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**SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFGHANI-
STAN: STATUS OF U.S. STRATEGY AND
OPERATIONS AND THE WAY AHEAD**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
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**SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN: STATUS
OF U.S. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS AND THE WAY
AHEAD**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, December 11, 2007.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:01 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you. And we realize this is before our voting hours. But, Mr. Secretary and Admiral, we appreciate your giving us your time today. And as I understand it, correct me if I am wrong, you have a drop-dead time in—after 2 hours and 15 minutes. Am I correct?

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir. But if the committee wishes to proceed, I am prepared to throw both Admiral Mullen and Admiral Mullen's representative and my Under Secretary for Policy under the bus, and they are prepared to take our chairs and continue the discussion.

The CHAIRMAN. We will be glad to proceed after that. Thank you very much. And welcome to you. And I am extremely pleased to have you with us, to discuss our way forward in Afghanistan. It could not be more critical at a time like this, and I am real concerned that given our preoccupation in Iraq, we have not devoted sufficient troops and funding to Afghanistan to ensure success in that mission. Afghanistan has been the forgotten war. The opportunity has been squandered, and now we are clearly seeing the effects. We must reprioritize and shift needed resources from Iraq to Afghanistan. We must once again make Afghanistan the center force in the war against terrorism. Our national security and Afghanistan's future are at stake. Our allies and our partners must do more, but we must, of course, lead the way.

Secretary Gates, I know you just returned from a trip to Afghanistan this last week. And during your trip, you expressed concern about the continued increase in violence in that country, and you were also greeted with pleas from President Karzai and senior Afghan officials for more assistance. Suicide bombings and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks are up. The Afghan Security Forces are facing real shortfalls, problems of narcotics, corruption, slow development persist. At the same time despite a string of tactical victories in Afghanistan this year, we hear that intelligence of-

officials are increasingly worried about a looming strategic failure in the country and point to signs that the larger war effort there is deteriorating.

The National Security Council (NSC) has also reportedly concluded that the only kinetic piece of the Afghan war is showing substantial progress while improvements in other areas continue to lag.

To be clear, there have been some truly impressive gains made since 2001 and there continue to be some real success stories. At the same time, our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies must do much more in fulfilling their commitments in freeing their forces from so-called national caveats that limit their ability to fight. In other words, the rules of engagement. However, we cannot expect our allies to step up if we don't demonstrate a strong commitment to the success of the mission.

So I hope you will tell us what is the way forward in Afghanistan. What is being done to ensure that necessary troops and funding are devoted to that mission?

Finally, I want to mention your recent call for the U.S. to commit dramatically more funding and effort to civilian instruments of national security. Mr. Secretary, I couldn't agree more. For too long our military has had to undertake effective civilian missions because—for lack of commitment from the State Department as well as other civilian agencies. One good example is the team of agriculture and business development experts from the Missouri National Guard who are working to revitalize Afghanistan's agricultural sector. These folks are excellent farmers as well as soldiers. But they can't substitute for civilian efforts throughout our government. The civilian agencies must adapt their organizations and personnel requirements for today's security needs, but they also must have the resources they need to meet the mission.

Mr. Secretary and Admiral, we thank you so much for being with us. It is a personal pleasure to welcome you and to receive your testimony and your advice in regard to this very, very important part of the world.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. McHugh.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN M. MCHUGH, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM NEW YORK, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me echo your words about the importance of this hearing today. And I want to commend you, Mr. Chairman. I know this is an opportunity you have been attempting to arrange for us for some time, and clearly this is a critically important hearing.

Afghanistan is a vital front in the global war against terror, against radical Islamists, and achieving security and stability in Afghanistan is important for the Afghan people, but equally important I would argue for the citizens of this country and the international community.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by expressing the regrets of both the Ranking Member, Duncan Hunter, and the next Ranking Member, Mr. Saxton, for their inability to be here today. As you know, Mr. Chairman, given the vague reason, all the schedules involved, this has been a very difficult hearing to pull together. I know they

would very much wish to be here, but I am honored to be sitting in their stead and provide this opportunity for this very important committee and, of course, for the Congress at large to hear about the current conditions on the ground with respect to this vital component in the war against radical Islamists.

And let me add my words of welcome and appreciation with yours, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Secretary. Mr. Secretary, welcome home, having just returned from what I understand is your third trip to Afghanistan in about a year or so in your official capacity as Secretary of Defense. That is a very admirable record and we are looking forward to hearing your on-the-ground and strategic assessment of the opportunities and equally important, of course, the challenges facing Afghanistan in the days ahead.

Admiral Mullen, welcome home to you as well. And thank you for being here after returning from a quick trip to the Middle East. We welcome you for what I believe is your first appearance in front of this committee in your current position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Congratulations on that very esteemed position, and we look forward to your testimony too.

Gentlemen, your remarks here today offer our members an opportunity to reflect on the tactical successes and challenges we are seeing today in Afghanistan. Today I personally, and I know all the other members do as well, look forward to receiving your assessment of the current strategic environment and gaining a better understanding of how the Department of Defense (DOD) is working with its interagency and international partners to advance security, stability, and economic prosperity at the strategic level.

We also look forward to hearing how we intend to establish the conditions necessary for the Afghan government and the people of that great country to continue progress for future generations. As the Chairman noted, since 2001, the United States and the international community, in cooperation with Afghanistan, have remained committed to abolishing those conditions that foster support and safe harbor for radical Islamists and rebuilding Afghanistan as a moderate and stable nation.

Given the baseline of where we started in 2001, this nation has made notable progress, including the adoption of a new constitution. Elections led to their first democratically elected President and Parliament and established a democratic forum to deliberate and resolve differences, growth in the size and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, construction of new schools, health clinics and roads throughout the country, personal freedoms previously forbidden by the Taliban, and new opportunities for women to participate in civic and economic life.

Unfortunately, again, as the Chairman I think very accurately pointed out, progress in Afghanistan has been met by serious challenges as well. Security has deteriorated since 2006, particularly in the south. The NATO-led international security assistance forces (ISAF) maintain shortages and critical military capabilities and national caveats, again as the Chairman mentioned, as to where and how their troops operate.

Poppy cultivation and opium production are at their highest levels. Gaps in existing training and equipping of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the

Taliban and al Qaeda continue to take refuge and regroup in Pakistan's federally administered tribal area (FATA) and northwest frontier province.

Today we hope to learn what the Department of Defense is doing to address these challenges, particularly its efforts to sever the Taliban's resurgence of violence and influence, resolve NATO shortcomings, support reconstruction and redevelopment, and accelerate and expand the training and equipping of the Afghan National Security Forces. By their actions, the Afghans, Americans and our international partners, military as well as civilian, have demonstrated the resolve to achieve security and stability in Afghanistan.

Our discussion today should focus on what we are doing here in Washington to ensure their achievements on both the strategic and tactical level, as well as the resources needed for the near-term and long-term successes.

With that, Mr. Chairman, given the time constraint, I would yield back to you and look forward to the remainder of the hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Again, Mr. Secretary and Admiral Mullen, we welcome you and we appreciate you being with us today. Mr. Secretary.

STATEMENTS OF HON. ROBERT M. GATES, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND ADM. MICHAEL MULLEN, USN, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, ACCOMPANIED BY: AMBASSADOR ERIC S. EDELMAN, UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND LT. GEN. JOHN F. SATTLER, USMC, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PLANS AND POLICY, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT M. GATES

Secretary GATES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make a few remarks and turn the floor to Admiral Mullen before we take your questions.

Mr. Chairman, Representative McHugh, members of the committee, thank you for inviting us to testify before you today. I have a longer statement that we have submitted for the record.

As you noted, I have just returned from Afghanistan, where I met with Afghan officials, U.S. commanders, our civilian colleagues and our European allies, and this is an opportune time to discuss our endeavors in that country. I will tell you that when I took this job, it seemed to me that the two highest priorities we had were our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. If I am not mistaken, I just finished my sixth trip to Iraq and I think maybe my fourth trip to Afghanistan.

Notwithstanding the news we sometimes hear out of Afghanistan, the efforts of the United States, our allies in the Afghan government and people have been producing some solid results. If I had to sum up the current situation in Afghanistan, I would say there is reason for optimism, but tempered by caution.

Projects that will have a real impact on the lives of citizens are underway with the construction of utilities, roads and schools. The Congress has appropriated about \$10 billion in security and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan for fiscal year 2007, almost

three times the previous year's appropriation. I thank you, the Members of Congress, for your strong support of this effort.

Admiral Mullen will speak in more detail about some of the activities made possible by the funding increase with regard to provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), Afghan Security Forces, as well as our own endeavors.

We have just passed the first anniversary of NATO's taking over all responsibility for helping Afghans secure their democracy. The first half of 2007, NATO and coalition forces took the initiative away from the Taliban. Contributions from our civilian colleagues helped secure these military gains. Afghan forces played a key role, demonstrating their improved capability in the last year, and indeed Afghan Security Forces have led the fight to retake Musa Qala in recent days.

As you know, in 2007 the number of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan increased. The insurgents have resorted more and more to suicide bombs and improvised explosive devices similar to those found in Iraq. As I learned during my visit, some of the uptick can be attributed to increased Afghan and ISAF operations. The Taliban and their former guests, al Qaeda, do not have the ability to reimpose their rule. But only in a truly secure environment can reconstruction projects take root and rule of law be consolidated. That environment has not yet been fully achieved, but we are working toward it.

As you know, the drug trade continues to threaten the foundations of Afghan society and this young government. To attack this corrosive problem, a counternarcotic strategy is being implemented that combines five pillars: alternative development, interdiction, eradication, public information and reform of the justice sector. I hope that the coming year will show results.

There also needs to be more effective cooperation of assistance to the government of Afghanistan. A strong civilian representative is needed to coordinate all nations and key international organizations on the ground. We and others have worked with the Karzai government to identify a suitable candidate. I am hopeful this exhaustive search will be completed soon.

The final point I will turn to, and is an extremely important one—and both you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. McHugh referred to this—is the willingness of our NATO allies to meet their commitments. Since ISAF assumed responsibility for all of Afghanistan in October 2006, the number of non-U.S. troops has increased by about 3,500. NATO still has shortcomings, shortfalls in meeting minimum requirements in troops, equipment and other resources.

I leave for Scotland tomorrow for a meeting of Defense Ministers of the countries involved in Regional Command (RC) South, and this will certainly be on the agenda. The Afghanistan mission has exposed real limitations in the way the Alliance is organized, operated and equipped. I believe the problem arises in large part due to the way various allies view the very nature of the Alliance in the 21st century. We are in a post-Cold War environment. We have to be ready to operate in constant locations against insurgencies and terrorist networks.

I would also like to stress the role Congress can play in this endeavor. If other governments are pressured by this body and by the

Senate as well as by those of us in the executive branch, it may help push them to do the difficult work of persuading their own citizens of the need to step up to this challenge.

Let me close by telling you about a region I visited last week, a region that demonstrates why I am cautiously hopeful about the mission in Afghanistan. For years, and even decades, the Khowst region has been a hotbed of lawlessness and insurgent activity. Things are very different today. Under the strong leadership of an honest and capable Governor, and with Afghans in the lead, there have been remarkable gains as security force, local organizations, and the U.S.-led provincial reconstruction team with representatives from the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have worked in tandem to promote civic and economic development. Where last year there was one suicide bombing per week, now there is on average one per month.

As the Governor said to me, through our combined efforts more has been accomplished in the past eight months than in the prior five years. Khowst is a model of the integration of hard and soft power in a counterinsurgency campaign and it is an example of what can be done in other regions.

You have asked us to talk about the way forward. I would tell you that I proposed at the last NATO Defense Ministerial that NATO put together a strategic concept paper looking forward three to five years, where do we want to be in Afghanistan and what will be the measures of progress? We will be talking about that in Scotland over the next couple of days. The rest of the Alliance Defense Ministers have embraced this idea and my hope is that we can present such a strategic concept paper to the heads of state at their meeting in Bucharest next spring.

A moderate, stable Afghanistan is crucial to the strategic security of the United States and its allies. The elected leaders of the countries that make up our Alliance have said as much. Afghans have the will to keep their nation in the democratic fold, and we need to match their determination with the necessary resolve and resources to get the job done.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Gates can be found in the Appendix on page 59.]

Secretary GATES. Admiral.

STATEMENT OF ADM. MICHAEL MULLEN

Admiral MULLEN. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Representative McHugh, distinguished members of this committee. Thank you for your continued support of the men and women who serve this Nation, and their families. And thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to talk about our operations and our commitment in Afghanistan.

I was last there in early October, just after assuming my current post. By then, some 10 months had elapsed since my previous visit to the country. My major concern in early 2007, in fact my conviction, was that there would be a markedly resurgent Taliban. I was only half right. Though the Taliban has grown bolder in recent months, particularly in the south and west, they have lost a significant number of their leadership and failed to fully reassert them-

selves, reverting instead to terror attacks, thuggery and intimidation.

As a result, and not surprisingly, violence is up 27 percent over a year ago, with a significant increase in the number of suicide attacks. In Helmand Province alone, violence has risen more than 60 percent. And according to a recent poll, 23 percent living in the southwest say people in their areas support the Taliban, triple what it was just 3 years ago. Al Qaeda and foreign jihadi fighters, supported in some cases by Iran, add to the deadly mix.

As disconcerting as these trends are and we are all very concerned about them, there is some good news. Six years after the fall of the Taliban, most Afghans still see that overthrow as a good thing. Nearly three out of every four support the United States presence there and most want us to succeed. Our provincial reconstruction teams are having a real impact on the quality of thousands of lives. Six times as many children that were attending school in 2001 are now, in 2007, hard at work on their education. And today that figure, 6 million students, includes nearly 2 million girls. And respect for women's rights, though not as high as we would like to see it, remains the majority desire.

Some today at this hearing may argue that it is time to reassess our strategy, time to take a closer, more critical look at what we are doing and why we are doing it. I am not sure, perhaps so, but I am sure of this, Mr. Chairman: it is important, critical work and it must continue. We must recognize that, unlike the poppy which grows so easily there, we are sowing seeds of freedom in unaccustomed soil. It will take time to bear fruit. It will require patience and it will require pragmatic realization of three things.

These thoughts are what I really want to leave with you today. First, the war in Afghanistan is, by design and necessity, an economy of force operation. There is no getting around that. Our main focus militarily in the region and in the world right now is rightly and firmly in Iraq. That is not to say the brave men and women in harm's way in Afghanistan—American, Coalition, Afghan—are not valued or supported or in any way less important. It is simply a matter of resources, of capacity.

In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must. That is why—and this is my second point—it remains critical that NATO continue to lead and lead well. In assuming command of the International Security Assistance Force, the Alliance has taken on enormous responsibility and asserted its relevance in the 21st century for this out-of-area mission. It is, as I described, an extraordinarily complex mission with many of the same dimensions and requirements our Coalition forces have seen in Iraq. There is a limit to what we can apply to Afghanistan by comparison. But what seems to be growing is a classic insurgency that requires a well-coordinated counterinsurgency strategy, fully supported by security improvements, counternarcotics expertise, economic growth, the open exchange of ideas and, of course, political and diplomatic leadership.

And while I applaud NATO for stepping up to the plate, the ISAF is plagued by shortfalls and capability in capacity and constrained by a host of caveats that limit its abilities.

Let me echo the Secretary by urging member NATO states to do all they can to fulfill the commitments they have already made, completely and with as few conditions as possible.

Lastly, we must realize in the long run—and here Afghanistan is very much like Iraq—that real enduring success lies not in our own progress, but in the progress of the Afghan people and the government to assert themselves, to determine their own fate.

The Secretary asked me to speak a little about our investments in fiscal year 2007. It is in this regard that the investment most applies. Most of the \$10 billion, some \$7.4 billion, went to training and equipping the Afghan National Security force, the Army and the Police, which are now on track to field 14 Army brigades and 82,000 National Police by December 2008.

We recently increased the authorized strength of the Afghan Army to 80,000. And we expect to generate up to nine more battalions over the next six months, which will quite frankly push the limits of our trainer capacity, if not exceed it. I am watching this closely.

Afghan soldiers are already executing more complex roles in security operations. Just last month, for example, ANA forces together with ISAF, repelled the Taliban from the Golestan district of Farah Province and led more than 30 other operations. This week as you know, they are leading with Coalition forces in a critical campaign to retake the village of Musa Qala.

We have enjoyed less success with the Afghan National Police. There are at present more than 75,000 police, but they are not fully trained and there is too much corruption. Only a third of the required mentors are in the field and we lack sufficient mentoring teams to field more. Training police forces is a skill not many countries do well, especially in the military. So we have a long way to go.

Mr. Chairman, to wrap up, you have said that some consider Afghanistan the forgotten war. I understand the sentiment. But it is not forgotten, sir. Not by me and not by any of the joint chiefs. We know and we remember the great sacrifices being made by each of the over 26,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and civilians deployed there as well, as their families who so steadfastly support them.

