

**NOMINATIONS OF GEN JAMES D. THURMAN,
USA, FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE
OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER,
UNITED NATIONS COMMAND/COMBINED
FORCES COMMAND/U.S. FORCES-KOREA;
VADM WILLIAM H. McRAVEN, USN, TO BE
ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL
OPERATIONS COMMAND; AND LT. GEN.
JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC, TO BE GENERAL
AND COMMANDER, INTERNATIONAL SECUR-
ITY ASSISTANCE FORCE/COMMANDER, U.S.
FORCES-AFGHANISTAN**

TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2011

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Webb, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Blumenthal, McCain, Chambliss, Brown, Portman, Ayotte, Collins, Graham, and Cornyn.

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

Majority staff members present: Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; Gerald J. Leeling, counsel; Peter K. Levine, general counsel; Jason W. Maroney, counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; and Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: David M. Morriss, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Christian D. Brose, professional staff member; Michael J. Sistik, research assistant; Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Christine G. Lang and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: Christopher Griffin, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Tressa Guenov, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Casey Howard, assistant to Senator Udall; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Joanne McLaughlin, as-

assistant to Senator Manchin; Ethan Saxon, assistant to Senator Blumenthal; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Joseph Lai, assistant to Senator Wicker; Charles Prosch, assistant to Senator Brown; Brent Bombach, assistant to Senator Portman; Brad Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte; Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins; Sergio Sarkany, assistant to Senator Graham; and Dave Hanke and Russ Thomasson, assistants to Senator Cornyn.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

The committee meets this morning to consider the three military nominations for command of some of the most critical and challenging missions facing our Nation.

Our witnesses this morning on what is truly a joint panel are General James Thurman, U.S. Army, nominated to be commander, United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea; Vice Admiral William McRaven, U.S. Navy, for appointment to the grade of admiral and nominated to be commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, or SOCOM; and Lieutenant General John Allen, U.S. Marine Corps, for appointment to the grade of general and nominated to be commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

Thank you all for your many years of great service to this Nation and your willingness to serve once again.

Let me also extend our thanks to your families, whose support is so essential to your and our Nation's success. As is the tradition of this committee, I would invite each of you introduce any family members or friends who may be here with you when you make your opening remarks.

General Thurman's nomination as the next Commander of U.S. Forces in Korea comes at a time of significant change and simmering tension on the Korean Peninsula. Our commitment to peace and stability in the region remains steadfast, and our alliance with the Republic of Korea is as strong as ever.

The strength of that alliance will be particularly important over the next few years, as we are embarked on an ambitious realignment of our forces on the peninsula and need to deal with the unpredictable and aggressive behavior of a North Korean regime that continues to follow the destructive path of an international pariah.

General Thurman's long experience in positions of leadership and with maintaining well-trained, equipped, and ready soldiers provide the kind of foundation and professional skills that will be required of the U.S. commander in Korea.

Vice Admiral William McRaven is nominated to be the ninth commander of U.S. Special Operations Command. Admiral McRaven has commanded at every level in the special operations community, most recently as commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, and served in various staff and interagency positions, including time with the National Security Council. Incoming Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has credited Admiral McRaven with being the "real commander" of the extraordinary operation that killed Osama bin Laden.

Admiral McRaven has been nominated to be commander of SOCOM at a time of exceptionally high operational tempo growth for special operations forces. As the current commander of SOCOM, Admiral Olson, told the committee earlier this year, "Since 9/11, our manpower has roughly doubled, our budget has roughly tripled, and our overseas deployments have quadrupled." Admiral Olson has also indicated that the force is beginning to show signs of "fraying around the edges."

Admiral McRaven, the committee looks forward to hearing your thoughts on how the stress on special operations personnel can be mitigated, given the demand for their unique skills. The committee is also interested in your views on the future of special operations and the challenges that special operations personnel are likely to face, and will the announced drawdown of forces in Afghanistan impact special operations forces, given that special operations forces depend heavily on their counterparts in the general purpose forces for many of the enabling capabilities that they need to be successful?

In addition, the committee would be interested in your thoughts on the employment of the range of special operations capabilities against al Qaeda and associated groups outside of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. Director Panetta has expressed concern about al Qaeda's shifting to other places, most notably in Yemen, Somalia, and North Africa, and I hope that you will address what you see as the appropriate role for special operations forces in those areas.

In announcing Lieutenant General Allen's nomination, President Obama called him "the right commander to take over the vital mission in Afghanistan." If confirmed, Lieutenant General Allen will have some big boots to fill in succeeding General Petraeus as commander of the 49-member International Security Assistance Force coalition and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

Like General Petraeus, General Allen brings an in-depth understanding of the complexities of the counterinsurgency effort based on his own experience as the commander in Anbar Province in Iraq. Working with the Sunni Awakening, the Marines in Anbar succeeded in getting local Sunni tribal leaders to reject the insurgency and instead support the Iraqi government.

And as the deputy commander at U.S. Central Command, General Allen has developed a regional perspective on issues affecting the mission in Afghanistan. He will be the first Marine to serve as the top commander in Afghanistan.

General Allen's number-one priority will be implementing President Obama's decision last week to accelerate the transition of security responsibility to Afghan forces and to start bringing U.S. surge forces home. As outlined by the President, 10,000 U.S. troops will be withdrawn by the end of this year, and the remaining 23,000 U.S. surge forces will be drawn down by September of next year.

The President's decision keeps the pressure on Afghan leaders to assume more and more responsibility for their security, just as the establishment of a date to begin reductions had the effect of creating a sense of urgency on the part of the Afghan government to take responsibility for Afghanistan's security. The assumption of

that responsibility by the Afghans is the path to a successful mission and a stable, non-Taliban controlled Afghanistan.

The President's transition decision was buttressed by the significant gains that coalition and Afghan forces, partnered together, have made in the last year in reclaiming former Taliban strongholds, particularly in the south.

Another major change in the last year is the surge in Afghan security forces. There are now 100,000 more Afghan security forces than 18 months ago when President Obama announced the U.S. surge, and another 70,000 Afghan soldiers and police who will be trained and equipped by the end of next summer, when all 33,000 U.S. surge troops will have withdrawn.

In their testimony to Congress last week, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen characterized the President's decision as "more aggressive and incurring more risk" than Admiral Mullen had initially recommended. However, Admiral Mullen felt that, "Only the President in the end can really determine the acceptable level of risk that we must take," because, as he put it, "The truth is, we would have run other kinds of risks by keeping more forces in Afghanistan longer."

And among those other risks, Admiral Mullen said, are the risks of perpetuating greater Afghan dependence on our forces and inhibiting the growth and capability and confidence on the part of Afghan forces. The committee will be interested in hearing from General Allen as to his views of the President's decision.

Again, gentlemen, our great thanks and our gratitude go to each of you and to your families.

Senator McCain?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me thank our very distinguished witnesses, who are each nominated for a military command that is essential to the security of our Nation and our allies. And I want to thank each of them for their many years of dedicated service and for stepping forward again when called upon to serve when and where their Nation needs them most.

All of you will help lead a force that has been at war for 10 years. We honor the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, and we pray that they will return safely and successful in their missions.

General Thurman, you have been nominated to lead our forces on the Korean Peninsula at a tense time in this long-running conflict and a critical time for our alliance with the Republic of Korea. We thank General Sharp for his leadership over the past few years.

The U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance has never been better and stronger. But the situation on the peninsula has rarely been as dangerous as it is today. The transition of power in North Korea from father to son has contributed to a series of provocative acts of aggression against our South Korean allies.

It is clear to me that if there is another such provocation, Korea will not turn the other cheek. This has serious implications for the United States as we are bound as treaty allies to the defense of South Korea. We remain as committed as ever to our responsibil-

ities. And it is for this reason, and especially in light of the heightened state of alert and increased tensions, that we need to take a hard look at our current plans for U.S. force realignment and tour normalization on the Korean Peninsula.

This committee needs a better understanding of this major undertaking, the costs of which are significant and growing. But ultimately, what must guide U.S. defense policy vis-a-vis the Republic of Korea is our obligation to ensure our mutual security and success.

Admiral McRaven, what you had achieved in your distinguished career is already extraordinary before May 2, 2011. But on that day, by leading the mission that killed Osama bin Laden, you and your men won an enduring place in American military history. So to say that I am confident in your ability to lead U.S. Special Operations Command is an understatement.

Admiral Olson has done an exceptional job, and I am confident that you will build on his great work, if confirmed. The leader of al Qaeda is dead, but a new one has taken his place. Your mission will be to help ensure he meets the same end.

At the same time, a series of deadly franchises, especially al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, continues to threaten the security of our homeland, our interests, our friends, and our allies. We look to SOCOM to continue planning and synchronizing our global operations and to continue building up the capacity of our partners to defeat our enemies far away from our homeland.

Finally, General Allen, you have perhaps the biggest boots to fill in General David Petraeus, but we know that General Petraeus personally recommended you and supported you as his successor to lead our mission in Afghanistan. I can think of no higher compliment to pay a military officer.

The challenge that you will face in Afghanistan was always going to be significant. But I fear this challenge has only been increased unnecessarily by the drawdown of U.S. forces that the President announced last week.

I agree with the President that we are making amazing progress in Afghanistan. This progress is real, and it is remarkable. But as our commanders on the ground all point out, it is also fragile and reversible.

Our commanders also say that next year's fighting season will be decisive. This will be our opportunity to consolidate our gains in southern Afghanistan while increasing numbers of U.S. forces shift their main effort to eastern Afghanistan, where the Haqqani Network, al-Qaeda, and other regional militant groups are still present and operating actively.

However, under the President's plan, which calls for having all of our surge units out of Afghanistan by September, these troops will begin flowing out of Afghanistan right at the time that the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and their terrorist allies begin to step up their operations next spring and summer. At the moment when our troops could finish our main objective and begin ending our combat operations in a responsible way, the President has now decided to deny them the forces that our commanders believe they need to accomplish their objective.

I hope I am wrong. I hope this decision will not endanger the hard-won gains that our troops have made or the decisive progress that they still need to make next year. But I am very concerned that the President's decision poses an unnecessary risk to the progress we have made thus far, to our mission, and to our men and women in uniform.

After all that we have given to this mission—the money we have committed to it, the decade we have devoted to it, and the precious lives we have lost in it—why would we do anything now that puts our mission at greater risk of failure? By drawing down U.S. forces those several months early so that they miss the next fighting season, how much additional risk are we incurring, and how could it negatively affect our mission? Those are just some of the questions we must answer at this critical moment.

It is a pleasure to have all of you before the committee today. You all make me proud of America's armed forces and confident about their future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

Let me now call on our witnesses for their opening statements. General Thurman?

STATEMENT OF GEN JAMES D. THURMAN, USA, FOR RE-APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED NATIONS COMMAND/COMBINED FORCES COMMAND/U.S. FORCES-KOREA

General THURMAN. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and other distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear here today.

I would like to thank the Secretary of Defense and the President for nominating me to be the next commander, United Nations Command; commander, United States-Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command; and commander, United States Forces Korea.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee, as well as our alliance partner, the Republic of Korea, to address the challenges and opportunities we face together on the strategically important Korean Peninsula. Recognizing that a strong United States-Republic of Korea alliance is one of the most important factors for maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region at large, I will, if confirmed, continue the work of my predecessors directed at sustaining strong ties with our Korean partner.

I would also like to thank this committee for the support it has provided to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, our Department of Defense civilians and their families, who selflessly serve our great Nation both at home and abroad. As the commander of United States Army Forces Command, which is the Army's largest organization, I am all too well aware of the support this committee has provided and the difference this support has made to the men and women who serve our country in the armed forces.

If confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure that those serving us in the Republic of Korea will receive the very best working, living, and training environment that can possibly be provided. If con-

firmed, I look forward to working with this committee to achieve this commitment.

I would also like to thank my wife, Dee, for over 37 years. She has been magnificent in raising our two daughters, Jaime and Carey, who are now both married to Army officers and bringing up our four grandchildren.

Dee has also selflessly supported our soldiers and their families. Like other military spouses, she is truly an unsung hero. I am blessed to have her love and commitment as I continue to serve our Nation.

