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AFGHANISTAN: WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE END STATE, AND HOW DO WE GET THERE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

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AFGHANISTAN: WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE END STATE, AND HOW DO WE GET THERE?

TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Menendez, Casey, Webb, Shaheen, Coons, Durbin, Udall, Lugar, Corker, and Risch.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing will come to order. Thank you all for coming to join us today.

By events that we obviously had no way of predicting, the issues that are in front of this committee at this point in time are even more compelling and more relevant than they would have been anyway. And they were relevant and compelling under any circumstance. We have been planning these hearings for some period of time, mostly because July represents that critical moment when the President will be making important decisions about our policy in Afghanistan. But, for all the obvious reasons, this is a seminal moment as we deliberate about our foreign policy and our national security interests.

The death of Osama bin Laden is obviously an event of enormous consequence. His wealth, his iconic stature, gained by multiple murders and terrorist acts, going back to 1993 or so, his ability to plot, organize, direct, motivate, and recruit terrorists, all of those things made him a unique threat to our country and our allies. Bin Laden's death deals an enormous blow to al-Qaeda's ability to operate. It doesn't end the threat, however. But, still it is a major victory in the long campaign against terrorism waged by our intelligence agencies and our military.

This event enhances America's security and it brings us closer to our objective of dismantling and destroying al-Qaeda; though, tragically, nothing can erase the bitter memories of September 11, 2001. The haunting images will be forever seared in our minds: the Twin Towers burning, people jumping hand in hand to escape the inferno, the buildings collapsing, floor upon floor successively, on themselves in a cloud of dust and destruction. But, we remember, too, the heroism of America's finest: the police, the firefighters, the emergency workers who gave their lives. These images and the

realities that they meant, and mean still today, for nearly 3,000 families and for millions of people around the world, will never be forgotten.

For anyone who has challenged America's right to go after Osama bin Laden, and there have been some, let them remember and consider the shameless, cowardly attack out of nowhere that bin Laden unleashed on the innocence of all those who suffered, and that he then laughed and bragged about. In the wake of World War II, it's hard to believe that one man's evil aspirations could again so convulse the world, so occupy our resources and transform our lives. But, he did. And now, thank God, he is dead.

That death needs to be a lesson to all who embrace violence and anarchy in the guise of religious rectitude; the United States of America means what it says when we pledge to do whatever it takes to protect ourselves and mete out justice to those who wantonly murder and maim.

So, bin Laden is dead. But, the fight against the violence and the hatred that he fomented is not over. In fact, there are many questions—many more than we might have thought—raised as a consequence of the events of the last 48 hours. And it is important for us, and for this committee, to think through and find answers to these questions.

One of the reasons we're here this morning is to examine how Osama bin Laden's death affects the conflict in Afghanistan and its implications for our upcoming troop withdrawal, our transition strategy, and our partnerships in the region.

This hearing is the first in a series of six hearings over the next 3 weeks. It builds on the 14 hearings that we held in the last Congress on Afghanistan and Pakistan. And we are fortunate to start with a well-qualified panel of witnesses.

Dr. Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and a friend of this committee. He held many senior government positions, including working director of policy planning, and U.S. coordinator of policy toward the future of Afghanistan.

He's joined by one of his successors, Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter, who recently went to Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School after serving as Secretary Clinton's Director of Policy Planning.

Rounding out this group is three-time Ambassador Ronald Neumann who currently serves as the president of the American Academy of Diplomacy. And, like his father in the late 1960s, Ambassador Neumann served as our envoy to Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007, and recently returned from a trip there.

So, we thank you all for coming and look forward to a vigorous discussion.

I would just say quickly—before we begin and I turn to my colleague Senator Lugar—as we know, in 2 months, President Obama will unveil his strategy for drawing down our forces so that Afghans can assume a greater responsibility for their country and their future. Our military is making significant inroads, clearing the south, particularly, of insurgents. But, we do expect a significant Taliban counterattack this spring, in order to try to regain some of those areas. We also know insurgents are spreading into

other areas of Afghanistan, even as we drive them from their bases in the south.

Clearly, the challenge is not only on the battlefield. Despite the tremendous skill and sacrifice of our troops, again and again our military leaders and our civilian leaders have repeated the mantra, "There is no military victory to be had in Afghanistan." If that is true and we accept that it is, then we need to fashion the political resolution.

Out of these hearings, I hope that we can achieve a discussion with our partners about how this war ends, what an acceptable end state looks like, and what steps we need to take to get there.

With the death of bin Laden, some people are sure to ask, "Why don't we just pack up and leave Afghanistan?" So, it's even more compelling that we examine carefully what is at stake, what goals are legitimate and realistic, what is our real security challenge, and how do we achieve the interests of our country. What type of Afghanistan do we plan to leave so that we may actually achieve those objectives, and how will that peace be achieved?

Our reintegration efforts, frankly, have had limited impact so far. Reconciliation may be more promising in the long run, but it will not be fast and it is not a silver bullet. And there may be no grand bargain to be had with Mullah Omar or groups like the Haqqani Network. Although obviously one of the questions that looms in front of us is: How, if at all, has the death Osama bin Laden and the events of recent hours affected even the answer to those questions? Some Taliban appear to be willing to negotiate. There are different tiers of Taliban. So, the United States needs to send a strong and consistent message that we support a political solution led by Afghans. It will be difficult, as it was in Iraq, but Afghans themselves have to make the hard choices to bring stability to their own country.

So, as we debate the end state, it is inevitable that we need to factor in also what can we afford to do, in light of our budget constraints and realities in this country? We will spend $120 billion in Afghanistan this fiscal year. And our decisions on resource allocations there affect our global posture elsewhere, as we see today in the Middle East, with the crying challenge of Egypt, Tunisia, and other countries. We have to ask at every turn if our strategy in Afghanistan is sustainable. Our military and civilian strategies need to support an Afghanistan that is viable as we transition and draw down our forces.

And finally, we have to consider the regional context, particularly Pakistan's role and what bin Laden's presence there says about that alliance and about the prospects for peace in Afghanistan. Sanctuaries in Pakistan continue to threaten the prospects for peace in Afghanistan. And, while we have been working closely with our Pakistani allies to address our common threats, ultimately we must address Pakistani concerns about what the end state in Afghanistan will look like.

All of this will take patience, it will take careful thinking, it will take strategic decisionmaking, and it will take a lot of patience and determination. I am confident that we have the ability to achieve our goals and to get where we need to go.

I thank each of you for joining us at this important moment.

Senator Lugar, it is my pleasure to turn the floor over to you.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. I join the Chairman in welcoming our distinguished witnesses, and I thank him for holding this series of hearings on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

These hearings are especially timely, as you pointed out, given the killing of Osama bin Laden. Americans are rightly gratified by the skill and courage demonstrated by our intelligence professionals and troops. This is an important achievement that yields both symbolic and practical value as we continue to fight terrorism globally.

As a prelude to our series, I would offer four observations about the ongoing United States effort in Afghanistan.

First, we are spending enormous resources in a single country. The President's budget request for fiscal year 2012 included more than $100 billion for Afghanistan. We have approximately 100,000 American troops in Afghanistan and another 31,000 in the region that are supporting Afghanistan operations. We spent $9.2 billion in 2010, and we are spending more than $10 billion this year just to train Afghan security forces. President Obama has requested nearly $13 billion for training in 2012. Simultaneously, we are spending roughly $5 billion per year on civilian assistance mechanisms in Afghanistan at a time when most foreign assistance projects worldwide are being cut.

Second, although threats to United States national security do emanate from within Afghanistan's borders, these may not be the most serious threats in the region and Afghanistan may not be the most likely source of a major terrorist attack. Last February, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Michael Leiter, said in congressional testimony that Yemen is the most likely source of a terrorist attack against American interests in the short term. American resources devoted to Yemen are a tiny fraction of those being spent in Afghanistan. Further, we know that al-Qaeda has a far more significant presence in Pakistan than in Afghanistan.

Third, the broad scope of our activities in Afghanistan appears to be devoted to remaking the economic, political, and security culture of that country. But we should know by now that such grand nation-building ambitions in Afghanistan are beyond our powers. This is not to say that we cannot make Afghanistan more secure than it is now. But the ideal of a self-sufficient, democratic nation that has no terrorists within its borders and whose government is secure from tribal competition and extremist threats is highly unlikely. The most recent "Section 1230 Report on Progress Toward Stability and Security in Afghanistan" indicates that improvements in Afghan governance and development have been inconclusive. All of the investments to date and the shift to a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy led by General Petraeus have yielded some gains in select areas. The prominent caveat within the Defense Department report, however, and sprinkled across nearly all recent official statements by the Obama administration is that these gains are "fragile and reversible."

Fourth, although alliance help in Afghanistan is significant and appreciated, the heaviest burden will continue to fall on the United States. We have contributed $26.2 billion to the Afghanistan national security forces from 2002 to 2011, while the rest of the world, donating through the Afghanistan National Security Force Fund, has provided $2.6 billion. Similarly the United States has provided $22.8 billion in nonmilitary assistance since 2002, while donor partners have provided $4.2 billion. We are carrying the lion's share of the the economic and military burden in Afghanistan and this is unlikely to change. Alliance military activities in connection with the civil war in Libya further reduce the prospects for significantly greater allied contributions in Afghanistan.

If one accepts these four observations, it is exceedingly difficult to conclude that our vast expenditures in Afghanistan represent a rational allocation of our military and financial assets. Our geostrategic interests are threatened in numerous locations, not just by terrorism, but by debt, economic competition, energy and food prices, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and numerous other forces.

Some may argue that almost any expenditure or military sacrifice in Afghanistan is justified by the symbolism of that country's connection to the September 11 attacks. But nearly a decade later, with al-Qaeda largely displaced from the country, but franchised in other locations, Afghanistan does not carry a strategic value that justifies 100,000 American troops and a $100 billion per-year cost, especially given current fiscal restraints here at home.

President Obama must be forthcoming on a definition of success in Afghanistan based on United States vital interests and a sober analysis of what is possible to achieve. Clearly it would not be in our national security interest to have the Taliban take over the government or have Afghanistan reestablished as a terrorist safe haven. But the President has not offered a vision of what success in Afghanistan would entail or how progress toward success would be measured. The outcome in Afghanistan when United States forces leave will be imperfect, but the President has not defined which imperfections would be tolerable. There has been much discussion of our counterinsurgency strategy and methods, but very little explanation of what metrics must be achieved before the country is considered secure.

I noted in our last hearing on Afghanistan in July 2010, that we must avoid defining success there according to relative progress. Such definitions facilitate mission creep. Arguably, we could make progress for decades on security, employment, good governance, women's rights, and other goals—expending tens of billions of dollars each year—without ever reaching a satisfying conclusion.

A definition of success must be accompanied by a plan for focusing resources on specific goals. We need to eliminate activities that are not intrinsic to our core objectives. We also need to know what missions are absolutely indispensable to success, however it is defined.

I am hopeful that these hearings will bring greater focus to the mission and strategy in Afghanistan in the context of broader United States vital interests.

I look forward to our discussions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar.

We're going to go in the order of Dr. Haass, then Dr. Slaughter, and then Ambassador Neumann.

And, as is customary here, we're happy to put your entire testimony in the record as if read in full. We'd appreciate summaries, so that we have a chance to really have a good dialogue here this morning.

I failed to mention, I will be going to Afghanistan next weekend—not this one coming, but the one after—and hope to be able to get a good sense, from the Afghans, from President Karzai and others, what their take is on where we are, as well as the events that have taken place in Pakistan and how that might affect some of their calculations. So, we could add that to the record as we go forward.

Dr. Haass, welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD N. HAASS, PRESIDENT, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, NEW YORK, NY

Ambassador HAASS. Thank you, Senator. Thank you. And thanks for having me back here to discuss Afghanistan.

And, as has been the case whenever I testify here over the years, my statement and testimony reflect my personal views and not those of the Council on Foreign Relations.

As you all know, much of the debate about Afghanistan has focused on whether United States policy is likely to succeed. With success loosely defined as bringing about an Afghan Government that, in several years time, can hold off the Taliban with only a modest amount of ongoing American help. In theory at least, several more years of intense U.S. military effort will provide the time and space required to train the Afghan Army and police, and weaken the Taliban so that the Taliban will no longer constitute an overwhelming threat, or, better yet, decide to negotiate to end the conflict.

Let me say as directly as I can, I am deeply and profoundly skeptical that this policy will work, given the nature of Afghanistan; in particular, the weakness of its central institutions, and the reality that Pakistan will continue to provide a sanctuary for the Taliban. So, yes, U.S. forces will succeed at clearing and holding. But, successful building by the end of 2014 is at best a long shot. Some Taliban may give up, but many, and probably most, will not. Afghan military and police forces will increase in number and improve in performance, but not as much as is needed.

The bigger question I'd like to talk about, though, is whether it is worth—what we are doing is worth it, even if we were to succeed. And I would argue not. Afghanistan, over the years, has evolved from a war of necessity into a war of choice. Our interests there have become less than vital with the near elimination of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Afghanistan no longer represents a significant global terrorist threat, and certainly no more of one than several other countries, most notably Pakistan, in the region.

Second, there were, and are, other viable policy options available to us there. In particular, a more narrow and limited counter-

terrorism strategy coupled with a limited degree of nation- or capacity-building.

The situation in Afghanistan did not, and does not, warrant our becoming a protagonist in its civil war, the adoption of a counterinsurgency strategy, or the tripling of United States force levels to 100,000. Afghanistan is not a major terrorist haven, as I said. And it should not be assumed it will become one even if the Taliban make inroads. It was, and is, an error to equate Taliban return with al-Qaeda's return. And if, however, there is some renewed terrorist presence and activity in Afghanistan, we can, and should, respond to it, much as we do in other countries, such as Yemen and Somalia.

The Afghan/Pakistan tie is at the heart of our policy, but also its limits. There is no way, I would argue, the United States will be able to persuade Pakistan to become a full partner in Afghanistan and to stop providing a sanctuary to the Afghan Taliban. Given Islamabad's obsession with India and its view of Afghanistan as a critical source of strategic depth in its struggle with India, even a solution to the Kashmir conflict would not change this. And there is no solution to Kashmir in the offing, certainly not in a timeframe that would prove relevant.

Afghanistan is simply absorbing more economic, military, human, diplomatic, and political resources of every sort that it wants. The $120 billion annual pricetag, about $1 out of every $6 or $7 this country now spends on defense, is unjustifiable, given the budget crisis we face and the need for air and naval modernization.

The history of the 21st century is far more likely to be determined in the land areas and waters of Asia and the Pacific than it is on the plains and mountains of Afghanistan. We need to be better prepared for a number of future counterterrorist interventions elsewhere in the greater Middle East and Africa. And we should also make sure that we have adequate forces for dealing with possible contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and possibly Iran. Afghanistan is a strategic distraction, pure and simple.

All this is not an argument for complete withdrawal, but it is an argument for doing considerably less than we are doing, by transitioning rapidly, over the next year or year and a half, to a relatively small, sustainable, strategically warranted deployment, one I would estimate to be on a scale of 10,000 to 25,000 troops. And this future troop presence should allow for continued counterterrorist operations along the lines of the sort of operation just carried out by United States Special Forces in Pakistan, and for some training of Afghan forces at both the national and local level.

Reductions of the scale I am advocating and the phasing out of combat operations against the Taliban have a number of advantages, beginning with the fact that it would save upward of $75 billion a year and hundreds of American lives and casualties. Continuing what we are doing, on the scale we are doing, will not necessarily achieve more than what is being suggested by what I am advocating, given Afghanistan's history, leadership, demography, culture, geography, and neighborhood. And, even if substantial progress could be achieved in the near term, there's nothing to suggest the gains would endure.

Strategy, as you all know, is about balancing means and ends, resources and interests. And the time has come to restore a strategic perspective to what the United States does in Afghanistan.

Let me, if I can, turn for a few minutes briefly to discussing Pakistan. Pakistan is more important than Afghanistan, given its population, its arsenal of nuclear weapons, the presence of large numbers of terrorists on its territory, and the reality that what happens in Pakistan will directly affect India.

There is the view, in the administration and beyond, that the United States has to do a lot to stabilize Afghanistan, lest it become a staging ground for groups that would undermine Pakistan. But it is Pakistan that is providing the sanctuary and support to the Afghan Taliban, who are the greatest threat to Afghanistan's stability. So, why the United States should be more concerned than Pakistanis that Afghanistan could one day endanger Pakistan is not clear. It also exaggerates Afghanistan's actual and potential influence over developments in Pakistan. To be sure, Pakistan is a weak state. But, this weakness results far more from internal divisions and poor governance than anything else. If Pakistan ever fails, it will less be because of insurgents coming across their border than from decay within.

It is hard to imagine a more complicated bilateral relationship than the one between Washington and Islamabad. And it's about to become more complicated yet. Pakistan is, at most, a limited partner. It is not an ally. And, at times, it is not even a partner. The United States should be generous in providing aid to Pakistan only so long as that aid is made conditional on how it is used. But, we must accept that, no matter what the level of aid, there will always be clear differences between how Americans and Pakistanis see the world, and sharp differences over what is to be done.

So, let me suggest a simple guide to U.S. foreign policy when it comes to Pakistan. We should cooperate where and when we can, but we should act independently where and when we must. And the recent successful operation that killed Osama bin Laden is a case in point.

