

# THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCES

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## JOINT HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

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## **THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCES**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA AND  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order. After recognizing myself, Chairman Yoho, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Sherman, each for our opening statements, I will then recognize other members seeking recognition for 1 minute. We will then hear from our witnesses. And without objection, the witnesses' prepared statements will be made a part of the record, and members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record subject to the length limitation and the rules.

I would like to remind audience members that disruption of committee proceedings is against the law and will not be tolerated, although wearing theme shirts while seated, seated in the hearing room, is permissible. Holding up signs or standing up during the proceedings is not. Any disruptions will result in a suspension of proceedings until the Capitol Police can restore order.

Thank you, Mr. Police Officer.

The Chair now recognizes herself for such time as she may consume.

Finally, the third time is the charm. After running into hurricanes from Mother Nature and an emergency tax reform retreat the first two times that we scheduled this hearing, I am glad that we can all finally convene this important and timely hearing. I thank our witnesses for their patience and their willingness to work with us and coordinate our schedules so that we can make this hearing finally happen. So without further ado, we will officially kick off our budget hearing for Afghanistan and Pakistan in an effort to examine the new strategy the President announced 2½ months ago.

What I think many of us are interested in hearing is exactly what the details are in this strategy—how it will be implemented,

what are the benchmarks for measuring success, how the President intends to use the resources available to implement this new strategy. What I did hear when the strategy was rolled out was a clear and decisive message that the United States is resolved to win, to defeat terror, and that we will not focus on artificial timelines for withdrawal. I think that is the approach we should be taking reversing our previous message to the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and others that they can simply wait us out, because we had already predetermined when we would leave. But we haven't seen or heard how we plan on doing this.

We do know that this comes with an undefined and open-ended financial commitment by the United States as we saw earlier this week when the administration sent up an amendment to the budget request for additional resources to support 3,500 more troops. I don't see how we can defeat these groups without the support of Pakistan. I know the President put an emphasis on Pakistan needing to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, to order, to peace. But the strategy was lacking on details on how we are going to get Pakistan to reverse course.

Pakistan needs to quit hedging its bets and get fully on board with the U.S. and Afghanistan. But the strategy was short on details on exactly what tools we will use and how to convince Pakistan that its interests aligned with what we aim to achieve in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the correct move.

Following her trip to Pakistan with Secretary Tillerson, Ambassador Wells, welcome to you, stated that the administration "laid out some very specific expectations of how Pakistan can help create the conditions that would help bring the Taliban to the table."

I hope to hear some of those specific expectations, not just on bringing the Taliban to the table, but to address the use of Pakistan territory as terror safe havens. I support the President's determination to integrate all elements of American power—diplomatic, military, economic, and political—to protect our interests and achieve our objectives, particularly when it comes to leaning on our partners and allies to share the financial burden and to provide more troops. A safe, secure, and stable Afghanistan, free from terror groups is in all of our interests.

The United States should not be relied upon to bear the full burden. Others must contribute to our mutual success. But right now, I don't see that willingness from our partners, especially when it comes to contributing more troops to NATO's mission, and I think the administration hasn't quite gone into detail on how we can get the support. I am also concerned that the new strategy isn't as clear when it comes to our commitment to Afghanistan's future and the U.S.-Afghan relationship.

Since the year 2002, we have made a concerted effort to support and empower women in Afghanistan. And in recent years, we have seen that support start to be realized. Dr. Bera and I had the honor and privilege to host first lady Ghani, former First Lady Bush, and members of the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council for a meeting with our committee members and members of the Caucus for Women's Issues last week in the Capitol.

What we heard was that the United States has helped build a foundation for women and girls that has improved their lives. But



now, what we need is to take that to the next level, to build on previous successes achieved in large part to the work of the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, help them scale up and meet long-term challenges. Women will have an important role to play in Afghanistan's future, and I hope to hear how our new strategy will leverage that to achieve even greater success.

The President clearly defined winning as attacking our enemies, obliterating ISIS, crushing al-Qaeda, preventing the Taliban from taking over Afghanistan, and stopping terror attacks against America. But what is the strategy in which to do this? What is our plan for addressing the growing Iranian influence in Afghanistan? We didn't hear anything in the new strategy regarding Iran's military and financial support for the Taliban, or of Qatar's continued support for the Taliban, and likely other terror groups in the region.

