup and support that

I think would have made a huge difference when ISIS came across the border from Syria into Iraq. So I think the way we abandoned Iraq is part of why ISIS is in Iraq.

But having said that, in Afghanistan we all want to see it done differently, and we want to see the kind of transition that makes them a stable country and able to stand on their own two feet. So I think we are all in support of that.

Are you concerned, General Campbell, that there are people out there in our society who want to withdraw from Afghanistan precipitously and not get the job done before they are able to stand on their own two feet?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I can talk purely from a military perspective. We have to continue to provide the Afghan security forces the ability to stand up on their own feet. They need help in areas that we said they have needed that help for several years, aviation, intelligence, logistics. I think people that may be saying those kind of things may not have an on-the-ground perspective of where the Afghan security forces are at or how dangerous this thing, terrorism and the insurgent groups and the safe havens that have been there in the past, will mean to the homeland or Europe if we don't continue to keep pressure on them.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you.

Now I want to ask you about the rules of engagement, hot pursuit into Pakistan. Would you like more flexibility when it comes to pursuing people who have committed terrorist or other violent acts and are melting back into Pakistan, to be able to strike them, even if they are right at the border?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as a matter of course for operational security we don't talk about rules of engagement in an open forum. I can talk to you off-line if you want to do that.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you.

Lastly, I want to ask about a real specific question having to do with American contractors and defense-related companies that I think are sometime being pressured by the Afghan government or people within the government, people within the bureaucracy, to pay licensing fees or taxes or whatever they call it. But it strikes me that this is contrary to language we have put into the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] that companies don't have to pay those kinds of taxes to do business in Afghanistan. But if they have to pay these for whatever it is called, they are going to really have their ability to get their job done impaired, which will hurt your forces getting their job done. Can you talk about that please?

General CAMPBELL. Sure. Briefly, I could. In the BSA [bilateral security agreement] it specifically states what Afghanistan can do or not do for contractors. And as we work any issues that come up from contractors through the U.S. Embassy there with the Afghan national unity government we have come to amenable conclusions on all that. I think we just have to raise those up. They have to bring that attention forward.

Again, President Ghani understands how important it is to bring business in, and they want to make sure they don't do anything to create an obstacle there. But most of that is covered in the bilateral security agreement that was signed, and if there are issues, we can take each of those and work those through the U.S. Embassy.

Mr. LAMBORN. But it has come to my attention that despite the BSA and despite language we have put into the NDAA, this is being abused, this process is being abused.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the ones that have been brought to my attention, have been brought to my folks that work any of the procurement issues at Resolute Support, we have been able to work those with the Afghan Government. I don't know of these particular ones you are talking about, but maybe I can talk to you afterwards.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. So if there is a particular issue we become aware of we can come to your people?

General CAMPBELL. I work with the U.S. Embassy there.

Mr. LAMBORN. At the embassy, okay. All right, thank you very much, General.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, General. In your testimony, you talked about 2015 you—or in 2016 you wanted to get continued flexibility into 2016. Can you give us an example of what that continued flexibility would mean? What flexibility don't you have? And what flexibility would you propose the mission have in 2016 and 2017?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. When it comes in terms to what a commander has or doesn't have on the ground, I think you can break it down into bins. It is resources. Resources includes people. It includes equipment. It includes, you know, airplanes. It includes authorities, what you can and can't do. So I think those are really the two that I deal with.

All of those, we work assessments. I continually work assessments. We provide that information to our higher headquarters. If we need adjustments to the authorities, if we need additional authorities, if we need to change authorities, I bring that through my chain of command. It works through a broader process, as I talked about, through CENTCOM [U.S. Central Command], through the Joint Staff, through OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense], up to the White House.

In 2016, we have the number of people we have on the ground, we have the equipment that we have on the ground. We are working toward having the Afghans continue to have a campaign plan as they move forward. And so as we take a look at what else we can do, authorities is an area that I would provide my best military advice to my chain of command as we move forward.

I don't get into particulars on authorities in an open forum. I can talk to you afterwards. Again, some of these authorities would provide changes in what we could do to the enemy. And I don't want to talk about that in an open forum to give them any kind of advantage. But I would be glad to talk to you in a closed hearing on that.

2017, again, I think is an opportunity to continue to assess how the Afghans have improved over fighting season 2016 and do we need to do something different and do they need to do something different as we go forward.

They understand that, you know, the majority, 51 percent of this is on the Afghans, that they have to continue to get the reforms

that we continue to push them on, getting off of checkpoints, getting more maneuverable, reducing the attrition levels that they have, to recruit better, to recontract better, to build upon leadership, to get after corruption. All those kind of things, those reforms, we continue to work with them.

They know that whatever we are going to do is based on how they continue to adjust their own. And if they don't continue to get better, they will lose the confidence of us, they will lose the confidence of the donor nations, and they don't want to do that.

Mr. LARSEN. There was a report this morning, I think, of expanding the amount of dollars for the European Reassurance Initiative, and that money would come from the Overseas Contingency Operations account, or OCO, which seems to me it would put more pressure on available resources in OCO.

Assuming that newspaper report is true and we are going to see that in the budget, just assume it is true for a moment, what impact would that have on the U.S. and the NATO mission in Afghanistan if, in fact, the dollars that we thought we were voting for, for OCO, which would go to Afghanistan and Iraq, are now going to be used for ERI.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I haven't seen the report. I couldn't comment on the amount or anything like that. But assuming that Afghanistan was going to take a cut in OCO, I would have to assess on the impact of that cut and go back to leadership and say this is the risk that would occur because you are taking away OCO.

Hypothetically, I couldn't answer that. But if I was to lose OCO money, which I do need, then I would take a look at where that was coming from and then the risk that it would mean to my forces.

Mr. LARSEN. That is good. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, thank you so much for joining us today. Thanks for your service and what you are doing there in Afghanistan. I know it is a challenge.

When we met with you back in November, one of the discussions we had with you was about the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] close air support capability, what they are doing to develop that, where they are today. Can you give us an update on where those pilots are? I know that they, I think, have completed some training here in the United States. Where are the capability gaps with ANSF close air support capability?

I know you point to some resource shortfalls. So can you describe to us where things are there and what needs to happen in the months to come for them to gain that full capability?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. Again, thanks for your visit as well.

Sir, as we have talked in the past, I mean, to build their close air support, their aviation, their air force to what they need with a 352,000 force, with the enemy threat they face, that is going to continue to take years and years. What has changed since we last saw you, about 2 weeks ago they received the first four A-29 Super Tucano fixed-wing, for lack of a better term, bombers that are

there. The Afghan pilots are flying those. They will get them into the mix in combat here in the next couple weeks. They are doing additional training inside of Afghanistan. There will be another four that come in probably the April-May timeframe, more into 2016, 2017, and 2018 as we build that force up. But for the next large, well, the next summer campaign fighting season, per se, they will have about eight of those that are there.

The MD-530 Little Bird helicopters we have got over the last year, there are about 14 in country. They continue to get those. They continue to get better and better. They have flown the MD-530s in Nangarhar in combat. They have flown them in Helmand in combat. They have flown them in Kandahar in combat. And they have had very good results. They have learned lessons learned on trying to increase, you know, flight time. They have moved ammunition around to be able to rearm and refuel these helicopters at remote sites. So their capability continues to increase.

They are learning lessons on medevac and how they can move their injured on the battlefield with some of their fixed-wing aircraft, how they can tie their Mi-17 helicopters in with their forward-firing Mi-17 helicopters to provide aerial support to go into remote LZs [landing zones] to pick up their wounded and they have reduced the time. So they continue to build upon that.

Sir, it is going to be a continued challenge. It takes 3-plus years to get a pilot. They have to recruit now to have pilots for 3 years from now as they continue to build. To build maintainers there will take 3 to 5 years.

Mi-17s will continue to be a challenge. We are not buying any more of those. As they continue to have battle loss or issues with maintaining those, you know, we are going to have to come up with ways to work through that. And we have a study out that looks at a future aircraft. They want to have a U.S. aircraft, helicopter, attack helicopter, and we would have to come back to Congress to ask for continued support to do that.

But every day I see the air force continue to get better. The Afghan Special Mission Wing that supports the Afghan special forces with their helicopters, rotary-wing support, is incredible and what they can do at night. But the conventional forces lack the capability to fly. Many of them can't fly at night. And so we have got to continue to build that capability.

Mr. WITTMAN. I know when we met there, the concern is, is that the Russians are no longer selling parts to the Mi-17. So how much of a gap do we have in Mi-17 availability and the MD-530s and the capability that they are providing? Because if we have a shrinking capability within our rotary-wing force there, that creates a significant issue.

So where are we with keeping the Mi-17s flying and closing the gap with the MD-530s?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks. You know, the Mi-17 was never designed to be their close air support helicopter. It was really for transport from medevac. What they did and what we did to help them this year was mitigate that by putting fortifying machine guns in some of the Mi-17s, about 10 of them, and then putting rocket pods on some of the other ones for a total of about 15 or so that have that.

They continue to do that. But they are losing, based on just wear and tear in the aircraft, combat losses, anywhere between 7 to 10 each year, and we have got to continue to work through that. They have issues with overhaul maintenance. The chairman and I talked the other day on as we move forward, what else can we do to work through that. And I owe the chairman some more information on that. But they weren't really designed to complement the MD-530.

They do, sir, if I could add one thing.

Mr. WITTMAN. Sure.

General CAMPBELL. They do have three Mi-35s, really Mi-24s, Mi-35s from India. They will have a fourth one coming in pretty soon that will add to their inventory as well, and that will make a great difference.

Mr. WITTMAN. In closing, how reliant are they upon U.S. enablers for logistics, maintenance, those kinds of things? Because that has a sustainability leg to it too for their aircraft.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, they are relying upon a lot of contractor support, just like the U.S. Army does a lot of maintenance on our helicopters rotary wing with contract support. They do the same thing. And so they are very reliant on parts, on contractors as we move in. We will try to continue to reduce that as we build the Afghan capability.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Campbell. I wish you all the best.

I think we would all like to someday talk about something other than war in Afghanistan. It is a most remarkable country. I know as I have been there and flown over it and you look down, you can imagine what a very different place it could be if we could only finally get to a place where the country is more stable as we focus on keeping it and preventing it from becoming yet again a safe haven for potential attacks on this country. That has always been our motivator.

But I have to say, in my last visit home, we were just back in our districts for a couple of weeks, I had an opportunity to meet with a support group for families of those who have served, both in Afghanistan and Iraq. And it was really a reminder, as I know it is for all of us who meet with these families, what a shared sacrifice it is, that as their young people go and serve and come back, the struggles are not over, and that these families have long-term commitments to their young people who have served in our behalfs. And everybody tries to come together to move them to another place in their lives. That is something all of us always have in the backs of our minds.

And also in my many visits there, we can't help but feel good about the many gains that have been made. We have talked about the gains for women. I have been to schools where you have seen the opportunities that creates for their young children. It is remarkable really. So we all feel pride. And in meeting with Afghans too, what pride they feel for those gains that they have achieved.

