

NOMINATION OF RYAN C. CROCKER

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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NOMINATION OF RYAN C. CROCKER

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2011

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

Hon. Ryan C. Crocker, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Cardin, Casey, Webb, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Lugar, Corker, Risch, and Isakson.

Also present: Senator John McCain.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order.

Thank you all very much. I apologize for being slightly tardy here.

We welcome our friend and our colleague, Senator John McCain. We're delighted to have him here for the purposes of making an introduction.

Obviously, we're here today to consider President Obama's nominee for Ambassador to Afghanistan, and I think we are very fortunate that the President has chosen one of America's most experienced and able diplomats to serve in Kabul, and we're very fortunate that Ambassador Ryan Crocker has agreed to serve.

We're happy to welcome him again before the Foreign Relations Committee. As everybody knows, in his distinguished career he has served as ambassador to five countries, including such challenging posts as Pakistan, Iraq, and Lebanon; and immediately after the Taliban's ouster he became chargé d'affaires in Afghanistan, re-opening our Embassy for the first time since 1989. So this is a man with experience in the region and experience in these complicated and difficult tasks.

I think he thought he had retired to a quiet life in academia, but the President had another idea, and I want to say on behalf of all of us how grateful we are, Ambassador Crocker, that you and your wife Christine were willing to agree to return to public service.

Obviously, you will arrive in this post at a pivotal moment in the conflict. We have a critical planning window in front of us right

now. This is a critical moment. It's a moment where we have the ability to recalibrate, if that's what's needed, to redefine, and to do the things necessary in the wake of the successes that we have had against al-Qaeda, which was the principal reason for being in Afghanistan in the first place. So in order to ensure a transition, I think there are a number of things that need to be thought through.

Last month we held five hearings on Afghanistan and Pakistan to examine all the assumptions guiding our strategy in the region and to help chart a path forward. In about 2 weeks, Secretary of State Clinton will testify here on the administration's thinking and address congressional concerns as the President decides how many troops to draw down starting in July. Needless to say, I think it would be very helpful if this committee and the Senate can move very rapidly on this nomination in order to put you in place to be part of those deliberations.

I'd just say very quickly—I know Senator McCain is here, so I'll truncate this. But I'll just say very quickly that I think we ought to be guided by certain truths here. First, while the United States has genuine national security interests in Afghanistan, our current commitment in troops and in dollars is neither proportional to our interest nor sustainable, in my judgment.

Second, our military has made significant gains, clearing and holding in the south, but as the President has said, they're fragile and reversible absent continued U.S. robust presence there. We've not yet made sufficient gains in the east, where the threat from insurgent groups based in Pakistan continues, and I will continue to beat this drum that the principal equation with respect to our capacity to resolve concerns in Afghanistan still lies in Pakistan and will lie in our ability to adjust that relationship, and indeed to create a regional framework with respect to this conflict. I want to emphasize that regional framework.

Third, only a political settlement will resolve this. Every military leader has said that. There is no military solution. Reconciliation is not a silver bullet, but we're going to need to support the Government of Afghanistan as it tries to engage those willing to make some kind of acceptable agreement.

And finally, we need to reexamine the current plan with respect to the Afghan National Security Forces because there are serious questions about size, capability, sustainability, and I think we need to examine those very carefully.

Also today, the majority on the committee is releasing a report regarding assistance. This is a report meant to be constructive. It's a report with critical observations but observations that are made in the best spirit of joint cooperative effort, and we appreciate Administrator Shah's responses and assistance, and we appreciate the administration's cooperation with us in efforts to address the concerns that we have.

The report argues that U.S. assistance needs to meet three basic conditions before that money is dispensed. The projects have got to be necessary, achievable, and sustainable.

So over the next few months, there's a lot on the table for the Congress and for the President, and Ambassador Crocker is going

to have an essential role, a critical role to play in making sure that we get it right.

Senator Lugar.

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

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I join you in welcoming our very distinguished nominee.

Ambassador Crocker has returned from his well-earned retirement to again apply his unsurpassed experience at managing civil-military collaboration in a dynamic conflict environment. I thank him for his commitment and know that he will bring insight and informed judgment to his job in Kabul.

This is the sixth hearing the Foreign Relations Committee has held related to Afghanistan during the last 2 months. We have explored not just what is happening in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan, but whether our vast expenditures in Afghanistan represent a rational allocation of our military and financial assets.

Our geostrategic interests are threatened, not just by terrorism, but by debt, economic competition, energy and food prices, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and numerous other forces. Solving these problems will be much more difficult if we devote too many resources to one country that, historically, has frustrated nation-building experiments.

The question the President must answer is whether we can achieve the most important national security goals in Afghanistan—especially preventing the Taliban from taking over the government and preventing Afghan territory from being used as a terrorist safe haven—at far less expense.

Ambassador Crocker would be assuming his post coincident with the Obama administration's review of Afghanistan policy that is anticipated to result in some level of troop reduction. This opportunity should be used to do more than just withdraw an arbitrary number of troops based on political expediency. Rather, the President should put forward a new plan that includes a definition of success in Afghanistan based on the United States vital interests and a sober analysis of what is possible to achieve.

Such a plan should include an explanation of what metrics must be satisfied before the country is considered secure. It should also designate and eliminate those activities that are not intrinsic to our core objectives. The administration's ambiguity on our goals must be eliminated in order to more effectively address our national security interests and convey to Afghans the continuing relationship we will maintain as allies in the region.

Despite 10 years of investment and attempts to better understand the culture and the region's actors, we remain in a cycle that produces relative progress but fails to deliver a secure political or military resolution. In Afghanistan, measuring success according to relative progress has very little meaning. Undoubtedly, we will make some progress when we are spending more than \$100 billion per year in that country. The more important question is whether we have an efficient strategy for protecting our vital interests that does not involve massive open-ended expenditures and does not require us to have more faith than is justified in Afghan institutions.

I would appreciate hearing the nominee's impressions of the Obama administration's strategic review and of how we can improve Afghanistan's capacity to defend and govern itself, while reducing our own commitment of resources.

I applaud Ambassador Crocker's willingness, once again, to take on an extremely difficult mission, and I look forward to his testimony.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar.

As I said previously, it is a privilege for the committee to welcome Senator McCain. As the ranking member and chair and so forth, back and forth on the Armed Services Committee, there's nobody with more experience in these matters or who pays more attention to them in the Senate, and I appreciate his taking the time to be here to introduce Ambassador Crocker.

Senator McCain.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN MCCAIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA**

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your kind words, and thank you for indulging me to introduce this great American.

Senator Lugar and members of the committee, it's an honor to introduce the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Ryan Crocker, a man whose stellar record of service precedes him and speaks for itself.

Obviously, I join the committee in recognizing two members of Ambassador Crocker's family who are joining him today, his niece Cameron, and of course the dedicated woman who has been by his side ever since they were young Foreign Service officers working together in Baghdad in 1979, Ryan's wife, Christine.

I understand the challenges of being a Foreign Service couple, and I know that Ryan could never have enjoyed as many successes without the support of Christine.

Those successes make the task of introducing Ambassador Crocker quite easy. The U.S. Senate has had the wisdom to confirm him to the post of ambassador, as the chairman pointed out, five times already—Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria, Pakistan, and Iraq. And this is only a fraction of Ambassador Crocker's story.

When the U.S. Embassy in Beirut was bombed, Ryan Crocker was a young officer who helped pull wounded colleagues from the rubble. When the United States needed to reopen our Embassy in Afghanistan after the Taliban were driven from power in 2001, the Secretary of State sent Ryan Crocker. A few years later, facing the same challenge in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, once again Ryan Crocker was the only man for the job. It is nearly impossible to find other American diplomats who can match his record.

I had met Ambassador Crocker in his earlier posts, but where I really came to know him and to respect him most was during his amazing tour in Baghdad. It is difficult to remember just what Ambassador Crocker was getting himself into when he raised his hand to serve in 2007. The violence in Iraq was spiraling out of control. Dozens of civilians were being killed every day. The ethnic

and sectarian battle lines were drawn. Iraq faced the very real prospect of tearing apart, and America faced the horrifying possibility of being driven from the country in defeat.

Fortunately, President Bush adopted a new policy, and of all the consequential decisions that he made in January 2007—the change of strategy, the surge of forces, the nomination of GEN David Petraeus—one of the most important and least appreciated was the nomination of Ryan Crocker as his Ambassador to Iraq.

I'm sure that if you asked Ambassador Crocker, he will say he was just doing his part to serve his country where and when he was needed most. Heroes always say that. The truth is, what Ambassador Crocker accomplished in Iraq was nothing short of a miracle. General Petraeus has obviously received huge praise for the role he played in Iraq, and he deserves every bit of it. But as General Petraeus would be the first to affirm, our military strategy in Iraq would never have worked without Ryan Crocker's constant, dogged, and tireless leadership of our political strategy.