Yesterday I crossed paths in the airport in Shannon, Ireland, with several hundred returning after a year in Afghanistan. They are extremely proud of what they have done. They have made a difference and we are proud of them. We know and remember our commitment to the people of Afghanistan and to their future. And we know and remember our obligation to you and to the American people who have so steadfastly supported us in this endeavor.

Thank you and I stand ready to answer your questions, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Admiral, thank you very much.

I just have one question, Mr. Secretary. Would you elaborate again on your thoughts, on your comments regarding NATO and the multiyear proposal that you discussed a few moments ago?

Secretary GATES. I think, Mr. Chairman, that in many respects the mission of NATO has changed over the past year. I think when NATO leaders and Riga accepted NATO responsibility for Afghanistan, that most of them were looking at it primarily as a stabiliza-

tion and economic development and reconstruction endeavor. And I think that shaped their view of what their commitments would be and the conditions in which they would be working.

As the Admiral has indicated, we are in a rather different environment, particularly in the east and in the south, which has taken on—which in both places has taken on more of the characteristic of a classic counterinsurgency. It seems to me that at this point, it is important for NATO to take a step back and, as I suggested, through a strategic concept paper, look at where we want to be in three to five years in Afghanistan, where we hope the Afghan government will be, the ways in which we intend to get there and ways in which we can measure progress. I will be pursuing this in Scotland. Individual allies have undertaken an assessment of how they see the situation in Afghanistan. We will bring all of those together, NATO will, and my hope is that we can put together a thoughtful and persuasive approach that takes a longer-term view of where we want to be.

I think part of the problem that the European governments are having in selling their publics on the importance of their commitment in Afghanistan is a lack of understanding in Europe, particularly of what we are trying to accomplish and why it is important. So I think that the strategic concept paper can address this issue as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Mr. McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I remember when I came to this committee 15 years ago, I was of the opinion the further you removed yourself from the Ranking Member and the Chairman, the brighter the members got. And I still believe that. So we have got an opportunity to get to some of the other members here today, and I want to do that. But I would, if I might, like to probe three questions. The first two, Mr. Secretary, in your more complete written statement, you made the comment that also hindering the government from extending its authority and influence across the country are the insurgent al Qaeda sanctuaries in Pakistan, and weapons and financing coming from Iran. I would like to hear your assessment, having just returned from the region, as to the viability of the frontier concept of the Musharraf government as to their efforts to try to stabilize the areas into the FATA and into Swat number one and number two. What is the reality of the involvement, if any, with the Iranian government and their attempts, perhaps sub rosa, to try to disrupt the stabilization of Afghanistan?

Secretary GATES. First of all, I think that I should say that the government in Pakistan has been one of our most steadfast allies in the war on terror since September 11th and has been immensely helpful to us. That said, the conditions on the border clearly are a problem. And there are areas, particularly in North and South Waziristan, that are sanctuaries for both al Qaeda and for the Taliban, and as long as that remains unconstrained, I think we will have a continuing problem.

I think one of the top agenda items that we have with the government of Pakistan is working together in terms of how we can—what they can do more unilaterally, how we can work with them to help them be more effective, and whether there are instances in

which we should, or must, take action by ourselves. But clearly the situation there on the border is one that complicates our effort fairly significantly.

With respect to Iran's involvement, we have I think pretty good evidence of the Iranians providing some weapons and some training. I would say that the evidence is a lot less voluminous than we have in Iraq of Iranian involvement, and I would say at this point, while I think it is worth noting and bringing light to bear on the Iranians' efforts to interfere in Afghanistan, as yet I think it is not playing a decisive role.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Chairman, I don't know if Admiral Mullen would wish to make any additional comments.

Admiral MULLEN. The only comment I might add on the border is that there have been significant operations there in the eastern portion of Afghanistan over the last many months, and specifically it has been quiet over the last two to five months there as far as the kinds of things that have been going on, at least directly affecting Afghanistan as best we can tell militarily.

Mr. MCHUGH. Gentlemen, you heard the opening statement of the Chairman, distinguished Chairman of the committee. His concern is shared by many, and that is that somehow Iraq versus Afghanistan is an either/or situation; that the operations in Iraq are inhibiting our ability to operate in Afghanistan and the suggestion—I am not attributing this to the Chairman—but to others who have made the comment that somehow it might be better to refocus on Afghanistan in—given our operational limitations that, Admiral Mullen, you spoke about at the risk of Iraq, is this an either/or situation, or do you view both of them to be critically important?

Secretary GATES. Let me comment and then ask Admiral Mullen to comment. My view is we need to be successful in both. Our interests are very much engaged in both at this point. One significant difference, though, is that a multinational coalition, a multinational alliance, NATO, has formally taken responsibility for the situation in Afghanistan. We are willing to step up to the plate when there is a need. In anticipation of what the intelligence indicated would be a significant Taliban offensive last spring, I extended a brigade of the 10th Mountain Division.

I have also extended our helicopter capabilities in Kandahar by six months because NATO had not been able to find replacement helicopters and I considered it important for our success. We preempted the offensive in the spring, and the offensive in the spring became a NATO offensive. So, contrary to a lot of the intelligence forecasts of last fall and last winter, in fact, we were very successful against the Taliban's efforts; and we have shown where we have to, we can apply our own assets as well. But I think my own view is I am not ready to let NATO off the hook in Afghanistan at this point.

As I indicated, the Taliban are in no position to take back control of Afghanistan. They can't even hold a village like Musa Qala when we turn our attention to it, and we have had real success in Regional Command East, as I mentioned in my remarks, in terms of a regular counterinsurgency effort under General Rodriguez. So my view is, A, we have to be successful. B, I think we have shown this year that although the levels of violence are higher, the Taliban

have not been able to make significant gains. In fact, one could argue that they have hardly made any gains at all. And I think at the same time, third, we need to keep our allies accountable to the commitments they have made and keep working that challenge.

Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. I likewise think that success in both Iraq and Afghanistan is important. I don't think it is an either/or. I think that, to just reinforce what the Secretary has said, that it is very important that those who have committed, those nations who have committed, that they step up. That in fact when I was in Afghanistan, specifically in October, I was encouraged by the evolving development and execution of the Afghan Army, and that has been very much a part of this week's operation—or this recent operation in Musa Qala. There are Afghan Army leaders, battalion commanders and brigade commanders, that our people, our soldiers, are singling out as terrific leaders. So I think that what the Secretary has done to extend where we needed to was the right answer at the right time.

So I think it is again important to succeed in both, and that we resource both. And from that standpoint, one other comment. The Secretary talked about the need to—or the work, the important work that has gone on, to bring in an individual to make a difference with respect to the governance area, the economic area, to bring all of these aspects of a future together for the government and the people of Afghanistan is also very important.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, we certainly don't want to let NATO off the hook. I am personally convinced that there needs to be a positive result in Afghanistan; otherwise, the whole future of NATO might very well be at stake.

Under the five-minute rule, Mr. Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. Admiral Mullen, Secretary Gates, thank you very much for your testimony.

Admiral, you acknowledge quite candidly in your testimony that what we can do in Afghanistan is constrained by resources. Obviously those constraints come from our commitments and engagement in Iraq.

First question is: To what extent has our involvement in Iraq constrained or deprived us of the means we need for success in Afghanistan?

Admiral MULLEN. I am really, just to pick up on what the Secretary said with respect to an expectation this year that the Taliban would be very successful, they weren't. And, in fact, because we were able to both anticipate that and focus on it, we really presented them with some significant setbacks.

The resource issue is a very delicate balance, but I am very much where the Secretary is in the sense that it is important that NATO step up. There is additional capability, in fact, that they can provide.

And I would also say that since Secretary Gates has put this kind of pressure on NATO, there are additional commitments that have been made, both in number of forces and, in fact, some additional helicopter capability. So I think that will continue to be important. Having that, I am satisfied right now that we are in a po-

sition where we are not going to undergo—I can't predict the future perfectly—but not undergo any significant setbacks there. NATO has only been in charge of this force for a little over 12 months. That is a growing process. We were learning there ourselves. So the resources that we are applying I think are having a significant impact.

Mr. SPRATT. When we discuss what the base force would be, redesigning our force structure in the 1990's, two major regional conflicts (MRCs) was the stated goal, and then it was compromised down to maybe one MRC, and in another regional conflict holding the adversary at bay. Are we seeing this sort of one-and-a-half scenario where we can fight one MRC vigorously and only hold at bay the other MRC, the other adversary, until we can shift our resources from one theater to the next?

Admiral MULLEN. No, sir. I wouldn't equate Afghanistan to a second MRC or the forces that we have committed there to be representative of the second MRC.

Mr. SPRATT. Would you and the Secretary say that thus far the best we have been able to achieve is to hold at bay the Taliban?

Secretary GATES. No, sir. I think we are doing better than holding them at bay. I think they cannot succeed militarily. I think where we need progress—one of the unsourced requirements, in fact the major unsourced requirement, now is for about 3,000 trainers. But those are mostly trainers for police, and this is an area where a number of countries in the world have the opportunity and the capability to be able to help. The European Union (EU) has accepted responsibility for taking part of this on. My view is they haven't done enough and they can provide a lot more. But we are doing a lot more than holding the Taliban at bay. They cannot win militarily at this point. What we need to do is improve our counter-insurgency skills so that when we do establish security in an area, we can hang onto it and bring the economic development and reconstruction together with the security situation to make sure that the population stays on our side.

Mr. SPRATT. One final question. We have given, as I understand it, about \$10 billion in aid to the Pakistanis since the outbreak of the situation in Afghanistan. Have we gotten \$10 billion in value received in terms of assistance, particularly in the northwestern provinces, out of the Pakistanis?

Admiral MULLEN. We have invested significantly there with a strategic partner that has been at our side from the beginning, since 9/11, and I think that is important. We clearly have a significant amount of that money that has been invested in forces that would permit him to evolve so that he can fight that fight. And I personally think from a military standpoint that has been a good investment.

Mr. SPRATT. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. Mr. Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Admiral, Secretary. Thank you very much for being here today. I am particularly happy to see both of you. I was in Kabul eight days ago, prior to your visit, and it was extraordinarily important to me. I had the privilege of going with Congressman Spratt earlier in the summer. I

have visited with the 218th brigade of the South Carolina National Guard now three times in the last six months. And each time I go—this was the unit I served in for 28 years—the persons serving in that brigade are just so honored to be serving our country. They are serving as mentors and training the Army units and Police units. And I am particularly grateful for the leadership of Brigade General Bob Livingston. He is the commander of the forces. I hope you met with him. He is one of South Carolina's leading business persons. It is a really classic case of soldier-civilians. We are just so grateful for their service.

As I think about this, though, it is indicated in the material that we received, that NATO ISAF has stated on December the 8th that requirements of shortfalls, 25 operational mentor and liaison teams to mentor the security forces and different other shortfalls. What is being done to address the shortfalls? And I know last week you announced additional M-16s, additional vehicles, increase in the size of the security forces. But specifically with the shortfalls identified, what can be done?

Secretary GATES. Well, the principal, as I indicated, the principal shortfall as identified to me is about 3,000 trainers, and the vast majority of those, the requirement is for the police, whereas the admiral indicated at the beginning, we continue to have real concerns. There is a shortfall on helicopters. There is a shortfall, as you suggested, on operational mentoring and liaison teams. My worry, quite frankly, is, as we press for other nations to bring forward these operational mentoring and liaison teams, that they will not be adequately trained.

And so one of the things that I think we need to focus on is at the same time we are pressing other countries to provide these Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs), as we call them, we need to make sure that they are also adequately trained before they come into theater so that they can actually make a difference with the Afghan units they are assigned to. So I think that is an important thing, both filling the requirement for the OMLTs and making sure they are adequately trained.

There is a need for approximately three maneuver battalions. We are talking to a variety of nations about getting those additional battalions into the theater. As I say, we will continue to have those conversations in Scotland over the next couple of days. But it is a continuing effort with our NATO allies to get them to step up to the plate.

Another area I have been pressing them very hard on is helicopters, and one of the things they are looking at now—part of the problem with the helicopters is that regular helicopters really don't work very well in Afghanistan. They need a different kind of engine because of the altitude and the requirements. So there is actually something of a scarcity of helicopters in the Alliance that are able to deal with this problem. But they do recognize the need to do this. I have refused to extend our helicopter cut/chop to ISAF beyond the end of January, and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) is taking steps now to find alternatives.

Admiral MULLEN. The only thing I would add is on the criticality of the OMLTs. In fact, in a meeting in NATO a few weeks ago, I met with my counterparts. The chiefs of their militaries recognize

this need, recognize the impact it can have and in fact have provided, have committed to a handful more. We are aware of the gap, we know the impact, and it is a vital, vital need.

Mr. WILSON. I also had an opportunity with Congressman Spratt to visit the police training facilities in Jalalabad. And I was really impressed by the contractors in also helping in police training. What is the status of contractors, different companies that may be assisting in the training, in addition to the National Guard or Active Duty forces?

Admiral MULLEN. Actually—I don't know. I would have to take that one for the record and get back to you.

Mr. WILSON. Again, I was very impressed and I believe it is—DynCorp was the contractor. But again, I really wanted to report how grateful the South Carolina Army National Guard is. This is the largest deployment of troops from our State since World War II, and the people of South Carolina are very supportive and we are very grateful for our troops. And I yield the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here this afternoon.

Secretary Gates, you gave a speech November 26th of this year at Kansas State University, which I thought was a great speech. In fact, I think it could be the kind of speech around which you could organize a government, I mean that seriously. I mean, I think you could dress this thing up and make it an inaugural speech.

Admiral MULLEN. Please, no.

Dr. SNYDER. But I would like to spend just a couple or three minutes. I am just going to quote. I am going to kind of jump through it, so it may not hang together so well. But, quote, my message—this is Secretary Gates' speech on November 26th. Quote, "My message is that if we are to meet the myriad of challenges around the world in the coming decade, this country must strengthen other important elements of national power both institutionally and financially, and create the capability to integrate and apply all the elements of national power to problems and challenges abroad. In short, based on my experience during seven Presidents, I am here to make the case for strengthening our capacity, use soft power and for better integrating it with hard power. Economic development, institution building and the rule of law, promoting internal reconciliation, good governance, providing basic services to the people, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic communications and more. These along with security are essential ingredients for long-term success."

You go on, "So we must urgently devote time, energy and thought to how we better organize ourselves to meet the international challenges of the present and the future."

I will jump ahead a couple of pages. Quote, "Most people are familiar with the cutbacks in the military and intelligence, including sweeping reductions of manpower, nearly 40 percent in the active Army, 30 percent in the CIA's clandestine service. What is not well-known and arguably even more shortsighted was the gutting of America's ability to engage, assist and communicate with the

other parts of the world, the soft power which had been so important throughout the Cold War.”

And again jumping ahead, “But these new threats also require our government to operate as a whole differently; to act with unity, agility and creativity. And they will require considerably more resources devoted to America’s nonmilitary instruments of power.”

And the last short quote I want to read is, jumping ahead again, quote, “We lack a similar benchmark for other departments and institutions. What is clear to me is that there is a need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security: diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action and economic reconstruction and development.”

I believe it was Dr. Chu, I think at one of our hearings some time ago, who briefly discussed in response to maybe a question from Mrs. Davis about foreign language training, that we either currently, or last year, had funding coming out of the DOD budget going to public elementary schools to encourage kids to take foreign languages because we are having such a problem with foreign language skills in the United States to do the kinds of things that you are talking about. The issue of research and development for industries so that our economic competitiveness, the whole issue of health care, we have a lot of disagreement in this body about how do we deal with health care in the civilian sector, but we all agree it is a big burden on business and the ability of business to compete economically. I understand the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is really working on economic development as being a tool for ultimately solving the immigration problems we have along our southern border. Until the desire to come to the United States economic engine goes away, we are always going to have immigration issues.

My question is—you talk about an increase in funding for soft-power modalities. Do you anticipate that next year’s budget proposal by the President will reflect that kind of dramatic increase in spending in those areas that you talk about?

And my second question is, as some of you most recently have come out of academia, what parts of soft power are actually in the nongovernment part of the United States? I would argue most of it. But would you respond to this? This is a chance for you to do a second speech here in the remaining two or three minutes.

Secretary GATES. First of all, I know that Secretary Rice has asked for a substantial increase in the size of the Foreign Service and in the State Department budget, and I assume within that for AID and strategic communications as well. I am not familiar with the specific numbers, but I know she has asked for that increase, and I assume the Administration has supported that. She also has proposed, and the President has endorsed, the creation of this Civilian Reserve Corps that would have many of the skills of people that carry out the kind of tasks that I referred to in that speech.

So there are at least two fairly significant initiatives on the table where there is a request for funding that would increase our capabilities in this arena.