But also now we are hearing more about fear. They are becoming yet more afraid. And as we struggle with what our way forward

should be, all along the emphasis has been on our Afghan National Security Forces. I can remember, as the surge was put in place, being in Afghanistan and meeting with some of the young recruits and understanding what an extraordinary challenge it was going to be to train and equip these young people, to get them to a place where they could replace the very professional efforts that we have brought to it.

And so I am just wondering, even as you talk about how a 5-year plan might be an appropriate way forward, the issue of attrition has been an ongoing one. So given the challenge, as you bring in, you train and equip, you get these people up to a place, then you lose them, there is the cost to the billions of dollars spent on the effort. But also I think we have to be realistic about what that attrition rate, really the impact it has on our long-term ability to transfer and be secure that this is a durable transfer to a security force that hasn't yet demonstrated that it can recruit and keep a security force that is up to the task. How are you dealing with the attrition rate?

And I think it also has to be complicated by the death rate. I mean, I read alarming numbers of losses. And I can't imagine how that reverberates across Afghanistan as families are sending their people off to fight—rightfully so. I mean, this has to come down to them. But how are you dealing with those two elements?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you for the question, ma'am. Attrition is one of the areas, one of the reform areas we work very hard with the Afghans. It is a couple different components. For me, it really gets down to leadership and holding leaders accountable to take care, understand their young men and women that join their services. They don't have the noncommissioned officer corps that we have in all of our services that really look at that discipline. If you recruit somebody in Badakhshan way in the north, put him down in Helmand, and let them sit there for 3 years and fight, he is not going to have the attitude that I want to continue to serve and stay there. He has to be able to get on a cycle that he can sustain to be able to train, be able to go see his family, and then fight. They don't have that in their conventional army. We are working toward that. That is one of the reforms.

Ms. TSONGAS. What is the attrition rate at this point, just a number?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I can come back to you with an exact number.

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

General CAMPBELL. The last couple months the recruiting has gone up. They are recontracting, what we would call reenlistment, keeping people in after their first term has gone up. So that has offset some of the attrition. But it continues to be an issue.

They can train about 6,000 a month if they recruit that much. They will maintain levels, no issue. But, again, it gets down to leadership. They do have a working group. And we have had a task force on attrition headed by their vice chief of the army, Lieutenant General Murad Ali. We have advisers that meet with him all the time to work on different issues to get after the recruiting and the recontracting. We brought experts from our Recruiting Command in the United States Army to Afghanistan for a very short time to

take a look at all the processes and systems they have to make sure we can adjust as they move forward.

But it is putting attention on it, and President Ghani is starting to hold corps commanders and other leadership accountable to really get after attrition. It is going to take some time to continue to build that. But I think they do have the focus on that now.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Coffman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, I had the pleasure of visiting Afghanistan late last year and spent Thanksgiving with some of our troops and had the opportunity to meet with you as well. While I was there, I had the opportunity to observe—actually this was before—some of the ANA [Afghan National Army] field artillery. And so I think my concern is are we giving them weapon systems that are simply too complicated for them to effectively deploy as well as ever maintain? And I don't know if this would be appropriate for a classified setting, if the ANA has been able to actually deploy that artillery. I think they were using a D-30 system.

General CAMPBELL. That is right.

Mr. COFFMAN. I wonder if you could comment on that.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, where they have been trained in using the D-30, they do quite well. They do a lot more direct fire as opposed to indirect fire with the D-30s. We have worked with them on that. We have worked with them on preventing civilian casualties by using indirect fire, direct fire. But they have employed the D-30 in many places throughout Helmand and many places in the east.

Again, it depends on which corps and how much emphasis they put on the training and how much the leadership actually understands about that. We have had advisers work with them specifically on the D-30. The chief of staff of the army there recently appointed a new chief of field artillery. So he is revamping the school and the training that goes along with the D-30 and all the assets. They use a 60-millimeter mortar quite well also in combat.

But it boils down to if they have had the right training on that particular piece of equipment, And I think we have got to continue to work with them on that.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, General Campbell. I mean, my concern with that, I think you mentioned 60-millimeter mortars, which seems very appropriate for them. And given the capability of the enemy that has essentially light mortars, some crew-served automatic weapons, small arms, IED capability, RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades], but that is pretty much it.

So I am concerned about whenever we give them a major weapon system that is complicated, that this artillery requires a lot of vehicle assets to be able to move it, logistics are more complicated, fire direction is much more complicated than light mortars, and individual infantry can move light, dismounted, can move light mortars. And so I just think we need an evaluation across the board.

I want to commend you for your service and for all you have done. I want to be fair to the Afghan security forces in having systems that they can readily deploy, that are within their capability, and also their ability to maintain them. And so I think to be fair to them and be fair to the taxpayers of the United States, to make

sure that we are giving them the appropriate weapons and equipment.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks. I think what President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the senior leadership that I deal with understand when the United States provides equipment, it is kind of one station does all. They get the training, they get the maintenance, and they get practical application on the equipment. So just like we do with A-29s, MD-530s, M4s, M16, NATO weapons, they get that training. They learn the maintenance of it.

We do the same thing with the D-30s. D-30s were cobbled up many years ago from different nations. We are working now to make sure they have a standard D-30, they all have the same type of sight system on that, and we are working through that piece. They have the right lots of ammunition and they know how to employ.

But they do include the D-30 as part of their overall architecture for fire support. So when you talk close air support, they use the D-30 to provide some of that indirect fire when they plan for operations as they go forward. And they will continue to get better. And I will take a hard look at it, sir, as you have mentioned.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you. Thank you, General Campbell.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, everyone has commented on your great service to this country. I too would like to extend my congratulations.

I also want to congratulate you on presenting probably the most well-written statement, clearest statement that has been before this committee in some time. You were direct and to the point and I appreciate that. Oftentimes, we get mixed messages. You were very clear in your presentation.

Having said that, you made the point that 70 percent of Afghanistan is still under the control of the government. SIGAR [Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction], in its quarterly report, its most recent one, said that the Taliban now controls more territory than at any time since 2001. So that would suggest to me that we are not gaining ground, we may, in fact, be losing ground.

So my question to you is: What should we be doing differently? And what conditions should we be looking at to determine if our strategy is succeeding? And will the job ever be done there?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am. I think as we move forward, again, we have got to continue to work with the Afghan Government, with the Afghan security forces, and increase their capability. And I do see changes in leadership. I do see changes in their ability to plan operations as they move forward.

Again, the things that are very hard for the U.S. Army that has been around for 240 years is very tough for an army that has only been around for 8 or 9 years. And if we try to compare the two, then we will make some bad comparisons.

On the Sopko, Mr. Sopko and the SIGAR report of more than 2001, you know, in 2001, the Taliban controlled the government. They were in Kabul. It is not like that today. So I am not sure where that statement came from. It is totally different than 2001. And the Afghan Government is in control of Afghanistan. And I

told you about 70 percent influence control. So I am not sure where the statement came from Mr. Sopko on that, the comparison to 2001.

I think as we move forward, again, we have to make sure that we have realistic expectations on how fast they can move to be a force that can take care of Afghanistan and the people.

If I thought that the sacrifices we have made over the last 14, 15 years weren't worth it, if I thought that what we were doing there was not going to pay dividends, hasn't paid dividends, hadn't prevented another 9/11 from happening, I would tell my son who is in the Army, who the last time I saw my son, he is a sergeant, was in August of 2014 in Jalalabad on his second tour in Afghanistan. I talked to him 2 days ago as I got back here. He is getting ready to deploy on his third tour. If I thought that it wasn't worth it, I would tell my own son: You need to do something different.

But I absolutely believe that the commitment of our young men and women as we move forward is going to make a difference not only for the Afghan people, but for the security of our homeland. And we haven't had another 9/11 since we have been forward deployed.

And I think sometimes we just kind of wish that away. And the world we live is not that way. It is going to continue to be a dangerous world for the rest of our lives. And we have to do everything we can to build up capability for countries like Afghanistan to help us in that fight. And they want to do that.

Ms. SPEIER. So you reference being clear-eyed about this. Do we have to accept the fact that we are there indefinitely, that we have to have a peacekeeping force there much like we have in Korea?

General CAMPBELL. Korea, Germany, I have heard those references made before. You know, we had 300,000-plus at one time, when I first went to Germany as a second lieutenant, and we are down to probably between 20,000 and 30,000. In Korea, it is somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000.

We are nowhere near those levels in Afghanistan, but yet we continue, although sometimes not as fast as we want, to continue to grow the capabilities of the Afghan security forces. I do believe we are going to have to continue to provide monetary support until the Afghans can pick that up on their own. I said that is at least till—all the reports indicate at least till the 2024 timeframe where their economy will be able to support the Afghan people completely on their own. They do continue to raise their commitment for their Afghan security forces, \$500 million this past year. They will continue to raise it every year.

But I think, you know, we have to figure out what that balance is going to be. We have to figure out balancing the number of casualties that we have. And I believe the American people, understanding how important it is to have a presence in that part of the world and what it does to second-, third-order effects, you know, that they will continue to support as we go forward.

Ms. SPEIER. Maybe for the record you could answer this last question. I am running out of time. The Wall Street Journal today says the rules of engagement need to change if we are really going to make some headway there. Maybe you can respond for the record for that.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I will take that for the record in a classified response. Thank you.

[The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gibson.

Mr. GIBSON. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General. You caught me by surprise yesterday when I learned of your retirement. It caused me to reflect on when I first met you. I think it was about 25 years ago when you were a major and I was a captain. And those were interesting times, but I don't think either of us could have anticipated what these past 25 years have wound up being.

And, General, you have always taken all the hard jobs. And I think of your honorable, faithful service over the years. I am thinking at this moment of your time as a brigadier general in Baghdad. I know that was a very tough time. We lost a lot of great Americans then.

And I just want to say that when I think of you, I think of integrity, unflappable mental and physical toughness, and dependable. So I thank you and your family.

I want to take note of a comment you made earlier. You talked about leverage when it comes to ensuring that the investments that we are making in Afghanistan come to fruition. In my view, that was really among the most important lessons from Iraq. We quibble over some things, but I think that we really lost opportunities. We had significant leverage, the financial investments we were making there and other matters. And while we were seeing the deterioration, we saw a leader in Iraq at the time that was corrupt and really sectarian. And I think we missed a real opportunity to use leverage to change that. And so I just want to appreciate that comment.

But my question to you—and, by the way, I hope that the administration is listening, sort of a segue to the last point—which is, as we think about going forward from here and for the next President, I would love for you to tell us—because I accept the point you make that as hard as matters have been in Afghanistan, by keeping the pressure on them over there, we are protecting the American people here.

So if you were able to change things in any way, how would we improve our counterterrorism, counterterrorism in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, but really, so specifically there, but then in general, what lessons, what changes in policy would be necessary so that we can improve our counterterrorism?

General CAMPBELL. Well, thanks for the question. And thanks for your service as well all the way. That is a great question as we move forward.

I think, for me, what I reflect on, from a CT, counterterrorism, perspective, when I got there 18 months ago, as we were going to 1,000, Kabul-centric, there is no CT strategy. And what we have done has been able to push that. And we do now have a counterterrorism strategy in that part of the world as we move forward. And I think we do have to continue as part of that strategy to build the Afghan forces up so they can take that over.

