

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE
SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Washington, D.C.

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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:28 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Graham, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN McCAIN, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM ARIZONA

3 Chairman McCain: Good morning. As the committee
4 convenes, I want to make it clear that I will not tolerate a
5 disruption of the workings of this committee, and I will say
6 that anyone who does will be arrested, not ejected, but
7 arrested. I want to make that very clear. We will not
8 tolerate disruption of the workings of this committee. They
9 are too important.

10 The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning
11 to receive testimony on the situation in Afghanistan.
12 General Campbell, we thank you for appearing before the
13 committee today, and we are grateful for your many years of
14 distinguished service and your leadership of the United
15 States and coalition forces in Afghanistan at this critical
16 time. We ask that you convey the gratitude and appreciation
17 of this committee to all of the brave men and women in
18 uniform under your command.

19 14 years ago, U.S. forces went to Afghanistan because
20 that was where, under the sanctuary under the Taliban
21 regime, al Qaeda planned and conducted initial training for
22 the 9/11 attacks that killed 3,000 innocent civilians on
23 American soil. Our mission was to ensure that Afghanistan
24 would never again be a safe haven for al Qaeda or other
25 radical Islamist terrorists to attack us again. As General

1 Petraeus told this committee recently, that mission has been
2 successful for 14 years.

3 American troops and civilians have made steady progress
4 in supporting our Afghan partners to secure their country
5 and dealt severe blows to al Qaeda and other terrorist
6 groups that want to attack the United States and our allies.

7 At the same time, we have seen a remarkable progress in
8 Afghan society: more schools and more teachers; greater
9 opportunities for women and girls in the classroom, in the
10 workforce, and in positions of leadership; higher literacy,
11 better roads and wider use of cell phones. Life expectancy
12 in Afghanistan has increased by 22 years in less than a
13 generation, a feat unparalleled in modern history.

14 And it is precisely because we are fighting for
15 progress and fighting for our values that it has been so
16 disturbing to read reports alleging that some of our
17 coalition partners may be engaged in sexual abuse and other
18 activities that contradict our values. This committee
19 treats such allegations with the utmost seriousness, and we
20 look forward to hearing from you, General Campbell, as to
21 what actions have been taken and what processes put in place
22 to address this situation.

23 Yes, we have made significant and steady progress in
24 Afghanistan. But as U.S. military officials and diplomats
25 have warned for years -- I repeat, for years -- these gains

1 are still reversible, and a robust and adaptive U.S. troop
2 presence based on conditions on the ground not on a calendar
3 is essential to ensuring that these gains endure. Failure
4 to adopt such a conditions-based plan, these experts have
5 warned, would invite the same tragedy that has unfolded in
6 Iraq since 2011. If we have learned anything from that
7 nightmare, it is that wars do not end just because
8 politicians say so.

9 The evidence of that is already clear in Afghanistan.
10 Since President Obama hailed the end of combat operations in
11 Afghanistan last year, ISIL has arrived on the battlefield
12 and the Taliban have launched a major offensive to take
13 territory across the country, as we saw most recently in the
14 key City of Kunduz.

15 Meanwhile, just like the Iraq Security Forces at the
16 end of 2011, the Afghan National Security Forces are still
17 developing key capabilities. The shortfalls are hauntingly
18 familiar: intelligence, logistics, air lift, close air
19 support, special forces, and institutional development. And
20 yet, the White House remains committed to its politically
21 driven withdrawal of nearly all U.S. forces from
22 Afghanistan.

23 It is not too late for President Obama to abandon this
24 dangerous course and adopt a plan for U.S. troop presence
25 based on conditions on the ground. But time is of the

1 essence, and continued delays by the White House are hurting
2 our national security interests and those of our partners in
3 Afghanistan and beyond.

4 America's friends and foes alike are waiting on
5 President Obama. The government and people of Afghanistan
6 are waiting to see what kind of support and commitment the
7 United States will make. Afghan Security Forces, whose
8 morale has been tested by heavy casualties against the
9 Taliban, are waiting to find out whether their American
10 partners will remain at their side. Our NATO partners are
11 waiting to determine their course in Afghanistan and need to
12 begin generating forces now for an extended commitment.
13 Pakistan is waiting for a U.S. decision while hedging its
14 bets with individuals and groups that are hostile to our
15 interests. The Taliban is waiting to see if it merely needs
16 to wait until the United States draws down to an "embassy-
17 centric presence" to have the battlefield largely to
18 themselves.

19 And then there are the thousands upon thousands of
20 American troops and their families who have served and are
21 serving in Afghanistan who are waiting to see if their
22 sacrifices will be put at greater risk because we abandoned
23 Afghanistan by blindly following an inflexible timetable for
24 withdrawal.

25 As the world waits, the consequences of the indecision

1 and the wrong decision are beginning to merge: growing
2 instability, terrorist safe havens, and an increase in
3 direct threats to the United States. We cannot turn back
4 the clock on decisions made 4 years ago in Iraq, but the
5 decisions made now will determine the nature and scope of
6 the future challenges we face in Afghanistan.

7 The world walked away from Afghanistan once before, and
8 it descended into chaos that contributed to the worst
9 terrorist attack ever against our homeland. We cannot
10 afford to repeat that mistake, because the threats we face
11 are real and the stakes are high for the lives of the Afghan
12 people, especially women and girls, for the stability of the
13 region and for the national security of the United States.

14 General Campbell, we thank you again for being with us
15 this morning. We look forward to your testimony.

16 Senator Reed?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

4 And, General Campbell, welcome and thank you for your
5 service. And please also pass along our deep appreciation
6 to the men and women in uniform under your command in
7 Afghanistan for their service.

8 General, you have been in command for over a year of
9 the twin missions in Afghanistan: training and advising the
10 Afghan Security Forces and counterterrorism operations.
11 Your purpose and mission is to ensure that Afghanistan does
12 not once again become a safe haven for terrorists aiming to
13 attack the United States, its allies or their interests.

14 Your testimony this morning comes at a critical time.
15 The administration is in the process of considering
16 operations for the size and authorities for the U.S.
17 military presence in Afghanistan in 2016 and beyond. I
18 strongly believe that the U.S. force posture in Afghanistan
19 going forward should be shaped and resourced to enable you,
20 General, to achieve your missions' objectives based on
21 conditions on the ground. We should also take into account
22 our regional counterterrorism requirements, including
23 against al Qaeda and an apparent growing presence of ISIL in
24 determining the long-term size and posture of the U.S.
25 military presence in Afghanistan.

1 The news reports regarding security conditions in
2 Afghanistan indicate a worsening situation over the past few
3 months. Taliban forces continue to be formidable, despite
4 the announcement of Mullah Omar's death. This year,
5 casualties for the Afghan Security Forces have reached their
6 highest level since the start of the conflict. The Taliban
7 have expanded their control over some rural areas, closing
8 schools, reducing the Afghan people's access to services,
9 killing or intimidating government officials, reimposing
10 restrictions on Afghan women and girls, and reversing the
11 progress of the past decade in these areas. Taliban attacks
12 in southern and eastern Afghanistan have increased, and most
13 recently they conducted a major operation to seize the
14 provincial capital in Kunduz in the north.

15 This situation raises significant concerns. Yet, in
16 2015, Afghan Security Forces have repeatedly regrouped and
17 retaken territory from the Taliban. It is notable that, in
18 the past few days, Afghan forces, with enabling assistance
19 from U.S. and NATO and advisors and airstrikes, have retaken
20 central Kunduz from the Taliban. General Campbell, I hope
21 you will give us your assessment of whether the Afghan army
22 and police retain their will and capability to fight.

23 Security in Afghanistan depends not only on our
24 training and advising the Afghan Security Forces but also on
25 whether those forces believe there is an Afghan Government

1 and leadership that they are willing to support and defend.
2 In Iraq, we saw our training efforts catastrophically
3 undermined when Prime Minister Maliki gutted the army's
4 leadership and replaced competent leaders with his own crony
5 loyalists, resulting in an army that melted away when ISIL
6 seized the City of Mosul and suffered a number of other
7 significant losses.

8 In Afghanistan, we have partners in President Ghani and
9 CEO Abdullah Abdullah. Yet, this unity government has
10 struggled to stand up its cabinet, and there are reports of
11 serious divisions at lower levels. General, we would be
12 interested in your views on President Ghani's commitment to
13 ensuring that the Afghan army and police have competent,
14 non-corrupt leadership, and any insights you may have on how
15 to maintain and promote the unity of the Afghan Government.

16 Our counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan have had
17 a number of significant successes this year. This is due in
18 part to an increased level of cooperation across the
19 Afghanistan-Pakistan border and active military operations
20 by the Pakistan army that have driven al Qaeda and other
21 militants across into Afghanistan creating opportunities for
22 targeting these extremists.

23 I am concerned, however, that our ability to execute
24 successfully these critical operations will be reduced as a
25 result of resources being redirected to support our campaign

1 against ISIL in Iraq and Syria or a possible reduction in
2 our counterterrorism footprint as part of the President's
3 decision on the future size of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

4 I would also be interested in your thoughts on the
5 operational authorities you believe will be necessary going
6 forward to target terrorist groups that would hope to
7 capitalize on U.S. and international troop reductions to
8 once again use Afghanistan as a safe haven from which to
9 launch attacks.

10 Finally, our efforts to promote security in Afghanistan
11 will be severely damaged if we are not perceived as
12 upholding the highest standards for our forces and the
13 Afghan forces that we train. Recent news reports alleging a
14 policy of nonintervention when U.S. troops were aware of
15 sexual abuse by Afghan commanders receiving training are
16 deeply disturbing. General Campbell, I expect you to help
17 this committee get to the truth regarding these allegations
18 and to confirm for us that U.S. troops will not tolerate
19 human rights abuses by forces we are training or advising,
20 including the sexual abuse of any civilians.

21 Additionally, U.S. forces must uphold the highest
22 standards for the protection of civilians as they relate to
23 collateral damage caused by military operations. The United
24 States must do all it can to avoid incidents like the recent
25 tragedy in Kunduz where, according to news reports, U.S.

1 airstrikes damaged a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders
2 killing more than 20 patients and staff and wounding more
3 than 3 dozen. The Defense Department has announced that
4 your headquarters will be conducting an investigation of
5 this incident and this committee expects to be kept informed
6 of the progress of that investigation to the maximum extent
7 appropriate as it goes forward. General Campbell, I am
8 interested in hearing from you what additional steps are
9 being taken to ensure that our rules of engagement reinforce
10 the importance of protecting civilians from harm and
11 preventing such tragic outcomes in the future.

12 Thank you again, sir, for your service, and we look
13 forward to your testimony.

14 Chairman McCain: Thank you very much.

15 General?

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA, COMMANDER,
2 RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION; COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES-
3 AFGHANISTAN

4 General Campbell: Well, good morning, Chairman McCain,
5 Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the
6 committee. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before
7 you today.

8 I have been honored to lead and represent the service
9 men and women of the United States Forces-Afghanistan for
10 the last 14 months.

11 I would like to begin by thanking the committee for
12 your steadfast support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen,
13 marines, and our civilians. And due to your leadership and
14 commitment, they are the best trained and equipped force our
15 Nation has ever deployed. Their outstanding performance
16 bears testimony to your backing and the backing of the
17 American people. So thank you very much.

18 I would like to pay tribute to our military families.
19 They are the unsung heroes of the last 14 years of conflict.
20 In many ways, our frequent absences from home are harder on
21 them than they are on us. Without their love and support,
22 we could not succeed.

23 I would also like to acknowledge and honor the over
24 2,200 service men and women who have been killed in
25 Afghanistan and the over 20,000 who have been wounded.

1 Tragically we lost 14 personnel, to include six airmen and
2 four U.S. contractors, last Friday in an aircraft mishap.
3 And we always remember the Afghan and own fallen and the
4 loved ones they left behind. Every day we honor their
5 memories by assisting the Afghans to build a stable and
6 secure country and by protecting our homeland.

7 Over 14 years have passed since the 9/11 attacks and we
8 have not forgotten why we first came to Afghanistan and why
9 we remain. Since 2001, exceptional efforts and courage of
10 our forces have ensured that another terrorist attack
11 originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S.
12 homeland has not occurred.

13 8 months have passed since I last appeared before this
14 committee, and much has changed since then. Afghanistan,
15 its government and security forces, the enemy, and our own
16 coalition have undergone tremendous transitions. These
17 changes have ensured that this fighting season has been
18 fundamentally different. It cannot be compared to previous
19 years. And I would like to emphasize how political,
20 military, economic, and social transitions are affecting the
21 operational environment in order to place our campaign in
22 context. Afghanistan is at a critical juncture and so is
23 our campaign. But before I further explain the formidable
24 challenges and the opportunities before us, I would like to
25 address a few topics that have been in the headlines here

1 lately.

2 First, I would like to discuss the tragic loss of lives
3 in the strike on the hospital in Kunduz. By way of
4 background, U.S. Special Operations forces have been
5 providing training, advice, and assistance to Afghan
6 National Defense Forces who have been engaged in a tenacious
7 fight with the Taliban. On Saturday morning, our forces
8 provided close air support to Afghan forces at their
9 request. To be clear, the decision to provide aerial fire
10 was a U.S. decision made within the U.S. chain of command.
11 The hospital was mistakenly struck. We would never
12 intentionally target a protected medical facility.

13 I must allow the investigation to take its course, and
14 therefore, I am not at liberty to discuss further specifics
15 at this time. However, I assure you that the investigation
16 will be thorough, objective, and transparent.

17 I would also like to remind the committee and the
18 American people that we continue to make extraordinary
19 efforts to protect civilians. No military in history has
20 done more to avoid harming innocents. We have readily
21 assumed greater risks to our own forces in order to protect
22 noncombatants. To prevent any future incidents of this
23 nature, I have directed the entire force to undergo in-depth
24 training in order to review all of our operational
25 authorities and rules of engagement.

1 Our record stands in stark contrast to the actions of
2 the Taliban. They have repeatedly violated the laws of war
3 by intentionally targeting civilians. The United Nations
4 attributes more than 70 percent of the noncombatants killed
5 and wounded in this war to the Taliban.

6 Second, I would like to discuss the sexual exploitation
7 of children by a few members of the Afghan Security Forces.
8 All of us consider this reprehensible. This criminal
9 practice is entirely unacceptable and unacceptable to the
10 Afghans as well. President Ghani and Chief Executive
11 Abdullah have reiterated their policies and laws to enforce
12 this with their Afghan Security Forces. We will do
13 everything within our power to defend and protect human
14 rights. That is our moral obligation to you, the American
15 people, and ourselves. And I have ordered 100 percent
16 training of the force to ensure that they understand our
17 human rights policy, which has been in place since at least
18 2011. This policy requires that our personnel report any
19 suspected human rights violations committed by the Afghan
20 Security Forces, and this is to include any sexual abuse of
21 children. Whenever and wherever our personnel observe human
22 rights abuses, they will be conveyed through our chain of
23 command and in turn to the Afghan Government. Perpetrators
24 must be held accountable.

25 With still many weeks left in the traditional fighting

1 season, intense combat continues in many parts of the
2 country. The Afghan Security Forces have been severely
3 tested this year, but they continue to fight hard. In the
4 wake of the coalition's redeployment, the Afghan Security
5 Forces and insurgents both accepted that this fighting
6 season would be decisive. There was no winter lull, and
7 since February the fighting has been nearly continuous.
8 Casualties on both sides have risen, and the violence has
9 moved beyond the traditional insurgent strongholds.

10 Pakistan military operations this year have also
11 displaced foreign fighters into eastern and northern
12 Afghanistan. The emergence of Daesh, or the Islamic State
13 in Khorasan Province, IS-KP, has further complicated the
14 theater landscape and potentially expanded the conflict.
15 Most recently, the Taliban increased the tempo of their
16 operations following the announced death of their spiritual
17 leader Mullah Omar.