Let me just turn to one last subject, which is that of diplomacy, affecting this entire set of questions. There's growing interest and there's three particular ideas that are gaining some currency: One is negotiations involving the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban; second, negotiations involving India and Pakistan; and third, resurrecting some sort of a regional forum.

In the interest of time, for now, let me just say, I am quite skeptical about the possibility for diplomacy resolving the internal questions in Afghanistan. I am even more skeptical of the potential of diplomacy to resolve the differences between India and Pakistan. But, I do think there is reason to proceed with the possibility of some sort of a regional forum, along the lines of the old "Six Plus Two" forum, that actually did contribute somewhat.

In this context, I would also endorse talks between the United States and those Taliban leaders willing to engage. Direct communication between the United States and the Taliban would be preferable to allowing either Pakistan or the Afghanistan Governments to act as our go-between. I therefore support the decision announced by the Secretary of State to drop preconditions for talking

to the Taliban. What matters in any dialogue is less where it begins than where it ends. But, the Taliban need to understand that we will attack them if they associate with terrorists, and we will only favor their participation in a political process if they forgo violence.

Let me just end with one last thought. We should not kid ourselves. Whatever it is we do or don't do, vis-a-vis Pakistan or Afghanistan, there is unlikely to be a rosy future for Afghanistan anytime soon. The most likely future, for the next few years and possibly on, is some form of a messy stalemate, an Afghanistan characterized by a mix of a weak central government, strong local officials, and a Taliban presence, supported out of Pakistan, that will be extensive in much of the Pashtun-dominated south and east of Afghanistan.

Resolution of the ongoing conflict by either military or diplomatic means is highly unlikely and cannot constitute a basis for U.S. policy. Walking away from Afghanistan, however, is not the answer. Instead, I would argue this country should sharply scale back what we are doing and what we seek to accomplish. And we should aim for an Afghanistan that is simply "good enough," in light of local realities, limited interests, and the broad range of domestic and global challenges now facing the United States.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Haass follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD N. HAASS

Mr. Chairman, thank you for asking me to appear before this committee, in this instance to discuss U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and, more specifically, what constitutes an acceptable end state in that country and how the United States can best work to bring it about. As has been the case over the past 8 years, my statement and testimony today reflect my personal views and not those of the Council on Foreign Relations, which takes no institutional positions on matters of policy.

The questions that inform this hearing are at one and the same time critical yet difficult to answer. Indeed, I have come to think that just about anything associated with Afghanistan is difficult. I first visited that country as a researcher in the late 1970s in the months preceding the Soviet-engineered coup. Just over a decade later, Afghanistan was part of my portfolio of responsibility when I served as the senior director for Near East and South Asian Affairs on the National Security Council staff of President George H.W. Bush. It was in the first weeks of that administration—in February, 1989, to be precise—that the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan came to an end. And, more recently, in the aftermath of 9/11, I served as U.S. coordinator for the future of Afghanistan under President George W. Bush.

Much of the debate about Afghanistan has focused on whether U.S. policy is likely to succeed, with "success" loosely defined as bringing about an Afghan Government that in several years' time can hold off the Taliban with only a modest amount of continuing American help. In theory, several more years of intense U.S. military effort will provide the time and space required to train up the Afghan Army and police and weaken the Taliban so that they no longer constitute an overwhelming threat or, better yet, decide to negotiate an end to the conflict.

I am deeply skeptical that this policy will work given the nature of Afghanistan (above all, the weakness of central institutions) and the reality that Pakistan will continue to provide a sanctuary for the Taliban. Yes, U.S. forces will succeed at clearing and holding, but successful building by the end of 2014 is a long shot at best. Some Taliban may give up but many and probably most will not. Afghan military and police forces will increase in number and improve in performance but not nearly as much as is needed.

Of course, I may well be proven wrong here, and sincerely hope I will be if the decision is made to keep U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan relatively high until the end of 2014 or even longer, as is possible if the United States bases any withdrawal decision on conditions that will be difficult to bring about. But the bigger question hovering over current U.S. Afghan policy is whether it is worth it even if it were

to succeed. I would argue it is not, both on the micro (local) level and the macro (global) level.

Some perspective is required. American troops have been fighting in one form or another in Afghanistan for nearly a decade. But it is essential to note that today's Afghan war is fundamentally different than the one waged after the 9/11 attacks. That war was a war of necessity: the most important national interest (self-defense) was involved, and there were no promising, timely alternatives to the use of military force once it became clear diplomacy would not bring about an end to Afghan Government, i.e., Taliban, support for global terrorism.

Over time, however, Afghanistan evolved into a war of choice. What made it so were two developments. First, U.S. interests had become less than vital with the near-elimination of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Afghanistan no longer represented a significant global terrorist threat, and certainly no more of one than several other countries (most notably, Pakistan) in the region and in Africa. Second, there were other viable policy options available to the United States in Afghanistan, in particular a more narrow and limited counterterrorism strategy coupled with a degree of nation, i.e., capacity-building. The situation did not warrant our becoming a protagonist in Afghanistan's civil war, the adoption of a counterinsurgency strategy, or the tripling of U.S. force levels to near 100,000.

Just to be clear, wars of choice are not wrong per se. But before undertaking one, it is essential to demonstrate that the likely benefits of using military force will outweigh the costs and produce better results at less cost than other policies. Afghanistan does not meet these tests. It is not a major terrorist haven, and it should not be assumed it will again become one even if the Taliban make inroads. It was and is an error to equate Taliban return with al-Qaeda's return. If there is some renewed terrorist presence and activity in Afghanistan, we can and should respond to it much as we have been doing in other countries such as Yemen and Somalia.

The Afghan-Pakistan tie is at the heart of U.S. policy and its limits. There is no way the United States will be able to persuade Pakistan to become a full partner in Afghanistan (and stop providing sanctuary to the Afghan Taliban) given Islamabad's obsession with India and its view of Afghanistan as a critical source of strategic depth in its struggle with India. Even a solution to the Kashmir conflict would not change this—and there is no solution to Kashmir in the offing, certainly not in a timeframe that would prove relevant to U.S. decisionmaking for Afghanistan.

At the macro or global level, Afghanistan is simply absorbing more economic, military, human, diplomatic, and political resources of every sort than it warrants. The $110–$120 billion annual price tag—one out of every six to seven dollars this country spends on defense—is unjustifiable given the budget crisis we face and the need for military (especially air and naval) modernization. The history of the 21st century is far more likely to be determined in the land areas and waters of Asia and the Pacific than it is on the plains and in the mountains of Afghanistan. We had also better be prepared for a number of future counterterrorist interventions (along the lines of Somalia, Pakistan, and Yemen) in Libya and elsewhere in the Greater Middle East and Africa. We also need to make sure we have adequate forces for possible contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and conceivably with Iran. Afghanistan is a strategic distraction, pure and simple. Secretary of Defense Gates's recent West Point speech makes a case for avoiding sending a large American land force into places like Afghanistan. I agree. But less clear is why we should continue to deploy a large number of soldiers there for the present and near future.

All this is an argument for doing considerably less than what we are doing, by transitioning rapidly (by mid- or late 2012) to a relatively small, sustainable, strategically warranted deployment, one I would estimate to be on a scale of 10,000-25,000 troops. The precise number of U.S. troops would be determined by the terrorist threat, training goals, the role assigned to civilians and contractors, and what the Afghans were willing to accept. The future U.S. troop presence should allow for continued counterterrorist operations (along the lines of what was just carried out by Special Forces in Pakistan) and for training of Afghan forces at both the national and local level.

Such a strategy would be consistent with existing policy, i.e., the President all along has said the United States would begin troop reductions as of mid-2011. At issue is the pace or glide slope of U.S. troop reductions. The President did not commit to any particular pace or end point.

Reductions of the scale being advocated here and the phasing out of combat operations against the Taliban have a number of advantages. It would save upward of $75 billion a year and sharply reduce American casualties. Doing so takes into account Afghan nationalism and the understandable popular desire to limit foreign forces in number and role. Doing less with less avoids a large footprint that would

be costly and risks wearing out our welcome. A more modest strategy is a more sustainable strategy in every way.

Continuing to do what we are doing on the scale we are doing it will not necessarily achieve more than what is being suggested here given Afghanistan's history, leadership, demography, culture, geography, and neighborhood, in particular Pakistan. And even if substantial progress is achieved in the near term, there is nothing to suggest those gains will endure. Strategy is about balancing means and ends, resources and interests, and the time has come to restore strategic perspective to what the United States is doing in Afghanistan.

At the same time, to say that current policy in Afghanistan is not warranted by either the stakes or the prospects is not to say the United States has no interests or can achieve nothing. There is a need for continued counterterror and counterdrug operations. There is also a case for continued training of government and local forces. The United States has an interest in seeing human rights respected in Afghanistan. A continued U.S. military presence would provide a backdrop for efforts to persuade individual Taliban troops and commanders to give up the fight and negotiate a modus vivendi with the Afghan Government. The intention of keeping some troops after 2012 takes away the argument that we are leaving Afghanistan, something that should reassure many Afghans in and out of government, those Pakistanis who want to know the U.S. commitment is continuing beyond 2014, and those in this country who do not want to do anything that could be interpreted as losing and thereby handing a victory to extremists.

An additional argument against withdrawing is that great powers need to be careful about making dramatic policy changes. Revising a policy is one thing; reversing it quite another. A reputation for reliability is important. This line of thinking, however, should not be employed to justify a continued commitment of large numbers of lives, dollars, and time on behalf of questionable goals.

Consistent with the desirability of maintaining a military presence in Afghanistan, I support talks taking place between the U.S. and Afghan Governments on a long-term security relationship, one that would include U.S. forces remaining in the country for some time to come. There is obviously a significant degree of internal Afghan and regional resistance to this notion. To help allay some of these concerns, there should be no U.S. permanent bases and no permanent U.S. troop presence. The arrangement could be for an initial period of 5 to 10 years and could be cancelled by either side with 1 year's notice.

I understand that this hearing is about Afghanistan, but for any number of reasons it is impossible to discuss it without also discussing Pakistan. Pakistan is widely acknowledged to be more important than Afghanistan given its population, its arsenal of nuclear weapons, the presence of large numbers of terrorists on its territory, and the reality that developments in Pakistan can have a profound impact on the trajectory of India, sure to be one of the most important countries in the world.

More specifically, there is the widespread view that the United States has to do a great deal to stabilize Afghanistan lest it become a staging ground for groups that would undermine Pakistan. But it is Pakistan that is providing the sanctuary and support to the Afghan Taliban who are the greatest threat to Afghanistan's stability. The Pakistanis are doing so because they want to retain influence in their neighbor and to limit Indian inroads.

Why the United States should be more concerned than Pakistanis that Afghanistan could one day endanger Pakistan is not clear. More important, this view exaggerates Afghanistan's actual and potential influence over developments in Pakistan. To be sure, Pakistan is a weak state. But this weakness results more than anything from internal divisions and poor governance. If Pakistan ever fails, it will be less because of insurgents coming across its borders than from decay within them.

It is hard to imagine a more complicated bilateral relationship than the one between Washington and Islamabad. Pakistan is at most a limited partner; it is not an ally, and at times it is not even a partner. There are many reasons for the mutual mistrust; what matters for our purposes here is that it is pervasive and deep. The United States should be generous in providing military and economic assistance only so long as it is made conditional on how it is used; U.S. markets should be more open to Pakistani exports. But we must accept that there will always be clear differences to how we see the world and sharp differences over what is to be done. Under these circumstances, U.S. foreign policy should follow a simple guide: we should cooperate with Pakistan where and when we can, but we should act independently where and when we must. The recent successful operation that killed Osama Bin Laden is a case in point.

Interest is growing in the possibility of diplomacy to contribute to U.S. policy. Three potential paths are receiving considerable attention. One involves the Govern-

ment of Afghanistan and the Taliban. There is talk of moving toward some sort of a new "shura" that would attempt to integrate the Taliban into the formal ruling structure of Afghanistan. The second involves India and Pakistan. The third involves neighboring and regional states, including Pakistan as well as Iran, India, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and others. This would resemble the "6 plus 2" forum that facilitated Afghan-related diplomacy in the past.

I judge prospects for a major breakthrough on either the Afghan/Taliban or India/Pakistan fronts to be poor. There is a weak and divided Afghan Government that enjoys at best uneven support around the country. The Taliban are themselves divided. Pakistan has its own agenda. It is far from clear that the situation is ripe for a power-sharing accord that would meaningfully reduce much less end the fighting. India and Pakistan are far apart and again it is not clear the leadership in either government is in a position to undertake significant negotiations involving meaningful compromise. None of this is reason not to explore these possibilities, but expectations should be kept firmly in check. Prospects might be somewhat better for reviving a regional forum, though, and this possibility should be pursued.

I should add that I endorse talks between the United States and those Taliban leaders willing to engage. Direct communication is much preferable to either the Pakistan or Afghan Governments acting as an intermediary. Consistent with this perspective, the decision announced by Secretary of State Clinton in February to drop preconditions for talking to the Taliban was a step in the right direction. The same logic holds for our rejecting any Taliban preconditions. What matters in a dialogue is less where it begins than where it ends. The Taliban should understand we will attack them if they associate with terrorists and we will only favor their participation in the political process if they forgo violence. The Taliban should also know that we will continue to provide military training and support to the Afghan central government and to local groups of our choosing.

We should not kid ourselves, though: there is unlikely to be a rosy future for Afghanistan any time soon. The most likely future for the next few years and possibly beyond is some form of a messy stalemate, an Afghanistan characterized by a mix of a weak central government, strong local officials, and a Taliban presence (supported out of Pakistan) that is extensive in much of the Pashtun-dominated south and east of the country. Resolution of the ongoing conflict by either military or diplomatic means is highly unlikely and not a realistic basis for U.S. policy. Walking away from Afghanistan, however, is not the answer. Instead, this country should sharply scale back what it is doing and what it seeks to accomplish, and aim for an Afghanistan that is "good enough" in light of local realities, limited interests, and the broad range of both domestic and global challenges facing the United States.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before this committee. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Haass. Very comprehensive and, I think, very appropriately provocative and thoughtful, as well. And we look forward to following up on it.

Dr. Slaughter.

By the way, Dr. Slaughter, welcome back. I don't know if many of you know it, but Dr. Slaughter was an intern here in this committee in 1979, through persistence, mostly, if I remember. [Laughter.]

But, we welcome you back. You've come a long way.

STATEMENT OF ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, BERT G. KERSTETTER '66 UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, PRINCETON, NJ

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Thank you. I hope some of the interns around can imagine a similar return. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify, Chairman Kerry and Ranking Member Lugar.

I want to start with three very different and quite dramatic images that frame the story of Afghanistan today.

First, think about our troops posted on remote and often barren outposts in the valleys and on the mountains of Afghanistan, work-

ing under fiercely difficult conditions to defeat and drive out the Taliban. In the aftermath of Osama bin Laden's death yesterday, a former paratrooper with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command wrote of his deployment, "Our job was to build a sustainable nation in a Mad Max wasteland, and we did our duty."

The second image is of the extraordinary operation carried out by the highly skilled and trained team of Navy Seals against Osama bin Laden's compound. They succeeded in accomplishing a key part of the mission that our troops are in Afghanistan to do: to destroy and degrade al-Qaeda. But, that success did not follow from state-building operations in Afghanistan. Indeed, it didn't even take place in Afghanistan, but in Pakistan.

The third image is of young Arabs in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, and now Syria mustering the courage to face bullets, beatings, and brutality to claim their basic rights as human beings: to speak freely, to assembly freely, to participate in deciding how they'll be governed, and to hold their governments accountable for the provision of basic services and the possibility of a better life.

The determination of those protestors, in their millions, to demand far more of their rulers even in desperately poor and conflict-ridden countries, is exactly the attitude of responsibility and self-reliance that we hope to see among the people of Afghanistan, but too often do not. Indeed, many reports from the field describe a culture of dependence, corruption, and inflated expectations that the United States and its allies have helped to create.

As we reexamine our goals in Afghanistan and the next phase of how to secure those goals, it's worth bearing those three images in minds, the things that connect them and the disjunctures between them. We seek a secure, stable, and self-reliant Afghanistan that does not provide sanctuary for al-Qaeda and that is a crossroads for an increasingly prosperous and secure region.

I disagree that Afghanistan is a strategic distraction. It's a strategic distraction only until the next attack. Moreover, we can't think about Afghanistan separately from Pakistan and India and, as I will argue, the broader Central-Asian region, which is an extremely important region, going forward.

A secure Afghanistan means a country with low levels of violence that is defended and policed by its own local, regional, and national forces. That means not only an end to open conflict between government and insurgents, but also the basic kind of everyday safety that allows citizens to go to work and to send their children to school. Establishing that kind of security in Afghanistan requires not only building up Afghan police and military forces, but also, and crucially, creating the kinds of incentives for them to risk their lives for the sake of protecting their own people.

It also means removing U.S. troops as focal points and targets for Taliban attacks; attacks that end up alienating the very villagers that our soldiers seek to protect and win over. Our counterinsurgency strategy assumes that if we protect and serve the population of a village, they will have incentives to give us the information we need to protect ourselves and drive out the enemy. In some cases, for some periods of time, that has proved true. But, it's a strategy that assumes the troops providing protection are there to stay for as long as it takes to erase the possibility of retal-

iation by the enemy that's been informed against. As long as villagers know that we are going to leave someday, as we will, and as long as they lack faith in their own government to protect them, their instincts for self-preservation will tell them to keep quiet. Their incentives are to go with the winner, not to make us the winner.