That is going to take a long time. As you know, the men and women that we have that do CT have been doing this for many years, and they take great pride in their precision, on their ability to gain the intelligence that is required, on and on and on. And I think as we move forward, what we have to do is continue to rely on lessons learned, go back and take a look at everything we have done. We can always get better.

But I think there are, and I don't want to get out of the lane on policy, I do believe that there are issues throughout the world, not just on Afghanistan, on how we can apply policy different, apply pressure that ultimately will get after this global, generational threat, terrorism, which knows no boundaries. And I think part of it is getting the rest of the global community to help fight this. It can't just be the U.S., although they depend on the U.S. to lead the way. We shouldn't forget that. Even with NATO, they didn't make the decision to continue Resolute Support longer until the U.S. made its decision. That is how they depend on our leadership and understand how important that leadership is.

And so I think in the world of CT, there are things that we can do throughout the world that probably we ought to talk in a classified hearing, not to give our enemies an advantage here, that we could do a little bit differently. But we have the greatest CT capability in the world. And it continues, I think, to get better and better under the leadership of guys like Joe Votel and Tony Thomas and others. So I am proud to have been able to work with all those forces both in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 14, 15 years.

Mr. GIBSON. I thank you, General. And as we all go forward, I think it is important that you think about, you mentioned NATO being involved here and really all of our friends and allies in thinking across the spectrum in terms of intelligence required, force protection, all of the assets that are going to be necessary for us to prevail.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Takai.

Mr. TAKAI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Aloha, General Campbell. Thank you for your service in Afghanistan and candor with this committee.

As we make adjustments to our funding commitments in Afghanistan in light of the budget pressures, what metrics are we measuring the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces capabilities such that we can reduce our support?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, a lot of that is, when we first started there, I said we were in the \$12 billion to \$13 billion range. We were building a lot of infrastructure. We were providing a lot of equipment, arms. We don't have to do that now. So we just have to provide really—we look at providing life-cycle sustainment. So that has really cut down the amount of money and we will continue to work through that.

As we deal with the Afghan forces on the monetary piece, we do look at making sure they understand, you know, it is very tough for us, PPB&E, which is really the planning, programming, budgeting, execution. We have advisers there, senior-level advisers that work with senior-level Afghans on budgeting, on programming, on their procurement. President Ghani chairs personally and Dr.

Abdullah chairs personally a procurement meeting every Saturday night, it goes 2 or 3 hours, as they work on how they can cut out corruption, how they can get the right kind of contracts in there. He has definitely taken that on as trying to help cut out corruption. So that is going to help us continue to bring down.

But we have to build their capability in that. And in the past, where many of our weapon systems were our young men and women out there fighting every day, shona ba shona, side by side, shoulder by shoulder with them. Now our weapon systems are our senior advisers, senior civilians that come over, senior military folks of all our services that work in the very tough areas of planning, programming, budgeting, execution, intelligence reforms, transparency and accountability, rule of law, those kind of things. I think as we continue to build their capability, they will get more efficient and we can continue to bring down the funding.

But we use conditions, again, to apply pressure, to make sure they understand that there is a sense of urgency here, that we have to continue to move forward. And they understand that and they want to make changes. But it is about changing behavior. And so you can't continue to do the same old thing, and you have to apply different ways to change behavior.

Mr. TAKAI. Is it fair to suggest that increased support from U.S. contractors will be necessary to supplant the decrease in active duty military support?

General CAMPBELL. We have depended on contractors for years in many critical areas both in Iraq and Afghanistan. We do offset the number of military on the ground by the number of contractors. We do look at that very hard. We try to keep that in balance. But I think for the foreseeable future we will continue to have to have contractors involved, yes, sir.

Mr. TAKAI. Thank you. While I know you have rightfully been focused on helping the Afghans fight the Taliban, ISIS, and Al Qaeda, my other assignment from HASC [House Armed Services Committee] is the ranking member of the Contracting and Workforce Subcommittee on the Small Business Committee. I wanted to concentrate for a minute on the U.S. contractors that enable you to perform your mission—you mentioned them just a few minutes ago—some of which participate as small businesses. It is my understanding that they are having significant challenges in dealing with the Afghan Government in a number of areas, such as tax disputes, attaining new or renewing licenses, and generally staying compliant with Afghan law.

At some point, these issues will impact you and your successor's ability to perform the mission and reach our objectives. The contractors can't fix this alone. It must be a government-to-government solution. What is Resolute Support doing to help facilitate a solution to these challenges?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is the second question brought up on the contractor piece and the issues they may have. I will go back and make sure we are attuned to that. We do have the BSA and a task force that works both with the Afghans—the Afghans have a piece of that—Resolute Support and all of the embassies, especially the U.S. and the BSA, work toward that. The first meeting actually was last week, I think, at a lower level. It will come to

both myself and the Minister of Defense, who will sit those. And these kind of issues, if not worked out at a lower level, will then be brought forward. And I will make sure that we take a hard look on any of the taxing issues or licensing issues.

Again, I know President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah are very attuned to making sure that they create opportunities inside of Afghanistan not only for the Afghans to continue to build up and build business, but also they are going to need help from outside. And if they are doing things that obstruct that, as it impacts on the security perspective, we will make sure that we get after that. But I will go take a harder, deep dive on that and make sure we are addressing that fully.

Mr. TAKAI. Okay. Thank you. I believe the bilateral security agreement and the NDAA say that these types of taxes are improper. In fact, we just met recently with a company that says that they are facing a \$63 million tax bill. So this is a big issue that needs to be resolved. So if you can get back to us, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Bridenstine.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, I appreciate you being here and all your great work through the years.

In your testimony, you write—or you say and write: “We recently gained the authority to strike Daesh. Since then, we have had considerable success in degrading their capabilities.” A lot of us were concerned that that authority was not given to you earlier than it was. And clearly that has been a challenge.

Later in your testimony you write: “Groups aligned with the Taliban, such as Al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, continue to threaten our national security interests.”

Can you share for us, do you have the authorities necessary to strike the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the Haqqani Network?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. I have the authority to protect the coalition members against any insurgents, Haqqani, Taliban, Al Qaeda, if they are posing as a threat to our coalition.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. But do you have the authority to strike the Taliban because they are the Taliban?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, just like, again, if the Taliban are attacking coalition forces, then I have everything I need to do that. To attack the Taliban just because they are Taliban, I do not have that authority.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So the President—this is the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, quote: “The President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons.” Did the Taliban harbor such organizations or persons?

General CAMPBELL. The Taliban, Al Qaeda, all the insurgent groups, the networks that they have are really intertwined. It is very difficult many times to separate who is AQ, who is Taliban,

who is TTP [Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan], who is IMU [Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan], who is——

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So according to the Authorization for Use of Military Force, you have the authority, given to you by Congress, signed by the President, to use the necessary force. And yet the President, it seems, is saying you can't attack the Taliban even though they were responsible for September 11?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think as we adjusted our mission in 2015 we went away from combat operations. And we have worked with the Afghans to build their capability to go after the Taliban. Again, if the Taliban are attacking or pose a threat to coalition forces, I have everything I need to provide that force protection. But just to go after Taliban because they are Taliban, I don't do that, sir.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So when you talk about the train-and-assist mission, the TAA mission, as your testimony talks about, one of the challenges we have is with only 9,800 troops, it makes it difficult to do that kind of training and assisting at lower levels. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we only do train, advise, and assist at the ministerial level, MOD, MOI. At the corps level, and really only on four of the six corps. On the other two corps we provide expeditionary advising. So it is not what we call level 1, it is not every day, it is sporadically. And then we provide tactical-level TAA only with the special operating forces and with the air force. We are not down at the kandak or battalion level. We are not down at the brigade level.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Would it be beneficial to you to be able to go to those lower levels with training and assisting?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we are looking at in our assessment if that would make a difference. I don't think we can do that everywhere. You know, the number of forces that would take would be far more than what we even had in the surge many years ago. I think where we have to do a better job is taking the right units and providing them the right necessary equipment, training, manning, and put them in the right places. And as we focus on the special operating forces, they have made a huge difference.

I think if they get after other reforms that we have worked with them on, getting off the checkpoints, coming up with a force-generation cycle, working off attrition, building leadership, that will probably do a lot more at this point in time for them than trying to put a whole bunch of people down at the kandak level. That is just unrealistic at this point in time.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. The limited training and assisting that we are currently doing, we ought to be doing more. If we go down from 9,800 troops to 5,500 troops a year from now, I presume that means we are going to be doing even less training and equipping. Is that going to be a good idea or a bad idea? Given where we are right now, do you think that is even possible?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I am working that assessment, work that through the process to provide where we go with that. Again, the 5,500 number is more focused on the CT mission as opposed to a TAA mission.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So we won't be able to do TAA at those numbers?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, we will have a very limited ability to do TAA with the 5,500 number.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Lastly, Mr. Chairman, it is astonishing that we have an authority to go after the Taliban and the President is preventing us from doing that. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ashford.

Mr. ASHFORD. Thank you, General Campbell. I was in Afghanistan last February, so a year ago. And I would just chime in by saying that I think that what I have been hearing today and have read is that there have been exceptional things happen in the last year. It is interesting, when we met with President Ghani back in February and we talked about the many elements of what has to change in Afghanistan to be successful, obviously, there is the military side, but there are other elements that are critical. And I was struck by what you said today and about your involvement in those other elements of how do you create a stable country.

I think back to my, even in Omaha, University of Nebraska at Omaha, where Tom Gouttierre at the Afghan Studies Program at UNO has been there for 45 years, working with—in fact, President Ghani mentioned when we first met him that he had known Tom Gouttierre, Dr. Gouttierre, since he was 17 years old. So there has been this incredible commitment by the military, obviously, and yourself and your team, and lots of other people who have made this commitment.

Here is my question really, and you have probably answered most of it. But number one is there is a big difference in my mind between a sunset, saying we are going to be gone in a year, we are going to go to some number in a year, and what you are talking about today, which is a 5-year vision. To me, hearing you talk about a 5-year vision is a very refreshing thing. We were just at NATO on our way back from the Gulf States and talking about the Warsaw conference and the need for a 5-year vision in Afghanistan.

What in your view would be those elements, many of which you have already talked about and worked on, that would be in a 5-year vision? What would you see a 5-year vision entailing in an optimum sense?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, again, you know, I talk usually just from the security perspective. And we would work on different areas on the Afghan security forces to build upon the areas that we knew they would have issues with, that would take years to build on, intelligence, close air support, those kinds of things we have talked about in the past.

But I think a 5-year vision really from NATO, the U.S., everybody working together, is not just the security piece. It involves a political dimension, an economic dimension. And I think NATO is behind that. I believe we are working toward that as well. President Ghani wants to continue to push that.

So President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, President Obama do periodic video teleconferences. I have been honored to have the opportunity to sit in those with the President. He has done several of those in the last 18 months. They continue to talk through what they need to do as they go forward. I think those have been very helpful.