18 We are also now seeing how our redeployment and
19 transition from combat operations to an advisory role have
20 changed battlefield dynamics. Only a few years ago, our
21 coalition numbered over 140,000 military personnel. Now our
22 forces comprise fewer than 14,000, of which approximately
23 10,000 are U.S. service men and women. In years past, our
24 aircraft provided responsive and often decisive close air
25 support to coalition and Afghan troops in contact. This is

1 no longer the norm but the exception. Collectively, the
2 Afghan Security Forces are adapting to these changes and in
3 some places they are struggling.

4 Within this context, the fluidity of the current
5 security situation is not surprising. This fighting season
6 started well for the Afghan Security Forces as they executed
7 successful multi-corps, cross-pillar operations in Helmand,
8 Zabul, and Ghazni Provinces and in the southern approaches
9 into Kabul. In April, they fought back significant Taliban
10 pressure in the north, and in August and September, they
11 reversed almost all of the Taliban gains in the northern
12 Helmand after considerable effort.

13 Yet, there have been setbacks, and most recently, the
14 Taliban overran Kunduz, Kunduz City. Still, the Afghan
15 Security Forces rallied and they have regained control of
16 most of the city, just as they have successfully retaken
17 other ground temporarily lost throughout this fighting
18 season.

19 The Afghan Security Forces' inconsistent performance in
20 Kunduz underscores several of their shortcomings. They must
21 improve their intelligence fusion, command and control,
22 utilization of their forces. They do not possess the
23 necessary combat power and numbers to protect every part of
24 the country. This makes it very difficult for the Afghan
25 Security Forces to counter the Taliban's ability to

1 temporarily amass, seize an objective, and then blend back
2 into the population. Ultimately the Afghan security leaders
3 need to discern better when to fight, when to hold, and
4 where to assume risk.

5 Despite these shortcomings, however, the Afghan
6 Security Forces have displayed courage and resilience. They
7 are still holding. The Afghan Government retains control of
8 Kabul, Highway 1, its provincial capitals, and nearly all
9 the district centers. The Afghan Security Forces are
10 effectively protecting the principal population centers.

11 It is also apparent that our advisory support and
12 financial backing are strengthening the resolve and building
13 their systems and processes. The Afghan Security Forces
14 have repeatedly shown that without key enablers and
15 competent operational level commanders, they cannot handle
16 the fight alone in this stage of their development.

17 Ultimately I am convinced that the improved leadership and
18 accountability will address most of their deficiencies, but
19 it will take time for them to build their human capital.

20 The Afghan Security Forces' uneven performance in this
21 fighting season also underscores that their shortfalls will
22 persist well beyond this year. Capability gaps still exist
23 in the fixed and rotary wing aviation, combined arms,
24 intelligence, and maintenance. One of the greatest tactical
25 challenges for the Afghan Security Forces has been

1 overcoming the Afghan Air Force's still extremely limited
2 organic close air support capability.

3 Despite a myriad of challenges, the fundamental
4 partnership between the coalition and the Afghan Government
5 remains durable. The difference between the Ghani
6 administration and the previous administration is like night
7 and day. At every level, coalition and Afghan leaders
8 continue to work together in pursuit of shared objectives.
9 The Afghan Government, civil leaders, and military
10 commanders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the
11 coalition's efforts.

12 President Ghani has asked NATO and the U.S. to provide
13 some flexibility in our planning to account for the fact
14 that his government remains in transition while the threats
15 he is facing are changing. He has asserted that a sustained
16 coalition and U.S. presence provides actual and
17 psychological stability to the country as the new government
18 solidifies. He recognizes that his new administration must
19 invest considerable time and effort to address the
20 challenges of systemic corruption. He has also acknowledged
21 that while the Afghan Security Forces are better equipped
22 and trained than ever, much work remains to build their
23 systems and processes and improve their leader development.

24 I have offered my chain of command several options for
25 our future laydown in 2016 and beyond. It was envisioned in

1 mid-2014 that we would transition to a normalized embassy
2 presence by January 2017. That remains our planning
3 assumption. Since that time, much has changed. We have
4 seen the rise of Daesh, an increased al Qaeda presence in
5 Afghanistan due to PAKMIL operations, and now we have strong
6 partners in President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah.
7 As a result, I put forward recommendations to adjust to this
8 new environment while addressing our core missions, train,
9 advise, and assist the Afghan Security Forces and conduct
10 counterterrorism operations to protect the homeland.

11 As the upsurge in insurgent violence in the northern
12 Helmand and Kunduz shows, Afghanistan is again at a decisive
13 point. The President is well aware of the tenuous security
14 situation, and I also appreciate that he has many other
15 global issues to weigh as he considers my recommendations.
16 My role is to provide him my best military advice based upon
17 my assessment of the conditions on the ground weighed
18 against the risks both to the force and to the mission.

19 I am unable to discuss further details on the options I
20 provided to the President. In the past, when flexibility
21 has been requested of him, he took it under serious
22 consideration and made his decision. He provided
23 flexibility this year. The same decision process is being
24 worked through now for 2016 and beyond.

25 In closing, the challenges before us are still

1 significant. In an extremely tough fight, the Afghan
2 Security Forces continue to hold. They have remained
3 resilient and they have not fractured. Fully supported by
4 an engaged commander-in-chief, President Ghani, embraced by
5 the Afghan people, and backstopped by our military advisors,
6 resources, and enablers, the Afghan Security Forces' future
7 and Afghanistan's prospects for eventual peace still remain
8 promising.

9 If we fail in this worthwhile mission, Afghanistan will
10 once again become a sanctuary for al Qaeda and other
11 terrorists bent on attacking our interests and citizens
12 abroad and at home. If a security vacuum arose, other
13 extremist networks such as Daesh would also rapidly expand
14 and sow unrest through Central and South Asia and
15 potentially target our homeland.

16 The hard work and the sacrifices of countless coalition
17 military personnel and civilians over the last 14 years have
18 created the conditions in which the Afghans can and are now
19 taking responsibility for their own security and governance.
20 The Afghans welcome the opportunity to shape their destiny,
21 but they still desire, need, and deserve our assistance.
22 Our support cannot and should not be indefinite or
23 unconditional. The Afghans must continue to do their part.
24 If they do, we should continue to exercise strategic
25 patience and sustain our commitment to them.

1 Working together, we can be successful. A proactive,
2 cooperative Ghani administration and committed Afghan
3 Security Forces offer us a unique opportunity to further
4 develop a meaningful strategic relationship in a volatile
5 but vital area of the world. Our continued efforts to
6 stabilize Afghanistan will benefit the entire region and, in
7 turn, offer greater security for the U.S. homeland and
8 Americans abroad and at home.

9 Again, thank you for your steadfast support of our
10 campaign. I look forward to your questions. I also request
11 the committee to accept my written statement for the record.
12 Thank you very much, sir.

13 Chairman McCain: Without objection.

14 [The prepared statement of General Campbell follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Thank you, General Campbell, and
2 thank you for your continued great leadership in a very
3 difficult situation. And we are proud of your great
4 leadership.

5 On the hospital issue, I know I speak for all members
6 of the committee that our sympathy for those who were killed
7 and injured in this tragedy is heartfelt and deep.

8 Is it true that the strike was requested by Afghan
9 forces on the ground that struck the hospital?

10 General Campbell: Sir, as I said yesterday in a press
11 statement, yes, sir. The Afghan forces on the ground
12 requested aerial support from our forces that were on the
13 ground. But as I said in my opening statement, even though
14 the Afghans request that support, it still has to go through
15 a rigorous U.S. procedure to enable fires to go on the
16 ground.

17 Chairman McCain: But there was no American forward air
18 controllers on the ground.

19 General Campbell: Sir, we had a special operations
20 unit that was in close vicinity that was talking to the
21 aircraft to deliver those fires.

22 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

23 General Campbell, the President on 27 May 2014 made a
24 long statement and said by the end of 2016, our military
25 will draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul with a

1 security assistance component. And I am not making this up.
2 He said, just as we have done in Iraq.

3 General, in your opinion do the conditions on the
4 ground warrant a change to the current plan for the drawdown
5 of U.S. troops in Afghanistan?

6 General Campbell: Sir, thanks for the question.

7 Sir, as I mentioned in my opening statement, when that
8 decision was made in 2014, a lot has happened since then in
9 transition, the growth of Daesh, we did not have a national
10 unity government in 2014, the actions by Pakistan and the
11 fight they have had to push additional insurgents inside of
12 Afghanistan. Underneath that construct, it does not enable
13 us to provide a CT component. And so as I have talked about
14 on the options, I provided several options to the chain of
15 command and will continue to work with my chain of command
16 and provide them my best military advice, the pros and cons
17 of each of those courses action as we move forward.

18 Chairman McCain: Well, could I respectfully ask again,
19 do the conditions on the ground warrant a change to the
20 current plan that calls for, by the end of 2016, we would be
21 an embassy-centric force?

22 General Campbell: Sir, again, based on conditions on
23 the ground, based on the transitions I have talked about, I
24 do believe that we have to provide our senior leadership
25 options different than the current plan that we are going

1 with. Absolutely.

2 The current plan, as envisioned right now, sir, as you
3 know, and as you talked about in your opening statement, is
4 an embassy-based presence. As I take a look at conditions
5 on the ground, as we have to continue to provide TAA to our
6 Afghan partners, when the President made that decision, it
7 did not take into account the change over the last 2 years.
8 And so the courses of action that I have provided to my
9 senior leadership provide options to adjust that.

10 Chairman McCain: Did the attack on Kunduz surprise --
11 maybe the word is not "surprise," but is it not an
12 indication that the Taliban have significant strength,
13 including in an area in the north where they generally
14 speaking did not have very much capability, thanks to the
15 makeup there in northern Afghanistan?

16 General Campbell: Sir, the Afghans and quite frankly
17 coalition were surprised when the Taliban were able to take
18 over Kunduz City. A lot of reasons I think why. But the
19 Afghans are taking a hard look as well to make sure they
20 understand and do their own sort of after-action on this.
21 Part of the reason, they did not have many of the key
22 leaders in place, the city, for the most part, had police.
23 The Afghan army was on the outskirts. They did not
24 reinforce. Bottom line, the Taliban were able to come in,
25 attack from within the city, and quite frankly surprised the

1 police forces that enabled the Taliban to gain a great IO
2 victory. I do not think the Taliban had intent to stay in
3 Kunduz for very long, and as soon as the Afghan forces were
4 able to bring additional forces in, logistically resupply
5 that, the Taliban, for the most part, melted away, left the
6 city. There are small isolated pockets that continue to
7 fight.

8 Chairman McCain: From a PR standpoint, though, it was
9 a rather significant victory for the Taliban.

10 General Campbell: Sir, absolutely, yes.

11 Chairman McCain: Finally, you said in your testimony
12 we will need to help the Afghans address capability gaps in
13 aviation, intelligence, and special operations. And I would
14 add logistics to that list.

15 Should it not be that you should be recommending not
16 numbers of people to the White House but capabilities and
17 then fill in the numbers after that? Is that the process
18 you are using, or is it you are just giving them numbers?

19 General Campbell: Sir, I deal in capabilities, as you
20 talk about. So I look at the requirement and really the
21 needs assessment the Afghans would have and try to base the
22 courses of actions based on those requirements.

23 Chairman McCain: So their needs are aviation,
24 intelligence, and special operations according to your
25 testimony.

1 General Campbell: Sir, absolutely. Sustainment,
2 logistics. The aviation piece we just, quite frankly,
3 started late on their air force, building their close air
4 support capability. Logistics and sustainment is hard for
5 any army. For a U.S. Army that has been around for 240
6 years, try to compare that to an Afghan army that is nascent
7 and maybe only 8 to 9 years old is quite tough.

8 Chairman McCain: Aviation is one of the areas of most
9 critical I would argue. I think they have two helicopters.
10 Is that right?

11 General Campbell: They have two functioning MI-35
12 helicopters. They have several MI-17's, and now they have
13 the MD-530, which we introduced here. But as far as close
14 air support helicopters, that is a key gap. As you know,
15 sir, it takes 2 or 3 years to grow a pilot, 2 or 3 years to
16 grow maintainers. We are doing that as fast as we can.
17 They started out the season with five MI-35's. Today they
18 have two just based on airframe flyability.

19 Chairman McCain: Well, I thank you. And again,
20 General, I would like to again express my appreciation for
21 the outstanding job you are doing under extremely difficult
22 constraints. I thank you, General.

23 Senator Reed?

24 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

25 And thank you, General, for your testimony and for your

1 service.

2 So this has been a long struggle, and every community
3 in this country has seen the effects and just recently a
4 brave, young Rhode Islander, Sergeant First Class Andrew
5 McKenna, was killed in action in Kabul. So this is not just
6 academic or hypothetical. This is very real for our country
7 and for the men and women of this country and our armed
8 services.

9 Let me ask you a question. You have two major
10 missions, train and equip, together with counterterrorism
11 operations. Just in the context of counterterrorism
12 operations, do you need a physical presence outside of Kabul
13 to do that effectively?

14 General Campbell: Sir, to conduct counterterror
15 operations effectively, it would have to be outside of
16 Kabul, yes, sir.

17 Senator Reed: So that would argue in terms of
18 capabilities for a presence that is beyond the simple
19 environment of Kabul.

20 General Campbell: Yes, sir.

21 Senator Reed: There is new leadership in the Taliban.
22 Mullah Mansour has taken control. His deputies include I
23 think one principal of the Haqqani Network, which is located
24 on both sides of the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan.
25 All of this raises the issue of the role of Pakistan, which

1 is consistent and a constant issue that comes up.

2 Just a few months ago, they were trying to broker peace
3 talks. Can you give us some insight into the current
4 position of the Pakistan Government with respect to what is
5 going on in your AL?

6 General Campbell: Sir, again, as far as reconciliation
7 and Pakistan's role, Afghanistan has said many times that
8 this has to be Afghan-led on reconciliation. I think
9 Pakistan understands that. President Ghani and the
10 leadership inside of Pakistan have talked several times
11 about reconciliation moving forward. I think both President
12 Ghani and Pakistan understand that there has to be some sort
13 of political resolution to this fight, and so reconciliation
14 is one of those ways.

15 Right now, with the Taliban being fractured, with
16 Mansour claiming that he is the head, other folks like
17 Zakir, Manan, Yaqoub, Dadullah, other senior Taliban members
18 are actually still trying to struggle to fight against that
19 and do not believe that Mansour should be the head. I think
20 that will work itself out, but I think there are
21 opportunities for Afghanistan to take advantage of that as
22 they move forward.

23 There was, I think as has been mentioned here, one
24 peace talk. There was a second one that was on the table
25 that was moving forward in just a day or so before when the

1 Mullah Omar death was announced, and they kind of scrapped
2 that.

3 I do believe -- and I did have the opportunity to talk
4 to General Raheel Sharif, the Pakistan chief of the army. I
5 talk to him probably once a week. I try to get to Pakistan
6 once a month. I did talk to him last Monday, and he is
7 dedicated to try to move the peace process back. And I know
8 that he and President Ghani will continue to try to work
9 through that. But again, sir, I think that is going to take
10 time and a lot of effort by a lot of people. And I do not
11 think that we should expect that is going to happen here in
12 the near future. But it will take concerted effort by all.

13 Senator Reed: As you indicate in your testimony, both
14 President Ghani and CEO Abdullah seem to be committed to not
15 only a positive relationship with the United States but to
16 create a professional military force. Is that again your
17 consensus?

18 And also unlike, hopefully, Iraq, there does not appear
19 to be any major sectarian divisions material, developing
20 within the security force?

21 General Campbell: Sir, you are right. I do believe
22 that the Afghan Security Forces continue to be very
23 resilient. President Ghani has taken on the role as
24 commander-in-chief. He takes that very seriously. He
25 visits training. He talks to his corps commanders quite

1 frequently in person, on video teleconferences. So he takes
2 on that role. And I have seen the Afghan Security Forces
3 under very, very tough situations continue to come together.
4 I do not see -- and I spent about 19 months in Iraq. I do
5 not see the same decisive ethnic infighting that I saw in
6 Iraq.