The President also said that we will work with the Afghan Government only as long as we see determination and we see progress; that our commitment is not unlimited and our support is not a blank check, and the American people expect to see real reforms. I am not sure that these are both on the same timeline, and I am not sure that we can achieve our goals without supporting the Afghan Government. I am also greatly concerned with what I see as a dangerous and tragic retreat when it comes to our counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan.

The President's request for fiscal year 2018 was nearly half of our actual expenditure on these operations in 2016. ISIS, al-Qaeda, and so many others finance their operations, in large part, through their illicit activities, most notably through the money they raise from drug trafficking. We cannot just defeat these terror groups kinetically. We need to take out their revenue streams.

Without a commitment to counter narcotics, I don't see how we can totally defeat these groups. There are ideas in this new strategy that many of us can fully support, but we need to hear details on how we will achieve our objectives, and we need to know what benchmarks the administration is going to use to measure success.

I hope to hear some of that from our patient panel today, and how the President's budget request will be leveraged to achieve our goals and fulfill this new strategy.

And with that, I turn to the ranking member of our Middle East Subcommittee, Mr. Deutch, for his opening statement.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, and thanks, Chairman Yoho, for convening this important subcommittee hearing. Thanks, of course, to our witnesses here today from State and USAID, whom I fear are undervalued, underfunded, and underutilized in the current administration.

Sixteen years. For 16 years, Americans soldiers have been sacrificing their lives in Afghanistan to secure the future of that country and to protect our citizens at home. Too often we forget this very simple truth, that while we sit here in comfort, our young men and women are risking everything for us. Just this weekend, we were sadly reminded of this when a Green Beret, Sergeant First Class Stephen Cribben, husband, son, and father of two, was killed in combat operations South of Kabul. This sacrifice, though, includes not just our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, but, also, our

diplomats and our public servants bringing hope and opportunity through the critical work in the State Department and USAID.

Yesterday, we held a hearing in this room on democracy and governance promotion in the Middle East. We cannot secure Afghanistan's future and an effective relationship with Pakistan that roots out terrorism and empowers civil society without these efforts.

We went into Afghanistan 16 years ago in order to remove al-Qaeda, who had been provided safe haven under brutal Taliban rule, and we have since made tremendous gains in decimating al-Qaeda's core infrastructure and helping Afghans reclaim their country. We have seen great strides to improve democratic governance, promoting women's rights, better maternal and child healthcare, and increased access to education. Under the oppressive Taliban rule, before 2001, less than 1 million Afghan children were in school, and almost none of them were girls. Today, more than 9 million children are in school, and over 40 percent of them are girls.

And USAID, which has already spent billions to promote the governance, economic growth, and access to education, just announced another \$75 million project to print and distribute 135 million approved textbooks for grades 1 through 12 to all public schools in Afghanistan. The Afghan people are profoundly grateful for these efforts, and so are the members of this committee.

In August, the Trump administration finally unveiled its strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia aimed at maintaining these gains and ultimately bringing the war in Afghanistan to a close. Today, we have a critical opportunity to hear from the administration witnesses how that strategy will be implemented and what it means for the future of our relationships with Afghanistan and Pakistan. I hope our witnesses can also help explain the motivation and potential impact of this administration's alarming 40 percent decrease in the budget request for these two countries from last year.

In his well-scripted strategy speech, President Trump said, "The men and women who serve our Nation in combat deserve a plan for victory, they deserve the tools they need and the trust have earned to fight and to win." I agree.

But the very next day, Secretary Tillerson seemingly contradicted the President by saying that while we may not win on the battlefield, neither will the Taliban. And while winning the war in Afghanistan has always been an amorphous target, I would have hoped for a clearer explanation from this administration after its intensive strategy review.

What is clear to me is that we are facing a very real risk of backsliding in Afghanistan. The last few weeks have been particularly tough with a number of brutal attacks, including a deadly shooting at a TV station in Kabul this weekend by an ISIS affiliate.