And with President Ghani, you have a commander in chief. And a lot of things that he does, again, different from previous folks that were there, is try to model a lot what he has learned based on what he sees from the United States. He considers us a foundational partner. And I think we have got to continue to provide the ability to stay with him. He understands that. He is not going to try to do anything that would get in the way to do that. He is getting after all the things we wanted him to get after, corruption, work in gender integration issues, building civilian leadership, building military leadership. I think all of those would go inside of the plan as we go forward.

Mr. ASHFORD. And I think it is exceptional what you have been able to accomplish, General, quite frankly, because those are the elements that we talked about a year ago. And there certainly are challenges with Daesh and others, other elements here. But every one of those elements were challenges that President Ghani talked to us about. And you have been able, working with him and your team working with his team, to advance the ball quite a bit, in my view.

I mean, all I can do is look at what I saw then when President Ghani first got there and now. And, yeah, there are challenges clearly, obviously. But there are significant strides that have been made. And going down the checklist and even expanding it beyond that, just issues involving—I know President Ghani talked about attitudes towards women and I think that has clearly been an issue for him. And all those things that were on the table, needed to be addressed 1 year ago are being addressed in a very positive fashion.

So thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have had a lot of help. It is not about me here. Thanks, sir.

Mr. ASHFORD. I yield back. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Campbell. It is great to see you again. I had the opportunity to visit with you in November on a congressional delegation. I was able to visit with soldiers that I represent in the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum.

I wanted to talk to you about in your testimony today you discussed the fact that terrorist organizations are no longer siloed, that it is much of a terrorist network. To what extent is IS-KP [Islamic State-Khorasan Province] recruiting current and former members of the Taliban? In your testimony a couple months ago, you assessed that IS-KP was evolving from nascent to operationally emergent. How would you describe that progress today? And how does that impact the security conditions on the ground.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, thanks for the visit. Thanks for the great 10th Mountain Division that continues to remain there today.

You know, Daesh, IS-KP continues to recruit and really started from an Afghanistan—disenfranchised members of the TTP or the Pakistani Taliban. That was really the core. And the senior leadership of IS-KP continues to come from TTP. They have gained other members of the Taliban that may have become—that see the success that happened in Syria and Iraq. They see more money. So

they want to join something like that. They have been able to use that to their benefit, using social media to recruit.

President Ghani, I said in the past, talked about Al Qaeda being Windows 1.0 and Daesh being, you know, Windows 7.0 when it comes to social recruiting. It has made a difference on the battlefield. They have continued to grow. February-March timeframe, I did say nascent. Operationally emergent is what I said back in October. They continue to be about the same place. I don't think they have the ability today to attack Europe, to attack the homeland. I think if left unchecked they would have that ability. They have expressed that they want to attack Americans, that they want to attack the homeland. And so everything that we can do to make sure they can't do that, you know, we will get after that.

The ability to go after ISIL, as we have done in the last week and a half or so, I think has made a significant impact on their leadership and on their ability to continue to form, in Nangarhar particularly, Achin and Dih Bala districts of Nangarhar, and we will continue to work that piece of it.

Taliban and Daesh fight each other or have fought each other. It has caused the Taliban to move resources, as I mentioned in the opening statement, away from other areas to fight ISIL in Nangarhar, and that has an impact on the battlefield.

But let's make no doubt about it, they have expressed desire to attack the United States, to kill Americans, to attack Europe. They want to do what has happened in Syria and Iraq and gain ground in Afghanistan. They want to take over Jalalabad, build in the Kunar Province, to establish the Khorasan Province, which is Afghanistan, part of Pakistan, central South Asia. So there is no doubt they want to do that and they are going to continue to work toward that.

It is very hard, I think, as we move forward to see the difference between the networks out there of all the terrorists. Many of them provide different types of support to each other in many of the ungoverned areas, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And I think Pakistan has done a lot of stuff in the last year very courageously from General Raheel, the chief of army, to have PAKMIL [Pakistan military] operations in Pakistan. But the result of that has driven a lot of that into Afghanistan and the Afghan forces have had to deal with that as well.

So we will continue to stay after this. But ISIL, you know, we have to continue, IS-KP, Daesh, we have to continue to keep pressure on them or it will grow to where we do not want it to be.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you for that answer.

I want to shift gears here to, you noted three capabilities, logistics, intelligence, and close air support, that the Afghan security forces need to further develop. Can you specifically discuss metrics in 2016 that you are looking for to see improvements? You know, what specifically are you looking for in those three capabilities areas?

General CAMPBELL. Simple things, like in the logistics realm, you know, every day the Afghans ask me for more of this, more of that, certain leadership down at lower levels. And they have the equipment. They have the ammunition. It is a matter of leadership. It is a matter of supply distribution. So we are taking a holistic look

at their entire supply system on how we can make it easier for them to be able to provide the right logistic support for all their forces.

Sometimes what we do is we go into a place and we make it too hard, we impose our systems and processes, and we find out that they are just not capable of having that same type of system, so we have to adjust. Not everybody in Afghanistan can read or write. Not everybody in Afghanistan has the ability to get on a computer and have all their logistic supplies and move of their logistic supplies based on the network that we have here in the United States.

So we have to adjust. And what I tell our advisers all the time is keep it simple, you know, do everything we can to keep it simple. So in many areas that we thought we were doing a good job, we have to go back and ask ourselves, you know, was that the right way to do it. Logistics is a hard area, but I think simple things like taking logistics from point A, getting it to point B, getting it to people on the ground is a pretty simplistic measure, but that is one we are looking at.

And close air support, it is really about gaining the ability to fly both day and night. We have got to continue to work in 2016, getting them to fly at night is going to be very, very important as we go forward.

In the intelligence place, I think, in the intelligence arena, having them continue to build upon MOD, MOI, NDS [National Directorate of Security], their intel agency, working together to take a look from the strategic level all the way down to the tactical level, I think will make a big difference. They formed a fusion cell earlier this year that they have never had, intel fusion cell at the strategic level, and that is starting to make a difference now as it takes strategic intelligence from all the different agencies and pumps that out to the special operating forces so they can prosecute the target. And that is making a difference.

Ms. STEFANIK. I am over my time. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moulton.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, first I just want to join Mr. Gibson and so many others who have thanked you for your service. There are very few people who have to make daily life-and-death decisions and are fundamentally, in a very direct way, responsible for the survival and success of our Nation's most precious assets, the young Americans who fight on the front lines. Certainly none of us on this side of the room have that direct responsibility that you do. And I can say that you will be missed.

I want to go back to a comment you made about making sure that 2016 is not a rerun of 2015. My personal concern is that, even more broadly, that 2016 or 2017 or 2018 becomes a rerun of the 2010 to 2013 period we saw in Iraq where things really fell apart. And I think of that game that you sometimes see in bars where there is—it is called Jenga—and there is a pile of sticks. And what happened in Iraq is we had this nice pile that we had constructed at the cost of a lot of time and a lot of American lives, and the enemies of Iraq and America were steadily pulling out one stick at a time. And we were standing far enough back that we could still say, "Look, it looks like a great tower, in fact, it is even getting a

little bit higher,” as they pull a stick out and put it back on top. But at some point the whole thing collapsed.

And my concern is that there is a lot of evidence out there, despite the admirable progress that you have made, that things in Afghanistan aren’t getting better, in fact they might be getting a little bit worse. I am concerned that the differences that you described between Iraq and Afghanistan aren’t really so stark. There are an awful lot of Iraqi leaders who wanted us to stay in the country. There was just one guy at the top who did not. That is a very analogous situation to the problem we had with Karzai, and if President Ghani is not there in the future, we could see that problem again.

There is a lot of sectarianism in Iraq. I also knew army units that were very nonsectarian and were very committed to the national unity government.

There are also stories, tremendous stories of Iraqi Army success, despite the well-publicized failures. And, indeed, the same is true in Afghanistan.

But what happened in Iraq is not that Daesh came in and just overran the Iraqi Army. The Iraqi Army put their weapons down and went home because they had lost faith in their government, because when they looked at that tower, it had collapsed.

Now, you mentioned in Afghanistan today that it is not just our troops on the front lines, but these advisers in the ministries, the people who are working on Afghan governance, to make sure that that doesn’t happen in Afghanistan. But if you look at the progress with the Afghan Government, we have gone from approval ratings in the 70s to a recent survey that had approval ratings in the 6 to 8 percent range. So I am very concerned that we are going to see a repeat of Iraq 2010 to 2013 in Afghanistan over the next 3 years.

So what do we need to do differently? If you came and testified to us that everything was just fine and we were maintaining the status quo, that it seems like a good response to that would be to keep our forces at the same level. And yet the two choices on the table are keeping them at the same level or reducing them when it seems like in many measures, in many ways things are actually getting worse.

So what do you think that we need to do differently so that we can make positive forward progress, not just on the military front, but on the political front with the Afghan Government, so we don’t see things sliding back, more sticks being pulled out, and someday we just see the tower collapse?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question. Again, I spend a lot of time with President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, as does Ambassador McKinley from the embassy. We have a great partnership together. I am honored to work with him. I know that he and I have spent a lot of time together going after the exact question you talked about, talking to President Ghani about things that he could do to help manage better inside the government, working with Dr. Abdullah.

They both understand how important it is to keep the national unity government together. I do believe that they both want to continue to keep the national unity government together, despite all

the other distractors around them, despite the, for lack of a better term, the opposition groups that are starting to form that want to take away President Ghani or take away Dr. Abdullah. A lot of that, quite frankly, is so politically based on constituencies and because certain groups haven't been given a ministerial job or a governorship or something like that.

Mr. MOULTON. General, I am almost out of time. But if you could continue on the record what we in the United States could be doing differently to improve the situation, to make sure that the progress we make is greater than the progress we have seen over the past year, I would very much appreciate it.

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely.

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

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you. I will echo what the others have said, I thank you for your service. I don't know that most people in the country truly understand what you have done and what many others like you have done to serve this country, and it is appreciated.

You mentioned in here that you recently gained the authority to strike at Daesh. What were you doing before that? When they were on the move or a threat, how did you handle that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if they were a threat and we knew they were a threat to attacking the coalition, then I would have the ability to provide that force protection. I would strike them.

Dr. WENSTRUP. But only in a defensive posture or—

General CAMPBELL. Only if I knew they were going to attack the coalition, yes, sir.

Dr. WENSTRUP. You mentioned the capability gap that exists today, the deficiencies that you see, where they need our help. What do you see as a timeframe for those capabilities being fulfilled? I mean, are we talking 20 years? You mentioned 240 years for us and 8 years for them is a big difference, right? So do you see them trending towards that and having that capability, those capabilities some day?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think every area is different. But I will take aviation because it is easy to look at, I think. We won't even get the last aircraft that we are working toward till probably the 2018 timeframe. So we are talking 2, 3 more years just to get that aircraft. And in that timeframe, many of the aircraft could have issues with maintenance, could have battle damage, and on and on and on. But the human capital of building their pilots for years and years, you know, you have got to start that now and make sure they realize if you recruit a guy now, you are not going to see him for another 3 years before he can be a pilot. So aviation is the area that is going to take a long time, several years, to get them to where they were used to.