With that, I thank the committee again for allowing me to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Thurman follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. General, thank you so much.

Admiral McRaven?

STATEMENT OF VADM WILLIAM H. McRAVEN, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Admiral McRAVEN. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear here today.

I am deeply honored that the President has nominated me to serve as the next SOCOM commander. And if confirmed, I promise you that I will work tirelessly to ensure that SOCOM continues to provide the American people the finest special operations forces in the world.

Joining me today is my wife, Georgeann. She has been a constant source of strength to me and to the men and women and their families with whom I have served. I have been extremely lucky to have her by my side for the past 33 years.

I have three children as well. My oldest son is a captain in the Air Force. My number-two son is completing his Ph.D. in California. And my daughter is going into her junior year in college.

I have been very fortunate to have spent the past 34 years in special operations, and I can tell you from my personal experience that the decision by the Congress to establish U.S. Special Operations Command was the best thing that ever happened to SOF. As a result of your efforts and your interest in the well-being of U.S. special operations soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and civilians, we have the best-trained, the best-equipped, and the most experienced special operations force in the history of the United States and possibly the world.

The special operations soldier's unparalleled contributions to the security of this great Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world are a direct reflection of the support USSOCOM has received from the Congress over SOCOM's 24-year history. I want to personally thank you for that support.

If confirmed, I will continue to train, organize, equip, deploy, and, when directed by the Secretary of Defense, employ this force across the spectrum of conflict. We will at all times be prepared to answer the Nation's call with experienced forces whose intellect, maturity, and courage allows them to operate in politically and militarily complex environments—men and women who relish chal-

lenges and who willingly go where the threat to America is at its greatest.

However, as good as this force is, I know that, if confirmed, one of my primary responsibilities will be to ensure the SOF members and their families are well taken care of, both physically and emotionally. In his 2011 posture hearing, Admiral Eric Olson noted that as a result of 10 years of continuous combat, the force is frayed at the edges.

Admiral Olson and his wife, Marilyn, were exceptionally engaged in the welfare of the SOF soldiers and their families, particularly our wounded warriors. And if confirmed, Georgeann and I will follow their lead and put forth every effort to ensure the well-being of the individuals under my command and the families that support them.

It has been my privilege to serve my entire career in special operations. And in all those years, I have never ceased to be amazed by the courage and sacrifice of the men and women in special operations. I am humbled to be considered for assignment as their commander.

Thank you very much, and I am standing by for any questions. [The prepared statement of Admiral McRaven follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Admiral.
General Allen?

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC, TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE/COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES-AFGHANISTAN

General ALLEN. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today.

I am truly honored to be nominated by the President to command the International Security Assistance Force and United States forces in Afghanistan. I am grateful to the members of Congress, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their confidence, the support, and assistance extended to me since my nomination.

And of course, I am and have always been humbled by the incredible sacrifice of our servicemembers and their families, who have continued to serve our Nation despite many hardships.

Mr. Chairman, at this point, I must note the vital role of this committee and its leadership in providing crucial support to our men and women who have so honorably served in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thank you for that support.

I would also like to start by acknowledging and thanking General David Petraeus, whose outstanding service as the commander of ISAF has been so essential to generating the progress that we have seen in Afghanistan. If confirmed, I will seek to emulate his principled and resolute leadership. And if he is confirmed to be the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, I look forward to a very close working relationship with him and with the rest of the intelligence community.

I would also like to express my admiration for Ambassador Eikenberry and his team in Kabul for their untiring dedication to the mission. And if confirmed, I look forward to working with my

friend, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, with whom I served in Iraq, and the NATO senior civilian representative, Ambassador Simon Gass, to ensure that our military and civilian efforts are closely synchronized.

I would also like to express my profound admiration for all of the partner nations and their forces in Afghanistan. With 49 ISAF nations from all over the globe currently serving in Afghanistan and supporting that mission, the scale of this coalition is truly historic.

As General Petraeus has noted, Afghan and ISAF forces have halted the insurgency's momentum in much of the country and reversed it in key areas. Based on my work as the deputy commander of the Central Command, numerous visits to the theater over the past 3 years, including last month, and extensive discussions with senior military and civilian leaders, I share in that assessment.

Afghan and coalition forces now largely control the battle space in strategically important areas such as Kabul, where one-fifth of the Afghan population lives; in and around Kandahar, the spiritual and historic sanctuary of the Taliban; and in Helmand, a former Taliban stronghold; and in many other key areas.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to exert unprecedented pressure on the insurgency, with a variety of efforts, including the Afghan local police initiative, which is mobilizing communities to defend themselves; Afghan-led efforts to reintegrate former fighters, with nearly 1,900 reintegrated to date having joined the peace process; and a variety of governance and development initiatives focused on establishing the conditions to achieve long-term security.

Much of this progress has been enabled by and increasingly led by the Afghan National Security Forces, who are conducting their own surge. They are currently on track to meet the 2011 goal of 305 troops—305,000 troops, and substantially more and more capable Afghan forces will be trained and fielded over the next year as well.

Although there are reasons to be cautiously optimistic, there are also many challenges remaining. Insurgents still maintain lethal capabilities, and the fighting will continue to be intense in some of the areas as the enemy seeks to recover lost territory. Transnational terrorist groups like al Qaeda will seek to establish new bases and safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and corruption and other challenges to good governance will still need to be addressed.

Still, none of these challenges are insurmountable. As the President announced last week, and in fulfillment of his West Point commitments, we will begin the drawdown of surge forces next month. Although I was not a participant in those discussions, I support the President's decision and believe that we can accomplish our objectives.

If confirmed, I will offer my candid assessment to the chain of command on the current state of the conflict, as well as provide options with respect to the President's goals in accomplishing this strategy.

Even once the security surge forces have been removed, there will still be some 68,000 U.S. troops and thousands of international forces in Afghanistan, not to mention some 70,000 more Afghan

forces, which will join the fight in the next 15 months, at the same time the U.S. and NATO are both discussing long-term strategic partnerships with Afghanistan. This reality sends an important message of commitment to the Afghan people, as well as a sense of urgency that Afghans must take more responsibility for their security.

I would like to close by thanking my family and, most importantly, my wife, Kathy, who is with me here this morning, for her years of dedicated and loyal service to our magnificent troops and their families. Kathy raised our two daughters, Betty and Bobbie, often alone, during a career where we have been married for 34 years. And they have grown up, those two young ladies, to be wonderful and independent women and citizens.

I would also like to add that Kathy and I understand the sacrifices of war, with both our families having experienced conflicts firsthand across the span of American history. If confirmed, I assure you and all the military families that I will do everything I can to provide our forces in Afghanistan with the resources they need to accomplish the mission and to return home safely.

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee, it has been a great honor to appear before you this morning. And I am prepared to answer your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Allen follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General Allen. And now, let me ask the three of you the standard questions that we ask of our witnesses.

Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the administration in power? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Have you assumed any duties or undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation outcome? [All witnesses answered in the negative.]

Will you ensure your staff complies with deadlines established for requested communications, including questions for the record in hearings? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Will those witnesses be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify upon request before this committee? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee or to consult with the committee regarding the basis for any good-faith delay or denial in providing such documents? [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Okay, let us try a 7-minute first round. We have votes, three votes at noon, which may complicate this a bit. We will see how it works out.

General Allen, let me start with you. You indicated in your questions before the hearing and your testimony that you agree and support the President's decision on U.S. troop reductions in Afghanistan. Can you tell us a little more why you do agree with this decision?

General ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, the President, in December 2009, enunciated the strategy, a result of a deliberate process of the review of the situation in Afghanistan, which was to be resourced, well, in a number of different ways, but in particular with the surge forces. At that time, he announced that those surge forces would begin to be withdrawn in July 2011.

There were two points, I think, that were made importantly in that speech. One was that the nature of this resourcing of that strategy was a clear signal of U.S. support to Afghanistan and our intent to provide Afghanistan the opportunity and the time to begin to develop its Afghan National Security Forces to provide for the security of the country.

But also the other aspect of his announcement was that by beginning to withdraw those surge forces in July of '11, it sent a message of urgency to the Afghans that they must begin to take ownership of their security themselves. So the President's announcement in West Point set the schedule ultimately for the withdrawal of those forces.

This was augmented ultimately in the meeting in Lisbon, the conference in Lisbon in November 2010, where the schedule for transition was developed, where our security forces would provide ultimately the cover for the Afghan forces as the transition of terrain in Afghanistan proceeded from 2011 to 2014. In essence, at the end of 2014, Afghan forces being in the lead across the country.

That brings us to the President's announcement. We expected that he would begin the process of the withdrawal. He has made that announcement. As General Petraeus and the Chairman said last week, we are accounting for that number.

We will begin the implementation. He has begun the implementation in Afghanistan with his ISAF staff to implement the President's decision. And I support that because that decision was timely. It provides a full accounting for the President's commitments in December 2009.

And as we begin the implementation, we will continue to have 68,000 American forces on the ground, an upswing of about 70,000 Afghan National Security Forces, and we anticipate that this decision by the President can be accounted for within the current strategy, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. How important, General, is it to the success of the mission in Afghanistan that the Afghan security forces take ownership of the responsibility for their security?

General ALLEN. Chairman, it is essential. In the end, our strategy has envisioned that the Afghan security forces would take ownership all along.

And in the aftermath of the Lisbon conference, the intent was, as agreed to by the member nations of the coalition and by President Karzai, that that transition would be completed by 2014, where ISAF forces would support the development and the deployment of the Afghan National Security Forces and by the end of

2014 be in a position to provide strategic overwatch of that. So it is essential to the strategy, Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. And now let me ask you, Admiral, do you see the President's announced reductions as creating problems for special operations forces in Afghanistan?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I do not. As General Allen mentioned, there is still going to be a sizable U.S. force and coalition force there. For SOF to operate effectively in Afghanistan, we need to make sure that we continue to have the infrastructure, which will remain in place and, frankly, the enablers, which are always critical to us.

And if confirmed, I will work with General Allen to make sure that we balance the counterterrorism and the SOF requirements with the conventional requirements so that at the end of the day, we are still able to put pressure on the enemy. So, no, sir, I do not think the drawdown will affect SOF.

Chairman LEVIN. Admiral, what is the role of Afghan special forces in the counterterrorism operations that have been carried out? And how would you assess the capability of the Afghan forces?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. There is a number of different Afghan SOF forces, if you will. There are the Afghan commandos, which are trained by U.S. Army Special Forces personnel, and they are clearly some of the elite Afghan forces. They are magnificent soldiers.

There are Afghan special forces, which are the Green Beret counterpart. And then with the force that I operated with, we had what we referred to as the Afghan partner unit, or APU. These were Afghans that went on target with the JSOC forces forward to ensure that we had an Afghan that was, if you will, going through the door first, that was making first contact with the locals, in order to make sure that we kind of protected the culturally sensitive issues or items that were on target.

So the Afghans that we have worked with are top notch, to be honest with you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. And how important is it to our counterterror effort and to our counterinsurgency effort that they be in the lead in that way, the Afghan special forces be in the lead?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. I think it is very important. As General Allen mentioned, at the end of the day, the Afghans have got to take ownership for the security of Afghanistan, and I would say the same thing applies to special operations.

At the end of the day, we have to make sure that the Afghans take the lead in special operations, recognizing that, right now, we still need to maintain a fair amount of overwatch. But over time, hopefully, that overwatch will diminish and the Afghans will take a larger role in that.

Chairman LEVIN. And you feel they are capable of doing so?

Admiral MCRAVEN. I do, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Let me ask both of you, Admiral, General Allen, the safe haven enjoyed by the Haqqani Network in Pakistan continues to provide the freedom for that group to launch attacks against the United States and coalition troops in Afghanistan.

You both, I believe, have talked to Pakistani military leaders. Why do they refuse—why does Pakistan refuse to take on the Haqqani Network? And in your judgment, is that going to change?

Let me start with you, General Allen.

General ALLEN. Sir, I think it is a complex answer that we would receive from them. It is a function probably of capacity. But it might also be a function of their hedging, whether they have determined that the United States is going to remain in Afghanistan, whether our strategy will be successful or not.