In terms of soft power, you know, it is one of the things that I referred to at Kansas State, was the fact that Texas A&M University has been both in Afghanistan and Iraq, in agricultural develop-

ment since 2003, and so has Kansas State and a variety of other land grant universities around the country. And one of the things that I refer to in that speech is the need to figure out how to integrate these nongovernmental capabilities at the same time as we try and strengthen our capacity within the government.

We just met this morning on the staffing for U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) and AFRICOM's mission and strategic communications. And there are land grant universities very active in West Africa and various parts of Africa involved in research and in agricultural development and so on, and how do we harness that in a way that doesn't inhibit it, but at the same time integrates it with the other activities of government? And frankly, I just don't think we have the proper institutional framework in our government to be able to do that, and I am not sure I have got the answers on how to structure the government.

The premise of the speech was this is the 60th anniversary of the National Security Act of 1947 that created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Council (NSC), what would become the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force and so on. I said if you were writing a National Security Act of 2007 for a 21st century national security policy, how would you structure the government? What new institutions would you create?

And my hope is that through the process of our election debate the next year, that we take the opportunity to think about and talk about how you would create new institutions that enable us to exercise something in addition to military power in pursuing our national security interests. Part of that has to be how to figure out in the 21st century how you integrate the incredible contribution the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) make, both universities private charities and others, into the efforts of the government. And I think that is a challenge that faces us all.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Before I call Mr. Kline, Admiral, you said that in Afghanistan we do what we can; in Iraq we do what we must. Would you tell us the difference?

Admiral MULLEN. It really speaks to the resource issue that was brought up earlier. Iraq, I was very specific in my comments that Iraq is the military priority right now. It is where we have the vast majority of our resources. And we have resourced Afghanistan to the level that we think we can right now, given that balance. We have talked about the military challenges associated with the Taliban, with the borders, with providing not just military trainers, but trainers for police, with equipping a growing Army. And more than anything else, what that is meant to say is that is reflective of both the priorities, the resources, and the balance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here and for terrific public service, both of you, for so many years.

Mr. Secretary, I wish you enormous good luck in your trip to Scotland and what comes out of that. I would share the Chairman's comment that we cannot let NATO off the hook. They may have

formally stepped up to the plate, I think were your words or were the Admiral's earlier, but I would argue they have not actually, in many cases, because they have not provided the resources and because of the caveats which exist all over the place. You cannot embed troops from a NATO nation that cannot go out on the wire, so to speak. So there is a lot of work to be done there.

To Mr. Spratt's comment about putting more resources, more troops, I think he was suggesting, perhaps shifting them into Afghanistan, again, I would say that if we were to do that somehow, to put another division or so into Afghanistan, we would, in fact, be letting NATO off the hook, and there would not be that pressure for them to step up, really, to the plate, actually to the plate.

So I have no advice here for you, sir, except to say our prayers are with you, and I hope you are successful in that effort to get them to step up to the plate.

For a lot of reasons, I want success in Afghanistan soon. My son is going as part of the 101st, in 21 days, for 12 or more months in Afghanistan, and he is a helicopter pilot. To the point of terrain that is not compatible with helicopter flying, I was there with a congressional delegation (CODEL) about two months ago, and it is hard for me to imagine a more inhospitable place to operate helicopters. It is just brutal.

Let me just go very quickly—because I know the five-minute clock is going to run out—to something that Chairman Skelton brought up with some pride, I am sure, having to do with the Missouri National Guard. They are sending some farmers over there. When I was in Jalalabad two months ago, speaking to the Americans and to the PRT and, in fact, to some of the Afghans, it was clear that they felt a need for this. Here is a case where we have, again, this crossover between some civilian capability.

The members of the National Guard are not full-time soldiers and have a civilian capability, and they are going over there to help fill in this PRT. So, again, harkening back to my friend Dr. Snyder's comments and your response to how we get civilian soft power involved there, in the short term, we sort of have that coming together in the form of the Missouri National Guard.

As a Department, are you looking at this as a short-term model, a middle-ranged model, a long model or a onetime event, of sending over this sort of civilian expertise, specifically from the National Guard?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think that, again, I will take a stab and then invite the Chairman. But it seems to me that we do have these capabilities, whether it is engineering or agriculture, in the National Guard that brings tremendous personal experience to bear.

At the same time, what we need are people whose full-time careers are teaching other people how to do these things. This is the role that the Provincial Reconstruction Teams play. And our commanders will tell you that even a handful of people in one of these PRTs makes a huge difference on the ground, in terms of what they bring to a village, to a province. You talk about a force multiplier; they are really quite extraordinary.

But I think the longer-term solution is either in a new institutional capacity or in something like this Civilian Reserve Corps,

where we have people who do this as a full-time responsibility and as a full-time career rather than as a National Guard deployment, where they are making use of the skills that they have brought to the Guard as a means of helping out. But the truth is that is a longer-term solution. We have to deal with the here and now, and that is where the National Guard brings some extraordinary capabilities to bear.

Let me just say one thing, though, that I should say for the record and then ask Admiral Mullen to address that issue. We should not use a brush that paints too broadly, in terms of speaking of our allies and friends. Some of our allies have more than stepped up to the plate. The British, the Canadians, the Australians and several others have played a really significant and powerful role in Afghanistan. They have met their commitments; they have exceeded their commitments. They are outside the wire, and they are doing the full range of responsibilities. So there are a lot that have the caveats, there are a lot that have not stepped up, but some have.

Mr. KLINE. Fair enough. Thank you.

Admiral MULLEN. Just quickly, sir, if I can talk, I will just start with NATO.

I know that we have certainly put a focus on them today, but as someone who commanded in NATO in 2004, NATO, who had never taken an out-of-area mission before, was looking at this, recognizing where they needed to go, and it has stepped up to it. And in many ways, it has done things when a lot of us certainly wondered whether NATO would do this or not.

I want to commend NATO and the leadership for that and second what the Secretary said about the members whose forces have stepped up, including some who were caveated and who recently have been adjusting those caveats. And so it is certainly something that constantly we are going to have to pay attention to. And they have made a big difference in some key areas.

The Missouri National Guard deployment in February is—we anticipate that this is a model we will continue to use. In addition, I am told there is at least one other university who is interested in this.

So how do we match this up? I think, in the long run, it is this difference between how we are structured as a government and what our capacity is to meet this full-spectrum need, not just the military need. We may be in a transition, but until we get through to how we should be organized and have the capacity to be able to do, I think the military is going to be called on to take advantage of the kinds of skills that are resident in the Missouri brigade.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Adam Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, for being here.

I guess I am much more troubled, actually, by what is going on in Afghanistan than what some of the testimony might have led us to believe, and that is based primarily on what I have read and also on communications with military personnel over there, the direction in which that is going. But also, one of the biggest reasons

I am troubled by it is because of the importance of the region. This is where al Qaeda had a safe haven. In the whole rest of the world, we can speculate about whether or not they can get a safe haven. We have no doubt that they can get a safe haven in this part of the world because they have done it before. Arguably, they still have it right now in northwest Pakistan. And that makes it, to my mind, the top priority in what we are supposed to be fighting here, which are the people who hit us on 9/11 and elsewhere, al Qaeda and their senior leadership. This is where they are and where I think more of our focus should be.

Also, you know, in talking to various military personnel over there, there is no question that they believe we do not have enough troops over there. We do not have enough troops to pursue the Taliban when they pop up out of their holes. We do not have the resources over there right now to enable us to prosecute the war against them to the degree that they have. And I have heard that from General McNeil, and I have heard that from many, many different layers of folks over there, that they are concerned about that.

Now, I will agree with you that I think the Taliban has a heck of a time grabbing and holding territory right now. But the numbers that I think are troubling—the violence is up, and I, for one, will never accept the argument that if the violence is up that means we must be winning because they are desperate. I do not think that holds.

Second, the more troubling statistic is one you cited in your opening testimony, that support for the Taliban in Afghanistan is up. We had done a very effective job of crushing that shortly after 9/11. It is back up. That is definitely worrisome to my mind, which brings us all sort of back around to the issue of Iraq in the balance.

I do not remember exactly how you put it, but, more or less, you said that Iraq is, by definition, more important than Afghanistan. Therefore, it gets the resources and, to some degree, Afghanistan gets what is left over. That is not relying on your words for the moment; it is just relying on the numbers. We have 164,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, roughly. We have roughly 25,000 in Afghanistan. Yes, we get support from our NATO allies. Even adding them up, we are still about a third of what we have in Iraq. But I think we also have to admit that the level of support that we would like from our NATO allies is not coming any time soon.

I agree with Mr. Kline that we should not let NATO off the hook. We should try to keep the pressure on. I also agree with you, Secretary Gates, that part of the problem there is that they do not quite see our mission the way they should. I agree they should, and we need to make that case, but right now, it is what it is, and they are not bringing in the troops. And between letting NATO off the hook and letting al Qaeda and the Taliban once again get a safe haven, I will go ahead and opt for letting NATO off the hook.

So the point is, and the real question I have is, that we have decided, apparently, that Iraq is roughly six times more important than Afghanistan. That does not make sense to me, given how important Afghanistan is to al Qaeda and the Taliban and given the fact that they have had the safe haven there.

So, having made the statement—and I will disagree with Mr. McHugh a little bit. Yes, we can do more than one thing at one time, and I understand that. But we are clearly choosing to make Iraq a vastly higher priority than Afghanistan, and I think that is a mistake.

I am just wondering if you could address the issue of why Iraq is that much more important than Afghanistan. If it is not, why are we dedicating so many more resources to it than to Afghanistan?

Secretary GATES. Let me take a crack at that and then invite the Chairman to comment.

First of all, in those areas where there is increased support for the Taliban, most of the intelligence that I have seen says it has more to do with a lack of proper governance from Kabul and also with corruption of the local police and with an inability to provide governmental services to the people.

In addition, another issue that has been controversial in Afghanistan has been the whole question of civilian casualties. Part of the problem is that there are, from time to time, civilian casualties—or innocent civilian casualties. The other part of the problem is the Taliban lies, and they just make it up, if there is an attack, about a lot of civilian casualties.

So I think in those areas where the acceptance of the Taliban—and admittedly, it has gotten worse, but it was, as I recall, still 23 percent of the population or something like that.

Mr. SMITH. Twenty-seven was the number, I think you said.

Secretary GATES. So I think it has more to do with governance than it does with a lack of sufficient U.S. forces.

The other problem—

Mr. SMITH. That, too, is a resource issue, I mean, to some degree. Wouldn't you agree?

Secretary GATES. Well—

Mr. SMITH. To some degree.

Secretary GATES. But if it is a resource issue, it is more a civilian resource issue, in terms of training police and having proper governance.

The other aspect is, in terms of the al Qaeda safe haven, to the degree they have a safe haven, it is not in Afghanistan, where we would put additional troops if we wished to, but, rather, in Pakistan. So the issue is, how do we work with the Pakistanis to make them more effective, and what can we do together or, perhaps, independently? But with that, there are clearly not going to be major force movements across the border. There is no question that we have to worry about al Qaeda operating on the Pakistani side of the border.

I would say also that we have the most significant U.S. presence in Afghanistan in Regional Command East, which is the part that borders these areas of Pakistan and that are of greatest concern.

Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. The only thing I would add to what I said previously is that the al Qaeda threat in Iraq has grown to be significant and still is significant; although, they are very much on the run right now. We do not see—certainly in Afghanistan, I do not see the kind of comparable threat. That does not mean down the

road that could not be the case, but certainly we do not see that right now. I have spoken—

Mr. SMITH. I am out of time. I will send a letter to you and will follow up on that last point.

Admiral MULLEN. Sir?

Mr. SMITH. I would like to send a letter and follow up on that last point—

Admiral MULLEN. Sure.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. Because I certainly do not concur with that analysis, but I am over time, and I respect the Chairman on that.

Admiral MULLEN. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Dr. GINGREY.

Dr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Secretary Gates, Chairman Mullen, Admiral Mullen, I am very appreciative of your being here today, and I appreciate the work and the leadership that you are providing for our country in very, very difficult times of war.

I have actually got a question for each of you.

Secretary Gates, you mentioned, I think, a couple of times during the hearing that you did not think that the Taliban could win militarily. I am grateful that you are our guy and not their guy, but if you were their guy, how would you recommend they proceed to win? What would the playbook look like? What can they do? If they cannot win militarily, what would you recommend they do to ultimately achieve victory?

Then, as you are thinking about that, Mr. Secretary, I want to address my second question to Chairman Mullen.

A couple of our members have already mentioned this. My good friend from Minnesota, Colonel Kline, referenced these national caveats. You spoke a little bit about them. I think you mentioned that you have been a NATO commander in your distinguished career.

How did we ever get to a situation where our allies, our team members, if you will—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO—could set the rules of how they play? It would be like having someone on your football team whose parents would say, “Well, my son will play but only if he can be the running back.” That is an oversimplification, but I just do not understand how we ever got ourselves into a situation with our Western European allies where they could say to a commander, to an ISAF commander, that I am not going to go out on patrol after five o’clock in the evening or I do not want to go to the south of the country because it is a little hot down there, speaking militarily “hot.”

How did that ever occur? Why do we put up with that? I just cannot imagine why we would let those kinds of national caveats continue.

By the way, parenthetically, what is the United States’ national caveat in regard to what our brave men and women are willing to do, the 15,000 or so who we have contributed—9,000, I guess it is—to this NATO force in Iraq?

Secretary GATES. Well, I am glad I do not have a really specific plan because I do not think I would want to give it to them for win-

ning. But I think, if I were in their shoes, I would aim at outwaiting us and at bringing divisions both among our allies and among the Afghans themselves. I think you can sort of think about different tactics to accomplish both of those things, but I think taking us on directly is not the way they are going to win. If they are to have any success at all, it will be because they have outwaited us or because they have been successful in sowing enough doubt and division among us that it will cripple our effort.

Admiral MULLEN. As to the NATO piece of how did we get here, I am not a NATO historian but, as I indicated, I did command. And what I experienced then and what I see now in NATO is a commitment on the part of individual countries that reflects, in many cases—or, actually, in every case—the will of their people and of their governments to do certain things. And they offer up certain capabilities that are requirements in the overall laydown of achieving the mission. NATO makes the decision to accept these or not.

This is an alliance. It is 26 members. Everybody gets one vote. I think it is a critical alliance. I think it is a critical alliance for us in the long term in the world that we are living in right now. We have differences, but when we get together and when we do agree, it becomes a very powerful force in terms of achieving long-term objectives. There are things that countries are doing right now in Afghanistan that, three or four years ago, I would have not predicted they would do, in terms of the fighting that they are doing.

So that is why the persistence here is important and the pressure is important, and I have seen change. It just takes time. Each country and what they commit to is a reflection of its government and its people. And some of those governments are coalition governments that are very much on the edge of sustaining themselves, and others are not. I see that reflected routinely in the alliance.

Dr. GINGREY. Well, Mr. Chairman, that is somewhat reassuring, but I still come back to the point that it seems like every member, all 26, should play by the same rules.

Mr. Secretary, I was hoping to get the response that I got from you because I think it is absolutely right. I think that they sit back and wait us out and look long-term and understand that division within our ranks, not militarily but politically, is to their advantage. You, of course, and I have no control over how the media reports these things. But I think, clearly, as you suggest, they sit back and play a waiting game and wait for us to eat our own. Then that is the way for them to ultimately achieve victory.

Again, I thank both of you for being here. I think your testimony has continued to be tremendously helpful, and I thank you for your leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. McIntyre.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both, gentlemen.

As I mentioned to both of you just prior to today's hearing, I had an opportunity to be in Afghanistan at the first of this month, a few days ago, to thank our troops and also to discuss the progress being made with General Dan McNeil concerning the Taliban, Gen-

eral McNeil's being a native of southeastern North Carolina and also a former commander at Fort Bragg. We also went to five African nations and spoke with the Presidents or Prime Ministers of those nations about the new AFRICOM, the U.S. Africa Command, and we are very pleased with their receptivity and willingness to work with us. I commend you and your efforts on the new Africa Command.

When we were there, General Cone, with whom I also had an opportunity to meet, said there are 414 police districts which are, in his words, the heart of corruption in Afghanistan. Mr. Secretary, you have also, two or three times and in your written testimony, used that word, "corruption," when referring to the police.

One thing that concerned me that I wanted to ask you, specifically—and then I have two other quick questions—is how the U.S. is coordinating efforts to train the police currently with the European Union. Because General Cone said that Germany was in the lead on this; then it went to the European Union police efforts; then to the State Department; and now it has gone back to the DOD. I am wondering if this has gone full circle.

Has it now landed back in our lap, with regard to training the police?

Secretary GATES. We have essentially, I think, taken on the gap. The truth is that the European Union, as I recall, committed to provide 160 trainers, something like that. There are about 70 in Afghanistan. Of those, there were probably 40 who were already there and just exchanged one hat for another.

So I would say that the European effort on the police training has been, to be diplomatic about it, disappointing. General Cone has tried to fill the gap with some of our trainers.