U.S. defense officials have plainly described the current fight against the resurgent Taliban as a stalemate. The most recent SIGAR report shows that U.S.-backed Afghan Government maintains control or influence over just 56 percent of the country's 400 districts, and that around 10 percent of Afghan civilians reside in areas under militant control or influence.

So where do we go from here? There are those who believe that the only way to achieve a stable Afghanistan is through an unending American military presence on the ground. Others advocate for the immediate withdrawal of every last American troop. But serious security experts, I believe, understand a third way. The U.S. should continue supporting and strengthening the Afghan national defense and security forces to ensure that it can one day function independently of foreign assistance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The Chair notes a disturbance of committee proceedings. The room will be in order. I formally request that those disrupting the committee stop the disruption. The committee will suspend while the Capitol Police restore order.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Officer.

Mr. Deutch is recognized to continue.

Mr. DEUTCH. The ANDSF must ensure that it can one day function independently of foreign assistance and U.S. leadership on the ground. Meanwhile, we need to create conditions on the ground that can bring about a negotiated political settlement where the Taliban understands that it can never win power through its military. But any political settlement cannot come at the expense of the human rights and basic dignity of the Afghan people. Ultimately, for this to be successful, the Afghan Government must become accountable for its own future. A stable Afghanistan will require continued patience and consistent resources from Congress. Achieving success in Afghanistan will not be quick or easy, but we owe it to the Americans and Afghans who have sacrificed so much get this right.

I look forward to exploring with our witnesses how the U.S. can, in fact, get this right, and address the ongoing challenges in Afghanistan from Taliban insurgency, terrorism, corruption, economic stagnation, and narco trafficking, as well as Pakistan's role in preventing terrorist groups from establishing safe havens.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch.

And now I am pleased to yield 5 minutes for his opening statement to the chair of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, Dr. Ted Yoho.

Mr. YOH. Good morning. And I thank Chairman emeritus Ros-Lehtinen for spearheading this hearing. And it is nice to know that you are going to looking down upon us as these hearings continue.

Afghanistan and Pakistan continue to make up one of the United States' most complex foreign policy and security challenge. And sadly, in the 16 years of our conflict in Afghanistan, the broad strokes of this situation are strikingly unchanged. Though the previous administration attempted to bring a symbolic close to the combat mission in Afghanistan, in reality, America's longest war is still ongoing. American soldiers are still fighting and dying in Afghanistan, and the cancer of the Taliban and terrorist groups is metastasizing. Pakistan is still seen as both a key to resolving the conflict and shelter for our enemies.

While he is no support of unending wars in the Middle East and South Asia, President Trump observed in his speech that the consequence of a rapid exit and both predictable and unacceptable. In announcing our new national strategy for the conflict, the Presi-

dent laid out an important truth that should have guided our policies all along, that despite the enormous cost, we can't leave without resolution. Doing otherwise would create a vacuum filled instantly by terrorist threats, not just to the United States, but to the free world. Our new strategy must include civilians as well as military efforts to secure a lasting victory in Afghanistan and for the Afghanistan people, and a sustainable relationship with Pakistan. There are many important questions to be answered about how the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development will work within the new strategy and contribute to its eventual success. The administration has proposed reconsolidating the special representatives for Afghanistan and Pakistan back into the bureau of the South and Central Asia.

I hope Ambassador Wells, the acting head of both offices, will share her thoughts whether this will increase operational efficiencies, and contribute to more region-wide strategic thinking. I am particularly interested in hearing more about whether this administration will tolerate Pakistan's aiding and abetting of terrorist groups within its borders. Pakistan has been one of the largest U.S. foreign assistance recipients in the post-911 period. But despite giving tens of billions of dollars in counterterror assistance over the years, terrorist organizations continue to operate with impunity in Pakistan.

We have seen some promising signs that this administration will no longer put up with Pakistan's friendliness toward terror groups, and I hope to hear this new posture is reflected throughout the budgetary planning. A broader question is how reduced resources will be redirected and whether the administration's reduced focus on nation-building, which the President mentioned in his speech, plays into foreign assistance budgeting for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The administration's budget for these two countries reflect substantial cuts, even to accounts which have a strong nexus to defense and security, including INCLE, NADR, and FMF.