Ambassador Crocker put the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on a counterinsurgency footing. He established a seamless partnership with General Petraeus and his military leaders which set the standard for civil-military partnerships at every level of our effort across Iraq. He also established a relationship of trust with Prime Minister Maliki and his government, and then used that relationship to push, prod, encourage, and support the Iraqis in saving their country.

Throughout this struggle, as rockets smashed into his office in Baghdad, Ryan Crocker performed his duties with courage, poise under pressure, a unique ability to marry strategic vision with tactical effectiveness, and a relentless work ethic that literally almost killed him.

I commend the President for recognizing that there is no better man for the job of Ambassador to Afghanistan than Ryan Crocker. I also commend Ambassador Crocker for again answering his country's call to service. In Afghanistan today, a new generation of Americans, both military personnel and civilians, is writing the inspiring next chapter to the history of our great Nation. The challenge for all of us, in our time of service, is to strive to be equal to these heroic fellow Americans.

In nominating Ryan Crocker as Ambassador to Afghanistan, the President has chosen a man who is worthy of the service and sacrifice of those he must lead. I hope all of you will reach a similar judgment and vote him out of committee quickly so that the full Senate can confirm Ambassador Crocker as rapidly as possible.

And I'd like to finally add, I think that the chairman and ranking member and others would agree with me. We've had the great privilege of having so many outstanding Americans serve in our diplomatic service in our State Department, and Americans probably are not appreciative of the enormous sacrifices they make. There is no greater example of that kind of service and sacrifice than the man whose nomination is before you today.

I thank the chairman, and I apologize for the length of my opening statement.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, Senator McCain, no apology needed at all. I think it's a very important statement. I appreciate the fact, both

the length and the thought that went into it. I think it's very helpful to the committee. It's important for the record, and I think it really states in a very articulate, clear way the assets that Ambassador Crocker brings to this task. And I think it's important that you've said those things and I've said those things so that the message goes clear to President Karzai, to President Zardari, to others in the region that this is a serious person that we all have confidence in and brings a great deal of experience. So I think your introduction was, frankly, superb and really welcome. Thank you.

Ambassador Crocker, you're flying alone now, but you've done that a lot. So we are delighted to welcome your testimony and you to the committee.

You know how it works. If you want to put your full statement in the record as if read in full, it will be placed there. If you want to summarize, we can then have a good dialogue and look forward to the questions. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN C. CROCKER, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to become U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. And I'm very grateful to Senator McCain for his most generous introduction and for his recognition of the Foreign Service, my colleagues that over the years have labored hard on behalf of America's vital interests and sometimes paid the ultimate price.

I am also grateful to the President and to Secretary Clinton for placing their trust in me. If confirmed, I look forward to cooperating with you to advance America's interests in Afghanistan.

I had the privilege of opening the Embassy in Kabul in January 2002. As you noted, I worked closely with President Karzai in those early days and developed respect for his commitment to a stable, unified Afghanistan. If confirmed, I look forward to renewing our relationship and working together toward that vision.

I also had the honor of serving as the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan from 2004–07, which developed my understanding of the region and which, if confirmed, I hope will be a useful asset as we work with our regional and international partners.

As you know, our core goal in Afghanistan and Pakistan is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and to deny it safe haven in those countries. Osama bin Laden's death is an important step, but much work remains to be done to ensure that al-Qaeda can never again threaten us from Afghanistan, with the Taliban providing safe haven.

Our efforts to pursue this goal are focused on three mutually reinforcing surges—military, civilian, and diplomatic—all aimed at stabilizing Afghanistan so it will not become a safe haven for terrorists again.

The military and civilian surges that President Obama announced in 2009 have stolen momentum from the Taliban-led insurgency. Today, more than 1,100 U.S. civilian experts are serving alongside our troops to help establish the conditions for a sustain-

able and irreversible transition of security responsibility to the Afghan Government. If confirmed, it will be an enormous privilege to serve with these courageous and committed Americans.

Working together with the Government of Afghanistan and our coalition partners, we have made significant progress. But as you have noted, as the President has noted, this progress is still fragile and reversible. Enormous challenges remain: governance; rule of law, including corruption, which undermines the credibility of the Afghan state; narcotics; sustainable economic development, including employment, increased revenues, along with the capacity for the government to provide basic services such as education and health care. Failure in some of these areas can mean failure of the state and the creation of an environment in which our strategic enemies can regroup. Making progress on these issues has been hard, and it will go on being hard, but hard does not mean impossible. As Secretary of Defense Gates has noted, we walked away from Afghanistan once in 1989 with disastrous consequences. We cannot afford to do so again.

Ultimately, all of this will be an Afghan responsibility, realized through a responsible transition. A key U.S. priority in Afghanistan is supporting the Afghan-led transition process that was agreed upon by the Afghans and NATO-ISAF partners at the November 2010 NATO summit at Lisbon. This process will enable Afghans to systematically assume full responsibility for their security across Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

The transition process will begin this July with the transfer of lead security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces in seven provinces and municipalities, which I understand contain roughly one-quarter of the Afghan population. If confirmed, I will work hand in hand with our military partners, as I did as the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq, to continue this responsible, conditions-based transition to an Afghan security lead.

Alongside this transition process, the Afghan Government has launched a peace effort to reconcile insurgents. President Karzai formed a High Peace Council that includes representatives from across Afghanistan. The United States supports this Afghan effort. Over the last 2 years, we both have laid out our unambiguous redlines for reconciliation with the insurgents: renounce violence; abandon their alliance with al-Qaeda; and abide by the Constitution of Afghanistan and its protections for all Afghans, including women. Those are necessary outcomes of any negotiation. If former militants are willing to meet these redlines, they would then be able to participate in the political life of the country.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will work closely with Ambassador Grossman, our Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Ambassador Munter in Pakistan, among others, to continue our efforts to build support for an Afghan-led reconciliation process. I will maintain our efforts to support Afghanistan's long-term reconstruction, sustainable economic development, and the strengthening of key Afghan institutions critical to ensuring that transition is sustainable and irreversible.

We do look forward to a long-term relationship with Afghanistan and have initiated negotiations on a long-term Strategic Partnership Declaration with the Afghan Government in March of this

year. This political framework document will help normalize our relationship and provide a roadmap for our political, economic, and security cooperation. We respect Afghanistan's proud history of independence, and we do not seek any permanent military bases in their country or a presence that would be a threat to any of Afghanistan's neighbors.

In closing, I want to thank this committee for the support it has provided and continues to provide for the vital work of the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. As you know, Mr. Chairman, you have held a series of useful hearings over the past several months to examine our policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and, if confirmed, I will listen to your guidance and continue a dialogue with Congress on our progress on the ground. And in that context, I would note that I've just received a copy of the report you cite. So if confirmed, I think I know where that dialogue is going to begin.

I will also ensure that the precious U.S. taxpayer resources being used in Afghanistan are applied effectively, transparently, and with an eye toward the long-term sustainability of these efforts by the Afghans themselves.

As the Secretary said in her February 18 speech at the Asia Society, "The United States is not walking away from the region. We will not repeat the mistakes of the past. Our commitment is real and it is enduring." As we approach the 10th anniversary of the horrible attacks of September 11, it is a time to remember those who died that day and to honor the sacrifices that so many Americans have made, military and civilian, to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists from which they can attack America.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Crocker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RYAN C. CROCKER

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to become U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Clinton for placing their trust in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you to advance America's interests in Afghanistan.

I had the privilege of opening the Embassy in Kabul in January 2002. I worked closely with President Karzai in those early days and developed a great deal of respect for his commitment to a stable, unified Afghanistan. If confirmed, I look forward to renewing our relationship and working together to help the Afghans realize our shared vision for the future of their country, one that is free, secure, democratic, and can stand on its own feet, and plot its own course toward its destiny. I also had the honor of serving as the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan from 2004–07, which developed my understanding of the region and, which, if confirmed, I hope will be a useful asset as we work with our regional and international partners towards a stable Afghanistan.

As you know, our core goal in Afghanistan, and Pakistan, is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda, and to deny it safe haven in those countries. Our efforts to pursue this goal are focused on three mutually reinforcing surges—military, civilian, and diplomatic. Osama bin Laden's death is an important step toward achieving this objective, but much work remains to be done to ensure that al-Qaeda can never again threaten us from Afghanistan with the Taliban providing safe haven.

The military and civilian surges that President Obama announced in 2009 have stolen momentum from the Taliban-led insurgency. Today, more than 1,100 U.S. civilian experts are serving alongside our troops to help establish the conditions for a sustainable and irreversible transition of security responsibility to the Afghan Government.