Let me ask the Admiral to address that.

Admiral MULLEN. I think that, in many ways—to follow on to what the Secretary said, it did come back to us. We know that it is a vital mission, I would call it, as far as the training mission right now. It is really the center of gravity, getting the police force trained.

There is concern for corruption. There have also been some significant steps taken by the government with respect to reducing corruption, but we have a long way to go. I think it will continue to be with us.

From a mission standpoint, we feel that is a big part of the way forward and the way out, and we cannot sit by and wait for other trainers to show up. Training police, as I said in my opening statement, is a mission not a lot of countries do well. Those that do need to, and we are going to continue to need that help.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you.

I want to ask you a couple other quick things.

I would urge you, in Scotland, to bear down hard on them regarding their cooperation for police training. And thank you for your attention to that.

Also, during my meeting with General Cone in Afghanistan, he said that the Afghanistan infantry had 3 of 48 battalions that he would say were independent. The rest of them, in his words, need mentors.

You have spoken about mentoring today. How many battalions do you expect to be in the lead a year from now in Afghanistan?

Admiral MULLEN. I would specifically have to get back to you. We have an expectation that they will be fully trained and equipped by the end of 2009. There is a very small number that has the lead right now. We also have mentors in every single battalion, as General Cone probably told you as well.

So I do not know the exact number. I would really have to get back with where we think we will be 12 months from now.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Do you think that could even double from three to six?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, I would expect it would. I really would have to go back to General Cone and get where he is, in terms of his expectations based on what he has seen on the ground.

Mr. MCINTYRE. All right. If you would follow up, that would be great.

Lastly, I want to follow up on what Chairman Skelton asked when you said that the priority right now for the military is Iraq, and then you followed up with a similar statement to Mr. Smith.

In your best professional judgment, is any progress being made to locate Osama bin Laden? If so, do you think he is along the Afghan-Pakistan border?

Admiral MULLEN. There is a concerted and a continued effort to try to do that, and I really would not want to say any more about that right now.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Do you feel like any progress is being made in that effort?

Admiral MULLEN. I would really like to—there is a concerted effort. It is an area of focus, and I would like to not be more specific than that.

Mr. MCINTYRE. All right. If I may, I would like the private opportunity to follow up.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Shuster.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, for being here today.

It has been my view for the past couple of years that Afghanistan—my view has been that it is a more difficult, long-term problem to build democracy in Afghanistan because they lack resources. They have no industrial base, the population is highly uneducated, and they have no infrastructure to build upon. So, although the situation is much more violent and difficult in Iraq, it seems to me it is a longer-term project.

I wonder if you could comment on that.

Secretary GATES. Yes, I guess I can because I fought another war in Afghanistan 20 years ago, and my experience is that, in contrast to Iraq, where one of the challenges we faced was that Iraq had an incredibly highly-centralized government where everything went to the center for a decision, historically Afghanistan has had a relatively weak central government, with powerful warlords and tribal influences. And so trying to create a central government and especially one where you do not have resources—I mean, at the end of the day, Iraq is a rich country, and there are a lot of resources

available for them to develop the country. That is not the case in Afghanistan.

Just as an example, the Iraqis will put about \$9 billion to \$10 billion into their own security forces this coming year during fiscal year 2008. The budget for the Afghan National Army is about \$250 million. It is the difference in the resource base, and the Afghans are dependent on outside help to pay for the force that they are building.

I think that there are some significant cultural and historical differences between the two. And Afghanistan's building a central government that has credibility and that delivers services to the people is, I would agree, a longer-term enterprise.

Mr. SHUSTER. The second question I have is—and I think you are the right person to ask this to—as to the historical lesson that I think we should take away from Afghanistan. When the Soviets were driven out, there was a power vacuum left, and we withdrew from the region, for all intents and purposes. The Taliban, an extremist group, got a foothold, and then they allowed al Qaeda to get a foothold.

Do you think that is a historical lesson that we should be able to take and to look at in the same context with Iraq if we were to allow that to happen?

Secretary GATES. Well, I would just say, with respect to Afghanistan, that I feel a certain sense of personal responsibility. I was Deputy Director of the CIA and then the Deputy National Security Advisor during the period when the Soviets did withdraw from Afghanistan.

The United States essentially turned its back on Afghanistan, and five years later came the first attack on the World Trade Center. So, you know, one of the lessons that I think we have learned is that, if we abandon these countries once we are in there and engaged, there is a very real possibility that we will pay a higher price in the end.

Mr. SHUSTER. In my trip I took in July to Pakistan, many people in the Pakistani government kept reminding us of that lesson because they believe that the same thing could occur in Iraq.

The final question is: We keep talking about NATO. I do not know that I have heard the answer. What can we do to get NATO to step up to the plate, one?

Second, do you get a sense that it is their military people or is it strictly their political establishment that is stopping them from engaging and from going outside the wire and having the resources?

Secretary GATES. I would tell you that I think most of the governments in NATO get it; they understand the need. But as the Chairman indicated, a number of them are minority governments or they are coalition governments depending on others.

I would say one of the areas where we have not performed well enough in Afghanistan as an alliance is in strategic communications and, I would say, strategic communications within Afghanistan to let the Afghan people know that 42 nations are in there trying to help them and what they actually are accomplishing in terms of road-building and hospitals and schools and everything else.

But it is also strategic communications with respect to Europe, and that would have to be done out of Brussels. I have talked to the NATO Secretary General about this. It seems to me we need to do a much better job of helping the Europeans understand why we are there.

This is an easier problem for America. One of the reasons why I think there is a much broader consensus in this country about the need to be in Afghanistan is that we know we were attacked out of Afghanistan. That is not the case in Europe. There, it is an easier sell as sort of an economic reconstruction and development program and kind of an idealistic endeavor, rather than its being rooted in the very security of the country.

Now, as they deal with an increasing terrorist problem of their own, maybe it will be brought home more vividly to them, but I think that part of the area where we need to improve as an alliance is in trying to help explain.

That is one of the reasons that I have proposed this strategic concept paper, not only because it will help us figure out where we think we need to be in three to five years in Afghanistan, but it also will serve as a basis for helping to persuade people in Europe and elsewhere as to why this is an important mission.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, isn't that an information operations problem?

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Udall.

Mr. UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, gentlemen—Mr. Secretary and Admiral.

I want to turn to the situation in eastern Afghanistan and in western Pakistan, but before I do that, I want to acknowledge, Mr. Secretary, your emphasis on soft power and that it won the Cold War for us.

I think those are the most powerful weapons we have—the power of the example of our people, of our economic system and of our history. Of course, General Petraeus has made this clear in the case of a former commandant in the Marine Corps, General Jones.

In that spirit, I think many of us in the Congress believe that the central front on the war on terror is in this region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, that border region. There is a common defense of our position in Iraq, which is that it is better to fight them there than to fight them here. My response more recently has been, you know, you are right, but let us fight the right “them” in the right “there,” and I am not sure that is in the middle of the civil war in Iraq.

Setting aside that discussion, clearly al Qaeda is based and deeply rooted in this region of the world. And I am curious: Tactically, have we seen an increase in the infiltration of insurgents from Pakistan into Afghanistan?

Admiral, what is the DOD doing to account for a further possible destabilization of this crucial and lawless area?

Admiral MULLEN. We have, actually, over the last several months, as I indicated, in great part attributed to the forces that are operating in the eastern part, seen it become relatively calm as far as the infiltration there on that border.

I think, in the long run, it is that we need to continue to work with the Pakistani government to assist them in this challenge. I think all governments that are affected by this recognize that this is a serious issue and that we will continue to focus on it. In fact, I know, just from the counterpart discussions that we have had, military to military, between our two countries, that at the senior military level this is recognized in Pakistan as well.

The specifics of being predictive about exactly when we are going to have what kind of impact would not serve any purpose right now. We all know it is a big problem, and we know that we are going to have to continue to not just focus on it but to do something about it.

Secretary GATES. I was just going to say, when I was there, I spent a lot of time, a fair amount of time, with General Rodriguez, the commander of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and RC-East. As I mentioned in my remarks, I traveled up to Khowst province, which is a real success story. I think that, really, of all of the parts of Afghanistan where we have a counterinsurgency strategy that is fully developed, it is in RC-East, and I think it is one of the reasons the area has been somewhat quieter.

The real problem area, I think, for us right now in terms of activity is RC-South.

Mr. UDALL. Admiral, are we in close contact with the Pakistani military, given the unrest, the political unrest, that exists in Pakistan? I know General Kayani, I think, has taken charge of the military. Would you care to comment on that?

Admiral MULLEN. I spoke with General Kayani late last week by way of making just my personal initial contact with him. I know that Admiral Fallon had spent time with him before. He is a man who is held in very high regard by many people in the military whom I have spoken to about him who know him.

We have had significant military engagement with the Pakistani military for a number of years. It has continued even through this most recent crisis, and I am confident that it will continue in the future.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. Secretary, if I might turn back to NATO and to your comments on the mindset of the Europeans, it was very helpful to me and I think to the committee, because we clearly, as Americans, know from where we were hit on 9/11.

Have you thought through what would happen if there were pull-outs on the part of the NATO alliance, particularly with individual members of NATO? What would we do to convince them not to do so?

Secretary GATES. Well, Afghanistan is a place where, I am happy to say, in a lot of instances we are seeing people plus-up their forces rather than thinking about pulling them out. In one or two places where there has been a decision to reduce their forces, other NATO countries have stepped in to supplement that. Just to give one example, the Dutch are going to reduce their presence by a few hundred, and to a significant extent, the French are going to step in and help fill that gap.

So, as I say, there are a number of countries that are willing to step up. I just cited an example of one where we are seeing people

prepare actually to increase their presence and to be more involved.

Mr. UDALL. Thank you, gentlemen.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I call Mr. Turner, Mr. Secretary, who is the leading strategist in the conflict in Afghanistan?

Secretary GATES. I would say that it is a combination of General McNeil and General Rodriguez.

Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. Sure.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Secretary and Admiral, thank you for being here and for the opportunity to address the issue of Afghanistan today.

Many of the issues that you have raised—issues of corruption in the government or in the Afghan national police, cross-border insurgency, the drug trade, difficulties in completing reconstruction, and a relationship with our NATO allies—have been issues that have been ongoing as we have looked at the Afghanistan area.

One difference, obviously, is the shift that has occurred in Pakistan, and I want to follow up on Mr. Udall's comments on Pakistan.

As I have traveled to Afghanistan twice, during those two times the contrast of how we looked at the border issue not only was focused, in part, on the Taliban's organization but also on how Pakistan was either assisting us or how their policies were not assisting us or how they were making things more complicated.

How has what is going on in Pakistan affected what we see with the Taliban and with al Qaeda? How are you guys addressing what shifts might be occurring in Pakistan?

Admiral MULLEN. Clearly, with the challenges and with the crisis that Pakistan has been in recently with respect to President Musharraf, we were very concerned about the attention that that obviously would draw specifically off of that challenge in that part of Pakistan.

To some degree, it is back to the military-to-military piece. I mean, we clearly made this known to our counterparts. And there was, certainly, in that event some loss of focus represented and some setbacks there. But recently, literally in the last couple of weeks, I am more optimistic in that regard with what the Pakistani Army has done. Clearly, not to certainly speak for what that country will do, but with the situation calming now, I am optimistic that we can have the right focus in that area.

Even prior to the crisis, though, it was a very, very tough area to get at because of the history, the tribal aspects of it. And so I think it is going to take a concerted effort over an extended period of time to have the kind of impact we need to have in that safe haven area, which we want to eliminate.

Secretary GATES. I would just add that I think this has been a part of Pakistan that, to a considerable extent historically, has not been under firm control of the central government in Islamabad. I think one of the things that has changed just in recent months in Pakistan has been a growing appreciation on the part of the government of Pakistan that what is going on along that frontier raises the potential threat to stability in Pakistan itself.

So I think they are beginning to take it more seriously than was the case in the past. And I think, in part, it is because they now see that it has some potential impact for them.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Secretary, in my last trip to Iraq, we had the opportunity to stop in Jordan at the international police training facility there, and many of us came away concerned with the level of knowledge that we have about who we are training—concerns that perhaps we might be training people who are, in fact, joining the insurgency.

In Afghanistan, you talked about the issue of police training, in getting our allies to participate in that process. With Iraq, people have indicated that the state of the country and the state of the government's records make it very difficult to track anyone to be able to be assured that they are even joining the police forces.

Is that process going a little better in Afghanistan, or do we have the same concerns that perhaps we may be training people who are, in fact, joining insurgencies?

Secretary GATES. All I can say is that, in my visits to Afghanistan and in my meetings with General Cone and with his predecessor, I have not heard this concern expressed.

I think it is a good question, and I think we could take it for the record, in terms of what kind of a vetting process goes on.

Mr. TURNER. I would appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For the record, Admiral Mullen and General Sattler, congratulations on the Navy beating Army last weekend in Army-Navy.

General, on a more serious note, I am a Blue Dog Democrat. We stand for two things: strong national defense and fiscal discipline.

We have given the Pakistanis \$5.6 billion in military aid, called the Coalition Support Funds, to reimburse the Pakistani government for fighting the war on terror. The simple fact is that there are major questions as to how this money is being spent and whether it is actually protecting American lives.

For example, Coalition Support Funds were used to purchase 26 Bell 412 helicopters. These helicopters are allegedly being used to fight the war on terror, but my sources tell me that President Musharraf is actually using them as a personal fleet to chauffeur his political allies across the country. Meanwhile, the Taliban and al Qaeda are using the Pakistan and Afghanistan border as a haven to launch attacks on our troops.

Now, we may have to do this in a classified session if need be, but the Congress and the American taxpayers have a right to know how the Pakistanis have spent our over \$5 billion in aid and when, if ever, we are going to see a return on our investment.

So, I guess, Mr. Secretary, the question is probably directed toward you, if we can get an itemized receipt or report on this \$5.6 billion and an accounting of whether or not you believe that this has made us safer in the war on terror, if you would like to respond.

Secretary GATES. We will do that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 66.]

Mr. MURPHY. Great. Thanks.

How about the larger question? Do you believe that we are now safer because we have invested this money in the Pakistan government—and I understand President Musharraf is a declared ally—but especially this resource on the \$5.6 billion, getting a more robust return of our investment especially in this area?

Secretary GATES. I do not have direct experience between 2001 and the end of 2006, but based on everything I have heard and on everything I have seen, I think it has been a very worthwhile investment.

Mr. MURPHY. Admiral.

Admiral MULLEN. I feel the same. Having, certainly, just come from a couple of years as a service chief, I was very focused on trying to make sure that we were spending every dollar responsibly. That is a priority for me as well. Given that, this investment, I think, in the government of Pakistan and in the people of Pakistan has been a very important one.

Mr. MURPHY. My next question would be: Our focus, especially after 9/11, was on Osama bin Laden and on al Qaeda. And I know there was talk—and I know my colleague from Colorado mentioned it in his questioning. How much closer are we to getting Osama bin Laden? I know, once we get him, it is not over and that there is a lot more al Qaeda out there, but how much closer are we today than we were five years ago?

Secretary GATES. Since I was not here five years ago, I have not got a clue. I think a serious answer to the question is really along the lines that Admiral Mullen indicated. We are focused very much on it.

I think if we were to talk about it any further, it would probably need to be in a closed session.

Mr. MURPHY. Admiral, do you concur?

Admiral MULLEN. I do.

Mr. MURPHY. Well, thank you, gentlemen. Thank you for your continued service to our Nation. Thank you for being honest with your answers.

Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman in the far corner, Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary and Admiral, thank you for being here this afternoon.

With respect to counternarcotics and counterinsurgency and with the overlap of those issues, when we were there in September, there seemed to be some concern that our NATO allies did not take the narcotics issue quite as seriously as we did.

Also, there was some indication that, with respect to going after the full spectrum of the narcotics business, it is one thing to pick on a sharecropping poppy grower, but it did not seem to me like we were going after the landowner who was complicit in the trafficking and in the profiting being done from the opium and the poppies.

Given the interagency nature of the approach so far, is there a better way to go at this that would put it all under one roof? Because they are so interconnected.

Secretary GATES. I think part of the problem has been, as you suggest, that our allies have not taken the narcotics problem as seriously, perhaps, as we have. Some have, but not all, by any means.

Second, I think that our effort has been inhibited somewhat by a serious difference of view that isolates the United States from most of our allies and from the Afghan government, and that has been in our desire to press for aerial spraying. Virtually no one else wants to do that, including the Afghan government. We discussed it when I was there last week.

I think it is patently obvious that we have not been successful in the counternarcotics effort in Afghanistan. They now provide about 90 percent of the opium for the rest of the world, most of which goes to Europe, by the way. It seems to me that part of the problem—I talked in my remarks, in my prepared remarks, about a five-pillar strategy, but I think at the end of the day what is actually required, in addition to a broader effort, is that the day we go in and eradicate somebody's crops, we had better be there with alternative seeds, some money and a way to get that product to market, or we will have just recruited somebody else for the Taliban. I think too often there has been a desire to go after the eradication without the rest of the package being there right then.