At some point, as we have emphasized to the Pakistanis, we have got to bring pressure to bear on this insurgent safe haven. And in the end, what we would hope is that they would listen to our desires for them to do that, would muster the capacity and the capability, and ultimately put pressure on the Haqqani Network to deny them that safe haven from which that element of the Taliban can move across the border and conduct operations against ISAF and against the Afghan National Security Forces as they take over more of the security.

Chairman LEVIN. Admiral, do you want to comment? Is this likely to change in the near term?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I don't think it is likely to change. I would agree with General Allen. It is a very complex situation, obviously, in Pakistan.

And as both General Allen and I have had an opportunity to talk to military leaders in Pakistan, this is—again, it is both a capacity issue for the Pakistanis and I think potentially a willingness issue, recognizing that the situation in the FATA is difficult for them to deal with.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, something has got to give, something has got to change because it just can't continue this way, for them to expect that we are going to have a normal relationship with them, which we all hope for. But it just—it can't continue this way with that expectation in place.

Senator McCain?

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Allen, do you know of any military leader that recommended in 2009 that the President make an announcement in 2011 of drawdown of troops?

General ALLEN. I do not, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Do you know of any military leader that recommended the drawdown plan that the President announced last week?

General ALLEN. I do not, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Does it surprise you that after the President's announcement, that President Sarkozy, the British, other of our allies have now announced that they will be withdrawing from Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. It does not, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Did you see the picture in the paper over the weekend of President Karzai and the Ayatollah Khamenei sitting down at a meeting, pledging friendship, support for one another?

General ALLEN. I didn't see the picture, sir, but I was aware of the meeting.

Senator MCCAIN. Is it true that IEDs manufactured in Iran are still coming across the border into Afghanistan and killing Americans?

General ALLEN. I believe they are, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Did you hear of the statement of the leader of—the Taliban field commander, Jamal Khan, told the Daily Beast of his reaction to Mr. Obama’s speech? “My soul and the soul of thousands of Taliban who have been blown up are happy. I had more than 50 encounters with U.S. forces and their technology, but the biggest difference in ending this war was not technology, but the more powerful Islamic ideology and religion.”

Are you aware of that statement by the leader of the Taliban?

General ALLEN. I am, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Does the President’s announcement of this withdrawal make your job—if you are confirmed, and I am sure you will be—harder or more difficult and more challenging or easier?

General ALLEN. Senator, that is a difficult question to answer, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. I am sure it is. That is why I asked it.

General ALLEN. And not being confirmed yet and not being the commander, I have no ability to assess it with great accuracy at this particular moment. As the Chairman said, the announced decision was a bit more aggressive than we had anticipated. But he supported the decision. General Petraeus supports the decision.

General Petraeus is working now to begin the implementation of that decision. We had anticipated that those forces would be coming out. And there is a lot that has to happen between now and the end of this year, sir, and the end of the period of the drawdown. And I know that—

Senator MCCAIN. General, I understand why it would be difficult for you to answer that question. I appreciate that, and I appreciate your answer.

I believe that—I have talked to probably 20 retired and active duty military leaders since the President’s announcement was made, and it is very obvious that the challenges are now enormous. The question is, is whether we will still be able to succeed or not. And I appreciate your willingness and your patriotism to take on what is obviously a dramatically increased risk.

The Economist states again this week, “Mr. Obama would only have himself to blame if, for entirely domestic political reasons, he undermines the conditions for a security transition to Afghan national forces by 2014 that still looks just about doable. His rush for the exit could yet end up delaying the very thing he is hoping for.” I think that summarizes the views of most.

Admiral McRaven, do you believe that the United States should have a residual force in Iraq in order to assist particularly with special operations functions, intelligence?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I think that it would be mutually beneficial to us and the Iraqis if, in fact, that was the case. Obviously, remains to be seen whether the Iraqis will want us to stay past the intended drawdown time. But clearly, there is still a threat in Iraq, and a small, soft presence there I think would be advisable.

Senator MCCAIN. And if you look at recent U.S. casualties, the situation, at least in some respects, politically as well as militarily, has shown some deterioration. Would you agree?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I would. Statistically, that appears to be the case. Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. General Allen, do you believe that we ought to have an enduring military presence, for example, a base, an air base in Afghanistan? Everything that I know and hear is that President Karzai is very interested in such an arrangement.

General ALLEN. Sir, I believe we should have an enduring military relationship with the Afghans. How ultimately that would be negotiated, how ultimately those missions and roles and functions would be determined I think remains to be determined by discussions with the Afghans and certainly our own discussions and our determination.

With regard to a permanent base, I don't believe that we need a permanent base in Afghanistan. We could probably conduct operations over the long term from a shared basing concept within Afghanistan.

Senator MCCAIN. I guess we are getting into semantics here. A shared basing concept is, I think, fairly agreeable.

General THURMAN, this committee has shown some serious concerns about the cost and the policy of the base realignment. I hope you will work with us closely on that issue, and I think we are going to ask for sort of a pause until we can get a full evaluation.

My question, though, is that there has been recent public reports about a North Korean ship that was turned around that may have had materials in it which would have had some—again, press reports are it had some, perhaps some nuclear technology onboard. And it was headed for Burma. It was turned around by the U.S. and headed back to port in North Korea.

Can you tell the committee anything about that?

General THURMAN. Senator, only what I have read in the open source. I do know there are two United Nations Security Council resolutions, 1718 and 1864, that the purpose of that is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear or weapons of mass destruction from the North.

I believe it is very important that we continue to monitor that carefully. I believe it needs to be dealt with in a whole-of-government approach.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank you.

Can I say congratulations to the three of you, and you make all of us extremely proud that the United States is blessed with such leadership, dedication, and sacrifice. And that includes your families as well.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I would just pick up where Senator McCain left off and say that listening to the opening statements that the three of you made and hearing you respond to the questions of Chairman Levin and Sen-

ator McCain, which I would not describe as softballs, I think the cumulative effect is that you are really a very impressive group.

Today, I think you have shown us your intelligence and that you are well spoken. Your records speak really with extraordinary power to a career of patriotism, bravery, and leadership capacity. And you remind us about how much every American has to be grateful to you and everyone else in uniform for all you do every day to protect our security and our freedom. So I thank you very much for that.

General Allen, I want to get into the decision that the President made last week about and announced about Afghanistan, just ask you this question. As I understand what was announced, one way to look at it is that this year we will withdraw from—this calendar year, we will withdraw from Afghanistan 10,000 of the 33,000 troops we surged as a result of the President's decision in December, 2009. Next year, we will withdraw the remaining 23,000 by sometime in September.

But here is what I want to ask you. My understanding is that within those parameters this year and next year, you, as ISAF commander, will be given latitude to determine both the pace of the withdrawal that will begin in July and which of our forces are withdrawn. Is that correct?

General ALLEN. That is correct, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. The second question I want to ask is this. In your response to the questions submitted to you by this committee, you state, and I quote, "I will constantly monitor and assess the situation on the ground, and should I determine the situation has changed, I will so advise my chain of command through the proper channels."

So I want to—my understanding of what you are saying there is that if, as we go through this year into next year, you find that the pace of the withdrawal is having an effect on what is happening on the ground in Afghanistan that you think is really negative, that you will exercise your authority to report that up the chain of command and, if necessary—this is a hypothetical—would ask that the pace of withdrawal be slowed down?

General ALLEN. Senator, that is a very important question. And if confirmed and if I take command of ISAF, I am going to monitor the operational environment and the conditions constantly, not just as it relates to the drawdown of the forces with respect to the surge, but throughout the entire period of time I command during this campaign.

And it is my responsibility to the chain of command and to our Commander-in-Chief to ensure that should I be concerned over the progress of the execution of the campaign, that I so advise the chain of command with my forthright advice. And so, I will make that obligation now. I state that obligation now, and I see that as an important responsibility, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that reassurance and I thank you for it.

Admiral McRaven, with regard to Afghanistan, obviously, the special operations force has been playing an extraordinarily important role in the counterinsurgency strategy that we are carrying out there with significant success. Is it your expectation as the

drawdown of our forces overall, pursuant to the President's decision last week, goes forward, that the special operations forces are likely not to be drawn down in number? I think you know what I am asking.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. Sir, I think that remains to be seen. And again, if confirmed, I will work very closely with General Allen and General Mattis to take a look at what the right balance is for special operations forces.

And we have got to have—we have got to strike a good balance between the conventional piece and the various elements of SOF in order to be successful, I think.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yes, I accept that answer. My own sense of it is that as the forces, our overall number is drawn down, it may be that the special operating forces are going to be even more critical. So that they, in some sense, would be not the last, but you would want to have a critical mass of SOF there as this goes on.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. General Allen, do you have an opinion going in about that?

General ALLEN. I do, Senator, thank you.

We are currently engaged in a comprehensive civil- military counterinsurgency campaign of which counterterrorism and the role of SOF forces play a very important role.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General ALLEN. And as this campaign continues to mature, as we continue to look at the progress on the ground, we may well see that the role of SOF may increase, in fact, as time goes on within the context of the counterinsurgency campaign.

And SOF does more than simply direct action or strike operations. SOF is critical to the development of capacity, as Admiral McRaven has already said, with respect to the Afghan security forces. But also SOF is playing a vital role on the ground in the establishment of the Afghan local police program and the village stability operations program.

And all of that together constitutes an enormously powerful contribution by special operating forces to the campaign today, and we would see that an enduring contribution over the long term, out to 2014 and beyond.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you. Thank you.

General Thurman, arguably, you will be assuming command in Korea at the most dangerous time in quite a while. And I say that based on the continuing provocations by North Korea of our allies in the Republic of Korea, by the statement that the president of the Republic of Korea has made that if there is another provocation, there will be a response in measure from South Korea, our allies.

But also because we are watching a pattern of aggressive behavior by the People's Republic of China in the region generally that is quite different than what we have seen for a while, really staking claims to territory and a kind of sovereignty—extended sovereignty that we haven't seen in quite this way.

So I wondered, going in, whether you would, first, give us your reflections on the state of mind of the leadership of the two countries that most worry me, anyway, in the region now, very different, obviously. One is North Korea and the second, of course, is

the People's Republic of China, with which we have ongoing comprehensive relations, and we try very hard to manage our relations in a constructive way. The North Koreans, of course, are in a very different place.

General THURMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I have the same concerns going in. I believe Kim Jong Il is an unpredictable leader. He continues to antagonize and through his coercive diplomacy to protect his nuclear capability, I believe. There is no question there is a deteriorating economy. Reports I have read is there is a food shortage.

So I think he will continue this cycle of provocations. I believe it is important for us to work closely with the Republic of Korea, their military, to counter these provocations in a responsible manner.

Having said that, I think it is very important for us to also maintain relations with China. And I intend to work close, if confirmed, with Admiral Willard, the PACOM commander, as we look at and assess the whole security posture and stance, particularly on the peninsula.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, General. Thanks to the three of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I want to say we are blessed and grateful to have the service of all three of you for our country. I want to thank your families and all that have served underneath you for what you have done. And we have great confidence in all of your qualifications.

I wanted to ask Vice Admiral McRaven, in your advance policy questions, you were asked what are the weaknesses and shortcomings in the current effort to combat terrorism and insurgency in Afghanistan. And in one of your answers, you said, "Those weaknesses and shortcomings will arise not from the strategy or the efforts of our soldiers, marines, airmen, and civilians on the ground, but from diminished resourcing, lack of long-term commitment, and any decrease in international assistance."

Vice Admiral, can you elaborate for me what you meant by that statement in terms of the concerns about diminished resourcing or lack of long-term commitment?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. This is basically focused on what we refer to as the enablers. So, for us, special operations, to continue to be successful in Afghanistan is going to be a function of ensuring that we continue to have the airlift we need, the rotary-wing support, the fixed-wing support, the ISR in terms of unmanned UAVs.

That is the aspect of the support that is critical now and for the long run in order for special operations to be effective.

Senator AYOTTE. And does the President's recent withdrawal announcement, in your view, impact the lack of a long-term commitment—one of the issues that you raise?

