HEARING TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2010

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:07 a.m. in room SD–G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Akaka, E. Benjamin Nelson, Webb, McCaskill, Udall, Hagan, Kaufman, McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Graham, Thune, Wicker, LeMieux, Brown, and Collins.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Joseph M. Bryan, professional staff member; Ilona R. Cohen, counsel; Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; Jason W. Maroney, counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Christian D. Brose, professional staff member; Michael V. Kostiw, professional staff member; David M. Morriss, minority counsel; and Dana W. White, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Jennifer R. Knowles, Christine G. Lang, and Hannah I. Lloyd.

Committee members' assistants present: James Tuite, assistant to Senator Byrd; Christine Griffin and Vance Serchuk, assistants to Senator Lieberman; Greta Lundeberg, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Patrick Hayes, assistant to Senator Bayh; Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Tressa Guenov, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Jennifer Barrett, assistant to Senator Udall; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Halie Soifer, assistant to Senator Kaufman; Sandra Luff, assistant to Senator Sessions; Andy Olson, assistant to Senator Graham; Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune; Erskine Wells III, assistant to Senator Wicker; Brian Walsh, assistant to Senator LeMieux; Kevin Kane, assistant to Senator Burr; Kyle Ruckert, assistant to Senator Vitter; and Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Well, we're glad to welcome back our witnesses this morning, as the committee resumes its hearing on the progress in Afghanistan. Under Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus, let me reiterate this committee's great appreciation for your service, the sacrifices that you both and your families make along the way. The demands of your positions are great. You carry out your duties professionally and with excellence, so thanks to you both.

General Petraeus, you were more than willing and more than able to proceed yesterday morning. It was my abundance of caution that led me to adjourn the proceedings until this morning.

Before I turn to Senator McCain, who still has a bit of his time remaining, I understand that General Petraeus has a short statement.

STATEMENT OF GEN DAVID H. PETRAEUS, USA, COMMANDER, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

General PETRAEUS. Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, members of the committee. Again, thank you for the opportunity for a redo hearing after I demonstrated yesterday the importance of following my first platoon sergeant's order 35 years ago to always stay hydrated. I'll try to remember that in the future. In fact, my team provided me this nifty camelback to help me remember it. [Laughter.]

I pointed out that the committee provides water, And I do thank the committee as well for the chocolate chip cookies that were in the anteroom before this session.

If I could, Mr. Chairman, before the questioning resumes, I'd like to ensure that my answers to questions by you and Senator McCain on the July 2011 date are very clear. As I noted yesterday, I did support and agree at the end of the President's decision-making process last fall with the July 2011 date described by the President as the point at which a process begins to transition security tasks to Afghan forces at a rate to be determined by conditions at the time.

I also agreed with July 2011 as the date at which a responsible drawdown of the surge forces is scheduled to begin, at a rate again to be determined by the conditions at the time.

As I noted yesterday, I did believe there was value in sending a message of urgency, July 2011, as well as the message that the President was sending of commitment, the additional substantial numbers of forces. But it is important that July 2011 be seen for what it is, the date when a process begins, based on conditions, not the date when the U.S. heads for the exits.

Moreover, my agreement with the President's decisions was based on projections of conditions in July 2011 and, needless to say, we're doing all that is humanly possible to achieve those conditions and we appreciate the resources provided by Congress to enable us to do that.

Of course, we will also conduct rigorous assessments throughout the year and as we get closer to next summer, as we do periodically in any event, to determine where adjustments in our strategy are needed. And as July 2011 approaches, I will provide my best military advice to the Secretary and to the President on how I believe

we should proceed based on the conditions at that time, and I will then support the President's decision.

Providing one's forthright advice is a sacred obligation military leaders have to our men and women in uniform, and I know that that is what the President expects and wants his military leaders to provide as well.

Beyond that, Mr. Chairman, in response to some of your questions yesterday, I want to be very clear as well that I fully recognize the importance of Afghan security forces leading in operations. Indeed, the formation of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, the many initiatives it is pursuing, and the vastly increased partnering ordered by General McChrystal are intended to help the Afghan forces achieve the capability to take the lead in operations.

To that end, I think we should note that Afghan forces are in the lead in Kabul and in a number of other areas and missions, and they are very much in the fight throughout the country, so much so that their losses are typically several times U.S. losses.

In short, our Afghan comrades on the ground are indeed sacrificing enormously for their country, as are of course our troopers and those of our ISAF partner nations.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Petraeus follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Well, thank you very much, General. And I am glad to hear of your support for that July 2011 beginning of U.S. troop reduction decision, since I continue to strongly believe that it is essential for success in Afghanistan for everyone to understand the urgency for the Afghans to take responsibility for their own security.

Now, this morning, after calling upon Senator McCain to complete his questions, I'm going to be calling on Senators for questions in the early bird order that was established yesterday morning, as I believe that we notified all of our members' offices yesterday afternoon.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We were interrupted probably at the most important point of my comments yesterday, General Petraeus, when I said I considered you one of America's greatest heroes. In case you missed that, I'll repeat it.

Chairman LEVIN. I don't think you missed that.

General PETRAEUS. It was overwhelming, sir. [Laughter.]

Senator MCCAIN. I still believe that with all my heart.

I appreciate the statement you just made, General Petraeus, and I think it's very helpful, and I hope that it's heard in the Oval Office and in the Vice President's office, because your statement seems to contradict what the President of the United States continues to say, what his spokesperson said, that July of 2011 was "etched in stone," that continues, administration officials, to be saying that July 2011 will begin the withdrawal. According to what is probably trash journalism, Vice President Biden said: "In July of 2011, you're going to see a whole lot of people moving out. Bet on it."

So it would be very helpful if your sentiments were shared by the President, the Vice President, the President's National Security Ad-

viser, and others. Right now, General, we are sounding an uncertain trumpet to our friends and our enemies. They believe that we are leaving as of July 2011. I could relate to you anecdotes all the way down to the tribal chieftain level in Afghanistan.

It seems to me that organizations and countries and leaders in the region are accommodating to that eventuality, and that does not bode well for success in Afghanistan. So I guess it's more than a comment that I made, in elaboration of the comment I made yesterday. If we sound an uncertain trumpet, not many will follow, and that's what's being sounded now. And that's one of the reasons why we see some of the events taking place that are in the region, not just confined to Afghanistan.

So I know that I've used up most of my time, Mr. Chairman. Maybe General Petraeus would like to respond.

General PETRAEUS. Senator, first of all, I think July 2011 is etched in stone, but as I tried to explain it, there as a date at which a process begins that is based on conditions, and that I think was explained clearly at the speech at West Point by the President, which I was privileged to attend.

Beyond that, as I said yesterday, I don't think it's productive, obviously, to discuss journalistic accounts of Oval Office conversations based on second and third-hand sources, other than to say that I think it is important that folks should know that those are not a complete account. I will leave it right there.

What I have tried to explain today is my understanding of what July 2011 means and how it is important again that people do realize, especially our partners, especially our comrades in arms in Afghanistan and in the region, that that is not the date when we look for the door and try to turn off the light, but rather a date at which a process begins.

If I could, I'd like to ask the Under Secretary perhaps if she wanted to provide some insights, having participated in the process as well.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Thank you very much.

I think General Petraeus has characterized the date accurately. It is an inflection point. It is a point at which the end of the surge will be marked and a process of transition that is conditions-based will begin. The President was very careful not to set a detailed time line of how many troops will come out at what point in time, because he believes in a conditions-based process, and he's said that over and over again.

On the issue of whether or not Afghans understand our commitment, I think one of the things that we did in the strategic dialogue we had recently with President Karzai and 14 members of his cabinet was to focus on the long-term commitment of this country to the Afghan people and to Afghanistan's development. We talked about long-term security assistance, long-term commitment to build capacity, governance, development.

I think that everyone walked away from that with no questions in their mind about the depth and enduring nature of the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan. So I think that that has to be important context in which this conversation happens.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you, Madam Secretary. We don't live in a vacuum here. I had conversations with him as well. I've

had conversations with leaders throughout Afghanistan and the region, and that's not what they're telling me.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. President.

Welcome back, General. It's great to see you looking good again. Your recovery time was very impressive yesterday. I thought it was at World Cup levels, and the coach may want to add you to the team roster before Slovenia later in the week.

I thank you both for your service and your leadership. I want to say at the outset that, as you both said yesterday in your opening statements, in previous appearances before our committee you've made clear that things would get worse before they got better in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, that's exactly where we are now.

But to me the important point here—and I want to go back to that December 1 speech by President Obama at West Point. We're talking about the deadline parts of it. I want to come back to that in a minute. But the President made a very strong case there, expressing his decision that the outcome of the war in Afghanistan was of vital national security interest to the United States, and if it went badly the consequences for our security, American security, were disastrous.

To me that's the most important point. We know from previous experience that counterinsurgencies take time. I think the key now is to make sure that we've got the right strategy, that it's sufficiently resourced to execute it with decisive force, and, as important as anything else, that we give our warfighters and the State Department personnel on the ground the time and patience to achieve the strategic national goal that we have in succeeding in Afghanistan. I say that to us here in Congress as well as to the American people.

General Petraeus, I think an important part of that is the clarification you made just now about what the July 2011 date means. It's not a deadline for withdrawal. It's not a deadline by which we're going to pick up and go out. It's a goal. I want to just stress, as you did very clearly today, notwithstanding anything that we may have read and what my dear friend and colleague from Arizona has described as "trash journalism," or it may be trash journalism, the fact is that what happens on the ground, what happens on the ground at that time, will determine whether we withdraw any troops from Afghanistan in July of 2011.

Obviously, we hope we'll be able to. I believe that it's important for the President to make that clear at some point soon, because, notwithstanding all the clarifications that followed from him and Secretary Gates, Secretary Clinton, the two of you, in our conversations with people in the region that date is being read as a date at which the United States is going to begin to pull out regardless of what's happening on the ground.

So thank you for your clarification of that this morning.

Second, I want to ask this question. And some of us on the committee were talking about it afterward. There's been a run of bad reporting from Afghanistan over the last couple of weeks. The Marines took Marjah, but the Taliban is fighting back. There's been

beheadings and targeted assassinations of people who worked with us. General McChrystal announced last Friday that the offensive in Kandahar is now being delayed.

Yet the reports that you gave in your opening statements yesterday were quite upbeat about what's happening in Afghanistan. I fear there's a gap between the tone and the message that you gave us yesterday and what we are reading in the media about what's happening. I wanted to ask you to address yourself to that gap, because that gap can begin to erode the support that you need from members of Congress and the American people in the months ahead.

General PETRAEUS. Senator, I think you've raised a very important point, and that is the importance of having measured expectations. The conduct of a counterinsurgency operation is a rollercoaster experience. There are setbacks as well as areas of progress or successes. It is truly an up and down when you're living it, when you're doing it, even from afar, frankly.

But the trajectory in my view has generally been upward, despite the tough losses, despite the setbacks. When I appeared before you some months ago for the posture hearing, a coalition soldier could not have set foot in Marjah. I did that just, I guess it was, a month and a half ago with the district governor. There wasn't a district governor at that time. There is gradually again the expansion of government activities in the form of schools, in the form of assistance to revive markets, and in the form even of nascent judicial systems, if you will, certainly that are tied into local organizing structures as well, which is very important.

We did the same in Nad-i-Ali, in Kandahar, bought bread in the market down there. Yes, I had security around me, but yes, I had hundreds of Afghans right around me as well, and bought the bread directly from them, sat there, chatted with them while we ate it.

Again, this is an up and down process, and that defines the experience of counterinsurgency, where there's no hill that you can take and plant the flag and then go home to a victory parade. Rather, progress is almost the absence of something. I remember in Iraq when all of a sudden I realized we were making progress. It was we were hearing less about a certain activity, say a car bomb or a suicide attack, and all of a sudden we had expanded our forces into an area. The Iraqi forces were starting to stand up in certain areas, as is the case again in certain areas of Afghanistan.

So I think it is essential that we realize the challenges in this kind of endeavor. It is also essential that, as both the Under Secretary and I noted, that people do realize there has been progress, but there clearly have also been setbacks.

Beyond that, if I could just underscore what you said about the designation as a vital national security interest. For one who taught international relations for a period, that is a code word. That is a sign of commitment. That's a rhetorical statement that means an enormous amount, and again I appreciate your mentioning that because it does highlight what I was discussing earlier.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, General.

Did you want to add something, Secretary?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Sir, I would agree with what General Petraeus said about counterinsurgency campaigns being a roller-coaster ride. But the overall trajectory is moving in the right direction. It's going to be hard. There are going to be times when we take one step back and then we'll take two steps forward.

The one thing I wanted to give as an example is I do think that the reporting on the s-called delay in the Kandahar campaign has been overplayed. We talked a lot yesterday about the importance of Afghans taking the lead. I think we owe General McChrystal a degree, a great degree, of operational flexibility. What's happening in Kandahar is he's taking more time to shape the operation. The campaign's already begun. The shaping is happening now.

The shura that President Karzai conducted on Sunday was very important for him to step up and take the lead, the ownership, of what's going to happen in Kandahar. So if that means delaying some aspects by a little bit of time to make sure that that Afghan ownership and leadership is in place, then we should all be supporting that. That is not any sign of failure at all. It's a sign of good counterinsurgency strategy.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you both.