Moreover, the only real long-term security flows from competent and honest government, whether in a village in Afghanistan or in city neighborhoods in the United States. Real security in Afghanistan can come only if the central government has the incentives to choose and keep capable and honest local and regional officials, or a new constitution allows for more decentralized election of those officials, and mechanisms for citizens to hold them directly accountable.

So, the key question, going forward, is how to align the Afghan Government's incentives with serving the interests of its people at every level. Many different strategies have been tried, but if we are embarking on a public transition from this period forward, we can make clear that, from now on, we will be investing in winners. Our development dollars, our civilian assistance, and our military advising and support will flow to those villages, towns, cities, and provinces that demonstrate the ability to help themselves. When a competent official is replaced with an incompetent one, we will shift resources elsewhere. The message at every turn must be that we have a strong interest in seeing Afghans succeed in securing and rebuilding their country, but not so strong that it means we will do it in their stead.

Security is a necessary but not sufficient condition. We also need stability; stability meaning predictability. Real stability, as Chairman Kerry started, cannot be won by military force. It requires a political settlement that is sufficiently accepted by all sides to create a long-term political equilibrium. And the sooner we begin constructing that equilibrium the better.

In a speech at MIT last week, former British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, argued that a political settlement is not part of a multipronged strategy in a counterinsurgency. It is the overarching framework within which everything else fits and in the service of which everything else operates. He recommends that western countries in Afghanistan set out a unified and strong vision addressing the security situation, possible amendments to, or interpretations of, the Afghan Constitution, basic human rights guarantees for all Afghan citizens, and the best model of governance for Afghanistan. Such a vision would provide a diplomatic benchmark against which all negotiating parties can begin to adjust their positions. I can see value in such a course, but my purpose today is not to outline a specific diplomatic strategy.

However we get negotiations on a political settlement underway, however, there's a great advantage to actually beginning the political endgame, rather than continually complementing it, in that it will force multiple players to reveal their true preferences about what they will and will not accept. Only with a sense of real redlines on all sides can a lasting deal be constructed.

The death of Osama bin Laden creates a new opportunity to begin those negotiations. The United States has already made clear

that his death is not the end of the war in Afghanistan. But, we should now mark this moment as the beginning of the end, as a moment that allows us to pivot toward a comprehensive political settlement that will bring security and stability to Afghanistan and greater security to Pakistan while still allowing the United States to take whatever measures are necessary to protect ourselves against al-Qaeda.

That settlement has to be durable and consistent enough with the basic rights and interests of all Afghan citizens, sufficient to allow all countries, regional and international institutions, corporations, citizens to invest in Afghanistan's economic and social capital. The architects of a political settlement must pay equal attention to provisions that will provide a foundation for Afghanistan's economic future from trade and investment rather than foreign assistance.

Let me turn to that economic vision. The last thing we seek is a self-reliant Afghanistan. U.N. officials, NGO officials, people with long experience in Afghanistan often point out that it is impossible to build the capacity of a foreign government when the inflated salaries offered by our government, other governments, NGOs, international institutions drain local talent from local institutions. When Afghan engineers make more as advisors, or even drivers and translators, to Westerners, it is small wonder that local and national government bureaucracies fall short. Moreover, large sums of aid without sufficient accountability mechanisms, and being distributed too fast, inevitably contribute to growing corruption.

Moving forward in Afghanistan, we must be aware of our own inflationary footprint on the Afghan economy and the expectations of the Afghan people. It is worth exploring how governments and other organizations could conform much more to local conditions and to pay scales, as many of our soldiers often do. At the same time, we need to focus on finding export markets for Afghan farmers and entrepreneurs, and socially, as well as economically, profitable ways to exploit Afghanistan's mineral sector.

The recent agreement by Pakistan and India's commerce secretaries to improve trade ties across a wide range of sectors, and a newfound confidence among Pakistani businessmen that they can compete in India's markets, are promising signs of a willingness to make long-held aspirations of regional markets a reality.

Afghanistan's rich mineral resources are already attracting large-scale investment, with China the winning bidder for a $3 billion project to exploit Afghanistan's largest copper mine. The agreement commits China to build a powerplant that could provide electricity to most of Kabul, and to build Afghanistan's first railroad which will run to the Chinese province of Xinjiang. Afghanistan also has a new outlet to the sea, thanks to a 135-mile road, constructed by India, connecting the Iranian port of Chabahar with Nimroz province in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is actually increasingly poised to resume its historic and very lucrative position as the trading crossroads of central and south Asia. And again, whereas Afghanistan itself may seem strategically less significant, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and the rest of central Asia are absolutely essential for the United States and, I would argue, for the world, going forward. The question for the

United States is how a regional diplomatic agreement that would help address Pakistan's chronic security concerns at the same time as it would engage key regional players in underwriting long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan can also help build the foundations of regional economic engagement and integration.

Before I conclude, it's worth pausing for a moment to think about what this debate is not about. It's not about finger-pointing for past mistakes. It is not about the performance of our troops, which has often been superb. It's not about whether their fight has been worth it. We have an overwhelming reason to ensure that Afghanistan cannot again offer sanctuary to al-Qaeda. And the fighting to date has brought us to the point where al-Qaeda is severely degraded. It is not about whether COIN is right or wrong as a theory of how to fight insurgency. And it's not about whether Afghanistan can ever be governed.

It's about getting from where we are now to where we want to be, a realistic vision of a secure, stable, and self-reliant Afghanistan. Achieving that goal requires seizing the opportunity and the political space, afforded us by Osama bin Laden's death, to orchestrate and schedule negotiations on a final political settlement within Afghanistan and a broader regional, economic, and security agreement. In the meantime, as the endgame begins, we must move as rapidly as possible to supporting only those Afghan forces and officials who demonstrably take responsibility for their own security and development. That was, after all, the central premise of how we distributed funds to European countries under the Marshall Plan.

In the end, success is a matter of aligning incentives. Our military strategy must work side by side with a development strategy and a diplomatic strategy that focuses on building incentives for all the relevant players—Afghan villagers in growing urban populations, Afghan troops, the Afghan Government, the Pakistani Government, the Afghan and possibly the Pakistani Taliban, India, China, Russia, Turkey, Europe, and others—to act in ways that will advance their own interests and our ultimate goals. That is a job for our diplomats more than it is for our military and development experts. It may seem like an impossible job, but the sooner we begin it, the higher the chances of success.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Slaughter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER

Let me begin with three very different and dramatic images.

First, consider the image of our troops posted in remote and often barren outposts in the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan, working under fiercely difficult conditions to protect villagers and fight the Taliban. In the aftermath of Osama Bin Laden's death a former paratrooper with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command wrote of his deployment: "Our job was to build a sustainable nation in a Mad Max wasteland, and we did our duty." [1] The crazy lawlessness of Mad Max similarly permeates the Oscar-nominated documentary "Restrepo," as well as the descriptions of other outposts in the Korengal Valley in Bing West's 2011 book "The Wrong War."

The second image is of the extraordinary operation carried out by the highly skilled and trained team of Navy SEALs who carried out the successful attack

[1] D.B. Grady, "Veteran's Day," The Atlantic, May 2, 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/05/veterans-day/238138/.

against Osama Bin Laden's compound. Amid the deep satisfaction of having finally caught the man who symbolized al-Qaeda and the attacks on 9/11 more than any other has been a deep pride in the capabilities, organization, and preparation of these young men and the intelligence, analysis, and institutions behind their operation. They succeeded in accomplishing a key piece of the mission our troops are in Afghanistan to do: degrading and destroying al-Qaeda. But this success did not follow from state-building operations on the ground in Afghanistan itself. Indeed, the operation did not even take place in Afghanistan, but in Pakistan.

The third image is of young Arabs from Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and now Syria mustering the courage to face bullets, beatings, and brutality to claim their basic rights as human beings: to speak and assemble freely, to participate in deciding how they will be governed, and to hold their governments accountable for the provision of basic services and the possibility of a better life. The determination of these protesters, in the millions, to demand far more of their rulers, even in desperately poor and conflict ridden countries, is exactly the attitude of responsibility and self-reliance that we hope to see among the people of Afghanistan, but do not. Instead, reports from the field all too often describe a culture of dependence, corruption, and inflated expectations that we have helped to create.

As we reexamine our goals in Afghanistan and the next phase of how to secure those goals, it is worth bearing these three images in mind and reflecting on both the connections and the disjunctions between them.

THE AFGHANISTAN WE SEEK

We seek a secure, stable, and self-reliant Afghanistan that does not provide sanctuary for al-Qaeda and that is a cross-roads for an increasingly prosperous and secure region.

A Secure Afghanistan

A secure Afghanistan would be a country with low levels of violence that is defended and policed by its own local, regional, and national forces. Security means not only an end to open conflict between the government and insurgents and/or warlords, but also the kind of everyday safety that allows citizens to go to work and to send their children to school. It means a country free from the continual fear of violence or death, whether targeted or random.

Establishing that kind of security across Afghanistan requires not only building up Afghan police and military forces but also creating the incentives for them to risk their lives for the sake of protecting their people. It also means removing U.S. troops as focal points and targets for Taliban attacks, attacks that end up alienating the very villagers that our soldiers seek to protect and win over. COIN assumes that if we protect and serve the population of a village they will have incentives to give us the information we need to protect ourselves and drive out the enemy. In some cases, for some periods of time, that has proved true. But it is a strategy that assumes the troops providing protection are there to stay for as long as it takes to erase the possibility of retaliation by the enemy that was informed upon. As long as villagers know that we are going to leave some day, as we will, and as long as they lack faith in their own government to protect them, their instincts for self-preservation will tell them to keep quiet. Their incentives are to go with the winner, not make us the winner.

The only real long-term security flows from competent and honest government, whether in a village in Afghanistan or city neighborhoods in the United States. Real security in Afghanistan can come only if the central government either has the incentives to choose and keep capable and honest local and regional officials or a new constitution allows for more decentralized election of such officials and mechanisms for citizens to hold them directly accountable. Honest and capable Afghan officials exist. The most frustrating and often heart-wrenching stories over the past decade are those of mayors or police chiefs or governors who temporarily succeeded in serving their people, only to be murdered without retribution or deliberately fired by the central government and replaced with cronies.

The key question going forward is how to align the Afghan Government's incentives with serving the interests of its people at every level. Many different strategies have been tried, but if we are in fact embarking on a public transition, we make clear that we will be investing in winners. Our development dollars, our civilian assistance, and our military advising and support will flow to those villages, towns, cities, and provinces that demonstrate the ability to help themselves. When a competent official is replaced with an incompetent one, we will shift resources elsewhere.

In the short term, adopting this strategy could well mean accepting less success for U.S. dollars, in the sense of fewer program outcomes or even less territory se-

cured. Military commanders and civilian program administrators have to be able to pull the plug on partially secured territory as soon as Afghan forces demonstrate that they are unwilling to take sufficient responsibility for local security and on partially completed programs when local civilian officials fail to meet a basic standard of competence. The message at every turn must be that we have a strong interest in seeing Afghans succeed in securing and rebuilding their country, but such an interest that it means we will do the job in their stead.

A Stable Afghanistan

Stability means predictability. Real stability cannot be imposed or even won by military force. It requires a political settlement that is sufficiently accepted by all sides to create a long-term political equilibrium. And the sooner we begin constructing that equilibrium the better.

In a speech at MIT last week former British Foreign Secretary David Miliband argued that "a political settlement is not one part of a multipronged strategy in a counterinsurgency; it is the overarching framework within which everything else fits and in the service of which everything else operates."[2] He recommends that Western countries fighting in Afghanistan set out a unified and strong vision addressing the security situation, possible amendments to or interpretations of the Afghan Constitution, basic human rights guarantees for all Afghan citizens, and the best model of governance for Afghanistan. Such a vision, he contends, will provide a diplomatic benchmark against which all the negotiating parties can begin to adjust their positions.

I can see value in such a course. But I would not presume to outline a specific diplomatic strategy here. The business of diplomacy is figuring out the fastest and best way to get the parties to the table with positions that are sufficiently real and flexible to allow for a lasting bargain to be forged. Regardless how we get negotiations on a political settlement underway, however, the great advantage to actually beginning the political endgame, rather than continually contemplating it, is that it will force multiple players to begin to reveal their true preferences about what they will and will not accept. Only with a sense of real redlines on all sides can a lasting deal be constructed.

The death of Osama bin Laden creates a new opportunity to begin real negotiations. The Afghan Government has greeted the death of Bin Laden by arguing simultaneously that U.S. forces should be focusing on Pakistan rather than Afghanistan, since that is where the real terrorists are. At the same time, the leader of the Afghan opposition, former Foreign Minister and Presidential candidate, Abdullah Abdullah, noted immediately that U.S. forces will still be needed in Afghanistan for a long time to come.[3] The United States has already made clear that the death of Osama Bin Laden is not the end of the war in Afghanistan. But we should now mark this moment as the beginning of the end, a moment that allows us to pivot toward a comprehensive political statement that will bring security and stability to Afghanistan and greater security to Pakistan while still allowing the United States to take whatever measures are necessary to protect ourselves against al-Qaeda. This pivot will help creates a new set of strong incentives for the Afghan Government to engage in the kind of behavior on both the development and defense side that warrants our continuing assistance.

A final political settlement must be durable enough and consistent enough with the basic rights and interests of all Afghan citizens to allow all countries, corporations, and individual citizens to invest in Afghanistan's economic and social capital. Predictability is the prerequisite for any kind of long-term investment, and Afghanistan needs the kind of investment that will employ its growing youth population, its newly educated women and girls, and its different tribes and ethnic groups. The architects of a political settlement must thus pay equal attention to provisions that will provide a foundation for Afghanistan's economic future from trade and investment rather than foreign assistance.

A Self-Reliant Afghanistan

U.N. officials and experienced veterans from Non-Governmental Organizations often point out that it is impossible actually to build the capacity of a foreign government when the inflated salaries offered by foreign governments, NGOs, and international institutions drain all local talent from local institutions. When Afghan

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[2] David Miliband, "The War in Afghanistan: Mending It Not Just Ending It," speech delivered at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, April 13, 2011, http://davidmiliband.net/speech/the-war-in-afghanistan-mending-it-not-just-ending-it/.

[3] Ben Birnbaum, "Afghan Opposition Leader: International Presence Still Needed After Bin Laden's Death," The Washington Times, May 2, 20100, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/may/2/abdullah-international-presence-bin-laden-death/.

engineers make more as advisers (or even as translators and drivers) to Westerners, it is small wonder that local and national government bureaucracies fall short. Moreover, the large sums of aid pouring in to a very poor country inevitably contribute to growing corruption.

Moving forward in Afghanistan, it is vital to be much more aware of our own inflationary footprint on the Afghan economy and the expectations of the Afghan people. It is worth investigating how governments and other organizations can possibly conform much more to local conditions and pay scales, as many of our soldiers certainly do. At the same time, we need a far greater focus on finding export markets for Afghan farmers and entrepreneurs and on socially as well as economically profitable ways to exploit Afghanistan's mineral sector.

The recent agreement by Pakistan and India's commerce secretaries to improve trade ties across a wide range of sectors and a new-found confidence among Pakistani businessmen that they can compete in India's markets are promising signs of a willingness to make long-held aspirations of broader regional markets a reality. Both Pakistan and India's leaders understand the vital importance of economic growth and the value in weaving their two economies closer together. At the same time, Pakistan has been proposing closer economic ties with Afghanistan in ways that could have a direct impact on China and India. Add to this mix a proposed natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India, as well as a $500 million project financed by the Asian Development Bank to build a 1,300 megawatt, high-transmission power line carrying electricity produced by hydropower of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan through Afghanistan to Peshawar in Pakistan, and possible energy deposits in Afghanistan itself, and the outlines of a regional energy market begin to emerge. The path to greater Afghan self-reliance is likely to run through greater regional economic integration.

Afghanistan's rich mineral resources are already attracting massive investment, with China the winning bidder for a $3 billion project to exploit Afghanistan's largest copper mine. The agreement commits China to build a powerplant that can provide electricity to much of Kabul and to finance and build Afghanistan's first railroad, which will run to the Chinese province of Xinjiang. Afghanistan also has a new outlet to the sea, due to a 135-mile road constructed by India connecting the Iranian port of Chahbahar with Nimroz province in Afghanistan. It is thus increasingly poised to resume its historic (and lucrative) position as the trading cross-roads of Central and South Asia.

The question for the United States is how a regional diplomatic agreement that would help address Pakistan's chronic security concerns at the same time as it would engage key regional players in underwriting long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan can also help build the foundations for regional economic engagement and integration. Reduced trade barriers and a growing common economic space in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan can radiate outward through a much broader Central and South Asian region. From Turkey to China, India to Russia, the EU to Singapore, many countries have a strong interest in the economic development of this region. And again, when it becomes clear that a serious diplomatic process is finally in train, many countries will have an incentive to be sure that they have a place at the table.

Before concluding this discussion of a desirable end state in Afghanistan and how to get there, it is worth pausing for a moment to reflect on what this debate is not about. It is not about finger-pointing for past mistakes. It is not about the performance of our troops, which has often been superb. It is also not about whether their fight has been worth it. We have an overwhelming reason to ensure that Afghanistan cannot again offer sanctuary to al-Qaeda and the fighting to date has brought us to the point where al-Qaeda is severely degraded. It is not about whether COIN is right or wrong as a theory of how to fight insurgency. And it is not about whether Afghanistan can ever be governed.