Admiral MCRAVEN. No, ma'am. I would contend it doesn't affect SOF directly. And the reason it doesn't is because it is a function of how you balance the withdrawal.

And again, in discussions with General Allen and General Mattis, I will make it clear that as General Allen looks at that withdraw, that he takes into consideration the critical enablers necessary to continue to support special operations across the battlefield. And while it is not just about the direct action piece, which is important—and in my former role as a JSOC commander, that was vitally important—but it is about all the other enablers that support the broader SOF effort in Afghanistan.

Senator AYOTTE. And are there any other concerns you have about diminished resourcing, based on what you highlighted in your statement, that we should be aware of?

Admiral MCRAVEN. No, ma'am. Again, the two primary ones are the airlift support and the ISR support.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Admiral.

Lieutenant General Allen, the fighting season in Afghanistan is roughly from April through October. And the President has decided on September 2012 as the deadline for withdrawal of the surge forces. Is there any strategic, operational, or tactical advantage to a September deadline for withdrawal during the fighting season, as compared to waiting through the fighting season?

General ALLEN. Senator, I think that the value of a second fighting season, as was expressed by the Chairman and General Petraeus in their testimony last week, is important. But as General Petraeus said in his recommendations, those recommendations are forwarded to the Central Command commander, ultimately to the Secretary of Defense. And the discussions, which ultimately generated the President's decision, account for the President's unique role and unique position in terms of his national security views and his views as President of the United States and the Commander-in-Chief.

And so, he has made the decision at this juncture with respect to when the end of the drawdown of the surge forces should occur. We support that decision. We will implement that decision. And we are in the planning process for it now, Senator.

And as I said before to Senator Lieberman, it is my intention, obviously, as the commander to monitor the progress, the operational environment and the progress and the situation with respect to the accomplishment of our objectives and missions respect to the campaign plan. And should I become concerned that our ability to accomplish those objectives are threatened, I will ensure that I give forthright and prompt advice to the chain of command.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, we deeply appreciate that, General. I just wanted to follow up, just so I am clear. I certainly appreciate the President's unique role as Commander-in-Chief. But in your view, is there any strategic, operational, or tactical reason to withdraw in September versus at least allowing us to finish the fighting season?

Because you are going to be in the middle of the fighting season. Can you think of any reason of a strategic nature or operational nature why we would withdraw then?

General ALLEN. Senator, again, the forces that are at work during that particular time are not just about the forces of—the presence of U.S. forces on the battlefield. Even as those forces come down, we will still have some portion of the surge throughout most of the fighting season.

We will have the 68,000 U.S. forces that will be persistent in the presence, tens of thousands of ISAF forces, about 50,000 more Afghan national security police and army forces, and some 20,000 or so the Afghan Public Protection Force. They will all be joining the fight. They will all become part of the process during that period of time.

And so, again, the President was presented recommendations by the commander of ISAF, forwarded by the Central Command commander, and the discussions were held in the White House, and the President applied his view ultimately as the President of the United States and the Commander-in-Chief and made the decision.

Senator AYOTTE. I appreciate that, General. And I understand that you didn't participate in those discussions, but their recommendations were different than the ones that the President adopted in terms of timing after the fighting season. Is that right?

General ALLEN. The Chairman said that the President's decision was a bit more aggressive than was recommended.

Senator AYOTTE. And one of the concerns with a more aggressive recommendation, of course, is, as Senator McCain has outlined, given the progress we have made in Afghanistan, that that progress, we could see a regression of that progress. Is that right?

General ALLEN. Well, we are going to take advantage of the opportunity between now and the end of the year to assess where we are with the progress of the campaign. We have made really spectacular progress in the south. I wish all Americans had the opportunity to see the great work that has been done by the forces at work, ISAF forces in the south and southwest.

We are going to consolidate that progress and, at some point, take other actions, which I won't get into the great details here. But we will take other actions as necessary. The President's decision will be accounted for, obviously, in the planning that will go forward. And we anticipate that we will continue to achieve the objectives of the campaign.

But we must account for the decisions that the President has made, and we will go forward with those—accounting for those decisions, we will go forward with every intention of accomplishing the objectives. And we believe that that can be done now, and we are moving forward with the planning with the ISAF staff now.

Senator AYOTTE. General, I want to thank you for your testimony. My time is up.

But I had the opportunity as a new Senator to go to Afghanistan in January, and I was very impressed with the progress that has been made. And I guess I would share—I remain concerned and appreciate the challenges that you face with having to withdraw a significant number of our troops during that fighting season.

Thank you for your testimony.

General ALLEN. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for your presence, and I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleagues on the dais as to your service and particularly acknowledge your families who are here, and what wonderful Americans.

General Allen, if I could turn to you, and I know you are going to have some challenges. You have got a leadership record that is exemplary. But I would like to focus on some specific items today that I hope then gives us an understanding of your priority and needs.

And in that spirit, let me turn to the success that you had and we had in Anbar, in Iraq. You reached out to a population that had been previously pretty hostile and worked with them to then turn their focus to al Qaeda and the elements of terrorism that had really created enormous chaos. And in the process, the COIN doctrine was validated.

I don't want to imply that the two countries are alike. But could you talk about the primary lessons that we learned in Anbar and how we are going to apply those lessons in Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. Senator, much of what was accomplished in the Anbar Province, of course, needless to say, much of it was accomplished on the shoulders of the sacrifice of many terrific soldiers and Marines and sailors and airmen. And we honor that service and their sacrifice in having accomplished that really remarkable outcome.

But what was accomplished in the Anbar Province was really the result of a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency strategy. It was a strategy that leveraged every aspect of military capacity that could be brought to bear in the battle space, civil affairs, conventional military capabilities, advisory capacity to build the Iraqi police, the Iraqi security forces, the two divisions of Iraqi infantry that we had.

Special operators, who worked both as advisers and mentors, but also, euphemistically, the term "black SOF," the strike forces that would enter the battle space to attack the insurgent network. We pressurized the insurgent network constantly.

And while we were pressurizing and shredding the insurgent network and blunting their capabilities with the use of conventional forces, we worked very, very hard to build the capacity of the Iraqi security forces, both the army—those two divisions—and we went from about 4,000 police to almost 30,000 police in the year that we were there, in 2007 and 2008.

All of that was complemented by a comprehensive plan with respect to civilian outreach as well. USAID resourced three embedded PRTs and resourced our PRT, our provincial PRT in Ramadi. And I believe that the wise outreach to the sheiks in the tribe, the wise expenditure of tax dollars with respect to both the stabilization projects and development projects, our efforts to build governance capacity, where the governance has been completely shattered as a direct result of the efforts of al Qaeda and other of the insurgent efforts, that comprehensive effort paid off in the end.

It built up governance which had the capacity to stand up on its own two feet and extend the writ of the provincial government out into the districts and down to the municipalities and even to the

tribes. It incorporated the tribes into the solution rather than have the tribes be on the outside of governance and part of the problem.

It ultimately built the capacity for the people of that province, the beleaguered people along the Euphrates River to ply their trade, to engage in economic development. And that, in conjunction with the persistent governance, all overwatched by U.S. forces, but eventually overwatched by Iraqi security forces, provided the trade space necessary ultimately for the persistence of governance and the success, frankly, that we have seen in the aftermath in the Anbar Province to this very moment, sir. Over.

Senator UDALL. Let me jump to Afghanistan in that context, General. We have been talking here about the withdrawal numbers and the concern that some have about the effect on the fighting season next year. I know we have a full complement for this fighting season.

Do you think you are going to have to shift to a counterterrorism model, or can you blend the two strategies? I know we throw those acronyms around casually. But can CT and COIN be implemented simultaneously in different provinces depending on the needs of those populations and the strategy that you have in place?

General ALLEN. Indeed, Senator, it is occurring now. There is an active counterterrorism capability that is underway within the larger counterinsurgency campaign.

And as Vice Admiral McRaven knows so well from his time as JSOC and our task force commander in the Central Command, the capabilities of those strike forces have really been spectacular in getting at the enemy's network. As well, the use of SOF, as I previously mentioned, will have an important role in developing the training, supporting the training of the Afghan special operators, as well as facilitating ultimately the mobilization of the populations in those key villages where the Afghan local police are being expanded.

So, to answer specifically your question, we would see that there will continue to be a counterterrorism dimension to the overarching counterinsurgency campaign. And as time passes, as conditions in the battle space evolve, as we approach 2014, and as we define our long-term relationship with Afghanistan, we may well see that the development of CT will become even more important as time goes on. So there will be an important role, sir.

Senator UDALL. Would you talk about reintegration? Do we have enough formal structure around what we are trying to do there? There have been some stories recently that there is more we could do, that we have sent some mixed messages to the fighters in the Taliban forces who want to come out of the cold.

General ALLEN. Reintegration is an essential dimension to a counterinsurgency strategy. It helps us to begin to decompose the base of the insurgency.

The Afghans ultimately will be responsible for reintegration. It is their program. They are ultimately to be responsible for accepting these fighters out of the insurgency and reintegrating them back into Afghan society.

To that effect, the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Committee has been formed at a national level. There are provincial peace committees that have been formed throughout the country. And in

the process, we are working closely with our Afghan counterparts to facilitate the reintegration process, which ultimately is that local fighters and many of the fighters are, in fact, close to their villages, close to their homes.

Local villagers who desire ultimately to leave the insurgency and to become part of the future of Afghanistan will put down their weapons, renounce violence, sever their ties with al Qaeda and the insurgency, and become part of the solution, become part of the peace process. And in return, the village elders and the village benefits ultimately by bringing them back into the fold. And through the use of funds, which are cycled through the Afghan government through the Peace and Reconciliation Committee councils, projects are performed in those villages which benefit everyone, and the quality of life improves for everyone.

So the village leadership vouches for that young fighter who has come off the battlefield. They embrace him. They bring him back into the community. They make him a reintegrated, productive element within the committee. The whole village benefits as a result.

To your question specifically, the issue with respect to what we can do better, we are just getting started. The infrastructure within the Afghan side is really just beginning to gain purchase at this particular time.

And as we recognize as a persistent shortfall in Afghanistan in a number of different areas, the ability to flow resource from the central government down to the provinces and ultimately into the projects for the reintegration program, that is the challenge at this particular moment. I know that our civilian colleagues are working very closely with their Afghan counterparts to improve the ability to get this money on budget and get it flowed in an expeditious manner to take advantage of the opportunities as these fighters come off the battle space.

We are at about 1,900 soon of those individuals who have formally reintegrated, and there are about 3,000 in the pipeline. So getting this process accelerated has the effect of providing another option if you are a fighter. You can fight U.S. or Afghan forces and potentially be killed. You can fight U.S. or Afghan forces or be detained. Or you can put your weapon down and become part of the future of Afghanistan, be reintegrated into your village, and the whole village will benefit because of it. And I think that is a pretty stark option in reality.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, General.

My time is expired. General, I look forward to working with you, particularly on this initiative because this is the key element to bringing our forces home and successfully concluding our operations in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

General ALLEN. Yes, Senator. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thanks.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator COLLINS.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, let me thank each of you for your service and your willingness to accept these new challenges.

General Allen, the people of Maine have paid a heavy price for the war in Afghanistan. Our State has suffered the highest rate of casualties of any State in the Nation.

We have seen lots of discussion at this hearing and others last week about the number of troops, the pace of withdrawal, and the timetable. But I have for you a more fundamental question. And that is, is there any number of troops that can ensure a stable Afghanistan that is going to be able to take responsibility for its own security, given the safe havens and turmoil in Pakistan and the lack of a competent central government that is not plagued by corruption?

In other words, are these such insurmountable obstacles that no matter how many troops we have, for how long, and how brave and skilled they are, are those two facts—the safe havens in Pakistan, the corruption and incompetence of the central Afghan government—insurmountable obstacles?

General ALLEN. Senator, I don't believe so. There are challenges. There are significant challenges. Those have been explained by both the current ISAF commander, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. But I believe that the campaign, as we currently envisage its unfolding, has the development of the Afghan National Security Forces ultimately to be in the lead of security out to 2014 as an objective which is attainable, with U.S. forces in a strategic overwatch position.