When we went out as a force, we showed them we would never go out unless we had ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance], unless we had attack helicopters, all the enablers out there. Yet, as they took over the country, they didn't have all of those enablers, all of that support. So we are working through that to

build that support for them. But, again, the Taliban doesn't have a lot of that either, and we have got to make sure that they don't look at the Taliban as 10 feet tall, as I talked about in the opening statement.

Dr. WENSTRUP. So is that the capability that you think will take the longest, is aviation?

General CAMPBELL. I think aviation is probably the area that will take the longest, yes, sir.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Okay.

Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Rourke.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your testimony, for your service, and for hosting so many of us who have visited you and the service members who serve under you in Afghanistan.

The primary goal, as I understand it, in terms of our efforts in Afghanistan is to prevent that country from ever again becoming a place from which terrorists or those who would do us harm could launch attacks against the United States. That makes a lot of sense to me. And, again, I thank you and those who serve under you for your success to date.

The secondary goals are harder for me to follow. You mentioned in kind of a negative way what one of the goals is not. It is not to perpetuate a stalemate. You don't want to see that continue. And, yet, I am unclear at this point as to what we will do to prevent that from happening, this indefinite stalemate, and what we are willing to do to help the Afghanistan national government should it fail to prevail against the Taliban.

My understanding is we are not at war today with the Taliban. And my understanding is that we have a train, advise, and assist function. We don't have an active combat function against the Taliban.

You have made a great case as to why we might want to understand the Afghan National Army's performance in the perspective of only having been stood up for the last 7 years and that there will need to be some ongoing U.S. commitment.

Do you have any thoughts about what we, as policymakers, should be willing to commit to should the Afghan National Army not succeed in holding back Taliban advances, whether they are in Kandahar, Kunduz, or elsewhere in the country?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, you are absolutely right, I have two sort of narrow missions, counterterrorism under my U.S. hat and the train, advise, and assist under my U.S. and my NATO hat. And I do believe that we have to continue to build upon the Afghan capabilities to get after CT, which they want to do, and the train, advise, and assist is a very important piece to build their capability.

I think as we go forward what Congress can do is what you have done for the last 14, 15 years, is to continue to support the campaign by approving the money, by approving the ability to bring our great men and women over to Afghanistan, by providing the equipment, by providing the support that way. That has made a huge difference, and we have always had that continued support. And we shouldn't let that go unnoticed.

But I do think that, you know, I go back to this is a generational struggle, and too many times we think that we can get this done very, very quickly. And I am going to tell you, and most of your military commanders would tell you, that we have to have some strategic patience, and we have to have the ability to always assess where we are going.

And, you know, in the military we do lessons learned all the time and try to learn from those, and I have done that based on the last fighting season. And I think there are some adjustments we have to make sure that I have proposed to the senior leadership that will move forward, and then make some decisions.

And I think for continued modest investment in Afghanistan, the second- and third-order impact of not having another 9/11 is a pretty big deal, or to be able to provide the Afghan force to continue to grow, yes, sir.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I think we are in a tough place. I know someone else asked about conditionality, about setting benchmarks that the Afghanistan national government has to meet in order for us to continue or increase support because of that primary mission. We will never allow Afghanistan again to become the launching pad for attacks against the United States. The Afghanistan national government knows that.

So it is very hard for us to follow through on that implied threat that if you do not do the following things—leading in the fight, reforming in your government—we will not be there for you. We are going to be there to ensure that we do not have that threat again.

So my question really goes back to what should we as policy-makers, what should the American public set our expectations be ready to do if the modest changes, perhaps some modest increases in funding don't get the job done and we see another significant city fall even temporarily to the Taliban or for a longer period of time? Should we be thinking about potentially going to war again against the Taliban or is there some other strategy if the current status quo with some refinement doesn't work?

I realize I am out of time, Mr. Chairman, so I may have to take that for the record.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I will take it for the record.

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

General CAMPBELL. But one thing I talked about up front is we are not going to kill our way out of this. There has to be some form of political settlement, reconciliation. The Afghans want to go that way. President Ghani is leading that effort. And I think all the countries around—I talked about Pakistan, China, United States—supporting that effort. And that is a way that we have to continue to move forward.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. McSally.

Ms. MCSALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to echo what many of my colleagues have said and thank you so much for your service. It was also great to visit you back in May, see the incredible leadership that you are providing, and you definitely will be missed.

As we talk about the strategy that we have had for maybe the last several years of ramping up ANSF capability and ramping

down our capability, it seems that has happened on the ground, but you have clearly stated and it is very obvious that that didn't happen with the air capabilities.

So for whatever reason decisions were made that we were basically going to pull back on our air power capabilities, to include those you mentioned, whether that is air strikes and using air power on its own or close air support and ISR before they had the capability ramped up, and that is creating the huge gap that you mentioned in your testimony today.

So I know you are not in a position to decide on that, but let's just imagine, should a decision be changed, that we would again provide American or coalition, NATO air power for air strikes against the enemy, which you have laid out the networks of the enemy, and close air support to our supporting coalition partners on the ground, like we did after 9/11 and like we are doing in other places in the world, what would that do to change the dynamics, to create the space so there could be a political solution and the ANSF could continue to grow their capability?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, great question. I think what we are trying to do is mitigate on the ground how we can work toward that by providing them other ways to get after that same problem set.

Ms. MCSALLY. But let's say tomorrow we gave you a couple more squadrons, a strike aircraft, and the authority to be able to actually strike, provide close air support, ISR, like this, what would that do?

General CAMPBELL. I think what you meant is A-10s, that you would give me 24 A-10s.

Ms. MCSALLY. Of course.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. We would have to really work through TTPs to make sure that we can—as you know, it is very hard unless you have people on the ground to be able to provide precise direction to hit that target you are going to hit. So we would have to really work through the techniques, tactics, and procedures that we would use. And sometimes, in some cases, that may take more resources of people, in some areas as you train the Afghans to be able to do that, to interact, you could reduce that threat.

So, I mean, we are looking hard at that. We do continue to provide train, advise, assist at the tactical level with the special operating forces. We are trying to build and we are building their JTAC [Joint Terminal Attack Controllers] capability on the special operations side. We are trying to build their JTAC capability on the conventional side as well. Not only to interact with their close air support platforms, but if needed to understand other nations that could provide support.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks.

Similarly, you talked about the network of the different terrorist organizations and how they are intertwined and the challenges with authority. So, again, let's just say tomorrow there was a decision that you now have the authority, we still have the PID [positive identification] and the CDE [collateral damage estimate] requirements, but you had the authority to strike any of those net-

works assuming you met those other criteria, what would that do to change the situation on the ground and strategically?

General CAMPBELL. I would have to make that call based on resources, based on a particular target as we go forward. We were able to get the ISIL/Daesh authority and not take any more resources, but at the same time continue to degrade that network. We would have to take a hard look at how we would do that to other networks if we have a change in authority. Again, some we would have to probably ask for additional resources, in other areas we would not.

The one resource that I didn't bring up in another question asked earlier is ISR. Every combatant commander, every commander on the ground has an insatiable appetite for ISR, and we have the same thing in Afghanistan. And we are building the Afghan capability this year to have their own full motion video in a ScanEagle ISR platform. So that is going to be really good as they get that.

Ms. MCSALLY. Okay. Great.

Last question. We are at 9,800 right now, again, that has just been directed, with the direction from the administration to ramp down to 5,500 for 2017, but it is also supposed to be conditions based. And we also have an election going on. We are going to have a new Commander in Chief in January. Just picturing trying to re-deploy squadrons that potentially with a new Commander in Chief there could be a change in that direction. We could be ramping up additional resources in order to address the strategic long haul that we need to have there.

Imagining the sort of short-term redeployment and then deployment back again, wouldn't it make more sense to just kind of stabilize where we are and let the next Commander in Chief make their assessment as opposed to ramping down and then potentially a change in direction, just from an efficiencies point of view, of the units that would be involved in redeployment?

General CAMPBELL. If there was a decision to go from 5,500 back up to whatever number next year sometime, absolutely, if you are already on the ground, you have the equipment. I think that the decision in October this past year that President Obama made, again, I talked in terms of not necessarily the numbers, but the capabilities. But more that I welcomed there was the bases, so Bagram, Jalalabad, Kandahar, it gave us the opportunity to provide flexibility and options for future leadership.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks. Thanks for your service again.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Veasey.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General Campbell, I wanted to ask you specifically about the ANA Trust Fund. And how far into the future do you see the U.S. investing in the Trust Fund and to what level? I wanted to ask, like, do you see it gradually going down over a certain amount of time or do you think that, as far as us being committed to this fight, to make sure that we have some sort of stability in Afghanistan, that there will be a certain level of stability in the funding?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think for all of the different funding streams that come into Afghanistan, whether it is the ANA Trust Fund, LOFTA [Law and Order Trust Fund of Afghanistan], pure

U.S. money that we provide, that all of those we are looking to bring them down over time. We have to make the Afghan security forces more affordable, more efficient, and more sustainable, and we continue to look at ways we can do that.

So I see all the money sources coming in, all the donor nations continue to want to try to bring that down. I think over time, at least 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, as we move toward Warsaw, we want to keep it at the funding levels that we are about right now.

Mr. VEASEY. And my last question that I wanted to ask you was about the drawdown. As it was stated earlier by my colleague, that the drawdown by the end of 2016 will go to about 5,500 military personnel. And I wanted to ask you about the placement. Do you still anticipate placing a presence in the south and east of Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, currently we have forces in the east and the south, and under the 5,500 we will continue to have forces in the east and south, yes, sir.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Russell.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, thanks for your decades of defense to our Republic and doing the hardest things that our Nation asks. And also thank you for your perseverance when we inadvertently obstruct it.

I would like to give a quote from some opponents of the American efforts in the war: "We have got into a mess, a quagmire from which each step renders the difficulty of extraction immediately greater. I am sure I wish I could see what we were getting out of it."

The quote was from 1900, October 6. American efforts in the Philippines, 14 years, 4,500 dead, 20,000 wounded. This body repeatedly asked military leaders: Why are we there? What are we doing? What is the point? And yet, at the end of that, another three decades of commitment where we were willing to build their infrastructure, help their people, grant them the means to have independence.

And although the 1944 date of complete independence was interrupted by World War II—it was restored 2 years after the end of the war—they became a crucial ally that became a vital strategic projection platform in all of our efforts in the Pacific. And today they are a top 50 economy that provides much of our clothing and furniture in the United States.

Hard to see, hard for these opposers to see that, and yet it was the commitment of American service personnel that made it happen.

I sit here somewhat amused as a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan listening to much of the discussion, the debate about Afghan security forces and their ability to control most of the nation. My efforts with the Afghan security forces was zero, when we worked with 2 PARA and 3rd Special Forces in the spring of 2002 to create a vision and an effort that would get us there, from being a delegate at an Afghan security conference and getting commitments from partner nations around the world, so that we could see this day where we were having debates about, well, they don't use com-

munication very well and they don't have their logistics down. What a great problem to have. And thank you, sir, for your efforts in continuing that and making so much of that happen.