Working together with the Government of Afghanistan and our coalition partners, including many Muslim majority nations, we have made significant progress, but this progress is still fragile and reversible. Enormous challenges remain: governance; rule of law, including corruption, which undermines economic growth and the credibility of the Afghan state; narcotics; sustainable economic development, including adequate employment opportunities, increased revenues along with the capacity for the government to provide basic services, such as education and health care. Failure in some of these areas can mean failure of the state and the creation of an environment in which our strategic enemies can regroup. Making progress on these issues has been hard, and it will go on being hard. But hard does not mean hopeless. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has noted, we walked away from Afghanistan once in 1989 with disastrous consequences. We cannot afford to do so again.

Ultimately, all of this will be an Afghan responsibility, realized through a responsible transition. A key U.S. priority in Afghanistan is supporting the Afghan-led transition process that was agreed upon by the Afghans and NATO-ISAF partners at the November 2010 NATO summit at Lisbon. This process will enable Afghans to systematically resume full responsibility for their security across Afghanistan by the end of 2014. President Karzai has repeatedly, and understandably, requested that the United States and our partners and allies phase out parallel structures and move to less intrusive forms of assistance that enable the Afghans take control of their own future. We support that goal and appreciate President Karzai's March 22 speech announcing the start of transition.

This transition process will begin this July with the transfer of lead security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces in seven provinces and municipalities, which contain roughly 25 percent of the Afghan population. If confirmed, I will work hand in hand with our military partners, as I did as the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq, to continue this responsible, conditions-based transition to Afghan security lead, which is a major priority for President Karzai.

Alongside this transition process, the Afghan Government has launched a peace effort to reconcile insurgents. President Karzai made a good start by convening a broad-based Peace Jirga last June that set out a framework for national reconciliation. He then formed a High Peace Council that includes representatives from across Afghanistan. Council leaders are holding meetings in key provinces throughout the country with tribal leaders, civil society, women, and villagers to hear their hopes and concerns for a reconciliation process. They are working to form local councils to begin engaging the insurgents and the broader community.

The United States supports this Afghan effort. Over the past 2 years, we both have laid out our unambiguous redlines for reconciliation with the insurgents: renounce violence; abandon their alliance with al-Qaeda; and abide by the constitution of Afghanistan and its protections for all Afghans, including women. Those are necessary outcomes of any negotiation. This is the price for reaching a political resolution and bringing an end to the military actions that are targeting the insurgency's leadership and decimating its ranks. If former militants are willing to meet these redlines, they would then be able to participate in the political life of the country under their constitution.

As transition proceeds and Afghan leadership strengthens across the country, a process of political reconciliation will become increasingly viable. In turn, successful reconciliation will reduce the threat to the Afghan Government, making transition more sustainable. If confirmed, I will work closely with Ambassador Grossman, our Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Ambassador Munter in Pakistan among others, to continue our efforts to build support for an Afghan-led reconciliation process. I will maintain our efforts to support Afghanistan's long-term reconstruction, sustainable economic development, and strengthening of key Afghan institutions critical to ensuring that transition is sustainable and irreversible.

The United States and our partners will continue to support the Afghan Government and a durable responsible political settlement. Toward that end, we initiated negotiations on a long-term Strategic Partnership Declaration with the Afghan Government in March 2011. This political framework document will help normalize our relationship with the Afghan Government, and provide a roadmap for our long-term political, economic, and security cooperation. In no way should our enduring commitment be misunderstood as a desire by America or our allies to occupy Afghanistan against the will of its people. We respect Afghans' proud history of independence, and we do not seek any permanent American military bases in their country—or a presence that would be a threat to any of Afghanistan's neighbors.

In closing, I want to thank this committee for the support it has provided and continues to provide for the vital work of the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. You have held a series of useful hearings over the past month to examine our policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and, if confirmed, I will listen to your guidance and con-

tinue a discussion with Congress on our progress on the ground. I will also ensure that the precious U.S. taxpayer resources being used in Afghanistan are applied effectively, transparently, and with an eye toward the long-term sustainability of these efforts by the Afghans themselves.

As the Secretary said in her February 18 speech at the Asia Society, “The United States is not walking away from the region. We will not repeat the mistakes of the past. Our commitment is real and it is enduring.” As we approach the 10th anniversary of the heinous attacks of September 11, it is a time to remember those who died that day and to honor the sacrifices that so many Americans have made, military and civilian, to ensure that Afghanistan never becomes a safe haven for terrorists from which they can attack America.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ambassador Crocker.

I want to come back—that last sentence sort of hit me, and I want to come back to it in a minute. But let me say, first of all, that I support and agree with the transition process that will begin this July with the lead responsibility going to Afghan security forces in seven provinces, representing the somewhat roughly 25 percent of the Afghan population. Clearly, the Taliban are trying to disrupt that with their increased violence in the last days, targeting some of the governors and high-level officials.

I also am particularly supportive of the Afghan-initiated peace process, the reconciliation President Karzai has initiated with his broad-based jirga last year and the things coming out of it that you have mentioned in your testimony.

My concern is a little bit in sort of pinning down our own definitions here and the breadth of what you’ve said, and particularly this sort of notion, ensure that Afghanistan never becomes a safe haven for terrorists from which they can attack America.

I think we have to really kind of bear in on this question of what that really entails. What is a safe haven, and how much guarantee is there? To the degree there’s a safe haven, if that’s what we’re worried about, and we want to spend dollars most efficiently, the safe haven is in the western part of Pakistan. We’re spending \$120 billion in a country where there is no safe haven and about \$2.8 billion where there is a safe haven.

The Haqqani Network, the Quetta Shura, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, these folks are the problem, and they’re the ones responsible for most of the violence that’s taking place in Afghanistan.

So I think the question is how do we get this right? I mean, what I saw in RC East when I was there a few weeks ago convinced me that if all we do is the current paradigm where attacks are launched out of the western part of Pakistan, we’re not going to find a very successful road here. I’d like you to comment on that.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are very important points. I have said in testimony before this committee during that brief but happy interlude when I was out of the Service that you cannot really succeed in Afghanistan without a fair measure of success in Pakistan. That’s why I think your legislation, the Kerry-Lugar-Berman legislation, a multiyear commitment, was so important.

These are hard problems to solve. I wrestled with them as Ambassador to Pakistan. I had numerous meetings, as you’ve had,

with the Pakistani leadership to press on the Quetta Shura, on the Haqqani Network, and clearly with the most limited of results.

So again, I think that is why the administration has been right in talking about the two nations together and having Ambassador Grossman now succeeding Ambassador Holbrooke so that you do have an approach that crosses the borders, because certainly that's what the militants are doing.

How to crack that conundrum? Sir, I know you have made huge efforts, as has Secretary Clinton, Ambassador Grossman in recent weeks. We'll have to see whether the Pakistanis do take these actions. And as I noted in my statement, I look forward to working with Ambassador Munter, as well as Ambassador Grossman, because we face a common problem.

The last thing I'd say, Mr. Chairman, is, quite frankly, the reason that most of the problem is in Pakistan and not in Afghanistan at this time is because we are in Afghanistan. And as we go through a responsible transition, it I think has to be, as the President and others have said, conditions-based to ensure that as we draw down our forces—and I'm keenly aware from my consultations of the mood both here on the Hill and publicly, there has to be transition. But at the end of the day, we have to be sure that the safe haven doesn't then relocate from Pakistan to Afghanistan.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand that. The question is, Does it take 150,000 troops to guarantee that doesn't happen?

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, that's again a question that the President will be seized of. I am not part of those deliberations or consultations, and indeed—

The CHAIRMAN. That's an unfair question. It's a question that's on the table. I want to put the question to you, but I understand you're not part of those deliberations now, so I don't expect you to answer it today.

But let me ask you this. In your testimony you say enormous challenges remain: governance; rule of law, including corruption which undermines economic growth, credibility of the Afghan state; narcotics; sustainable economic development, including adequate employment opportunities, increased revenues, along with the capacity for the government to provide basic services; education; health care. Failure in some of these areas can mean failure of the state and the creation of an environment in which our strategic enemies can regroup.

Can you narrow that down for us? Which of those areas means failure of the state and are essential to the accomplishment of our goal?

Ambassador CROCKER. I think clearly the issues of governance, rule of law and corruption have to improve if Afghanistan is to go forward as a stable state charting its own destiny.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you saying, then, that taming corruption is essential to our capacity to achieve our goal of preventing strategic enemies from regrouping?

Ambassador CROCKER. I think corruption, Mr. Chairman, and I draw on my Iraq experience here, corruption totally unchecked becomes, as prominent Iraqis put it, a second insurgency. It undermines the confidence on the part of the people in their government, and it makes groups like the Taliban look attractive.