And I think this is something we just have to pay more attention to. We have to work harder with the Allies, and we may need to devote more resources to it.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Secretary, with respect to the folks further up the food chain, I agree with you that the sharecroppers—and most of them are of the poppies—need something else to grow. And their profit levels on other crops are not that much different than that of opium, but there seems to be some evidence that the landowners and others further up, perhaps even in government, require these landowners to grow poppies because their margin of profit is much higher than if they were growing wheat or some other kind of product.

I do not necessarily expect an answer from you this afternoon but a commitment to perhaps focus within our group and to focus with the government, because I suspect that these landowners are very powerful individuals who are perhaps tribal leaders and others who are involved in an effort that we take seriously and that obviously the government ought to take seriously, and it certainly gives lip service to that.

Perhaps there is some sort of effort that can go not just into eradicating that one crop—where it may or may not be that the guy who owns the land is the same guy who is growing it—but in eradicating all of the other people in that narco-trafficking food chain.

So I appreciate your comments today, and I appreciate your being here.

Secretary GATES. I would just add that I think it is tied up with the overall corruption problem that we have talked about. And we definitely will take a look at that aspect of it.

One area where we have been successful—and I really heard about it for the first time a few days ago when I was out there—is that we have been successful in taking down a number of narcotics laboratories, where you get to the gathering point with some potential impact.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 66.]

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before I call on Mr. Sestak, let me ask this question: Some experts have stated that a long-term American commitment in Afghanistan is necessary to ensure the stability there, such as a 15-year-or-more commitment.

Do you think that a long-term American military presence is a requirement, Secretary Gates?

Secretary GATES. This is one area where I think, you know, it is going to be a period of time, several years, before the Afghan National Army is prepared to take full control of the process.

In a way, you are asking me to predict the future, in part because of the ability of al Qaeda to reconstitute itself on the Pakistani side of the border and whether we need to have a presence in terms of being able to do counterterrorism.

I think that there will probably be a requirement for Coalition forces, for NATO to be there for a number of years. But I think we can be there as part of a significantly large number of countries, not on our own.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Sestak.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Secretary, Admiral, thank you for your time.

Admiral, I was struck by what you said: In Iraq, we do what we must, and in Afghanistan, we do what we can. You know better than anyone else that Afghanistan is where it all began, as you were in the Pentagon that day that the Pentagon and the Twin Towers were struck, from the Taliban's protecting al Qaeda in ungoverned areas. I would think that the better approach might be what Winston Churchill said: Sometimes it is not enough to do our best; sometimes we have to do what is required.

So, Mr. Gates, my question as we talk about NATO is that the U.S. Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan has a requirement for so many embedded U.S. trainers for both the Army and separately for the police force, but U.S. forces are only meeting 44 percent of the required U.S. commitment to that for the Army and 34 percent of that for the police. That adds up to approximately 3,500 troops that we have not met our commitment to in the embedment of trainers and mentors.

How can we point at NATO if we have not done what is required?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think it is the fact that we have half the forces in Afghanistan and that our significant enablers in terms of helicopters and various other capabilities have had the appropriate influence on the attitudes of our allies. The numbers for any other single ally are a small fraction of the commitment that we have made in Afghanistan. We have over 26,000 troops there and

an overall ISAF commitment of a little less than 50,000, so we are making a significant effort.

I think part of our—there is no question, as you talk to General Cone, that he has—and I will invite the Admiral to comment—thinned out, somewhat, our embedded trainers with the Afghan National Army in order to try and provide some additional support to training the police, a mission that originally, as I indicated, had passed to the European Union. So—

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Gates, just because of time, may I follow up with a question, another one?

That is the governed areas where the police are and the army. I guess, actually, I am almost more concerned about the ungoverned areas. That is where al Qaeda struck us. I understand there is al Qaeda in Iraq, but our intelligence community tells us they do not plan attacks against the U.S. homeland. They do, those al Qaeda who live in either Pakistan or Afghanistan.

So my concern, sir, is, having been on the ground in Afghanistan—as you know, Admiral, it was at about this time, a little later, right after we struck Afghanistan, having brought my battle group back and then going on the ground again 18 months later and seeing what we needed to be doing and seeing now that once again al Qaeda has safe havens in Pakistan. General Eikenberry said it well. Where the road ends, the Taliban begins in the ungoverned regions. We actually have to make sure that we do not have another sanctuary where we sit here a year or two from now and say, “Couldn’t we have done more, the United States?”

I am concerned that NATO, the Germans, the Spanish and the Italians do not send any troops to the south except for 250 troops by Germany. Some of our allies will not fly to Afghanistan. Some refuse to do combat ops at night. Some do not fly when the first snowfall falls.

My concern, sir, is, if this is our security, why don’t we just put more troops in there? Or will we look back in the rearview mirror two years from now and say, “Should we have done more to meet the requirements?” It is U.S. security above all else.

Secretary GATES. I would just comment, sir, that, first of all, I am not—I don’t think that the Taliban constitutes a threat to us here at home; and in terms of al Qaeda—

Mr. SESTAK. I meant al Qaeda. The Taliban gives the sanctuary to al Qaeda.

Secretary GATES [continuing]. We run operations to make sure al Qaeda has no safe havens in Afghanistan, and I believe those operations are successful. We are working with the Pakistanis and we are concerned and we are watching in terms of what al Qaeda is doing on the Pakistani side of the border.

But I would submit to you, sir, overall, we would not be looking at adding significant numbers of U.S. forces to run operations to do conventional military operations on the Pakistani side of the border. That is the area we do need to be concerned about al Qaeda training and reconstituting itself. It is one area, as I have suggested before in the hearing, where first we need to see if we can get the Pakistanis to take it on and then to work with the Pakistanis to improve their capabilities or do things together; and then

we need to be able to act unilaterally, if we have to, to make sure they don't come back at us again.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Along down the line, either one of you, Mr. Secretary or Admiral, what is the optimal number of—level of troop strength in Afghanistan? Have you thought about that?

Admiral MULLEN. Again, not wanting to be predictive—it is—I don't have a specific number in my head. The current concern is clearly for the trainer capacity, which is a shortfall. We go a long way if we increase the shortfalls that are there right now, the countries in NATO are committed to.

While I have said this is an economy of force operation, it is an operation that has had significant impacts, particularly this year against the Taliban. There is progress being made in other areas. And this is a country that we are trying to bring forward from a developmental level of hundreds of years, and it is going to take some time.

Secretary GATES. Let me just say, so we can keep the numbers we are talking about in some perspective here in terms of what the ISAF commander has requested in—because the numbers are not that big. We are talking about, as the Admiral just said, 3,000 to 3,500 trainers, a substantial majority of which would be for police. We are talking about approximately 20 helicopters, 14 lift and 6 attack. We are talking about three maneuver battalions.

So we are not talking about 10, 15, 20,000 additional troops going into Afghanistan to meet the requirement that the commander has placed on all of NATO. The numbers are not all that big which, frankly, is one of the sources of frustration for me in terms of our allies not being able to step up to the plate and meet these needs.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

May I point out that the Secretary has 15 minutes before he must leave. I understand that Ambassador Edelman will take the spot at the table.

Mr. Akin.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have got just one short little question, and that is what happens if we continue to delay the supplemental? Is that going to affect operations in Afghanistan?

Secretary GATES. Well, the supplemental includes—in addition to the impact on Army and Marine operations, supplemental contains, I think, \$2.7 billion for training and equipping the Afghan forces. So we wouldn't be able to do that.

Mr. AKIN. When would your supply of money run out so you would have to have the supplemental to do that?

Secretary GATES. I think what we have communicated to the President and to the congressional leadership is that the money begins—the money runs out for the Army in about mid-February and for the Marine Corps in about mid-March.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Tauscher.

Ms. TAUSCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Admiral Mullen, I apologize. I had to run out and manage something on the floor for the Speaker; and if this is a repeat of what somebody else has asked, I apologize for that, too.

I am very impressed, Mr. Secretary, with your work inside of NATO to try to move things to a more sense of urgency on many different levels, including ballistic missile defense. My concern is that—and I sit on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and am the Vice Chair of the American delegation. I am over there three or four times a year. They are here a lot. I see a huge disconnect between the publics and the parliaments among our NATO allies on so many different issues. I see your very good under secretary, Mr. Edelman, nodding because we talk about this a lot.

And I really appreciate my colleague Mr. Snyder's comments about the soft power issues. The kind of public diplomacy that the Congress can be helpful with member to member in different parliaments, especially inside of what I believe is the finest military and defense alliance in the world, a have to have, which is NATO, is very, very important; and what I am suggesting is that we work together a lot more closely on message.

I think we need to be engaging at the member-to-member level, Member of Congress, Senate and members of parliament throughout our NATO allies and in Europe generally on threat analysis, on understanding exactly what we are buying and why we are buying it and how we are going to knit these systems together, how we are going to have interoperability.

The issues of caveats are specific, as Admiral Mullen knows, to the public perception in many of these countries of fear of loss, fear of loss of their precious people as they have seen us lose far too many ourselves.

So I think this is really a time for engagement, and I know that you are for that, and I would like to hear from you what you think we can be doing to be helpful, how we can be more organized on message, how we can be much more strategic and, frankly, a little more robust in our activities in getting this done. Because I think the disconnect is a widening yawn, and it directly impacts these countries' abilities to raise money. I mean, the cry that we have when we are over there is spend more than two percent of your gross domestic product (GDP) on defense.

The numbers are going the wrong way. There is only a few countries—France, the United Kingdom (U.K.) and maybe some—maybe the Netherlands—that are actually spending enough money. So if you could help energize us with some ideas, work closely with us on this, I think we could get someplace. But I am interested in hearing what you think.

Secretary GATES. I couldn't agree more. Six out of 26 allies meet the 2 percent GDP for defense threshold or higher. I couldn't agree more in terms of the role of the Congress being helpful; and, in my introductory comments, I said I would also like to stress the role Congress can play in this endeavor if other governments are pressured by this body and the Senate as well as those of us in the executive branch.

So I think that—I mean, this is one area where we really are in accord, and I think the opportunity—there is a disconnect between the governments and the parliaments. And I think that the govern-

ments get it, and the problem they have is a lot of them are minority governments, a lot of them are coalition governments, and it is a harder sell because they weren't attacked out of Afghanistan like we were.

But I think this is really a place where not only in terms of the importance of Afghanistan but communicating the message that, as far as the American people are concerned, it is important to the future of the Alliance that our allies help us here.

I couldn't agree more, and I think we ought to figure out some mechanism where we can sit down and kind of figure out what the right message is so we are giving them a very similar set of messages in terms of what is needed.

Ms. TAUSCHER. I look forward to that. I mean, I think the most obvious argument is that a failed narco state in Afghanistan where the poppy crop is increasingly growing hits Europe first, the first cut of that cocaine; and that heroin is in Europe before it comes, unfortunately, further west to us.

So I think that there is a message, but I just think we have to be much more strategic and dedicated to making that message one that we all carry. And I think we need much more muscular engagement, and I think we really need to be putting it to them in no uncertain terms in a friendly way on how we should be doing this.

Admiral Mullen, do you have any comments that you want to make?

Admiral MULLEN. I couldn't agree more as well. I know you have, as you indicated, extensive experience there. I have shared the same kind of both challenges and goals and frustrations, and I think the more we engage the more likely it is this very critical Alliance is able to be relevant for the future.

Ms. TAUSCHER. Mr. Secretary, I look forward to working with you and my colleagues to convene together to make sure we have this message and that we are being much more promotive and, frankly, leaning a little bit more forward on being in front of our friends more often and making sure that we are delivering this message in an effective way.

Thank you. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and thank you, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, for being here, for those that are in attendance with you and those you represent. I always want to let you know how much people like me appreciate you because, apart from those in uniform, people like me couldn't sit on this platform, and I appreciate it.

With that said, you know, as we discuss the overall battle against Jihadist terrorism in the world, I think it is important that we realize this is really in a larger sense one war. It is a war between freedom and tyranny. And just as you, Mr. Secretary Gates, said that, you know, you put yourself in the place of the enemy to be able to ascertain what their strategies might be, I am afraid that they are very good at putting themselves in our place. They study our ways very carefully.

And one of the great concerns I have, sir, is that some of the discussions that we have in this body and at home undermine a lot of what takes place overseas. There has been a lot of discussion as to whether or not Iraq or Afghanistan, juxtaposing the two, are the most important. I can only say that, from the rhetoric of the terrorists, they consider both of them important but especially Iraq. Because they see that this could be a terrorist base with great resources that they could use to launch terrorism throughout the world, and the rhetorical advantage they would gain if they chased America out of Iraq I think would be enormous.

I know you have heard this before, but the bottom line is, if Iraq is not important in the war on terror, then somebody needs to explain that to the terrorists, because they don't understand.

And with that said, I hope that, you know, for the sake of those here and for the sake of just Americans in general, that we don't put not only the battle against terrorism upon the back of our soldiers but having to carry this undermining rhetoric at home on their backs as well; and I hope that we can back you up a little better in the days ahead.

Perhaps the first point that we might ask you, you mentioned that in mid-February that there would be some money that would run out. What happens on the ground in mid-February if that occurs without this supplemental?

Admiral MULLEN. I think the services, the Army and Marine Corps, start to—actually, they already have. Because in anticipation inside a service of the lack of funds you start to constrict. And in fact, except for the vital necessities on bases—health, property and safety, those kinds of things—the furloughs that have already been discussed very publicly, up to 100,000 furloughs which we would anticipate starting, you know, in the February time frame, you stop doing your training to deploy. You stop rotating to other parts of the world. The Commandant of the Marine Corps specifically said his recruiting comes to a halt.

So it is not just some of the things that we have talked about. It has a very debilitating effect on those two services. The Army's annual operational budget is about \$27 billion. They are spending \$6.5 billion a month right now to run the Army as well as to support the efforts with respect to this war. That is why they run out in February. They won't have the money they need to operate the Army. And that is why passing this—or getting the supplemental, the full supplemental, in place as rapidly as possible is really important for all of the men and women who are serving, as well as their families.

Mr. FRANKS. I think that you folks are doing your part; and if Congress doesn't do our part in that regard, it is a disgrace that beggars my ability to describe here.

Let me shift gears here. Related to the influence that Iran has had over the country of Afghanistan, you know that not long ago we put in a policy where if Iranian weapons were found in Afghanistan that there would be a report; and it occurs to me that just in some of the recent writings that there may be some decrease in the Iranian efforts to affect the conflict in Afghanistan because of fewer weapons showing up. Is there anything to that?

Admiral MULLEN. When I have been asked this question lately, I am still in the—it is too soon to tell. There are clearly some indications, just by virtue of the level of violence, the kinds of weapons that we see actually going off at the time. But I still believe that while the recent data is indicative, that a longer term trend on this before I would be willing to say——

Mr. FRANKS. Any Chinese weapons showing up?

Secretary GATES. Excuse me. Were you referring to Afghanistan or Iraq?

Mr. FRANKS. Yes, Afghanistan in this particular case. But either way, Afghanistan or Iraq, Iranian or Chinese weapons, any weapons showing up still?

Secretary GATES. I am not aware of any Chinese weapons.

Admiral MULLEN. I am not aware of any Chinese. There has been concern for the Iranian weapons support in Afghanistan for the past several months.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Secretary, if you would stay through Mrs. Davis's questions, it will only put you over by a minute or two.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and thank you both of you for being here and for your service.

Let us try this one. Is that better? Can you hear me? Okay. Great. Thank you. Thank you again for your service.

And I want to commend you, Secretary Gates, for your discussion of soft power. I think actually my counterparts in both France and Germany were suggesting we talk about smart power, not soft power; and that probably speaks well, also. On the Oversight Committee, we have been discussing this a great deal as we look at PRTs and we think about interagency collaboration. So we are very happy to have you discussing those issues, and we certainly want to work with you on them as well.

I had an opportunity to travel with Mr. Abercrombie, and I am sorry he wasn't able to join us this afternoon, as we spoke to our counterparts in France and Germany, because on his trip he realized how important, you know, these ongoing discussions are. And I appreciate the fact that my colleagues also have worked in these parliamentary sessions.

In talking about public opinion there with them, we realized we obviously have a different investment in Afghanistan. But we are doing a fairly miserable job, Secretary Gates, as you suggested, in articulating our policy and our goals there. And I am wondering on this strategic concept meeting that you are talking about, and it seems to me that this is probably, you know, two years late perhaps, but again it is important that we are doing it. What role do you think this discussion of public opinion is going to have?