7 They have had some setbacks. We knew this was going to
8 be a very tough season. Both the Afghan Security Forces and
9 the Taliban knew this would be a decisive fighting season.
10 And I think over time, they continue to get better. So in
11 northern Helmand where they had some issues, Musa Qala was
12 taken over. It took a little bit of time, but the Afghan
13 forces -- although some of those had retreated out, the
14 majority got back together, had a good plan, resupplied, and
15 moved the right forces in to take back over Musa Qala. They
16 did the same thing in Kunduz. And again, very hard to move
17 that number of forces logistically, to plan that very
18 quickly. So if you try to compare Iraq and Afghanistan, I
19 see them as again night and day, two different things. The
20 Afghans are fighters and, sir, they are warriors.

21 Senator Reed: So both, from your perspective,
22 operationally and politically, the Afghans are making a
23 commitment that justifies continued support by the United
24 States and NATO.

25 General Campbell: Sir, without a doubt. Absolutely,

1 yes, sir.

2 Senator Reed: Thank you.

3 Chairman McCain: Could I mention the chart there,
4 General? The shaded areas are the areas of Taliban
5 activity. Is that an accurate chart in your view?

6 General Campbell: Sir, I got one right here.

7 Sir, if the red areas are active areas of Taliban, I
8 think for the most part that is on target.

9 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

10 Senator Inhofe?

11 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 You have answered really most of my questions. Let me
13 just ask for clarification. When Ghani last January and
14 then again last week reemphasized that we may want to
15 reexamine our withdrawal plan, I think, as I understand it,
16 you have a list of options that you are prepared to give the
17 administration to look at. Is that what you are referring
18 to?

19 General Campbell: Sir, President Ghani has asked on
20 different occasions to continue to have coalition forces. I
21 have already provided my recommendations for a force posture
22 post 2016. Yes, sir.

23 Senator Inhofe: And you are not in a position to share
24 any of that.

25 General Campbell: Say it again, sir.

1 Senator Inhofe: You are not in a position to share any
2 of that with this committee at this time.

3 General Campbell: Sir, as I said in my opening
4 statement, I provided those to the leadership. I have to be
5 able to give my leadership the opportunity to make those
6 decisions without --

7 Senator Inhofe: I understand.

8 In February when you were before this committee, you
9 outlined six criteria, six expectations. I would not expect
10 you to have those in front of you right now, but can you
11 recall any of those six that have not met your expectations?
12 And then for the record, outline each one of them and how
13 they are coming on that score sheet.

14 General Campbell: Sir, like you, sir, I do not
15 remember those six, but if I can take that for the record
16 and reply back to you.

17 Senator Inhofe: That would be fine.

18 [The information follows:]

19 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Inhofe: At our last hearing, you stated the
2 Afghan army and national police have shown that they can win
3 battles on their own, overmatching insurgents whenever
4 challenged. You also estimated that it would be unlikely
5 that the Taliban would be able to overmatch them on the
6 battlefield in 2015. How has that estimate changed? Or has
7 it?

8 General Campbell: Sir, I think again that this
9 fighting season we knew was going to be very, very tough. I
10 still believe that the Taliban cannot overtake the
11 government. They will not overthrow the Afghan Government.
12 They will continue to challenge the Afghan Security Forces.
13 As the Afghan Security Forces continue to grow, they have
14 stretched the Afghan Security Forces. As you look at the
15 map Senator McCain referred to, those areas up in the north
16 or some areas up in Badakhshan and in the far northeast,
17 Farah, Kunduz, are areas in the past that we had not seen as
18 much insurgent activity. But, again, all the enemy has to
19 do is go in and cause terror, fear, and then come back out,
20 may not try to occupy or control, but they are really trying
21 to stretch I think the Afghan Security Forces.

22 Their main goal continues, I believe, to be Helmand,
23 Kandahar, the heartland of the Taliban. And so as they pull
24 forces from maybe the south or the east to the north, it
25 could make the Afghan Security Forces vulnerable. In the

1 south, the Afghan Security Forces understand this. They
2 have a campaign plan for this fighting season. They have a
3 campaign plan of what they want to do during the winter in
4 preparation for the next fighting season. So I think they
5 understand this and continue to work to try to improve.

6 Senator Inhofe: You know, I and probably every member
7 of this committee have been over there and have observed the
8 advancements that are made by the Afghans. And I think they
9 are real. Senator Reed in his opening statement said
10 something about the will to fight. Has there been a
11 deterioration in the will to fight on their behalf?

12 General Campbell: Sir, we have seen on two occasions,
13 sir, in Kunduz with the police and probably northern Helmand
14 with the police that you had some members lose that will.
15 They are taking a hard look at why that happened, whether it
16 was poor leadership, which I believe was a big part of that,
17 whether they had just been in the fight too long and not
18 been able to rotate. Again, that is probably two
19 battalions' worth out of 100-plus battalions. For the most
20 part, I see the Afghans continue to have the will to fight.

21 In the places that we have looked at that have come
22 out, a lot of those have been actually police that were
23 untrained police. They were hired, had not gone through the
24 requisite training, had been put out very hastily out on the
25 checkpoints. They may not have been supported by other

1 forces. And when they took fire, they felt they may not
2 have been supported and they left. But, sir, that is not
3 the majority. It is far from the majority of the Afghan
4 forces, and I think they continue to learn from that and
5 they have made adjustments.

6 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, General.

7 And then lastly, you did already address the abusive
8 behavior or the accusations over there. But the press
9 reports also -- they said, quote, they are happening also on
10 our bases. You did not say anything about our bases. Is
11 there anything that you would share with us as to whether or
12 not -- the accuracy of that accusation?

13 General Campbell: Sir, again, I think the thing that
14 started this piece was a media article, and it was citing
15 cases from 2010, 2011, and 2012. I have reiterated my
16 policy in writing to all of my folks. I have not seen
17 anything on our bases, sir. Absolutely not.

18 Senator Inhofe: Thank you.

19 General Campbell: Yes, sir.

20 Chairman McCain: Senator Kaine?

21 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you,
22 General.

23 I want to dig into a piece of your testimony just to
24 make sure we are all kind of on the page you are on. You
25 talk about we all knew this fighting season would be tough.

1 Talk about why this fighting season was particularly
2 challenging.

3 General Campbell: Sir, we knew this was going to be
4 tough, again because this was really the first year that the
5 Afghans were going to be totally on their own.

6 Senator Kaine: So the Taliban would want to test that
7 early.

8 General Campbell: Sir, absolutely. The Taliban knew
9 that as well, and they also knew that if there was going to
10 be some sort of reconciliation in the end, they wanted to
11 operate from a position of strength. To get a position of
12 strength, they got to fight and they got to go out and cause
13 disruption with the Afghan Security Forces.

14 So I think everybody knew this was going to -- the
15 Afghans certainly knew this was going to be very tough.
16 They tried to get out in front of this by conducting a
17 multi-corps operation early on in the February time frame.
18 So they actually started the fighting season -- the Afghan
19 Security Forces did -- as opposed to waiting till the
20 Taliban brought it on. There is usually about an April to
21 October fighting season that people talk about. This year,
22 as I said, there really was not lull. And there was a
23 continuous fight. And the Afghans a lot of times take the
24 winter time frame to regroup to do additional training.
25 They did not have that opportunity.

1 Senator Kaine: They would love not only to be
2 militarily successful in this fighting season, but they
3 would love to destabilize the civilian government if they
4 could if at all possible.

5 General Campbell: The Taliban, yes, sir. Absolutely.

6 Senator Kaine: Talk a little bit about the Taliban
7 post Mullah Omar. We talked a bit about this in my office
8 yesterday. Sort of internal divisions and factions. We
9 have also heard claimed ISIL affiliations in Afghanistan,
10 but a lot of the reports have suggested that may be
11 Talibanis who are not happy with their leadership. And so
12 they are claiming an affiliation with ISIL. Who is the
13 Taliban today? Talk about that a bit.

14 General Campbell: Sir, thanks. Sir, again, the
15 Taliban under Mullah Omar had a spiritual leader. He had
16 been there for years and years. And they did not see him
17 for many years. And in fact, for the last 2 and a half
18 years, there has been a big lie out there that he had been
19 passing on guidance, and many of the Taliban I believe now
20 feel that they trusted somebody that was not there.

21 And so they are disenfranchised. They want to do
22 something about it. And so they are fighting back against
23 Mansour because they knew Mansour was the guy that had
24 something to do with this. So there are fractures within
25 the Taliban. Mansour, Yaquob, Manan, and many other ones,

1 Dadullah. And they are trying to take control of a piece of
2 it.

3 The Taliban are very decentralized, and so they do
4 operations that are very decentralized. But Mansour is
5 trying to get a coalescent group there. He has named, I
6 think as Senator McCain talked about early on and Senator
7 Reed, but he has named Siraj Haqqani as one of his deputies.
8 Zawahiri from AQ has come out and said I pledge allegiance
9 to the Taliban as well. So there seems to be some steam
10 over the Omar piece to try to coalesce and get a group. But
11 they have their own issues with funding, with being able to
12 work together, leadership issues.

13 Up mostly in Nangarhar in the east, we have seen a rise
14 of Daesh or ISIL-KP. It has been reported in a lot of
15 different provinces, Sar-e-Pol, Helmand. But Nangarhar is
16 where ISIS, or the Daesh, have predominantly been, and that
17 is where they want to set up and use Jalalabad as their
18 capital of Khorasan Province and they want to try to recruit
19 and they want to expand. This year, right now the Taliban
20 and Daesh continue to fight each other, and so they are
21 going at it inside of there.

22 A lot of the Daesh's we see continue to be
23 disenfranchised Taliban that maybe see Daesh as a way to
24 gain more media, more resources. So they kind of change
25 T-shirts, raise a different flag. We see a lot of TTP that

1 are Pakistani Taliban that have gone over to the Daesh as
2 well.

3 So we continue to look at that. When I was here in
4 February, I think I called it nascent. The term I would use
5 today would be operationally emergent as they continue to
6 try to build upon their capacity. President Ghani looks at
7 that. I look at it every day as we move forward.

8 Senator Kaine: Let me ask you about one more topic.

9 Prior to this assignment, you were Vice Chief of Staff
10 of the Army, and one of your responsibilities was readiness.
11 We are having an intense budgetary discussion here. How
12 many of our military strategies around the globe are limited
13 because of readiness deficits in the current budget
14 environment?

15 General Campbell: Sir, all of the forces that I get in
16 Afghanistan have the requisite training and they have gone
17 through all of that. So I have not suffered that in
18 Afghanistan. I do know that with all the services, they
19 continue to have issues as we look toward the sequestration.
20 And I think over time they have been able to balance that
21 based on priorities to provide Afghanistan the requisite
22 forces with the right training. But as the budget will
23 continue to have issues, hopefully that will not impact
24 Afghanistan, but it certainly could as we move forward, sir.

25 Senator Kaine: General, I appreciate your testimony.

1 As much as I agree with members of the committee that our
2 strategy in Afghanistan should be conditions-based not
3 calendar-based, I hope we will have a budget that is
4 conditions-based, not calendar-based to a decision that was
5 made in August of 2011. We should be making budgetary
6 decisions based upon the needs of today.

7 With that, Mr. Chair, thank you.

8 Chairman McCain: I agree.

9 Senator Cotton?

10 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

11 General Campbell, thank you very much for your service
12 to our country and thank you for the service you represent
13 of the many American men and women you have in theater with
14 you.

15 I want to start with the Kunduz hospital bombing. So I
16 understand that an American aircraft and American ground
17 troops were involved in calling for fire that ultimately hit
18 that hospital?

19 General Campbell: Sir, we have U.S. special forces on
20 the ground. They are doing train, advise, and assist with
21 our Afghan partners. Our Afghan partners called for fire.
22 The U.S. aircraft delivered those munitions. Yes, sir.

23 Senator Cotton: And there are three investigations
24 underway?

25 General Campbell: Sir, I have a DOD investigation.

1 There is a NATO investigation, and the Afghans are doing an
2 investigation and will be open and transparent. I have
3 talked to investigating officers, Brigadier General Rich
4 Kim. He is up in Kunduz today. I talked to him this
5 morning. He is reaching out to all the folks that were
6 involved there. He is reaching out to Doctors Without
7 Borders to make sure that we have everything we can on this
8 investigation as we move forward.

9 Senator Cotton: And you conduct investigations like
10 this anytime there is a similar incident?

11 General Campbell: Sir, we have to get to the facts.
12 There are a lot of questions out here. And yes, sir.

13 Senator Cotton: Do you think there is anyone here who
14 regrets this incident more than the pilots of that aircraft?

15 General Campbell: Sir, everybody wants to make sure
16 that we find out what happened. As you know, every soldier,
17 sailor, airmen, and marine, if they are involved in
18 something like this -- that hurts.

19 Senator Cotton: Is there anyone that we are to blame
20 for this incident other than the Taliban for going into a
21 civilian area and fighting among civilian targets?

22 General Campbell: Sir, the investigation will tell me,
23 as I get the facts on that. But as you mentioned, the
24 Taliban did go into Kunduz. The Taliban did know that they
25 were going to cause a fight inside a built-up area. And as

1 I talked about, you know, Taliban causes, based on the UN,
2 over 70 percent -- I believe it is a little bit more -- they
3 target civilians. There is a difference between target
4 civilians and what happened at the hospital.

5 Senator Cotton: The Taliban, like our enemies in Iraq,
6 like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, intentionally
7 target civilians and intentionally use civilians as shields.
8 Is that correct?

9 General Campbell: Yes, sir.

10 Senator Cotton: I want to talk briefly about some of
11 the stories about abuse of children among certain Afghan
12 leaders. So you are a four-star general at the highest
13 level of command in Afghanistan. I served there 6 years ago
14 as a captain. There is a big gap between those two levels.
15 And sometimes we see things differently. I received
16 training before I went, as did my soldiers, and in
17 Afghanistan I received training. I provided training that
18 said that such behavior was unacceptable. Nor did I ever
19 see such behavior. Is that still the case today, training
20 for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines throughout
21 the country?

22 General Campbell: Sir, that is correct. The Afghans
23 have also incorporated this into their training, human
24 rights training, under the basic training courses. And in
25 their officer accession training, they have incorporated

1 this. They have also trained their JAG's, or their lawyers,
2 to be able to perform what we call mobile training teams to
3 go out to the different corps to reemphasize the human
4 rights training throughout. President Ghani has stated
5 emphatically that he will prosecute anyone suspected of
6 committing sexual assault upon children.

7 So as I said in my opening statement, we have looked at
8 this very hard, and at least since 2011, I know that there
9 has always been a policy out there that says you will report
10 violation of human rights. And I reiterated that in writing
11 here recently based on the media reports, and I have also
12 required that within 30 days all personnel in theater
13 complete additional training on human rights abuse reporting
14 requirements and that everybody new coming into theater
15 complete training upon their arrival into theater to make
16 sure that we get everybody there. The training very clearly
17 indicates that sexual abuse by Afghan Security Forces is a
18 human rights abuse issue.

19 Senator Cotton: Well, thank you.

20 You said that back to 2011. I can tell you that at
21 least in my neck of the woods in Afghanistan, it went back
22 to at least 2008. I suspect it went back to 2001 as well.

23 I would like to turn to your testimony about the
24 differences in this fighting season from previous fighting
25 seasons. You cited the rise of the Islamic State, the

1 national unity government, Pakistan military operations in
2 eastern and northern Afghanistan. But there is also the
3 difference of our presence in the country. Your testimony
4 on page 3 states, "In years past, our aircraft provided
5 responsive and often decisive close air support to coalition
6 and Afghan troops in contact. This is no longer the norm
7 but the exception. Our force reduction, drop in enablers,
8 and resultant close air support gap have created challenges
9 for the ANDSF; they have understandably struggled at times
10 to adjust."

11 It sounds to me like, General, that our unwise and
12 precipitous drawdown in Afghanistan over the last couple
13 years have contributed as much to the difficulty in the
14 fighting season this year as anything that we have seen from
15 enemy activity.