Mr. Chairman, we're not out to clearly create a shining city on a hill. That's not going to happen. That would apply to all of these sectors I've mentioned. But there needs to be progress. We went through the same thing in Iraq. We chipped away at it. Over time, we got them to take some measureable, if partial, steps on the issue of corruption so that you have a situation in Iraq today that is not, again, a city on a hill, but where they have a good chance of carrying forward without U.S. forces on the ground.

It's the same kind of dynamic that I think we have to go through in Afghanistan, not to solve these problems—

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think that billions of dollars coming from America that are spent through contractors which don't have adequate oversight contributes to corruption?

Ambassador CROCKER. It's certainly something I'm going to take a careful look at, Mr. Chairman. I have met with the State Department's inspector general. They, as you know, did a recent report. We have your staff report. I have spoken to colleagues in government. It's clear that there is a need for more contracting officer representatives. State and AID recognize this. There have been initiatives that you're aware of and that the staff report notes USAID forward, the Accountable Assistance for Afghanistan initiative, the military's Operation Transparency.

So I think there clearly have been problems. I think equally clearly there is a recognition that we have to be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem, and I'm encouraged by what I've heard of the steps that have been taken.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Ambassador Crocker, this committee has discussed, as you have in your opening statement, the possibility of passing to the Afghans control over military and police functions, presumably for seven provinces or about 25 percent of Afghanistan, with the thought of this as the first of such large transitions in the next few years, hopefully occurring before 2014.

I want to ask, however, about the whole conduct of the Afghan state and really how the budget of Afghanistan is put together, in other words, how its obligations are paid for. Now, in the case of the military and the police, the training has been paid for largely, if not completely, by the United States and its allies, and the sustenance of all of that will be expensive.

But beyond that, enlighten us a little bit more about commerce in Afghanistan. That is, how do ordinary people make a living? What kind of industries are there? What sort of investment has been coming into the country or has been generated by any profits or success?

The reason I ask this question is that many stories about Afghanistan's economy indicate that the income coming into that government is pretty low given the ambitions of Afghans and the United States and its allies, which causes the resources required in maintaining some level of security to constitute a significant expense. But with regard to civil society and the economy moving forward, thoughts have come even from President Karzai himself in personal visits with Members of Congress that Afghanistan has remarkable natural resources that might be found, extracted, and sold to others in due course, but that this will require a consider-

able amount of investment and a security environment in which the safety of investors can be better guaranteed. Of course, many of the investors may or may not be friends of ours, or may have very different foreign policy views.

Now, I don't mean to make the question impossibly complex, but as you survey the scene, how is Afghanistan going to raise revenue? And second, if Afghanistan is not able to raise revenue, are you in your preparation for this ambassadorship working with the State Department or other officials on some estimates as to what obligations the United States may have for many years to come? I don't mean solely our expenditures related to our military's continuing involvement there in the near future. Instead, I'm focusing on the long run, as some with whom we've raised this question in previous hearings have said, as a matter of common sense, that our obligations will last for a long time, for a decade or even decades.

This really has to be an important part of our calculations as Members of Congress working with the administration now on 5- or 10-year budget plans for the United States. This could be a major factor, and if we do not get it right, it could have very grave consequences for Afghanistan or their expectations that the American support might be forthcoming.

Can you discuss this general area?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator. It is a very important and, as you note in your question, a very complex set of issues.

And again, at this point I have, shall we say, an imperfect understanding of exactly how Afghanistan works, having not yet been confirmed and not having gotten out there. But I did note employment and economic development because I think these are critical factors.

How does the economy work now? Services are an important part. Agriculture is an important part. I am told that the agricultural sector accounts for 80 percent of employment in Afghanistan, which is why I think we have to continue to support its development in a reasonable way that leads to, again, ultimately an Afghan capacity to carry forward.

Senator LUGAR. What part of that is drugs as opposed to legitimate crops?

Ambassador CROCKER. I'm talking about the part that isn't drugs, primarily wheat. We would certainly like to see them move into, as they want to do, higher yield products such as fruit and pomegranates, which Afghanistan used to be famous for and which provide a better return to the farmer actually, I'm told, than poppies.

But based on what I know, I think the administration is right in dealing with the narcotics issue, not to emphasize, as we tried at one point, the eradication but alternatives, economic alternatives that cause Afghans themselves to turn away from these kinds of things.

I'd make a couple of other brief points on the Afghan economy. As you know, there are substantial mineral resources over the longer term. These can be a significant benefit to the state, but this will take time for them to develop and, as you point out, it's going to require security conditions. The development of a robust private sector is going to be important, and I am pleased to learn that

OPEC is significantly engaged in Afghanistan, working on upward of 50 projects. I would like to see United States private investment come into Afghanistan. I worked hard on that in Iraq with some success.

Customs revenues have to pick up, and I know there is a major effort underway where our trainers, mainly from the Department of Homeland Security, are working side by side with the Afghan border police. Corruption gets into this, too, but they've got to increase their revenues.

The final point I'd make is Afghanistan is a country centrally located in an important region. I think the Afghan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement was a very important step. I understand that President Karzai will be visiting Islamabad in just a few days time, I think the day after tomorrow, which is good in and of itself. Obviously, the leaders of the two countries talk through their issues.

But I understand one of the objectives is to lay out the actual implementation of this agreement, because Afghanistan as a trade and transit center through Pakistan, into India, up into the former Soviet Republics to the north, with Iran, I think all of that can provide a major difference for Afghans' economic future.

Senator LUGAR. My time is expired, but I just want to underline I think it's a remarkable fact you presented, that 80 percent of the employment of Afghanistan is in agriculture. That is huge, and success in this area is obviously paramount. But I get back to the fact that while perhaps eventually the Congress or the public will have a better idea of the budget of Afghanistan, most estimates analyzing Afghanistan's budget indicate that the government's revenues are a very, very small percentage of its obligations, both from a security standpoint as well as the commercial standpoint that we're talking about.

So I get back to my problem, and that is how long a stream of income from the United States going to Afghanistan is going to be required. If assistance to Afghanistan at current levels is not forthcoming in the future, is it likely that the economy and the security situation there will collapse, causing Afghanistan to be back to square one again regardless of any success we achieve in the meantime in providing some security there?

But I thank you again for at least that discussion, and as you get out there you will have more to say.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much, Senator Lugar.

I'll recognize Senator Casey, and I'm also going to pass the gavel to Senator Casey because I need to go to another committee.

Ambassador Crocker, I hope you'll forgive me for that, but I appreciate your testimony this morning. As I said earlier, we're going to try to move your nomination as rapidly as we can, hopefully have a business meeting in short order and get the full Senate to move on it. We look forward to getting you there, and I thank you again for coming in and for your willingness to do this.

Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and thanks for this hearing.

Ambassador Crocker, it's great to see you again, and we're so grateful for your public service and your willingness to commit yourself to yet another very difficult assignment. But I know that you're not only prepared but I have confidence, total confidence that you'll be confirmed, and you should be confirmed because we need you there, we need you on the ground.

I wanted to raise a couple of questions with you. And again, I'd also commend the commitment that your family makes when you take on a tough assignment like this.

But I wanted to bring you back to a meeting that you and I had, and I've spoken about this a number of times, but I think I keep coming back to it because I think it has a lot of relevance to not just our policy in Afghanistan but where we are now this year, this summer, making some difficult decisions, the Congress, the administration, and the American people.

And I start with the setting. It was in Iraq, and it was a small group of people, and you were there. It was in August 2007. And I was complaining at the time, very bluntly, about the language that was used to describe progress in Iraq, victory and defeat, win or lose, all language which I thought was not only inappropriate but, frankly, sometimes misleading, I hope not deliberately so, at the time in Washington. I won't cast blame on who used the language, but a lot of folks did, and it was wrong. It was wrong then; I think it's wrong now.

And I asked you at the time what language do you think is appropriate to the mission, and you gave a very cogent answer. But what I remember most about it was that you said two words, sustainable stability, which has stayed with me ever since.

So I ask you, in light of this mission which is, frankly in my judgment, more complicated, as difficult as Iraq was, a different set of priorities, and frankly a different set of challenges in Afghanistan. But I ask it in light of some of the real numbers that folks in Pennsylvania live with, and I know comparable numbers around the country.

We have—we're at 70 right now killed in action. Sixty-nine is the last number I saw, but it could actually be now 70, which is about a third of where we were with regard to Iraq. We fell just short of 200 there, 197, 198, depending on what accounts you read. So we're about a third of the killed in action as we were in Iraq in Afghanistan now. The wounded numbers, my numbers in Pennsylvania are 455 in Afghanistan, 1,233 in Iraq. So again, about a third of the number in Iraq as it relates to the wounded.