So I thank the witnesses for joining two subcommittees today to share their knowledge on these and other important questions, and for working with us on scheduling to hear this hearing. And I look forward to their testimony.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Dr. Yoho.

I now will recognize members for their opening statements, starting with Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, and Chairman Yoho, and Ranking Member Deutch, and Ranking Member Sherman, for holding this joint subcommittee hearing exploring the President's Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thank you to our witnesses for being here today to discuss this critical set of issues.

For 16 years, the United States military has been deployed to South Asia in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11. Since the beginning of military operations in October 2001, our Nation's objectives have evolved several times creating more and more uncertainty as to the future of Afghanistan and America's role in that country's continuing challenges. Most importantly, since October 2001, nearly 2400 American lives have been lost in military operations. We owe it to the brave men and women and their families who have made the ultimate sacrifice to clearly define what our

Nation's role is in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This includes a clear explanation of the President's plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan, detailing the strategy and mission, and what it will take in terms of resources and personnel to achieve the objectives set forth in that mission successfully.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today as they can help inform this process. And with that, I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Rohrabacher of California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I would hope that we are going to be doing things differently to achieve a different outcome. We have been there for 16 years. I have spent a lot of time in Afghanistan over my life, and been involved in its policy. Madam Chairman, we have had the wrong policy. Obviously it hasn't worked. And unless we are—for example, we mentioned going to hold Pakistan more accountable. Unless we are going to eliminate poppy production, which we have not done, all of this time there—Taliban are still making their money, hundreds and millions of dollars off opium production. We have not stopped that. We had the ability to do so.

There are a number of things that needed to be done. We have written a constitution and foisted upon the people of Afghanistan that is totally contrary to their culture. And while it is important for us to defeat the forces of radical Islam, including the Taliban, either we do these other things right instead of just relying on the military, we are doing a great disservice to the people of Afghanistan and the people of the United States.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Dr. Bera of California.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

You know, along with the chairwoman, as she mentioned, last week, we had the ability to meet with First Lady Ghani and First Lady Laura Bush to discuss some of the problems that are facing women and girls in Afghanistan but also to discuss some of the successes. One thing I think we can be proud of as a Nation is that investment in a generation of girls. By USAID's own statistics, USAID has helped support 3.5 million girls in school and has helped increase the number of female health workers in Afghanistan. You know, in 2002, only 25 percent of the health facilities had a female health worker. In 2015, 85 percent do. That is something we can be proud about. As a few of my colleagues have indicated, though, as we start to change our mission in Afghanistan, we have got to look at regional partners. And it would be difficult for us to think about budgets with Afghanistan and Pakistan without talking about India as well, and India's ability to create some stability in the region.

I look forward to the testimony and look forward to thinking about India's role in that region.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Kinzinger is recognized.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. And to the guests, thank you for being here. It is going to be a good hearing. I just think—Michael Waltz, who is a friend of mine, he was a Green Beret in Afghanistan, who wrote a good book. He made the

point that at the moment, the prior administration announced a surge in Afghanistan but had an end date on it. He said at that point, the conversation he was having with the locals ended because they basically said, Look, we really like Americans, we like you here, but we know you are leaving now. And it really set our policy back quite a bit.

I think this President coming forward and saying we are not going to be defeated in Afghanistan, people know that—I think we all know that we won’t be defeated on the battlefield. The only time we will be defeated is with our will, if that happens. And, look, Afghanistan is not going to be a smiley unicorn facility if we leave. It is going to be even worse, and we are going to see another 9/11 type attack being planned. Unfortunately, we are finding ourselves engaged in generational war on terror that I think will last the rest of my life. I wish it was different, but it is the reality.

So Madam Chair, I appreciate you doing this, and I look forward to all the great insights from our guests.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Kinzinger.

Ambassador Wagner.

Mrs. WAGNER. I thank our esteemed chairman for organizing the hearing today.