My colleagues asked questions about the expense of it. And yet I ask the question, how much is a failed state worth? Section 60 in Arlington, where many of my friends are buried, and yours, what about their commitment, not their politics? Abandonment in Iraq was far more costly than had we remained committed there. We created a situation where, where we failed to lead, tyrants and regional destabilizers filled the void, millions have been displaced, ISIS has ascended, and human suffering on a barbaric scale has been reintroduced to mankind.

So I guess my question to you would be, 25 years from now, what would, in your estimation, Afghanistan and the region look like with our partnership and what would it look like with our abandonment?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think with our continued partnership and long-term commitment 25 years from now I can take my family to Afghanistan and visit all those places that some of the members have talked about that they would look to go see, Bamyán and the mountains of the Hindu Kush and on and on; that they would have a government that is for the people; they would have the Afghan people working; all the boys and girls who wanted to go to school could go to school; on and on.

They have that same vision that everybody here in the U.S. wants for their men and women, and that will happen if we have a long-term commitment, as you talked about. And if we don't continue to provide the space and time for them to grow that ability to sustain both their economy and their national security, they won't get to that.

So I am personally invested in Afghanistan. My family is, the men and women I have been surrounded with the last 14 years. And I do think our definition of time and their definition of time are two different things, as you have pointed out. We have to stay for the long haul here.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you, General Campbell.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Graham.

Ms. GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General. Unfortunately I haven't had as long of an opportunity to work with you, but I have heard such amazing things about your service. So I want to add to that chorus.

My question sort of is a natural segue from your last answer. There was an article in The Washington Post today that talks about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Iraq. We often find that when the people are struggling, it increases the radicalism in a country. So I am wondering what do you see on the ground in terms of the humanitarian condition of the people in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, again, I think what the people of Afghanistan want is governance for the district level. It is very, very tough for them to do that in many of the remote areas. They expect that the national unity government will provide that. They are

working very hard to put into place the right leadership at the district level, the members of Parliament to work through that.

I think they are all concerned with the humanitarian aspects of that. All of the ambassadors from all the different countries get together periodically to talk with the Afghan leadership on ways that they can move forward on getting after humanitarian issues there.

So I think there is good dialogue and you have to be talking about that as you move forward. And so I see continued progress, although slow. But I think as we continue to talk and make the Afghans aware of the issues that are out there, they want to try to make changes to build upon those efforts. So I think we will continue to see growth in that area.

Ms. GRAHAM. I often talk about this because I think this really is key to moving towards a place of peace across our world, which is getting to the youth across our world, about wanting peace and wanting to find a way where we can find a way to stop all of these wars and conflicts.

What do you see with the youth in Afghanistan? And is there a social media presence in Afghanistan? And are we doing any soft power programs to try to encourage the youth for a brighter future?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the question.

I think the future of Afghanistan or the hope of Afghanistan is the youth of the country. I meet periodically, trimonthly with an Afghan advisory board. I bring in different segments of the society, both male and female, publicists, economists, members of Parliament, on and on. And most of them are younger. And I could go into that meeting very frustrated about other things that have happened throughout my day earlier, when I come out of that meeting I am always inspired because of the young people. They understand the problems and they have only known for the last 37, 38 years war. And so they want to have a better life.

They do have the ability, because of freedom of the press, which is getting attacked by the Taliban, which happened last week, but they do have the ability to see TV, to listen to radio, they do have Facebook and Twitter and all those kind of things, in more of the built-up areas as opposed to out in the rural areas. But they see that there are other things out there and they want to have the ability to have those opportunities as well.

So I think the youth, based on the number that want to go to school, the number that want to better their lives, I think that is the future. And I see that in the army and the police as well with the young captains and majors and sergeants that have come back to the United States for training and now go back and bring that education back with them. We have to continue to get them in the right places of leadership so we can build upon what they have learned, and they seek that out.

Ms. GRAHAM. Well, I see the same thing here in this country, it is the youth that gives me such hope and optimism about our future. So it is good to know that the Afghanistan youth and the American youth share that in common.

I don't know if it is possible. Do we have a program where the American youth are reaching out to Afghanistan youth and back and forth so they can build those friendships and relationships and

trust and caring, where there is the mutual desire to stop the wars and have a better future for us all?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I know there are a lot of different organizations from a lot of the countries, and the U.S. included, that reach out to Afghanistan and particularly focus on the youth. I can come back to you with a better answer and give you some of those organizations.

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

General CAMPBELL. I saw in the audience, she may have left, Bonnie Carroll here who runs TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program [for Survivors] here in the United States. I saw her in Afghanistan a couple weeks ago, just reaching out to the orphans and the children of the martyrs, of the folks that have been killed or wounded in Afghanistan. Bonnie has done incredible work for all of our services.

Thank you, Bonnie.

And she is taking that to Afghanistan now. It just gave me goose bumps to say that there.

Ms. GRAHAM. It gave me goose bumps too.

Thank you, Bonnie.

Thank you, General.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for being here today. In the Pentagon's "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan" report it says that given the ANDSF's [Afghan National Defense and Security Forces] current stage of development, they can't manage the insurgency and ensure security and stability across Afghanistan without further improvements in key enabling capabilities.

During your October 2015 testimony you were very harsh on the capacity and readiness of the ANDSF conventional units, and you and I actually talked briefly about some of the root causes of their ineffectiveness. As you recall, you cited a lack of tactical level train, advise, and assist, TAA mentors as one reason for their failures, and you contrasted that with what the Afghan special forces had, who do have advisers down at the tactical level.

Now, we have been deployed to Afghanistan for a long time and there is really almost no end in sight. Ideally, we could just bring everyone home, but reading the latest security assessments I know that is not a reality. However, I do want to have an honest conversation about the exact level of commitment that we are talking about. I want to know the full extent of what it would take to conduct a proper TAA mission so that the ANDSF can get on the right trajectory and, more importantly, so the American people have a clear understanding of what we are doing here and how many troops it will take.

Given the current troop levels, are we able to effectively align our advisers at the appropriate echelons within the ANDSF to where we would see a difference in their capability? And how many troops would be required in order to better align our advisers with the ANDSF to where they would be most impactful, where we could actually start to see more long-term positive trends?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you for the question, ma'am. And, again, two mission sets that I focus on, train, advise, and assist at the ministry, at the corps level, and tactical at the special operating forces; and then the counterterrorism mission under U.S. hat to build their capacity. And I think each one of those you have to kind of break those out in bins as you work toward that. And we made a decision a while back to continue to build their capability but at the same time have a glide slope to bring our forces off as we raise their capability. And instances it depends upon the unit that has had that level of training and the right leadership that is put in place, be able to have that training sustained and move out.

There are places in Afghanistan, like the 203rd Corps, where we came off at the corps level and through the fighting season 2015 they continued to do pretty good. And I would only put expeditionary advising down there very sporadically, and they continue to operate. There are places like Helmand with the 215th where we didn't have advisers at the corps level and they didn't do as well, and I have had to move more advisers down there now to build that the capacity up to get ready for the next fighting season.

So some of it really for me goes back to leadership and have the right leadership in place as opposed to the numbers of advisers, because we see it differently throughout the country of Afghanistan. But where they do have the right leadership and we do focus and build on those capabilities they continue to get better and better.

I think I have to be realistic in understanding the different resources out there and what we need throughout not only Afghanistan, but in Europe and Africa, the Pacific. And there is a limited number and finite number of resources.

I fight every day to have ISR, and I am very fortunate to have General Austin at CENTCOM work with me on ISR. He continues to have the fight against ISIL in Iraq and Syria and I have that fight in Afghanistan. I work with him to make sure we have the right resources, and he has given me everything that I have asked for. But I know that for him it is a continuous struggle because he has a limited number of resources. So I take that into consideration as we look forward in Afghanistan.

And I think, again, we are doing an assessment now, I have made an assessment on things that we could do in 2016 to make a difference so it is not like 2015. And, realistically, the thing that I can make a difference on is authorities as we go forward, and that is in the process now of working some of those.

And then in 2017 we have already committed to keeping—again, as I said in my opening statement, 18 months ago we were going to be at 1,000, only in Kabul. Now we are at 5,500, in many places, yet we are still talking about we need more and more. So I have to take a look at what we do have and where we are going to make the biggest bang for the buck for the resources we have and I will provide all of that to my leadership as we go forward.

But I think every commander has a continual assessment as we go down. And it is not a simple, you know, I need X amount of people. You can have the forces, but if you don't have the authorities it doesn't make a difference. You can have the authorities, but if you don't have the resources to execute those authorities, it doesn't

make a difference. So you have to have that balance as you move forward.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Well, that is exactly what I wanted to touch on. As you are trying to put some more units at lower echelons, what do you see as assuming risk, given flat or even declining troop authorization levels? And how do you mitigate that risk? And what criteria must exist for you to recommend an increase in number of U.S. or NATO forces in Afghanistan? And I can take your answer.

I know I am over time, Mr. Chairman.

General CAMPBELL. I will provide that to you for the record.

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. General, one brief clarifying question. If nothing changes and your successor has to be at 5,500 by January 1, 2017, at what rough timeframe do things have to move, do decisions have to be made to get to that level?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, my leadership has left it up to me, and General Nicholson will have the ability to take a look at what I have recommended as we go from the 9,800 to the 5,500. Obviously, we would like to continue to keep the highest number during increased fighting in the summer, and then hold those forces, and then decrease after that, so after the September-October timeframe you would have a short window of opportunity to bring that down.

At some point, as I have talked before, it becomes a matter of physics on how you can move people in or out. But, again, we can do that I think very quickly, we have been doing that for years. Our logisticians are the best in the world, and I am very confident we will make those decisions.

But as I talked about, sir, continue investment. I have to go back to leadership and say, based on the Afghans and what they have done, based on where we want to go, take a look at the risk to the force and the risk to the mission and here are some changes that we ought to make. And I think we are doing that now, and I will make sure that General Nicholson has the ability.

On the NATO piece, we are trying to work that very quickly. If NATO is going to make a determination to change numbers, advisers, enablers, working through their process and would try to make those decisions before the summer, that would enable 2017, just based on a force generation cycle that they have.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Well, after 2½ hours I think that there is a lot of consensus in this room, a lot of consensus of respect and gratitude for you and your family; a recognition that the Afghans made a lot of progress with our help; and also a sense of unease about what the future holds depending on the decisions that are made there. But as I said at the beginning, I feel in a lot of ways you have been walking a tightrope and even in that difficult situation have done an extraordinary job in making sure that our security interests in Afghanistan have been protected.

So thank you for today. And thank you for your service. And we all wish you the best.

With that, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

FEBRUARY 2, 2016

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FEBRUARY 2, 2016

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith
HEARING ON
Afghanistan in 2016: The Evolving Security Situation and
U.S. Policy, Strategy, and Posture
February 2, 2016

I would like to thank General Campbell for appearing again. While recent reporting on Afghanistan has not all been positive, we must remember that our troops continue to serve in Afghanistan for important national security reasons and consider the significant progress that the Afghan people have made, with our assistance, over the last 14 years.

We are engaged in Afghanistan to further our interests. Al Qaeda used Afghanistan as a safe haven from which to strike our country, and our efforts in Afghanistan since have been centered on eliminating al Qaeda and fostering security and stability in Afghanistan in order to prevent violent extremism. While we have greatly reduced the number of Al Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan, some remain, as do members of other dangerous international terrorist groups. The Islamic State in the Khorasan Province, which is affiliated with ISIL, is one example. We should, therefore, maintain our strong capability in Afghanistan to prosecute the fight against terrorism.