Your question about the safe havens, it complicates the process. There is no question of that. We would recommend to our Pakistani friends that they take those measures that are necessary to reduce those safe havens because, in many respects, those safe havens are not only safe havens that generate the opportunity for those insurgent elements to attack into Afghanistan, but they have also turned out to be safe havens that provide a springboard for the assault directly upon the Pakistani government and the Pakistani military.

So we will encourage and we will continue to encourage our Pakistani friends to bring pressure to bear upon those safe havens. It is not just good for the outcome of our strategy and for the President's vision on the outcome in Afghanistan. It is good for Pakistan as well.

And I might add that our relationship with Pakistan, while strained at this particular moment, there is a bright spot, frankly, in the many different facets of the relationship that I will touch. And that bright spot is the tripartite planning committee, where on a regular basis U.S., Afghan, and Pakistani military officers sit down and go through the process of planning for how they will conduct cross-border operations in a way that limit the operations across the border.

So there is a bright spot in that regard, and I think it is an opportunity for us to continue through that contact to leverage our relationship with Pakistan, to emphasize, as you point out correctly, Senator, the difficulties that these safe havens provide to the accomplishment of our strategy, but also how they endanger Pakistan as well.

To that part of your question that relates to corruption and incompetence, we have been partners with President Karzai for a

long time. And in the course of this long-term partnership, and in particular in the last couple of years, we have seen our civilian colleagues operating within the context of the civilian surge, which accompanied President Obama's military surge, provide efforts to increase capacity within the Afghan government, within key ministries, to provide better, predictable, uncorrupt governance.

That process has been accompanied by activity within ISAF, the formation of Task Force Shafafiyat, which stands for "transparency" in Dari, which is supported by Task Force 2010, which seeks to get at corruption and difficulties associated with contracting that can create additional corruption, as well as Task Force Spotlight, which seeks to control the evolution of private security companies.

There are a number of measures that we have put in place through the civilian surge with our colleagues in the embassy, through Ambassador Eikenberry and soon-to-be Ambassador Crocker, as well as measures that have been put in place through ISAF with the task forces associated with corruption, that seek to build both capacity, at the same time we address the particular issues associated with corruption.

And so, today, we do face the dilemma of the safe havens. And today, we do work with an Afghan government that embraces the desire ultimately to reduce corruption and increase competency. And we will remain in close partnership with the Afghan government to get at both of those issues, and we will continue to work with the ANSF.

And even if the safe havens are not reduced, it is our strong desire and hope that in the end, as the Afghan security forces ultimately take to the field in the numbers that we anticipate, with the capabilities that we are building into those ANSF forces, that they will be able to provide the cover for Afghanistan so it can have a secure and stable future.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Collins.

Senator Reed.

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

And gentlemen, thank you for your service to the Nation and for your families' service. So your service to the Army, to the Navy, to the Marine Corps, and—Admiral McRaven, because of your son—the Air Force. I can get all the principal services in. So thank you very, very much.

Let me begin with General Allen. You talked very eloquently about, in response to Senator Collins, about the need to work closely with the Pakistanis. Have you had the occasion to meet on a regular basis yet or do you intend to meet on a regular basis with General Kayani and your counterparts on the Pakistani armed forces?

General ALLEN. Senator, I have met General Kayani on a number of occasions. It is not a relationship yet. That, I hope to develop. It is, in fact, the intent for General Petraeus and I, should I be confirmed, to pay a call on General Kayani so that the relationship that he has enjoyed with General Kayani can ultimately be passed to me.

So it is my—I look forward to the opportunity to work closely with General Kayani and the senior Pakistani military leadership in partnership, in the context, as I said before, of the tripartite planning committee because, in the end, we have so many common objectives that we need to get after. And I look forward to that opportunity to work with the Pakistani military.

Senator REED. I think from your comments, General, from both sides, their perspective and our perspective, it is a complicated and sometimes frustrating relationship. But it is a relationship that is essential to our continued operations in Afghanistan. So I would commend your efforts and urge you, as General Petraeus has, to establish at least lines of communication to the leadership.

There is another aspect, too, that you touched upon in your testimony. That is the development of the Afghani National Security Forces. In the several visits I have made there, they have made some progress over the last year, after 7 or 8 years of fits and starts and not particularly impressive. But I think over the last few years, we have got momentum.

And it seems to be one of the major building blocks of our strategy, our reduction is really almost directly related to their ability to field competent forces. And I wonder if you might comment briefly, if you already had, on that aspect.

General ALLEN. It is central to the strategy, Senator. And as we have—as you correctly point out, as we have developed the real capacity in the last couple of years—and here I must mention Lieutenant General Bill Caldwell and his terrific team in both CSTC-A and NTMA, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, for the work that they have done. And it has been a comprehensive approach with respect to the development of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

And he has put in place a number of training initiatives that are paying big dividends, not just the least being literacy training. Where in a country where the literacy, depending on statistics, varies between 10 percent and 20 percent, it is not surprising that many of those who seek to be soldiers or police are illiterate. And that alone has given the members of the Afghan National Security Forces a different feel about who they are and the role that they could potentially play in their country.

And so, that, plus many of the other initiatives which are underway, which are gaining purchase now and traction, leave me confident that our end-state, which is an Afghan security force which has both capability and staying power, will be successful in the end.

And it is not just about NTMA and Bill Caldwell's efforts. General Rodriguez in the ISAF joint command and all of our conventional forces on the ground that are so closely partnered with Afghan units in the field have become also vital to this process as well, the professionalization of units, as well as the individual preparations of Afghan national security police and army troops in the training pipeline as well, sir.

Senator REED. Thank you, sir.

Admiral McRaven, again, like all of my colleagues, I salute you and your colleagues and the SEALs for extraordinary operations, and thank you. I think your decisiveness and your feel for every

level of the conflict, from the villages of Afghanistan and Pakistan all the way up here to the more complicated rooms in Washington was amply demonstrated.

Thank you for your service.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Thank you, sir.

Senator REED. Let me touch on a point I am sure has been raised also. You have a force that is small, very select, can't expand overnight because of criteria, can't be lowered to accommodate size. It is under significant pressure after 10 years.

And your efforts in Afghanistan are—and Pakistan—are significant, but you also look to other places—Yemen particularly of concern at the moment; Somalia, there is indications of operations there.

And then just a further point is that you, I think, will be, as we go forward, strategically the force that is called upon sort of right out of the box, if you will, which is a change, a slight change in strategic thinking. So given this, the pressure on your Special Operations Command, your comments about what we have to do to give you the resources.

Are you prepared and capable to expand your operations at a moment's notice worldwide or in different parts of the world? And I would appreciate the comments.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. Thank you, Senator.

We are not prepared to expand immediately worldwide. The problem, as you point out, is that it is very difficult to grow special operations forces overnight.

Admiral Olson, in his capacity as commander of SOCOM, has gone on record as saying that he wants to try to grow the manpower within SOCOM at the rate of about 3 percent to 5 percent per year, which we think is—which I think is about right as well.

Part of this is making sure that the standards that we have set at our various special operations training elements for the special forces officers and the SEALs and the Marines and the aviators remains very high. We don't want to come off those standards because, at the end of the day, the American people expect us to put forth a world-class special operations operator.

So I think expanding the force rapidly will be difficult. One of the greatest challenges I think we will have for the future is there will be a greater demand on SOF. And as we have talked about today, intuitively, we think as the drawdown occurs in Afghanistan in terms of the conventional force, there will probably be some requirement—additional requirement for special operations forces to cover down, if you will, in Afghanistan.

I don't think we know exactly what the size of that will be yet. And again, I think these are going to have to be discussions between myself, if confirmed, General Allen, General Mattis, and the Secretary to find out what is the right amount of forces we need to put into Afghanistan.

As we look out from Iraq, Afghanistan, and, frankly, across the globe, and, as you are well aware, sir, special operations forces any day of the year are in about 60 to 80 countries around the world. Sometimes in very small numbers, but those small numbers can have very large effects in other areas. They are building host nation capacity, hopefully putting forth those values, those American

values that the other forces can see and want to replicate. And, frankly, that allows us to kind of get ahead of some of the conflict in other countries.

As we look at the hotspots in Yemen, where you have al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or Somalia, where you have East African al Qaeda and al-Shabaab, these are clearly areas of concern. And we are looking very hard right now—at least from my standpoint as a former JSOC commander, I can tell you we were looking very hard at Yemen and at Somalia.

Our shortfall, as always, in a lot of these areas, for a kinetic—for kinetic strikes is always our ISR, our unmanned ISR or our manned ISR. It is a critical enabler for us to be able to do our mission if it is a direct action mission.

However, having said that, I will tell you that both the Central Command and U.S. African Command have been terrific about kind of apportioning that ISR as required, depending upon the missions that pop up. So to get to the crux of your question, sir, it will be difficult to expand, manpower wise. I think any expansion of manpower is going to have to come with a commensurate expansion of the enablers.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Admiral. My time is expired.

General Thurman, let me just say—congratulate you on a great service to the United States Army, and I look forward to working with you, should you be confirmed.

You are all very correct about that term, but I have a certain hope for all of you gentlemen. Thank you.

General THURMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Reed.

Senator Brown.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And good to see you all, and congratulations to you and your families.

General Allen, something that has always bothered me is the lack of other countries fulfilling their commitment with regard to helping train and get up to speed, obviously, the Afghan army and police. How do you think that with the current shortfall of about almost 500 institutional trainers, the withdrawal of 10,000 troops will affect that training mission?

General ALLEN. Well, we will continue, Senator, to ask our partners for trainers. We are going to continue to work, if I am confirmed, through NATO and through ISAF, to the non-NATO troop-contributing nations to continue to provide the kinds of trainers necessary to build the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces that we all need in the end to accomplish our objective.

It is no secret that that has been difficult to do. It is no secret that we have made it very clear. The current commander has made it very clear, the current supreme allied commander of Europe, Admiral Stavridis, and the NATO leadership has made it very clear that we need more trainers. And we are still—as you are correct, Senator, we are still short about 480 trainers.

And I will continue—if confirmed and if I become the commander of ISAF, I will continue to emphasize that we have got to have trainers in order, ultimately, to bring to bear the kinds of quality

training in the velocity that we need in order to get this Afghan National Security Force stood up.

Senator BROWN. Is it a higher level? Does it go to the President's level where he goes to the other leaders and says, "Listen, in order to get out of here, we need to train these folks and get them up. And you made a commitment."

And I mean, it seems like we have been making that request forever, but there hasn't been a heck of a lot of return, reciprocity in providing them.

General ALLEN. Senator, I can't speak to whether the President has asked that question specifically. But I know the Secretary of Defense, this Secretary, has been unambiguous in calling on NATO and the other non-NATO troop-contributing nations to provide trainers.

And if confirmed and I become the commander of ISAF, I will be unambiguous in that requirement as well. And I believe Admiral Stavridis has been beating that drum very loudly and regularly, sir.

Senator BROWN. What do you think the ratio is? Is there a ratio between trainer and trainee that works? Are we at that, or how far below are we on that?

General ALLEN. I would have to get back to you on that, sir.

Senator BROWN. If you wouldn't mind, that would be helpful.

General ALLEN. I would be happy to.

Senator BROWN. How about the flexibility? Do you think you have the flexibility you need to keep the enemy on its heels and also train the Afghan security forces from now until the end of the summer? Even though the enemy now has the timeline for our departure, does it affect those two things at all?

General ALLEN. I believe we do have the flexibility.

Senator BROWN. And General Thurman, in looking at your new job, when you are confirmed, how do you deal with a lot of the insecurity over there?

It seems—I mean, let us say, hypothetically, that North Korea makes another probe and tries to instigate things, and South Korea responds. What role, then, do we play? How do you envision that potentially working out?

General THURMAN. Senator, thank you.

I think the number-one point is we have got to maintain a strong presence on the peninsula. There is no question, based on what I have reviewed, that the ROK military is a very professional and competent force.

I think the other important point is making sure that all our plans that we have are current, they are exercised frequently, and we have the right training programs in place. And I think the other important thing is maintaining the alliance and continuing the transformation efforts.