I think we have talked about our message, but, you know, it is also our actions; and part of my concern on what I was hearing certainly from our colleagues over there is that this—the fact that Afghanistan is a lower priority for us, despite the fact that obviously our efforts are considerably greater than theirs, is also being communicated. So how are we going to deal with this and how will it play a large role in this strategic concept meeting, if at all?

Secretary GATES. I think that strategic communications have to be an important part of the strategic concept approach. As I indicated earlier, I don't think we do a very good job of strategic communications inside Afghanistan in terms of communicating to the Afghan people what we are doing and what 42 nations and 70 organizations and states altogether are doing for them.

But I don't think we do a very good job of communicating in Europe as NATO, and I think that this is—I have talked to the NATO Secretary General about this. There is a need that really needs to be centered in Brussels in terms of communicating to the media in Europe and through the media to the citizens about why this mission in Afghanistan is important.

I will say that in the four meetings plus that I have had with my defense minister counterparts since I took this job, defense minister counterparts in NATO, the issue of whether or not Afghanistan is a priority for the United States has actually never come up. I think that they, at least from the defense side, they see it as us taking it very seriously and particularly in light of the resources that we have—

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. As the Secretary would say, in terms of the public opinion in those countries, that was brought up repeatedly to us.

Secretary GATES. Well, I think one of the things that I am encouraged about in terms of strategic communications and sort of the integration, if you will, the application of smart power, one of the things that is going to be different about this meeting in Scotland is that each of us is bringing a senior diplomat with us. This will be the first time that the defense ministers of RC-South have been accompanied by the diplomatic folks who can help us have a more integrated strategy.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you. I appreciate that.

And on that counternarcotics issue, again we talked a great deal about this, the fact that we have, I believe, 24 PRTs operating through all the NATO countries. Of course, we have the bulk of those, but none of those are really focused on counternarcotics operations. How do we explain that and are we moving to do more of that? And, if not, what is the problem?

Secretary GATES. No. As I indicated earlier, I am really concerned about counternarcotics because I think that we don't really have a strategy, and I think we have not engaged our allies. I think we have not persuaded them it is important and needs the application of resources. That has clearly got to be an area because it ties into corruption, it ties into governance and the whole string.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Admiral Mullen, any other comments quickly just in terms of the way that we are communicating with our allies? And it looks like my time is up.

Admiral MULLEN. I think what the Secretary has laid out with respect to communicating strategically, penetrating very deeply into the peoples of all those countries, also within NATO is absolutely critical.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentl lady.

Mr. Secretary, we thank you very much, very.

Admiral do you—

Admiral MULLEN. I am going with him, with your permission, sir.

Secretary GATES. We will have our more able seconds.

The CHAIRMAN. We can really ask some tough questions.

Mr. Secretary, Admiral, we really appreciate you being with us, your expertise and your hard work; and we will look forward to seeing you again soon. Thank you so much.

Will our new witnesses please approach the table? Ambassador Edelman and—I know exactly who he is. We raised General Sattler from a pup here in this building. Am I correct, General?

General SATTLER. That is correct, sir; and I hope you remember that when I start having questions come from that side of the table, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Ambassador, General, we appreciate—will somebody take those two signs down, please? Put the real signs up. Again, we thank you for completing the hearing for us.

Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Really just a couple of quick questions first for Ambassador Edelman, and this is to put a finer point on Representative Tauscher's question about talking to NATO countries. I was wondering if you have identified, you know, specific countries and what specifically you think each of those offer additionally as you move forward into tomorrow's meeting in Scotland?

Not that I would ask you to share that specifically with us here today, but if a member had an opportunity in the next couple of days to speak with representatives from any of these countries, which some of us may have, do you think you could share that with us that we can be even more specific as we have that conversation?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Mr. Larsen, first of all, I would say that the RC-South countries themselves are, as the Secretary indicated, some of the actually serious contributors. And our Canadian colleagues in particular but also our U.K. colleagues have been engaged in pretty significant operations and have taken a lot of casualties. So I think our effort is to, in the first instance, get help for them from other NATO members.

One country where I think we have an ongoing discussion is with France. Because when President Sarkozy was here, as you may recall when he spoke to the Congress on November 7th, he indicated that France would be in Afghanistan for the duration; and we are now discussing with them what form and shape that might take. Our French colleagues were extremely helpful in providing an additional OMLT for Oruzgan province to help enable our Dutch colleagues to get through their parliamentary session.

I would add on the messaging. First, I, like Secretary Gates and the chairman, I agree completely with what Mrs. Tauscher said. She pointed to one important message which is the counter-narcotics message and quite correctly. But I think there is a broader message as well that is not well appreciated in Europe that I think members when they are traveling can share with their counterparts. Which is to say as I travel through Europe I frequently hear people say this is American problem because you were attacked on 9/11 or maybe it is a U.K. problem because they were

attacked in July of 2005 and because of the Heathrow plots in the summer of 2006.

But if you look at the development of al Qaeda over the last year or two, with the adhesion of the Algerian and now Libyan Salafist movements swearing to bin Laden, the arrests that were made in Germany of the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) operatives who were plotting terrorist operations in Germany, I think it is increasingly clear that this is really a threat that is on Europe's littoral. It is in the heart of Europe. And it is a common threat to all of us and it is what our Alliance is all about, of course, common shared risks and the indivisibility of security for all of us. So I think it is important to make those augments.

Mr. LARSEN. There are two countries in particular personally where I am going to have an occasion to talk to folks. If I could have my staff follow up with somebody on your staff sooner rather than later to identify.

And another thing that—obviously, there are some countries in Europe that are not part of the EU, that see the NATO Alliance as their primary military relationship with the United States and want to strength that. So that may be another area—another tack to take, if you will.

And the second thing, in our staff memo there is a very short conversation about China and what China might be doing or could be doing. It is really more focused on the economics, about this investment in copper mining and railways and so on.

When I was in China this year earlier just in August, there was a conversation we had with some folks in Xinjiang province in the far west that this is the first year in China where they are going to interdict more southwest Asian heroin than southeast Asian heroin—that is, Afghan heroin versus Burmese heroin, mostly coming up through Pakistan and into Xinjiang. And it seems to me that there could be a marriage of interest there. China as well as every other country doesn't want a drug problem. Second, that drug problem largely starts in Afghanistan where we have a counternarcotics effort.

So there might be a relationship there to address with the Chinese if they can figure out who is in charge, if it is public security bureau, if it is border folks, if it is People's Liberation Army (PLA). And if we can kind of lift that veil a little bit, too; and our Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) folks are trying to do that in China. So there is a relationship there, and I hope you would be willing to explore that with our DEA folks who are very attuned with this, with this problem in Xinjiang.

Ambassador EDELMAN. We will be happy to follow up on that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 65.]

Ambassador EDELMAN. I agree there is an opportunity to discuss this with the Chinese. I just last week had my Chinese counterpart here for the defense cooperation talks, consultative talks; and we have some other opportunities down the road to continue with those and certainly raise these kinds of issues. We did discuss regional issues and the stability in Afghanistan in those discussions, but we could certainly pursue it further.

We are in pretty good contact with DEA. I was in quite regular contact with Karen Tandy when she was the director and with Mike Brown, the director of operations for DEA. So we do work closely with them.

Mr. LARSEN. Just a suggestion, one more angle to try to help the Chinese see their interest in this as well.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

Not that I don't appreciate you being here, I did want to ask Secretary Gates a question, but I will go ahead and ask you anyway. Because it is a quote from him that I want you to follow up on or at least give your opinion.

In your careers and in regards to some of the comments that were made here earlier, in regards to your long and distinguished careers to our government, it has been inferred that Congress's debate and talk about this war is somehow undermining our abilities—and I can remember at least on two occasions in this room Secretary Gates made the comment that he felt this debate was healthy, and in your study of history and the time when our country is at war and previous to our service before, wouldn't it be fair to say that Congress has always debated in times of war and even before that? Would you both agree?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman Ellsworth, when Secretary Gates said I would have to pinch hit for him here, I told him I was a little worried that people would not appreciate having the second string come in. He said, oh, no, don't worry about it. I said, in that case, I hope I have as good a day as Todd Collins did last Sunday for the Redskins.

As a lapsed historian before I became a Foreign Service Officer, much less a senior defense official, debate has always been a factor whenever our country has been at war. You know, as long as I think the debate is constructive and focused on advancing the country's interest, it is healthy; and I think that is what Secretary Gates has said consistently.

General SATTLER. I would certainly agree. Anytime we take a look at courses of action, we form operational planning teams and we look at the pros and the cons and we debate inside the military. So I believe that our culture would agree with that totally, that discussion and debate is healthy. Yes, sir.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. And just to paraphrase him one more time, he said that he felt the troops understood over there. And I visited the troops on a couple of occasions. I think they understand, too, that the debate is healthy.

I have also never voted against funding for our troops, so I feel qualified to say that—and I won't vote to cut off funding for our troops. But in a hearing a couple of weeks ago, we heard what I believe was 29 investigations—I think it was the chairman's question, 29 investigations going on that totaled somewhere in the area of \$88 billion that was missing in these 29 investigations; and I would say that goes a long way toward funding our troops if we could reel those back in.

I really don't expect you to comment on that. I just wanted to get that out there. We talk about that we do need money for our troops and we won't not fund our troops, but there is things we can do better on the checks and balances of where that money is going.

My question is that I have people every day when I go home ask me—and I represent about 650,000 people, as most Members of Congress do. Some march out in front of my office with “bring them home now” signs and some say “stay the course”, whatever the saying of the day is. So I think it is fair to talk about this.

People come in my office, and they want money for things domestically, and they question why we send so much money. And so my question is about provincial reconstruction teams. And I appreciate that. I think they are doing a great job.

My question is, the people that we are trying to win the hearts and minds of, their appreciation. And I think they do, but I would like your comment on—and if you don't know, I would like you to get back—that after we build the bridges and we build the generators and we supply water and the pump houses—and I keep hearing these stories about electrical poles being cut down and generator stations being blown up and the roadways being cut—is there a percentage or a figure or a feel or can we get the information on after we spend this money building, how much stays and they keep up, that they maintain and that stays there, or is it all for naught? I shouldn't say “all”, because I know that is not the case.

Is there any way to answer that in today's hearing?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, Congressman Ellsworth, let me take a stab at it.

I think if you look at the range of poll data, there is a lot of it. There is a recent ABC poll. There is an Asian Society poll. I think that the data is actually fairly consistent, which is that Afghans are quite supportive of the international community's presence, including the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, because they do see the results.

And I think it is actually quite telling that when Taliban come into an area, the first things they tend to do is attack the results of the kinds of things that folks and PRTs are doing, that is, schools, health clinics, sending night letters to the family saying don't educate your daughters. They are going after the various things that the international community is doing largely through PRT but through other mechanisms as well.

So my impression—and I was in Afghanistan last month and was down in Nangarhar province in March where we have a tremendous effort ongoing with the PRT down there—is that Afghans do appreciate this and do try and build on it.

But it is, as was mentioned earlier in the hearing, a desperately poor society. We need to bear in mind this is, I think, the fifth poorest country in the world. It is a country that has half the per capita GDP of Haiti. So it is, you know, starting from a very low base.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you. Unless you want to—

General SATTLER. I would just add, all the Taliban—all they bring to the equation is intimidation, murder and thuggery. When the PRTs come in and establish essential services, which is the key element of a common surgency, is to provide those essential serv-

ices for the population, that they have no counter, they can bring nothing. Therefore, they must retake away.

But we will take the question for the record, sir, and come up with a percentage of what we do construct sustains for the long haul and what does fall to the intimidation and murder campaign of the Taliban, sir.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you both very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, General, for all you do and, Ambassador, for being here.

Ambassador, if you came down Independence on the way here, you would have seen that there were some folks who were very much for the effort in Iraq out staging a protest, as is their constitutional right. And I appreciate them, and I want to see our country prevail.

One of the signs said "total victory". And I am just curious, if our Nation had to define total victory, either Iraq or Afghanistan, if it sent you here to talk about Afghanistan, I am curious, does our State Department have a mark on the wall that defines that?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Mr. Taylor, I think what Secretary Gates has talked about in both the context of Iraq and Afghanistan is defining success, and success being countries that can stand on their own feet, that can provide for their own security, albeit with our assistance for some period of time, and that are working together with us in the broader effort against violent extremism in the Islamic world. And I think both of those are within our reach in both places, but it is going to take, I think, time and sustained effort.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Ambassador, how would you define some degree of time.

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, I think it is difficult to be too precise about it. I think the chairman asked at one point earlier in the hearing about 10 or 15 years. We do have with Afghanistan a document outlining a strategic partnership. We have had a couple of meetings of the Strategic Partnership Council (SPC); and I think that the international community is going to be involved in Afghanistan for a very, very long period of time.

I think in Iraq it is probably going to be shorter in part because of the differences in terms of resources, levels of education and the fundamental ability of the two societies to, in the medium term, function on their own.

General SATTLER. Sir, I think it goes beyond the scope of, obviously, just Iraq and Afghanistan. If you look at the global war on terror with a long war, that the place to win this is in phase zero, you know, the shaping phase up on the front before we get to conflict later on.

So if we expand what Ambassador Edelman just addressed and took it out to our global partnership capacity to all the instruments of national power, especially those soft elements of power to get out and into the environment globally and not accept that environment but in the long haul work to change that environment on the front side, change the environment and shape it over the course. And it will take a substantial amount of time, but it will take not only the

coalition within our government, i.e., all the instruments of national power, but our global partnership capacity as we build friendships around the world, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. General, you know you are my friend, but that was about as far from defining a timeline as you could possibly get.

General SATTLER. I just wasn't sure if your timeline was how long we will be in Iraq or Afghanistan or how long will we be in this—

Mr. TAYLOR. Actually, it was the Ambassador that said some degree of time. And for the sake of the American people who are reaching into their pockets to pay for this, we are sending their sons and daughters and loved ones, I would just like to give them some idea if anyone in the Bush Administration has an idea of how long this is going to take.

Mr. Ambassador, something that continues to trouble me about Afghanistan, and I would like to hear your take on this. About the only thing that the Taliban did right was the virtual elimination of the heroin trade and poppies. Some people surmise that one of the reasons that some of the warlords fought with us was so that they could go back into the heroin trade; and, by the Secretary's admission earlier, it skyrocketed. I have even had friends who were working in Afghanistan tell me that it is common knowledge that President Karzai's brother is one of the major traffickers in Afghanistan.

How do we as a Nation—how do we tolerate that? Do you just look the other way and say, well, we are going to focus on the good stuff?

Because, quite frankly, you know, I heard a former Speaker of the House—he recently resigned—say something to the effect, well, that heroin goes to Europe. Well, I consider the Europeans our friends, and I would just as soon not see our friends poisoned either. So at what point do we as a Nation condition either our help there or, at the very least, say clean up this mess, starting with your family, Mr. Karzai?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Congressman Taylor, this is a very difficult issue and in part because the question of narcotics, first of all, goes well, well beyond just what we in the Department of Defense and what the military can do. It is a broader issue because it involves economic, social, political and information elements, not just on the military side. We, I think, have to make sure that our allies, because they are the ones who are in the first recipients of this stuff, do have, I think, have had the lead formally in this and have some responsibilities here.

I don't think that means we stick them with the problem, by any means. I think we have to work at it in part because it is now—whatever the Taliban's previous attitude toward narcotics, and I think it was—even in the heyday of their rule, it was somewhat ambivalent, it is now clearly helping to finance the insurgency that we see in RC-East and RC-South. So it is a problem that we have to get a handle on. And as you, I think, have quite eloquently said, because of its reach into Afghan society, it is potentially a corrosive factor that is going to undermine the effort to have Afghans govern themselves.

That being said, we are talking about a very—you know, very poor society and the lure of easy money, which we find in the narcotics trade, is always there.

A richer society that I know something about, Turkey, where I was ambassador for a couple of years, took a very long time and a lot of money to eliminate this problem. It is not going to be a problem that is going to get eliminated very quickly. It is going to require leadership from President Karzai. It is going to require leadership at the provincial level. Although we have seen the overall level of the poppy crop increase in the last couple of years, including this year, which I think will be a record crop, we also have seen a number of provinces become poppy free, and that has been a function of leadership at the level of the governors. And governor-led efforts seem to be the ones that have been most successful.

We have a new coordinator inside the presidential palace for local governance who is working to get more capable governors in place, and that is going to be a big part of dealing with this problem.

Another part is going to be making sure we have, as Secretary Gates said, the alternative livelihood crop programs in place. It is going to mean having a system of justice functioning. You have to be able to have the counternarcotics police who we are helping to train in DOD functioning. It means you are going to have to have a system with courts, with prosecutors who will not be suborned and who will prosecute people and a system of incarceration that will actually hold them once they have been convicted.

We are working very closely with DEA on the interdiction effort to go after not just the person at the bottom end of the food chain, the cultivator, as one of your colleagues was pointing out earlier, but after the people who are really making the big money in this narcotics trade. I think of 34 DEA operations that we provided support and assistance for in 27 of those 34 operations.