16 General Campbell: Sir, what I would say is that we
17 knew that we would have to continue to do train, advise, and
18 assist in many areas that we talked about, logistics,
19 intelligence, special operating forces. Close air support
20 is the one that I get asked about from the Afghans every
21 single day. It is an area that we started too late. We
22 will continue to work that very hard. We are surging on
23 building their pilots, building their maintainers. But as I
24 put in my statement there, it has been slow coming. So what
25 we have really worked with the Afghans is to enable them in

1 every other way to try to work through this with using their
2 own QRF's, using every indirect fire means that they have.
3 And so it is a balance and making sure that they can work
4 through that.

5 Again, the Taliban do not have close support
6 helicopters. The Taliban do not have up-armored Humvees.
7 The Taliban do not have a lot of the sophisticated technical
8 equipment that we have provided to the Afghans over the
9 years.

10 I go back to leadership and leadership makes a
11 difference. And in areas that they have had problems, I
12 think leadership has been the key.

13 But we have to be able to provide the Afghans with this
14 ability to provide their own close air support, and that is
15 going to take several more years to get there. If they
16 would have had their own close air support at the levels
17 that they probably wanted, maybe something like Helmand may
18 not have happened. But as we go through and look at that --
19 they are very committed to working through this piece of it,
20 and they have made many adjustments as they go forward.

21 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

22 You had said in response to Senator McCain that you
23 deal in capabilities not personnel numbers. I hope the
24 President does as well.

25 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

1 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 And, General Campbell, thank you for being here this
3 morning and for your service.

4 Thank you also for your forthrightness in talking about
5 what happened with the bombing of the hospital in Kunduz. I
6 know all of us looked at that horrific accident and want to
7 know how that could happen. And I appreciate your talking
8 about the effort to investigate on our part what happened
9 there.

10 But do you have any reason to object to having an
11 independent investigation done by the UN or another
12 independent body of what happened?

13 General Campbell: Ma'am, I have trust and confidence
14 in the folks that will do the investigation for NATO, the
15 folks that will do the investigation for DOD, and in the
16 Afghan partners. So all the very, very tough questions that
17 we are all asking -- they will get after that. My
18 investigating officer, again, is a brigadier general, Rich
19 Kim. I have all the trust and confidence that he will get
20 answers to all of those questions and he will continue to
21 work that very hard and will continue to be transparent and
22 provide all of that to this committee and to the American
23 people as we move forward.

24 Senator Shaheen: But as I understand your answer then,
25 you would not object to and would cooperate with an

1 independent body other than NATO or our Department of
2 Defense in doing that kind of an investigation?

3 General Campbell: I would let my higher headquarters
4 or senior personnel make that decision. We are reaching
5 out, again, to Doctors Without Borders and the personnel
6 that were on site and making sure that we get all sides of
7 the story. I did talk again to the investigating officer
8 this morning. He has done that. He has talked to a few.
9 He is continuing to try to get out to locations where he can
10 talk to doctors, nurses, survivors of that to make sure he
11 gets all that story. And we will certainly share all of
12 that.

13 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

14 There was a very interesting recent news article about
15 the role that Afghan-trained special forces units played in
16 regaining control of Kunduz and the role that female
17 soldiers, who were part of those units, played. I wonder if
18 you could share with us what you know about how those women
19 who are trained to serve in the Afghan army are faring and
20 the role that they are playing and the successes that they
21 are seeing on the ground.

22 General Campbell: Thank you for the question, ma'am.

23 I do believe that having the ability to have Afghan
24 females embedded in the special operating units provide them
25 a unique capability as they get on objectives to talk to

1 females that are on those objectives. They use this quite
2 frequently. Female engagement teams is what we used to call
3 it. I think they call it the same thing. So that has been
4 quite helpful to their national mission force, which is
5 their equivalent of our Rangers, at Qatayhas. They have
6 some of these females also inside of their commando unit.
7 So this is quite good.

8 The MOI, the ministry of interior, with the police
9 continues to do better and better on recruiting females as
10 police, and the police can continue to come in and probably
11 operate in their own hometowns. It is a little bit more
12 difficult for the army to recruit females because most of
13 them would have to come in and then deploy someplace
14 throughout the country. So the MOD is a little bit farther
15 behind, but we continue to work it very hard.

16 This committee has earmarked money for us on gender
17 integration that we work toward recruiting methods. I have
18 a gender integration advisor that reports directly to me
19 that works with Ms. Ghani, that works with all the folks in
20 Afghanistan to continue to look at how we can do better
21 building this capacity. It has been slow. Culturally it is
22 hard, but I think both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah
23 really want to get after this.

24 Senator Shaheen: Well, I know that most people on this
25 committee have talked about the importance of ensuring that

1 women continue to have a place in Afghan society that gives
2 them opportunities. And so this is one of the ways in which
3 we can see women advance that I think will have a trickle-
4 down effect across other sectors. So I appreciate the
5 efforts that you have undertaken.

6 I also want to thank you for supporting the special
7 immigrant visa program for those in Afghanistan who have
8 helped our troops. As you may be aware, the Defense
9 Authorization Act this year includes an additional 3,000
10 Afghan SIV's, and maybe you could just speak briefly to how
11 important that is in terms of our dealings with Afghans and
12 getting them to help us.

13 General Campbell: Ma'am, I think as you know we have
14 been dependent on some great Afghans over the years to
15 provide interpreter/translation skill sets for us that we
16 did not have. They put their life on the line with tactical
17 units. They have done it for many, many years over and
18 over. They put themselves at risk and their families at
19 risk. And I think anything that we can do to help mitigate
20 the impact on them and the safety of them and their families
21 is greatly appreciated. I know that I get asked all the
22 time about that. They work that through our embassy. Our
23 embassy has a great program under Ambassador McKinley to
24 work through that.

25 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much.

1 Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

2 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General Campbell, for your
3 service to the country and your leadership.

4 I wanted to ask you about -- right now the
5 administration's stated policy in Afghanistan, as reiterated
6 when President Ghani visited our country in March, is that
7 we will be drawing down to a normal embassy presence in
8 Kabul with security assistance, just as we have done in Iraq
9 and by the end of 2016. If that remains our policy, in
10 light of the capability gaps that you have identified in
11 your testimony and have been identified many times before
12 this committee, what would be the consequences of that in
13 Afghanistan?

14 General Campbell: Ma'am, if we go to a normal embassy
15 presence, as you stated there, we would have very limited
16 train, advise, and assist capability from Kabul.

17 Senator Ayotte: And what do you think will happen to
18 Afghanistan if we do that?

19 General Campbell: Well, it will take much longer to
20 continue to train in some of those critical areas that we
21 need to train. So it would be very difficult, again, to do
22 train, advise, assist.

23 Senator Ayotte: So would we lose and would the Taliban
24 gain territory?

25 General Campbell: Ma'am, I think that the Afghan

1 Security Forces, you know, where they are today, where they
2 were 2 years ago, where they will be in another year and a
3 half -- they continue to improve. I do not believe that the
4 Taliban can take over the government. I do believe the
5 Taliban understand that they stress the Afghan Security
6 Forces pulling out to the outer pieces of Afghanistan, cause
7 casualties on some of the road checkpoints --

8 Senator Ayotte: General, I guess the question I want
9 to understand is without getting into numbers of troops or
10 anything like that, do you think, based on your military
11 advice being the Commander in Afghanistan, that we should
12 revert to an embassy presence alone by the end of 2016? Do
13 you think that is what we need to do to make sure that
14 Afghanistan does not become yet again a haven for al Qaeda?

15 General Campbell: Yes, ma'am. I understand the
16 question. I have provided my chain of command options
17 because I believe there have been a lot of different
18 transitions over the last couple of years since that
19 decision was made. And if you go to just embassy-only,
20 again, our ability to do TAA is very limited. Our ability
21 to do CT is much more limited.

22 Senator Ayotte: And so your recommendations would be a
23 presence beyond the embassy, without getting into what they
24 are.

25 General Campbell: The different options that we have

1 laid out through the chain of command provides our senior
2 leadership with options above and beyond a normal embassy
3 presence based on changes that have happened over the last 2
4 years and changes on --

5 Senator Ayotte: So here is what I want to make sure
6 the American people understand. Why does this matter? Why
7 does it matter that we continue to work with the Afghan
8 Security Forces to ensure that Afghanistan does not go back
9 to a place where it becomes a haven for a group like al
10 Qaeda?

11 General Campbell: As I said in the opening statement,
12 ma'am, Afghanistan continues to be a dangerous area. That
13 region of the world, all of its neighbors do not play by
14 rules. Areas in Pakistan, areas in Afghanistan, if not
15 continue to have pressure on them --

16 Senator Ayotte: Does it matter to our security?

17 General Campbell: I think that as I said up front, we
18 have not had another 9/11 attack on our homeland because we
19 have had forces that have been forward deployed and have
20 continued to provide pressure and have continued to train
21 our Afghan partners so that they have this capability to
22 take that on for themselves. But that is going to take some
23 time.

24 Senator Ayotte: I wanted to ask you about Iran's
25 activities in Afghanistan. Can you tell us what Iran, if

1 anything, is doing right now in Afghanistan in terms of
2 supporting the Taliban or other groups?

3 General Campbell: Yes, ma'am. At this level, I can
4 tell you that we have some reports that Iran has provided
5 money, weapons mostly in the west in the Harat area to the
6 Taliban to fight Daesh.

7 Senator Ayotte: And so they are supporting the Taliban
8 right now -- Iran -- with resources, money and weapons.

9 General Campbell: Again, we have reports that they
10 have provided money and weapons to the Taliban mostly in the
11 west around the Harat area. I do not have numbers of how
12 much, how much money, how extensive that is, but there have
13 been reports, yes, ma'am.

14 Senator Ayotte: How has cooperation been with Pakistan
15 in dealing with the Haqqani Network and what more should we
16 be doing there?

17 General Campbell: Well, as you know, Haqqani continues
18 to be a big threat not only against the coalition but also
19 the Afghan people. Haqqani are the ones that were
20 traditionally responsible for the high-profile attacks, the
21 VBIED's, vehicle-borne IED's, the suicide vests. Haqqani
22 are the ones that attack innocent civilians.

23 So what I have stressed to Pakistan and I think at all
24 levels of our Government from DOD all the way to the White
25 House continue to express to Pakistan that they have to do

1 more to not provide sanctuary to Haqqani inside of Pakistan.
2 And so we got to continue to keep the pressure on and make
3 sure that Pakistan understands that there is a common enemy
4 here that Afghanistan and Pakistan should work together.
5 And terrorism knows no boundaries. So they have to work it
6 out together.

7 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General.

8 Chairman McCain: Has the Iranian assistance to the
9 Taliban increased or decreased or stayed the same recently?

10 General Campbell: Sir, I would have to come back to
11 you on the record. I would tell you that we saw it a few
12 months as there was increased fighting with Daesh and
13 Taliban out in the west, but I could not tell you if that
14 was more or less than from before.

15 Chairman McCain: Senator Donnelly?

16 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 And, General, thank you for your hard work in a very
18 difficult place.

19 One of the most expensive things has always been to
20 have to take the same ground twice. And, you know, we want
21 to look at things as they are and not as we hope. And one
22 of the main concerns I have is that it makes it more
23 difficult for the American and coalition troops who are in
24 Afghanistan and it makes it more dangerous for them if we
25 are not able to fulfill each of the roles that the Afghan

1 Government should in terms of security, in terms of air, in
2 terms of intelligence, in terms of the logistics, that the
3 weaker they are in those areas, it puts our men and women in
4 greater danger.

5 So it is a long way of asking you, are we really in a
6 South Korean type situation where we have to put significant
7 numbers in for a long term to help create the stability that
8 needs to be there? It seems from year to year to year we
9 just kind of bounce along or it gets a little bit worse. Is
10 it not more applicable to a South Korean type situation?

11 General Campbell: Sir, I would not compare it to South
12 Korea. What I would tell you is what we have been able to
13 do over the last 14 years is provide the Afghan Security
14 Forces -- remember in 2001, they did not have an Afghan
15 army. They did not have an Afghan police. So they did not
16 have an Afghan air force. So the capabilities that they
17 have today, because of the great work by many men and women
18 -- and many of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice. They
19 are in a different place now. So they have a capability,
20 and they want to be a partner in the region. They want to
21 have their own CT capability to fight the terrorism that is
22 out there. And everybody is working very hard to do that.

23 Force protection for the coalition, the U.S. forces,
24 the NATO forces -- I have that. That is my number one
25 priority, to make sure that I do everything I can to

1 mitigate where I would have issues with that. Today with
2 the resources I have and the authorities that I have, I am
3 comfortable where I am to be able to provide the right force
4 protection for those forces.

5 Senator Donnelly: We have come a tremendously long
6 way, but we want to make sure it does not slip back. And
7 the worry is that if we just simply do numbers-based work,
8 that it does not take into consideration what is going on in
9 the field.

10 And so one of the proposals, I hope and assume, is that
11 you have given to the administration your best win scenario
12 or the best Afghan Government stabilization scenario, that
13 you say, look, here if I am not getting determinations on we
14 want less people or we want this or we want that, here is
15 the best plan for success. Is that going to be one of the
16 things that is put forward?

17 General Campbell: Sir, as we talked earlier, the
18 courses of action I provided to my senior leadership are
19 based on requirements, based on the capabilities that we
20 talked about. Of course, any military person on the ground
21 wants to make sure that that end state, that outcome, is
22 success. We are not going to put something forward that
23 would not lead to that.

24 Senator Donnelly: When you look at where we are, in
25 terms of the village and tribal elders, what are the things

1 we need to do to give them long-term confidence that they
2 should be betting on our side as opposed to the Taliban? If
3 you are in some of those outlying areas and you see things
4 happen like what just happened in Kunduz -- what are the
5 kind of things they are looking for that we need to be
6 providing?

7 General Campbell: Sir, what they are looking for is
8 for the Afghan Government to provide them governance at the
9 local and at the district level. I think if you are a
10 tribal elder, if you are somebody on the outskirts, you are
11 not thinking in terms of what can the coalition provide.
12 You are thinking in terms of what can the Afghans provide.
13 And so they look at the Afghan forces and want to make sure
14 that they have the ability to have governance at that level.

15 And so President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the senior
16 leadership in the MOI, MOD continually try to engage with
17 the senior elders. They call them shuras. And so in
18 Helmand, right after they had issues in Musa Qala, the
19 senior military got on the ground. Major General Abdullah
20 Khan brought in local elder leaders to work through that
21 piece. They also try to engage local elders to build Afghan
22 local police so that the villages can provide their own
23 security. They will do that in Kunduz as well as they
24 continue to move forward, and they will bring in the local
25 leadership to make sure they understand what the Security

1 Forces can provide and then what the Afghan Government can
2 provide.

3 Senator Donnelly: What was missed by the Afghans in
4 Kunduz in terms of the infiltration of the Taliban and then
5 coming in? What did we miss, or did we know and were not
6 able to stop it? What happened?

7 General Campbell: Sir, we are still looking at that,
8 sir. We have asked that question and the Afghans have asked
9 that question. President Ghani has established a
10 commission, for lack of a better term, to get up into Kunduz
11 to give him a readout on why this happened, who was
12 responsible. So he has a commission that is also doing
13 that.

14 Senator Donnelly: The reason I ask -- not to interrupt
15 you, General -- is you wonder if there is another one
16 brewing somewhere else and are we picking up on the signals,
17 or are the Afghans picking up on the signals, and are we
18 putting in place a way to stop it from happening?

19 General Campbell: Sir, that is exactly the same
20 question that President Ghani asked at a meeting of the
21 National Security Council when he activated this commission.
22 He said the exact same thing. I want to make sure I
23 understand what happened, why it happened, and I want to
24 make sure that it cannot happen again. So we need to get
25 the senior police and army into Kunduz City to do that, and

1 if you have people that gave up and walked off the job, then
2 they need to be disciplined. If you have general officers
3 that did not fight, then they should not be in those
4 positions. So he has asked all those tough questions.

5 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, General.

6 Chairman McCain: Senator Rounds?

7 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 General, thank you for your service.