It is about getting from where we are now to where we want to be. I have argued for a realistic vision of a secure, stable, and self-reliant Afghanistan. Achieving that goal requires seizing the opportunity and the political space afforded us by Osama Bin Laden's death to orchestrate and schedule negotiations on a final political settlement within Afghanistan and a broader regional economic and security agreement. In the meantime, as the endgame begins, we must move as rapidly as possible to a posture of supporting only those Afghan forces and officials who demonstrably take responsibility for their own security and development. That was, after all, the central premise of how we distributed funds to European countries under the Marshall Plan.

In conclusion, success in Afganistan is above all a matter of aligning incentives. Our military strategy must work side by side with a development strategy and a diplomatic strategy that focuses on building incentives for all the relevant players—

Afghan villagers and growing urban populations, Afghan troops, the Afghan Government, the Pakistani Government, the Afghan and possibly the Pakistani Taliban, India, China, Russia, Turkey, the EU, and others—to act in ways that will advance their own interests and our ultimate goals. That is a job for our diplomats more than for our military and our development experts. It may seem like an impossible job, but the sooner we embark on it, the better the chances that we can get it done.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Slaughter.

Ambassador Neumann.

STATEMENT OF HON. RONALD E. NEUMANN, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY, WASHINGTON, DC

Ambassador NEUMANN. Chairman Kerry and Senator Lugar, thank you very much for inviting me to appear here, about a month after my last trip to Afghanistan. I found that security has improved in some areas, but, as everyone is noting, heavy fighting is ahead of us.

It took a long time to get in place the military and civilian forces decided on in 2009, longer than many had hoped, although many of those hopes were not very realistic. I think that lag between decision and action is now distorting the discussion of where we are. I believe that the thing to watch is what happens next year. If United States forces can transfer some of the difficult areas to Afghans, and the Afghans can hold them, then transition will begin to have real credibility. If not, the strategy will lose all credibility. But, I believe these forthcoming operations are much more important than the speculative kind of conclusions that people are dashing to at the moment.

The killing of Osama bin Laden is significant, but the war is not over. We've all agreed on that, so I won't talk about that.

You asked, in your letter, how policy choices have affected the current dynamic. I would say that security is improving and politics are a mess. Afghanistan does suffer from a weak government with much corruption. These problems are large; they are not unique to the area. However, our actions have made many of these problems worse.

Strident public criticism was taken by many Afghans as evidence that the United States was turning against Karzai. Since, through ignorance, the United States has employed many corrupt warlords as contractors, this has created the suspicious question, "Why should I fire my crooks if you won't fire yours?"

Our goal of destroying al-Qaeda remains important, but it is not clear to Afghans what this means for our longer term policy toward Afghanistan. When I was there, I heard the same point from Karzai, from his most strident opponents, from Afghans who are not even in politics, saying, "What does the United States want? What does it intend?"

The result of this has both immediate and longer term consequences. For President Karzai, I believe that he has developed a strong suspicion that we are either against him or we will leave before Afghanistan has the strength to survive. And he has intensified his survival strategy, seeking to build a network of military and political supporters who will sustain him if we bail out. And, for survival, he will tolerate very poor performance.

Clearly, many of the problems of poor governance in Afghanistan are Afghan problems. However, I am emphasizing our own respon-

sibility because that is a piece of the issue which we can work on and fix. And I think we have not paid enough attention to it. For Afghans, generally, the confusion results in the pursuit of hedging strategies.

I might move on here, because you're going to tell me I'm out of time, and my timing device is not ticking.

Afghans generally are pursuing hedging strategies because of this confusion. Many fear the return of the Taliban, either because of our withdrawal or through a political deal. Some non-Pashtuns would fight rather than submit to such a return. Some are thinking about how to position themselves if the Taliban returns, and are even considering a civil war. I heard on my visit more talk about thinking about a civil war than I'd ever heard before. This hedging, as much as corruption, is getting in the way of resisting the insurgency.

You asked what we need to achieve. We need to clarify our long-term intentions. To prevent the return of terrorism, we need to build Afghan security forces capable of carrying on the level of fighting required as we pull out. The standard I am referring to is not impossible, but it does require dynamic leaders, as well as essential support capacities that are only now being developed, because we didn't choose to begin that until recently. This is a process of several years.

Difficult areas must be turned over to Afghan lead, and I think that process needs to start while United States forces are thinned out. The Afghans need to be given some opportunity to lead, even to fail, before we simply are out the door.

There is a big difference between some of us here today, obviously, although some of the difference between, for instance, me and my very respected colleague, Dr. Haass, is about the speed at which one tries to turn over. But, I think that question is an incredibly serious one.

I think that we are behind what many people hoped would be our time schedule, but that we are right on the cusp of beginning to turn over areas in the south within the next 6 to 12 months. If we cannot do that, then I think the strategy's a failure. But, rushing away just as we are getting to that point would also, I think, be a great mistake.

The Afghan central government must control its more rapacious local leaders; we all agree on that. This is easy to say, very difficult to do, after 30 years of divisive warfare. I think we are spending too much in some of our economic programs, fueling a culture of dependency and corruption that does them no good, since we cannot sustain it. Yet, having said that, I understand that Afghans, not we, have to work out acceptable political institutions.

You asked about broader policy considerations. Two that I support are regional solution and negotiation, but on the understanding that neither provides a fast way out. There exists a long instructive history of negotiation to end such conflicts, and every one of them took years while fighting continued. To expect less in Afghanistan is unrealistic. Nor is it clear the Taliban leadership seeks compromise.

I believe that President Karzai needs to know that he has solid U.S. backing to achieve a good agreement, not a fast one. I do not

believe that separate parallel U.S. negotiations will do more than create confusion and counterbidding between different parties. I believe our role in negotiations can reassure other Afghans that their essential freedoms will be protected, something that is very destabilizing now.

Afghanistan had a long period of peace when its neighbors essentially left it alone. We need to focus on recreating this, understanding that such a situation requires that the neighbors realize that they cannot achieve their maximum desires. It is not clear to me that Pakistan recognizes that.

Additionally, a regional solution that many speak about a sort of neutrality requires an Afghan Government capable of preserving internal order. If many Afghan parties contend for power, they will draw in foreign support, leading to the rapid destruction of any neutrality agreement.

Let me just very briefly, as I close, note three points that I've expanded on in my written testimony.

I think that the effort in Afghanistan is essential to our goals in Pakistan. I do not think they can be treated as alternatives, because of the way Pakistan looks upon Afghanistan. If we are leaving, Pakistan's security issues, its strategic analysis of Afghanistan is extraordinarily different from whether we have commitment to stay, so that I think it is incredibly important to approach Pakistan with the linkage in mind.

I think there is a grave danger of excessive dependence on local security forces. I have lived with a number of those situations. There are some things that can work; most of them are abysmal failures.

I do not think counterterrorism is an alternative to a broader strategy, although it is certainly a part of one. It depends on on-the-ground intelligence and resources. If our primary approach to Afghanistan is counterterrorism, then what we say to the Afghans is, "All we bring you is endless years of slaughter." There is nothing in that approach which will produce Afghan support for us in that policy. If we are not there, at least in part, to help build a country, there is nothing in that policy that attracts Afghans.

I understand the gravity of our deficit. However, I understand also, as I believe you do, that the United States does not have the luxury of pursuing only one interest at a time. I believe that, in the effort to turn over to Afghan forces, we can bring down our financial burden to an acceptable level. I also believe that the alternative is to grab at some patchwork strategy that will cost us far more in the long run.

And I am pleased to answer your questions. Thank you very much for including me.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Neumann follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RONALD E. NEUMANN

Chairman Kerry, Senator Lugar, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. As you know I was U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007. Additionally, I returned last year and again in March of this year for 2 weeks. I had the opportunity to visit many parts of the country and to talk to Afghan friends and foreign diplomats as well as the extensive briefings provided by ISAF and our Embassy. I am speaking only for myself, not for the American Academy of Diplomacy, the organization of which I am now President.

I would like to make a few, short comments on the current status and then turn to your questions. Much of the current debate turns on analysis of what the strategy has accomplished. That desire for instant scoring is very American, the American people and the Congress have a right to accountability but at the same time the demand for a bottom line can also be problematic because it sometimes invites very premature judgments. Getting the balance right is important.

Take security, for example. Judging not only from the views of my military colleagues but from what I heard from Afghan friends on the ground during my visit, there is definitely more security in parts of Helmand, Kandahar, and even in the north. But what does that mean for final analysis? Very little. The areas secured need to be turned over to Afghan forces and they, in turn, need to hold it with only a very light U.S. backing. That has not yet been tried so therefore much so-called analysis is speculation with inadequate evidence.

What can we judge? The current strategy is working slower than many hoped but not slower than is logical. Washington focuses on policy and tends to discount the time lags from decision to execution. We thus leap to conclusions of failure about the time one could begin a serious analysis. The decision to enlarge forces and money, something I would have dearly loved in my time, is about 2 years old. Yet the actual troops only completed their arrival 8 months ago and became effectively employed less than that. Ditto for civilian programs where people have to arrive, learn jobs, develop contacts with locals, etc. Simply put, we have had a potentially effective strategy for a rather short time. It is certainly too early to claim success yet one can say that the trajectory of the policy is working, if not its desired pace.

Because of the time lag between decision and action we are now in a somewhat artificial and highly polarized debate about the numbers to be withdrawn. If significant numbers of troops are not withdrawn many will call the strategy a failure and if they are withdrawn too quickly we may guarantee failure.

The thing to watch is the next year. If U.S. forces can transfer some of the difficult areas such as Helmand to the Afghans, and the Afghans can hold them, then transition will begin to have credibility. If nothing important or difficult has been transferred a year from now the strategy will have to be questioned; perhaps to the point of giving up. These forthcoming operations should have much more focus than the debate over immediate withdrawal numbers.

The killing of Osama bin Laden is a significant victory for the United States but it is not the end of the war. Mistaking its significance could be costly. Insurgent-secured territory in in Afghanistan could easily become a new sanctuary area for terrorist operations directed against the United States. Al-Qaeda as an organization continues to exist and will be under pressure to show its strength through action in Afghanistan and against the United States. The Arab, Chechen, and Punjabi fighters we see emerging on Afghan battlefields will not disappear. The linkages between the Haqqani movement and al-Qaeda have apparently become tighter in recent years and a more central part of the insurgency. That will not change. We turned our back on al-Qaeda before. First, we did little to take it seriously after the bombing of our Embassies. The second time, by assuming we needed to put little effort into Afghanistan in the period 2002–04, we let al-Qaeda regrow exactly when they were weak and Afghanistan was more secure than it is now. To make the same mistake a third time, to count victory before it is in hand, would be exceptionally costly.

Turning directly to your questions, your letter of invitation first asked how recent policy choices have affected the current dynamic and potential for progress. Honestly, the answer points in two ways. On security, on building Afghan army forces, I think the results are positive. Politically, however, we have and continue to cause confusion. The poor relations with President Karzai have grown over several years because of problems on both sides.

Afghanistan does suffer from a weak government with a high degree of corruption. President Karzai is poorly positioned to control these problems. He controls very little money since virtually the entirety of Afghanistan's development comes from foreign donors and many projects are executed without coordination with or consent by the Afghan Government. Nor does President Karzai control force since military operations are directed by NATO/ISAF. Years of warfare have left few Afghans with any confidence that they can rely on pensions or continuing employment so there is a strong social pressure to grab what one can to protect oneself. These problems are large but not unique to Afghanistan.

However, the way we have gone about addressing them with President Karzai has made many problems worse rather than better. Two years of strident public criticism by U.S. officials were taken by many Afghans as evidence that the United States was against Karzai, perhaps even intending to overthrow him. This is because in Afghan culture one would never criticize a friend in public in this manner

unless the friendship was over and the criticism was an excuse for moving against him. The idea that the criticism could actually be about what is stated is not credible to Afghans. When we continued this behavior it set off a search for the "real" reasons and inspired many wild conspiracy theories.

Additionally, the United States also has employed equally corrupt warlords as contractors. This was done through ignorance, pressure for speed, and lack of knowledge of power and patronage networks in Afghanistan. Yet the result is to create further questions along the line of "why should I fire my crooks if you won't fire yours?" NATO and USAID are now seeking to clean up their own contracting problems but are finding this hard and slow.

The decision to begin withdrawal of troops in July 2011 caused considerable additional confusion. While the decision had various caveats about conditions on the ground it was the date that was emphasized in President Obama's statements. This convinced many—not just Afghans but Pakistanis and even the Taliban—that America was on the way out of Afghanistan. Since virtually no one believed that the Afghan Army would be ready to take over so quickly, this perception created a scramble for survival. The NATO decision to move the transition date to 2014 has helped the immediate problem but has not responded to the larger need for strategic clarity.

Currently, there is considerable confusion among Afghans about longer term U.S. intentions. When I was in Afghanistan in March I heard essentially the same point from President Karzai, opponents like Dr. Abdullah, ex-ministers who oppose Karzai and even Afghans who are not in politics at all; each asking what our intentions are. This may be unfair but the fact is that they do not understand our long-term strategic intent.

The result of all this is that President Karzai has developed strong suspicions that we are either against him or will leave before a state and army strong enough to survive have been built. Accordingly, he has intensified a survival strategy, that is, he is seeking to build a network of supporters who will sustain him politically and militarily if America bails out or moves against him. For survival he will tolerate poor performance in these supporters. From his point of view he has little choice if the United States is about to pull the plug; and we have not told him otherwise. This may also account for some of his efforts to strengthen ties with other regional powers.

He also is seeking to define himself as something other than an American puppet (Afghan history shows that those marked as foreign puppets generally came to a bad end when their foreign patron departed). This produces public criticism. Sometimes it is excessive and unfair to us. Yet we seem not to pay attention to anything less than a scream. For example, the issue of control of the private security companies began in 2006 but we offered no plans or alternatives until the issue became a crisis in 2010. Clearly, many of the problems of poor governance are Afghan problems, some resulting from years of war and others from the character of individuals. However, I emphasize our own responsibility for the worsening of the issue because it is a part of the problem that is too little understood.

The result is a messy lack of trust and mutual bad feeling. The United States is by far the bigger and stronger player. Hence, if the situation is to be improved it needs to start with greater strategic clarity from our side. Even if that is possible, patience and time will be needed. We have a home to which to return. If things end badly that will not be the case for Afghans like President Karzai. That imbalance is bound to make him cautious.

For Afghans more generally, the confusion results in the pursuit of hedging strategies. For example, everyone I talked to expects a major insurgent push this summer to regain the initiative. If we start pulling troops out there is the fear of Taliban victories in parts of the country. Many non-Pushtun groups fear this could lead the present Afghan Government to make a political deal with the Taliban, bringing them back to some measure of power in return for survival of the government.

This may not happen but such an outcome is greatly feared by many, particularly the non-Pushtuns. These minorities, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and others, were massacred and abused by the Taliban. They would fight rather than submit to a return of the Taliban that could threaten them. This could be the cause of a civil war. They might not wait to see if all their fears are realized. I do not think such a civil war is imminent but it is being talked of more than I have ever heard before. Groups and individuals are thinking about how to position themselves should it occur. This produces the "hedging" that, as much as corruption, gets in the way of unity in resisting the insurgency.

You asked what we need to achieve. Clearly we need to answer this question because it is the very lack of definition that is causing so much Afghan confusion and

the hedging strategies I mentioned. Within Afghanistan we want to prevent the return of externally directed terrorism, to keep out the possibility of terrorism from Afghanistan. There is a confusing discussion about whether al-Qaeda post-Osama bin Laden remains a threat in Afghanistan or whether this is essentially a Pakistani issue. Here I wish only to note my belief that if a movement that continues to consider itself at war with us is able to claim "defeat" of a superpower its potential for increasing recruits, funding and danger is enhanced. Although quantification is not possible, my judgment is that, such an al-Qaeda victory would significantly increase the potential for attacks on Americans in the world and in the United States.

We recognize that AQ is a movement that regenerates itself. Therefore since a single moment of victory is unlikely the first thing we need to achieve after clarity of purpose are Afghan security forces, essentially the army, capable of carrying on the level of fighting that is likely to remain after our departure. The Taliban are not "ten feet tall" so the standard I am referring to is not impossible but it does require dynamic leaders willing to fight for their country as well as their having essential support and logistics capabilities that are only now being developed. That said, this is a process, not a single moment in time. Certain areas, difficult ones, must be turned over to an Afghan lead while U.S. forces are thinned out but remain available in extremis. Whether this is possible should become clearer over the next year. The Afghan Army must be given some opportunity to learn, even to fail, before suddenly being left on its own.

Additionally, the Afghan central government must control the more rapacious local leaders and institute a modicum of fair government so that there is a reason for Afghans to support the government. This is easy to say and incredibly difficult to do. Afghans must overcome 30 years of divisive politics. We are spending a great deal on development and governance; quite possibly too much in terms of what Afghanistan can actually absorb. We may well be fueling a culture of dependency and corruption that does them no good since we cannot sustain the cost.

Yet, having said this I would be very hesitant to suggest that we can have fully shaped policy answers. Afghans, not we, have to work out acceptable political institutions. That took us years after the Articles of Confederation, a secret convention, a grueling ratification campaign and an eventual civil war. I doubt a foreign design would have made our process easier.