And I guess what people want to know, taxpayers want to know, certainly the families that have loved and lost, families that are contributing at a minimum the time and the sacrifice of their loved ones, is what is the mission and therefore what is the goal? And I'd ask you to comment on that in light of the discussion we had in 2007.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do clearly recall that conversation. That was shortly before the September 2007 hearings that General Petraeus and I took part in, and again, as you may recall from that conversation, I was not among those who have ever used the words "winning" or "victory," not then, not now, not in Iraq, not in Afghanistan.

Sustainable stability were words or a concept that I stood by then and would stand by now in the case of Iraq. Another way to put it is good enough governance, governance that is good enough to ensure that the country doesn't degenerate back into a safe haven for al-Qaeda, and that's what I was attempting to get at in my conversation with Chairman Kerry, I think before you arrived, that there is no intention that I see in any of my consultations here, I certainly don't come with such an intention to produce the perfect society. We can't. But I think by judicious use of resources and conditions-based redeployments and transfers of responsibility as will begin this July, we can get to that sustainable stability.

I have always been and always will be frank and open with this committee. It's my responsibility as an official if you so choose to make me one again, but even as a citizen. As I look at Afghanistan's past, the 50 years of relative tranquility from, say, 1928 to 1978, Afghanistan did require outside assistance, and we provided some very important contributions to their economic development that are still favorably remembered through the Point 4 program, which later became USAID.

So in my—well, again, I'm not well informed enough to lay this out as a thoroughly considered view, but I would anticipate—and this gets a bit at what Senator Lugar was touching on—that beyond 2014 there will be a requirement for outside assistance from the international community, and I think part of our obligation is being sure that the international community continues to understand that they have a great deal at stake here. This is not an American problem only or an American obligation.

But that, in short, is how I would view it, getting—and it's going to be incremental. It's going to be kind of issue by issue, case by case as to what sustainable stability and good enough governance is going to look like, but that certainly is what I see as my responsibility.

Senator CASEY. Thank you. I'm over on my time, but I'll ask you a second round about how we measure that, and I think that's also something a lot of the American people are concerned about.

Senator Menendez.

Oh, I'm sorry. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. I thought I moved up one in seniority. That's OK.

Senator CASEY. Senator Ben Cardin, State of Maryland, Class of 2006.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador Crocker, first of all, thank you very much for your service. You have served our Nation with great distinction, and I thank you for that, and I thank you for your willingness to come back into public service. I can think of no one who is more qualified for the position than you in a very tough situation.

As everyone is suggesting, Afghanistan needs to change, its United States role in Afghanistan needs to change. We could talk about the military aspects and the fact that we are looking toward a redeployment of our combat troops starting in the next month or two, and that we expect that we might be able to accelerate that considering the current status of terrorist organizations operating in the region.

Now, having said that, I want to concentrate on the other part of our role. We have had our military presence, but we also have had an effort to provide economic development assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Now, I know you just recently got the report that was commissioned by this committee, but let me just share with you some observations that should not be a surprise.

It's rather critical of the efficiency of the deliverance of our aid to accomplish any long-term economic stability for the people of Afghanistan. It also questions as to whether we really are operating with a leadership team in Afghanistan that can deliver the type of economic promise for the people; and probably worse than that, that we're creating an arbitrary economic activity in the country based upon a war economy that will not be sustainable, and that we are, in fact, creating an inflationary situation within Afghanistan that will cause a serious problem as we transition to a country that can take care of itself, admittedly with international assistance. I don't deny the long-term need for humanitarian and economic assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

My question is one of how you see your role as the Ambassador to assist us in being able to evaluate how we can transition the United States role and be as helpful as we can so the Afghans can take care of their own people and that we have at least a strategic ally in our war against terror. How do you see using the information that you have learned or will learn or know from the region to assist in helping us, the United States Senate, in transitioning to the next phase in Afghanistan?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator. It's clearly an important question. I see my responsibilities at a number of levels.

First, it is ensuring that we are properly organized as a civilian mission, as an embassy, to ensure that our assistance is accountable and it is effective, and effective for me means it's got to be about transition, building Afghan capacity, helping the Afghans again carry forward without assistance at this scale in the future.

So I know that Administrator Shah and Deputy Secretary Nides have provided some responses already to this report. I have not had the chance to go through it in depth, but I know it will be useful to me if I'm confirmed out at post looking at how we're structured and deployed, looking at our programs and being sure they're effective, again to this end of sustainable stability, with the Afghans increasingly taking the lead. So, you know, obligation begins at home within the Embassy.

The second thing that I clearly would be focusing on is developing a partnership with the Afghan Government. Our programs have to support their vision and have to be sustainable by them, and I know that we already have in place several mechanisms, formal mechanisms that focus on transition. This is a major concern of President Karzai. He has chosen Ashraf Ghani, who I also came to know in my early days in Afghanistan, to head this up from his side precisely so that we don't create that unsustainable wartime economy.

I understand that USAID and other donors have already taken steps, for example, to ensure that they are not inflating salaries. I think that would be very important. For example, the worst thing we could do I think is be competing with the Afghan Government

for talent. It needs all it can get and a lot more to function as a government. So that would be another key part of it.

It's their country, and how it moves forward is ultimately their responsibility. I want to establish myself as a reliable partner but keeping the emphasis on sustainable development and transition, which is what they themselves seek.

And third, I would say again this will have to be in consultation with Ambassador Grossman and others. We have a lot of international partners engaged in Afghanistan, NATO and non-NATO. The United Nations plays an important role, the special representative to the Secretary General. Staffan de Mistura performed that role in Iraq, and I cooperated closely with him there. I look forward to doing the same in Afghanistan.

As I said earlier in a slightly different context, Afghanistan is not a uniquely American problem. It is a threat to international peace and security and requires an ongoing international commitment. So what role I play in that is still something to be sorted out, but clearly I believe I will have a role to play. I hope that gives you some sense of—

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for your answer. I think it's going to be a real challenge because we're not necessarily paying salaries or competing with the Afghan Government. We're paying salaries that look like we're giving just cash bonuses well above reasonable salaries to make friends with Afghans, which ends up supporting a corrupt system.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Senator CASEY. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, I'm here out of respect for you as a person and the role you've played in much of our foreign policy. I know we had an extensive conversation in our office. General Petraeus has asked that we support efforts in Afghanistan through this fighting season, and I think people, generally speaking, have been willing to do that. But I think you sensed certainly in our conversation, but probably among numbers of people here, we're expecting pretty dramatic changes at the end of this fighting season and expect and know that you will help guide those changes into a different place.

All of us know the model that we have in Afghanistan is not sustainable for multiple reasons that we've talked about again in detail in private, and I'm just here to thank you today for your willingness to do this. I don't know why you'd come back and do this other than you're a great American, and we thank you for that.

And again, without belaboring, I know there's numbers of questions that we can ask you that you cannot answer yet, but I think you all know there's a great degree of—it's not impatience—a great degree of us knowing that what we're doing there is not sustainable that is greatly changing the character of the country that your knowledge there hopefully will help us do, and the partnership that doesn't exist the way that it should in Pakistan also. But again, we thank you for that. I look forward to talking to you on the ground in Afghanistan, and I thank you for your willingness to do this.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, sir.

Senator CASEY. Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Ambassador, let me pile on with everybody else. You're clearly a national treasure here, and we're happy to see that you are going over into that part of the world.

I think my major concern—and you and I had the opportunity to discuss this when you visited with me—is how we define our strategic objectives in Afghanistan and how that matches up with what we are able to actually accomplish in a cost-benefit way. I think this is one thing you're hearing from a lot of people right now.

How much do we actually need to achieve in Afghanistan with respect to our national interest? How much do people want to achieve that may be above what we need to and are we getting into this area of nation-building? How much can we achieve? And how much of that actually benefits our strategic objectives? That's what I've been struggling with for more than a year now.

I don't know if you saw the column that Peggy Noonan wrote recently for the Wall Street Journal. It's been a few weeks. I don't have it in front of me, but she clearly is not a radical. She was one of the bright lights of the Reagan administration in which I was very proud to serve. One of the strong comments that she was making was if there is any nation in the world that needs nation-building right now, it's the United States of America. And when we're putting hundreds of billions of dollars into infrastructure in another country, it should only be done if we can articulate a vital national interest because we, quite frankly, need to be doing a lot more of that here.

Time is short obviously, but could you please articulate your view of the strategic interest of the United States in Afghanistan and how the current military policy can help to bring us to an endpoint in that strategic objective?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator. That is, of course, the essential question. As I said in my statement, and as the President and others have said, our ultimate strategic objective is to disrupt, dismantle, defeat al-Qaeda, and in the Afghan context to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes what it was before 9/11, an area in which al-Qaeda can reconstitute itself under protection of like-minded elements.