The President said in his August speech on South Asia that, and I quote, “We can no longer be silent about Pakistan’s safe havens for terrorist organizations.” And he made clear that the U.S. would fulfill its mission in Afghanistan and give commanders the green light to target terrorist and criminal organizations. I welcome the President’s policy change on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and look forward to working with the administration on improving the U.S. security approach in South Asia.

However, I believe that any policy and funding upheavals should include intentional inclusion of civil society organizations and serious reform of the IMET program with Pakistan to emphasize human rights and good governance.

I thank you, and I look forward to your statements, and I thank the chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Madam Ambassador.

Does any member wish to seek recognition?

Seeing no other members seeking recognition, I am delighted to finally introduce our witnesses. Thank you for your patience with the rescheduling.

We are delighted to welcome Ambassador Alice Wells, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and the Acting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Prior to serving in this position, she served as the United States Ambassador to Jordan, special assistant to the President for Russia and Central Asia, and Executive Assistant to Secretary of State Clinton. Thank you for your lifelong service, and we look forward to your testimony, Ambassador Wells.

I am also delighted to welcome Dr. Gregory Huger, who serves as USAID’s Assistant to the Administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs. Mr. Huger has served in various capacities within USAID, including Pakistan’s Deputy Mission Director, Afghanistan’s Senior Development Advisor in Regional Command

East, and Mission Director for Ukraine and Egypt. Thank you for being here. We also look forward to your testimony.

As I said, your written statement will be made a part of the record. And please feel free to summarize.

We will begin with you, Ambassador Wells.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ALICE G. WELLS, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ACTING SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN, BUREAU OF SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS , U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Ambassador WELLS. Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen and Chairman Yoho, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Sherman, and members, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the administration's strategy for South Asia.

At the top of my testimony, I want to recognize and thank the thousands of U.S. servicemen and women, diplomats, development specialists, intelligence professionals, and international partners who are working every day to enhance our collective security. I have submitted the longer written testimony for the record. But here today, I would like to emphasize a few points about our approach to the region.

For Afghanistan, it is conditions-based. The President has made clear that our true presence will be driven by conditions on the ground, and not arbitrary timelines or troop ceilings, and that the ultimate goal is a political settlement that stabilizes Afghanistan and denies sanctuary to those who threaten us. The Taliban will come to understand that the United States has the resolve to deny them success on the battlefield, and their best option is a negotiated political settlement with the Afghan Government. The Afghan leadership has welcomed the President's recommitment and recognizes that the strategy cannot succeed unless the Afghan government does its part.

During the Secretary's October visit to Afghanistan, President Ghani and CEO Dr. Abdullah briefed on the ambitious reform goals endorsed in the Kabul compact, including measures to fight corruption, promote the private sector, combat ghost soldiers and police, and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. Credible elections in 2018 and 2019 will demonstrate to the Afghan people and the Taliban that the central government represents the hopes and aspirations of all Afghans. Our rock-solid commitment to Afghanistan's security provides the time and space for Afghanistan to build its political future.

Our strategy is also regional in nature. A sustainable solution to the conflict in Afghanistan requires more than just a responsible and democratic Afghan Government. It requires the collective efforts of Afghanistan's neighbors and the international community. To be economically healthy and politically secure, Afghanistan must be anchored in a region that respects territorial integrity and sovereignty, promotes government stability, and works toward economic prosperity.

In October, we restarted the Quadrilateral Coordination Group convening Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, and the United States to discuss a path toward reconciliation in Afghanistan. We will vigorously pursue international and regional efforts to build broad sup-

port among the region to increase pressure on the Taliban to come to the negotiating table. Pakistan, of course, is a central part of our strategy. On the one hand, it has suffered greatly from terrorism and has fought back against militants' intent on undermining the Pakistani Government. We recognize the sacrifices that Pakistan has made in its progress against some of these terror groups. Pakistan has been a partner with us in the past when they helped decimate al-Qaeda, and Pakistan is cooperating with us in our efforts to disrupt ISIS.