9 In an address to the Nation on 27 May in 2014,
10 President Obama said Afghanistan -- and I quote -- we will
11 bring America's longest war to a responsible end and then
12 announced calendar dates for the withdrawal. And I will
13 quote him again. At the beginning of 2015, we will have
14 approximately 9,800 U.S. service members. By the end of
15 2015, we will have reduced that presence by roughly half,
16 and we will have consolidated our troops in Kabul and Bagram
17 Airfield. 1 year later by the end of 2016, our military
18 will draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul with a
19 security assistance component, just as we have done in Iraq.

20 In looking at that, number one, from 9,800 down now --
21 have we drawn from 9,800 down in a manner consistent with
22 following that goal to its end as indicated on 27 May?

23 General Campbell: No, sir, because what happened is
24 back in the February-March time frame, we asked for
25 flexibility, and so President Obama provided me flexibility

1 on the timing and the number. And as you remember, 9,800 to
2 provide train, advise, and assist through this very first
3 fighting season. If I had to get down to the 5,500 number
4 by the end of this year, I would have had to start closing
5 bases like Jalalabad, Kandahar, and even Bagram. So I asked
6 for, President Ghani asked for some flexibility, and
7 currently that 9,800 number I still have and are not going
8 to get down below that -- required to get down below that
9 until probably May of 2016 time frame as we move toward the
10 current projection of this embassy-based.

11 But again, I have gone in with different courses of
12 action that outline pros and cons of different locations and
13 different force levels based on the capabilities that we
14 need to continue to provide to the Afghans.

15 Senator Rounds: Based upon that, it is fair to assume
16 that Bagram is not in the position of being closed down at
17 this time.

18 General Campbell: Sir, the current plan would have
19 Bagram closed by the end of 2016.

20 Senator Rounds: Have you made any movements toward
21 that end yet?

22 General Campbell: Sir, over the last couple of years,
23 we have had to close hundreds and hundreds of bases. So
24 every day we continually what we call "descope" and get rid
25 of buildings, get rid of equipment to send back to the

1 United States, turn over to the Afghans, other partners.
2 And so every day even in Kabul we are on that. We continue
3 to descope. We do that at Bagram. We do that at Jalalabad.
4 We do that at Kandahar. So I am doing that every day, but I
5 have not reached a point where if a decision is made to keep
6 Bagram that is irreversible.

7 Senator Rounds: Okay.

8 With regard to Taliban funding, if you could look at it
9 right now and determine where most of the funding is coming
10 from, could you list out where the funding for Taliban is
11 currently coming from in Afghanistan?

12 General Campbell: Sir, a lot of the funding comes from
13 narcotics, from drug smuggling. It comes from kidnapping.
14 It comes from other countries that support the Taliban. So
15 there is a whole list.

16 Senator Rounds: Primarily local unit by local unit? I
17 mean, are they doing it on their own, separate, or is there
18 a grand plan in terms of all of them working together in a
19 concerted effort?

20 General Campbell: Sir, I think the Taliban is
21 organized where they have committees. They have a political
22 committee. They have an operations committee, that kind of
23 thing. But they are very independent -- "decentralized" I
24 think is a better word -- as they conduct operations
25 throughout Afghanistan.

1 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

2 General Kim's report, the one which he would be working
3 on as we speak -- is there a time frame for a release of
4 that report?

5 General Campbell: Sir, I have not determined that time
6 frame. I want to make sure that he has the time required to
7 talk to everybody that he needs to talk to. He has been up
8 in Kunduz for the last several days. I have had the ability
9 to talk to him each morning here. He is getting more and
10 more people to talk to, but as he talks to one person, that
11 leads to two more people to talk to. So I think this is
12 going to take some time.

13 As soon as I can get a preliminary assessment out of
14 this, I will go back to my senior leadership. Again, we
15 want to make sure that we can be transparent, open, very
16 candid about what happened here, learn from that, and make
17 sure something like this never ever happens again.

18 Senator Rounds: Reasonable to expect at least a
19 preliminary report within 30 days?

20 General Campbell: Sir, I think so, yes, sir.

21 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

22 Chairman McCain: Senator King?

23 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Just to be very clear, General -- and I think you have
25 made this clear, but in your professional military judgment,

1 conditions on the ground at the present time would require
2 some revision of the withdrawal plan to a Kabul-centric
3 1,000 personnel by the end of 2016. Is that correct?

4 General Campbell: I will stomp my foot. Yes, sir.
5 The options I provided provide pros and cons of different
6 levels of support above and beyond the 1,000, and I based
7 that based on my experience on the ground and the conditions
8 that I have seen as I have talked about Daesh, ISIL, what
9 has happened in Pakistan, the national unity government. So
10 all of those are factors and variables I considered as I
11 worked on different courses of action. Yes, sir.

12 Senator King: I am not asking you what you
13 recommended. I am asking you for your professional judgment
14 as you are sitting here today that there should revision to
15 that plan.

16 General Campbell: Yes, sir.

17 Senator King: Thank you.

18 General Campbell: Political questions. I am concerned
19 about the Ghani-Abdullah relationship. I understand there
20 are still some ministers not appointed. They are still in
21 different buildings. They do not seem to be communicating
22 effectively. This war is going to be impossible without
23 some kind of unified government in Kabul.

24 How are the politics of the national unity government
25 developing, and is there some role that we have to play to

1 move that along?

2 General Campbell: Sir, thanks for the question.

3 Again, sir, I think every single day both myself, my
4 partner, Ambassador McKinley -- we work this and we
5 understand how important having a national unity government
6 is. And I think the Afghans understand this as well. To
7 think that there are people that do not want the national
8 unity government, that are what I would call "spoilers" out
9 there trying to disrupt that, I think we would be foolish.
10 Sir, there are. And I think both President Ghani and Dr.
11 Abdullah understand this as well, and they know that they
12 have to do better to sync up where they are going.

13 I think on major policy issues, both President Ghani
14 and Dr. Abdullah -- there is no daylight between them. I
15 think they agree on those major policy issues on what is
16 good for Afghanistan and its future. I think where they
17 have issues is determining who is going to be this minister,
18 who is going to be the provincial police chief, those kind
19 of things as they go back and deal with their
20 constituencies. But I think they continue to understand
21 they have to make those tough decisions. On September 29th,
22 they had a little over a year and they understand now is the
23 time to do that. I have seen, over the last couple of
24 weeks, an increased dialogue to make sure that happens.

25 But that is a continual issue, and I think -- you know,

1 again, the ambassador works that. I work that. All the
2 other international community ambassadors that are in
3 Afghanistan understand how important that is, and everybody
4 consistently works very hard to make sure that both
5 President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah understand that.

6 As far as the ministers, the only one that I know of
7 not appointed is the acting minister of defense, Stanekzai,
8 who I think is very, very capable and it would be a big
9 mistake and a tragedy if the parliament was to do something
10 in Afghanistan to make sure that he was not the minister.
11 But he is absolutely the real deal for Afghanistan as they
12 move forward in the ministry of defense.

13 Senator King: So finalizing that appointment would be
14 a step forward.

15 General Campbell: Sir, it would. And right now,
16 President Ghani has absolute trust and confidence in Mr.
17 Stanekzai. He continues to work as the acting minister, and
18 I think he is making decisions as the acting minister just
19 as he would as a minister.

20 Senator King: I hope you will maintain -- I mean, we
21 have a substantial role there. We are very important to
22 them, and I hope we can use that influence to move this
23 along.

24 I was disappointed, for example, when President Ghani
25 spoke to the Congress. Dr. Abdullah was sitting in the

1 front row. There was a great round of applause. That would
2 have been a wonderful moment for President Ghani to call Dr.
3 Abdullah up and receive the -- it was a kind of symbolic
4 gesture. It did not happen. I hope you will continue to
5 encourage President Ghani to loosen up a little bit. He
6 won. He could afford to be magnanimous. That is free
7 political advice to the president of another country.

8 General Campbell: Sir, thank you. And as you know,
9 sir, Dr. Abdullah represented Afghanistan at the UNGUP in
10 New York City here last week and took that on. I know that
11 he and President Ghani continued to talk every day as they
12 went through that. So I think that is a step in the right
13 direction as well.

14 Senator King: Thank you.

15 Another political question. What is the feeling of the
16 population of Afghanistan about the Taliban? Is the Taliban
17 gaining adherence, losing adherence? Are they about the
18 same? If there were an honest poll taken, do you not
19 approve of the Taliban, what would the results be?

20 General Campbell: Sir, the people of Afghanistan
21 understand that the Taliban attacks civilians. The Taliban
22 kill innocent women and children. So the support that the
23 Taliban have from the average Afghan is not favorable. In
24 fact, that percentage over the years has continued to go
25 down and down.

1 The Afghan people have great confidence, and the number
2 one institution in Afghanistan is their army. They have
3 issues, again, with the government. When they see terror,
4 when they see something happen that frightens them, they are
5 going to blame that on the government and on the Afghan
6 Security Forces. But I think if you put them side by side
7 and said you can pick the national unity government, you can
8 pick the army, you can pick the Taliban, they absolutely
9 would not pick the Taliban. The Taliban, again, go into
10 many remote places. In some places, they may provide some
11 sort of Sharia law or governance. But I think in the end,
12 the people understand that the way of the future for
13 Afghanistan is with the national unity government, having a
14 very professionalized army and police, and so they do not
15 support the Taliban.

16 Senator King: Thank you. I am out of time.

17 Perhaps for the record, you could give us some of your
18 thoughts on whose side Pakistan is on in this struggle and
19 what role they are playing, just for the record. Thank you.

20 [The information follows:]

21 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

22

23

24

25

1 General Campbell: Thank you, sir.

2 Senator King: Thank you, General.

3 Chairman McCain: Senator Graham?

4 Senator Graham: Thank you, General. Are you keeping
5 Captain McCarthy in check there?

6 General Campbell: Sir, I will take that for the
7 record, sir.

8 [Laughter.]

9 Senator Graham: Okay.

10 Could you very briefly describe what winning would look
11 like in Afghanistan from an American point of view and what
12 losing would look like?

13 General Campbell: I think winning would have a stable
14 Afghanistan, a stable government, would have a
15 professionalized army and police that provided governance
16 for the people of Afghanistan, that people could go to
17 school, people could work. And I think the opposite of
18 that, an unstable Afghanistan would provide opportunity for
19 insurgents to use ungoverned spaces to go after something
20 like our homeland in the future.

21 Senator Graham: If we had the right configuration in
22 January 2017, what is the likelihood of winning over time?

23 General Campbell: Sir, I think we have a great
24 opportunity if we continue to support that Afghan Government
25 and continue to work with the Afghan Security Forces. This

1 is our best opportunity. We have not had a government like
2 this that reached out not only to the U.S. but to the
3 international community. We have not had a government that
4 takes on its responsibility to professionalize the army and
5 the police like we have. We have not had a government that
6 understands what the army and the police are going through.
7 So this is our best opportunity.

8 Senator Graham: Do the Afghan people want us to stay
9 by and large?

10 General Campbell: Sir, the Afghan people that I talk
11 to that I deal with -- and I do bring in an advisory
12 committee that is made up of different facets of Afghan life
13 to talk to about every month. I do have a women's advisory
14 committee that I bring in to make sure we understand gender
15 issues. Overwhelmingly, the Afghans support the coalition
16 and want to continue to have that continued support.

17 Senator Graham: Do you agree with me if we go down to
18 1,000 forces, 1,000 people, Kabul-centric, embassy-centric,
19 like 90 percent chance that the country falls apart?

20 General Campbell: Sir, I do not know if I would put a
21 percentage on it. Sir, what I would say is our ability to
22 provide train, advise, and assist and continue to grow the
23 Afghan forces would be very limited.

24 Senator Graham: What about the counterterrorism issue?

25 General Campbell: Sir, just from Kabul, I cannot do a

1 counterterrorism mission.

2 Senator Graham: Okay. Now, tell the American people
3 why it is in their interests for you to have a
4 counterterrorism footprint in Afghanistan.

5 General Campbell: Sir, I think two reasons. I think,
6 first off, we need to continue to build the Afghan capacity
7 for their CT element, and that takes our men and women to
8 continue to work with them as they do today. Their special
9 operating forces, their CTP's are probably the best in the
10 region and continue to get better. But it is going to take
11 time to be able to raise that. So if we continue to build
12 their capacity, they want to be a regional partner. They
13 want to be able to handle those issues in that region. To
14 have a CT capability to keep pressure on some of the
15 ungoverned spaces -- you know, we do have people that
16 continue to want to do bad things to the people --

17 Senator Graham: Let us dig into that a bit. A better
18 trained Afghan counterterrorism force is good for the
19 stability of Afghanistan. Do you agree?

20 General Campbell: I agree, sir.

21 Senator Graham: But there are no substitute for
22 American counterterrorism forces that would protect the
23 homeland. Does that make sense?

24 General Campbell: Sir, I believe that our
25 counterterrorism forces are the best in the world.

1 Senator Graham: But they would have a focus that the
2 Afghans would not have.

3 General Campbell: Again, we want to continue to build
4 the Afghan forces, yes, sir. But our forces provide our
5 best --

6 Senator Graham: I am just trying to make the case, as
7 well as I know how, that we would be nuts to not have a
8 counterterrorism force inside of Afghanistan, U.S. presence
9 counterterrorism folks, making sure that we never get
10 attacked again like 9/11. Does that make sense to you?

11 General Campbell: Sir, I think General Dempsey has
12 laid out a regional CT piece to have regional CT throughout
13 different spots in the world to --

14 Senator Graham: But Afghanistan would be the
15 centerpiece of that.

16 General Campbell: Sir, I would concur with that, yes,
17 sir.

18 Senator Graham: And we are welcome there. They would
19 welcome this presence.

20 General Campbell: Absolutely.

21 Senator Graham: The only reason we would not have a
22 counterterrorism force in Afghanistan is because we decided
23 not to ourselves. The Afghans welcome that presence.

24 General Campbell: Sir, they welcome us there. Yes,
25 sir.

1 Senator Graham: Parwan Prison. Is that moving forward
2 in an acceptable way to use it as a national security
3 detention facility?

4 General Campbell: Sir, Parwan is the gold standard for
5 Afghanistan. Yes, sir.

6 Senator Graham: And this new president is willing to
7 use that prison to take high-value targets, put them in jail
8 so they cannot bribe their way out. Is that correct?

9 General Campbell: Sir, he has moved high-value targets
10 from other provinces into Parwan because, again, it is the
11 gold standard. They have had some issues with some other
12 prisons here lately but not at Parwan.

13 Senator Graham: And just to end, one of my last
14 questions. Do you see a commitment by President Ghani and
15 Abdullah Abdullah to do things differently than Karzai that
16 give you optimism in terms of the future of Afghanistan if
17 we continue to partner?

18 General Campbell: Sir, without a doubt.

19 Senator Graham: Thank you.

20 Chairman McCain: Senator McCaskill?

21 Senator McCaskill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Thank you, General Campbell. Thank you to all that
23 serve under you for really hard stuff that they are doing
24 every day.

25 I will be looking forward to the investigation over the

1 tragedy of the Doctors Without Borders as it develops.

2 Corruption continues to be a major, major challenge in
3 Afghanistan. I know that Ghani made this a focus of his
4 campaign when he ran to lead the government in Afghanistan.
5 But I noticed the "New York Times" reporting last week that
6 corruption played a role in the Taliban's recent success in
7 Kunduz, saying that the local security forces were extorting
8 money from the locals, which raised sympathy for the
9 Taliban. They were being, in fact, hit up by the folks that
10 we have been spending hundreds of millions of dollars to
11 train, and obviously, that is unacceptable.

12 Could you talk about that, and what is your assessment
13 of the risk right now of corruption as it relates to the
14 work we are trying to do with the Afghan National Security
15 Forces?

16 General Campbell: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the
17 question.

18 I think President Ghani has stated -- many people say
19 that corruption is the number one issue as they look to the
20 future. President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah have really tried
21 to get after this from a couple different levels.

22 One is he knows that contracting has caused a lot of
23 corruption-type issues. And so he has instituted a national
24 procurement directorate or agency that looks at every single
25 contract to make sure that those are valid, that he can get

1 this corruption out of the contractor piece.