General PETRAEUS. If I could, Senator, we probably should distribute what was published as President Karzai's talking points for the Kandahar shura, because it really makes a number of these points. And this is a president who is acting as a commander in chief.

Senator LIEBERMAN. That would be very important.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, just as a suggestion, I share the concern of both of the previous questioners about the exit strategy, about a date certain. And I was relieved when the President made his speech, I guess it was—well, anyway, when he said: Just as we have done in Iraq, we will execute this transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground.

Well, that's the position that I wanted him to take and I was relieved to hear that. The problem is I've only heard it once. I asked staff after the meeting yesterday to go back and check and see if they've seen that, any emphasis on that, by the President. I would recommend that that be done, that he keep saying that, and that the administration does it, and certainly General Petraeus and others, because that clarifies it and makes it clearer. But without that, only having said it once, I think there's a little bit of a problem there.

Let me ask you a question, General Petraeus. You've heard me talk about this before and you know that I have a very strong feeling about the CERP program. You talked about it in your opening comments. We had the CERP program from the budget that came from the President; it was at $1.3 billion, and this was comprised of $200 million in Iraq and $1.1 billion in CERP.

Now, this committee—and I respect them for doing what they felt was the right thing; I disagreed with it—has lowered that so

that it takes the amount that goes to Afghanistan from $1.1 billion down to $800 million.

Now, I'd like to ask you your feeling about that and how valuable is the program and how would you use it? Then the second part of that question is—and you had said this, Madam Secretary, that McChrystal needs more operational flexibility. I think maybe we need that in the CERP program, because in talking in my last trip over there as to what needs are there that could come from the CERP program, something that could be done fast would be power stations, grid, dam projects. However, the CERP has restrictions due to the statute so that money can't necessarily be spent on this type of projects.

So the second part of the question would be, do we need to change the language, either one of you—I'd say particularly you, General Petraeus—to be able to accomplish these two things that people in the field told me we should be spending it on?

General PETRAEUS. Senator, thanks for that. First of all, the President actually has described what you've quoted him on in a number of different occasions. I'd come back to the West Point speech in particular, where these very important words "responsible drawdown" were used. Just almost like "vital national interest," that has been a code word for those of us who went through the Iraq policy review, at the end of which the President announced the responsible drawdown and, as you'll recall, lengthened the time over that which was expected earlier. And we are in the process of doing that and, touch wood, we think that it is on track and it will be at the 50,000 number by the end of August, by the way.

With respect to the CERP for Afghanistan, we do need the full amount, Senator. And it is very valuable. You asked about that. We now, as I mentioned in my opening statement yesterday, have the inputs just about right, certainly another 9,000 troopers to get on the ground and some of our NATO partners as well.

But as we get everybody in position, as we get them out performing their tasks and trying to wrest the initiative from the Taliban, take away their sanctuaries, and then capitalize on that, CERP is critical to that process.

Now, someone may ask, well, how come the execution rate, the obligation rate, this year so far is low? In part because we're just building up still. Again, we actually are doing many more projects that are actually lower cost, is another issue. But beyond that, we do indeed have projects that are stacked up right now. We just have submitted them in fact, and OSD is working on this, and I'll let the Secretary talk about these projects, for electrification in particular, in the Kandahar, Greater Regional Command South and Regional Command East areas.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Senator, let me just echo. We think that CERP is an absolutely critical and flexible counterinsurgency tool. We would urge the committee to consider restoring the funding that was removed.

In the specific case of the electrical projects in Kandahar, again it's a very critical element of the fight. We think it directly impacts the population that we're trying to protect and win over to support the ISAF and the Afghan government. The projects have been de-

veloped in close coordination with AID, with a bridging strategy that would eventually hand off to longer term development efforts. CENTCOM has submitted these proposals. They're being reviewed quickly in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and we'll be making a recommendation to the Secretary very shortly.

We do not judge at this point that the language needs to be changed. Our reading of the language and those of our lawyers, our trusty lawyers, suggests that the flexibility is there to do this kind of thing.

Senator INHOFE. We're running out of time here, but I would only suggest this, that this is information I got from the field, that there are things that we could use that we are restricted from using. So perhaps for the record you could elaborate a little bit, both of you, on that and maybe send us something.

I'm running out of time here. Let me just mention one of the things that I have a hard time answering. When I talk to people, they talk about, well, the surge was successful in Iraq. The surge, however, in Iraq, we ended up with close to 165,000 troops in a period of time of 18 months. Now we're looking at a surge that might be about 100,000 troops and talking about 9 months.

Now, considering that Afghanistan is about twice the size of Iraq, this disparity is—it's hard for me to describe to people why this number will work in Afghanistan when it took so much more in Iraq. General Petraeus, do you have any thoughts that I could share with these people?

General PETRAEUS. I do, Senator. Thank you. First of all, with respect on the timing of the actual surge in Iraq, we had all of the surge forces on the ground by end of June, July-ish, in there, and we actually began the drawdown of the first brigade in December. We then did lengthen it out over the course of the next spring.

But in this case we will actually have all of our U.S. surge forces, all of our tactical units certainly, again less the one headquarters that's not required until a month after August, but on the ground by the end of August. And again, the July 2011 date is the date at which the process again begins that would embark on the, quote, "responsible drawdown" of the surge forces. So that's a pretty considerable period.

Now, with respect to the density of forces, you have a situation in Afghanistan where there are a number of places that really don't require substantial numbers of coalition forces and areas where in fact the Afghans again are very much in the lead. So this is about counterinsurgency math. We think we'll have the density once we get the additional forces on the ground, our additional U.S. forces, NATO forces, and then as we're able to ramp up the Afghan forces, as you know, by about 100,000 between the period of earlier this year and the fall of 2011.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, General.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Inhofe's comment about the importance of the CERP program I think reflects the views of every member of this committee. The reason why both the HASC and the SASC reduced the $1.1 billion to $800 million in Afghanistan was because you're on track in Afghanistan to spend only $200 million for this entire year of the billion that we appropriated last year.

So, for the record would you also then explain to us why the request is for $1.1 billion and why the reduction to $800 million would have a negative impact, given the spending rate is only $200 million for the entire year? But we do—I think I can say that what Senator Inhofe says is reflective of this committee's very, very strong support for the CERP program and your answer to that question for the record would be helpful to us as we proceed during this budget.

I want to thank you, Senator Inhofe, for your leadership on that CERP program.

Senator Udall.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification about CERP. I think everybody on the committee does fully support it.

Good morning to both of you. General, we all on the committee understand this is an important time in Afghanistan. I think it would be useful to be able to consider President Karzai a reliable partner. It's sometimes hard to understand what he says versus what he does, and vice versa. I've got a couple of questions in that regard.

How do you best explain what seemingly is his mercurial personality? One day he talks about making common cause with the Taliban and then another day he goes down to Kandahar and gives an impassioned plea to the residents there to cooperate in the upcoming fight.

Second, I have had a chance to get to know Minister Atmar and had great respect for his talent and his vision. What do you think his departure might mean for the important, maybe even crucial, police training effort?

General PETRAEUS. Thanks, Senator. On the first question, I think there are a number of explanations, if you will. First of all, perhaps political leaders occasionally differentiate their message a tiny bit depending on who the audience might be. I know that would never happen in our own country, but——

Senator UDALL. Fair enough.

General PETRAEUS.—I think over there that occasionally happens.

The second thing is, this is a tough fight and leaders are under enormous pressure. I can tell you that, having dealt with leaders throughout our region and having dealt with leaders in Iraq at various times who were similarly under enormous, perhaps even greater, pressure with just staggering levels of violence in Iraq over the years that we were there prior to the downturn. Again, this can lead individuals at times to have outbursts or to express frustrations. I think there's a bit of that that is understandable.

Now with respect to the president accepting the resignation of Hanif Atmar, the former minister of interior, someone indeed that we all really knew quite well, have worked with, not just as the minister of interior, but in two previous ministry positions as well, and one who again has impressed all of us. I think the impact of the departure cannot be determined, needless to say, until we know who the replacement is.

There are discussions going on. You should know that coalition leaders are certainly included in those discussions, which I think is a positive feature of the process. But at the end of the day, certainly this will be the decision of the president of a sovereign country. But if the candidates that we think are under consideration provide the ultimate next minister, then I think that the ministry will continue forward on a positive trajectory.

Senator UDALL. So I sense you're guardedly optimistic that there will be a replacement with whom we can work and who would bring the same sort of focus and expertise?

General PETRAEUS. That's correct, Senator. And I would not rule out again seeing Minister Atmar at some point back in another capacity, either.

Senator UDALL. That's heartening to hear.

If I might, let me move to the very fascinating report over the weekend that Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Paul Brinkley issued on the mineral and natural resource wealth of Afghanistan. It's tied to a military task force, the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations. You may know, the chairman and I teamed up to offer an modernization in the Defense Authorization Act that authorizes that task force work in Afghanistan.

The amendment also, General, will ask for a report from the DOD and the State Department to look at the promising sectors in Afghanistan's economy, assess the capabilities of the government to generate additional revenue, to work on infrastructure needs, and so on. We're hopeful this report will provide important information that will enable Afghanistan to attract investment and pursue new economic opportunities.

I'd be interested to hear your thoughts on the task force work and, more generally, about these economic development opportunities. And Under Secretary, you may want to respond as well.

General PETRAEUS. First of all, if I could just say that Deputy Under Secretary Paul Brinkley and the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations did phenomenal work in Iraq. It was really created initially in fact to our request at that time that someone try to get some business leaders back into Iraq. It was a land of extraordinary opportunity, but also at that time a land of extraordinary violence.

But you had to look out over the horizon. You had to envision a world where the violence was reduced and business could begin to flourish again, given the extraordinary potential that Iraq has in terms of its energy resources, natural water, agriculture, sulphur, and a variety of other blessings, including human capital.

He was able to bring in business leaders at a time when no business leader in his right mind would come in on his own. We flew them around, secured them, housed them, fed them, and everything else. And over time this led to some very big deals, actually, for American business, but also in some cases for some other businesses as well, because we did indeed open it more widely than that, but some very, very big transactions that Iraq needed.

In fact, this was at a time when Prime Minister Maliki specifically was asking me as a military commander if I could get a certain corporation to reengage after their earlier disappointing experience there and get another one in. These are in the electrical sec-

tor, the oil sector, gas, and so forth. And again, Deputy Under Secretary Brinkley did great work there.

I think—so in fact I encouraged and we have helped to get him into Afghanistan. We might even look a bit more broadly than that, but in fact it was during his process of getting acquainted with the situation on the ground in Afghanistan that these geological surveys and other documents were all pulled together, and I think people realized the magnitude of the mineral resources that exist in Afghanistan, recognizing the enormous challenges to actually turning those into wealth and income and so forth for the people, revenue, but nonetheless recognizing the extraordinary potential that is there.

It has some of the world's last remaining super- deposits, or some other terms, certainly for iron, lithium, tin, timber, gemstones. It has some coal. It has some natural gas and oil. So again, they're not super-deposits, but it has extraordinary potential.

Again, helping business finds its way to that, in partnership with the military that is trying to create the security foundation on which they can build and operate, I think is a very important initiative, and I appreciate the committee's support for that particular initiative. That's one of the areas in which we have learned huge lessons in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in the last 5 years or so.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Let me just add that I think that what the picture that's painted from the U.S. Geological Survey that was done, which is only a partial survey, under Mr. Brinkley's sponsorship really paints a brighter economic picture for Afghanistan mid-term and long-term. It creates at least the prospect of a much more sustainable economy that can actually support some of the capabilities that we are putting in place today, like the armed forces and other government and economic capacity.

It also shines a spotlight on the importance of some of our capacity-building efforts, particularly with the ministry of mines, which is under new leadership that seems very capable and competent. We are working very closely with them to try to build their capacity so that this information informs their planning and they sort of get off on the right foot in terms of pursuing some of these opportunities, working with businesses, private sector companies from around the world.

So we think this is a bright spot on the horizon. As General Petraeus said, it's going to take a lot of time and effort to build the capacity and the sort of legal structures and so forth to really take full advantage of this. But we're working along those lines.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that elaboration.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Udall. And thank you for your leadership on this very, very important part of the Afghan picture. It's essential that that leadership be there and we're all grateful to you for it.

Senator Brown.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, it's good to see you in such chipper shape today. I think there are a lot of cookies back there, which I hope you partake in a couple.

When we met in Afghanistan, actually, I was aware—we were briefed in fact—of the mineral and oil and other deposits. It became apparent to me that, one, they have a problem in how to get everything out of the earth, number one. Number two, how to secure it and get it from point A to point B. And number three, then, how to ensure that the corruption that we've seen in Afghanistan actually keeps the money in country and has it flow down to the individual citizens.

So the challenges, Madam Secretary and General, obviously seem great. Yes, there is a bright spot, but it also appears to be how do we get from point A to point B. Do you see a role with the military in anything, aside from securing? Or what do you think, General, in that regard?

General PETRAEUS. Again, the security foundation is the essential component to all of this. Without that you can't build the legal regime that's required, you can't combat the corruption that creeps into these kinds of activities. So it is essential in that regard.

We do indeed provide an important supporting role to those, like the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, AID, some international and nongovernmental organizations, that are also trying to help Afghanistan with these. So in that sense we are an enabler for them in certain respects as well.

Senator BROWN. Mr. Chairman, I have a couple other hearings, but I'm going to just ask two more questions and then turn back the remainder of any time I have.