If confirmed, I fully expect to look at and review our capabilities and make sure they are the right capabilities and we are positioned properly to support any type of aggression. But I do feel it is very important to maintain a strong presence with our Korean partner and continue to work close with them and to make sure that we have the right strengths and can counter any type of aggression.

Senator BROWN. Thank you.

And back to you, General Allen, I agree with the chairman when he was talking about our relationship with Pakistan. And I also feel, listen, gosh, we have given them \$4 billion, and yet sometimes we don't know if they are in or they are out. Are they with us, are they not?

And how do you view your role in dealing with that situation over there, that country building or country, you know, pushback? What do you think your role will ultimately be, if any?

General ALLEN. Well, I think there is a role, Senator. The role, as has been demonstrated by both General McChrystal and, after him, General Petraeus, was to seek ways and opportunity across the border with the Pakistani military to try to have effect upon the nature of the border, the safe havens, those elements of the insurgency where we can focus our efforts.

General Petraeus has established, I think, a productive relationship with General Kayani. I hope to follow in that process where, leveraging the role of the ISAF commander, we can continue to place the kind of emphasis that we need to with the Pakistani government, the Pakistani military to continue to pressurize those insurgent safe havens.

In the end, it is a decision that they will make. But in my role as the operational commander, I am going to leverage every possibility that I can for cooperation across the border, to build habits of cooperation, habits of partnership. And hopefully, from there, as we continue to evolve our relationship overall with Pakistan, this will be a mechanism that can provide a bright spot for additional cooperation later. And I think here is an important opportunity with Pakistan.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, sir.

And Admiral McRaven, I noted that you said, you know, that there is some fraying at the edges, potentially, with everything that is happening, and that is rightly understandable. And it is not like you can, all of a sudden, just press the button and you get a special ops guy ready—or gal ready to go. What do you anticipate trying to do to deal with that problem?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. In fact, Admiral Olson has put together a Pressure on the Force Task Force and has done really an amazing job of getting out to the various operational units to talk to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, their families, to find out what are the stresses on the force. That task force is kind of continuing to gather its data and information. And if confirmed, I will come in, take the recommendations of that task force and then aggressively pursue programs that make sense in order to take care of the families and their soldiers.

I mean, we have got to take a hard look at not just making sure that this force is sustainable for the next couple of years, but what is it going to look like in 5 years, in 10 years, in 15 years. And if we don't get ahead of this and if we don't get on top of the concerns and the pressures that are on the families and the soldiers, I have great concerns about what this force will look like 10 years from now.

Senator BROWN. Great. Well, thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Brown.

Senator BEGICH.

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

Again, thank you all for your willingness to serve. And like many of my colleagues here, I anticipate and hope that you are all confirmed and look forward to your additional service to this country.

First, General Thurman, let me ask you, if I can, I know the President has delayed the transition of operational control of South Korea I think until 2015. And I just—if you could give me some thoughts of your understanding how this additional time will allow the U.S. and the Republic of South Korea to conduct a successful transfer.

Can you give me kind of a feel? It has been delayed, but what does this mean?

General THURMAN. Yes, sir, Senator. Based on what I have been briefed on, it was delayed until 2015. There has been a Strategic Alliance 2015 that was agreed upon by the two—our Secretary of Defense and the minister of defense. It was the two presidents that agreed to delay the OPCON transition.

What I believe is this allows the ROK military to continue to transform their efforts. They have several transformation efforts ongoing. They are a highly capable and competent force.

What I have reviewed, there is a timeline and a set of well-defined milestones through the exercise program that will get us on the road to OPCON transition in 2015. If confirmed, I will review the Strategic Alliance 2015 and those milestones and work close with the ROK chairman and the ROK minister of defense and the ROK military to help progress them along on that timeline.

Senator BEGICH. Let me also ask you, I know you have heard a little bit of discussion—this is more of a kind of a yes or no. But if you want to expand, feel free. But, you know, the security concerns and fiscal realities that you have heard some questions already on the feasibility on tour normalization.

Assuming confirmed, are you willing and obviously going to reexamine the plans for the tour normalization and how that all will work in the future?

General THURMAN. Senator, if confirmed, I will review the overall concept of tour normalization. I am well aware of the fiscal constraints we are under as a nation. I am also aware of some of the proposed legislation that has been perhaps provided, if the NDAA is approved.

And I will work very close with the Department of Defense and the—and this committee to make sure that we are doing the right thing and to make the recommendations.

Senator BEGICH. Very good. Thank you very much.

And I will look forward to that as it progresses. And assuming we actually pass an authorization bill, that will be good, and it will have some guidance, hopefully. So thank you.

If I can, Vice Admiral McRaven, this year the Cold Weather Maritime Training Facility will be built in Kodiak, Alaska, which, of course, we would invite you to Kodiak—not in the summer, but in the winter—

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH.—because that gives you great extra points, to be frank with you. But Kodiak is a great place. But how important—and this is more of a broad—you have answered this a little bit already through your conversation with other members. But how important is facility infrastructure investment really for the readiness that you need for your special ops?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. And I will tell you, the Kodiak cold weather training facility is kind of a great topic to look at in terms of the effect on the operators and then, frankly, the rest of the infrastructure across SOF.

But right now, when USSOCOM was stood up, the legislation was passed in '86 and really kind of got going in '87, a lot of the military construction that was in place—when the money flowed from the services, a lot of the recapitalization money for a number of the MILCON projects did not flow with that.

So now, 24, almost 25 years into Special Operations Command, we have a number of facilities out there that are in need of repair or, in fact, we need new facilities. I know Admiral Olson has come forth in his posture hearing and made it clear that he is looking for additional support from Congress in order to recapitalize some of this infrastructure.

As with any force, sir, I mean, our readiness is a direct reflection of the amount of equipment and infrastructure we have to do the job, to train with both in garrison and forward. So the infrastructure is critical to our special operations operators.

Senator BEGICH. As you review that—and, again, assuming you get confirmed—I am assuming you will share your analysis on kind of where those gaps are and kind of prioritize those based on funding.

Sometimes around this place, the funding occurs based on who yells the loudest. But we want to look at—I guess my view would be what is the most critical elements of infrastructure investment that is necessary for your operations to continue at the level you are at, plus, obviously, growing itself?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. Great.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Thank you.

Senator BEGICH. One other piece. And you had mentioned—I may be abbreviating this—you called it the something-something stress task force?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. What is the timetable that you anticipate some results? And the reason I say this, for all the reasons, I want to echo what you said. And that is the readiness of our forces and the impacts on them as individuals and the families that are being impacted because of the amount of deployments and the speed. What is your timetable, do you think you might have?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Well, sir, the Pressure on the Force Task Force—

Senator BEGICH. There we go.

Admiral MCRAVEN.—that Admiral Olson has implemented has been in place for many months now. And again, they have gone around the country talking to the special operations operators and their families.

Having said that, we have had a number of programs at all the units in place for quite some time. The units, down to the O-5 level, to the lieutenant colonel and the commander level, have programs supported by U.S. Special Operations Command to take care of the families and the operators.

The real question I think for USSOCOM is, is that enough? And I think as the pressure on the task—Pressure on the Force Task Force begins to look at what 10 years of fighting has done, we realize that the current programs are not enough. So we have a number of programs that are being implemented daily across the force. But we think, based on the results coming back from this task force, that we are going to need to apply additional resources to support the families and the soldiers.

Senator BEGICH. Will you share that with us?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Absolutely, sir.

Senator BEGICH. Okay. And my time is expired, but I want to end with one question to Lieutenant General Allen, and that is the whole issue of corruption in the Karzai government. You seem optimistic. I don't, to be very frank with you. It seems it has gotten worse.

I was there a year and a half ago, maybe longer now, 2 years ago. Again, time flies around this place. But without solving the corruption issue, from Karzai down, how are we ever going to get the system—and you talk about reintegrating people back in, and I can't remember the exact—the peace and reconciliation committees and the cash flow that goes through there. But the corruption is layer upon layer upon layer, generational upon generational upon generational.

Give me some thoughts on how that is ever going to get resolved because, honestly, it seems like every dollar we send over there, everyone is taking a piece of it until it gets to the end, and there is very little then utilized for the services. And I will say it here, as I have said publicly, I think from Karzai government on down, he is not exempt from this.

So give me your thoughts on how we are—I mean, we are dealing with a corrupt government and a corrupt system. So there is the easy question for the day.

General ALLEN. Thank you, Senator.

It is a daunting problem, as you have indicated. But we are working closely with the institutions of government that are emerging, seeking to create patterns of conduct, systems of accountability, the process of responsible budgeting, the execution of the budget, accountability within the execution of the budget, in ways that can reduce these problems associated with corruption.

It is an effort with which we will, if I am confirmed as COMISAF, I will partner very, very closely with Ambassador Crocker in his efforts and his great civilian team. I will work very closely with Ambassador Simon Gass, who is a senior civilian representative of NATO, and other elements within the interagency to do all that we can to build capacity which holds people accountable, that provides—creates systems and provides mechanisms for predictability and accountability within the government.

But it is a problem, Senator. You have correctly identified that as a difficulty. And corruption, of course, is corrosive to any demo-

cratic process and any hope of democracy. And so, it is our very strong hope that in partnership with the Afghan government, we can get at this issue.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much.

And again, I want to thank all of you for your willingness to serve and to your families that I know are the backbone to your service. So thank you all very much.

General ALLEN. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Begich.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to compliment the President for making the selections of each of you. You are good choices by the President.

These hearings are not so much about getting you confirmed as it is about allowing us to understand what we can do to help you and what your challenges are. And I am completely okay and very much support the idea of civilian control of the military. I think that is essential. That is what has made America great for all these years.

But politicians are accountable to the voters. The generals are accountable to their troops, to their chain of command, to the Congress. And I just want to make sure those of us who make decisions in politics that affect the war, that we are accountable. If it turns out well, we get the credit. If we have done some things to undermine the effort, then people will notice where the blame lies. So that is my view of what we are trying to do here in the next few months.

Admiral McRaven, is Mullah Omar in Pakistan?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, we believe he is.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So let us just stop for a second. We believe that the leader of the Taliban after the fall of the Russians, Mullah Omar, who invited bin Laden to come in to be the honored guest in Afghanistan, who empowered bin Laden to attack the country, is still in Pakistan.

Do we believe he is there with the knowledge of the ISI and the upper echelons of the army?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I believe that the Pakistanis know that he is in Pakistan. Whether or not there is a—

Senator GRAHAM. Let me ask you this. If they tried for about a week, do you think they could find him?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I can't answer that question. I don't know whether they could or not because I don't know exactly where Mullah Omar is.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, have we asked them to find him?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I believe we have.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I am asking. I think that Senator Levin and I both will ask together today. We are asking the Pakistan government to help us find Mullah Omar, who has tried to destroy Afghanistan, who has formed an allegiance with al Qaeda.

And so, along those lines, General Allen, are we certain that IEDs being used against American troops in Afghanistan and coalition forces in general are coming out of Pakistan?

General ALLEN. Senator, I believe, yes, we are.

Senator GRAHAM. As a matter of fact, we know—we have given the Pakistanis information about buildings where we can see these things being put together. Is that not true?

General ALLEN. That is correct, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. And have they responded effectively?

General ALLEN. They have not, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Well, I am with Chairman Levin on this. This has got to stop.

Now let us talk about corruption. Have you read the article that has come out—I know you have been very busy—about the Afghan Central Bank flees to the U.S.—Central Bank chief flees to the U.S.? Are you familiar with that at all?

General ALLEN. Sir, I have read many articles at this juncture about that issue.

Senator GRAHAM. I know. I know you—

General ALLEN. I don't recall that one specifically.

Senator GRAHAM. I would like to put this in the record, if I may, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LEVIN. It will be made part of the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator GRAHAM. I am convinced. I met with the gentleman when I was over there, as Senator Graham, and I met with him extensively. And he went to the floor of the Afghan parliament, and he started naming names about Kabul Bank, about who was involved in setting up this bank. The bank was used to pay Afghan government bills, depositing coalition currency as well as Afghan currency.