But we look to Pakistan to ensure that its territory is not a safe haven for the Taliban-Haqqani network and other groups seeking to destabilize the region. We have also called on Pakistan to use its influence to create the conditions that will bring the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Pakistan's support in securing the release of Caitlin Coleman; her husband, Joshua Boyle; and their three children from captivity showed what we can accomplish when we work in partnership. Indeed, a Pakistani officer was injured while pursuing the hostage takers. However, the fact that the Coleman-Boyle family was in Pakistani territory highlights that Pakistan still has much to do to meet its commitment to take action against all terrorists without discrimination.

As long as terrorists continue to operate within Pakistan's borders, they pose a threat to Pakistan's own stability as well as to the security of American citizens and servicemembers in the region. Pakistan has said that it is committed to the war on terrorism and seeks a strong relationship with the United States.

We look for tangible evidence that Pakistan is adopting an indiscriminate posture against groups that threaten the region's stability, including the Taliban, the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e Tayyiba, and Jaish-e Mohammed. The Secretary conveyed specific requests on how Pakistan could make this happen. And he made clear that if Pakistan decides not to meet these requests, we will adjust our strategy accordingly. Pakistan has made important commitments to improve relations with Afghanistan. Afghanistan reasonably asked that the Taliban insurgents be forced to fight on Afghanistan soil without recourse to safe haven, respite, and regeneration in neighboring states.

Finally, our strategy prioritizes the reduction of tension between India and Pakistan, which drives much of Pakistan's security calculus. On his trip to the region, Secretary Tillerson encouraged India and Pakistan to keep channels of communication open. The region and the world looks to both countries to safeguard against a nuclear conflict in South Asia.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to a candid conversation today.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Wells follows:]



**Testimony of Alice G. Wells**  
**Acting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia**  
**Before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittees for the Middle East and**  
**North Africa, and Asia and the Pacific**  
**Wednesday, November 8, 2017**

Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Yoho, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Sherman, and members of both subcommittees – thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss the Administration’s strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and the State Department and USAID’s FY 2018 request for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I’d also like to take this opportunity to update you on recent discussions we’ve had with these two countries, and how implementation of this strategy has progressed.

First, I want to recognize and thank the thousands of U.S. servicemen and women, diplomats, intelligence professionals, development specialists, and Afghan and international partners who are working every day in Afghanistan to enhance our collective security. I especially want to express my appreciation and deep condolences to the families, comrades, and loved ones of the U.S. service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice in pursuit of this vital and on-going mission.

The Secretary recently completed his inaugural trip to South Asia, which included discussions with the leadership of the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. The focus of the trip was the implementation of the President’s South Asia strategy, rolled out by the President in August, and specifically what these countries can do to support it. Today, I want to focus my comments on the diplomatic aspects of the strategy.

**The Region**

First, I would emphasize that the Administration’s strategy is regional in nature. It recognizes that a sustainable and enduring solution to the conflict requires the collective efforts of Afghanistan’s neighbors and international community. An economically healthy and politically secure Afghanistan must be anchored in a region that respects territorial integrity and sovereignty, ensures security by degrading and eventually denying terrorist safe havens, promotes government stability, and works toward mutual economic prosperity. We are working closely with our allies and partners to continue strong international support for the Afghan government and its security forces to build Afghan capacity

to confront the challenges it faces. We are also engaging with regional countries to maintain the international consensus in support of the Afghan government.

Our strategy makes clear to the region, as well as to the Afghan public and the Taliban, that the United States is resolved to stay as long as it takes to enable a political settlement to end the war and achieve victory. This commitment, which the Secretary reaffirmed during his visit to the region, addresses one of the key drivers of hedging behavior among regional actors, many of whom have provided direct support for the Taliban due to growing doubts about our staying power in Afghanistan. We expect this hedging to diminish as regional countries gain confidence that we will not allow the Afghan government to be defeated.

The South Asia strategy also focuses on reducing tensions between Pakistan and India. The United States does not seek a role as a mediator between India and Pakistan, but encourages both countries to restart dialogue at the earliest opportunity. An improved relationship between these two countries is critical to regional security and stability. We are increasingly concerned about the threat to strategic stability in South Asia associated with the introduction of new nuclear capable ballistic or cruise missile systems in the region. In particular, the region and the world looks to both Pakistan and India to safeguard against a nuclear conflict in South Asia. In this context, the United States remains concerned about Pakistan's growing fissile material stockpiles and its expanding and diversifying military nuclear and missile programs.