Sir, one of the things we also noted—and I'm the subcommittee chair on contracting issues with the Afghan police and the like—what's your involvement or the military's involvement in curtailing the level of corruption of the security forces in Afghanistan? Any news to report on that?

General PETRAEUS. There is, Senator, actually. In fact, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I have pushed, at General McChrystal's request, the establishment of a task force, led by a two-star Navy admiral, who in fact—she was the Joint Contracting Command-Iraq commander when I was the commander in Iraq. Now she has one more star. She is going to head a task force that will go in and augment the contracting command that helps in Iraq, that oversees this effort in Iraq—in Afghanistan, and then gets at who are not only the subcontractors, but the subcontractors to the subcontractors, literally where is the money going and is it all above board? That's a hugely important component of dealing again with corruption issues, dealing with warlordism and a variety of other challenges that cause issues for Afghanistan.

Senator BROWN. Because, as you know, it's $6 billion and counting, with many more billions forthcoming.

Then on the final note, Mr. Chairman, what type of cooperation are we getting from Pakistan regarding some of the terrorist activities, the Taliban and the like, that we're experiencing on the cross-border situations?

General PETRAEUS. Pakistan has over the course of the last year, Senator, conducted impressive counterinsurgency operations against the Tariq-i-Taliban Pakistani, the Pakistani Taliban, and some of its affiliates in the former Northwest Frontier Province, in eastern South Waziristan, Baijur, and currently in Orixi.

There is no question but that this is an organization that primarily threatens them, although it is also linked to the would-be Time Square bomber. So there is an external component to this that has emerged.

There clearly are other extremist elements that TTP has symbiotic relationships with, among them certainly Al Qaeda, the Hakkani Network, the Afghan Taliban, and a number of others that do have sanctuaries in various parts of the border region of Afghanistan. In some cases the Pakistani military has dealt with them as part of securing lines of communication for us and for themselves, in their fight against the extremists that are threatening their writ of governance. In some cases there is clearly more work that needs to be done.

General McChrystal, Admiral Mullen, and I have met with General Qiyani. In a recent meeting, we have shared information with him about links of the leadership of the Hakkani Network, located in North Waziristan, that clearly commanded and controlled the operation against Bagram Air Base and the attack in Kabul, among others.

Again, the challenge for the Pakistani military, because I think it is important again to note what they have done over the course of the last year because it is significant, the challenge is a situation in which they have a lot of short sticks and a lot of hornet's nests, and they've got to figure out how to consolidate some of those to get through—they've done good clearance operations. They're in the hold, build, and they've got to get further along in the hold, build, and then into the transition phases as well, so that they can deal with more and more.

They do realize, I believe, Senator, that you cannot allow poisonous snakes to build a nest in your back yard with the understanding that those snakes will only bite the neighbor's kids, because sooner or later they turn around and bite your kids. I think that realization has grown during this whole period of their experience with the TTP and its affiliates, and as they recognize again what Secretary Gates terms the symbiotic relationships with the other extremist elements. They're all related.

Senator BROWN. Thank you for that very thorough answer, General. I appreciate it. I'm glad to see you well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Brown, and thank you for raising the issue of the security contractors. As you know, the committee is in the middle of a year-long investigation into these activities with the private contractors, not only because of some of the problems that have been created by them, but also because of the corruption issue which you raised, and we're grateful for your bringing this to this committee's attention again, but also because they're a drain on the armed forces and the police. There's competition for those particular personnel and it creates a real issue as well.

Senator Kaufman.

Senator KAUFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Flournoy, General Petraeus, it's always weak when we say we thank you for your service. I just don't know what else to

say, but it's incredible that the two of you do what you do, and the country is blessed for doing it.

I've been one of the people that's supported counterinsurgency. I've spent a lot of time looking into everything about it and what we're doing here. But I just want to ask some questions because sometimes the kind of time passes and things change, people's perceptions of things change.

But I think it was pretty clear after our last set of hearings—and I was on the Foreign Relations Committee in addition to the Armed Services Committee—pretty clear what everybody agreed to was the deal back when. I don't think that's important, because what does cause problems overseas is if it looks like we're changing where we are. So I'd just like to make a few questions just to get clear.

In December we're going to evaluate where we are, isn't that right? So in December—and no one should be at the point of prejudging where we are. Now, in December we're going to sit down and figure out where we are. And then next June, 2011, we're going to begin to draw down troops.

The question on conditions on the ground is just how many troops we draw down, is that correct?

General PETRAEUS. That is correct. Again, that's the point, actually July 2011, that's the point at which again the term "responsible drawdown" of the surge forces begins, at a rate to be determined by the conditions.

Senator KAUFMAN. Exactly. So it's not whether we're going to draw down. It's the rate that is determined by conditions on the ground?

General PETRAEUS. That's the policy, that's correct.

Senator KAUFMAN. And there'll be no more new introduction of troops?

General PETRAEUS. That is not the intention right now.

Senator KAUFMAN. Right, but I mean I think both Chairman Mullen and Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton said in the Foreign Relations Committee that this would preclude any drawdown of troops. Secretary Gates said there may be the 3,000 troops we may need for guards and things like that, but essentially this is not a situation where we're going to be increasing the troops in Afghanistan.

General PETRAEUS. Senator, as a commander, as a military commander who owes the Commander in Chief and our troops in the field my best—I owe the President my best professional military advice, and that's something that's a sacred obligation with our troopers, I would never rule out coming back and asking for something more. I think that would be irresponsible. The intention right now is, our consideration right now, our view is that with the additional forces ordered by the President with the flex that you mentioned that Secretary Gates has—and General McChrystal has stated this in a letter to the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, that we will have the forces required to execute the strategy.

Senator KAUFMAN. And I guess I should have directed this to Secretary Flournoy, because it was the Secretary of Defense—the Secretary of State who said we would not introduce new troops.

General, I totally respect the fact, and I would be—it goes without saying that you would ask for more troops if you think we need more troops to provide our military objective.

But in terms of the official position of the President of the United States and the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and the head of the Joint Chiefs, we've put all the troops we're going to be putting into Afghanistan; is that fair to say, Secretary Flournoy?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think at this point in time that is the policy. There is no expectation of introducing any additional troops. We are all talking about a period of time in the future, so I don't think anybody would want to tie the President's hands either way. But as a matter of policy, our expectation is that in July 2011 the end of the surge will occur and we will begin a responsible drawdown, the pace and scope of which will be determined by conditions on the ground.

Senator KAUFMAN. And General, to try to get at where we do have potential problems, the U.S. troops in Afghanistan are performing magnificently; is that a fair statement?

General PETRAEUS. That is correct. In fact, I have said, Senator, that this is the new greatest generation of Americans, our young men and women who are performing these tough tasks under very difficult conditions against a very difficult enemy.

Senator KAUFMAN. I think they're behavior, I think from top to bottom—when I go over there, I am incredibly impressed with the fact that you have been able to inculcate in troops from the bottom to the top that we're in a counterinsurgency strategy and we move in a counterinsurgency. I mean, just the fact that you were able to do it in such a short period of time and the performance of our troops is magnificent at all levels.

So if it was up to our troops, I have no doubt about how this would turn out, none, zero. I think it's really incredible when you see our partnering—and it's true in Iraq, too. But the thing that makes it all work in terms of the partnering is they want to be on our team. The Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, when they see our troops and they spend time with our troops, they realize this is it, these are the big guys, these are the guys that know what they're doing, these are the guys I want to grow up and be like.

So I don't see anything, I mean anything in the performance of our troops, that is anything except on mark, doing great, we're doing fine.

General PETRAEUS. Senator, in fact I used to somewhat jokingly say, except the truth is it was serious, when I would talk to the transition team members in Iraq before they would join their Iraqi counterpart units, that our troopers should know that the Iraqis—and this is true for the Afghans and really for many other countries' forces as well—they see our troopers as the Michael Jordans——

Senator KAUFMAN. Exactly.

General PETRAEUS.—of military operations. And I realized that that was really the case when I saw them look exactly like our troopers, even to the point of wearing their kneepads around their ankles rather than on their knees, as they're designed to do.

Senator KAUFMAN. I think the key is seeing. I mean, you literally watch them and see them look at our troopers, and they say—you could just see it in their eyes. It's like, that's what I want to grow up to be when I grow up.

So really the problem here, to the extent we have a problem, I think I would say, and we have to evaluate going forward, and I think most of the people on the committee have recognized from the beginning, is the fact that counterinsurgency is not just about our troopers.

General PETRAEUS. It is—at the end of the day, it has to be a comprehensive civil-military, really we term it "whole of governments" with an "s" on the end, endeavor.

Senator KAUFMAN. Before I leave the troops, I went to Dahlgren and saw the non-lethal weapons down there. I understand you were there, too. You know, when you go over there and see what the troopers are faced with, the idea that they either have to—it's easy for us to say, but if there's a bus coming up behind your convoy at a high rate of speed and doesn't stop and the only choice you have is to fire into the bus or take the chance that it's going to blow up the convoy, that's a tough decision for any trooper to make. Or at a forward operating base, when you've got a car coming for you at a high rate of speed and you've got two choices, you can fire into the car or let it crash into the barricade.

So I am, I say, obsessed with nonlethal weapons in terms of ways to give our troopers a third choice at all times between deadly force and no action at all and putting themselves into danger. Can you talk a little about that?

General PETRAEUS. I can, Senator. In fact, if I could, I'd offer even a fourth alternative, I guess. The third alternative are the various tools that are employed in escalation of force circumstances. As you note, some of these are nonlethal weapons. There are a variety of different signaling devices, disabling devices, and others.

We've got to be very careful with this. We have to realize that there are points, obviously, when that vehicle is really coming at you, you really have to shoot at it to stop it.

But there is another option as well, and that same group is examining this also, as are other organizations. That is equipment to shape the conditions so that you're not in a position where you have to shoot at the vehicle at all, that if the vehicle keeps coming forward it runs into a cement block or something else, there's another alternative altogether.

That's difficult, but we're working hard. That's a leadership challenge and a training challenge and a doctrinal challenge as much as it is an equipment solution. But the equipment is wrapped into that. So we're looking at that as well as a way of just avoiding escalation of force situations altogether and not having to use either nonlethal nor lethal force.

But that's all caught up in this, and we've been working it really very hard, I think since the very early days of certainly Iraq, which is where we first had to encounter the suicide bomber threat in particular, is where you're most concerned.

Senator KAUFMAN. Thank you very much.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, sir.

Senator KAUFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Kaufman.

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Thank you, General, for being here and for your great work. I want to call to your attention an article which I'm sure you read in the June 12 New York Times. The headline is "Karzai is said to doubt West can defeat Taliban." This article talks about the firing of two of President Karzai's top aides, Mr. Saleh and Mr. Atmar. They were said to have quit because Mr. Karzai had made it clear he no longer considered them loyal.

The article goes on to say that Mr. Karzai has lost faith in the Americans and NATO to prevail in Afghanistan. One of the fired individuals, Mr. Saleh, has spoke at length, saying that President Karzai has been pressing to strike his own deal with the Taliban and the country's arch-rival Pakistan, the Taliban's long-time supporter. "According to a former senior Afghan official, Mr. Karzai's maneuverings involve secret negotiations with the Taliban outside the purview of American and NATO officials."

What do you say to that? I know Senator McCain was pressing on this yesterday. Is this happening at all in your judgment, and if it is is it happening because the Americans are giving an uncertain sound about being a long- term strategic partner with Mr. Karzai and his government?

General PETRAEUS. With respect to the very last point of that, Senator, having talked with President Karzai indeed about the meaning of July 2011, just as I started out today's session by explaining as precisely as I could what that means, that it's a message of urgency that went along with the huge additional message of commitment—Senator Lieberman reminded us of the words "vital national interest" used by the President with respect to Afghanistan, and again July 2011, the point at which a process begins that is based on conditions, to begin the responsible drawdown of the surge forces at a rate to be determined by those conditions at that time, based on advice, and so forth; and also a process to begin transitioning some tasks to Afghan forces and officials.

But I am not sure that I share the characterization of the headline, at least, about President Karzai's feelings. I base that on conversations with President Karzai, a number of them in the past month and a half or so, in Kabul, from Kandahar and Washington.

Senator WICKER. How often do you speak to him?

General PETRAEUS. It's probably at least every couple weeks. Again, it depends on the travel schedule. There was a period where we saw him several times in a period of just about 2 weeks, and then it may go a couple weeks otherwise. But what we also do, of course, is at the very least weekly videoteleconferences with the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary, Chairman Mullen, and I do with General McChrystal, and then lots of other conversations with him and exchanges.

He certainly does not share that sense. He just accompanied President Karzai, for example, all day on Sunday when President Karzai flew to and from Kandahar and held the shura council down there. As I mentioned earlier to the committee, I think it would be important that the committee see the talking points that he used

for that, because this is a very clear statement by a president who is the commander in chief of his country, who is committing to taking the actions that are necessary and is rallying the people behind him, and who then at the end of this tells the ISAF commander, also U.S. Forces commander: You now have my full support for the conduct of these operations and the support of the people in this area.

Now, with respect to meetings and so forth, President Karzai of course just hosted the National Consultative Jirga, Peace Jirga, which indeed addressed reconciliation and reintegration. I believe that we are aware of the meetings that he has and that his representatives have. He typically either includes our elements or at the very least will back-brief us.