We must also continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF) in their ongoing counterinsurgency efforts. There is no question that the ANDSF have been embroiled in a tough campaign to protect Afghanistan from insurgent attack. 2015 was a difficult year. The ANDSF experienced setbacks, temporarily ceded ground, and took casualties. However, the ANDSF have responded to challenges and secured strategic areas, including the recapture of Kunduz. Although, there may be a long way to go, the ANDSF capabilities are improving.

So, what lessons have we learned from recent events? What gaps in the ANDSF have been identified and how will they be addressed in 2016? What does the ongoing fighting suggest about the ability of the ANDSF to eventually secure the entirety of Afghanistan and to reliably prevent extremists from using Afghanistan as a safe haven?

While the ANDSF have progressed, they still need help in building the indigenous ministerial institutions to lead the ANDSF and to keep them viable in the future. We also need to help the ANDSF establish and maintain a capable air force and develop other key enablers, including sound operational planning, logistics, and maintenance systems.

In short, the Afghans are not yet ready to secure their own country without our assistance and that of our coalition partners. Under the current plan, today's level of approximately 9,800 U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan would go down to about 5,500 U.S. troops by the end of the year. In the past, the President has shown flexibility in adapting to evolving conditions on the ground. We should continue to evaluate those conditions objectively, as we empower the ANDSF to sustainably secure their own country.

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CDRUSFOR-A Opening Remarks for HASC Hearing
Tuesday, 2 February 2016, 1000

V8
words 3,300 (20 minutes)

- Good morning Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and other distinguished members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today while representing the servicemen and women of United States Forces-Afghanistan. I've been honored to lead and represent them and all that they do for nearly 18 months. It has truly been a privilege to do so.
- I'd like to begin by thanking the committee for your steadfast support of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and civilians. Due to your leadership and commitment, they continue to be the best trained and equipped force our nation has ever deployed. Their remarkable performance bears testimony to your backing, and the backing of the American people.
- I'd also like to recognize the unsung heroes of our nation: our military families. They have stood by us for the last 14 years of conflict. They endure the hardships of our frequent absences, and allow us to focus on our mission. Without their love and support, we couldn't succeed. We thank them for their continued support.

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- Finally, I'd like to acknowledge and honor the over 2,200 servicemen and women who have died in Afghanistan since 2001, and the over 20,000 who've been wounded. Tragically, we recently lost six US Airmen to a motorcycle-borne IED attack just before Christmas, and a Special Forces advisor just after the New Year. These losses remind us that Afghanistan remains a dangerous place, and while we take every measure to reduce force protection threats, our service members, civilians, and coalition partners remain in harm's way.
- We also remember the fallen of the Afghan security forces and the loved ones they've left behind. They now bear the brunt of this conflict as they fight to bring peace and security to Afghanistan. Every day, we honor their memories by assisting our Afghan partners as they fight to improve security, and by extension help us to protect our own homeland.
- The men and women I serve with have not forgotten why we are in Afghanistan. We remain there to ensure that another terrorist attack—originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland—will never happen again. That is why the counterterrorism mission remains critical to our mutual security interests. Yet we recognize the importance of our train, advise, and assist mission as we build a sustainable Afghan security force capable of standing alone in its mission of countering violent extremism and denying terrorist safe-haven. This is a shared vital interest among Afghanistan, the United States, and the international community. Those who serve in this

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mission understand that Afghanistan is worth our investment. It is their commitment that keeps us focused on our vision for a stable and secure Afghanistan. Together, the train, advise, assist efforts coupled with our counterterrorism mission underpin our overall mission.

- Just four months have passed since I last appeared before this committee. Even in that short time, there have been many developments in the security situation, the progress of the Afghan government and its security forces, our coalition's commitments, and of course, the US way ahead in 2016 and beyond. Today, I will speak to these developments and answer questions you may have on the state of our efforts and the overall situation in Afghanistan.
- Specifically, I'd like to address the lessons we learned from last year, how we intend to ensure that 2016 is different from 2015, and how we see 2017 and beyond. To assess these questions, we must ask ourselves: "what else can we do to enable the Afghan Security Forces?" And, "What else can the Afghans do for themselves to secure their country?"
- 2015 was fundamentally different than previous years of our campaign. It is important to remember this context as we assess our efforts in Afghanistan. First, Afghanistan's government and security forces have managed multiple transitions in 2015. Second, the US and coalition mission and force structure have significantly changed. And third, changing regional dynamics, including

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evolving threats, have presented both challenges and opportunities for our success.

- As I travel around Afghanistan, I recognize the changes and the progress made over the years of this mission. This is my third deployment to Afghanistan over the span of the last 14 years, and I have served as the senior commander there for the last 18 months. I am ever mindful of how far we've come, but remain clear-eyed about the challenges that lie ahead. Now more than ever, the United States should not waiver on Afghanistan. The crucial investment we are making provides dividends that achieve our strategic goals, secure our homeland, and position us well in the region—a region that has been a source of terrorism and instability for decades.
- Many of you have heard me say that for every bad news story we hear coming out of Afghanistan, there are ten good news stories we don't. While this is to be expected, I think it tints the view of our progress and prospects for success in Afghanistan. It is my intent to provide a balanced assessment that not only exposes the challenges that lie ahead, but also illustrates our gains and Afghan progress.
- With that in mind, I would like to address the concerns over what many feel is an overall declining security situation in Afghanistan. The situation is more dynamic than a simple yes or no answer would adequately address. In fact, as

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of last week, the units we have on the ground throughout the country report that of the 407 district centers, 8 (or 2%) are under insurgent control. We assess that another 18 (or 4%) are under what we call insurgent influence. Often, these district centers are in remote and sparsely populated areas that security forces are not able to access very often in force. Additionally, at any given time there may be up to 94 district centers (around 23%) that we view as “at risk.” These figures make two clear points: 1) that approximately 70% of the inhabited parts of Afghanistan are either under government influence or government control; and 2) the importance of prioritizing Afghan resources to ensure key district centers do not fall into insurgent influence or control.

- Over the last eight years the Afghan security forces have made advancements, beginning as an unorganized collection of militia and developing into a modern security force with many of the systems and processes of an advanced military. They have proven resilient and continued to make significant strides in only the second year in which Afghan forces assumed the lead for security throughout Afghanistan. They have demonstrated the ability to successfully conduct effective, large-scale, multi-pillar clearing operations across the country, including in Helmand, Ghazni, and Nangarhar. Following insurgent offensives, the Afghan security forces were able to re-take key territory—as they did in Kunduz—with strong performances from all security pillars.

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- Simultaneously, while the tactical units were conducting these operations, the security institutions had to continue developing the force. This includes many complex tasks such as budgeting, force generation, personnel management, and national level maintenance, logistics and procurement. These are areas that challenge even the most advanced militaries in the world. I like to say that what we have accomplished here is akin to “building an airplane while in flight.” And while these systems are far from perfect, the foundation has been laid and we continue to advise and assist the Afghans as they build a sustainable security force that is enduring and capable of standing on its own.
- With Afghans in the lead for security for the first time in 2015, the enemy and the naysayers predicted the collapse of the Afghan security forces and the Afghan government. They sought to capitalize on it. Instead, the Afghan security forces fought for the very survival of their country and held firm, they did not fracture, and kept the insurgents from achieving their strategic goals, while inflicting higher casualties on the enemy. They did this while maintaining a significantly higher operational tempo with significantly reduced Coalition support.
- However, the lessons learned in 2015 underscore that Afghan shortfalls will persist well beyond 2016. Capability gaps still exist in fixed and rotary-wing aviation, combined arms operations, intelligence collection and dissemination, and maintenance. More prominently, one of the greatest tactical challenges

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for the Afghan security forces has been overcoming the Afghan Air Force's extremely limited organic close air support capability. Admittedly, we began building the Afghan Air Force late and are constrained by the time it takes to build human capital.

- Those capability gaps notwithstanding, I still assess that at least 70% of the problems facing the Afghan Security forces result from poor leadership. Minister of Defense Stanekzai recognizes this. To date, the Afghan National Army has replaced 92 general officers, including the 215th Corps commander in Helmand. The MoI is lagging behind in making leadership changes, but we are taking steps to remedy this through our train, advise, and assist mission. This kind of change takes time.
- I have seen that the consequences of Kunduz and Helmand still weigh heavily on the leadership of both the security forces and the Afghan Government. They realize that, although not strategically significant in a pure military sense, those incidents shaped media coverage and undermined confidence in the government. Their desire to do better runs deep and is genuine. In many ways, these events forced a greater sense of urgency to make the changes they greatly require.
- Over the last year, there have been many positive trends. However, Afghan security forces have not consolidated significant gains of their own, nor

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defeating the insurgency across Afghanistan. Suffice it to say, their performance this year was uneven. To be fair, this was not unexpected, given the overall conditions.

- Ultimately, Afghanistan has not achieved an enduring level of security and stability that justifies a reduction in our support in 2016. That is why the President's decision to maintain current force levels through most of 2016 was welcome and important. This decision set the example for NATO, encouraging other Allies and partner nations to maintain, or in some cases increase, their contributions to the Resolute Support mission.
- During this winter lull, we are focusing on steps to best prepare the ANDSF for summer campaign of 2016. The leadership of the Afghan security forces share this focus and they are dedicated to resetting the force, by implementing reforms to improve training, equipping, and rebuilding of units that have endured unusually high operational tempos for long periods of time, especially those forces in Helmand. Such reforms are critical and are taking root with the Afghan security forces, but broader reforms remain important to success in Afghanistan.
- The Afghan government, including its security institutions, continues to show progress in battling corruption, and achieving other reforms such as gender integration. However, much work still needs to be done. We fully understand

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that many want to see more progress on social and human rights issues before continuing to commit resources to Afghanistan. The National Unity Government also recognizes this and has welcomed our increased use of conditionality to usher change. They understand the importance of stability, opportunity and hope – the hope that inspires people to stay in Afghanistan instead of seeking opportunity elsewhere.

- *Afghanistan is at an inflection point.* I believe if we do not make deliberate, measured adjustments, 2016 is at risk of being no better, and possibly worse, than 2015. To place this in context, I would like to emphasize the uniqueness of 2015 and some dynamics I think we should soberly consider as we assess our way forward.
- The enemy has also changed this year. Unlike previous years, the Taliban extended the fighting season, and has continued to conduct operations in Helmand, as called for by Taliban leadership. Even so, the Taliban recognize they have no lasting gains to consolidate from last year, and cannot afford to cede the limited ground that they do hold. They are also coming out of a year that saw fracturing of their organization, loss of legitimacy competition from other insurgent groups, and high casualty rates—probably their highest in years.