And the IMF called it the biggest abuse or rip-off of a bank they have ever seen. And for the IMF to say that, that is something because they have seen a lot.

So I want to associate myself with Senator Begich. I really do believe that they are trying to cover up, the Karzai government and other people in Afghanistan are trying to cover up the extent of the fraud and manipulation in this bank.

So, General Allen, I would ask you to report back to us as soon as you can, to the committee, about your view of the Kabul Bank situation and how it affects our efforts to stop corruption.

General ALLEN. I will, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Now let us talk about counterinsurgency. I have learned more about this than I ever thought I would know. As a military lawyer, I find the whole concept fascinating.

Since December 2009 to now, I want, from my point of view, the country to know that I believe that General Petraeus and all under his command—General McRaven, all of your forces—have done a fantastic job of going from defense to offense, that the 33,000 surge forces have been used effectively and that we have really put the enemy on the run in many places.

My question, General Allen, if we withdraw the 33,000 by September of next year, will this still be a counterinsurgency operation? Does the math work out? Will there be enough people left behind next year to effectively do counterinsurgency?

General ALLEN. I believe there will, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Now walk me through that. If we needed 33,000—if 70,000 wasn't enough and we had to add 33,000 to make this a counterinsurgency mission, next summer how can we maintain counterinsurgency if all the surge forces have gone? Have we improved that much?

General ALLEN. I think the surge forces, Senator, are a part of the overarching counterinsurgency mission.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, there were 40,000 requested. The President authorized 30,000. It has been my understanding that the strategy was to go into RC-South, take the Taliban on, and next summer, 2012, reinvest some of those surge forces to RC-East. Have we had enough people in RC-East since December 2009 to have an effective counterinsurgency?

General ALLEN. I believe that the—the R.C.-East forces have been conducting an effective counterinsurgency.

Senator GRAHAM. Have they had—do they have—counterinsurgency is a mathematical formula.

General ALLEN. To some extent.

Senator GRAHAM. To some extent. Would you run the math and report back to the committee as to whether or not RC-East has been adequately resourced to have an effective counterinsurgency program? And also report back to the committee if you take the 33,000 troops out, what does that do to counterinsurgency operations going forward? Could you provide us with that information?

General ALLEN. I certainly will, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Admiral McRaven, I can't thank you and those under your command enough for what you have been able to achieve, particularly with bin Laden. If you caught someone tomorrow in Yemen, Somalia, you name the theater, outside of Afghanistan, where would you detain that person?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, right now, as you are well aware, that is always a difficult issue for us. When we conduct an operation outside the major theaters of war, Iraq or Afghanistan, we put forth—we—and again, I will defer to my time as a JSOC commander—we put forth a concept of operation.

The concept of operation goes up through the chain of command—military chain of command and is eventually vetted through the interagency, and the decision by the President is made for us to conduct a particular operation. Always as part of that CONOP are options for detention. No two cases seem to be alike.

As you know, there are certain individuals that are under the AUMF, the use of military force, and those are easier to deal with than folks that may not have been under the authority for AUMF. In many cases, we will put them on a naval vessel, and we will hold them until we can either get a case to prosecute them in U.S. court or—

Senator GRAHAM. Are we going to have a second round, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LEVIN. Depending on how long the first round lasts and when that vote starts, but I hope—

Senator GRAHAM. I would like to inquire into this in a second round. So I don't want to intrude—

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. Yes, I do hope that we will have at least a few minutes each.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. To be continued.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. You could finish your answer, however, if you want.

Senator GRAHAM. Absolutely. So we put a guy on a ship?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. The bottom line, Senator, is there are—

Senator GRAHAM. How long do we keep him on the ship?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, there are a number of different options, based on—

Senator GRAHAM. What is the longest we can keep somebody on the ship?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I think it depends on whether or not we think we can prosecute that individual in a U.S. court, or we can return him to a third-party country.

Senator GRAHAM. What if you can't do either one of those?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, again, if we can't do either one of those, then we will release that individual. I mean, that becomes the unenviable option, but it is an option.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator Hagan?

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I just want to say we are mighty proud of each and every one of you and thank you for your service and your commitment to our country.

I wanted to ask a question about the U.S.-Afghanistan relationship. We have got to ensure that Afghanistan does not reemerge as a safe haven for al Qaeda and transnational terrorism.

And though the initial phase of the drawing down of our forces from Afghanistan is limited, we must ensure that the Afghan National Security Forces are capable enough to preserve the tactical gains. And it is important that as we transition to the Afghan National Security Force responsibility, that they are enabled with the appropriate capability, such as intelligence planning, logistics, and maintenance.

General Allen and Admiral McRaven, what should an enduring U.S.-Afghanistan strategic partnership look like after—beyond 2014? And what type of training, advising, and special operations forces presence should we have there? If any.

General ALLEN. We are in discussion with the Afghans about what the long-term, enduring relationship will look like. In the course of that discussion, we will ultimately identify the roles and missions and functions which conceivably the U.S. forces could bring to this enduring relationship.

I think while much remains to be discussed, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that some advisory capacity will be required, some enabling capacity will be required for Afghan National Security Force operations. Some intelligence capacity would be required, both to build the intelligence capabilities of the Afghan forces, and then some counterterrorism capabilities to address any reemerge or any potential terrorist hotspot that could conceivably emerge in Afghanistan in the period beyond 2014.

But much of this discussion remains to be had. We are nowhere near talking numbers yet or specific units. But in very general

terms, based on the discussions that we had in Iraq, for example, those kinds of broad roles and functions could conceivably be discussed over the long term.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, and I would agree with General Allen's comments.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

A few weeks ago I met with General Barbero, the director of the Joint IED Defeat Organization, JIEDDO, to discuss the inter-agency effort to interdict the flow of the IED caches. And I want to do everything possible to improve the detection rates and stem the flow of ammonium nitrate from Pakistan coming into Afghanistan, and I think we need to put serious pressure on the Pakistani network distribution of ammonium nitrate.

We know who the key facilitators are in Pakistan. They are pushing these caches of IEDs made with the ammonium nitrate across the Afghan border, which ultimately is killing or injuring our troops. General Allen, how do you plan to incentivize the Pakistanis to control the distribution of this ammonium nitrate, particularly given the fact that the Pakistani military and the civilian population, they, too, have suffered from these IED attacks at the hands of the Pakistani internally focused militants?

General ALLEN. Well, the Pakistanis have recently, I think to their credit, issued a counter IED strategy. We will continue to work with them to build their capacities to do that themselves with respect to protecting themselves from IEDs.

But I think that at multiple levels within our government, we have got to make very clear to Pakistani national leadership, to military leadership that the continued production of calcium ammonium nitrate—ammonium nitrate, for the purposes of this discussion—the fact that it is unregulated, the fact that it gets into the hands of those who would move it across the border, we have got to make it very clear to the Pakistanis. I know we are doing that.

I personally said this to the secretary of defense of Pakistan, we need their help in that regard. They have got to control this. They have got to do what they need to, to regulate the production and the sale so that it goes into the hands of legitimate businessmen.

On the other hand, on the other side of the border, we will continue to posture our forces to both detect, as best we can, to detect the infiltration of those caches of ammonium nitrate that come across. And as we can, we will interdict them, and we have had some pretty big interdictions this year. But it is only a part of the flow that is coming across.

And so, it has to be a joint effort. It has to be an effort with the U.S. and Afghanistan on one side of the border and the U.S., Afghanistan, and Pakistan on the other side of the border. And I believe at many different levels of the government, we have expressed our great desire that the Pakistanis sign up to this and stand up to the process of controlling and regulating ammonium nitrate and its flow and the hands into which it goes. And if confirmed the commander of ISAF, I will continue to add emphasis to that.

Senator HAGAN. You said the Pakistanis are now putting forward their counter IED plans. Do you know what those are?

General ALLEN. We will get back to you on that.

Senator HAGAN. And also, do you have a timeframe at all on what the Pakistanis might be doing as far as controlling the businesses producing this?

General ALLEN. I do not.

Senator HAGAN. Okay. Thank you.

In your answers to the committee's prehearing policy questions, Admiral McRaven, you mentioned the importance of the female cultural support teams to engage with elements of certain populations, presumably the women and children, which have previously been difficult to reach during counterinsurgency operations.

Can you describe the importance of these teams to counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, how they are being integrated into Special Operations Forces, and any changes to policy or law that you might suggest that would make these teams more effective?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. They have been wildly effective in terms of supporting our efforts in Afghanistan. Right now, when a special operations mission goes out, we normally take four females as part of the female engagement team with us. And as you point out, their role in that particular mission is after we have secured an objective. And I will speak first from the direct action side, and then I will talk a little bit about the special forces side, if you will.

But from the direct action side, after we have secured an objective, part of the role of our female engagement teams is to talk to the Afghan females on target, to make sure, one, that there is nobody else left inside the compound, that everybody is safe and secure, that we reassure the females and the children that they are going to be safe. And many times we will do tactical questioning of the females with a U.S. female soldier. And again, that has been wildly effective for us.

The special forces, the broader special forces teams that are part of developing the Afghan local police and the NATO forces that are using the—supporting the provincial reconnaissance companies are also using some variation of the female engagement team to a great effect as well. They are essentially fully integrated, if you will, into the operational units.

They go through an extensive training period for the SOF female engagement teams back at Fort Bragg, under the auspices of the U.S. Army's Special Operations Command. The Marine Corps SOF also has a female engagement team training program.

Once they have gone through their basic training program, they will come forward. There is some additional training that goes on forward with the unit that they are assigned to. And then, once they have achieved the standard we are looking for, then we will put them forward into the field.

Right now, all the policies and authorities are in place for us to do that. And again, it is, you know, probably several years late in coming. We probably would have been much better off had we developed these female engagement teams early on in the fight. But as we look at them now, they are a key component to our success in the special operations battlefield, if you will, in Afghanistan.

Senator HAGAN. Do you know how many of these female teams that you have got?

Admiral MCRAVEN. I know from a JSOC standpoint. I am not sure what the broader Army has. Right now, we have 12 teams, growing to 16.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am.

Senator HAGAN. My time is out.

General Thurman, I did want to just say you have done a great job as the commander of U.S. Army forces command in Fort Bragg. And I just welcome you, and I look forward to your confirmation.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to join in expressing my thanks and admiration for your great service to the country, the extraordinary sacrifice and service of the men and women who serve under you, and, of course, your families, and look forward to your confirmation and voting for it.

I want to pursue the line of questioning that Senator Hagan began. On the assumption that the Pakistanis are not cooperative, because they have not proven cooperative in the past, what additional measures can we take to destroy the sources of the calcium ammonium nitrate that has proved so absolutely and horrifically destructive to the men and women who serve our armed forces in Afghanistan?

General Allen—and I would like, respectfully, to ask you to begin. And then, Admiral McRaven, if you could follow with perhaps some perspective on what can be done through special operations?

General ALLEN. Senator, that is an important question. And the posturing of our intelligence-gathering apparatus, our capabilities, our ISR capabilities, the posturing, potentially, of our special operators on the western side of the border to detect the infiltration of these capabilities, to detect the infiltration of the ammonium nitrate, they come generally along relatively well-known routes of infiltration, to posture ourselves in a way where we can detect and interdict that material as much as we possibly can.

As I said with Senator Hagan, we have had some large interdictions this year. And it is because there have been explicit plans, explicit efforts being put forward and being pursued to do just that. And should I be confirmed and become the commander of ISAF, it is my intention to redouble that effort in every possible way we can to interdict and stop that flow as it gets to the border.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Admiral McRaven?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, to continue on from General Allen's discussion, from a special operations standpoint, we actually target the networks, vice the product itself.

Now, when the product is—when we have the nexus of the product obviously in the network and the individuals in the network, then we get a two-fer. But for the most part, what we are trying to do is shut down the leadership, both the senior leadership and the mid-level leadership and, to some degree, the foot soldiers that

are moving this HME from areas like Chaman across the border and into southern Afghanistan.