I would not characterize these as something that will culminate in reconciliation coming soon to a theater near us, reconciliation again being high-level Taliban leaders coming in to accept the conditions that President Karzai has established, accepting the constitution, laying down weapons, participating in the process, and so forth.

On the other hand, there very clearly is scope for re- integration, and that is the term used for the re- integration into society of reconcilable members of the Taliban. Now we're talking low and mid-level. And there are a number of cases in which that is ongoing. I was just reading in the morning book this morning the case in Shindand out in the western part of the country. There's 80 or so that have come in with their hands up, put their weapons down, want to be re-integrated.

It's very important now in fact that the interim guidance that President Karzai has provided then is promulgated as formal guidance and does move forward to provide what our troopers need in terms of legal structures, if you will, and what the Afghan government elements need to work together to take advantage of those kinds of opportunities.

Senator WICKER. How likely is it, General, that secret negotiations could have been held with the Taliban outside the purview of American and NATO officials?

General PETRAEUS. I think it's very unlikely, in part because we are told about what goes on, and we also have good insights, as they say in the intelligence community, into what's going on on top of that. The insights tend to correlate with what we are told.

Senator WICKER. Well, let me touch on one other thing in my remaining time. That's interpreters. Of course, we need interpreters. But I'm told that in securing the services of talented linguists, they're being paid by the coalition anywhere from $50,000 to $200,000 a year, which is considered by some a distortion of the Afghan economy.

Are you concerned that we're taking some of the best human capital that could be used in the Afghan government, in Afghan civil society, in Afghan business, and taking them away so that they can be interpreters for the coalition?

General PETRAEUS. The short answer is yes, Senator. In fact, Ambassador Holbrooke and I discussed this with President Karzai after we completed the 2-day civil- military review of concept drill

in Kabul about 2 months or so ago, and then went to back-brief President Karzai.

Very clearly there is an issue—by the way, I don't think the salaries you quoted are correct for Afghans. I think those may be for U.S. citizens or Afghan-Americans or something. But again, that we might want to verify for you.

But the fact is your point, which is more important, the substance of your point is exactly correct. What happens in some cases is the Afghan government, other countries, contributing nations, help build Afghan human capital by investing in them with education, to go back and work in Afghan ministries and so forth, and then in some cases the NGOs hire them away, we hire them away.

So we're competing with our own efforts, and we have to figure out how to come to grips with this. This is another of the tasks that this contracting task force is going to take a hard look at. In fact, the Afghan government really needs some kind of either law or regulations on this. When the U.S. Government sent me to graduate school, for example, I believe I had to give back 3 years for each year that I was in graduate school. They need something like that. President Karzai is actually keenly aware of it, as are we.

Senator WICKER. Plan to be announced later?

General PETRAEUS. Correct.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me add my welcome to Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus. I want to thank each of you for your leadership and also for your distinguished service, and also thank you to the men and women that you lead, both of you lead. Their service and commitment to our country is honored and really appreciated.

General Petraeus, you recently told members of the House Armed Services Committee that training of Afghan security forces is being overhauled. I understand that training procedures for Afghan police and security forces were being overhauled to avoid some of the mistakes made in Iraq. General, can you give us an update on training efforts in Afghanistan and any lessons learned since implementing those changes?

General PETRAEUS. With respect, Senator, training's being overhauled to avoid mistakes being made in Afghanistan or shortcomings in Afghanistan. That's not to say that there weren't plenty of shortcomings in our effort in Iraq. In fact, we tried to share those with our Afghan counterparts at various times during my different tours in Iraq.

In fact, after the conclusion of one of those tours, after standing up the train and equip mission in Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld asked me to go to Afghanistan on the way home from Iraq. We did. We spent time over there, and indeed identified shared—what we had learned, but also, frankly, identified a number of areas in which improvements could be made there at that time. Some of those were made. Some still, frankly, are being addressed now that General Caldwell is in command.

He's been in command about 6 months now. Literally, the establishment of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan itself, which

is an input, not an output, but that is a hugely significant development for all of this.

But there are a number of initiatives that have been already begun now. Just to give you one example, instead of a 3-year Afghan police for officers training program, they've now got an officer candidate school to complement this, because there's a war going on out there and we need officers in the interim as well. It's a 6-month program which we think will be good and will provide leadership on a more immediate basis, to enable the kind of progress that we know we need urgently and not just have this very long process.

There's also been a change—there was a procedure with the police in a number of different areas where they were recruited, assigned, and then trained when they got to it. Now the process is very much to recruit, train, and then assign. Just the recruiting itself, there is the creation of a recruiting component, and that has significantly improved, for the army as well, recruiting. Then there have been measures taken to improve retention, to reduce attrition, as well various incentive packages and policies and so forth. And those, on the basis of 3 months at least, and we don't want to declare that a true trend just yet, but those have enabled the building of the additional army and additional police elements to be on track for now, after a period in which they were not on track.

So that's just a few of the areas. There are enormous changes made in the institutional training business. It used to be there was one trainer for every 80 trainees, obviously inadequate. Now it's closer to 1 to 29 or 30. I could give you again chapter and verse across the board on this.

For those who are traveling there, I know that the chairman and the ranking member both are going to Afghanistan in the weeks ahead—General Caldwell looks forward to briefing your groups as you come over and describing to you in some detail the various programs that have been implemented and others that are under development.

Senator AKAKA. Secretary Flournoy, the International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Security Force are acting in partnership during operations in Helmand Province. It is the first large-scale effort to fundamentally change how we are operating together. Madam Secretary, can you give us specific examples of how coalition and Afghan forces have partnered together during the Helmand Province operations?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think the Marjah operation really was the beginning of a very different way of doing business together. I would say it was not only about the partnership between ISAF and Afghan forces, but between ISAF and the entire—I would say, the broader coalition whole of government capabilities, and the Afghan government as a whole.

So beginning from the planning stages, you had a combined Afghan-ISAF team that was planning not only for the military dimensions of the campaign, but also for elements of different Afghan ministries to come in and immediately establish a governance presence in Marjah and the surrounding areas. So that has really created a different way of doing business together that has now carried into other areas. As the planning and preparation and the

early stages of shaping in Kandahar unfold, that same kind of in-depth and multifaceted partnership is happening again.

I would just say that it's not only partnership. It's really putting Afghans in the lead in helping to design the operation, in helping to determine the timing of the operation and setting the conditions for ultimate success in the operation. So that is a very different way of doing business than we've done in the past, and I think it's an approach that General McChrystal has pioneered with his Afghan partners, and I think it bodes well for the future.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Akaka.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Petraeus, let me begin by echoing the comments of my colleagues that we're very relieved to see you looking so well today. I was quite confident that it wasn't the probing questions of this committee which caused your problem yesterday, and today you've shown for certain that that is the case.

Ultimately, our success in Afghanistan depends on the ability of the Afghan forces to take over the fight and to provide security for the country. You've just had an exchange with my colleague Senator Akaka about the training and you indicated that we've gone from having trainers in a ratio of one to 80 to one to 29 or 30. But the 12–31 report indicates that NATO overall has a requirement for more than 2300 trainers and that there is a shortfall of almost a third, of 32 percent.

Similarly, General Casey recently noted that the lack of trained Afghans was a major concern among U.S. troops in Afghanistan. There are also stories where our troops have expressed doubts about the willingness of the Afghans to fully engage in the fight as long as we're there doing the work.

What are we doing to fix the shortage of trainers internationally and what is the status of the requirement versus the actual numbers now? And Madam Secretary, if that's a more appropriate question for you, whichever of you.

General PETRAEUS. Actually, we can both do that, I think, Senator.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Right.

General PETRAEUS. First, Senator, because I just wanted to add that the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in Europe literally just sent out a message that I got word on that this morning, asking for additional trainers.

The latest numbers that we have, by the way—and these do fluctuate as trainers come, trainers go, pledges are made and filled, and indeed trainer requirements grow, because as the forces grow as we try to increase capacity for training, needless to say, the demand for trainers increases. But the latest that we have is 450 is the shortage.

We are trying to bridge the gap in certain areas. Soldiers and marines are doing some of that. And as I mentioned, the Deputy Commander for the NATO operational element has just asked for more of them.

Then if I could also add before handing off, as I mentioned up front, Senator, the Afghan forces are very much in the fight. They are in the lead, indeed, in some areas, limited areas, but Kabul is one of them, and other areas and other mission sets. There are some functional missions, convoy escort and some other tasks, for which they're in the lead.

But they are very much in the fight throughout the country. There is no better or perhaps more tragic metric that shows that than the fact that their losses are typically several multiples of our U.S. losses on an average.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Senator, we do have an institutional trainer shortfall of about 450. We continue to press our NATO allies to step up and fill those gaps. That said, the Secretary has made clear that he intends to deploy additional U.S. personnel to bridge the gap as necessary, because this is such a critical mission. It is a long pole in the tent of what we're trying to do in Afghanistan.

In addition, there are some continued shortfalls, although we've made a lot of progress here, in what we call OMLTs and PMLTs, the mentoring teams that are embedded with Afghan army and police units. We started out with a requirement of about 180 OMLTs. We're now at a shortfall of 14 of those teams. We started out with a requirement of 475 PMLTs. We're now at about 140 shortfall.

In that case, we are taking two kinds of mitigation measures. One is with this much more intensive partnering between ISAF and ANSF units in some cases that partnering can make up for the fact that you don't have an OMLT or a PMLT with a given unit. In other cases, we've taken a train the trainer approach and we're actually having—there are Afghan police training teams that are now prepared to embed to train Afghan police units.

So there are a number of mitigation measures in place. We are leaning forward on this very hard because it is such an important part of the mission.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Counterinsurgency strategy, as we've all learned over the past few years, depends on a unity of effort by both the military and the civilian side. In an after-action report in December of last year, retired General Barry McCaffrey predicted that "The international civilian agency surge will essentially not happen. Although the State Department officers, USAID, CIA, and other American agencies will make vital contributions, Afghanistan over the next 2 or 3 years will simply be too dangerous for most civilian agencies."

Madam Secretary, what is the status of the international civilian surge? It's so essential that we not just rely on the military side and that's why General McCaffrey's prediction is alarming to me.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think I would agree with your premise that the civilian surge is absolutely critical as part of this broader campaign. On the U.S. side, we have more than tripled our civilian personnel and that is likely to increase further as the campaign unfolds. We have developed very cooperative concepts of operations so our civilians are partnered with and protected by military forces as well as their own State Department security forces.

Internationally, as we've gone out to allies we have pressed them not only to increase their troop contributions, but also their civilian contributions, and many, many have stepped up, whether it's grow-

ing the civilian contributions to their PRTs, which historically they've been more military, or in cases like countries like Malaysia where they're actually sending a whole new contingent of civilian medical personnel and so forth.

So that is part of the effort. I think one of the challenges here on our side is that we have never resourced our own—or at least not recently, not since the Vietnam era, we have not resourced our civilian agencies, State and AID, to actually rapidly deploy civilian expeditionary people and capabilities with any frequency or with any sustainability.

If we want to be able to do that as a nation, that's something we need to look at in the future, because we've put the State Department and USAID in the position of having to throw together an ad hoc solution to a problem. They've done exceedingly well, but we haven't fully resourced them in the way they need to be resourced for this mission.

Senator COLLINS. General?

General PETRAEUS. Senator, if I could just add to what the Under Secretary said as well, and that is when I've talked about the inputs piece, that we're trying to get the right organizations led by the right people with the right concepts and the levels of resources necessary to implement those concepts, among the right people since in fact General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry going in have been the addition of a NATO senior civilian representative, a very talented U.K. Ambassador Mark Sedwell. The Special Representative of the Secretary General is now Stefan de Mastura, whom we will remember from Iraq when he was the UNSRSG there. And then most recently there's an EU rep there as well. In fact, when I was in the U.K. this past week I talked to the EU foreign secretary, if you will, and she described her strong commitment to the mission there as well. And all of them were involved in our civil-military review or concept drill that Ambassador Holbrooke and I hosted in Kabul now about 2 months or so ago.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. I'm going to take a minute to clarify some of the numbers which Senator Collins elicited, because there has been some confusion about it and it's a very critical number when it comes to the trainers, the OMLTs, the PMLTs. This is a critical mission to get them ready to take responsibility for their own security, and I'm going to take a minute to go through those numbers with you.

You said there's a shortfall of 450 what you call institutional, I think, institutional trainers essentially. These are what I kind of call the basic training. But that's 450 shortfall. There's also, I believe not included in that number, is a pledged number which has not yet been forthcoming. Is that correct? What is that number?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I have there are 574 pledged, 235 pending, meaning they're still getting confirmation in capitals.

Chairman LEVIN. Is that on top of the 450?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, that would be in addition to.

Chairman LEVIN. That's a lot of additional—go on.

Ms. FLOURNOY. But I think generally we can count on those.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, maybe you can count on them, but they're not there yet.

574 plus 234 plus 450, is that correct?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Correct.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, on OMLTs and PMLTs, about how many in each of those units? First on the OMLTs, if we're 14 short—how many are there? 5, 10, 20?

Ms. FLOURNOY. OMLTs are between 11 and 28 personnel per OMLT. It depends on the—

Chairman LEVIN. That's fine.

Ms. FLOURNOY. They're tailored to the conditions.

And PMLTs, it's between 15 and 20 persons.