So we are going to have to move as a government on all of those fronts to get a handle on this problem. I agree with you. It is a very important problem.

Mr. TAYLOR. At what point do we start with the president's brother? I am talking about the President of Afghanistan. I want to make that very clear. Not our president.

Ambassador EDELMAN. A number of our senior leaders have talked with President Karzai very directly about the threat of corruption and about the threat that this problem presents. I have had that conversation with him both in November and in March, and I think he understands that. It is going to take continued efforts to engage with him, I think, to push him to do more. It is a problem that is—as I said, a difficult problem to get a handle on, and it is not something that any one person can do.

But the broader question of the danger of a culture of impunity gaining currency in Afghanistan is a real danger, and there has been no shortage of folks that have told that directly to President Karzai.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Before I call on Mr. Loeb sack, it is rather interesting that this country, which is so good at public relations in so many areas, so

many areas, is losing the information battle to the Taliban that communicates by Internet, cell phone and Al Jazeera. Is there an effort on our part to win the information war?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think all of us share the frustration that you just expressed, and I think Secretary Gates has spoken to it pretty directly, I believe, in his Landon lecture at Kansas State. He addressed this quite specifically and in terms not too different from the ones you just used, which is to say that the country that invented public relations seems to have a lot of difficulty in this area. The lead, of course, is with, you know, throughout our government is with the Department of State and with the under secretary of—

The CHAIRMAN. You should have a father-son talk with those folks.

Ambassador EDELMAN. We do provide support to the Department of Defense in those efforts. We are clearly the supporting the element, not the lead element on that. But in both—

The CHAIRMAN. Do me a favor. Do us a favor. Get back to us on the future plans to increase our positive information warfare vis-a-vis the Taliban. Would you do that for us?

Ambassador EDELMAN. I would be happy to.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Loeb sack.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am sorry that I have been bouncing back and forth between two hearings, So I missed out on quite a bit. I hope I am not being too repetitive in what I ask.

But I have one question to begin with. Are we essentially engaged in nation building in Afghanistan?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Sir, I would say we are right now involved in a multinational effort at state building. Because I think we really in Afghanistan are talking about getting the fundamental institutions of a functioning state, as Secretary Gates said earlier, and perhaps you were out.

In Iraq, our problem has been we are dealing with a system that had been very centralized before the military operations. In Afghanistan, we are dealing with one where the writ of the central government has never run very far.

So it is—in many ways, we are—it goes back to Mr. Taylor's question about counternarcotics. I mean, we are trying to create really from the ground up a kind of justice system with prosecutors, with judges, with court, with a penal system that can function in an environment where there is a lot of drug money around and you are talking about building institutions from the ground up.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Whereas nation building I guess implies something far more than state building. State building is just the institutions, the structures, sort of laying the groundwork in hopes that politically either President Karzai or some others might be able to somehow reconcile the differences among the different ethnic groups and all the rest?

Ambassador EDELMAN. It won't be just President Karzai. It will be the members of the loya jirga, who have now begun to function in a sense as a legitimate parliamentary opposition in a country

that has never really had that in an institutional sense before. It is going to take a certain amount of time and adaptation and change in the way people do business.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Has anyone in our government, either in the Defense Department or the State Department or wherever, actually sat down and thought about sort of how many years of commitment are we talking about before we can reach whatever endpoint, whatever we would call a successful outcome in Afghanistan.

Ambassador EDELMAN. Mr. Taylor raised that issue, and I said I think it is very hard to put a specific number on it. I think you would have been hard-pressed to put a number in 1945 how many years we would be in Europe. We are still there now. Or, in 1953, how many years we would be in Korea. I think it is intrinsically a difficult question to look forward and say I know when the endpoint is going to be.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Yeah, I guess I am one of those, too.

I agree with Congressman Adam Smith. I did hear what he had to say earlier about sort of where our emphasis maybe should be, and this is where we will probably disagree, obviously. I thought for quite some time that we need to disengage from Iraq.

And someone here in the audience—I don't mean to call attention to her—but she has a shirt on that says, "Where is Osama?" Well, Osama we think is somewhere in eastern Pakistan, right, or western Pakistan or eastern Afghanistan.

And I guess my own view, for what it is worth, is, you know, I had some difficulty with the statement that was made earlier, too, about in Afghanistan, we do what we can, and in Iraq, we do what we must. If we did in fact decide that we are going to have a change in the mission in Iraq, we could in fact do more in Afghanistan. We would be capable of doing more.

I just—you know, as a new Member of this Congress, and someone that actually taught international politics and comparative government and all the rest, I am getting to see sort of in real life what nation building or state building is all about when I listen to what you folks, you know, talk about. And, boy, the challenges are even more overwhelming in some ways, and my heart goes out to all of the folks that are trying to do this.

I have been to Iraq twice, right, and I am just overwhelmed at the challenges when I go there. And I haven't been to Afghanistan yet. I want to go.

And the PRTs, for example, to sort of what it takes to have—for those to work. And I guess, along with respect to the PRTs, could you clarify a little bit better than what I have been able to get from folks up to this point the role of the Defense Department, the military, versus the role of the State Department when it comes to economic reconstruction?

Because—correct me if I am wrong, but what I think I have heard so far is—not today necessarily—that the military has got quite a much larger role in economic reconstruction than anybody anticipated even 5 or 10 years ago. Is that fair to say or not? How do we see this going forward?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, first, I think in the initial phase in Afghanistan when the PRTs were first being set up, I think it was initially there was a larger military role, and over time I think we

have gotten more participation by other elements of the inter-agency that have this.

I don't think this is unique in war, by the way. I happen to have been reading—and the chairman as a military historian may appreciate this, I was reading a recent book on the Italian campaign during World War II, which also happens to be the subject of—the diplomacy of which happens to be the subject of my doctoral dissertation. And one of the things I discovered was when Mark Clark—after the landing at Salerno, when U.S. troops moved into Naples, there was no plan for how we were going to run Naples and who was going to provide the services and who was going to pick up the trash. And there was General Mark Clark running around, organizing folks to take out the trash. So our military has, you know, learned to improvise this kind of thing in the past.

But ideally, as Secretary Gates has said, while there is a role for the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) and a role for us to play in PRTs, it ought to be the people who have the actual expertise who can provide the kind of work. And the economic assistance and development work is probably work for the Department of State and for the Agency for International Development.

And, frankly, I think we need to, as Secretary Gates has suggested, develop some expeditionary capabilities from other government cabinet agencies and independent agencies as well.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you very much, and thank you for letting me go over my time, Mr. Chair.

Mr. TAYLOR [presiding]. The chair thanks the gentleman.

The chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from New York, Mrs. Gillibrand.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am concerned about the information we received related to this testimony today about the shortfalls that we expect to have, that border security force maneuver battalion, maneuver battalions for regional command, airborne intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance and provisional reconstruction teams. We have 25,000 troops there now, and what do you expect would be the number that you would want there if you had access to the troops you need?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Mrs. Gillibrand, I have to say, you know, I am not sure what the—whether there is, as the chairman asked earlier today about that, an optimal number. I think actually the numbers matter less than the mission and what the people are doing. And you can see that in RC-East if you go visit there.

You see the kind of counterinsurgency effort that was initially launched under the 10th Mountain Division when they were there and now being carried forward by the 82nd. We need to be doing that in the other regional commands and getting our other NATO allies to begin doing that.

I don't think it is actually so much a matter of the military side. I mean, in counterinsurgency, the rule of thumb is 80 percent of your effort ought to be in the nonkinetic, nonmilitary side. So I don't know that the 20 percent is what needs to be increased in Afghanistan. It is the lack of the 80 percent being fully resourced and funded that is the problem, in my estimation.

I yield to General Sattler.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. General Sattler, would it be valuable to you to have an addition of 20,000 more troops?

General SATTLER. I think, as the Secretary alluded to, the short-fall requirement that is on the table right now from the ISAF commander going back through NATO is 3 infantry battalions; and then there is also the trainers, which is approximately between 3,000 and 3,500. Those would be the Afghan national army forces and also for the police.

I would also like to point out at this point, as we grow the additional police and the Afghan soldiers, that requirement will come up on the table. Today, as we sit here today, every Afghan national and army unit does in fact have either an OMLT, the Operational Mentoring Liaison Team, or what we call embedded training teams. So every battalion that is out there right now is in fact covered. But as we start to grow more, this will become a critical shortage that every one is concerned about, yes, madam.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Ambassador or General, do you know what the Administration is currently doing to engage NATO to make a greater commitment?

Ambassador EDELMAN. I think Secretary Gates, since he went and spoke with his NATO counterparts in winter of last year, I think it was around February or so, has been pushing consistently for our NATO colleagues to step up and meet the requirements of the joint statement of requirements that the Supreme Allied Commander (SAC) here has set forward and which the heads of government essentially agreed to at the Riga summit in November of 2006—

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. We are just asking at this point for additional help.

Ambassador EDELMAN. I mean, the Alliance is a political and military alliance of 26 nations run by consensus. So, unlike the Warsaw pact, we can't order our allies to do things.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. The plan is to keep asking and hope they will agree.

Ambassador EDELMAN. We have to keep engaging them and making the case that this is crucial to their security, which I believe it is.

We have a few more opportunities to do that. The Secretary will be in Edinburgh with the RC-South countries later this week. But we also have a defense ministerial in February before Verkunde, and there will be a foreign ministerial after that and then, of course, the NATO summit.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. And one other concern I have is that so much of our progress is often stymied by the level of corruption, official corruption, other fraud. We don't have an Inspector General (IG) in Afghanistan. What recommendations have you made to the Administration to address corruption?

Ambassador EDELMAN. Well, our Inspector General at DOD has actually been out in Afghanistan and spent quite some time out there.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. The Inspector General for Iraq.

Ambassador EDELMAN. No. This is the DOD Inspector General.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Would you recommend expanding the mission of the Inspector General of Iraq to include Afghanistan so we could

have better accountability about the fraud and corruption that is consistent with all of the funding—that billions and billions of dollars of funding that we are unable to identify?

Ambassador EDELMAN. In Afghanistan?

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Uh-huh.

Ambassador EDELMAN. I am not aware of the problem in Afghanistan being anything like that. I mean, I am aware of the issues in Iraq that we have had with contracting and both the reports of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), but also the DOD IG has been deeply involved both in Afghanistan and Iraq. My own view is that right now that has been sufficient for what we need to do.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. And then, last, can I just address the drug issue that the chairman raised? In the briefing that we received, it said that 10 percent of the Afghan population is currently involved in the drug trade. If you are talking about 33 million people, that is over 3 million people. I am highly concerned that our mission right now is limited when it comes to drug eradication, and I am also highly concerned that many of the funds from the drug trade is going straight into terrorism against our troops and against our country and against our allies. What is your intention with regard to whether we would expand our mission toward narcotics and help the U.K. in some of the work they are doing? And if we do expand that mission, there has obviously been complaints about using aerial maneuvers to eradicate crops because it has a health impact on the population. Could you please discuss those issues?

Ambassador EDELMAN. I think more broadly on the counternarcotics issues, I tried to respond to Mr. Taylor's comments and questions. The aerial spraying issue is a specific one. I mean, this is ultimately their country, and it is something that President Karzai and the government leadership has opposed. We have argued that it is an efficient and effective way to eradicate. But the sort of health concerns you raise which are against the backdrop of what Afghans experienced in the war against the Soviets in the 1980's, a particularly sensitive point for Afghan, it is not something we can impose on them.

It is also opposed, by the way, by most of our allies, including the U.K., which has the lead, as you point out, for narcotics.

I agree with you that we have to deal with this problem because of the role that narcotics money is playing in funding the insurgency. We have already taken some steps to, as I indicated earlier, work more closely with DEA and the interdiction approach to—in that sense to fold in counternarcotics efforts to our counterinsurgency efforts. I think we intend to continue to do that.

We will also be operating on all the other kind of lines of operation that have been outlined by the counternarcotics folks at the State Department.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Do you think we will be using crop replacement as a tool? From our briefing, it says that 98 percent of those that were questioned said they would willingly grow something else if they could receive money for and provide for their family. Is that something that we plan to—

Ambassador EDELMAN. I mentioned earlier alternative livelihoods. That has got to be a part of the picture. But those are not DOD responsibilities. Those are programs that our colleagues at AID largely are responsible for and some in the international community.

General SATTLER. Mr. Chairman, if I might add, one of the five pillars is also information/education. So, when we do come up with the alternate livelihood, we educate and inform the people of Afghanistan what is about to happen, why it is about to happen, and what their recourse is for that livelihood. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TAYLOR [presiding]. The chair thanks the gentlewoman from New York.

General Sattler, I will speak of my failure in that, while as a Member of this body, along with others, I really pressed the Department of Defense to uparmor Humvees, and it really was not until about January of 2005 that someone, a retired Army colonel, pointed out to me that the majority of the blasts were coming from underneath the Humvees, and that we needed to address that. I use that as an example of I wish I had known something sooner so that I could have fixed it in a more timely manner. My hunch is, given the success of underbody explosions in Iraq, and the Internet and the satellite television, that the forces in Afghanistan are aware of that vulnerability.

Do you see any evidence of the underbody threats migrating to Afghanistan? If that is the case, does the President's budget request adequately address this in requesting Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs)? Is there another threat that I am not yet aware of and that I need to be aware of that we need to start addressing in next year's defense authorization bill?

General SATTLER. Mr. Taylor, it is my understanding that the total buy for the MRAP includes the requirements for both the Army and the Marine Corps and any other forces that need mobility in both Afghanistan and in Iraq so that that requirement is, in fact, in the current buy and in the outyear buy. So, as to the sustained line to purchase the MRAP, the different variants of it are, in fact, on the table, but I would ask the Ambassador just to make sure, sir, since we both work this.

Mr. TAYLOR. Well, if I may, General, I understand.

Is there any evidence of the underbody threat, being a land mine from the bottom, an IED's being detonated below the vehicle—I do not think it is any secret that the preponderance of American casualties has been suffered as a result of that. Is there any evidence of that form of attack's migrating from Iraq and being used by the insurgency in Afghanistan?

General SATTLER. The underbody attack has been used in Afghanistan. That is a valid statement, sir. So that tactic, technique and procedure has already been used in Afghanistan. That is correct, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. Is it increasing slightly? Is it increasing exponentially? That would be my question.

Do you see a slight increase in those types of attacks, or do you see a dramatic increase in those types of attacks?

General SATTLER. Sir, that data is available, I just do not have it at my fingertips, but I will provide that for the record, yes, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. For the record, the reason for all of this is the Commandant was very, very professional in informing me of his desire to lessen the purchase of MRAPs, and I told him I wanted to think about it for a few days. Quite frankly, I would hope you would relate to him my desire that I just think that, as a Nation, given that now the whole world knows that a Humvee is vulnerable from below, that any potential foe is going to use that against the Humvees. I think, as a Nation, we would be much better served to have MRAPs in the inventory, even if they are never used, than to need them and have young people die needlessly because we did not, as a Nation, provide them. If they need to be modified so that they work better in certain terrain, which we do not need to detail, then I would prefer that the Marine Corps makes that a priority rather than its not asking for the vehicles.

General SATTLER. I would like to take both of those for the record, sir. I do not want to speculate on how the Marine Corps ran through their troops to task and looked at the tactics, techniques and procedures and what makes of vehicles they needed, sir. But I will take both of those back, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. Okay.

Mr. McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly, in my several trips to Afghanistan as a member of the Intelligence Committee and as a member of this committee, everything that I have heard and seen in open session and on the record—as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I want to underscore that, open session, on the record—has suggested that the main problem we have vis-a-vis operational security in Afghanistan and vis-a-vis the Taliban and al Qaeda emanates from the western area of Pakistan as well as the FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Do you agree with that, gentlemen?

General SATTLER. Yes, sir. There is definitely a flow of Taliban and forces that come from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas into Afghanistan. I would agree with that, yes, sir.

Mr. MCHUGH. If we had the best of all worlds—and I would say, editorially, no one in Congress will take a back seat to this committee, and, at the risk of sounding somewhat egotistical, I would argue, myself in terms of arguing over the better part of the last decade of trying to increase end strength for our forces and trying to increase our flexibility vis-a-vis our numbers.

However, if tomorrow we were able to locate 100,000 troops into Afghanistan, given the realities of our relationship with the Pakistani government and with our operational limitations into Pakistan, does that really do anything to get to the root of those sanctuaries in Pakistan? I mean, is that really our problem?

General SATTLER. I think, sir, as the Secretary and as the chairman both articulated, that problem needs to be first taken on by the Pakistani government. Our foreign assistance—some of the aid—we have put economic aid into the FATA as well as into the Frontier Corps, the corps responsible to eradicate that type of behavior inside the FATA. We were training and working with the

Pakistani government to train the FATA. So it is a combination of giving the folks who live in the Federally Administered Tribal Area some economic advantage, i.e., something to show for their effort to eliminate this, and then giving them the capacity and the capability within their Frontier Corps. That is one of the steps that we are using right now in conjunction with the Pakistani government, sir.