In the near term we must recognize, as we are beginning to do that we do bear some responsibility as well for the corruption. We have strengthened warlords, paid little attention to who got contracts and what we paid, and then blamed all the problems on the Afghans while demanding a change to "good government" that was far more complete, and therefore unrealistic, than the situation in any of the surrounding countries. More recently, we are starting to focus more narrowly on behavior that really hurts the war effort and on key institutions like the army. I endorse this fine tuning of the anticorruption policy.

What we can do is to add greatly to the growth of modern, educated Afghans capable of adjusting their country to something other than a culture of feuding "commanders" and short-term political bargains. Funding educational exchanges in the long run is worth more than cash for work or seed programs not tied to markets, although both have their place.

We can work hard to maintain political space so that new ideas, a free media, and different political ideas can put down roots. We must do our best to ensure that the Afghan Army remains multiethnic, professional, and nonpolitical. We need to come to decisions about how we will approach the Afghan elections of 2014. That decision should follow from our decisions on forces and money—the tools of influence—and take into account what is realistically achievable.

These are all long-term visions and none of them will be possible without expanded security. Hence I return to the absolute need to get the transfer to Afghan lead right; fast enough to inspire confidence and not so wedded to a timetable as to rush to failure.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, you asked further what broader policy considerations should be part of the dialogue. Two that are frequently discussed are a regional solution and negotiation. I support working on both while realizing that neither is quick or an alternative to fighting. In fact, seen as a quick alternative to war, each would become a serious mistake.

There exists a long history of negotiation to end such conflicts and it is instructive. Choose your model; Cambodia, Namibia, El Salvador, Algeria with the French, or our own experience in negotiating the end to the American Revolution. Each took years of talking. Most took some years of talking about talking before serious discussion began. To expect less in Afghanistan is absurd, particularly since it is not clear whether or not the Taliban leadership is interested.

Because negotiating any peace that meets our strategic needs is a long process it makes sense to begin as soon as possible—but not to be in an excessive haste to conclude. We should negotiate in support of President Karzai. He is the leader of a sovereign state that must live with the result. He needs to know that he has solid U.S. backing to achieve a good agreement. And by our presence in the negotiations we can, if we choose, also act to reassure other elements in Afghanistan that their most essential freedoms will not be sacrificed.

It is often remarked that Afghanistan had a long period of peace when its neighbors left it alone. We do need to focus on recreating a regional basis for peace. We need also to understand what that means. A regional solution requires that the neighbors realize they cannot achieve their maximum desires. It is not clear to me if Pakistan realizes that. Perhaps they will not until an Afghan Army is competent enough not to lose. Recognizing limits to ambition may require the United States to renounce permanent bases and influence projection that potentially threatens Iran and Russia. India also needs to be willing to observe limits in its own influence with Afghan parties since the struggle for influence between India and Pakistan is another source of tension.

Additionally, a regional solution still requires the existence of an Afghan Government capable of preserving internal order. If many Afghan parties contend for power then they will draw in foreign support. Support of one power will draw in another to protect its interests. The result would be the rapid destruction of an agreement on neutrality. Hence, with regard to a regional peace I believe that we should start discussing the idea now because it is necessary but we should avoid any idea that this approach can be a short cut to the exit.

Some comments on strategies offered by others:

Pakistan vs. Afghanistan: Some commentators have noted that Pakistan is the bigger issue and therefore suggested a shifting of U.S. efforts toward Pakistan. I agree on the importance of Pakistan but one must be careful to see what is at issue and, therefore, the necessary response. Pakistan's policy over three decades has been driven by three factors, although their relative weight has shifted in senior Pakistani thinking. One is fear of India, including the ability of India to threaten it from Afghanistan. The second is a desire to either control or exercise preeminent power over the Government in Afghanistan, both for Pakistan's own interests and to preempt new Pushtun threats to Pakistan's unity. Third, and more recently, Pakistan has had to contend with threats from radical Islam within Pakistan.

It is entirely possible that the first two themes remain dominant in Pakistani strategic calculations. In oversimplified terms this means that if the United States appears likely to leave Afghanistan then Pakistan will make a bid for dominance. Its tools will be Taliban insurgents with which it has maintained ties.

I am of the opinion that Pakistan's strategy would fail; that they would trigger a civil war in Afghanistan, that their clients would not be able to control the whole country. However, while they were engaged in an effort to control Afghanistan in alliance with radical Islamic elements I think it likely that Pakistan would not do a good job of confronting its own radicals.

This is a complicated subject that merits expanded discussion at another time. Now I only want to draw out two policy points. First, Pakistani thinking about its strategy will be much more heavily influenced by whether it believes the United States will persevere in Afghanistan—something it does not now believe--than by continuing our decade's failure to convince Pakistan to alter its basic strategic calculus about its interests in Afghanistan and see things our way.

Second, if Pakistan proceeds as outlined above and does not deal strongly with its own radicals, the influence of the latter is likely to expand and with it their threat to the Pakistani state. We should be alert to this very dangerous threat. We should respond to it better than we have in terms of our Pakistani and regional policy. Yet in doing so we should understand that our action or inaction in Afghanistan will be a large, perhaps the largest element in Pakistan's understanding of where its interests lie.

Decentralization: Two arguments are particularly frequent on the subject of decentralization. One is that we need to return to traditional Afghan structures. The other is that by building up local forces we can sidestep the messy process of reinforcing a central government. Both arguments have some merit but both are massively overstated and misunderstand much about current Afghanistan.

The old structure might better be characterized as parallel government (a term I owe to anthropologist Dr. Thomas Barfield who is much more of an authority on this subject than am I) in which the state was responsible for a limited range of functions while others belonged to tribes and communities. Recreating this structure runs into all sorts of problems. The old state had little to no responsibility for development. This is clearly no longer acceptable to Afghans. Yet communities and tribes

have no resources for development. At the same time, the tribal leaders were considerably stronger than is now the case. Years of warfare and the growth of militia leaders have weakened tribal authority as have the insurgent's systematic assassination of tribal leaders. Some form of more decentralized government may well be necessary in Afghanistan. However, it will have to be a new evolution created by Afghans, not an effort by superficially informed foreigners to recreate a partially mythical past.

Local forces may well be an important component of Afghan defense. However, to rely on them as a game changer is a mistake. The record of such forces in Afghanistan is one of creating militias responsive to commanders who feud with one another, terrorize their neighbors, and are incapable of unity against the Taliban. It is exactly the rapacious behavior of such local forces that created the conditions that led many Afghans to welcome the Taliban in the 1990s. The same overbearing behavior and settling of old scores is held by many observers to be a primary cause of the resurgent insurgency in Kandahar and Helmand.

We have a long record of the failures of such forces, including the effort to build the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) during my time. The new effort at constructing units called Afghan Local Police (ALP) is somewhat more promising but only because it is being managed very carefully to avoid the problems of the past. That very care keeps it slow. It is not a program that can be expanded quickly without leading to failure. Nor does the ALP program have the potential to be more than a useful adjunct to regular security forces. Having talked extensively with the people who are running the program it is clear that ALP units will be attacked this year. Their survival under serious attack will depend on back up from ISAF and Afghan forces. This is a mix of forces that may work but it illustrates why reliance on such local forces must be limited at best. Additionally, there are a variety of so called "village security forces" that are far more problematic in their composition and leadership. Many of these should be disbanded or, at least, not supported by us since they lack appropriate oversight and may alienate more people than they secure.

Counterterrorism will be a component of any military campaign. However, it is sometimes spoken of as a policy alternative in terms of keeping just enough force to strike terrorists and get out of nation-building. I will not try to summarize a complicated discussion but I want to make one policy point that seems frequently overlooked and would probably doom too great a reliance on counter terrorism—it offers nothing to Afghans except endless killing. Just striking enemies may appear to meet U.S. policy goals on terrorism but this is illusionary. Effective strikes must depend on intelligence gathered on the ground. If all we have to offer Afghans is a permanent condition of the brutality of the last three decades then many will prefer the Taliban, will prefer anything to the continuation of such a strategy. They will ask us to leave or push us out. And without assets on the ground we will not have the intelligence to carry out counterterrorist strikes successfully. Thus the policy would fail.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, thank you again for inviting me to testify. I believe deeply that failure in Afghanistan will lead to years of dangerous instability in Central and South Asia and increased threats to the United States. A bloody, long lasting civil war in Afghanistan that draws in Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and possibly the United States would further poison relations across the region with dangerous and unpredictable consequences for our own interests.

Even the modest success I have described is not assured. Yet we have a much better chance of succeeding than we had 2 years ago. We have no shortcuts that hold any promise of working. Poised between what I see as the realistic alternatives we need to clarify our modest long-term purpose in Afghanistan, make clear that our goals do not threaten Afghanistan's neighbors, get on with building the Afghan security forces and continue to strengthen better governance at a realistic, long-term pace. Over the next few years such an approach can lower our financial burden to a sustainable level.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, I understand the gravity of our deficit. However, I understand also, as I believe you do, that the United States does not have the luxury of pursuing only one interest at a time. The choice is to persevere responsibly or to run quickly to some patchwork strategy that will cost us much more in the long run.

I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much, all of you. You've really helped to frame this debate appropriately. And it's an impor-

tant one. And there are just a huge number of questions that leap out of this.

As I listen to you, each of you make assertions that, on their face, sound reasonable. You know, "They need to work out this relationship," or, "They need to have stability or prosperity," or, "They need to be able to do this or that." But, in the end, the process for getting to almost any one of those goals, is convoluted, expensive, and needs to be measured against the overall mission here. So, let me try to bear down a little bit. And I know my colleagues will also try to do this as we try to figure it out.

Ambassador Neumann, you just said "counterterrorism is not an alternative to a broader strategy." And you say we can afford to do this mission over a long period of time. Let me try to measure that against Dr. Haass's proposal here, and see if I can get the two of you more engaged in this.

What is our basic goal? What's the strategic interest to the United States? What are we trying to protect, here? What is in our national security interest, with respect to Afghanistan, per se?

Ambassador Neumann.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Thank you, sir.

I have very modest goals, myself, having struggled with this problem. I think we need an Afghan Army that can carry on the level of fighting that is likely to go on for a long time in Afghanistan, something we all agree we're not going to get peace quickly. I believe we need a government that has a modest amount of support so that it can hold this together.

The CHAIRMAN. How much American support do you envision having to be there to sustain that Afghan Army?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I see us with a declining slope. I don't want to put myself in the shoes of General Petraeus or our military commander; I think that would be excessive. But, I think, over the next year, what one should hope to see in the south would be the transfer out—whether to other places or out of Afghanistan; it's the President's decision—of most of the combat brigades in the south and southwest, while those which are partnered with the Afghan Army probably have to stay. That's basically the model we had in Iraq——

The CHAIRMAN. Can you give me a ballpark figure? I'm not asking you to be General Petraeus—who won't be General Petraeus, himself, in a little while——

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Over at CIA, but give me a sense of the numbers you recommend? What are we talking about? We're at 150-or-so-thousand troops now.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I would hate to put figures on it, because I don't really think that I know enough. But, I would say, over a 3-year slope, that that number probably should come down by more than half, perhaps considerably more than half. I do not know how many additional training forces one is going to have to retain, because, to sustain itself in the field, the Afghan Army's also going to need medical support and the package——

The CHAIRMAN. Don't you have to have an ability to measure what the Taliban are capable of and what the Taliban intentions will be over that period of time?

And is there any way to measure that?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I don't know if there's a good way to measure that, because I've not——

The CHAIRMAN. Does that matter to us? If the Taliban are not harboring al-Qaeda, if al-Qaeda doesn't exist, if we have an ability to attack al-Qaeda from a sufficient platform that exists in the region, why is it of critical interest to the United States? I'm being devil's advocate, here, a little bit. But, why is it of critical interest to us what happens between the Afghans? Haven't they always sought accommodation? And won't they seek it anyway?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I think my answer begins by disputing the premises on which you began the question, sir. I think what one sees is a considerable linkage, still, of al-Qaeda. You are seeing more foreign fighters, for instance, in the east. The linkages with Saraj Haqqani are much more of fundamentalist Chechens, Uzbeks, others coming into the battlefield. If——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me stop you there so I can get a response from the others, because I want to get them in on this.

Ambassador NEUMANN. OK. Basically, all I'm saying to you is, I think, first of all, that separation is not correct; second, that if you have a civil war going on in Afghanistan, you will see the linkage intensify, because the Taliban will need the reinforcement of al-Qaeda.

The CHAIRMAN. So, you think the United States needs to actually be there to prevent civil war.

Let me ask Dr. Haass. Do you want to respond? Is that where that takes us?

Ambassador HAASS. I just disagree profoundly with what I just heard. So, let me just make clear what I believe our U.S. policy needs to be, and why.

The goal should be to make sure that Afghanistan is not a major platform of terrorist attacks against the United States or the world. That is our goal. Our goal is not to build up the Afghan Government or have a certain level of U.S. troops. That's a potential means of realizing that goal. I do not think we should do it with what I would call counterterrorism only, but I do think that should be a more central part of our policy. There should be a degree of local capacity-building. There should be a degree of local diplomacy.

The CHAIRMAN. How is that distinguished from the idea of building police, and building armies——

Ambassador HAASS. Oh, because the question is one——

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Sustainability?

Ambassador HAASS [continuing]. The question is one of balance, and the question is one of scale and emphasis. I think that we should have a CT—a counterterrorism policy; that's the dominant part. We should try to build up some local capacities, but we should be realistic about what it is we're trying to build up. We're never going to, I believe, accomplish some of the goals I've heard here. And we should save money.

If we can save $75 billion a year, which I believe is the scale of savings we would get from the kind of policy I'm talking about, that is one-fourth—one-fourth of the fiscal savings everybody suggests we need on a slope of $300 billion a year. We would get 25 percent of what we need through this policy, alone. And that is an

extraordinary bit of progress that we could get. And I believe we could get it without materially affecting the prospects for what our goal is in Afghanistan, which is to make sure it is not a major platform of terrorist attacks against the United States.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Let me stop you there for a minute. I want to get Dr. Slaughter in on that, too.

There's a clear difference here, and we need to explore it very carefully. Dr. Haass suggests that the goal is a limited one of preventing—say that again—of preventing——

Ambassador HAASS Afghanistan from being a platform——

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Afghanistan from being a platform for terrorism.

Dr. Slaughter, you have said that our goal is a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Now, a stable and prosperous Afghanistan is, first of all, somewhat nebulous. But, does it really take that to protect the interests of the United States?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. So, I actually agree with Richard that our ultimate goal, the reason we're there, is absolutely to prevent Afghanistan from being a platform for terrorists who can attack the United States. Our difference is how you can accomplish that goal. I don't think you can accomplish that goal without a political settlement that, longer term, produces a measure of security, a measure of stability, and a measure of self-reliance.

The problem with the strategy that Richard's articulated is, that is the strategy we tried. We did that. For 3 to 4 years after we invaded Afghanistan, we pursued a narrow counterterrorism strategy. And the result was, the Taliban came surging back. We did not want to be in Afghanistan, fighting the kind of counterinsurgency strategy we are now, but we perceived there was—that that strategy had failed.

The issue now is precisely how we can prevent the Taliban from taking over in such a way that the—we're not going to be able to negotiate with the Taliban and have them not fight al-Qaeda, unless we have a political settlement.

The CHAIRMAN. We need to dig into this a lot more. I'm confident we will with my colleagues.

My time is expired on this round. So, Senator Lugar. And we'll see where we wind up.

The committee will be in recess until we can restore order.

[Recess taken to remove protestors.]

The CHAIRMAN. Folks, you know, this committee has a good tradition of really exploring these issues in a very open and thorough and unbiased way. And I respect, and I think everybody knows this, everybody's right to their point of view and to make that known. And you can choose your forum. But, it would really be helpful to us if we could ask people to respect this process and to allow these proceedings to continue without manifestation, interruption, demonstration, or otherwise. I think every member, and I think people trying to explore these issues, would really respect and appreciate that.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Dr. Haass, I'd like to follow through on Chairman Kerry's questions. If I remember correctly, you recommended that U.S. troop presence gradually diminish to about 10- to 25,000

personnel in 12 to 18 months. And you've indicated that this group would support antiterrorism activities in Afghanistan. My understanding of our operations currently is that they are very comprehensive. And while Afghanistan is not a huge country, it is a large one. Where would we place the 10- or 25,000? Or how would you conceive their operations, day by day?

Ambassador HAASS. I'd say three things. One is, what I would do a lot less of, just to be clear, is combat operations against the Taliban.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Yes, I agree.

Ambassador HAASS. I would dramatically reduce and phase out that dimension.

Second, in terms of the counterterrorism mission, that seems to me a tactical decision, quite honestly, Senator. You'd probably want to have some sort of a pool of forces. And then, obviously, you'd want to have it distributed wherever you thought you were most likely to face—where the intelligence suggested you were going to meet terrorists, which, again, are quite few in number.

The training mission, again, is a question of where it could be logistically best carried out, with Afghans either at bases or in the field. Some of the best training, as you know, doesn't take place on bases, but takes place actually outside, in the field. So, that to me is—quite honestly, those are ultimately implementation decisions.

I think the big question is one of division of labor; again, phasing out combat operations and limiting us to training. By the way, not just national forces; I would also believe the United States should do training of selected local forces. We shouldn't put all our eggs in, if you will, in Kabul, Iran, police and army.