Chairman LEVIN. We can do the multiplication, and that I think is going to get us up to about 2,000 to 2500 personnel that are short. That's the number that was given to us.

Does that look right, General?

General PETRAEUS. It does, Senator. In fact, that is down considerably since, as you know, we devoted substantial numbers of marines and soldiers to these tasks, diverted literally a battalion for this, and then also have used a brigade combat team from the 82nd Airborne, for example, to help with the partnering effort, i.e., the OMLTs and PMLTs, in the Regional Command South area.

Chairman LEVIN. Right, and I think very appropriately done, and it's a critical mission, so we're very supportive of it. Thank you.

And thank you, Senator Collins, very much.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks again to Secretary Flournoy and General Petraeus for being here again today with us. I wanted to talk for a couple of minutes about President Karzai's reconciliation and re-integration program. I know it's important that reconciliation and re-integration efforts operate within the context of a broader counterinsurgency strategy. It's not possible for the Afghan government to reconcile with senior level Taliban or re-integrate low level Taliban fighters as long as the Taliban remains militarily strong and convinced that they are winning the war.

I believe that we need to avoid a situation where warlords and power brokers retain their militias. It's certainly too high a price to pay for reconciliation.

Financial incentives alone are not sufficient to reconcile with low-level Taliban fighters because they will be subject to brutal retaliation against themselves and their families, and if the government of Afghanistan cannot protect them from retribution it would be suicidal for them to shift sides. However, improved security conditions throughout Afghanistan, coupled with financial incentives and job opportunities, can lead to effective reconciliation.

I know that U.S. officials have expressed support for the inclusion of the Taliban in a future Afghan government so long as any former militants joining the government break with Al Qaeda, lay down their arms, and accept the Afghan constitution.

My question is, outside of the jirga on June the 4th, has President Karzai begun translating his reconciliation and re-integration initiatives into programs and policies?

Senator MCCAIN. Well, first of all, Senator, if I could just say, that's a very accurate and quite a nuanced description, frankly, of the situation and of the basic concepts behind all of this. It's exactly right.

With respect to re-integration, there is interim guidance that our forces and Afghan officials are using. But as I mentioned earlier, it's important that President Karzai now promulgate this formally, and that we believe will happen quite soon, according to General McChrystal in the videoteleconference yesterday morning.

With respect to reconciliation, an outcome of the National Consultative Peace Jirga is indeed direction to develop further reconciliation programs, while noting that there are criteria that do exist. It's very clear, and you just stated those as well, what has to take place for groups, former insurgent factions, indeed to be eligible for reconciliation.

But again, the promulgating instructions to provide the real governmental guidance and policies for that are still under development, noting that again that is quite high level and, even though there may be talks going on periodically among emissaries or what have you, I think, as you pointed out, that it is unlikely to see true reconciliation while the Taliban still feels that it is in the ascendant or at least can wait us out.

Senator HAGAN. Secretary Flournoy.

Ms. FLOURNOY. If I could just add, Senator, on re- integration for low and mid-level fighters, based on President Karzai's interim guidance, we have, thanks to this committee for making this possible, used the authority that you helped to give us to use up to $100 million of CERP in support of re-integration efforts. We've actually released those funds now, so those are now available for commanders working with their Afghan partners at the district and local level to start taking advantage of some of these re-integration opportunities.

On the reconciliation side, coming out of the jirga one of the conclusions of the jirga was to establish what's called a high peace council or commission, which will be the Afghan mechanism that will really begin to try to start thinking through reconciliation in a programmatic sort of level.

We have also made very clear how we're going to organize ourselves on the U.S. side so that we are joined at the him. We want to make sure that—this is obviously an Afghan-led process, but it is very important that we stay partnered with them as they consider how to move forward on this and that this is fully integrated with the broader counterinsurgency campaign.

Senator HAGAN. Has the low-level re-integration actually started and is it successful?

General PETRAEUS. It has started. It would be premature, I think, to describe it as successful yet. But it is certainly a work in progress in several different locations of Afghanistan. There are as many as in one case 80 that I read about this morning in an intel book, for example, in the Regional Command West area that came in literally with their hands up, laid their weapons down, wanted to be re-integrated.

Their incentives are very much in line with what you laid out. In that particular area, a combination of Afghan government secu-

rity forces and coalition forces, I think non-U.S., although I'd have to check that, brought about security conditions, just put enough pressure on the Taliban that they decided, this is not what we want to continue doing for the rest of our lives, and if there is an alternative that allows us back into society, then the security arrangement does have some incentives as well, then that's a course that they're willing to take.

That's basically where they are right now. But the follow-on piece of that, which is very important, as you'll recall, in Iraq ultimately we ended up hiring on our payroll, using CERP or fixed site security contracts, 103,000 Iraqi, largely Iraqi men. By the way, about 20,000 or more were Shia, just so the record understands there was a Shia awakening as well as a Sunni Awakening.

We do not envision doing the same thing here, in part because there's not the prospect, even despite the great mineral wealth that's found—that is not going to be exploited in substantial form, we wouldn't think, for some years. So that we don't want to saddle Afghanistan with a very costly program. Rather, we want to enable much more local programs, with the amount of CERP that the Under Secretary talked about being part of that.

Senator HAGAN. You mentioned the new-found wealth of the minerals. I know that on June the 14th the New York Times reported this discovery of nearly a trillion dollars in untapped mineral deposits. Does this new mineral wealth have the ability to fundamentally alter the Afghan economy, but does it also have the ability to amplify the existing problems of government corruption, as well as provide greater incentive for the Taliban to actually fight for control of the government?

I was just wondering, does Afghanistan's new-found wealth in any way alter the coalition's counterinsurgency approach, governance support plan, development plan? I know this would be years in the making, but on the ground now how does this play into our strategy?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first, to answer your first question, I think it's sort of an "all of the above" potential is present. Potentially, it could be an incredible boon to Afghanistan. It could enable them to pay for their own governmental officials, forces, programs, and so forth, in a way that I think prior to this there was not that same expectation, but again being very careful about how difficult this will be.

Beyond that, we have been engaged—again, this was not a revelation to a lot of us who have been working this. Again, there was a keen awareness of the different copper deposits. China is already in trying to extract that and to build the infrastructure necessary and to get it out and so forth.

But there is an awareness of these different opportunities that are out there. Some of them are being exploited in small ways by either local strongmen—I don't know if I'd quite go to "warlords," but different power brokers and so forth, or officials. And it's very important that there be a legal regime that governs this as well. This is something that we're quite keenly aware and the civilian elements have been working. I'll just give you one example, the timber. There's enormous timber resources in eastern Afghanistan in particular. There is a law. They haven't been able to implement

it, and that's the kind of effort that has to go forward if it's to become something that serves the state, rather than just some interests within it.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I would just add, when we became aware when the survey results came in last year, I think what it has done, even though it's a very long-term project, it has helped to inform some prioritization, for example putting more priority on capacity-building in the ministry of mines, the ministry of finance, putting more emphasis on looking at this particular area of law and regulation so that we try to—if you're going to start with a sector, let's start with this sector.

It's also—we're trying now to work with AID and others to make sure that the knowledge of some of these deposits and so forth actually informs some of our near- term projects in communities where these are located, so you start creating the foundations that will eventually position those communities to take full advantage of the wealth that's literally right underneath them.

So I think it has informed some reprioritization of our efforts on the development side.

I see my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator Thune.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, General, thank you for your outstanding service to our country. General, I also want to welcome you back today. I know we're very pleased to have you back. I'm not sure I would have been anxious if I were you to come back in front of this committee. But nevertheless, thank you for your great service.

General, about a year ago General McChrystal restricted close air support operations in Afghanistan in an effort to reduce civilian casualties and damage. I fully understand the efforts by you and General McChrystal to employ counterinsurgency tactics and strategy in this war, and that the McChrystal close air support directive is an effort to restrain the use of firepower, which is crucial to fighting an insurgency.

However, it seems to me that the directive can also elevate the risk to troops who are under fire and require the kind of assistance that close air support can provide. After a year or so of this directive being in place, what is your evaluation of the results of this directive and what kind of effect do you think that it's had on the war?

General PETRAEUS. First, Senator, in fact General McKiernan was the first one to promulgate the so-called tactical directive, and he did that with the intent of reducing to an absolute minimum the loss of innocent civilian life in the conduct of military operations. And he did it in the wake of some instances in which substantial numbers of civilians were killed in the course of military operations and almost undermined the entire strategic effort there in Afghanistan. It had a very serious impact.

General McChrystal did refine the tactical directive, also did issue counterinsurgency guidance as well. Again, same intent. Let me state up front, though, that we will drop a bomb or use attack helicopters or any other enabler at any time, at any place, if our troopers' lives are in jeopardy, if their safety and wellbeing is in

jeopardy. If they're pinned down and can't get out, we will do what is necessary.

But there are a number of cases in which that is not necessarily, where you're being engaged from a house—just to give you one example, and there are many of these—you're being engaged from a house, let's say. It may not be completely effective fire. You can break contact. Our predisposition is to close with and destroy the enemy. That's the motto of the infantry, to press the fight, to take the fight to the enemy.

But there are cases in which you have to balance that with the recognition that if you don't know who's in that house and taking the fight to the enemy ultimately means blowing up the house, which is sometimes what has to result if you're going to take out those bad guys that are shooting at you, but in the course of doing that you kill a substantial number of civilians, that "tactical success" then becomes a strategic setback of considerable proportions.

Now, as we have evaluated this and looked at it—and we have done after-action reviews throughout the course of the year—there are clearly cases in which we need to continue to educate our leaders. Again, we want on the one hand to be absolutely responsive when that is necessary. As I said, we will never restrict the use of our firepower or our enablers if our troopers are in jeopardy on the ground. But also, you need a sufficient very rapid review process so that folks really do look at this and examine and make sure that, again, we are not going to create a strategic setback in the quest for a tactical victory or advantage.

That's how we have come at that. We have worked very hard to educate our troopers, to train our troopers in the predeployment process during the road to war, if you will, the road to deployment. We've incorporated this in our combat training center mission rehearsal exercises, in doctrine, in various tactics, techniques, and procedures. We'll continue to do that.

We get feedback periodically that troopers feel that they are being held back. We don't want that to be the case. That is not the intent. The intent is very clearly just to reduce to an absolute minimum the loss of innocent civilian life, which in a counterinsurgency operation in particular can unhinge you.

Senator THUNE. Yes?

Chairman LEVIN. Let me interrupt you, if you would.

A vote has just begun in the Senate. I would suggest the following: that after Senator Thune's questions that we take a 10-minute recess; that the rest of us that want to—are able to come back, go vote, come back immediately, so that after that 10-minute recess we will have some people here to question you, so there won't be too long a gap. We'd want there to be about a 10-minute recess.

Thank you very much.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, is there any indication, though, that the Taliban are engaging in direct or indirect fire attacks more often and with greater effect, now that they know that there is potentially a diminished threat from the air? Do you see any evidence to that effect?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, counterinsurgence—I'm sorry, excuse me.

First of all, insurgents historically have always tried to use our rules of engagement against us. We know that. They did that in Iraq periodically. We had people in Iraq literally pushing through crowds shooting at us. This happened in a number of other cases in recent decades as well in these kinds of situations.

But we are about living our values, and every time we have taken expedient measures not only has it been wrong, we have also paid a price for it in terms of it biting us in the back side in the long run. So that's again—we have to be aware that they will use our reluctance to kill innocent civilians or to risk the lives of innocent civilians in the course of these operations.

Having said that, frankly, they generally are not engaging us directly as much as they are coming at us indirectly. They realized some years ago, certainly last year, that if they engage our troopers in a direct fire fight that they will lose. So they are using IEDs in much larger numbers than they have in the past, and that's where we see the increase in the violence incidence.

Senator THUNE. It's my understanding that B–1 bomber aircraft are being used quite frequently in ISR roles, rather than in an on-call fire support role. I don't know if you know the answer to this or not, but could you provide us with an idea of how frequently that Afghan and Navy crews are being utilized by ground troops in Afghanistan in ISR roles?

General PETRAEUS. We do that all the time, Senator. Again, a B–1 bomber—we have CAP, combat air patrols, so we always have CAPs over Afghanistan. And while they're waiting to be called on for a bombing mission, because again that's the only way we can have responsive bombing—in fact, we want it to be available within 10 minutes, is the metric. And I get—I review these metrics periodically for responsiveness of close air support and also, by the way, for responsiveness of medevac, which is the golden hour. Generally, the average on medevac responsiveness has been to get from point of injury to the first treatment facility, lately it's in the range of 45 to 50 minutes, which is where we want to keep it.

But as they are waiting for missions, we'll use the lightning pod or the other capabilities that B–1s, F–16s, F/A–18s, whatever aircraft we have. And again, they're very, very good in this role. We've all seen the downloads. We've all used this, frankly, and they are superb in this role.

Now, we'd rather use unmanned aerial vehicles or something like that, which are both more persistent, cheaper, greater dwell time, and so forth. But we have these platforms overhead anyway and so we do put them to use while we're waiting to use them in a close air support role, if they are indeed used in that role on their mission.

Senator THUNE. How many manned aircraft are there typically in the air above Afghanistan at any moment in time, any point in time?