Senator WEBB. I watched your opening statement from my office, and I don't disagree with the objective. But you can pretty well fight international terrorism without remaking an entire societal structure. Wouldn't you agree? And I know—I watched your comment about how they are not in Afghanistan now because they are in Pakistan—because we're in Afghanistan, et cetera. But you can end up in that region playing “whack-a-mole.”

So the real question is what is the ultimate objective with all of these ground forces and all these infrastructure programs in terms of the long-term advantage?

Ambassador CROCKER. Again, an important and multifaceted issue. What we've seen with the additional forces and the effort to carry the fight into enemy strongholds is, I think, tangible progress in security on the ground in the south and the west.

This has to transition, and again we're seeing a transition of seven provinces and districts to Afghan control, to sustainable Afghan control. So I think you can already see what we're trying to do: province by province, district by district, establish the condi-

tions where the Afghan Government can take over and hold ground. And you're absolutely right, you don't have to build a whole nation, I think, to achieve that.

Senator WEBB. International terrorism and guerilla warfare in general is intrinsically mobile. I fought a guerilla war in Vietnam, and I've written about this for a long time. So securing one particular area—I don't say this critically but out of concern for where this policy is going it doesn't necessarily guarantee that you've reduced the capability of those kinds of forces. They're mobile, they move. The reason that they're international in scope is that they do not align themselves with any particular governmental structure. I just want to lay that out as an area of continuing concern.

I want to ask you one more question in the time that we have. I mentioned to you when you visited my office, and that is we tend to speak of the conciliators in this region simply along the Pakistan-Afghanistan-India axis, when I believe there is a role here that China could play if they would step up to the mat and be a little more overt in their willingness to participate in these types of solutions. They're clearly going to benefit if there's more stability in the region. What are your thoughts on that?

Ambassador CROCKER. It's a great point, Senator. That's—as we talk about the three elements of our strategy, the third one is very much involved in regional engagement. And I would join you in including China in that discussion.

The Chinese, as you are aware, have the copper concession in Afghanistan. OK, that's great. You can only really make that pay off for you if the conditions on the ground permit its extraction and its transport.

Senator WEBB. They also have a long relationship with Pakistan. I know there are some people who would say that's overstated, but clearly they do, and in fact when Chairman Kerry returned here from Pakistan, that same day while we're sitting here in a hearing the Prime Minister of Pakistan immediately made a state visit to China and was welcomed and then stated that China was Pakistan's greatest friend.

I wish you the best. I am grateful that you are undertaking this, and I look forward to visiting you and perhaps continue our discussion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, sir.

Senator CASEY. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Ambassador Crocker, I join my colleagues in thanking you for your willingness to continue to serve the country, and I think I certainly stand ready, and I'm sure all of us do, to be helpful to you as you take on this new assignment.

I know that you haven't had a chance to review the report that was released this morning from the committee, but I think it does provide a renewed perspective on how difficult the challenges are in Afghanistan, particularly the civilian challenges, and much of that has been discussed by others here.

But the report certainly underscores the need for our reconstruction projects in Afghanistan to be necessary, achievable, and sustainable. And I know there have been some concerns about the projects undertaken under the CERP program. I certainly share

concerns about how those dollars are distributed. And I, like others, have called for a number of steps to try and address more accountability in Afghanistan.

I'm very pleased to see the overhaul of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, something that I thought also was long overdue; the appointment of the senior civilian representative to serve as a counterpart to the military commander there.

And I wonder—I know you haven't gotten on the ground there, but I wonder if you can assess at this stage what difference that might be making in Afghanistan and what you would expect your relationship as Ambassador to be with those two civilian counterparts there.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator. I join you in a concern for accountability. I was Ambassador in Iraq, as you know, and I think we all learned a lot of hard lessons.

I would hope to see those lessons being applied now in Afghanistan, and I think they are through some of the initiatives you note and others that I mentioned earlier, the USAID Forward Initiative, Operation Transparency that the military runs, the joint military-USAID vetting mechanism for contractors, the Accountable Assistance for Afghanistan Initiative, and so forth.

One of my first consultations was with the State inspector general. I had a very close working relationship with the head of SIGAR in Iraq, Stuart Bowen, who I have a lot of regard for. So again, I'm pleased that SIGAR seems to be moving forward with real capability, and if confirmed I look forward to welcoming the GAO, which I understand plans to set up a permanent staff in the fall.

I think all of these institutions—the State IG, the USAID Regional Inspector General, SIGAR, the GAO—all have an important responsibility in ensuring oversight and accountability. And you know the phrase, “we're here to help.” Well, sometimes help can be painful. But in my experience in Iraq, I found that kind of oversight to be absolutely essential going forward, and I will certainly, if confirmed, employ the same approach in Afghanistan.

Senator SHAHEEN. And are there experiences from your time in Iraq that you think can be helpful in terms of coordinating all these efforts? Because for those of us looking at what's going on on the ground, as you point out, there are a lot of people there trying to address oversight and accountability, but how is all of that getting coordinated? We know we have General Petraeus on the military side, but is there a similar command structure on the civilian side, and who is responsible?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you for that question because it is an important one, Senator. Basically, there are two and only two U.S. commanders in Afghanistan, as there were in Iraq, one military and one civilian. The civilian commander is the U.S. Ambassador, and I would like to say that as I have consulted and read in, I think Ambassador Eikenberry has done an amazing job in the swift ramp-up of the civilian presence in ensuring that it has been done in an orderly and organized manner.

Obviously, if confirmed, I will need to make my own assessments. But my sense is he has handled a huge challenge with great care, thoughtfulness, and ability.

There are microcoordination issues, and this may be what you were referring to. I have an obligation to see that the entire U.S. mission is effectively carrying out its various roles. I also want to be sure that the accountability element of this, the different inspection agencies are themselves coordinated. We had to wrestle with this a bit in Iraq so that we did not have different inspectors inspecting the same thing and not working in coordination.

There's also, of course, a whole military inspection apparatus which also has to be woven into this. So as I did in Iraq, again I have a responsibility of seeing that the whole mission is operating effectively, and again I give huge credit to Ambassador Eikenberry that, if confirmed, I have the sense I'm going to be inheriting a going concern, but also on the specific issue that our accountability and oversight mechanisms are working as a team and not in isolation or competition with each other.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator CASEY. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Casey. I'll join the other members of this committee in thanking Ambassador Crocker and your family for your willingness to come out of retirement and take on yet again another vital mission for the United States, this time in Kabul. And I'm very encouraged by your successful previous service in Iraq and the very difficult circumstances that you negotiated there.

I was concerned on my one visit to Afghanistan as a relatively new Senator to hear repeatedly about our generational commitment to the stability and security of the nation of Afghanistan. In your opening testimony you cited Secretary Gates' comment that we walked away from Afghanistan in 1989 with disastrous consequences and we cannot afford to do so again, and I think in the previous questions by Senator Lugar and others a number of us are trying to get at the question if we're not going to walk away, how long are we going to stay, and at what level?

And there is a lot of focus on the immediate decision about a drawdown, but I'm really equally, if not more, interested in the post-2014 structure and what it looks like, and was very surprised to hear in-country assertions that we were committed to sustaining a more than 300,000-member Afghan National Security Force, which meant paying for it, and to a sustained U.S. military presence for the foreseeable future, a decade or more.

You also made a comment that we are not seeking permanent military bases in Afghanistan, and I wondered, just as my first question, if you'd comment on the importance of achieving a United States-Afghan strategic—excuse me—a U.S.—in Iraq you achieved a strategic agreement that allowed for long-term stabilization. What importance is there in Afghanistan to our having a long-term United States or coalition military presence? Where do you think we are headed in terms of retaining strategic regional abilities? And how sustainable do you really think, past 2014, assistance required to support a 300,000 ANSF really is?

A few questions, right? Nothing really difficult at all. These are shared questions that I think many of us are confronting.

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, they certainly are the mega questions, and they're important ones. They're ones, if confirmed, I'll be

very much focused on since I would expect to be out there for a couple of years. And I'm not ducking by saying that I just don't know the answer now.

You know, I do think that we have an interest, again, in ensuring that the country doesn't backslide, that it just does not again become an al-Qaeda safe haven. I think we all would share that. The trick is how do you do it, how much does it cost, and how long does it take? And these are questions that my colleagues and I will have to work on, and we're accountable to you as you ask them.

I do think, as we saw in Iraq, that by going in big, you can then come out small. Now, Iraq has oil, and it always helps to have oil, moving aside the corruption issue there. They can pay for a lot of things that the Afghans can't.

