

**Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee**

**Room SD-G50
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Thursday, February 12, 2015**

To receive testimony on the situation in Afghanistan.
(As Prepared for Delivery)

I want to join Chairman McCain in welcoming General Campbell. Thank you for your service to this nation.

General Campbell, since you took command of U.S. forces in Afghanistan last August, Afghanistan has entered what Ambassador Cunningham yesterday called a “pivotal” period. The emergence of a national unity government under President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah has had an immediate impact on security in Afghanistan, with the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement and the NATO status of forces agreement. In a recent public opinion survey, two-thirds of the Afghans polled want U.S. and coalition troops to stay to train the Afghan security forces.

Your challenge is to successfully lead the U.S. and coalition effort to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces and conduct counterterrorism operations, even as U.S. and coalition forces have drawn down to post-combat levels in Afghanistan. We would be interested in your assessment whether you currently have the forces you feel you need to carry out these two missions.

We are also seeking your best military judgment this morning on what further reductions, if any, you would recommend for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and under what conditions. At yesterday’s hearing, Ambassador Ryan Crocker warned, “The consequences of disengagement

can be as great or greater than the consequences of engagement, intervention in the first place.” I share the concern of many on this committee that any future reductions in U.S. force levels in Afghanistan should be based on the security conditions at the time of the proposed reductions, taking into account the capabilities of the Afghan security forces and the status of the counterterrorism fight.

We would also be interested in your views on the full range of challenges you face, including:

- the progress of the Afghan security forces in building key enablers, such as logistics, special operations forces, intelligence, and airlift;
- the Afghanistan-Pakistan security relationship, including border coordination in counterterrorism efforts; and
- the reports of a growing ISIS presence in Afghanistan.

Again, thank you for your service and we look forward to your testimony.