General PETRAEUS. Let me provide that to you for the record. In fact, we can show you the unmanned as well. But it's certainly in the dozens at the very least when you start talking about tankers, command and control aircraft, jammers in some cases, in addition to those that are providing on-call close air support in a variety of different locations around the country, because again you can't ob-

viously get—you've got to be in the south, in the east, in the center or what have you—and then dozens of unmanned aerial vehicles as well.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator THUNE. And as the number of CAPs increase, my assumption is that the unmanned—I'm sorry—that the manned missions over there will be reduced. Is that a fair statement?

General PETRAEUS. No, I'm not sure I would—let me lay that out to you. In fact, we have put more CAPs, tried to put more CAPs over it as we have spread out our forces. And again, they're somewhat different missions, needless to say, as well. Obviously, some of our unmanned aerial vehicles are armed, the Predator and the Reaper, but not the rest.

So a substantial number of those are doing only full- motion video or various intelligence tasks, not responsive with weapons. Of course, the weapons on those that are armed are not as large as those that are carried by, say, a B–1 or some of the other bombers.

Senator THUNE. We do have a vote. My colleague may want to say something here from Florida. But just a final editorial comment if I will, because you have answered this question I think many times in response to the questions that have been posed by other members of the committee. But I share a concern, too, with respect to the date next summer for withdrawal. There was a report last week of a wedding party in Argendab District, which we visited in January, that the Taliban killed at least 39 people. There are reports that the Taliban executed a 7-year-old child in Helmand Province for cooperating with the Afghan government. Notwithstanding the Taliban's so-called code of conduct, there's still a lot of evidence of brutality.

The question I guess would be a lot of these folks in these areas, critical areas to us, who are cooperating with and helping the government, what happens when we leave? Then there was this report yesterday in the Washington Post, which is being disputed and denied by the Pakistan government, but I want to read you just one paragraph in this news story:

"U.S. officials say"—and these were releases of Taliban leaders from Pakistan—"that the releases reflected Pakistan's strategy of working closely with the United States on key fronts while also maintaining relationships with militant groups capable of serving Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan when U.S. forces are gone."

I'm concerned that the notion that we're going to be pulling down here in the not too distant future does shape the relationships, not only between the people of Afghanistan and the Taliban and the people of Afghanistan and our U.S. forces and efforts there, but also the neighbors in the region. So for what that's worth, I would just add that and echo a concern that's been raised by other members of the committee previously.

Thank you, sir. I guess with that we're on break. So thank you all.

[Recess from 10:53 a.m. to 11:06 a.m.]

Chairman LEVIN. I believe that Senator—let me check. I think Senator Ben Nelson is next. That is correct. Senator Nelson.

Senator BEN NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me add my appreciation to the two of you and all the men and women in uniform that are so valiantly protecting our freedoms. We appreciate your leadership in that effort.

General Petraeus, one of the things that I thought was so important and I'm pleased that we're seeing that happen now is the establishment of benchmarks to be able to judge progress. We achieved that same goal with Iraq and I'm very happy that we're approaching this same way with benchmarks in Afghanistan.

Two of your major objectives that were submitted in the benchmark progress reports to the committee in April were to: one, develop a self-reliant Afghan security force; and two, a more capable, accountable government in Afghanistan. I certainly agree with these and that they're critical to our success.

If you were to use a metric at the present time to measure our current progress, would you think, with respect to the self-reliant Afghan security force, that we're 10 percent, 20 percent? Is there some calculation in your mind as to where we are, what we've achieved, and yet what remains as the goal? The same thing when it comes to a reliable government? And this could apply to Secretary Flournoy as well.

Senator MCCAIN. With respect to the Afghan National Security Forces, Senator, obviously lots of different types of forces, different rates of progress among them, not only between the different components, but also throughout the country, to be sure. I think the important point to make is that we've really made progress in getting the inputs right in this area as well, in terms of getting the right organization, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan and its various component elements, and then on the Afghan side their various component elements as well, and in some cases adding, as an example, a recruiting element, which was not present before on the police side in particular.

Then getting the right people in charge of them, and General Caldwell and his team of all-star coalition and U.S. leaders I think is again another important step forward. The concepts right. I mentioned, for example, with the training of the police that it used to be recruit, assign, then train when you get to it.

Senator BEN NELSON. Ready, fire, aim.

General PETRAEUS. That's about right.

And then have the resources to do it. Of course, you provided, at the request of the President, the resources to add an additional 100,000 Afghan National Security Forces by the fall of 2011.

So all of those, again very important, and added to that the additional trainers in terms of resources, to where we've been able to go from again one to 80 trainee ratio of trainer to trainee, to now a one to 30 training ratio; the addition of trainers, while still a significant shortfall exists; additional OMLTs and PMLTs, although still again some more needed; and General McChrystal's directive to partner, just to have units partner, has made a difference in that regard.

If you want to characterize all of that and say where are you and a certain percentage, I think—I don't know that we're quite at the 50 percentile mark, certainly. I think again there has been important progress in this regard. I think there are some foundations

now on which we can build much more effectively than we have been able to in the past.

But we are still at the point of, having gotten the inputs right now, to see how the outputs come out. Not to say that all that has been done in the past to build institution, infrastructure, unit, trainees, and so forth is by any means without enormous value, because it is. But—and we went through the same thing like this within Iraq as well, and you're constantly adjusting, and then you have to adjust to the enemy as well.

Do you want to talk governance?

Ms. FLOURNOY. On the governance side, again I can't give you a set percentage, but I can tell you the kinds of things we're looking at and trying to measure. One is sort of general sense of the population as to the responsiveness of government to their basic needs, and there's everything from polling to participation in shuras and council meetings and so forth.

At the ministry level, we're very focused on making sure that ministries can actually receive and disburse moneys in an accountable manner. We're in the process of working with the various Afghan ministries to actually certify them in terms of financial management, and I think we've certified three or four and there are a number, an additional three or four in the pipeline, and we'll keep working through those, looking at their capacity to perform core functions.

At the local government level, it really has to do with have we actually created a connection with the local people, is the local government becoming the sort of focal point of community decision-making, do they have capacity to actually oversee and execute projects, and so forth.

So there are a number of different metrics that we're looking at. I think it's going to take—as General Petraeus has been saying, we're putting a lot of the right inputs in place, a lot of the right foundational pieces, and now we're going to start measuring progress over time. But it will take some time.

Senator BEN NELSON. With respect to the surveys or the polling——

[Audio system feedback.]

Senator BEN NELSON.—and I don't know why it's doing this.

Chairman LEVIN. I wonder if somebody could check out the sound system here, because we have this hum or feedback.

Senator BEN NELSON. In connection with the polling, I know that the Afghan acceptance of ISAF has not necessarily been increasing. It's been decreasing. From March 2010, with 29 percent of Afghans having a good or very good opinion of ISAF; in comparison, 34 percent now have a bad or a very bad opinion of ISAF, which is the lowest it's been since the surveys were started in 2008.

Is there comparable polling or are there comparable surveys on the support or the attitude of the Afghans towards their government?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I can cite at least one that I'm familiar with, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. You need to talk louder.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I'm sorry.

There is——

Chairman LEVIN. Is your mike on?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I don't think it's on.

There is a recent poll that was done——

Chairman LEVIN. A lot louder.

Ms. FLOURNOY.—that shows about 59 percent of the Afghan population believes that the combination of their government and ISAF is moving the country in the right direction, sort of a general, are we heading in the right direction question. That was an improvement since last fall. But frankly, I think we need to get better data from the polls. Right now we get somewhat contradictory information out of the polls.

Senator BEN NELSON. Do you have any polling information on their local governments versus where the overall direction of the country is going?

General PETRAEUS. Interestingly, in the south just recently a poll indicates greater optimism about the future than it did just a few months ago.

Senator BEN NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. The sound I think is now off. I think they're trying to fix it. So we're all going to have to talk much louder during this interim period.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Senator Nelson. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Good morning. Thank you both.

General Petraeus, what would happen if in the future the Taliban took over part or all of Afghanistan from our National security perspective? What would be the consequence?

General PETRAEUS. Well, I think, Senator, given what's happening in other areas, with pressure on extremist groups in other locations, that some of those will make their way back into Afghanistan and enjoy sanctuary, as they did prior to 9–11, recalling that the 9–11 attacks were planned in the Kandahar area and the initial training of the attackers took place in training camps in Afghanistan.

Senator GRAHAM. On a scale of one to ten, one being not so significant and ten being very significant, what would Taliban control of part or all of Afghanistan mean to us, national security-wise?

General PETRAEUS. Well, the President has said that—.

Senator GRAHAM. Closer to ten than one?

General PETRAEUS. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. If we were not there now, what would happen?

General PETRAEUS. I think the Taliban certainly would take control of certain areas of the country. Others might devolve into warlordism and you might end up with a couple of different civil wars going on between different ethnic groups, even sectarian groups, and some warlords overlaid on top of that.

Senator GRAHAM. This is June 2010. Are we winning?

General PETRAEUS. Winning to a counterinsurgent, Senator, means making progress. In that regard, I think that we are winning, but I think that it is a slow process. As I explained, we have just about got the inputs right in terms of getting the organizations in place, the right people in charge of them, the right concepts and the right level of resources to enable implementation of those concepts under those leaders in charge of the right organizations.

Senator GRAHAM. What percentage of Afghanistan is under central government control?

General PETRAEUS. What's that, sir?

Senator GRAHAM. What percentage of the country, Afghanistan, is under effective central government control?

General PETRAEUS. Certainly more, much more than what is not. Again, we have to talk about how do you want to define "central government control."

Senator GRAHAM. "Central government control" means being an effective police force, a responsible army, a functioning, non-corrupt local and national government.

General PETRAEUS. Well, we have a ways to go in that regard, obviously. Again, there are areas of the country that have those characteristics, but they're certainly in the minority.

Senator GRAHAM. Would you agree with me, right, that in June 2010 that most of Afghanistan is not governed in an effective manner where you have an honest police force and a non-corrupt, functioning government, that most of the country doesn't fall under that model?

General PETRAEUS. I think that's a fair assessment. Again, I'd want to sit with you with a map. I'd want to talk a little bit in a more nuanced fashion.

Senator GRAHAM. I'm just trying to get a baseline of where we're at in June 2010.

How many Al Qaeda members do we think reside in Afghanistan today?

General PETRAEUS. Probably very small number, certainly perhaps in the double digit numbers, that small, if any. Again, the nexus of Al Qaeda still we believe is very much in the certain agencies of the federally Administered Tribal Areas—

Senator GRAHAM. How many are over there?

General PETRAEUS.—of Pakistan.

Senator GRAHAM. How many are over there?

General PETRAEUS. Now we're into the hundreds. Again, if you want to talk—again, this is a question of how do you talk about the symbiotic relationships between these, because it can very easily extend into the thousands. There are trainees moving through there. Then there are relationships. How do you count the "support crew," the family members? As you'll recall, a number of these individuals literally married into tribes over there, and it becomes a very difficult accounting drill in a region where people survive by being chameleons at times.

Senator GRAHAM. Is it fair to say that Al Qaeda has moved next door?

General PETRAEUS. That is correct.

Senator GRAHAM. What is the number of big "T" Taliban that we're fighting in Afghanistan, give or minus?

General PETRAEUS. In the thousands, and I can provide you the whole laydown, because again it depends on how you define not just—what is the Afghan Taliban? Do you want to include the IMU? Do you include the Hakkani Network? Do you include Commander Nazir? Do you include—

Senator GRAHAM. Let's include them all. Let's include them all.

General PETRAEUS. So then you're well into—then you're well into the thousands, and then you have to start talking about the tiers of these different operatives. Again, the leadership, of course,

at the very top, that matters greatly, and then you get all the way down through the mid-level to the low-level, the five or ten dollar a day Taliban, as they say, that clearly can be broken off. And again, you could argue whether there is—it's not unlike Iraq. Again, you had a hard-core Al Qaeda in Iraq, you had various strands of insurgent elements.

Senator GRAHAM. So, long story short, into the thousands probably?

General PETRAEUS. Certainly.

Senator GRAHAM. Our policy of withdrawing in July of 2011, as I understand it, is that we're going to begin to withdraw in July 2011. The only thing in question is the pace of withdrawal. Is that fair?

General PETRAEUS. Indeed, Senator, as I described—and I want to get you a copy of the statement that you made this morning because I tried to provide a very precise description of that.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, is generally what I said fair?

General PETRAEUS. But July 2011 is when a process begins that includes the beginning of a "responsible drawdown" of the surge forces and includes the beginning of a process of transition of some tasks to Afghan officials and forces, based on conditions. And again, all of this based on conditions.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I want to make sure I do understand, because you told Senator Kaufman it's not a matter of if we're going to leave, it's just how quick we're going to leave. Is that not true?

General PETRAEUS. Based on conditions.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

General PETRAEUS. Given current projections as well. And again, Senator, I'd like you to read the statement that I gave at the outset.

Senator GRAHAM. I will.

In June 2012, do you anticipate us having more or less than 50,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan?

General PETRAEUS. Senator, I wouldn't hazard a projection. I think that would be speculative. Again, we're a year from the beginning of the process, which is a year from the date that you just stated. I think that it's just not productive. In fact, it could be unproductive.

Senator GRAHAM. One last. How does the Taliban view this policy? What intel do we have? Has this policy that we're going to begin to withdraw in July 2011—is there any indication that the enemy is encouraged by that plus the fact that NATO forces are beginning to withdraw?