2 The other area he has looked at very hard is on
3 leadership and trying to pick the right leaders based on
4 their experience, based on the right skill sets. And so
5 like something that you referred to up in Kunduz where
6 people are taking money, extorting from the local folks up
7 there, if he had the right leadership in place, that would
8 not happen.

9 So it is going to take time for him to get to all the
10 right levels to make sure he breeds this culture throughout
11 the Security Forces that corruption is not good and that if
12 you are corrupt, that you are going to be removed. You are
13 going to be held accountable. I have seen several instances
14 over the last several months where they have had different
15 cases where both in the MOI, the ministry of interior, and
16 ministry of defense, where they have prosecuted folks that
17 they found to be corrupt. But it is going to take time,
18 ma'am. I know they are both committed to it. They both
19 have worked very hard with their inspector general
20 counterparts in both the MOI and MOD to try to help them get
21 after the corruption. And so I think they are both
22 committed.

23 Senator McCaskill: And you are confident in their
24 sincerity.

25 General Campbell: I am, yes, ma'am.

1 Senator McCaskill: ISIL in Afghanistan. Obviously,
2 this is a problem that we are seeing the Taliban turning. I
3 mean, all the different factions in the Middle East are a
4 challenge for us, but in some ways they are also an
5 advantage because there is this fractionalization that keeps
6 everyone from uniting in terms of effective forces. And I
7 am worried about the conversion of some of Taliban to an
8 ISIS or ISIL loyalty situation and would like your take on
9 that.

10 And I noticed in your previous testimony, you indicated
11 that you are seeing a switch of allegiance of the Taliban in
12 Pakistan to ISIL. If that is the case, I certainly would
13 like you to speak to that briefly because, obviously,
14 Pakistan -- that is a whole other bag of worries in light of
15 the fact that they have nuclear capability.

16 General Campbell: Thank you, ma'am. If I could hit
17 the Pakistan piece first because General Raheel Sharif and I
18 have talked about that as late as last week here. He has
19 emphasized that ISIL/Daesh has no place in Pakistan. So he
20 absolutely believes that that will be a threat as he moves
21 forward. He wants to make sure that that has no place. So
22 I do not see Pakistan aligning with ISIL if that is what you
23 were saying.

24 Senator McCaskill: And you see their government
25 committed to doing what is necessary without us having to

1 prod, push, and pay for that effort.

2 General Campbell: I have talked to General Raheel on
3 that several times, and I do believe that he is genuine and
4 he is pushing both his army and his intel services to fight
5 Daesh. Yes, ma'am.

6 And on the other piece as far as ISIL and Daesh, we
7 have seen, as I said earlier, that -- I would have called
8 them nascent several months ago. We put them in the
9 category of operationally emergent as they continue to
10 recruit to gain a base in predominantly Nangarhar in the
11 eastern part of Afghanistan. They are fighting other
12 Taliban because their philosophy there is a little bit
13 different. We have not seen them reach outside of
14 Afghanistan, but I think that would be a goal that they have
15 if they have the ability to continue to grow.

16 President Ghani has said that al Qaeda was Windows 1.0
17 and that Daesh is Windows 7.0 in their ability to use social
18 media to recruit. So he is concerned.

19 I made it early on a priority information requirement,
20 a PIR, for me, and I continue to look at that very hard. We
21 have talked to all the intelligence agencies inside of
22 Afghanistan. We are trying to partner Pakistan and
23 Afghanistan up to look at ISIL/Daesh as well to make sure
24 that we all have a common operating picture of what they are
25 trying to do in the Khorasan Province.

1 Senator McCaskill: Are they helping us with
2 intelligence on the ground, General, in terms of are they
3 embedding effectively in terms of human intelligence for us
4 in both Pakistan and Afghanistan?

5 General Campbell: Are you talking about the Afghan
6 forces, ma'am?

7 Senator McCaskill: Yes.

8 General Campbell: I mean, Afghanistan probably --
9 well, not probably. Afghanistan has much better HUMINT than
10 I have.

11 Senator McCaskill: Obviously.

12 General Campbell: Yes, ma'am.

13 Senator McCaskill: But are they effectively putting
14 enough resources behind that?

15 General Campbell: They have a very good NDS, which is
16 their intel agency. They work very well with the other
17 pillars of police and the army. And I think what they have
18 developed here in the last couple months, what they call the
19 Nazarot Center, is a national joint fusion intelligence
20 center where they try to take intelligence from MOI, MOD,
21 and the NDS to fuse national level target sets. And that is
22 something new and that is very good.

23 Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

24 Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer?

25 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Thank you, General, for being here today.

2 To look further into that flow of the foreign fighters
3 that are moving into Afghanistan, are we seeing more of a
4 regional draw with ISIL? In February, you mentioned that a
5 few of the Taliban seemed to be reflagging under the ISIS
6 banner there. Are we seeing that regional draw or are they
7 drawing from outside the region in north Africa, say? And
8 then how does that compare to the Taliban? Are we going to
9 have local versus foreign fighters? Is that going to
10 continue to grow in Afghanistan, and will it be similar to
11 what we see with al Nusra and ISIL that takes place in
12 Syria?

13 General Campbell: Thank you, ma'am.

14 I think with ISIL, or Daesh, again particularly in the
15 Nangarhar area, we have seen mostly internal Taliban that
16 want to rebrand TTP, that want to rebrand. But there are
17 reports of people, foreign fighters, coming from outside of
18 Afghanistan. I could not give you a good percentage or
19 numbers, but we have seen increased reporting that there are
20 some foreign fighters that come in that want to try to
21 establish again a base there and try to bring in some sort
22 of funding stream to build a base in Nangarhar. But I think
23 they are a ways from that. And again, the Afghan forces,
24 our forces continue to look at that.

25 I think the Taliban, if they have foreign fighter help,

1 whether that is Uzbek, Chechen. We have seen pieces and
2 parts of that up in the north. I think we have seen other
3 reports from the Afghans that they see a lot more of the
4 foreign fighters into the Badakhshan, into the Kunduz, into
5 the Sar-e-Pol area. But as far as numbers or an increase in
6 foreign fighters, I do not think I could give that to you,
7 ma'am.

8 Senator Fischer: What numbers are we looking at for
9 ISIL right now and also with the Taliban? What numbers are
10 in Afghanistan? Do you have any hard numbers on that? I
11 know you said it is difficult to determine the number of
12 recruits, but where are we?

13 General Campbell: Ma'am, the numbers I would give you
14 would be based on different reports I have seen. I could
15 not give you how accurate that would be, but I think in open
16 press what I have seen, anywhere between 1,000 and 3,000 on
17 the Daesh. For years and years, the numbers of Taliban
18 inside of Afghanistan has gone everywhere from 20,000 to
19 80,000. And I think hard to distinguish in there which
20 people just sympathize with the Taliban and which ones are
21 actually hard core Taliban, and the intel community
22 continues to look at that.

23 But what I would say is that the Afghan Security Forces
24 have really impacted the Taliban this year based on the
25 number of casualties that I believe they have caused the

1 Taliban.

2 Senator Fischer: With the Afghan national police and
3 also with the local police forces -- we visited about that a
4 little bit yesterday when you were in my office. What do
5 you think are their biggest challenges, the biggest
6 weaknesses that they have, and will they be able to become
7 professional in moving forward as we assess what our
8 position is going to be in Afghanistan?

9 General Campbell: Ma'am, I think for the police,
10 again, the number one issue that I continue to stress with
11 them is getting the right leadership. The police have
12 several thousand that are untrained that provincial police
13 chiefs have hired, and they have not gone through the
14 requisite training. And they are doing that to get them out
15 on a checkpoint or get them into the fight because they
16 believe they have been stressed in different areas. But
17 they have got to get them into the right training to make
18 sure they have that.

19 I think with the Afghan local police, these are the
20 ones that have taken a lot of the casualties because they
21 veered outside of what they were designed to do and that was
22 designed to defend their local village. They were not
23 designed to be 5 kilometers, 10 kilometers outside of that
24 village to try to take on a lot of Taliban. They were not
25 equipped and were not trained for that, but yet in some of

1 the local areas, they have misutilized them by putting them
2 on those checkpoints.

3 Again, I believe that training is the key for the
4 Afghan police, but I think what we need to say here is that
5 the police in many cases are doing the same thing as the
6 army. So in a counterinsurgency fight, they are fighting
7 very, very tough like the army, and they are not manned and
8 they are not equipped like the army.

9 Senator Fischer: If the President would decide as one
10 of the options out there to keep our forces in Afghanistan
11 longer, what do you believe would be the reaction and the
12 commitment of our NATO partners? Would they support that
13 decision? Would they be able to maintain their
14 contributions as well?

15 General Campbell: Ma'am, I think it would be country-
16 dependent. We have 41 countries that are tied into a
17 residence support right now. The ones that I have engaged
18 with, for the most part, are very supportive and want to
19 continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan either by
20 contributing troops or providing financial support. But I
21 think again once the United States makes the decision, we
22 will see NATO come into that.

23 Senator Fischer: So you believe there would be support
24 from many NATO partners, also from the Afghan people if we
25 would choose to remain and continue a mission to stabilize

1 the country?

2 General Campbell: Absolutely, yes, ma'am.

3 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

4 Chairman McCain: Senator Gillibrand?

5 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I would like to continue the line of questioning about
7 the incident we read about in the "New York Times" about
8 young boys being abused by Afghan commanders, as well as
9 women and girls. What is the military's policy when a
10 service member becomes aware of an instance of abuse? There
11 has been some discussion about what the policy actually is.

12 General Campbell: Yes, ma'am. What I said in a press
13 release a week or so ago was that there is no policy that
14 says disregard that. What our policy has said since 2011 is
15 that you have to report instances of sexual abuse by the
16 Afghan Security Forces up your chain command. And so that
17 is what I expect of all of our men and women serving in
18 Afghanistan to be able to do.

19 Senator Gillibrand: So the article talked about
20 service members who were disciplined who wanted to intervene
21 or who reported up their chain of command. Have you
22 investigated those instances?

23 General Campbell: Ma'am, as I said earlier, those from
24 the "New York Times" article -- these are cases from 2010,
25 2011, and 2012 I believe. So, no, I did not have anything

1 to do with those cases.

2 Any reports that would come to me I would make sure
3 that we provided that to the Afghan Government as well.
4 President Ghani has made it very clear that he has a policy
5 that he does not tolerate that and he will prosecute that.

6 So the cases that you refer to are 4 or 5, 6 years ago.
7 I cannot speak to those.

8 Senator Gillibrand: So have you followed up, though,
9 to see if those cases were handled properly?

10 General Campbell: Ma'am, I have not been involved in
11 the 2010, 2011, or 2012 cases. No, ma'am.

12 Senator Gillibrand: So who should report to this
13 committee about an investigation of those specific cases?
14 Because if the policy changed in 2011, then arguably the
15 cases from 2011 and 2012, if true, were handled incorrectly.
16 Who is doing that investigation?

17 General Campbell: Ma'am, I will have to take that for
18 the record. I do not know.

19 Senator Gillibrand: Okay. Please report to the
20 committee who is doing the investigation and when we will
21 have the results because if those individuals did report
22 this and were told to mind your own business, then obviously
23 their commanders were not following the policy in 2011 and
24 2012.

25 [The information follows:]

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[COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Gillibrand: What was the policy before 2011?

2 General Campbell: Ma'am, as I think Senator Cotton
3 talked about -- and I was there in 2002, 2003, 2010 myself.
4 This is my third tour there. I have never seen a policy
5 that did not report it. And I would tell you that there has
6 always been a policy that if you saw this, that you would
7 report it. This is a fundamental value of our military to
8 treat people with dignity and respect. So I cannot imagine
9 somebody not doing that.

10 Senator Gillibrand: So why do you believe that the
11 various troops have reported this were told it is their
12 culture? Why is there an understanding by some troops that
13 you do not intervene when it is their culture? Are they
14 poorly trained or just unknowledgeable, or do you think
15 commanders are getting it wrong in the field?

16 General Campbell: Ma'am, I cannot speak again for
17 those individual cases, and I think those are disciplinary
18 cases that are either completed or ongoing. I would tell
19 you that all the forces I have been involved in absolutely
20 understand what the requirement is. And again, as I
21 reiterated earlier, I have asked all of our personnel
22 currently in theater to go back and receive this training
23 again to make sure that we have 100 percent so that we did
24 not miss anybody.

25 Senator Gillibrand: So what would we do today? If it

1 was reported that you hear screaming from Afghan military or
2 Afghan troops, from commanders, from children, what would
3 our soldiers do?

4 General Campbell: Our soldiers should report that up
5 their chain of command.

6 Senator Gillibrand: And then what does the chain of
7 command do with that information?

8 General Campbell: Ma'am, we would make sure that that
9 information got to the right authorities within the Afghan
10 Government, to the senior leadership in the Afghan --

11 Senator Gillibrand: So if the senior Afghan leadership
12 said, yes, we are not going to do anything about it because
13 it is our culture, what do we then do?

14 General Campbell: The Afghan leadership that I deal
15 with I do not think would say that. Again, I have talked to
16 President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, the senior MOI, MOD, the
17 senior army and the police leaders. They absolutely
18 understand this is not conduct. This is criminal conduct
19 and they understand that they have to do something about it
20 and they want to hold people accountable. Are there going
21 to be people that disregard that in Afghanistan just like
22 you would have maybe in any other country, yes.

23 Senator Gillibrand: But you are saying then, though,
24 that our policy is still not to intervene. What our policy
25 is based on what you just said is we report it to the

1 Afghanistan authorities, and if they choose to do nothing,
2 we do nothing.

3 General Campbell: No, I did not say that, ma'am.

4 Senator Gillibrand: So what do you do if they refuse
5 to do something?

6 General Campbell: Again, in the 14 months I have been
7 there, I have not had a case come to me that I had to go
8 back to the Afghan authorities and say you need to do
9 something on this. And I think that is a result of the
10 Afghans understanding that they have to get after this. So
11 I think they have improved in that area. So I have not had
12 to go back and do that. But if something was brought
13 through my chain of command to me that there was abuse of
14 children -- this is criminal conduct -- I would make sure I
15 went to the Afghans and said, you know, here is a report.
16 You need to go check out this report. And I would expect
17 them to be able to do that. We work through our central
18 function 3 and the rule of law folks that I have that
19 continue to help provide train, advise, and assist in this
20 area with our senior Afghans, with their military lawyers as
21 well. So we would absolutely expect them to go do
22 something. If they did not do something and there was
23 credible evidence that something happened here, then I would
24 raise that higher to the president, and I would demand that
25 something has to be done or I will withhold this. There has

1 to be conditions to this so that they understand that.
2 Blaming it on culture is not the way that I think our forces
3 have gone here.

4 Senator Gillibrand: So just to conclude, you are
5 saying you would raise it to President Obama and try to make
6 him engage.

7 General Campbell: I would raise it to President Ghani.

8 Senator Gillibrand: President Ghani.

9 General Campbell: And I would raise it first to the
10 minister of defense, minister of interior, the senior
11 officials that I deal with. Again, as soon as this news
12 article came out, I called President Ghani on this and said
13 we got to make sure that -- and before I even finished the
14 sentence, President Ghani said that is absolutely criminal
15 behavior. I will prosecute anyone that I find that has done
16 this.

17 The very next day, I went to a National Security
18 Council meeting. The president was there, Dr. Abdullah was
19 there, the MOD, MOI, all the senior cabinet members were
20 there. And before he started in his agenda of things that
21 he had to get through, he raised this issue and he made sure
22 that every minister understood that this behavior would not
23 be tolerated. So I have no doubt that Afghans get this, and
24 I have no doubt that our military personnel understand what
25 is expected of them.

1 Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis?

2 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 General Campbell, welcome. The last time I saw you was
4 in Afghanistan, and before that, it was before this
5 committee back in February.

6 I do think that we have to go back and talk about a
7 number of the positive things that have occurred as a result
8 of our presence in Afghanistan. You did a great job of
9 summarizing that back in February, life expectancies, the
10 number of children in school, progress on protecting women
11 and children. It is a great story, and but for America's
12 presence, I do not think it would be a story that you would
13 have been telling back in February.