Senator LUGAR. Therefore, it's conceivable that, if we had people who were skilled in antiterrorism on the ground, we would be able to—hopefully, with good intelligence—ferret out those who might be contemplating another attack upon us.

Now, second, as an auxiliary to this counterterror role, it would be helpful, obviously, if the government and the military of Afghanistan were fairly stable. It sounds as though what you describe is a far smaller military footprint. This would then be a limited training situation, at that point, of a few people, rather than a comprehensive program providing for the training of up to 400,000 people, which is often mentioned presently. And when that larger program is mentioned, in our questions to witnesses, there rarely is mention of who pays for all of this and for how many years. Those who conceive such a program lasting indefinitely in the future must contemplate huge budgetary commitments on the part of the United States given that it appears unlikely the Afghan Government will be able to generate the income to pay for such a program in the foreseeable future.

But, let me shift to the Taliban. If, in fact, the Taliban continue to be around, and, as Dr. Slaughter has said, in a 3- or 4-year period of time they came back and they were a problem, this is certainly unsatisfying to us, who would like to see people thriving in a democratic society. But, at the same time, the history of the country has been one of many challenges and tribal fissures that has not been very peaceful and democratic.

Isn't it conceivable that the Taliban are always going to be around? If this is indeed the case and if our strategy is based upon eradicating the country of the Taliban, then that strategy really is farfetched. Now, if not the Taliban, it appears some other group could increase its appeal on the basis of promises to provide more stability than is currently being offered by the government. Furthermore, in the absence of a central government that even can get out and provide solutions to problems taking place throughout the country, isn't it likely that there's to be a great deal of local government in Afghanistan for a long time?

So, one of the interesting things about your strategy is that while you assume we are going to have to endure a very unsatisfying governmental situation, we at least have boots on the ground to ferret out potential terrorists who might attack us or others in the world as a rationale for being there at all. Absent that, it is not clear altogether why we are in Afghanistan. In other words, we're not in all of the other countries that have terrorists—al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, all the rest. Somehow or other, they're getting a free pass. We're busy in Afghanistan, expending a huge portion of our total defense budget.

So initially, Dr. Haass and Dr. Slaughter, your ideas are appealing, and I want to explore them to make sure my understanding of this is correct, because it's clearly running counter to where we've been heading. It is sort of clear in the budget debate that we're having presently as well. And even in your strategy of 12 to 18 months getting there, this is still going to be an expensive process. It would require moving personnel or getting some other organization going.

I would just add, finally, that our confidence in President Karzai ebbs and flows, but, unless we're really prepared to present an alternative, he will be the President of the country and corruption will remain apparent. How, indeed, we hope to eradicate all of that is hardly clear at all. All that said, I think we really need to sharpen our objectives. This is not an exercise in cynicism, it's an exercise in the realities of Afghanistan and the history of the place and what is possible, in terms of our own security.

Now—and what do you say to all of that, Dr. Slaughter?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Thank you, Senator Lugar. [Laughter.]

So, I would say the first thing is that Richard and I, and, I think, maybe Ambassador Neumann—at least Richard and I agree that fighting the Taliban is not why we are there. The reason we are there is exactly to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States. The only question is, What's a successful means to that end? When we tried the counterterrorism strategy, we couldn't get the intelligence that we needed to be able to actively, effectively attack al-Qaeda. We got a——

Senator LUGAR. And why is that——

Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. We got Osama bin Laden because we got intelligence. We couldn't get the intelligence, because the Taliban were terrifying villagers, they're still terrifying villagers so that, as I said, they have no incentive to give us that kind of intelligence. So, we moved from the kind of strategy that Richard advocates to a full counterinsurgency strategy, where we said, "We'll get that intelligence by clearing, holding, and building, and getting the

confidence of those villagers." I do not think that can work over the long term.

So, the difference is, I'm advocating a political settlement that actually gets enough stability—this is not going to be some rosy vision of Afghanistan—but enough stability so that, in fact, Afghan forces have an incentive to fight the Taliban themselves. And we have—and this is critical—the ability to stay in the country and get the intelligence we need. So, it is a strategy of how you remain in the country sufficient to get the intelligence you need to do what we both agree, which is, long term, to ensure that al-Qaeda cannot come back and use Afghanistan as a platform.

Senator LUGAR. Well, in terms of intelligence collection, there's no particular evidence that the intelligence that got us to Osama bin Laden has any relationship to the Taliban's continued activity in Afghanistan.

Now, without getting into intelligence methods—my point is, if you have some people on the ground, maybe we already knew that there was an encampment of al-Qaeda there that was about to attack us. But, most people writing about that period of time indicate that we were not particularly vigilant and were not really on that track. Books written about the subject indicate that many of the administration still believed Iraq was a problem and we could hardly spend any time at all thinking about Afghanistan at the time.

I suppose my hope is that, if we're talking about any troops being there, they be of a limited number while retaining the capacity to inform the relevant authorities of the existence of an al-Qaeda encampment or other assets the organization may have in the country. And in response, maybe we do something about that camp, that threat, as opposed to acting in every village in Afghanistan.

Ambassador HAASS. Can I just—I was involved in the policy, as you know, after 9/11. And where I believe the United States could have done more then was to have done a bit more training, and so forth.

Again, I am not sitting here advocating a counterterrorism-only strategy. There is a place for a limited degree of training. But, there is a fundamental difference, if we expect to build up an Afghanistan—be it through training efforts, aid efforts, diplomatic efforts—that's going to be sufficiently robust, that is going to be a major partner. It's not going to happen. And in all intellectual honesty, sir, I think we have to assume, if we adopt something like I am suggesting.

But, even if we don't, I believe we're going to face a future in Afghanistan where the conservative Pashtuns in the south and east are going to dominate. And, whether you technically call them "Taliban" or "conservative Pashtuns," that's what it's going to be like. And, to me, the challenge for American foreign policy is not to prevent that from happening. That is impossible to prevent, I would suggest, given the nature of Afghanistan. We ought to try to break the historic link between the Taliban and groups like al-Qaeda. And I believe that that is a link that can be broken. Indeed, there's enough statements on the record from people in the Taliban suggesting that one should not equate the two. Our own

military leadership has made such comments. And that's the reason I favor having diplomacy.

I do not think our long-term goal here, as much as perhaps we would like it, would be to create this sort of "attractive" Afghanistan, by all sorts of human rights and economics and other measures that we would like to see. I simply think that is beyond our capacity. And what we have to do is accept the fact that there's going to be conservative Pashtun, or call it Taliban, inroads in parts of the country, and preventing that cannot be the basis of American foreign policy in that country. Even modest goals in Afghanistan are ambitious. But, ambitious goals in Afghanistan, I would think, are simply out of the question.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. But, that's a strawman. No one is arguing for some kind of perfect Afghanistan that respects human rights. I think we're actually saying the same thing. You said "diplomacy for a political settlement that would, indeed, negotiate with the Taliban to peel them away from al-Qaeda, to create a government that could actually govern with the Taliban, with others, with Pashtuns, with Tajiks, in Afghanistan in such a way that we could decrease our footprint, but still stay, at least to the extent we need to, to protect our interests."

Ambassador NEUMANN. Could I join, as well? [Laughter.]

I just want to note two things.

First, Dr. Haass's notion, which, as always, he expresses brilliantly, is attractive. But, there are elements of a mirage here. The notion of going down, in 18 months, to the levels of forces he recommends; it's taken us the better part of 2 years to get in place the adequacy of trainers that we have now. This notion that you can pivot on a dime, with our large forces, is not true. Second, the numbers grossly underplay any kind of serious advisory effort. So, this is a recipe for failure. You build Afghan forces, you throw them out, after 2 months training, without advisors, without backup, as green troops, and watch them fall apart; and then you say, "See, I told you the problem—the policy was a failure." This makes no sense to me.

There is a relationship between negotiations and fighting. If the image we convey with the Afghans is that we're about to bail out, the army's going to fall apart because we're not backing it, the advisors are too few, there's not a lot of incentive for anybody on the other side to negotiate seriously. So, there's a difference between saying you will accept a Pashtun role——

The CHAIRMAN. Do you mind if I just interrupt here——

Ambassador NEUMANN [continuing]. By the Taliban——

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. And add a question?

What is the incentive for them to negotiate now? Are they negotiating now?

Ambassador NEUMANN. No.

The CHAIRMAN. And is there any indication they're about to negotiate?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I would have to say, at the top leadership level, I'm skeptical. I mean, you've heard that from all of us. But, if part of what we're saying is, "You want negotiations," then to say also that you will essentially move quickly away from the military, I think pulls against the notion that you can have a suc-

cessful negotiation. I'm dubious you can have it. But, if that is part of your policy, then recognize—as former Israeli Prime Minister Rabin said, that they had to fight as though there were no negotiations, and negotiate as though there were no fighting. If you lose that, I think you lose the ability to negotiate.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I need recognize Senator Casey.

But, I'd just put on the table the question we haven't gotten to yet, and there's a lot more to explore here and sort of focus in on the mission. But, what if you had a sufficient force there, in terms of counterterrorism, that made it clear they would not allow the Taliban to take over the country? Now, if that is a stated capacity, with much less involvement, there's an incentive to negotiate and you haven't pulled the rug out from anybody. So, I think we need to come back and think about how other pieces might fit this.

Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Appreciate you arranging this hearing. This is a very important hearing among many that we'll have, and I'm grateful.

And, at the risk of some repetition, but around here that's important——

[Laughter.]

Senator CASEY [continuing]. To get our points across, all of us—I wanted to focus on the nature of this hearing, in the sense that we talk about an endgame, but maybe to focus on the description of an endgame.

And I use, as a predicate to my question, a visit that I had to Iraq in the summer of 2007. And, at the time, it was about Iraq, obviously, and it was in a dinner meeting, a small group of people, including General Petraeus and then-Ambassador Crocker. And now that they're both still engaged, maybe the question would be relevant again. But, what I was complaining to both of them about, as representatives of the Bush administration, was the way then-President Bush described the endgame or the goal, and sometimes his administration. And I was complaining about it. And I said, "Win and lose is a wrong way to talk about it, in my judgment." "Victory and defeat," the usual language that we use, I thought was inappropriate and, frankly, misleading. That was my complaint.

Ambassador Crocker, at the time, said that his—the way he—the language he tended to use—if not all the time, most of the time—was—as it relates to Iraq, was "sustainable stability," two words.

I think the American people need to hear, from a lot more of us, a basic description of what our goal is in Afghanistan, not in a page or a volume, but literally in a sentence or two, so we can focus on the goal. If we were sitting in that same meeting today, in Kabul or anywhere, and you were sitting there and I asked you the same question, What's the best way to describe it? And what is the best outcome that you could articulate, in a sentence or even a phrase? And I just ask it to all three of our panelists.

Dr. Haass.

Ambassador HAASS. The sentence I used in my testimony, sir, was that a "messy stalemate"——

Senator CASEY. Right.

Ambassador HAASS [continuing]. "An Afghanistan characterized by a weak central government, strong local officials, and a Taliban presence that's extensive in much of the south and east." I would include in that "a small U.S. presence." And that, to me—it doesn't sound that different, by the way, than what we have now, with a far smaller U.S. footprint. And my own view is, that's probably about as good as things will get. And that's also good enough.

Senator CASEY. So, you would say that is both achievable and acceptable.

Ambassador HAASS. Yes, sir.

Senator CASEY. OK.

Dr. Slaughter.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Thank you.

So, I said "secure, stable, and self-reliant." "Secure," meaning much lower levels of violence. "Stable," meaning predictable, stable enough so that you can actually invest, so some economic activity can regenerate. And "self-reliant," where the Afghans are taking the lion's share of responsibility for their safety.

I think, in terms of getting there, we're not that far apart. It does mean, over time—and I agree with Ambassador Neumann, in terms of moving from training—from actually fighting to advising. So, we want to actually give these forces a chance. But, it means a smaller U.S. footprint. In my view, it also, though, requires an overarching political settlement in Afghanistan and a larger regional agreement at the same time, to actually get us there.

But, the one sentence is "secure, stable, and self-reliant."

Senator CASEY. Ambassador Neumann.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Secure and stable, yes, and I enjoyed your comment, because one of the problems I think we have right now is, the United States does not have a clear expression. Whether or not it's the expression any of us come up with, we desperately need it. And not only for the American people, clearly where you have your responsibility, but we are not projecting, to anyone in Afghanistan, a clarity of purpose right now. And that is enormously important. And it's lack is debilitating.

I don't have perfect words in my head, but I think Chairman Kerry has put his finger on one key part: that the Taliban can't win, that's not the same as stability but, knowing that we will persevere to that extent, whether its counterterrorism, raids, other things, whether its United States forces—there's a lot of issues in there—but, knowing the Taliban cannot win is a central piece of Pakistani thinking, of Afghan thinking about what they can or can't count on us.

I think the second thing we need to get at—again, I don't think I have perfect words—is: enough support that Afghanistan has a chance to rebuild. I'm dubious about using "stability," because it is so hard to achieve, for all the issues we disagree on. But, maybe it's a good word, but it's very hard to get there. But, the sense that they have enough support to build stability, in a sense that its in their hands is crucial. They can still mess this up, with everything we are capable of doing. And I don't want to suggest a goal that depends wholly on us.

But, I would say the stability sufficient that the Taliban cannot win, although they can reenter in some form of negotiations. And

enough sustainability that Afghans can make their own decisions. That's not yet at the bumper-sticker kind of level that one needs, both for the Americans and the Afghans. But, I think those are the two key pieces.

Senator CASEY. Well, one last question with regard to Pakistan. I've been to Islamabad twice, and I plan to go back this year. And obviously the world has changed so dramatically. And, like a lot of Members of Congress, but also like a lot of Americans, I've got a series of questions to ask, as it relates to who knew what, when, and the details of that.

But, if you had the chance to sit down with Pakistani leaders right now, in light of what's happened over the last 48 hours or so—and maybe I'll leave this as a question for the record, because of time—but, if you could help us formulate some of those questions, that'd be helpful for those of us traveling. But, I have to say that, when I was there in 2008, but even more so in 2009, there was a sense then that the relationship, and especially on intelligence-sharing, was getting better. That's what I heard from our people. And that was encouraging. And obviously there's, at best—and maybe this is too optimistic, but, at best, a very mixed record; and, in light of what just happened, a very poor record. So, if you can help us formulate those questions and help us better articulate them, that would be—that'd be great.

Maybe we can just—I'll put that in the record for a question. But, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for that, Senator Casey.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank all of you for your testimony.

I think that—as it relates to what's happening today on the ground in Afghanistan, I think General Petraeus and others have asked that they be allowed to see through this fighting season. And I think most people in this body are willing to let them go through this fighting season, at present. And so, I think we're not really talking about something imminent today.

But, let me just ask this question, and we—you know, we've had Libya and other things on our mind—to all three of you briefly. Would you all agree that what we're doing in Afghanistan is not a model for the future?

[No response.]

Senator CORKER. I mean, I think it's a simple yes/no. But——

Ambassador NEUMANN. I—first, yes, I agree it's not a model. Second, if I had to do a fifth war, and I've been in four——

Senator CORKER. Yes.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I would devoutly like the dynamic effective leadership on our side.

Senator CORKER. So, this is not something we can do in country after country after country. Everybody agrees that this is not a sustainable model. Is that agreed?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. I do agree that we cannot be engaged in country after country, with this degree of responsibility for both security and building basic institutions. I do not think that is a model that works, going forward.

Ambassador HAASS. Senator Corker, not only would I agree; but, since the answer for everyone is yes—and I expect you think it's yes, as well—it begs the question then, Why is it the model for Afghanistan? And I would simply suggest, it should not be and it cannot be for any longer.

Senator CORKER. Well, one of the things that—I'm not as much of an expert as you all are on foreign relations, but, I've learned around here, it's easy to enter, but it's very difficult to leave, and the reasons for being in a place continue to evolve.

But, let me just ask this. So, we keep talking about "safe haven." And I'm confused even as to what a "safe haven" is. I mean, we saw, recently, where a fairly tawny by Pakistan standards, neighborhood can be a safe haven. So, what is it about Afghanistan—especially to Dr. Slaughter and Ambassador Neumann—that makes it more of a safe haven, if you will, than some of the other places that we might consider having 100,000 troops?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. So, I think we have to go back to where we were before. If the Taliban either controls an enormous part of Afghanistan unchallenged, or were it actually to take over the government again, then effectively you have the ability of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups to move——

Senator CORKER. But——

Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. Freely back and forth from Pakistan. If the Pakistanis—the more serious they get, they just move over to Afghanistan.

So, you know, we have to remember where we came from. And, indeed, I don't think we would have been able to actually get Osama bin Laden, had we not driven him out of where he was in the Taliban, put—in Afghanistan—put him on the run. We finally drew intelligence from all over the place to actually get him. But, we can't think that that—leaving that area alone, and leaving Afghanistan possibly still open to a government that would be completely willing to host al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks, is not a threat to us. That's where people are getting trained, that's where attacks are still getting mounted. We do have to have a Government in Afghanistan that does not host al-Qaeda.

Senator CORKER. But, I'm confused, because I know you keep—you've said, I think, that we shouldn't fight the Taliban. We are fighting the Taliban. And basically, we're fighting criminality in Afghanistan. We're fighting criminality on a daily basis. The people that we're locking up in prisons, in most cases, are not extremists. We visited one prison where there were 1,300 or 1,400 prisoners. There were maybe 80 that would be capital-T Taliban. Most of what we are fighting is criminality.