General PETRAEUS. The enemy has a number of different emotions right now, Senator. One is that the enemy is under greater pressure than at any time before, and they are feeling this. We can—we have insights into this, as they say. And we have put some pretty big dents into elements of the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan and, as you know, there have been some pretty big dents in the extremist ranks, the senior leader ranks, in the federally Administered Tribal Areas as well.

Having said that, there is an awareness of the July 2011 date and there is some sense among some of them. They are watching NATO allies as well. They have specifically with their information

operations campaigns and their tactical campaigns at times, we think, targeted certain elements of the coalition, certain countries. So again, their strategy certainly is to do what they have done in the past, which is outlast whoever it is that is confronting them.

Again, that's why, as I said, I tried to be very precise this morning with what 2011 means. That's why your colleague Senator Lieberman I believe mentioned the words "vital national security interest," which again say something to all of us, as you know, that were featured in the President's speech at West Point, and why again we should come back to the fact as well that that was a message of urgency that complemented the message of enormous commitment.

Let's not forget that by the end of August this year, Senator, the number of forces on the ground, U.S. forces on the ground, will be well more than three times, triple, what was on the ground at the beginning of 2009. That is a substantial—that is vastly more than the surge in Iraq. The number of civilians has tripled as well, and the authorization that you have provided for the ANSF is a very substantial one also, 100,000 more ANSF. That is a symbol and a reflection of commitment as well.

That's what we have tried to convey in the region, by the way. We have sat down with all the regional leaders to ensure that there is not—and that's what—in my statement today I said let's be clear what July 2011 is and what it is not. It is not when we race for the exits and reach for the light switch.

Senator GRAHAM. I think what they are probably more certain of is that on the July 2011 date there will be less Americans to fight and less NATO troops to fight, and that's the policy. I think it's a huge mistake.

So thank you.

Ms. FLOURNOY. May I? If I could just add, one of the reasons we've entered into a very public and high profile strategic dialogue with our partners in Afghanistan and, frankly, in Pakistan as well, and we are issuing declarations out of that, is that we are trying to both flesh out and communicate the nature of an enduring commitment to this region and what that's going to look like, and the fact that we are not leaving any time soon, even though the nature and complexion of the commitment may change over time.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Before I call on Senator McCaskill—I think it may be working. Just in time. Senator McCaskill.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you. I think it shut down for a while because it was freezing to death. It's so cold in here.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you want to call the superintendent to check our heat?

Senator MCCASKILL. No, no. I'm fine.

Chairman LEVIN. We're going to be out of here before he gets the heat on.

Senator MCCASKILL. I'm fine, I'm fine.

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Senator MCCASKILL. Let me first start briefly—

Chairman LEVIN. We just lost it. Oh, it's on again.

Senator MCCASKILL. Briefly on some contracting issues. I know we've had a number of members talk about the private security

contracting and I'd like to touch on that and the police training. On the private security contracting, I take it, General Petraeus, that you are perfectly willing to say on the record that we need to get back to this being more of an inherently governmental function, as opposed to something that we're contracting out?

General PETRAEUS. I would—let me if I could just talk a little bit about the private security contractors, because there's obviously a reason that they're there and that is because they augment what our troops do, just as they did in Iraq. What we learned in Iraq we're trying to apply now in Afghanistan and have been for some time, and that is to make sure that we get them under the authorities, that they understand the rules, if you will, that you helped us with with the Defense Authorization Act. We use those in Iraq, as you'll recall, and even did at least I think two cases where we actually brought cases to court based on those authorities under the military commander because we had the jurisdiction over them.

We are doing that in Afghanistan as well, and also applying the efforts to coordinate their activities, to ensure they are very clear on what their "rules of engagement" or self-defense are, and that they are fully integrated into our battlefield awareness, our situational awareness, and command and control systems as well.

Now, General McChrystal has also said he would like to get rid of private security contractors, because in a perfect world again that would be an inherently governmental function. But the fact is that to do that requires—there's a reason they are securing convoys, logistics, and others. I contracted out my own security in Iraq when I was a three-star general because we didn't have enough military police in this one-off organization, the train and equip mission, to secure all those that were lower in rank than I was, and I had enough clout to be able to contract it out. They couldn't do that for themselves, so we gave them the MP unit that was designed for me.

That's the situation that leads to this, and again it's a reality out there, and of course it's a reality on the Department of State front as well.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, I just think it's something that we need to continue to underline.

General PETRAEUS. Correct.

Senator MCCASKILL. If we're going to give our incredibly strong leaders missions to accomplish on behalf of the United States of America, we have to continually bang the drum that we've got to have the resources there that are necessary to perform inherently governmental functions.

I've got to tell you, General Petraeus, it doesn't surprise me that you gave up your MP unit to contract out your security. But I think a whole lot of Americans wouldn't be comfortable with that. I mean, you're an incredible resource for our Nation.

General PETRAEUS. Well, it was when I was a three- star, not a four-star.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, three-stars—well, the reason you became a four-star is because you were an above- average three-star. And I think that it would be important for us to acknowledge that having—and I do want to get on the record an acknowledgment that we are pulling people out of the work force in Afghanistan

that we need in our army and in our local police departments, at higher pay, and sometimes they're not good guys.

General PETRAEUS. Right. And not only are we doing that there, and President Karzai and I had a conversation with Ambassador Holbrooke as well on the fact that in some cases we are investing in Afghanistan's human capital, helping train, educate provide skills to people, they return to their inherently governmental function, and then we compete with the Afghan government and in some cases take them away and put them on a contract to us as you name it, a doctor who's now an interpreter, a great governmental official who now becomes again, who knows, human terrain team or whatever.

So that is a conflict and it's something that Afghanistan has to address in terms they need some rules and regulation and policies, and we've got to be sensitive. I don't know if you heard our mention of the task force that we have formed.

Senator MCCASKILL. General Caldwell.

General PETRAEUS. This is one actually with Rear Admiral Kathleen DuSoe, who you will remember as the—at the time she was a one-star, Joint Contracting Command-Iraq commander. She is now a two-star and is going to go out and lead a task force that will complement what the contracting command in Afghanistan is doing to really get into the details of this and to look at some of these issues that are out there, also to get down to the subcontractors to the subcontractors, to follow the money, to find out how is it being doled out, who really is benefiting from this.

Senator MCCASKILL. That's great. And I know, Secretary Flournoy, you are aware that we've also asked you to put in the QDR now contracting plans, that in the defense authorization bill we're asking that the QDR include contracting. I think if we've learned anything over the last 5 years, we've learned that if we are going to be fighting a counterinsurgency far away contracting is an essential piece of that mission, and we clearly—if we haven't learned that lesson, then we're in real trouble.

Let me briefly on the Afghan National Police. I would certainly want there to be an acknowledgment somewhere that we may need to hold on to training local police as part of our fundamental core competency in going against a counterinsurgency. This notion that the State Department had it and then we give it back to Defense and then the State Department takes it back and now it's back with Defense, and now we've got a problem with the contract and we're struggling with whether or not we compete it or not because the State Department is trying to—here we are in the crucial months of a strategy that has been adopted by our Commander in Chief and by the military in Afghanistan and we frankly are flatfooted as it relates to our ability to contract with the Afghan National Police trainers.

General PETRAEUS. I could not agree with you more, Senator. We see this wherever there is what we call an industrial strength mission. And again, this is to take nothing away from State or INL. There are fantastic armies of one in those organizations, but they are not structured, they don't have the deployability, they don't have the personnel protection, all the rest of these that in a counterinsurgency situation—they're terrific for the normal type of

mission that has been performed in the past. But I lived through this in Iraq. I watched us try to do it with the traditional structures and organizations, and then ended up being the guy that had to take it over and pull it together. And we just ended up taking more and more and more tasks. Ultimately, even the overall ministry adviser missions ended up all being under the MN–STCCI organization there after we tried to do it the "normal" way and it didn't work.

So I think it's very important, and there's an issue of inter-agency doctrine there that is important, or inter- agency roles and missions. Again, I am one who, like Under Secretary Flournoy and Secretary Gates, has argued for more resources for State and these different elements that are trying to perform these missions as well.

If I could, there is one we have in fact formed. We formed it a couple years ago, in fact when I was at Fort Leavenworth. Another hat was added for the commander at Fort Leavenworth, the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance. This is designed for the military to capture what it is we have learned about the industrial strength efforts here, too, because again we have learned. Traditionally we did this with Green Berets, with Special Forces, who would go out and they'd train a couple battalions, maybe even a brigade or two, in some country in Africa or Latin America or something like this.

Now we are doing again bulk industrial strength efforts, and we're having to use conventional forces in very significant ways. They dwarf the numbers of our Green Berets and have taken over the bulk of these missions. So we have sought to capture the lessons from that as well, and I think we've done a reasonably good job in terms of doing that and then developing doctrine, the preparation of these forces for deployment and the rest of that as well.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you. I'm out of time, but I do want to let you know, I will submit for the record—I'm very concerned about the situation in Kyrgyzstan and the stability of that government, our relationship with that government as it relates to our airfield there. I know they've arrested the former president's son in the U.K. and I know there's allegations of serious skimming in terms of fuel contracts with that air base. I know we've got a backup of trains with fuel.

That northern supply route, we've taken a long time to get it in place and it looks precarious to me right now, and that is of great concern. So I will address some questions to the record and will look forward to learning where you think we are as it relates to the ethnic strife that we're now seeing in Central Asia and how that impacts on our mission in Afghanistan.

[The information referred to follows:]

General PETRAEUS. Could I very quickly just reassure that the northern distribution network, the bulk of which on the ground, virtually all of it, runs through Kazakhstan and Ubzekistan, is functioning very smoothly. There are no issues with it. In fact, we continue to increase. I think we're almost at the point of 70 percent now of our supplies—supplies, not all of the other military equipment, but supplies—run through the northern distribution network, which has helped enormously to take the pressures off the

routes that come through Karachi, through the Khyber Pass and the Shaman Gate. Also, by the way, the prices went down in Pakistan as a result of having competition. What a surprise.

Beyond that, the Kyrgyzstan issue, Manass is quite a distance from Osh. As you know, we have had no security issues whatsoever up there. We are responding to and working hand in glove with the State Department to be prepared if there is a determination of humanitarian assistance or to help in any other way, as we did I fact in the wake of the riots that resulted in the displacement of the government.

There's an OSD team that is working on replacing the contract. In the mean time, we have been able to keep the fuel, we have all of our tankers back up there flying again, and again touch wood that that can just continue as we are sorting out the way ahead on the contract front.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCaskill.

Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you both for your service to your country.

I'd like to go back to I think the fundamental question that the American people have at the time of this hearing, is that they're picking up information that things are not going well in Afghanistan. They are concerned about it. Members of Congress are picking that up. We're seeing it in the media, rightly or wrongly.

I guess first of all, Secretary Flournoy, I understood you to say that you believe the overall trajectory of our efforts there is in the right direction since I guess that we are making progress toward the goal that we'd like to see for Afghanistan. Is that a fair statement?

Ms. FLOURNOY. It is, Senator. I think we are moving in the right direction. The nature of the counterinsurgency work is there are going to be setbacks along the way. It's very difficult. But we are moving in the right direction.

Senator SESSIONS. And the reports from your perspective that are pointing out problems, and some are very real, still don't dissuade you in that view that overall we're still on the right trajectory?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, especially because we are still having the resources that the President ordered still coming into theater, still getting in place, and not fully engaged yet in the fight. As they come on line, I think that will add to our ability to create some momentum.

Senator SESSIONS. General Petraeus, I remember still so vividly the decision to execute the surge. The President had to ask our soldiers who expected to come home to extend for 3 months, one of the most bitter things that I remember having to go through. It's still emotional to me. I remember asking you, did you think we can be successful in Iraq. At the time that was a matter of doubt. I guess we can say that the trajectory of drawing the troops down so rapidly indicates that you were at least right, at least at this point in time.

So again I'll ask you: Do you think we can be successful in Afghanistan, given the current state of affairs there?

General PETRAEUS. I do. Again, it will not be easy, nor was it in any way, shape, or form easy in Iraq. It was very, very hard in Iraq. We took very tough losses in Iraq, as you well know from visiting many different times. And there were significant ups and downs.

I still remember, for example, way past the September hearings, well at the end of that year, for example, as various government leaders came to very senior U.S. officials and called for a very significant change in governmental leadership there. This is way beyond the point that anyone was disputing that there were significant security gains. So this is a tough, tough business and it is, as I described earlier, very much a roller-coaster ride, a roller-coaster experience. Those who are living it have to try to keep their eye on the horizon to ensure that the trajectory is generally upward. I agree with the Under Secretary that it is.

Senator SESSIONS. You talk about the State Department and their contributions, which are very valuable. But you also pointed out that the NGOs and our other government entities don't carry security with them and it's difficult for them to fulfil their responsibilities. In an insurgency situation in which the very safety of American personnel are still at stake, doesn't it make sense—or I'll just say it this way and I'll let you comment. It's my opinion that the people who are in these PRTs, the people who are out there, are mostly military and we need to understand that they have the ability and can effectively dispense aid for local projects and so forth, that can save lives. I think the military has really such an intensity of interest in this because their soldiers' lives are at stake.

So would you comment on that fundamental balance between where the reconstruction moneys should be allocated?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, I think your point is very well taken. Second, in fact PRTs by and large are significantly military. There are—

Senator SESSIONS. These are the provincial reconstruction teams.