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- As I meet with Afghan soldiers and police, I remind them that the Taliban are not 10 feet tall and bullet proof. They face significant challenges and they can be defeated. This fact is often forgotten in prominent media reports. The brief notoriety the Taliban gained in Kunduz and Helmand is still overshadowed by the significant cost of those efforts, which is compounded by the loss of credibility and unity as enemy infighting continues.
- The Taliban's public narrative in Afghanistan is waning too. It is not lost on the people of Afghanistan that the Taliban are killing Afghans—security forces and innocent civilians alike. Recent public information campaigns have also been more forceful, stressing to the public that the Taliban, "...have no plan for the development of Afghanistan; they are here to kill you; they are against women; they are against education; they are against progress for the nation of Afghanistan." As these messages resonate, the government must show that it is the only viable option for Afghanistan. At the city, district, provincial, and national levels, the people of Afghanistan see that the return of the Taliban represents a return to brutality, criminality, and oppression.
- The operating environment is also evolving for the Taliban due to the emergence of other insurgent and terrorist groups. One such group is Daesh in Afghanistan, or Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP). Daesh continues to conduct brutal attacks against civilians, and directly competes with the Taliban for resources to establish a foothold in the country. They have focused their

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efforts on establishing a presence in Nangarhar and recruiting in other areas. We recently gained the authority to strike Daesh. Since then, we have had considerable success in degrading their capabilities. The rejection of Daesh by local elders, who are working with Afghan security forces, has also slowed the enemy's progress. The strikes have been effective in mitigating their growth. We must maintain constant pressure on Daesh and dedicate intelligence resources to prevent strategic surprise.

- The Taliban has had to adjust this year's strategy in order to counter the emergence of Daesh and other insurgent groups. This dynamic has served as a distraction to the Taliban, resulting in a shift of precious resources from fighting the ANDSF to countering opposition groups. More than just consuming resources, the in-fighting, and resultant inability to maintain cohesion has also severely damaged the credibility of the Taliban's core narrative of being a strong, united organization.
- Groups aligned with the Taliban such as al-Qa'eda and the Haqqani Network continue to threaten our national security interests. Al-Qa'eda has been significantly weakened, but as evidenced by the recent discovery of an al-Qa'eda camp on Afghanistan's southern border, they are certainly not extinct. The Haqqani Network remains the most capable threat to US and Coalition forces, planning and executing the most violent high profile attacks in Kabul.

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- These are certainly not “residual threats” that would allow for peaceful transition across Afghanistan. Instead, they are persistent threats that are adapting to a changing operational environment. Ultimately, the threats Afghanistan faces require our sustained attention and forward presence.
- Reconciliation is the path needed to obtain a negotiated settlement and end the conflict in Afghanistan. Current reconciliation efforts are an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned initiative, recently renewed with a quadrilateral meeting in mid-January that included Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and China.
- It has been over a year since the formation of the National Unity Government. It has faced institutional and political difficulties, yet can lay claim to some meaningful reform and progress during its first year. The unity government may be fragile, but it is holding despite being challenged, it is making continued progress, and building momentum to create an increasingly viable future. Politically, Afghanistan is postured for progress as well as a continuing strategic partnership with the United States. We have strong and willing partners in President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah—this has not always been the case.
- So, as I said at the beginning of this statement, we now ask ourselves, “what else can we do to enable the Afghan Security Forces?” And, “What else can the Afghans do for themselves to secure their country?” A strategic stalemate

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without end is not the goal of this campaign. Nor is it true to the reason we came here over 14 years ago. In fact, the recently submitted NATO Strategic Assessment makes recommendations for adjustments to the current NATO OPLAN that, in my best military advice, will help push the campaign past this inflection point and increase the prospect of achieving our shared goals.

- The measures that NATO is considering include advisory adjustments to give commanders more flexibility on the ground, and shifting from a yearly outlook to a 5-year vision to give all donor nations, and especially Afghanistan, the confidence that comes with predictability of support.
- The United States must continue to show flexibility with our mission in 2016 and beyond. As the commander, I am responsible for aligning our national objectives with ways and means while managing risk. Now that we have been allocated our resources for 2016, I am assessing the ways in which we ensure that 2016 is not a rerun of 2015. Based on conditions and the performance of the Afghan security forces during this winter lull, I am also reviewing how well those forces will likely perform in 2017 and the U.S. and coalition resources required for their continued development. This is all part of a broader process of which my assessment is only one part. I will provide my assessments of our strategy to my military leadership as well as my successor.

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- I think it is important to remember that this time last year, our plan was to transition to a 1,000 troop, Kabul-centric footprint. Due to conditions on the ground, the President made the decision to extend 9,800 through most of 2016, and increased our posture to 5,500 in 2017. This decision provided flexibility to make adjustments and represents the kind of conditions based approach that is so important for our mission in Afghanistan.
- Key to this long-term success in the region is the resiliency of the Afghan government and its security institutions, and the ability to serve as a regional partner in our combined efforts to counter violent extremism. It's important to remember that the National Unity Government welcomes our assistance. They are a dependable and steadfast counterterrorism partner in South Asia. 2017 marks a significant change in our approach as we focus our efforts to capitalize on the gains of the past decade and build the capacity of the Afghan security institutions.
- We now have a window of opportunity to increase our likelihood of achieving strategic success. Of course, our support should not be open-ended-- I believe our approach is sound. This year we will apply greater conditionality to the Afghans in managing the resources we give them. We are also developing a five-year vision out to 2020 to help better define what we are trying to accomplish, and avoid a year-to-year mentality. I believe that by changing our,

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and the Afghans', mindset from a cyclic "fighting season to fighting season" view to a genuine, long-term outlook best reflects our commitment.

- We need to provide the Afghans the time and space for them to continue to build their resiliency. Through their spirit and fortitude, they have proven worthy of our continued support. The actions we take now, combined with their resolve to improve, will, over time, develop a sustainable force capable of securing the nation, and in turn helping us secure ours.
- Thank you once again for your steadfast support of our campaign. I look forward to your questions.

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General John F. Campbell, USA
Commander, Resolute Support and United States Forces-Afghanistan

U.S. Army General John F. Campbell assumed duties as the Commander, International Security Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan on August 26, 2014; after serving as the 34th U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff.

The son of a U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant, General Campbell grew up on military bases around the world before attending the United States Military Academy at West Point. He graduated in 1979 with a commission in the Infantry. During his 35 years of service, he has commanded units at every echelon from platoon to division, with duty in Germany, Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan and the United States.

General Campbell served as the Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, KY, and led the division as Combined Joint Task Force 101 during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Additionally he commanded 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division and led the brigade during OEF; commanded 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division (Light); and as a junior officer, he commanded a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha in the 5th Special Forces Group and an Infantry company in the 82nd Airborne Division.

General Campbell served 17 months as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7 at Headquarters, Department of the Army. Other significant assignments include: Executive Officer to the 35th Army Chief of Staff; Deputy Commanding General (Maneuver), 1st Cavalry Division and Multinational Division Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom; Deputy Director for Regional Operations, J-3, The Joint Staff; Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps, and deployed in support of Operation Uphold Democracy; and Professor of Military Science University of California, Davis.

General Campbell holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from West Point and a master's degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College.

General Campbell's awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, two Legions of Merit, three Bronze Star Medals, two Defense Meritorious Service Medals, six Meritorious Service Medals, the Air Medal, the Joint Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Combat Action Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, the Ranger Tab, the Special Forces Tab, and the Army and Joint Staff Badges.

General Campbell and his wife Ann, of 30 years, have two children Jennifer and John Jr.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

FEBRUARY 2, 2016

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WILSON

Mr. WILSON. General Campbell, you recently stated that “If we don’t stay engaged here to build their capacity to fight this, keep sanctuaries down, its coming back to the homeland.” Do you believe, with the existing restrictions on your targeting authorities and the upcoming reduction of 4,400 troops by the end of the year, that we will ultimately be able to achieve your aforementioned goals? Do you believe these reductions and restrictions could put us on a dangerous path that potentially threatens the homeland?

[The answer is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. WILSON. In light of General John Nicholson’s recent remarks that the Haqqani network is the “number one threat to our forces in Afghanistan,” would you recommend that the President allow U.S. forces to target Haqqani forces?

[The answer is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. WILSON. What stress if any do you believe the proposed reduction of 4,300 troops places on the remaining Special Operation Forces? Do you believe they will be able to effectively continue unilateral counterterrorism efforts and train, advise, and assist missions?

(This response is from the current Commander, US Forces-Afghanistan, GEN Nicholson.) The President’s decision to sustain U.S. Forces at 8,400 means we will retain our full counter-terrorism (CT) capability as well as being able to conduct TAA in the Afghan Air Force Corps and Police Zones of the East and South.

Mr. WILSON. Could you please explain what constitutes a validated and non-validated al-Qaeda target and how involved this designation process is? Do you believe this designation process hinders your overall effectiveness?

[The answer is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GARAMENDI

Mr. GARAMENDI. On October 3rd, 2015, U.S. forces in Afghanistan fired on a Doctors Without Borders medical facility which they mistook for an Afghan government facility which was held by Taliban forces. A Department of Defense investigation found that a number of failures contributed to the tragedy, including malfunctioning communications gear, inaccurate fire control systems, and U.S. personnel ordering strikes they were not authorized to direct.

a. What remedial action have you taken to ensure that similar process and command failures cannot happen under your successor, Lt. Gen. Nicholson?

b. What have you learned personally from this tragedy and this investigation?

(This response is from the current Commander, US Forces-Afghanistan, GEN Nicholson.) a) GEN Campbell directed all U.S. personnel receive additional training on targeting authorities and rules of engagement. This training was completed on Nov. 5, 2015, and resulted in more than 9,000 people being retrained. He also directed that a holistic review take place at all echelons of command of the development, approval and execution of the Concept of Operations (CONOP) process, including the use of no strike lists. In addition, he directed that revisions take place regarding the tactical Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and that the headquarters issue revised tactical guidance to subordinate units. He also directed that subordinate commands establish SOPs and procedures in the event that systems would fail to work properly during operations.

b) This question is directed at GEN Campbell who is no longer in Afghanistan.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOULTON

Mr. MOULTON. After the United States left Iraq, we witnessed the collapse of the Iraqi government and violence and instability in the region. Given this, what can we do differently in Afghanistan on both the political and military fronts to ensure we don’t repeat the mistakes of Iraq and have the progress we have achieved slip away?

(This response is from the current Commander, US Forces-Afghanistan, GEN Nicholson.) a) The most effective way for us to secure the progress we have achieved in Afghanistan is through continued commitment towards the development of a capable and sustainable Afghan National Defense and Security Force (ANDSF) and establishment of a robust counterterrorism capability. These efforts, coupled with governance development led by the United States Embassy, are the cornerstone for a lasting peace and security in Afghanistan. Our commitment of US forces and finances, in addition to the support pledged by our Coalition partners, sends the signal to the government and people of Afghanistan that we are invested in their long-term security and stability. As we look to the future, Afghanistan can remain confident that the United States and Coalition partners will stand by their side, supporting their effort towards the long-term solution of reconciliation with the Taliban.

b) The commitment of the NATO Alliance and Coalition Partners through 2020 which was affirmed at the Warsaw Summit sends a strong message to the Afghan people, and to our enemies, of our resolve. This bolsters the confidence of the ANDSF, the Afghan Government and the Afghan people which will help avoid a loss of the progress we have made.