14 I want to go back to this drawdown and something that I
15 think you mentioned in February when we were talking with
16 you earlier this year. You just do not wake up Monday
17 morning and say I have got to bring down 1,000 troops and
18 all the materials that go with them by the end of the month.
19 It takes a lot of planning. I know that you have got a
20 proposal to the President. He has given you flexibility,
21 which is what has allowed you to keep the 9,800 there now.
22 But at what point do you have to start taking actions for
23 the material drawdown to hit the 2016 end-of-year target? I
24 mean, we have got to be weeks or months away from you having
25 to put a lot of those plans in place.

1 General Campbell: Yes, sir. It becomes a matter of
2 physics.

3 Senator Tillis: How quickly do you have start -- if
4 the President does not make any change in decision, when do
5 we start seeing material efforts to draw our troop forces
6 down to the embassy presence in Kabul?

7 General Campbell: Sir, as I said earlier, every single
8 day we continue to descope all of our bases out there. So
9 we are trying to get rid of unnecessary or stuff that was no
10 longer required in theater.

11 Senator Tillis: So you are effectively -- I have got a
12 couple of questions, so I apologize for being short.

13 So you are effectively drawing down based on -- I mean,
14 you are already taking the steps to draw down to something
15 that we know will be less than 9,800. We just do not know
16 what the number is.

17 General Campbell: Sir, I am. But I have also made
18 sure that based on the courses of action that I have
19 recommended, if we get a decision on that, it is not
20 irreversible.

21 Senator Tillis: Well, I think the administration needs
22 to be crisp on this. I know you have provided it to your
23 leadership, but this is not something that should take long.
24 And I think anybody who has followed the situation knows the
25 President is going down a perilous path if he goes far off

1 of what you already have in Afghanistan.

2 You mentioned something else, though, that I think is
3 important that I have not heard you talk about. And that is
4 in 2017 the other funding streams that are at risk that are
5 also an important part of the gains that we made and
6 protecting those gains I think with other partners. Can you
7 tell me about any progress or any concerns you have about
8 that?

9 General Campbell: Sir, I think this is a very critical
10 year coming up for 2016. They will meet at the Warsaw
11 Conference the middle of next year, and that will determine
12 all the donor nations for how much they will donate for
13 2018, 2019, and 2020 for Afghanistan.

14 Senator Tillis: But that is critically -- it is
15 something that is still an open switch and something that is
16 critically important if we are going to continue to build on
17 our gains there. Would you agree with that?

18 General Campbell: Sir, I do. I think again, having
19 the international community have confidence in Afghanistan
20 is important that we do not have donor fatigue there.

21 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

22 You know, something else that I just want to reinforce
23 that Senator Graham touched on -- and he was trying to make
24 the point that there was counterterrorism resources to help
25 us do our job in the region. But what I think many of the

1 American people do not understand is the value of the CT
2 efforts with respect to threats in other areas of the region
3 and potential threats to the homeland. This was the
4 birthplace of the 9/11 attacks. There are bad people there
5 who are trying to plot terrorist actions against Americans,
6 whether it could be American installations abroad or right
7 here in the homeland.

8 So getting down to an embassy presence only, we have
9 heard you say that we would lose all of our counterterrorism
10 presence in that region. Did I hear you correctly?

11 General Campbell: Sir, we would not have the ability
12 to conduct counterterrorism as I do today if we were just
13 based in Kabul.

14 Senator Tillis: So based on the current plan, a plan
15 that the administration is considering, we know it is going
16 to be diminished, but it could almost all go away by the end
17 of next year based on the current plans as you understand
18 them today.

19 General Campbell: Sir, as I said up front, the
20 planning assumption in the current plan and glide slope that
21 I am on is to go to about 1,000 by the end of 2016. Yes,
22 sir.

23 Senator Tillis: I think it is irresponsible and it is
24 dangerous.

25 And I appreciate the work that you are doing because I

1 know that you probably have a different view. I respect the
2 fact that you are going through your chain of command, but
3 this President needs to understand he needs to be decisive
4 and take different action or he is putting American
5 interests at risk.

6 Thank you all for your service.

7 Chairman McCain: Senator Manchin?

8 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Thank you, General. I appreciate it.

10 I think what we are trying to get our hands around as
11 far as should we stay, if we do stay, how many will stay,
12 and what effect will that have. And it goes back to the
13 training and money we have spent and the amount of effort
14 and time we have spent to train, how many people we have
15 adequately to continue to retrain, or will they ever be able
16 to take the training over themselves? Will ever trust them
17 for that? How much money would that cost? And it just goes
18 on and on and on, as you know.

19 The bottom line is, do you think that Afghanistan is
20 more stable and better prepared to take care of itself with
21 our help or without our help and how much of our help than
22 Iraq was? Because I think everyone is looking to the failed
23 policies in Iraq and saying, okay, why would you repeat
24 that? I think it is a different scenario as you said. The
25 leadership in Afghanistan has a much more different mindset

1 and determined today than Iraq was when we made our decision
2 to leave.

3 So if you can just give me just a little -- I just
4 heard you say about 1,000 is what you intend to recommend?
5 Is that wrong?

6 General Campbell: No, sir. A thousand is the current
7 decision that we are on.

8 Senator Manchin: That is what we are on. We are on a
9 glide path to 1,000 right now by 2016.

10 General Campbell: Yes, sir, by the end of 2016. So
11 that is the current plan. That is to go to a normal embassy
12 presence that President Obama discussed back in 2014.

13 Senator Manchin: It would be hard to explain.
14 Basically that would be the same glide path we had if not
15 maybe a little difference than Iraq, and we saw the results
16 of Iraq.

17 General Campbell: Sir, Afghanistan is not Iraq.

18 Senator Manchin: I got you.

19 General Campbell: You have a government that wants to
20 have you there. You have a government that wants to have a
21 counterterrorism capability. You have a fighting force that
22 is very resilient. So I think there are so many differences
23 between Iraq and Afghanistan.

24 Senator Manchin: Do you think that will change that
25 recommendation of 1,000, that will be upped?

1 General Campbell: Sir, again, I provided courses of
2 action and recommendations to my leadership that provides
3 our President, our national senior leadership with options
4 based on changes that have happened in the last 2 years.

5 Senator Manchin: And the money we have spent right now
6 -- I mean, it is an unbelievable amount of money for
7 training the Afghans. Do you expect that to continue, us
8 pouring the money into there for them to be able to train
9 their people?

10 General Campbell: Sir, we are working very hard to
11 make sure we can continue to bring that money down.

12 Senator Manchin: Do they have any economy at all?
13 Other than the war effort, is their economy sucking off the
14 U.S. taxpayers? Do they have any ability to carry their own
15 load financially?

16 General Campbell: Sir, in the Chicago and the Tokyo
17 commitments, they are required to provide about \$500 million
18 toward their national security, and each year we try to up
19 that. Their economy is very, very tough, and President
20 Ghani based on his background -- and the World Bank is
21 working that very hard. They had a very successful regional
22 economic conference here 2 or 3 weeks ago in Afghanistan.
23 There was just a Dubai conference where they had about 170-
24 plus investors come to take a look at it the different
25 airfields that we would leave. But it is going to take a

1 long time to build their economy. We built an army in a
2 place they cannot afford, sir. So they will be very
3 dependent upon the international community to continue to
4 provide that money for years to come.

5 Senator Manchin: General, finally, on the crash of the
6 C-130, we had six service members. One was from Marshall
7 County, West Virginia, Sergeant Ryan Hammond. I spoke to
8 his parents and his wife. I told them I would try to get
9 all the information I could of how this could have happened.
10 We fly a lot of C-130's in our guard, as you know, and they
11 are very capable, able aircraft. Do you have any
12 information that you can share with me that I could share
13 with the parents?

14 General Campbell: Sir, my thoughts and prayers are
15 with all the families. That very morning I went out to the
16 crash site. Right after that, I went to Bagram and talked
17 to all of our C-130 crews just to gather them in and talk to
18 them. I did that. Again, an investigation is ongoing.

19 Senator Manchin: Was it on takeoff is when -- the
20 accident happened on takeoff.

21 General Campbell: Yes, sir. Sir, I can talk to you
22 one on one.

23 Senator Manchin: If you could, I would appreciate it,
24 sir. If I could just give his family some relief and some
25 closure.

1 General Campbell: Okay, sir.

2 Senator Manchin: Thank you.

3 Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

4 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 And thank you, General, for your testimony. It is very
6 enlightening and I know it is not easy to testify when you
7 have options on the way forward and you are not sure the
8 commander-in-chief agrees with you or not. So I think all
9 of us appreciate your testimony.

10 I am going to follow up on a number of the previous
11 questions you have been asked.

12 First, Senator Shaheen had asked about a UN
13 investigation possibly into the hospital accident. Does the
14 UN usually investigate major deliberate attacks on civilians
15 in Afghanistan when they are conducted by the Taliban?

16 General Campbell: Sir, I have not seen that in the
17 past.

18 Senator Sullivan: I do not think they do typically.

19 So do you think it would seem fair or balanced if the
20 UN conducted an investigation, which was clearly on
21 something that was accidental -- the hospital bombing --
22 when they do not investigate deliberate Taliban killing of
23 civilians? Do you think that would be viewed as fair,
24 balanced, or something the command needs or would welcome?

25 General Campbell: Sir, I cannot comment on how the UN

1 would do that. What I can comment on, as I said up front
2 earlier, is I have complete trust and confidence in the team
3 that we have to be thorough, transparent, and if there were
4 mistakes made, we will make sure that those come out. If
5 there are people we have to hold accountable, we will make
6 sure we will do that. So I have every trust and confidence
7 in the U.S. and the NATO investigation ongoing.

8 Senator Sullivan: I think most of us here do as well.
9 I certainly do not think an additional investigation by the
10 UN would be warranted or welcomed by this committee.

11 Let me ask the issue again -- this is Senator Graham's
12 and Senator Tillis' questions. You are very focused on
13 managing risks. If we go forward with the current plan,
14 does it increase the risks that the Taliban could take over
15 the government in 2 or 3 or 4 years out?

16 General Campbell: Sir, again, I think we have another
17 year and a half to continue to grow the Afghan Security
18 Forces. If we went down to 1,000 around Kabul, we would not
19 have the ability to do train, advise, and assist --

20 Senator Sullivan: How about would it increase the risk
21 that the homeland would be attacked? You know, Senator
22 Tillis had some very good and direct questions that our CT
23 capability would essentially end. Would that increase the
24 risk -- I am just talking incrementally increase the risk
25 that the United States of America would be attacked.

1 General Campbell: Sir, again, when the decision was
2 made in 2014 by President Obama on the 1,000 going to a
3 normalized embassy, CT was not one of the variables tied
4 into that decision.

5 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask just on the timelines.
6 You know, I was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines a couple
7 years ago. I was assigned to an OPT in Afghanistan by
8 General Dunford. When they were looking at the force
9 posture, ROPT was looking at the force posture that would
10 take us from the OEF mission to the Resolute Support
11 mission. And it was a little frustrating to be working on
12 that because we had not gotten any guidance in terms of
13 numbers from the senior military or actually senior
14 civilian.

15 So you have said that you cannot talk about the
16 options, but have you actually been given a timeline by
17 which the White House is going to respond to your options
18 and requests. As Senator Tillis mentioned, the clock is
19 ticking. Have you either received information that you are
20 going to be given guidance by a certain date or have you
21 requested a certain date by which to be given guidance given
22 that the clock is ticking on this very important issue?

23 General Campbell: Sir, as you know, on a planning
24 perspective, as we lay out different courses of action, we
25 have what we call DP's, or decision points. And so in all

1 of our courses of action, they would have a decision point
2 of when that decision would have to be made --

3 Senator Sullivan: And are we approaching one --

4 General Campbell: -- so it would not be irreversible.

5 Senator Sullivan: Are we approaching one pretty soon?

6 General Campbell: Sir, I know that everybody in DOD,
7 everybody in NSC is working very hard to take a look at
8 these different courses of action. And as we have talked
9 about, the retrograde and the time that it takes out, I
10 think the senior leadership understands when those decision
11 points are and when they have to get those out.

12 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask a final question.

13 You know, having spent some time in Afghanistan and
14 Pakistan, I know you would probably agree with this. There
15 is a narrative in the region that in the 1980's we were very
16 active there because of the Soviet invasion, and we were
17 very helpful in terms of our assistance to people in those
18 two different countries. And there is a sense that in the
19 1990's we, quote, abandoned the region. And I think that is
20 a very powerful narrative. I do not know if you have seen
21 it there, but I certainly have seen it there when I have
22 been out in that part of the world.

23 You mentioned -- and I think it is really important
24 testimony today -- that we are overwhelmingly welcome, as
25 you mentioned, by the civilian population, by the Afghan

1 leadership. Do you think if we draw down to just an embassy
2 force, which is kind of what we have in the rest of the
3 world, that we would once again resurrect this idea of
4 abandoning the region, of abandoning the people there, the
5 governments there? And if that were the case, how do you
6 think that would impact America's national security if in
7 the part of the world that is really the heart of the battle
8 against al Qaeda and other places, the heart of the world
9 that brought us 9/11, that we were viewed once again as
10 unreliable and having abandoned the region, which is a
11 narrative that is very powerful still in that region? Do
12 you think that narrative would be resurrected, and how do
13 you think that would impact our national security?

14 General Campbell: Sir, I have been tied up with
15 Afghanistan for many years, and I think anybody in the
16 military would tell you presence equals influence. And so
17 the ability to continue to provide train, advise, assist to
18 our Afghan partners, to continue to improve upon their
19 capability is what any military person would want to tell
20 you. Again, I said that the Afghan people continue to want
21 to have a coalition presence. They understand the impact
22 that that has for them. So that is what they want. They
23 will continue to want that I believe unless we do something
24 that dissuades them from that.

25 But we have come a long way there, and a lot of this

1 has to do with this new national unity government. And
2 remember, they understand, different from where President
3 Karzai was, that we have provided a lot blood, sweat, and
4 tears here, that many of our men and women provided the
5 ultimate sacrifice, we have expended a lot of money, and
6 they want to make sure that they do not let us down here as
7 well.

8 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, General.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst?

11 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 Thank you, General Campbell, for being here, and thank
13 you for your outstanding service and that of your men and
14 women as well. I do appreciate it very, very much, as do my
15 constituents.

16 I am going to go back to a couple points. They have
17 been talked about many, many times already this morning,
18 General.

19 But going back to the sexual assault, the sexual abuses
20 by the Afghan National Security Forces against the Afghans,
21 particularly the young boys, it seems that many of the folks
22 that I have talked to that have served in that region,
23 American soldiers, it was common knowledge that this was
24 happening. And I do not believe that there was a DOD policy
25 that we turn a blind eye. As a matter of fact, you have

1 said since 2011 there has been a policy in place,
2 educational materials, classes, so forth. But there may
3 have been kind of an unofficial "do nothing" policy. We are
4 starting to see that corrected as it comes to light. But it
5 does affect the men and women that serve with us in our
6 forces and how they operate with the ANSF. I mean, that is
7 an issue, a trust issue.

8 And there was a 2011 report by Dr. Jeffrey Bordin. He
9 was a Red Team political and military behavioral scientist.
10 He supported half of the RC East. And he commented -- and I
11 am quoting -- several U.S. soldiers reported that they had
12 observed many cases of child abuse and neglect that
13 infuriated them and alienated them from the civilian
14 populace, and that there were numerous accounts of Canadian
15 troops in Kandahar complaining about the rampant sexual
16 abuse of children they have witnessed ANSF personnel commit,
17 including the cultural practice of bacha bazi, as well as
18 the raping and sodomizing of little boys. End quote.

19 Has any service member or civilian under your command
20 now or during your previous command of RC East reported up
21 the chain an allegation of an ANSF sexual assault against
22 Afghan children?

23 General Campbell: Ma'am, on this current tour, I have
24 not had any reports. I do not remember any specifically
25 from 2010, 2011. I can go back and try to look at records

1 for that.