Mr. MCHUGH. So, until such time, if ever, the Pakistani government allows us more operability within their borders, those are the approaches that we have to rely upon. Is that correct?

General SATTLE. That is correct, sir, at this time.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TAYLOR. The Chair thanks the gentleman from New York.

We want to thank the ambassador and Lieutenant General Sattler. Both of you, thank you for your service to our Nation. Given both of your careers, thank you for putting your lives on the line for our Nation.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:08 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

DECEMBER 11, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

DECEMBER 11, 2007

Final for Submission

**Statement to the House Armed Services Committee by
Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates
Tuesday, December 11, 2007**

Mr. Chairman, Representative Hunter, members of the Committee.

Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. I have just returned from Afghanistan, where I met with Afghan officials, U.S. commanders, our civilian colleagues, and our European allies. This is an opportune time to discuss our endeavors in that country.

It is important to make clear to this committee and to the American people that, notwithstanding the news they sometimes hear out of Afghanistan, the efforts of the United States, our allies, and the Afghan government and people have been producing solid results. If I had to sum up the current situation in Afghanistan, I would say that there is reason for optimism tempered by caution.

Under the Taliban, few Afghans had access to health care. Today, most do. More than 670 clinics and hospitals have been built or refurbished, and nearly 11,000 doctors, nurses, and midwives have been trained.

Afghan citizens have much more access to education now than they did during the rule of the Taliban. Fewer than a million children were in school in 2001. Now more than five million students – at least one and a half million of them girls – are enrolled in school.

The country's central bank has been rebuilt and supported with more than \$2.5 billion in reserves. It now operates branches throughout the country – remarkable considering that there was no commercial banking under the Taliban. There is now a single currency, the Afghani, which is actively traded and remains a stable measure of value.

More than four million Afghan citizens have returned to their country since 2002, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Projects that will have a real impact on the lives of the citizens are underway, with the construction of utilities, roads, and schools. The U.S. Congress appropriated about \$10 billion in security and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan for Fiscal Year 2007, almost three times the previous year's appropriation. I thank you, the members of Congress, for your strong support of this effort. Admiral Mullen is going to speak in more detail about some of the activities made possible by this funding increase – with regard to Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Afghan security forces.

We have just passed the first anniversary of NATO's taking overall nationwide responsibility for helping Afghans to secure their young democracy. Through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), NATO is now leading some 40,000 troops, from 37 nations, and 25 U.S. and partner nation-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams – the first sustained ground deployment that NATO has ever conducted outside of Europe. Additionally, we have nearly 11,000 U.S. forces deployed as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, assisting with the training of Afghan security forces and with special operations.

In the first half of 2007, NATO and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition took the initiative away from the Taliban. This was due to the work of the brave troops of allies and partner nations. Key contributions from our civilian colleagues helped secure these military gains. Afghan soldiers played a key role – demonstrating their improved capability in the last year. We hope and expect that their progress will continue in the future.

The Afghan National Police are beginning to show progress as well, with the benefit of training assistance from the United States and the EU. Some \$7.4 billion was appropriated by the

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U.S. government in Fiscal Year 2007 to accelerate and expand the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army and Police. Efforts to reduce absenteeism and improve vetting of recruits in the Afghan national security forces are necessary, and are being addressed. Afghan soldiers and police have fought courageously alongside international forces and are winning the respect of Afghan civilians.

Significant problems in the mission do persist, however.

Let me start with the Afghan National Police. Despite showing significant improvement over the past twelve months, the police force continues to struggle due to corruption and illiteracy.

Also hindering the government from extending its authority and influence across the country are the insurgent and Al Qaeda sanctuaries in Pakistan, and weapons and financing coming from Iran. Cross-border insurgency contributes to the continuing violence.

As you know, in 2007 the number of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan increased. The insurgents have resorted more and more to suicide bombs and improvised explosive devices similar to those found in Iraq. As I learned during my visit, some of the uptick can be attributed to increased Afghan and ISAF operations. It should be clear that the Taliban and their former guests, Al Qaeda, do not have the ability to re-impose their rule. But only in a truly secure environment can reconstruction projects take root and the rule of law be consolidated. That environment has not yet been fully achieved, but we are working toward it.

The drug trade in Afghanistan threatens the foundations of this young government. Poppy cultivation has been rising overall, despite an internationally backed counter-narcotics effort. The growing of poppies is centered in the south, where the Taliban and Al Qaeda are most active and the population is most vulnerable to their intimidation and influence.

There is a nexus between the drug-traffickers and the Taliban. The insurgents rely on the Afghan drug trade for a part of their operating funds, and some laborers double as insurgents and farm workers harvesting poppy.

To attack this corrosive problem, a counter-narcotics strategy is being implemented that combines five pillars: alternative development, interdiction, eradication, public information, and reform of the justice sector. I believe the coming year will show results.

The final point I will turn to – and it is an extremely important one – is the willingness of the NATO allies to meet their commitments.

Since ISAF assumed responsibility for all of Afghanistan in October 2006, the number of non-U.S. troops has increased by about 3,500. That said, much more can and should be done. NATO still has shortfalls in meeting minimum requirements in troops, equipment, and other resources. I leave for Scotland tomorrow for a meeting of Defense Ministers of the countries involved in Regional Command South and I know this will be on the agenda.

The Afghanistan mission has exposed constraints associated with interoperability, organization, critical equipment shortfalls, and national caveats. I believe the problem arises in large part due to the way various allies view the very nature of the Alliance in the 21st century – about facing threats that are quite different from those of the Cold War. NATO must adjust to the challenges associated with conducting operations in distant locations. And NATO needs to ensure that it has the resources and the organizational structure to counter terrorist networks and triumph over insurgencies that threaten to cause instability and failed states.

There also needs to be more effective coordination of assistance to the government of Afghanistan. Even with the devotion of U.S. resources that I've mentioned, there has not been sufficient follow-on reconstruction, development, or security by other allies, and this has put at risk areas that have been cleared of insurgents by the hard work and sacrifice of the men and women of

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ISAF. What is needed is a strong civilian representative to coordinate all nations and key international organizations on the ground. We and others have worked with the Karzai government to describe this need and identify a suitable candidate. I am hopeful this exhaustive search will be completed in the weeks to come.

Our progress in Afghanistan is real but fragile. That is what I tell my counterparts from allied countries at every opportunity, as I did in October at the NATO ministerial in the Netherlands and the Conference of European Armies in Germany. In Afghanistan last week, I heard the latest from American commanders on this subject.

I know, as do you, the members of this committee, that if the world's greatest democracies cannot summon the will to accomplish a mission that all agree is morally just and essential for our collective security, then the citizens of these democracies will begin to question the mission's worth – and perhaps even the worth of the Alliance itself. We must not allow this to happen.

I have been urging our allies to commit more troops and resources to the fight and to remove restrictions on the troops they already deploy. I know that several members of Congress have been doing the same thing. We in the administration will continue to work with NATO to fix these shortfalls. I would also like to stress the importance of American unity on this matter. If other governments are pressured by this body and the Senate, it may help push them to do the difficult work of persuading their own citizens that it is time to step up to this challenge.

Let me close on a positive and instructive note by telling you about a region I visited last week – a region that demonstrates why I am hopeful about the mission in Afghanistan. For years, and even decades, the Khowst region has been a hotbed of lawlessness and insurgent activity. Last year, it remained one of the most volatile areas in Afghanistan.

Things are very different today. Under the strong leadership of the governor, and with Afghans in the lead, there have been remarkable gains as security forces, local organizations, and the U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Team – with representatives from the State Department, USAID, and the Department of Agriculture – have worked in tandem to promote civic and economic development. Where last year there was one suicide bombing per week, now there is on average one per month.

As the governor said to me, through our combined efforts, “more has been accomplished in the past eight months than in the prior five years.”

Khowst is a model of a concerted counterinsurgency campaign – of the synergy that comes from the integration of hard and soft power. And it is an example of potential gains in other areas long considered ungovernable – gains made possible by honest and effective local leadership coupled with the skills and resources of the United States and our international partners.

A moderate, stable Afghanistan is crucial to the strategic security of the United States and its allies – and it is possible. The elected leaders of the countries that make up our alliance have said as much. Afghans have the will to keep their nation in the democratic fold, and we need to match their determination with the necessary resolve and resources to get the job done.

Thank you.

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**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

DECEMBER 11, 2007

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. SKELTON

Ambassador EDELMAN. In order to support the Department of State's efforts to combat Taliban ideology in Afghanistan, the Department of Defense has engaged in a multi-faceted strategic communications program. This program continues to highlight to the Afghan people and the international community the accomplishments of the government of Afghanistan and NATO/ISAF while contrasting these gains with the negative impact the Taliban and other insurgents have on daily lives in the region.

At a recent strategic communications conference held at Bagram Air Base, it was said with some frustration that insurgents do not need to fact-check their propaganda. Insurgent claims of civilian casualties caused by ISAF combat engagements, for example, are regularly exaggerated and are most often flat out false. However, if they are able to get the story out first, we have a difficult time reacting to a story, albeit a false one, being shaped by the enemy.

When dealing with enemy propaganda, the truth has always been our most powerful weapon. Unfortunately, in an age of information overload, separating those vital nuggets of important data from the background noise of situation reports and intelligence in a timely fashion and disseminating that information to the public is critical. To that end, my office provides guidance to the U.S. combatant commanders who have involvement in Afghanistan (CENTCOM, SOCOM) and those who interact with our ISAF allies (EUCOM) to do a better job pushing information up from the battlefield to our public affairs officers as quickly as possible.

OSD also publishes regular DOD Information Sheets, representing a coordinated fact sheet for reference by our task forces in Afghanistan, our combatant commanders, our Defense AttacheAE1s in embassies in Europe and Central Asia, our colleagues at the State Department, and our allies at ISAF. These are integrated into talking points for press releases and interviews conducted by senior DOD, State, and NATO officials. Recent information sheets highlighted progress in Afghan health care, the callous and savage tactics of the Taliban against the civilian populace and other non-combatants, and the continued splintering of the Taliban through the successful efforts of the government of Afghanistan to get many former militants to defect. Copies of some of these DOD Information Sheets are being provided to the Committee for the record.

OSD is working on a long-term approach to countering Taliban misinformation. We are working with our Allies and other partners to develop strategies and tactics that limit the effectiveness of Taliban propaganda. We are also working with non-governmental organizations to provide Afghani children with educational resources that do not have Taliban/extremist biases, thus making them less susceptible to extremist messages as they mature.

We are also building on lessons learned from our information battle against al Qaeda in Iraq. This month, we are deploying to Afghanistan a team of public affairs officers from DOD and State who will improve the current U.S. Government public affairs infrastructure in Afghanistan. This will help facilitate greater accessibility for U.S. and international media in Afghanistan to see the progress being made in security, development, and governance. This will be a great force multiplier for our ongoing strategic communication efforts by Embassy Kabul and the ISAF commanders on the ground. [See page 47.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. LARSEN

Ambassador EDELMAN. To combat the Afghan heroin threat, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security and National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) which lead China's counternarcotics (CN) efforts, have limited engagement with the U.S. through the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Beijing Country Office. Since 2005, DOD has provided support to U.S. law enforcement CN efforts in China through the Joint Interagency Task Force-West. DEA believes this assistance is highly valuable in addressing CN with China.

In April 2007, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics, Counter-proliferation, and Global Threats visited Beijing where he met with NNCC

officials to discuss DOD's role in counternarcotics (CN) efforts and possible opportunities for greater CN cooperation.

However, due to the lack of People's Liberation Army (PLA) involvement in CN activities, there currently are no direct CN efforts between DOD and the PLA. The impact of narcotics trafficking on regional stability is an issue we will include in our discussions with the PLA during upcoming Defense Policy Coordination Talks. [See page 41.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. MURPHY

Secretary GATES. The U.S. has received a good return from using coalition support funds (CSF) to reimburse Pakistan, and Pakistan's contribution to the War on Terrorism has made us safer.

Coalition Support Funds are not military assistance. They are a reimbursement for the actual costs Pakistani forces incurred in support of U.S. military operations in the War on Terrorism (WOT).

The U.S. has reimbursed Pakistan \$5.6B for the support it has rendered to U.S. forces since 2001. Major expense categories and costs are:

- Operations: \$1.9B. Operate and maintain forward ground and air bases; conduct air and maritime operations.
- Subsistence: \$1.8B. Food, clothing, billeting, and medical expenses for deployed forces.
- Reconstitution: \$571M. Repair and maintenance of weapons and vehicles; replacement of combat losses.
- Surveillance: \$534M. Air defense radars, surveillance, and operational watch costs.
- Logistics: \$415M. Transportations, communications, manual labor charges, road construction to facilitate movement to remote areas.
- Helicopters: \$235M. Lease of 26 Bell 412 helicopters to provide air mobility.
- Ammunition: \$111M.

Coalition Support Funds have allowed Pakistan to deploy and maintain approximately 120,000 Army and paramilitary forces along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

- Since December 2001, Pakistan has conducted 91 major and countless small operations, and suffered more than 1400 combat deaths in support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.
- Pakistan has assisted in or captured and killed on its own more Al Qaeda (AQ), Taliban, and other religious extremists than any other coalition partner. Those captured include 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Muhammad, AQ operational planner Abu Faraj al-Libbi, and Taliban military leader Mullah Obeidullah.

The CSF reimbursement process is deliberate and thorough, and there is no pressure to reimburse inflated or exaggerated claims.

- The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad receives and endorses the claim, U.S. Central Command validates that the costs were incurred in support of the WOT, and the OSD Comptroller evaluates for reasonableness and alignment with previous claims.
- The four congressional defense oversight committees are notified before any reimbursement is made.
- The U.S. embassy in Islamabad is working closely with Pakistan to ensure that the process for substantiating Pakistan's claims for reimbursement is as thorough and transparent as possible. [See page 30.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. CONAWAY

Secretary GATES. In the past the USG has had challenges working with an Afghan policy of negotiated eradication. Eradication campaigns in southern Afghanistan had limited success because they were negotiated with local community leaders, and local politics dictated the terms. The most powerful farmers applied influence to avoid eradication. Therefore, this year the State Department should help the Afghans to conduct mandatory, non-negotiated eradication operations, and find a way to provide security to eradication units in the volatile southern provinces.

At the provincial level, the State Department supports a Governor Led Eradication (GLE) program which accounts for the bulk of operations, but is subject to corruption and the will of Provincial Governors. Some authorities solicit bribes to bypass fields, or treat GLE as a "tax" and eradicate only a small portion of crops to satisfy GLE goals.

At the national level, the State Department supports the Poppy Eradication Force (PEF) which is led by the central government. The PEF consists of approximately six hundred Afghan police trained in eradication and security, who operate in self-contained units, but who require additional force protection when operating in particularly hostile environments. We are working with the Afghan Ministry of Defense to provide this additional security for this spring. [See page 32.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

DECEMBER 11, 2007

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SHEA-PORTER

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. We all agree that the Taliban's "spring offensive" failed to materialize on a large scale as predicted. Would you attribute that more to preemptive action during OP ACHILLES or to the effectiveness of soft power applications in the region or other elements or all of the above? Should we anticipate a similar forecast regarding the Taliban as last year's or have we turned that corner?

Secretary GATES. In 2007, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and Coalition forces took the initiative away from the insurgency and disrupted the Taliban's anticipated "spring offensive." This was due in large part to robust kinetic military operations, including Operation ACHILLES. Indeed, we have seen that the ANSF and their international partners dominate the battlefield and are able to defeat the Taliban in virtually all conventional engagements. Nonetheless, 2007 was the most violent year in Afghanistan since Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) began. Violence levels in 2007 were up some 27% over 2006. This increase in violence has been due in part to a greater number of engagements with the enemy: ANSF, ISAF, and Coalition forces have expanded their influence dramatically into areas where there had previously been no such presence. However, the increase in violence also reflects the insurgency's increasing reliance on asymmetric tactics (including suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices, etc.). The insurgency has demonstrated that it is adaptable and resilient. I expect it will continue to pose significant challenges to Afghanistan's security and stability in 2008. As such, I have recommended, and the President has approved, deploying 3,200 Marines to Afghanistan beginning in March 2008 in order to fill the critical maneuver battalion shortfall in Regional Command-South as well as assist with ANSF training and mentoring. By increasing the size and capabilities of the ANSF, they can increasingly take the lead in planning and executing operations. However, ultimately we cannot succeed against the insurgency through military means alone. It will require the application of a comprehensive counterinsurgency (COIN) approach that separates the population from the enemy. Achieving this goal demands a concerted and coordinated long-term effort, extending well beyond 2008, to enhance security conditions, strengthen the rule of law, extend governance, and improve economic conditions for ordinary Afghans.

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