General PETRAEUS. Provincial reconstruction teams are a mix of civilian and military. Typically you'll have civilian leadership and you'll have a number of very good civilian experts that bring skills that are hard to find at least within the military, although sometimes in our Reserve components we even have those skills.

But what we want to do is partner. And by the way, we do have significant skills in uniforms, folks who pack weapons and everything else and are prepared to go downrange, many of them again from our Reserve components, who perform civilian functions when not in uniform that lend themselves very well to these kinds of tasks.

Then on top of that, of course, we have the National Guard Agricultural Development Teams that have been superb. These are individuals who are farming experts. In some cases they're the leaders in the agriculture departments of their States or counties, and they have been very valuable over there. They come as an entire self-contained unit, so you have a unit that can move itself, feed itself, secure itself, and communicate and provides the expertise in the agricultural arena on top of that.

So this is a mix. That's the way it ought to be. We can dispense some of the money, and indeed the CERP funds are substantial when you talk about $1.1 billion in CERP or whatever. That's a significant amount of money to dispense. Certainly we coordinate then very carefully with AID and the other elements that are doing reconstruction and development work to make sure that we're not double- tapping a particular target or project.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, two things. First, I do believe often 90 percent of the PRTs are military personnel operating them. Number two, I guess the chairman asked you about why we aren't moving more on utilizing that money that's being asked for.

General PETRAEUS. In fact, we have a plan, as the Under Secretary explained, that will actually obligate a very substantial amount of this on top of what has been obligated already this year. And as obviously our footprint expands, as the inputs are completed, then the obligation rate will pick up as well.

Senator SESSIONS. Just briefly, there's been a slowdown in Kandahar. I see an AP article; according to McChrystal, he was going to slow down a bit. Karzai did go there recently, very recently, Sunday, and he hasn't done that enough in my opinion. But he went, had a meeting with the Kandahar leaders, as Senator Levin and I did a couple of years ago, met with a lot of their people. They're august, serious individuals, respected in their local areas. He called on them for support and a majority of the audience stood and raised their hands when he asked for their support.

I think General McChrystal saw that as a strong clear call for unity and that Karzai displayed "extraordinary ownership of the operation."

How would you evaluate that, and does that indicate that we're not doomed in Kandahar, but actually may be laying the groundwork for a successful operation?

General PETRAEUS. Well, that was indeed one of the most important of the political shaping operations. There was also another shura council that President Karzai held, about probably two and a half months ago now, even larger. It was from 1500 to 2,000 local elders and notables and leaders. It was so inclusive in fact that a number of them felt no reluctance in standing up with the TV cameras rolling and criticizing the Afghan government, in some cases President Karzai himself, who turned and pointed the finger at himself as well.

But this latest one, I've read the statement, the talking points, if you will, that President Karzai used that were translated. They're very good, and in fact I told the chairman I would get copies of them to the committee.

We had a videoteleconference in fact coincidentally with General McChrystal yesterday morning, the weekly that's done with the Secretary of Defense and the rest of us. And he felt quite encouraged by it also.

The fact is I always felt that Kandahar was going to take months and months and months. It's not a revelation to me that this will go into the winter. That's what I have always expected it would, having been on the ground in Kandahar and done it so very recently, I think a month and a half, 2 months ago most recently,

and walked around and talked to the governor and talked to other leaders there as well.

So again, he's going about it. He's changing slightly how he's going to start by doing more focused training and partnering with some Afghan forces before they launch their portion of the tactical operation. That's very sensible to me. Again, I don't see that as extending the overall time line necessarily. That's a component of the plan that I think a tactical commander has every reason to just as he sees fit.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Sessions.

Senator LeMieux.

Senator BEN NELSON. Senator Ben Nelson:

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.,

Thank you, Secretary Flournoy, General Petraeus. Thank you for your service. Good to see you again. About a month ago you were kind enough to host me and Senator Nelson at CENTCOM and we talked about a variety of issues, and I want to kind of follow on what my colleague from Alabama was just discussing in talking about President Karzai.

When we had that meeting, we talked about your confidence in President Karzai as a partner for our country in this effort to fight the Taliban and fight Al Qaeda. These recent comments that President Karzai made in Kandahar are welcomed, but they follow his comments that were reported around the 10th of this month that he had lost faith in the U.S.'s ability to defeat the Taliban.

I wanted to get an update from you about your confidence level in our partnership and in his leadership in fighting this war.

General PETRAEUS. Well, Senator, thanks and great to see you again as well.

If I could just start off by saying that I think that the "statement" that he's lost faith in the U.S. is a newspaper account, not certainly a quote directly from him, and it is more a characterization from some second and thirdhand sources, and it does not square, frankly, with what my contacts with him in recent months would have predicted, nor what General McChrystal reports, nor the others who have very frequent contact with him in Kabul.

Again, the example of the shura that was held in Kandahar is very significant. That is, that's the next important milestone in setting the political conditions for the conduct of the military operations, recognizing that many of the security challenges in Kandahar are related to political or economic disputes, tensions, friction, and so forth. So that's a very significant step forward.

It doesn't mean the Taliban's all going to turn around and bow in his direction by any means. They will continue their campaign undoubtedly of trying to intimidate, in some cases assassinate and attack our soldiers and our Afghan partners. But this is very important in getting the people on the side of the government, knowing what is going to happen, understanding. And he also didn't hold out rosy futures. He said this will be difficult, we're going to need to fight the Taliban together, etcetera.

At the end of the day, his success is our success. So working and very clearly following the President's guidance a couple months

ago, whenever that was, that we indeed have to support the leader of the sovereign country that we're trying to help.

Senator LEMIEUX. So you're still as confident in the partnership as you were when we last met?

General PETRAEUS. Yes, yes. Clearly there is an issue with the resignation of the minister of interior and their intelligence service, the NDS. We know those individuals. We've all worked with them. They're all regarded—we all regard them as competent. But I think again before we start judging what that will do to those ministries, to the overall effort, we've got to see who the replacements are, judge their competence, their ethnicity, because again President Karzai is very sensitive that they can't both be Pashtu.

For what it's worth, the discussions that we're aware of, some of which Americans have participated in, as various candidates have been considered indicate that the replacements will be competent individuals and individuals certainly that we have confidence in and can work with.

Ms. FLOURNOY. If I could, Senator, we had President Karzai and 14 of his cabinet members here in May for a strategic dialogue. They left with a very clear sense of a longer term U.S. commitment. We were talking about activities that will extend over the next 5 to 10 years in security assistance, in governance, in education, in economics, and the full range of a longer term strategic relationship. And they left with no question, I think, about understanding that we see that as a vital interest for the United States.

Senator LEMIEUX. That goes to the question of the time line. I know that some of my other colleagues have already questioned you about that. How many of the troops now are deployed of this surging effort?

General PETRAEUS. Of the final 30,000 that will take us up to that 98,000 figure—and again keeping in mind that we started in January 2009 with 30 to 31,000, so this will be a more than tripling of the force on the ground. The Secretary of Defense, as has been discussed in here, has some flex factor as required too for emerging force protection needs and other critical requirements. We're about almost at the 21,000 of the additional 30,000 on the ground. This is actually slightly ahead of schedule in terms of personnel and in terms of equipment, which is somewhat remarkable given the Icelandic volcanic eruptions, the Haiti obviously emergency relief operation, and some other challenges, including the issues at the Manass transit center with fuel of a month or so ago.

And yet it has all stayed on track. What we call Transportation Nation, the great Transportation Command led by General Duncan McNabb, the Logistics Nation led by a host of different individuals, and so forth, they have performed miracles, and in fact we're issuing equipment early to the brigade that is moving into the Kandahar area now.

Senator LEMIEUX. When do you expect the full deployment to be accomplished?

General PETRAEUS. All of the 30,000 required by the end of August will be on the ground by the end of August. There is one element, a headquarters, that is not required by that time, so we obviously won't put it in. It goes in about a month later, although we

could get it in there. But it doesn't rotate until after that, although it is part of the 30,000.

Senator LEMIEUX. And do you expect that that amount of troops then fully deployed by August will be sufficient complement to what you need to accomplish the mission?

General PETRAEUS. That's correct. In fact, General McChrystal has in a letter to the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee stated that this will enable us to be what's required to carry out the strategy, again recognizing that, as I said, if there are emergent needs we will always ask for those. That's our obligation to our troopers. In fact, Secretary Gates has this flex factor that could enable him to satisfy some of that at his level.

Senator LEMIEUX. I would expect that as we come into the summer of 2011, if you also felt that you needed to keep that level of troops on the ground, that you would make that recommendation to the President?

General PETRAEUS. In fact, that's correct, Senator. In fact, in the statement that I made up front, and we'll make sure that you get a copy of that, I stated that we'll look at the conditions on the ground at that time, I and I'm sure General McChrystal, Admiral Mullen, all the other military leaders involved, will provide our most forthright and best professional military advice, and then at the end of the day also support the ultimate policy decision made by the President.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you. Thank you again for your service.

My time is up. I wanted to also talk to you about Iran and what their influence is currently in Afghanistan, so I will submit some questions for the record to you.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, sir.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator LeMieux.

I'm just going to end with a final comment about a point which has been I think fairly made here by Senator Graham, that the Taliban knows that we're going to have fewer U.S. troops in Afghanistan starting in July of 2011. Your answer I think is also fair and accurate, that how many fewer and the speed of the reductions will, as the President has directed, be based on conditions at that time.

It's also true that the Taliban knows that the Afghan army, which is an army that the people support, is going to be far, far bigger in July of 2011 than it is now. I think it's also true that the Afghan government understands that those reductions which will begin in 2011—I think the point of them is, one of the points, is that that will give to that government a greater sense of urgency about their responsibility to take their own security on as their obligation more than it is ours. Is that something you would agree with, General?

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely, yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary?

Ms. FLOURNOY. And they want to fully exercise their sovereignty, including providing security for their own people.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, we've done well. If there's a quick comment by either of my colleagues?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I might, just to follow up in terms of messages we might send to the Taliban. Am I correct—I don't expect this to happen, but am I correct that General McChrystal understands that if for some reason between now and July 2011 he feels he actually needs additional American troops, that he is free to request that?

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And then the final question. There has been some discussion about different ways in which as we head toward July 2011 we can reassure both the Afghans, their enemies, and the region of our longer term commitment. I know that the last time President Karzai was here some of us talked to him and there's some interest, it seems to me, as you know, I'm sure, in the Afghans in seeking a longer term security relationship with us, including potentially becoming designated as a major non- NATO ally, and that would go beyond July 2011, might obligate us to some longer term funding of the Afghan National Security Forces, for instance.

Secretary Flournoy, is that on the table?

Ms. FLOURNOY. That is on the table. We are working together with our Afghan partners on a strategic framework for the relationship mid to long-term. As we develop that, we will certainly be consulting with you here. We would also like to make that framework a public framework, so it's very clear, our intention for an enduring and substantial relationship is very clear to everyone, Afghans and Taliban and others in the region.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you.

Are you supportive of that, General?

General PETRAEUS. Yes. In fact, that has been discussed and really is being worked. I don't want to prejudge the policy, but certainly discussions have been made.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Sure. That's very encouraging. I think that's a very constructive way to go. If I might just draw the parallel, as new countries have come into NATO, as you know, the understanding has been that this is an exchange, that you get the value of NATO or being a major non-NATO ally, for instance—and one of the things that you do in response is to improve your own military and indeed to reform your government. There might be a very constructive sort of quid pro quo here. But I thank you for that and I look forward to hearing more about it.

Thanks for an excellent morning of testimony, really very helpful and ultimately realistically encouraging. I think, as we said earlier, if you accept the goal and accept the principle that we have a vital national security interest in succeeding in Afghanistan, as President Obama has decided, then we've just got to figure out how to achieve that goal.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Lieberman.

Let me kind of support something that Senator Lieberman was driving at. I have put huge emphasis on the importance of getting that Afghan army trained, equipped, enlarged, and taking the lead in operations, including in Kandahar. That's been my focus from the beginning of this effort in Afghanistan. And I very much have felt that that decision to set a date for beginning of reductions in

July of 2011 is essential in order to energize the Afghan government to do what only they can do, which is to take responsibility, principal responsibility, for their own security.

I believe that deeply. I think that's an inherent part of counterinsurgency that that happen, and the support of the Afghan army by the Afghan people is there and it is going to make a huge difference in terms of success.

I also very much support a long-term relationship with Afghanistan, both security relationship and economic and political relationship. I don't view that as being in any way inconsistent with my belief that the Afghan government must get a message of urgency, of taking responsibility security-wise and politically for their own country.

I again am very comfortable in supporting both of those positions. In fact, I think they're totally not only consistent; I think they depend on each other, because I think success in Afghanistan is going to depend on the willingness of the Afghan government not only to take responsibility for their own security, but to take responsibility for decent governance inside of Afghanistan that will win the respect of the Afghan people.

So I wanted to add that because, with all my emphasis on the Afghan army taking the lead and taking responsibility, I do believe at the same time that they should understand that we have a long-term commitment and those of us that even want to place greater responsibility on them share that belief in a long-term commitment, security-wise, economically, politically, between us and the Afghans.

We thank you both. It's been a long couple days and it's been very, very helpful and constructive. We appreciate it. Thanks so much.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:03 p.m., the committee adjourned.]