2 Again, I cannot stress enough that this is about
3 discipline. This is about discipline of our men and women
4 understanding what right and wrong is, about treating people
5 with dignity and respect. And as I said, even the Afghans,
6 President Ghani all the way down understand how important
7 this is, and they have reiterated to me that this is serious
8 and that if he knows of people that violate this, that
9 conduct this criminal activity, they will be prosecuted. We
10 have reiterated to our men and women again that if you see
11 this, you have to report this.

12 And so what you are referring to again is 2010, 2011,
13 maybe 2012 reports. I think a lot has happened in that time
14 frame. I cannot comment on a particular company level or
15 battalion level unit that within that unit that the members
16 of that unit felt that it was okay to do some of that.
17 Ma'am, I cannot comment on that. I do not know that.

18 Senator Ernst: General, do you know of any instances
19 where an Afghan soldier was held accountable or an Afghan
20 leader and any disciplinary actions on their behalf?

21 General Campbell: I know that I have seen some
22 disciplinary actions over the last year in gross violation
23 of human rights when it has come to abusing of soldiers,
24 abusing of other members in the command. I have not seen it
25 with the sexual assault of children, though, in the last 14

1 months.

2 Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you. I think it is
3 important that we stress not only is it unacceptable amongst
4 our own ranks, but also those that we are serving with from
5 that region. So thank you for that.

6 Going back also to capabilities and conditions, I am
7 glad we look at that rather than the time frame. If we look
8 at keeping 10,000 troops on ground in Afghanistan, if there
9 is a decision point where we keep 5,000 troops on ground or
10 zero troops on ground, is there any way that you can just
11 broadly describe the conditions that must exist on the
12 ground before we get to those points? Do we leave it the
13 same as we have now at 10,000? Or at what point could we
14 get down to 5,000 and so forth? Just very broadly. Thank
15 you.

16 General Campbell: Again, ma'am, I think based on what
17 has happened since the President made his decision in 2014
18 to go down to 1,000 around the embassy, we have taken a look
19 at all the conditions, and based on those, I have provided
20 options to take a look at the mission sets that we want to
21 do in the future. I believe we still have to do train,
22 advise, and assist at certain levels for aviation, for
23 logistics, for intelligence, for special operating forces.
24 I believe that we have to have a counterterrorism capability
25 and you need a certain amount of forces to be able to do

1 that. And so those are based on what has happened in the
2 last couple years and as we look to the future. And so
3 conditions on the ground have changed since 2014.

4 I am appreciative that the senior leadership both at
5 Joint Staff OSD and I believe the White House are looking at
6 these options, understanding that conditions on the ground
7 have changed and we have to look at the pros and cons of
8 this and move forward.

9 Senator Ernst: Thank you. My time has expired, but I
10 do want to thank you for your valuable, no BS assessment of
11 what is going on over there. We truly do need that. So
12 thank you, General. I appreciate it.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 Chairman McCain: Senator Blumenthal?

15 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

16 Thank you, General, for your extraordinary service to
17 our Nation and particularly in your present role.

18 I have a question about Daesh, as I think you have
19 referred to it, interacting with the Taliban and with other
20 factional parts of our opponents there. How real a threat
21 do you regard Daesh as being compared to the Taliban, and
22 could any sort of negotiated solution involving the Taliban
23 also involve those other factions, including Daesh?

24 General Campbell: Sir, again, I think Daesh, ISIL,
25 Khorasan Province, ISIL KP, different names for -- everybody

1 is looking at this to make sure that it cannot grow, it
2 cannot build to a level to do something like you have seen
3 in Iraq and Syria. Daesh and Taliban have different
4 philosophies. They are fighting each other. I do believe
5 that within the ranks of the Taliban, that there are
6 reconcilables that understand that the only way to end this
7 is a political solution and they want to be part of that
8 inside of Afghanistan. Inside of the Taliban, there will be
9 a certain amount -- I have upwards of 20 to 30 percent --
10 that are irreconcilable, Haqqani probably being one. I do
11 not believe from what I know of Daesh that they are in the
12 reconcilable branch. They would be irreconcilable I would
13 believe at this point in time.

14 Senator Blumenthal: Are you satisfied with the efforts
15 that have been made toward reconciliation and negotiation so
16 far?

17 General Campbell: Sir, I am not satisfied because we
18 have not got to it. So I mean, I think there is a lot more
19 that can be done by both Afghanistan and Pakistan and the
20 Taliban, quite frankly. So I am not satisfied. We got to
21 continue to move toward a peace process.

22 The first day that President Ghani took office in his
23 inauguration speech, he talked about bringing in the
24 Taliban, you know, that you have to be part of this peace
25 process. You cannot continue to kill fellow Afghans. You

1 cannot continue to kill fellow Muslims. And so be part of
2 the peace process. And I think he genuinely wants that to
3 happen and is doing everything he can to try to push that,
4 to include expending a lot of political capital on Pakistan
5 throughout the last several months to drive them to help on
6 reducing the violence inside of Afghanistan to drive toward
7 reconciliation.

8 Senator Blumenthal: Is that goal of reconciliation one
9 of the factors you consider in your recommendation as to
10 what size and scope the American presence there should be
11 and over what period of time? I think Senator Graham asked
12 you what victory would look like, what defeat would look
13 like, but what your answers suggest is that there is some
14 different kind of picture that it would look like.

15 General Campbell: Sir, I think there are a lot of
16 different audiences out there that understanding a continued
17 presence by the coalition would have an impact on. It would
18 have an impact on President Ghani. It would have an impact
19 on the Afghan Security Forces and their morale. It would
20 have an impact on the Afghan people. It would make a great
21 impact on the Taliban. It would make an impact on Pakistan
22 and it would make an impact on NATO. And so I think all of
23 those audiences in differing levels would -- a decision to
24 continue to have a larger number of coalition forces, not
25 only the U.S. but the coalition, would have huge impact

1 there.

2 Senator Blumenthal: You make reference in your
3 testimony to two other trends that I think are concerning,
4 the brain drain and the loss of economic resources, the
5 drain on capital. Has that increased in pace and
6 seriousness?

7 General Campbell: Sir, there have been a lot of
8 reports of a lot of Afghans that are trying to leave the
9 country. As a lot of the countries in that area, the
10 refugee issue is going into Europe. And a lot of those are
11 Afghans who are trying to leave. Both President Ghani and
12 Dr. Abdullah have reached out to the younger generation
13 asking them to stay, to continue to work in Afghanistan.
14 And so there has been, for lack of a better term, a drain on
15 the human capital piece here that I know they want to keep.

16 And the future of Afghanistan is two things I believe.
17 It is the Afghan Security Forces and then it is this younger
18 generation of Afghans that are tired of 35-40-plus years of
19 war.

20 Senator Blumenthal: And one can hardly blame them
21 given the impact on their futures, economic and social and
22 family. And so longer term, the success of Afghanistan as a
23 country is really dependent on the political factors and the
24 social and economic factors that are hopefully supported and
25 promoted by the American presence there as well.

1 Thank you very much, General.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman McCain: Senator Sessions?

4 Senator Sessions: Thank you.

5 Well, this is a very serious time for us. And I would
6 say to Senator Blumenthal's good remarks -- I would note
7 that it is also, in the situation we are in Afghanistan, a
8 military situation also that can impact the outcome. And
9 without it, it will impact the outcome. Is that correct,
10 General?

11 General Campbell: Sir, you are talking about the
12 Afghan Security Forces?

13 Senator Sessions: Well, I am talking about our
14 presence and Afghan presence. There are some battles to be
15 fought. Military conflict is involved and is going to
16 continue to be involved for some time. Is it not?

17 General Campbell: Sir, Afghanistan will continue to be
18 a very dangerous place, and the Afghan Security Forces will
19 continue to be challenged in many areas. Yes, sir.

20 Senator Sessions: Well, the president has said he
21 would like to negotiate with the Taliban, and that has been
22 attempted for a number of years today. Is it harder or
23 easier to negotiate with the Taliban a reasonable solution
24 and a peaceful solution to Iraq if we made it absolutely
25 clear we have an irrevocable commitment to leave on a

1 certain date?

2 General Campbell: Sir, the reconciliation piece again
3 will be Afghan-led by the Afghan Government. But you
4 absolutely want to operate from a position of strength as
5 you do that. Yes, sir.

6 Senator Sessions: I know it is a difficult question
7 for you, but I would just translate that to say you need to
8 have a military strength, and if it is not there, it gives
9 confidence to the Taliban to believe if they wait us out,
10 then they can be successful militarily. Even though the
11 people of Afghanistan do not prefer Taliban domination, we
12 are setting this up, I am afraid, to allow that to happen.
13 And it is a very dicey thing.

14 In terms of going to 1,000 troops, well, this is really
15 not a military presence. Is it? This is just simply an
16 embassy security force essentially.

17 General Campbell: Sir, the goal right now or the
18 intent is to have a security cooperation office. That would
19 be a little bit more than just embassy force protection. It
20 would also have the ability to provide oversight of foreign
21 military sales, oversight of the money that will have to
22 continue to come into Afghanistan as well.

23 Senator Sessions: It is essentially not a fighting
24 force. And it signals that we are completely out of the
25 fight militarily, I would suggest. And I think that is a

1 dangerous signal to be sending.

2 So you are talking about we need to train, assist, and
3 advise more. Is it your recommendation that that capability
4 extend beyond the end of 2016?

5 General Campbell: Sir, I have said that the Afghans
6 will continue to need support in many areas that we have
7 identified, that they will need continued help, aviation,
8 logistics, intelligence. So, yes, sir, train, advise, and
9 assist in those areas would require a little bit longer
10 time.

11 Senator Sessions: And to what extent do they have
12 rotary aircraft, helicopter, capability for evacuation of
13 wounded or resupplying remote forces or otherwise taking the
14 battle to the enemy? Does that remain a problem?

15 General Campbell: Sir, their close air support
16 capability is just starting to grow. They have relied on
17 MI-35. They only had five when we started the fighting
18 season. They are down to two. They do have MI-17's that
19 provide them the ability to move wounded, to provide
20 resupplies. They have tried to put forward firing machine
21 guns, rocket pods on those to give them a little bit better
22 close air support capability. We have brought in an MD-530,
23 a little attack bird, that operates in different areas of
24 Afghanistan to give them a little bit better close air
25 support capability. And they will have a fixed wing

1 capability starting at the end of this year but into 2017,
2 2018 before it is really online.

3 Senator Sessions: Well, I am worried about it. In
4 your best military judgment, what additional risk are we
5 undertaking if our goal is, as you said it is, to create a
6 stable environment in Iraq where people can go to school and
7 have a chance for prosperity? What risks are we incurring
8 by setting a firm date of ending by the end of 2016?

9 General Campbell: Sir, as I think it has been
10 mentioned many times before -- maybe not in this hearing
11 today, but that whenever you put a time on something, that
12 always gives somebody the ability to manipulate that,
13 whether that is the enemy, whether that is the friendly
14 forces. And I think the options that we have provided to
15 the senior leadership is looking at different outcomes that
16 we want to have based on what has changed over the last 2
17 years.

18 Senator Sessions: Well, the President of the United
19 States has made some very unwise decisions in this regard.
20 He is complicating the life of the people in Afghanistan and
21 certainly making your life a lot more difficult in my
22 opinion. And I do not want to make a partisan argument
23 here. I am not saying that. We had a deep commitment to
24 Afghanistan. We had an entire international coalition on
25 that part, bipartisan. This was the good war. I think it

1 is possible to achieve the goal you have stated. Do you
2 believe it is possible?

3 General Campbell: Sir, I would not be there if I did
4 not think it was possible.

5 Senator Sessions: I agree. And I think to completely
6 move out and radically reduce our presence incredibly risk
7 the gains our men and women have fought so hard for, and
8 allies around the world have helped us.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your
10 leadership. I think we would do well to listen to your
11 advice. We should have listened in Iraq, and we need to
12 listen in Afghanistan.

13 Chairman McCain: I thank you, Senator.

14 General, as I understand it, the present plan is that
15 there would be increased reductions beginning in January.
16 Is that correct?

17 General Campbell: Sir, to get down to --

18 Chairman McCain: The embassy-centric --

19 General Campbell: Yes, sir.

20 Chairman McCain: You would begin those withdrawals in
21 January.

22 General Campbell: Sir, I would have to go back and
23 look at exact numbers.

24 Chairman McCain: Roughly.

25 General Campbell: Yes, sir.

1 Chairman McCain: So here we are in October, and the
2 plan now is to begin so that by 2017 we are down to a,
3 quote, embassy-centric force. That is the present plan.
4 Right?

5 General Campbell: Sir, that is the present plan. Yes,
6 sir.

7 Chairman McCain: So here we are sitting here in
8 October and you do not know whether to begin 3 months from
9 now a rather significant withdrawal of troops, which
10 requires a lot of planning, a lot of logistics, a lot of
11 assets. And here we are sitting here in October and you
12 have been asked to provide the White House with a, quote,
13 series of options. Is that right?

14 General Campbell: Sir, I provided options, and in
15 those options, I have accounted for the glide slope that I
16 have to take to be able to get down to the required numbers
17 there. Yes, sir.

18 Chairman McCain: And in addition, you have not been
19 asked for the best option, the one option, that would secure
20 Iraq, succeed in a mission in the most effective and
21 efficient fashion. Instead, you have been asked for, quote,
22 options. Is that right? Most of us were taught to believe
23 there is only one option for victory and success of a
24 mission. But you have been asked for options. Dare I ask
25 how many?

1 General Campbell: Sir, I am not sure I have been asked
2 for options really. What I have done is taken a look since
3 I have been on the ground, the last 14 months, and seen
4 where the Afghans Security Forces are at in different
5 metrics that we take a look at in order to ensure that they
6 have the right capabilities --

7 Chairman McCain: But is there only one option to
8 achieve the most efficient, the most effective, least in
9 danger of further casualties? I do not understand this. I
10 thought that usually -- my study of warfare is you develop a
11 strategy and you implement the strategy with a plan. You do
12 not say, hey, we are going to have five or six plans here,
13 five or six options that we are going to pursue. Most
14 commanders-in-chief that I have ever known of have called
15 their military people together and said give me the best
16 strategy that we can employ and what is necessary to achieve
17 the goals of that strategy. Am I wrong somewhere? Am I
18 getting something wrong?

19 General Campbell: Sir, I could not comment if you are
20 getting something wrong. Sir, what I would say again is
21 that I have provided some options to take a look --

22 Chairman McCain: You have provided the options.

23 General Campbell: -- train, advise, assist and a CT
24 capability in Afghanistan post 2016.

25 Chairman McCain: So you have given them, quote,

1 options, plural. Right? Not what most commanders-in-chief
2 that I have ever experienced. Give me the strategy, give me
3 the plan, see what it takes so that we can succeed in the
4 best and most efficient way to accomplish our goal. And we
5 all know what a goal is. It is a free, stable, democratic
6 Afghanistan.

7 Well, it is curious times. But, of course, those of us
8 that make any criticism apparently do not know a lot of the
9 things that the President of the United States knows.

10 So I thank you, General. And you are doing as you were
11 ordered, and I have observed firsthand your leadership in
12 Afghanistan on several occasions, and I think it is
13 outstanding. And obviously, I am not complaining to you
14 because you are playing the hand you are dealt.

15 I just do not understand why this administration does
16 not understand that if we do what is presently planned to
17 begin in 3 months from now, that we will see the Iraq movie
18 again. There is no doubt in anybody's mind about that. And
19 now we see a burgeoning or embryonic ISIS. We see the
20 Iranians providing weapons and more for the Taliban. And we
21 just saw an attack on one of the major cities in a part of
22 Afghanistan that we up till now had believed the most
23 secure. It seems to me that would lend some urgency to
24 action which would reverse what is clearly a deteriorating
25 trend.

1 And finally, General, we look forward to the results of
2 your investigation of this terrible tragedy of the attack on
3 the hospital. I want to emphasize -- I know speak for all
4 of my colleagues -- that we deeply regret this tragedy. We
5 do point out from time to time about the fog of war.

6 This hearing is adjourned.

7 [Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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