And I hear you and Dr. Neumann saying two very different things. I mean, I'm confused. I think you say we shouldn't fight the Taliban. I—you know, he says we should be fighting the Taliban. It's very confusing to me what the two of you are saying.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. I'm happy to——

Senator CORKER. OK.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. So, we fought the Taliban, initially, because the——

Senator CORKER. But——

Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. Taliban ruled Afghanistan——

Senator CORKER [continuing]. I'm talking about this——
Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. And they were the——
Senator CORKER. Yes.
Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. They were——
Senator CORKER. Today.
Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. They ousted al-Qaeda.
Senator CORKER. The Taliban today.
Dr. SLAUGHTER. That's right. The Taliban today made a major resurgence, is once again—was and we're degrading them now, but was once again in a position to either rule a large part of Afghanistan or, conceivably, to take back over the government. So, we have pushed them back, to the extent that they should not rule Afghanistan. In that sense, I completely agree with Ambassador Neumann. They should not rule Afghanistan.

How are we going to get there? We can get there by continuing to fight them. I don't think that's actually a strategy that is successful. Or we can get there by negotiating with them in such a way to allow a political settlement where they're part of the government—they are—as Richard said, there are many different types of Taliban—if they will no longer host al-Qaeda.

And, to Senator Kerry's question, I think the death of Osama bin Laden gives us an opening to try again to see how much they are willing to negotiate. There are many different impacts of that death. And we should take that as an opportunity. So, I'm suggesting we stop fighting them. We cut a deal that allows for a more stable government in Afghanistan that will not openly host al-Qaeda.

Senator CORKER. Probably easier said than done. I would agree with that.

I just want to read a quote from Secretary Gates, on February the 17th, "Being able to turn security over to the Afghan forces, against a degraded Taliban, is our ticket out of Afghanistan."

There's numbers of other questions I would have liked to have asked. But, I think the one thing that would stun the American people, on the ground in Afghanistan, is how much we are investing in this country, and what we are investing in. And I think that we have distorted greatly, hugely, their expectations, much about their culture, with the—just the vast amount of money that is coming in.

Let me just ask the two of you, if you agree with Secretary Gates. And should we very abruptly change the dynamic of civilian investment that we have ongoing in Afghanistan and really focus more on this degraded Taliban and a quicker exit out of there, once we feel we've accomplished that, after this fighting season?

Ambassador NEUMANN. First, I agree with Secretary Gates. And I think a lot of what we are disagreeing about, on the panel, is an issue of how fast you can do that without blowing it by trying to go too fast.

Second, I do think we are overspending on the economic side. I think we are fueling too many bad tendencies, including Afghan dependency. We're paying people to do things they ought to do themselves. There is a fair amount of tension also between the military spending. So, we need to look, I would recommend, at both CERP and at AID.

Senator CORKER. It's both of it——

Ambassador NEUMANN. It's——

Senator CORKER [continuing]. Is civilian spending, right? I mean——

Ambassador NEUMANN. Yes. There's a lot of rapid spending for very short-term results that are not sustainable. And I don't think that they are as essential. I'd be a little careful about draconian cuts. But, I think we're overspending there.

I do think security—let me put it this way. The Afghan Army does not actually have to win the war, for many of our goals. It has to be capable of not losing it. That changes the negotiating dynamic. That changes the security situation. I do think it is our way out. What I am saying, though, is that I think this process needs to be looked at very hard so that we do not destroy whatever changes we've created for success by suddenly moving out much too quickly.

There's pretty long record of how we get to this. We've had some—lot of experience in Afghanistan—in Iraq recently, with turning over, as well. And so, I think we should be very careful not to jump to totally politically inspired timetables of numbers and speed, recognizing that you'll never have as much time as, you know, any general or any ambassador would like.

And I'm not an ambassador anymore, I have to note. I do testify only for myself, not for the American Academy or anybody else.

Senator CORKER. Well, thank you all for your testimony. And I do hope we'll look at the civilian spending. And I agree that it's happening on both through the military and through our State Department. And hopefully that's something, since all three of you have very differing—or two of—you have two differing views, but all three of you agree with the fact that we're spending too much money there on the civilian side. Is that——

Dr. SLAUGHTER. I don't want to be on the record saying that I don't. I mean, I think we are spending it in ways that are problematic. But, overall, I think we want to pull down on the military spending. And very carefully monitored spending on the civilian side, I think can work. But, we're putting too much in at one time; I'd agree with that.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Corker.

Senator Menendez and then Senator Durbin.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I look at the situation in Afghanistan. I look at the $10 billion per month cost of our counterinsurgency effort. I look at nonmilitary contributions to Afghan reconstruction and development; almost $23 billion from 2002 to 2010 which is expected to increase, obviously, as we seek a transition to a civilian mission. And I ask myself, even if we are willing to make the enormous economic commitment to build a democracy and fund the necessary security elements, at a cost of tens of billions of dollars per year, what's the likelihood of our success? Seems to me the government is corrupt. Our working relationship is strained, to say the least. Our focus on building security forces is challenged, because its membership largely excludes Pashtuns in the south, which is the base for the

Taliban. Is there an amount of money or a plan that can actually work there?

Ambassador HAASS. I would say no. I would be quite explicit. I would say our policy won't work and it's not worth it, even if it did work. So, I would actually go beyond that. I just think, given the scale of the challenges we face around the world, our fiscal situation, I cannot find a strategic rationale for the scale of effort that we are undertaking on the military and civilian sides in Afghanistan, even if it were to work. And again, I think there's a negligible chance, Senator, it will work, which only, to me, increases the questions that I believe need to be raised about the direction and scale of U.S. foreign policy, here.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Senator, I don't think we're trying to build a democracy in Afghanistan, as the end. Once again, our goal is to ensure that there is not a government in Afghanistan that hosts al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks in such a way that they can freely plan and execute attacks against the United States. That's why we went in. That's why we're there. We succeeded very quickly, early on. We took our eye off the ball, the Taliban started coming back. If the Taliban were to take over tomorrow, they would once again host al-Qaeda. We would not be able to actually be in country to be able to get the intelligence, to be able to do what we need to do.

So, our focus still has to be a government in Afghanistan that does not host al-Qaeda and that is not defeated by the Taliban. With that, I think we can, in fact, get to, as I said, a secure, a stable, and an increasingly self-reliant Afghanistan. Rather than doing it by trying to build the country from the ground up, we need to do it politically, diplomatically, keeping our forces there by reaching a political settlement and a larger regional settlement. Every other country in that region has an absolute stake——

Senator MENENDEZ. At what cost and——

Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. In a stable government.

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. For how much time?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. I think that, actually, we can do this in a couple of years. I mean, I think we can start the political negotiations immediately, and the pace of transition does depend on how well the Afghan forces perform. But, increasingly there's evidence that some are performing well, when—and we can play, then, an advisory capacity. We should not be fighting their battles for them.

Ambassador HAASS. There is a fundamental disagreement here. This administration, several years ago, decided to—the words of the President, "to take the war, the fight, to the Taliban in the south and east of the country." We essentially became a protagonist in Afghanistan's civil war. I thought that was an incorrect decision then. I continue to believe it is an incorrect decision now.

I do not believe we should simply assume that the Taliban can take over. I don't believe they can, militarily. I think there's way too much pushback, particularly in the north and west of Afghanistan. I do think, however, they are likely, no matter what we do, to make inroads in the south and east. But, I would not assume for a second that Taliban inroads equate into al-Qaeda return, that it's stated here—that's a testable proposition. There's lots of evidence to suggest the Taliban would not do it. But, that's the reason

we should talk to them. And, if they were ever to do it, that's the reason we should attack them. But, I do not believe we should base U.S. policy on that, to me, truly unproven assumption.

I'd just say one other thing. I do not believe the goal, as Dr. Slaughter's articulating it, "self-reliant Afghanistan" is a reasonable goal. I would say it would not simply take us several years. I think that is an open-ended commitment for the United States, military and economically. And I do not believe, again, that that can be strategically defended, given the costs and given the opportunity costs, given all else we need to worry about in the world and given all else we need to worry about here at home.

Senator MENENDEZ. Originally, Vice President Biden reportedly favored a more limited mission in Afghanistan, designed solely to interrupt al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan. And this approach, obviously, envisioned a smaller ISAF presence in Afghanistan. Advocates of this approach assert that the Government of Afghanistan is not a fully legitimate partner, primarily because of widespread government corruption. They believe a counterterrorism strategy that relies more heavily on Special Operation Forces to track and kill select mid-level insurgent commanders, which has previously been shown to be effective, and which would be used to attack the al-Qaeda and Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan, would be a better approach.

What are your views on that approach as an alternate? And if you don't believe that it's a good approach, what's our argument for a broader counterinsurgency strategy instead of a targeted, more limited counterterrorism strategy?

I've always thought that we should have a counterterrorism strategy, and while I have been supportive of the administration so far, I'm having a real hard time as we move forward. So, give me why one over the other.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Sir, I think—no one has said you don't want that piece in the strategy—I think the big debility with at least the press; I'm not sure it was completely fair to the Vice President—what was portrayed as a solely counterterrorism strategy—is that, I believe that is strategy which, first of all, it requires a lot of on-the-ground presence to make it work. We've all said that. Second, it is——

Senator MENENDEZ. More than we have now?

Ambassador NEUMANN. No, not more than we have. But, what I believe you get, if you have a strategy reduced to that, that's not focused on doing anything with and for Afghanistan, is a strategy that invariably turns Afghans increasingly against us, to the point that that strategy fails as a sole strategy.

If all our purpose has nothing to do with the purpose of Afghans who have to live in their country, then Taliban rule, or pretty much anything else that gets us out and ends that, becomes an improvement. So, if you really want to create the xenophobic reaction to foreigners that so many talk about, then have a strategy that is based only on fighting our enemies and doing nothing for Afghanistan. I don't mean that we have to be in the total "build a democracy" mode, but if you deal only in extremes, if you deal with the kind of extreme—the press, at least, portrayed the Vice President

as having "very small U.S. forces to just hit terrorists"—I think that becomes a complete failure.

I do have—it was pretty clear—a serious difference about how much strategic interest we have here. My feeling is that what you will get, if we have something that can be really defined as a loss is—first of all, a huge propaganda victory for people who consider that they are at war with us and intend to continue that war. I don't know how you measure the consequences, but I've never heard of one side quitting successfully in the middle of a war.

Second, I think, in the context of the likely civil war in Afghanistan, something much larger than the fighting only in the Pashtun south, you draw in Pakistan, you draw in Iran, Russia gets drawn in, you end up with an instability that roils all of central Asia. I suppose we could turn our back on it. I, personally, believe that in that kind of situation, fear of India might well lead the Pakistanis to a much stronger support for radicals, in that they would be unlikely to deal with their own radicalism at the same time. And that also leads to greater instability in Pakistan.

I find this a really frightening prospect, and one that scares me enough that I would stick with things, albeit looking for ways to spend less, which I think we can do over a year or two by cutting troop numbers. But, I think we have to try to turn it over to Afghans at a reasonable pace. That has not yet been tried. We are only now arriving at the point where we start trying it. We ought to see how it works.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Durbin.

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

There are several things which motivate my thinking on this. The first is a sense of history. Afghanistan has been a graveyard of empires. Nations that have come to this country in an effort to suppress or reform it have a long history of failure.

Second, this is the longest war in American history, and there's no end in sight. When Ambassador Neumann says, "We would be guilty of quitting in the middle of a war," can anyone say with honestly, "We're in the middle of this war?" I'm not sure they can.

And the third is the fact that I think the road to Kabul is paved with good intentions. When you look at a corrupt regime running this country, when you look at a $10–$12 billion monthly payment by American taxpayers, much of which is being wasted and, sadly, portions of which are being diverted to fund our enemy, you have to ask yourselves: How long can we sustain this?

Mr. Haass, I read your testimony. And I was really kind of cheering you on, until I got to the last paragraph. And I've got to ask you about it, because here's what you said, "Resolution of the ongoing conflict by either military or diplomatic means is highly unlikely and not a realistic basis for U.S. policy. Walking away from Afghanistan, however, is not the answer." I want to ask you about that.

If this is about money, then clearly spending it, or wasting it, is very hard to justify. But, it's about a lot more. If you believe that resolution of this conflict by military means is highly unlikely and

not a realistic basis for U.S. policy, how can we send one more American soldier to fight and die in Afghanistan?

Ambassador HAASS. It's a good question and a fair question. I do not believe that United States interests, to the extent they exist in Afghanistan, require a resolution of the conflict. That's good news, because we're not going to get a resolution of the conflict, sir. But, we can maintain or protect ourselves or protect our core interests. Our core interest, again, is: Afghanistan ought not to launching pad for terrorist attacks against us or the world. We can do that, I believe, with a degree of counterterrorism presence and activity and a degree of limited, focused training on Afghan local and national troops. I believe we can protect our core interests with a modest investment. So, that's why I'm trying to come up with, not the proverbial middle course, because it's actually closer to one end than the other; but, I don't believe the answer is withdrawal.

Senator DURBIN. So, those of us—many of us who face this vote—faced two votes on Iraq in Afghanistan—23 of us voted against the invasion of Iraq; I continue to believe that it was the right vote. I voted for the invasion of Afghanistan. I voted for it to go after al-Qaeda for what they did to us on 9/11, and to find and, if necessary, kill Osama bin Laden. Now, here we are, almost 10 years later. And I have to tell you, if you would have asked me whether I was signing up for the longest war in American history, which has no end in sight even after the killing of Osama bin Laden, I would have to seriously say that wasn't the bargain. That isn't what I thought I was voting for.

And now the question I have is this: If our goal in Afghanistan, as Dr. Slaughter has said and I think you've just said, is to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States, why are we limiting this to Afghanistan? Aren't there other countries in the Middle East that are also harboring terrorists, wishing ill on the United States? Aren't there countries in Africa? So, why have we drawn the line here and said we'll stay as long as necessary to reach a "good-enough" solution in Afghanistan?

Ambassador HAASS. Well, it's actually the same approach I would actually suggest for these other countries. What I'm trying to do—maybe—it must be a drafting problem and I wasn't clear—I am trying to scale down dramatically the United States involvement and investment in Afghanistan much more akin to what we have been doing in other countries, like Yemen and Somalia. I want to emphasis to be on counterterrorism, a degree of training.

But, I agree with you, I don't believe—coming back to something Senator Corker said before, I think before you arrived—this is not a template that's sustainable, I believe, for any other country. I don't believe it's a template that ought to be sustained in Afghanistan. The war you signed up for 10 years ago—and I think you made the right vote, there, in signing up for this in Afghanistan, after 9/11—was a limited war.

Senator DURBIN. Yes.

Ambassador HAASS. This war has now morphed into something much more. We have basically allowed ourselves to become protagonists in a civil war. This was a mistake. And I believe what we need to do is dial it back, again, to a more limited mission, which is the one that you, I believe, correctly signed up for. And I believe

that limited mission is both affordable and in the interests of the United States. I do not believe the expanded mission that the United States has allowed itself to be drawn into is either affordable or justifiable or defends our core vital national security interests.

Senator DURBIN. And it is calling on us to send our fighting men and women to fight and die.

Ambassador HAASS. Absolutely. I agree with you on that.

Senator DURBIN. So, we are now in a very sterile conversation about diplomacy and foreign policy. The reality is, they're fighting and dying over there. And the question is, How long will we keep sending them?

Ambassador HAASS. Senator, I think the answer is that there is a case—the United States does have a vital national interest in—to make sure that Afghanistan does not become, again—and this is not unique to Afghanistan, this is similar to other countries—a place where terrorists can act with impunity. That is something that I believe, because it is of vital national interest, our Armed Forces would gladly be involved with. But, again, the problem with Afghanistan is, we have allowed our mission to grow. We've had classic creep in objectives. And that is something that I believe is not in the national interests of the United States.

Senator DURBIN. Dr. Slaughter.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. So, again, we're not disagreeing about the endgame, here. I think we all agree that we need to draw down our troops substantially. I think the President agrees with this.

The way I would differ with Richard is, we tried a limited counterterrorism strategy that—when you voted originally—we drove the Taliban out very fast, then we moved to a limited counterterrorism strategy. After 3 or 4 years, we turned around and the Taliban were deeply resurgent. We did not choose to be part of a civil war; we realized that we were at risk of losing all the gains we made. And we had to go back in with a counterinsurgency strategy.

Senator DURBIN. Let me ask you this question. Is it not true—I mean, they tell us—we could gather all of the known al-Qaeda—active al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in this room—in this room—and yet we are spending $10–$12 billion a month in a war with the Taliban, which——

I've asked this basic question: Can we achieve what we want to achieve in Afghanistan without defeating the Taliban?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. We can achieve that if we have a stable government in Afghanistan, that includes part of the Taliban, that does not host al-Qaeda. I think we agree. If we can get to an agreement where the Taliban can meet certain basic conditions, they can be part of the government and they do not host al-Qaeda, then we——

Senator DURBIN. And do you think——

Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. Our interests are served. And I think we can get there.

Senator DURBIN. And do you think this Karzai government can be the host for that kind of concern?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. I think we are now in a position where we have pushed back enough, and our troops have succeeded in pushing back enough, that we are now in a strong enough position to enter

a negotiation that will not just be the Karzai government, it will be a coalition government with a set of conditions that will then allow us to dramatically pull down our forces. But, we have had to push back, through counterinsurgency, because of what we lost through a pure counterterrorism strategy. And now we need to move to the political phase.