What we found is where we have focused our effort against some of the HME networks, the Taliban networks down south, we have been very effective at disrupting the HME. The additional piece of this, and probably better to discuss in a more classified form, is there some technology out there that is allowing us to detect HME before it becomes—before the critical components are put together and turned into a homemade explosive.

And I think we need to continue to pursue that technology because it has been reasonably effective early on the—and the testing of it, to be able to determine where some of this HME is. And then we are subsequently going after those compounds where we see it.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I would like to—I thank you both for those answers. I would like to pursue the offer to learn more about that technology in a different setting, if I may? And General Allen, also from you, whatever additional information you or your staff can provide.

I am planning to be in Afghanistan and Pakistan toward the end of August on a trip that is designed specifically to focus on this issue, and I would like to be helpful and supportive through the committee and through the authorization appropriation process—I know the entire committee will share that view—in developing not only the technology, but whatever resources are necessary to pursue the calcium ammonium nitrate that is brought into Afghanistan.

I want to focus on the impacts of the explosive devices that are manufactured with those substances. And particularly, General Allen, I understand there are now 34 active telemedicine portals in operation in Afghanistan. That number will be expanded, I think, by an additional 42 planned—

General ALLEN. That is correct.

Senator BLUMENTHAL.—focusing on the impacts of the IEDs and other explosive devices, particularly when it comes to traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress.

And I wonder if you could discuss not only the use of those resources but others to diagnose and treat the post-traumatic stress and TBIs that, in many respects, are among the signature wounds of this war?

General ALLEN. Senator, that is a very important question from the standpoint of the health of the force in the long term. And as we discussed yesterday, we have come a very long way with respect to our reaction to the effects of blast on our troops.

And as I indicated, the nature of the immediate action that occurs in the aftermath of an attack has given us the ability to not just detect the results of the attack but to take those actions, those medical actions necessary in the immediate aftermath of the attack so that we can provide the opportunity for rest and medical care for those who have been caught in the blast effects.

That process has evolved dramatically, to the extent that today some 95 percent of those who are immediately diagnosed can be returned to their units. But there is some number, because of the immediacy of the care, that we are able to determine right away that

can go quickly to follow-on care. And I think that that process, as I said, has evolved pretty dramatically in recent time.

And of course, that follows on to the post-traumatic stress disorder that you have mentioned, Senator. And what I would like to do is to give you a definitive lay-down both of how TBI is administered—the detection for TBI is administered immediately on the spot and how it flows ultimately into the PTSD, so that you have one comprehensive answer.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

My time has expired. I want to thank both of you for the very informative and candid and forthright testimony that you have given today. It has been very helpful.

And I would like to pursue the additional information that you both have mentioned. Thank you very much.

General ALLEN. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Let us try a 3-minute round, second round, see if we can all get 3 minutes of questions in.

Let me first ask you, General Allen, you were asked about the question of deadlines and as to whether you were aware of any deadlines that had been previously set that were supported by military commanders, I believe. In Iraq, back in November of 2008, President Bush, as I remember, agreed to two deadlines for U.S. forces, one, a June 2009 deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities and, second, a December 31, 2011, deadline for the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Iraq. Is that accurate?

General ALLEN. Chairman, I will have to check those dates, but thank you for that elaboration.

Chairman LEVIN. But do you remember those—

General ALLEN. I actually do, yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN.—those two deadlines being set?

General ALLEN. I do remember them.

Chairman LEVIN. Did they have the support of the military at that time, do you remember?

General ALLEN. They did, actually. I remember the withdrawal from the cities that worked quite well, actually.

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Second, relative to Korea, General Thurman, you indicated, I believe, that you would be willing to look into the plans that we have going on for a transformation underway in South Korea. There are three major initiatives going on involving our military, including a Yongsan relocation plan, a land partnership plan, and tour normalization plan. The costs of those, I believe, are something like 20—or, excuse me, like \$10 billion, significantly more than they were originally thought to be. That is just our share of the cost.

Can you, when you get there, take a look at the current plans to bring 8,000 more families to South Korea? There is a real question about the rationale. Why are we bringing more families to South Korea if it is a more dangerous place and continues to be a very dangerous place? There is also a very large question about the costs of that normalization, much greater than originally contemplated.

But would you take a look at the current plans and their rationale and their costs when you get there and get the full report to

this committee? Because we have now basically put a hold on those plans until we can really make an assessment.

General THURMAN. Mr. Chairman, yes, sir, I will. Based on our discussion yesterday, I fully expect to make that the number-one priority if I am confirmed, once I get on the ground over there.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Thank you.

Also, do you have any thoughts about the balance, the decision-making process as to, if there is another aggression, which I think is likely, from North Korea, what the proper response is to that aggression, as to what that decision-making process is, as to the adequacy of the response, but also as to the proportionality of the response? Is that a joint decision by us and South Korea?

General THURMAN. Mr. Chairman, that is a very good question. First off, South Korea is a sovereign country, and I believe it is well within their rights to protect themselves if there is a provocation. Obviously, that has to be balanced.

I do know that General Sharp has been working very close with the ROK chairman of their joint forces on counter-provocation and looking at the responses in a joint fashion. But I do expect, if confirmed, I will look into that and make sure that we are doing the right things, because I think a provocation can occur any time.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Finally, Admiral, on the question of your detention of people, you made reference to a couple, I think, that are on a ship, something like that. Is there any legal prohibition against them being tried before an Article 3 court or before a military commission?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, again, it depends on the individual case, and I would be more than happy to discuss the cases that we have dealt with.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, no, not—

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN.—specific cases so much as is there any legal prohibition, assuming it is planned—

Admiral MCRAVEN. No, sir. Not to my knowledge.

Chairman LEVIN.—to having those people tried either before an Article 3 court, if they have committed a crime against the United States, or if they have committed a crime of war, by being tried by a U.S. military commission?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, not to my knowledge, there is no prohibition.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

I think that Senator Ayotte would be next. Let me check, double-check my order. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to follow up, General Allen, on the question of detention. If we were to, for example, capture someone like Ayman al-Zawahiri in Yemen, for example, outside of Afghanistan, could we detain him in Afghanistan at the detention facilities there?

General ALLEN. We would not recommend that.

Senator AYOTTE. And why is that?

General ALLEN. Because Afghanistan is a sovereign country.

Senator AYOTTE. So we are not going to use the detention facilities, for example, in Afghanistan to detain terrorists who are captured outside the territory of Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. It is not our intention.

Senator AYOTTE. And following up, Admiral, with respect to detention, if we, for example, were to capture al-Zawahiri, and capture him and not kill him but hold him for purposes of gathering intelligence and detaining him long term because we felt we needed to under the law of war, where would we hold him?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. I think that is a policy question that I am really not in a position to answer. From a practical military standpoint, obviously, we can hold him—hold Zawahiri or Anwar al-Awlaki or anybody else in a number of places, from a practical standpoint.

It becomes a policy issue and a sovereignty issue for various countries. And as General Allen said, we have looked a number of times at whether or not we would do that in Afghanistan, but owing to the nature of the sovereignty of Afghanistan and the concern about the potential backlash from the Afghan government, we have recommended not to do that.

Senator AYOTTE. And Admiral, would it not be helpful, 10 years into the war on terror, to have a long-term detention and interrogation facility that would be secure for individuals where we need to gather further intelligence?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Ma'am, I believe it would be very helpful.

Senator AYOTTE. And as far as you understand it, is Guantanamo Bay still off the table in terms of being used for that type of facility?

Admiral MCRAVEN. As far as I understand it, it is. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. Okay. Thank you very much.

I wanted to also ask, General Allen, as the deputy commander of CENTCOM, could you tell me if any ISR assets have been pulled from Iraq and Afghanistan or Yemen or the general CENTCOM area of operations in order to support operations in Libya?

General ALLEN. While I was still serving at CENTCOM, yes, there were.

Senator AYOTTE. Could you describe generally what those assets were taken away and whether that has taken any capabilities away from us, ISR capabilities in Afghanistan?

General ALLEN. Not in Afghanistan, ma'am. I will get back to you on that question.

Senator AYOTTE. I would appreciate an answer on that. Thank you very much for that.

And I do have an additional question for you, General Thurman, and I will submit that for the record.

I want to thank all three of you for your distinguished service and your willingness to continue to serve our country.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral McRaven, if night raids were stopped, ordered to be stopped by the Afghan government, how would that affect our ability to be successful?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I think stopping night raids would certainly be detrimental to the special operations aspect of the fight in Afghanistan.

Just to give you some statistics, sir, over the course of the last 12 months, the task force that I commanded over there, we conducted approximately 2,000 operations. Of those 2,000 operations, somewhere in the neighborhood of 88 percent of them were, in fact, conducted at night. I think what is lost on a lot of folks is that approximately 84 to 86 percent of those missions, we never fired a shot.

Senator GRAHAM. And Admiral, I think it is fair to say that 78 percent of the people we are detaining—

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM.—come from those special operations missions.

Admiral MCRAVEN. They do, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, General Allen, if the Afghan government insisted that the 2,400 people we are detaining at Parwan Prison under the law of war be transferred to Afghan control by January 2012, would you have concerns about that decision?

General ALLEN. I would, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Would it affect our ability to be successful?

General ALLEN. I think it would.

Senator GRAHAM. All right. Now let us talk about counterinsurgency. The option that the country has chosen through President Obama is to withdraw 10,000 this year, all surge forces gone by September.

Is it fair to say, General Allen, that was not one of the options presented to the President by General Petraeus?

General ALLEN. It is a more aggressive option than that which was presented.

Senator GRAHAM. My question is, was that an option?

General ALLEN. It was not.

Senator GRAHAM. So I just want the country to understand that this is not the Petraeus strategy any longer. The Commander-in-Chief has the perfect right to do what he did. I just hope that it hasn't undercut what I think could be a very successful outcome.

Now, perception is reality. Do you agree, General Allen, that when the President announced at West Point that we would be withdrawing in July 2011, that created a problem in Afghanistan because it was seen by some as that America is leaving?

General ALLEN. I believe there are those who could have—

Senator GRAHAM. Were letters presented—were letters sent to people by the Taliban saying, "America is leaving in July, you better watch what you do," something to that effect?

General ALLEN. The Taliban have, in fact, communicated—

Senator GRAHAM. Would you agree that the Lisbon statement that we are going to transition in 2014 was very helpful?

General ALLEN. It was.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. My question is, now that we have changed the strategy and the withdrawal timeline, have we sent the signal yet again of uncertainty? Seems to be the Taliban commanders are renewed optimism, and it seems to be some of our allies are going to Iran and other places.

My question is, do you believe that this more aggressive withdrawal policy by the President has sent a signal of uncertainty, or do you know?

General ALLEN. I think it is too early to tell, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Great answer. I know you are going to try your best. We are all pulling for you. Let us know what we can do to help you. God bless you all.

General ALLEN. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Your own position, though, you do support that decision of the President. Is that correct?

General ALLEN. I do, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. I think it is important that even though this apparently was more aggressive than General Petraeus recommended, that military leaders of our country support this decision and feel it was an appropriate decision for the President to make. Is that correct?

General ALLEN. Chairman, we are in execution now.

Chairman LEVIN. But you also felt it was a proper decision for the President to make?

General ALLEN. It is the prerogative of the President to make—to take the recommendations of his commanders and to make the decision. And he made that decision, and we are executing it.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. And it is something you agree with?

General ALLEN. I agree.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

We want to thank all of you. I think we have probably run just exactly to noon, where we thought we would end.

And your families are sitting behind you, some of them shivering. And so, they are not just figuratively behind you, but they are literally behind you. And the air conditioning here is robust, just the way you and your men and women who serve with you act robustly.

But your challenges are tremendous. You are all up to them. And with the support of your families, you will succeed in meeting those challenges. This committee is very, very grateful for the work that you do and the men and women with whom you serve. I can't say that enough.

I am sure it sounds to some people listening to our hearings it is a bit repetitious. But from our perspective, we cannot repeat it enough. So we do that with a purpose, so that our troops understand exactly how much they mean to us and to the American people.

Thank you again, and we will stand adjourned. And we will hope to get these confirmations done this week. That is also a challenging, aggressive schedule. But we are up to it, just the way you are up to it.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]