I do think the Strategic Partnership Declaration process is important, as the Strategic Framework Agreement was in Iraq. It lets both countries kind of know where they want to move in the future. Obviously, the SPD is going to look different than the Strategic Framework Agreement in Iraq, but I think broadly speaking it's intended to serve the same purpose.

In terms of the ultimate end state for Afghan National Security Forces, the target is to, as you know, is to have the police and army combined at the 300,000 level by this October. To me, that is not a number that's engraved in stone and it would never change. I think, again—and I'm speculating here. I mean, we just have to see how circumstances develop over time, as this first transition of seven districts and provinces takes place, how they do. And farther down the road, 2014, 2015, the Afghans may decide that they really don't need a security force of this size.

Senator COONS. Another key factor to the sustainable progress in Iraq was the not just reconciliation but the reintegration of more than 100,000 through the Sons of Iraq program. So far, reintegration of the Taliban is going quite slowly. It isn't proceeding at anything like the pace you and others were able to accomplish in Iraq.

Do you think reintegration is going to be critical? Because, frankly, the size of the Afghan National Security Force required is partly directly correlated to the size of the ongoing insurgency or Taliban or other extremist activity.

Ambassador CROCKER. It's a great question, Senator, because you're right, and we haven't talked that much about this so far. The Afghans are focused on two elements to bring this insurgency to an end. One is reconciliation, kind of big R, and then the other reintegration, which I guess would be little R. Both I think are premised on a concept we would all share, which is that you can't kill your way out of an insurgency. There has to be ultimately a political solution.

I think reintegration is part of it. I'm told that there are some 2,500 former insurgents that are either processed or in process. It's an Afghan process, of course, and I think Afghan capacity is again an issue here about how fast they can move.

There is another element that I think is significant, and that is the Afghan local police initiative, not quite like the Sons of Iraq. The Sons of Iraq, as you remember, was a pretty varied group. Some of them were former insurgents, some were not. The Afghan local police initiative focuses on individuals who want to stand up

for their community and who were not part of the insurgency. I think their numbers are 6,000, and I've been advised that we expect to be able to continue to expand that possibly to 10,000 by September.

Again, in the lessons learned category, the Sons of Iraq were never tied to the Iraqi Government until quite late in the process, when the Prime Minister made some undertakings to incorporate some into the security services and provide civilian employment for others. The Afghan local police have started out linked to the Ministry of Interior. So you've got all three of those in play, all three Afghan supported and Afghan led, which I believe is important.

Clearly, we'd like to see the reintegration process move more quickly, and if confirmed, that is something that will have my focus because it can be a very—as it was in Iraq, it can be a very important component of a broader process.

But unlike Iraq, I think the ultimate solution will come through a successful reconciliation process, and we'll see what effect the death of Osama bin Laden might have on Taliban leadership attitudes, to what extent the linkage is personal rather than institutional. I don't think we know the answer to that yet, but it is going to be a very important question.

Senator COONS. Thank you for your answers, Ambassador. Thank you.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Coons.

I'd ask our distinguished ranking member, Senator Lugar, do you have a second round?

I wanted to ask one question. I know Senator Shaheen might also have a followup, as well as if Senator Coons does.

Just one quick question, and we can amplify this, or I should say you can amplify this, Ambassador Crocker, with written responses. But I wanted to ask you a related question about the set of questions I asked you about how the American people view the mission and the goals and how we define it.

One way to analyze that not just for Members of Congress but for the American people is to have metrics, measurements, reporting that we know we've had in place. There's probably a good debate about whether they're adequate enough. We learned a lot in the conflict in Iraq about how difficult that can be to measure and to report, but I think we've got to have metrics like that in place.

I want to get your assessment of kind of where we are with that and how you view that, similar to what Senator Shaheen talked about with regard to accountability and having some reporting so that as people analyze the policy and debate it, they have some way to measure progress.

Ambassador CROCKER. It's an important point, Mr. Chairman. And again, I think it's part of that accountability process that Senator Shaheen was alluding to, how do you measure progress. And as you point out, that can be hard in certain areas. In other areas, I think it's easier.

In education, for example, we know how many Afghan kids are in school, over 7 million, 2½ million of whom are girls. And again, as we consider our costs and our options, I just would like to take a minute, with your permission, to comment on girls and women in Afghanistan.

One of the first things USAID did when we reopened the Embassy in January 2002 was to start educational programs for girls who were completely shut out of the educational system, as you know, under the Taliban. And in the middle of January 2002, on a freezing day, I took then-Senator Biden to visit a girls' school that we had just established. We visited a first grade class that had girls whose ages ranged from 6 to 12 because the 12-year-olds had become of school age when the Taliban took over.

And I remember asking a 12-year-old whether it bothered her at all to be kind of in there with the little kids, and she said I am just so happy to have the chance for an education. I was touched at the time, and I still am.

As we consider, again, hard options, it certainly is my intention to see that there would be nothing in my recommendations and nothing in policy decisions over which I might have input or control that would put at risk half the population of Afghanistan, the girls and women who still face some significant challenges but who are in school, in business, and in government.

So I'm sorry for a slight digression, but again, it does touch at metrics. I think these are things we can measure, and I take the point. I mean, I'm not far along into this to be able to give you large quantities of statistics, and not everything is measurable that way. But I take the point that that which can be measured and metricized should be, so the American people and the Congress have a sense of what is actually happening out there.

Senator CASEY. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, and thank you very much, Ambassador Crocker, for that commitment, because that's exactly what I was going to ask as we talk about the potential for reconciliation and reintegration of the Taliban, how do we ensure that women's rights aren't traded away in any negotiations. And I think for all of us who have watched what's happened in Afghanistan, one of the biggest concerns as I think about what happens after the United States leaves is what happens to half of the population, who is women. So I very much appreciate your commitment to ensure that those rights are protected.

Senator CASEY. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Casey. If I might, just one last question, to take us back to I think the very first point Chairman Kerry raised about Pakistan and the disproportionate or significantly different investment we're making in prosecuting the war in Afghanistan and then trying to sustain this uneven partnership, relationship, whatever it is with the people of Pakistan.

As a former Ambassador to Pakistan, I just wanted to ask your advice or input on how you see the prospects of our ever being successful in persuading the Pakistanis to change their relentless focus on India as the primary source of threat to their nation and instead throw in their lot more decisively with us in the war on extremism, particularly against the Quetta Shura in North Waziristan and against LET, and what initiatives you think we can or should be taking to engage New Delhi in this and in helping to realign the strategic calculus of the Pakistanis.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator. I would imagine that my colleagues from Legislative Affairs would say you're not the

nominee for Pakistan, so be careful, but I was the Ambassador to Pakistan, and it is an important question.

The Pakistanis, of course, have been engaged against militants on their soil, and they have lost a very large number of forces fighting them. So it's not like they're not doing anything. But the problems of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Haqqani Network, the Quetta Shura, as you note, persist.

Just in recent weeks since the death of bin Laden, of course, we've had a number of senior visitors who have engaged the Pakistanis, including the chairman, as well as Secretary Clinton, Admiral Mullen, and Marc Grossman, and they have made some statements. It's clearly going to be important for them to follow through on them.

With respect to India, I'm pleased to see from my possible future perspective in Afghanistan that the dialogue between the foreign secretaries of the two nations has resumed. I think that's an important step. I hope they sustain it and they broaden it because clearly the degree to which India and Pakistan start to see some capacity to work together, it's to the benefit of the region, and it's to the benefit of us. But again, that falls to the purview of others, particularly as it relates to India.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Thank you for your input, and thank you for your willingness to take on this vital mission.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Ambassador Crocker, I'm going to be leaving. I'm going to be turning the gavel over to Senator Menendez. He will be the next questioner. But we're grateful for your service, and thank you for the testimony today.

And with that, I'll turn to Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, thank you for your past service, and for your willingness to continue serving. We had a good discussion when you came to my office, and I would like to pursue some of the things we discussed at that time.

I know you don't determine war strategy, but I do wonder what your role will be as Ambassador in terms of informing Congress about where we're at. I'm one of those who believe that we would be more successful in Afghanistan by reducing our troop presence in the south and continuing support for institution-building in the north. It seems to me that a counterinsurgency strategy, which is where we fight insurgents to give the government time to gather the wherewithal to stand up for itself, defend itself and govern itself might be a worthwhile policy if we had a solid partner in this regard, which in my view we do not.

That present policy has had an enormous toll on American lives and on American treasure, and I don't think we've won the hearts and minds.

So give me a sense. Do you believe that we're making sustainable progress in the south? I know that we're clearing and holding, but after that, it will not be sustainable for us to be able to stay. What happens in the follow-on?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator, and thank you also for the time you gave me in your office. That was very valuable to me in trying to get my mind around the big issues.