Senator DURBIN. If that's our goal, that negotiation should have started yesterday.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. I could not agree more.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I recognize Senator Shaheen, let me just follow up quickly.

Dr. Slaughter, you said the goal would be that this government would include the Taliban as a coalition, having negotiated that. Why is it necessary to have that? Why couldn't you simply have a government that is promoting its own agenda and the Taliban on the outside of it, and have an ongoing stalemate? It's their struggle. And, while we are aligned with that government that's fighting the Taliban, we have an arrangement where we have a platform, we're doing counterterrorism, we're making sure the Taliban aren't harboring any terrorists, and we also can guarantee that they're not going to be able to take over.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. So——

The CHAIRMAN. Why isn't that adequate? Why do you have to go to that next tier?

Dr. SLAUGHTER. With respect, we have a messy stalemate, of the kind you're describing and Richard Haass is describing, when we have 130,000 U.S. and allied troops there. Right now, if we were to pull out those troops, I do not think we'd have a Karzai government, sort of, defending its interests. I think you would see——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we didn't say "pull out."

Dr. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. Major Taliban advances. So, we have to get a political solution.

The CHAIRMAN. Nobody has said "pull out." People have said "reduce." Big distinction.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. And I think we're agreed that, if you can hand over to the Afghan forces, and we maintain and advisory role, then that that can continue, although it's still not as strong as a government that actually has at least some Taliban as part of it, so that there is, in fact, some kind of settlement.

Ambassador HAASS. Senator, could I say something?

I actually think the model you're suggesting is much more realistic. The idea that we're going to be able to negotiate, or the Afghans themselves are going to be able to negotiate, a broad-based government with discrete power-sharing arrangements seems to me highly optimistic. But, I would think it's perfectly acceptable that—given, particularly, the localized tradition of Afghanistan; you have a weak central government that's not necessary nationally representative—that the Taliban or conservative Pashtuns, call them what you will, have considerable influence again in the south and east of the country, and that so long as they are willing to abide by certain redlines that we can live with, I do not believe it is essential that we have a national compact or a government that is unified or self-reliant or anything else. Indeed, to try to jam

Taliban participation on the Tajiks and Uzbeks and others, I would suggest, would not only fail, but would probably be counterproductive.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me recognize Senator Shaheen. We'll come back to this in a second.

Yes, Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think it's fitting, as I'm sure people have said already, that we're having this discussion the day—2 days after Osama bin Laden has been killed. After all, as you all point out, it was his masterminding the attacks on the World Trade Center and the United States that got us into this war.

And so, as we think about what the endgame here is, what impact will the death of Osama bin Laden have on that endgame? Obviously, it was a huge national security and military and intelligence triumph for the United States. But, what will the real impact be, if any, on the Taliban who are operating in Afghanistan? And does it have any impact on our allies as we look at the fight ahead?

Ambassador HAASS. I believe the only way it has significant impact would be if it leads the Pakistanis to seriously reconsider their continual provision of a sanctuary to the Taliban. If this leads, through some sort of new conversation between the United—between Washington and Islamabad—to a material change in Pakistani policy, then I think it will have major repercussions. But, so long as Pakistan is willing to play the role it's played for all these years, and provide sanctuary to the Afghan Taliban, not only does it mean that Osama bin Laden's death will not have material impact on the future of Afghanistan, but it will not, essentially, have the sort of salutary effects you and I would like to see, you know, more broadly.

Senator SHAHEEN. Dr. Slaughter.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

I'm not sure we fully know. And one of the things I'm arguing is that we should take this moment to explore. I agree that it could change some of our relations with Islamabad. I think though it also may change the willingness of some Taliban to negotiate. There are arguments that Osama bin Laden was very close to the top leadership, Mullah Omar, of the Taliban. With him gone, that may create some political space. It's at least worth exploring. It also creates political space for us with President Karzai. And, in the sense that President Karzai often says, "Well, we're going to stay," because it's—we're there for our interests more than we are for his.

This is now a moment where we can say, as we're hearing all over the place—although obviously it's a symbolic death, it's a very important symbol. And it gives us a chance to pivot. So, that may give us more leverage, also, with President Karzai. Seems to me, we should seize that moment and explore. We're not going to be worse off. We may be substantially better off.

Senator SHAHEEN. OK.

Ambassador Neumann, do you have anything to add to that?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I basically agree. I am more—much more dubious that it is a moment for negotiations. I have nothing

against exploring them. But, I think Senator Kerry's description of a possible kind of end state was more realistic.

For one thing, there have been a great many negotiations over 30 years in Afghanistan. Almost all of them have fallen apart. Most of them, which are power-sharing agreements, have not worked. I think we need to get out of the American mindset that agreement ends things. Look at negotiations, historically, at least in Afghanistan, much more like the agreements of the Middle Ages/Renaissance Europe—they'll last until one person, one side, is strong enough to break them and go with them.

So, while negotiations are relevant, but pinning a lot of hope on them, or thinking that, because you've inked the page, you've got something, I'm pretty dubious about.

I do agree, on your question, that, very specifically, this is a place to push Pakistan. But, recognizing we have interests in common, and we probably have interests that oppose. And perhaps the thing that we need to clarify most is what the interests are that we have that we will sustain.

The confusion and the doubts of Pakistan, Afghanistan, regional players, about us, is enormously debilitating in this struggle, because we are such a huge player. Enemies, friends, and those that are neither, take position, in part, based on where they think we are. And when they don't know, they invent the answer. And then they go from that reasoning.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, we're going to have a hearing on Thursday to talk about Pakistan, so that will be an opportunity to explore that a little further.

I want to go back to the discussion that Senator Durbin was having earlier. And I'm having trouble, I guess, Mr. Haass, trying to distinguish between the endgame that you're describing, which sounds to me very much like what we've been doing in Afghanistan from the time we went in and removed the Taliban until we increased our forces. So, I wonder if you could just describe in further detail how that's different so I can understand the distinctions that you're making.

Ambassador HAASS. What I'm suggesting is different in two ways. It's different in where we're trying to get to and how we get there. My goal is not a democratic Afghanistan, though I'd like to see it. It's not an Afghanistan that's at total peace, though I'd like to see it. It's not a unified, strong national government. I don't think any of those things is in the cards.

What I'm looking for is simply an Afghanistan that has a minimal level of functionality, where, above all, it is not a place where al-Qaeda, or groups like it, act with impunity. And the way I believe we achieve that—this is a very modest goal—the way I would try to achieve it is through a heavy emphasis—not a sole emphasis, but an emphasis on U.S. counterterrorism capabilities, with a degree of training up of Afghan police and army forces, both nationally, but also locally, and a degree of diplomacy, particularly one on one with the Taliban, to try to draw some redlines with them, and also to try to have some sort of a regional forum. I would dramatically decrease U.S. troop levels. Right now, roughly 100,000; I would reduce them by three-quarters or more as quite quickly.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you just talk about why what you're just describing is different than what we were doing? Because——

Ambassador HAASS. Sure.

Senator SHAHEEN [continuing]. It doesn't sound that different to me.

Ambassador HAASS. It sounds quite different to me, and maybe I'm not articulating it well. But, my—what the—the big difference is, the current U.S. policy is trying——

Senator SHAHEEN. I'm not talking about the current U.S. policy. I'm trying to see if I can understand the distinction you're making between what we should be doing now, and what we are doing, and how that is different from what we did when we initially went into Afghanistan and continued to do, really until the buildup after President Obama was elected and began to increase troop size and trainers, because——

Ambassador HAASS. Sure.

Senator SHAHEEN. I'm not understanding the distinction you're making.

Ambassador HAASS. That's—OK, I apologize. I didn't understand your question, Senator.

The original policy, after 9/11, once the government was ousted, was a fairly narrow counterterrorism policy. It did not involve significant training up of Afghan police or army forces at either the national or local level. Now those—between—if you add up Afghan national army and police, it probably is more than 300,000. So, essentially we have done all that, particularly in the last couple of years. Plus, there was not a real diplomatic dimension. We allowed the "Six Plus Two" forum to essentially go into disuse. The United States did not try to test the Taliban as to whether they had changed their ways, when it came to association with al-Qaeda. So, essentially, you know, those are the differences.

And what we did also—the big difference—what we started doing, and I would end doing, is—I would bring to an end combat operations against the Taliban. Starting 2½ years ago, the United States made the policy decision that it would henceforth target the Taliban militarily. And that was the principal rationale for the military increases taken in 2009, as well as the subsequent surge. I believe that was ill-advised, and I want to go back to the phase before that, where the United States no longer targets the Taliban, militarily, on the assumption that Taliban presence is one in the same as al-Qaeda return. I think that is an incorrect assumption, and I do not believe the United States can—or should, rather—conduct policy in Afghanistan based on that. So, I would remove that component of our policy.

Dr. SLAUGHTER. Can I just jump in there?

Again, the desire of our policy was not to fight the Taliban for the Taliban's sake. The desire of our policy was to push them back from the gains that they had made when we were following a narrow counterterrorism strategy, and, as Ambassador Neumann said, also to actually convince the Afghans we were there not just to fight terrorism, but because we had their interests at heart, as well.

If we had negotiated with the Taliban 2 years ago, or tried to negotiate, we would be in a very different position. I think the way

we understand this is that we push back enough so we are now in a position to negotiate with the Taliban, with redlines. Maybe we can do that without the Afghan Government. I mean, to Senator Kerry's point, it's still a sovereign country. It's a little difficult to be negotiating with the enemy of the government independently of the government, but I would say we try a comprehensive settlement. If we can't get that, we negotiate in other ways. But, we had to push back on the Taliban so that we would then be in a position to negotiate the kind of solution you're talking about. We're not there to fight the Taliban for the sake of fighting the Taliban.

Ambassador HAASS. We, then, obviously have a disagreement here. I do not believe we had to do it, because I'm not trying to get the Taliban to become great citizens participating in the political life of Afghanistan. I only have one simple goal with the Taliban. It's that they do not reestablish the sort of relationship they had with al-Qaeda. I do not believe we had to militarily go to war against the Taliban for the last couple of years to do it. I believe we have—always have the option of attacking the Taliban directly. Plus, I believe the Taliban—based upon statements they have made and that have been reported back, they, themselves, have come to question their deep association with foreigners, which is what al-Qaeda is to them.

But, I think we have to accept, no matter what happens in Afghanistan, at some point the south and the east of Afghanistan is going to be dominated by Pashtun political leadership, which is going to be extraordinarily conservative in its behavior. And whether you call them, technically, Taliban or not, there's going to be unattractive features of that, in terms of their vision of a society and how they go about promoting it. But, I think that is inevitable, whether we have 100,000 American troops there for 5 more years. And 6 or 7 more years from now, that will happen, in any event. That is the future of Afghanistan.

At some point, we have to be willing to carry out a foreign policy that accepts a degree of local realities and limits. And one of the problems with our policy in Afghanistan is, when we get too ambitious there, and we don't respect, I believe, enough local culture and traditions and realities, we are committing ourselves to an expensive policy that will not have enduring benefits in any way that are commensurate with the military or human or economic investment we are going to be making.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Very——

Senator SHAHEEN. Well——

Ambassador NEUMANN. Could I say——

Senator SHAHEEN [continuing]. My time is up, but——

Ambassador NEUMANN [continuing]. One thing?

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I'll yield back to you, Senator Shaheen. I'm perfectly happy to have you pursue and closeout the hearing. I have a 12:15 I need to go to.

But, I just want to weigh in, before I go. And then Senator Shaheen will close it out. I——

This is a very—let me just say, first of all, the complexity of this, and the difficulties of reaching adequate definitions and understandings of what your, sort of, underlying premises are, is obvious. You know, this is complicated. It's not easy, No. 1.

No. 2, we have a bad habit—I want to pick up on what Dr. Haass was just saying—we kind of have a habit of saying—you know, well, we'll throw out this idea of negotiating, or we'll throw out this idea of, you know, achieving the sufficient stability, and this and that. But, in the end, good diplomacy, and its failure, which is conflict and war, is usually based on people's perception about their interests. And it's one thing for us to sit here and talk about, "Hey, you know, we're going to try and do this, or we ought to do that, or here's our perception." But, I find that, very often, it is not adequately based on, and in, the realities of the culture that we're in the midst of, or their interests and the way they see themselves playing out, here.

You know, most Afghans don't want to see the Taliban return. That's a reality. And I don't think enough of our discussion has, sort of, taken that reality into account, here. You know, poll after poll shows that the Taliban do not have widespread support, and they are not seen to represent Afghans, or even Pashtun interests, on a national basis. Yet, the current approach to negotiations, which we're sort of putting on the table here, appears to be almost counterproductive, in terms of some of our interests, because it alienates some of the ethnic groups that don't feel represented.

So, you have Pashtuns who feel excluded by the negotiations. You have minority Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras who are vehemently against any kind of deal with the Taliban, because they still remember the atrocities of the 1990s. You have Afghan women who fear they're going to pay a very heavy price for peace as the prospect of any of these negotiations. And civil society members are strongly opposed to a Taliban return.

So, it seems to me we ought to be able to factor those realities into where things may flow, with less troops and with the Afghans having to resolve these things for themselves, with us there, in a continuing capacity. In terms of the question of incentives, what kind of incentives are we providing? I don't see us saying we're abandoning the Afghans. I don't see us saying we're not going to, you know, be there to represent our interests also, and work with them to go through that process, and also prevent the Taliban from making any kind of enormous significant gain.

I might add that, regionally, there's a lot of anxiety about the Taliban coming back to power in any way. You've got Russia, central Asian republics, Saudi Arabia, India. All have varying degrees of antipathy to the Taliban coming back. And it seems to me that we could work more of a regional effort to try to deal with some of that reality than we have. A number of people have suggested to me there may be options here with the "Stans" and with Russia and with other countries, including, I might add, Iran, that we have not adequately explored. Iran doesn't like the Taliban. Iran also doesn't like drug-trafficking. And it seems to me there are legitimate interests here that ought to be explored in other ways here as we go forward.

So, the Pakistan piece of this is obviously critical. And there are a lot of questions raised in the wake of Osama bin Laden's death. But, I do think that—we're going to have a hearing on that—there's a lot we can explore.

But, I'd just summarize by saying, I think that we really have to do more work. And that's the purpose of these hearings, to hone in on the realities that we're dealing with, and what the possibilities are. We could spend a lot of money for a long period of time. And I tend to agree with Dr. Haass, I don't see a lot of indicators that that is going to significantly change the dynamic on the ground. And I think what's ultimately going to change it is Afghans themselves feeling they have a stake with a sense of what the long-term power-broker structure is going to be. And I think it could be significantly less prominently American, and significantly less expensive. And that's what we have to really examine here very, very carefully as we go forward here.

So, I know this is worth a lot more discussion, which is why we're going to have five more hearings on it, including having the Secretary of State come in, toward the end, and share her views from the administration's perspective now.

We will leave the record open for a week for colleagues to be able to submit questions in writing, and even to follow up on some of those questions that have been placed today.

I'm extremely grateful to you. I think the three of you have very effectively helped to frame the complexity and the realities of this debate. And it's a good shaping, if you will, for our discussions as we go forward. So I thank you very, very much. I think it's been very profitable and very helpful.

Senator Shaheen, if you would close out the hearing, I'd appreciate it.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am——

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, I apologize. Well, do you want to ask a couple of questions before you do?

The CHAIRMAN. No?

Senator SHAHEEN. I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. We will, then, have the record available for any submission of additional questions.

And, with that, we stand adjourned.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this full committee hearing on the situation in Afghanistan. It certainly is timely in light of the elimination of Osama bin Laden this past Sunday.

For almost 10 years, our men and women in uniform have faced hardships in the effort to capture or kill Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, and I congratulate our Nation's finest for their tireless pursuit for justice. We rejoice that this monster is dead. While we have succeeded in taking out the head of al-Qaeda, the effects of his death are yet unseen, and could span a broad range of possibilities. We must, therefore, not let our guard down in the Global War on Terrorism, and must remain ever vigilant in protecting our Nation and its people.

As the ranking member of this committee's Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I also want to recognize at this hearing the contribution by the Republic of Korea—our Nation's close friend and strong ally in Asia—to the commitment to peace in Afghanistan. In fact, last month, South Korea pledged an additional $500 million over 5 years to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) serving in Afghanistan. I understand that this additional assistance, a large increase over the $180 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) that Korea

provided to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2010, will enhance the capabilities of the Afghanistan National Security Force and support the country's economic and social development.

Korea has actively taken part in international efforts to rebuild Afghanistan, particularly in alliance with the United States, and has continually increased its assistance and activities there. From 2002 to 2007, Korea deployed military medics and engineers in Afghanistan. They provided medical service to 260,000 people and helped build the U.S. Bagram Airfield.

Korea officially joined the ISAF in April 2010, deploying 350 troops to Afghanistan. In July 2010, Korea established its own Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Parwan province in eastern Afghanistan. The Korean PRT's activities, which include education assistance, health and medical service, rural development aid, improved governance and police training, are greatly appreciated by the Afghanistan Government and local residents.

I commend the Republic of Korea for its past assistance to ISAF forces and people of Afghanistan and their new pledge of additional assistance.

Thank you again, Chairman Kerry, for holding this full committee hearing on the situation in Afghanistan.

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