

Opening Statement of Chairman McKeon

WASHINGTON— The House Armed Services Committee held a hearing today on [Recent Developments in Afghanistan](#). Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon made the following opening statement as prepared for delivery:

Witness testimony can be found on the [Committee Document Repository website](#) or linked below. All witness testimony is as prepared for, and embargoed until delivery.

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The House Armed Services Committee meets to receive testimony on the recent developments in Afghanistan. Today, we have with us General Joseph Dunford. General Dunford, thank you for your leadership and service to the nation, and thank you for joining us today.

"The NATO mission has entered a period of "transition." Although NATO has not fully transitioned security efforts to Afghan lead, President Obama already has announced the withdrawal of half of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan by this time next year. In my view, the President's approach is fraught with unnecessary risk. Nevertheless, on my recent trip to the region, I was impressed by how far the Afghan security forces have come. Their capabilities and willingness to fight for the future of their country are remarkable.

"The fundamental question before us is how the United States will continue to preserve U.S. national security interests after 2014. One of the key components to answering this question – in addition to the President's forthcoming decision on post-2014 troop presence and mission set – will be the Bilateral Security Agreement that the Administration is currently negotiating with Government of Afghanistan.

"After over ten years of war, the American people are understandably war weary. Clearly, the situation in Afghanistan and the region is a challenging and complex. But Afghanistan is directly connected to our vital national security interests and we must get this right. We owe nothing less to the victims on 9/11, the U.S. troops and their families who have served and sacrificed, and our sons and daughters who may have to return if we get this wrong. The simple justice that comes from that principled position cannot be overstated.

"General Dunford, again, we are extremely grateful for your service to our country. I look forward to your testimony.

Witnesses

General Joseph Dunford, USMC

Commander, International Security and Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan

- Witness Statement [[PDF](#)]
- Witness Biography [[PDF](#)]