We, as you point out, are successfully clearing and holding in the south and the west. We're also going to be transitioning seven provinces and districts in the month of July to Afghan security control, and I don't have the list right in front of me, but some of those are in these areas, as I understand it.

It will be an important step because that ultimately is our goal and their goal for the entire nation. They are assured that they can do this. What I understand from my briefings is that we are confident that they have the capabilities in these seven districts to do it. And if successful, that will be a not bad start to the transition that we and they are committed to, to cover the whole country.

Senator MENENDEZ. What role will you play in helping to win over Pashtuns and other groups in the south?

Ambassador CROCKER. Again, at this stage in the process, I cannot answer that with exact certainty because it will be part of a process of consultation with others who are involved in this matter, in particular Ambassador Grossman, who is both a friend and a colleague.

That said, as the Afghans move toward a concentrated reconciliation effort, I would certainly see a role for the Embassy in working closely, as we already do, with Pashtuns in the south. My position in Iraq was basically that we would talk to anybody who would talk to us and not ask a lot of questions as we entered those conversations, at least initially. Now, whether I can get away with this in Afghanistan or not, I don't know. But I do think it's important that we know what southern Pashtuns are thinking, as it is important we know what northern Tajiks and Hezaras and so forth are all looking at, especially as a tricky reconciliation process moves forward.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me turn to a field that I do think you do have a lot to say about, and that is what is the continuing use of U.S. taxpayer dollars for an assistance mission. My understanding is that the President's goal is to reportedly shift from a military mission to an assistance mission in Afghanistan, and that that mission is to help rebuild lives and institutions to create a functioning government. We've done this before, but we've done this with more committed partners, from my perspective.

From 2002 to 2010, we have spent \$19 billion in assistance, and much of which is not sustainable is subject to endemic corruption. I know that there is a report about to be released suggesting that we have had only limited success, and this huge attempt at nation-building may not survive an American withdrawal, which is a real concern to me.

Is this a good use of U.S. taxpayer dollars?

Ambassador CROCKER. I think we have had some significant successes with our assistance.

Senator MENENDEZ. Could you put on your microphone?

Ambassador CROCKER. Sorry. I think we have had some significant successes with our assistance, and I understand the report touches on some of those—that would certainly include education—we were talking about before you came in, and the provision of basic health services. What I can tell you, Senator, is that I am committed to ensuring that the assistance we provide (a) makes an

important positive difference, (b) can be implemented, and (c) can be sustained.

I would agree personally with the three basic conditions that I saw in the report, which I haven't had the chance to fully study, that our assistance projects should be necessary, achievable and sustainable. I know that Administrator Shah and Deputy Secretary Nides have responded on behalf of their respective offices. They are the ones to speak authoritatively on the matter. But I can tell you that if I am confirmed, I mean going forward, our assistance has to make a difference and it has to be sustainable to build capacity.

Senator MENENDEZ. You say we have some successes. Quantify for me in the context of \$19 billion what is success.

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, I think clearly in education, which was an early priority for us, the success of getting over 7 million kids into school, 2½ of those being girls, that would be a metric of success.

Senator MENENDEZ. If we put a dollar figure on that, what would that be? Do we have any sense of that?

Ambassador CROCKER. I can certainly get that for you.

[In answer to the above question, a written reply from Ambassador Crocker follows:]

Since 2002, \$685m has been spent on education in Afghanistan, or roughly 3.6 percent of the total budget. Please know that while this figure is derived from USAID and State funding, this figure does not include DOD funding being spent on education programs in Afghanistan.

Senator MENENDEZ. If you could get it to us, I'd appreciate it, because I'd consider that a success, but I don't think that's \$19 billion, and this is—I'd admonish the audience that we appreciate your attendance, but we're not subject to comments.

I'm going to support your nomination. That's not the issue. My point is that you're going to be in a role that is, yes, diplomacy, yes, foreign policy, and I hope you look at it as a fiduciary to the American taxpayer, because right now I do not believe that we are being good fiduciaries to the American taxpayer. Do you believe that the Karzai government is doing what it needs to do to be an effective, honest, and transparent partner?

Ambassador CROCKER. There are several elements, again, to a very important question. I'll start with the last. I noted in my statement that I got to Kabul in the beginning of January 2002, just about 10 days after President Karzai had been named by the Bonn Conference as chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority, and I worked very closely with him during those early days.

I believe he is committed to a unified, stable Afghanistan, and I look forward to renewing that relationship. I'm certainly going to make every effort as the Ambassador to have a productive working relationship with the head of state to which I'm accredited.

Have we had differences? Are there things that we wish he would or would not have done? Are there things that he wishes we would or would not have done? Of course there are. One key issue is corruption. For the sake of the State of Afghanistan, the Afghan Government is going to have to do more. We wrestled with the same thing in Iraq, and you don't get positive change overnight. But Prime Minister Maliki in Iraq expressed an awareness of the

problem, and incrementally some steps were taken. We have seen President Karzai make the same commitments.

Words do count. Deeds count for more. But I would start, if confirmed, from the assumption that we do have partners in the Afghan Government. That is certainly what I hear in my consultations. Some effective gubernatorial appointments in the provinces, some increasingly effective members of the Karzai Cabinet, that's a critical part of capacity-building and transition. I would see that as, again, a key responsibility to help them develop that capacity.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I'll just say that when I see the reports, both public and private, about where our money has gone, where the corruption is, and I see Karzai talk about the United States as an occupying force, I have real problems having American lives shed and having American treasure continuing to be shed. My understanding is that for that FY 2002 to 2010, we spent \$672 million on education. That's far from \$19 billion of success.

One last question before I turn it over to Senator Risch.

What is the United States position and your position on the efforts to alter the U.N.'s 1,267 list of persons associated with the Taliban and al-Qaeda? Under the proposed plans, I understand that two separate lists would be created, one for each militant organization, and this separation would likely provide the Afghan Government with a much greater say over which Taliban would be on the new list and possibly allow them to remove more than 100 people from the 450-person list that presently exists, providing them with freedom to travel and access to the banking system.

Do you support that effort, which would ultimately decide who stays on the list and who gets off, and are you concerned that potentially dangerous individuals can be removed from the list?

Ambassador CROCKER. Senator, this is one of many issues, frankly, that I am not fully briefed or fully up to speed on. I'm aware of it. Again, the policy of the administration has been that for reconciliation to take place, insurgents, the Taliban, have to renounce violence, break with al-Qaeda and agree to respect the Afghan Constitution. I can't speak for the administration on this matter because I don't know if they have a position.

I would be concerned about individuals who have a record of extremist violence against us and against the Afghans having freedom of movement and an ability to kind of do whatever they want. But again, I cannot be authoritative on that matter.

Senator MENENDEZ. I look forward to pursuing that with you because I'm concerned about where we're headed with these lists.

Senator Risch.

Thank you for your answers.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Mr. Crocker, first of all, thank you for what you do for America. Certainly, your qualifications are impeccable here for this job. I can tell you this, I don't envy what you're about to take on. I've been following this hearing electronically because I've had other things going, but let me just say that I share some of the skepticism that—in fact, that's probably an understatement. I share a lot of the skepticism that's been expressed here this morning.

This is a messy situation that isn't getting any better, and since I've been elected to the U.S. Senate, people back home keep asking

me what's going to happen, how is this going to end, what kind of progress is being made there. Certainly militarily we've done well, I believe, but beyond that, this is very, very difficult, and to articulate what our objectives are and what our goals are and how this is going to end with us achieving those is very, very difficult to grasp, let alone to convey to the American people.

So I wish you well. The problems here are very, very significant, and I'm glad you're the one that's going there because I think that you're the right person to do this job.

But again, I'm very skeptical about how we're going to be able to end this. So, thank you.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Senator. I'm under no illusions of the difficulty of the challenge. If Iraq was hard, and it was hard, Afghanistan in many respects is harder. All I can promise to you and the other members is that if confirmed, I will give you an honest assessment of what conditions and situations are, what are achievable ways forward, and what may not be achievable. That much I certainly undertake to do.

Senator RISCH. And I appreciate that, and I think your observation regarding Iraq and Afghanistan is appropriate. Too often people try to compare the two, and it's a comparison of apples and oranges. What we're trying to give to the Afghan people and have worked at for 10 years and given them in blood, sweat, and tears, you really, really wonder whether they want what we're trying to give them. And if they don't want what we're trying to give them, it's not going to work. So that's kind of where I am on it.

Thank you very much again for your service. I wish you well, take care of yourself over there. Thank you very much.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, seeing no other members, the record will remain open for 48 hours. We ask the Ambassador to respond to any questions as expeditiously as possible so we can move the nomination.

And with that, this hearing is closed.

[Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]