With India, we value the role the country can play in global security and stability as part of our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. We also want to work with India to counter terrorist threats. And we see significant economic and business opportunities in both countries that we intend to explore for the benefit of all of our citizens.

Today, I will address our foreign policy for each country, but would note that we see the issues facing these countries as inextricably linked. A South Asia that is secure, stable, and prosperous requires cooperation and progress on a range of issues across the region. We will vigorously pursue international and regional efforts to build broad support among the region to increase pressure on the Taliban to come to the negotiating table.

### **Afghanistan**

The strategy articulates a commitment to Afghanistan that is not time-bound and not constrained by artificial troop ceilings. For Afghan security forces, this commitment will boost their morale as they fight with the confidence that the United States will not abandon them. For the Taliban, it signals that they cannot wait us out, and that the only realistic prospect of achieving their objectives is by contesting their claims at the negotiating table.

For Afghan leaders, our commitment is boosting their motivation to make tough decisions as they tackle corruption and take steps to make their government more inclusive and more responsive. There is much that the Afghan government must do in support of our common objectives. For instance, we look to the Afghan government to play a critical role in setting conditions for a peace process and demonstrating it is a willing and stable partner for negotiations that represents all of Afghanistan's tribal, ethnic, and geographic diversity as a government of real national unity. Credible elections in 2018 and 2019 will play an essential role in demonstrating that Afghan governing institutions represent the will of the people, and we look to President Ghani and CEO Dr. Abdullah to implement reform commitments they have identified to improve governance.

In conjunction with our new strategy, and at the initiative of President Ghani, we have launched a new process with the Afghans to agree on and monitor priority reforms in four key sectors: governance, economic development, the peace process, and security. We call this set of understandings the Kabul Compact. The Afghan leadership has welcomed the President's recommitment and recognizes that the strategy cannot succeed unless the Afghan government does its part. The Executive Committee for the Kabul Compact process consists of President Ghani, CEO Dr. Abdullah, our Chief of Mission in Kabul, and the Commander of Resolute Support, and it officially launched the Compact on August 23, 2017.

The Afghan government has already made progress on some of the Compact's most important objectives. Notable actions in response to Compact benchmarks include the replacement of 150 ineffective or corrupt generals and steps to strengthen anti-corruption prosecutions—as demonstrated by legislative action to provide the Anti-Corruption Justice Center a dedicated funding stream, which supports its independence to pursue further prosecutions against high-ranking officials and influential public figures.

The measures proposed under the Compact are the Afghan government's responsibility. Fulfillment of these goals will improve Afghanistan's security, promote economic growth, and strengthen the foundation for a peace process to resolve the conflict with the Taliban. These goals make Afghanistan stronger and, in turn, make America safer. The President was clear that we are not nation-building in Afghanistan. We are in Afghanistan to make Americans safer. The Afghans recognize that they have a responsibility to build their own nation; as Chief Executive Abdullah tweeted in response to the President's speech: "Nation building is our job." We cannot do it for them, but we have an interest in encouraging reforms that will allow Afghanistan to be more self-sufficient and able to independently confront the challenges and threats it faces. We will work with Afghanistan as partners in pursuit of this goal.

### **Pakistan**

Pakistan is important to the success of the strategy. The President and the Secretary have been very clear that the trajectory of our relationship with Pakistan, including U.S. security assistance, will depend on how Pakistan responds to our requests for support in implementing our strategy. During his visit, the Secretary laid out specific expectations of how Pakistan can help create the conditions that will help bring the Taliban to the table.

There is no doubt about Pakistan's significant sacrifices and contributions in fighting terrorism; Pakistan has fought against militants intent on undermining the Pakistani state at the cost of over 70,000 soldiers' and civilians' lives. It has been and continues to be an important partner in defeating al-Qa'ida and ISIS in South Asia.

Our new South Asia strategy presents Pakistan with an opportunity. As the Secretary said to Pakistan's Prime Minister and Chief of Army Staff, "We have a long history of positive partnership with Pakistan. But Pakistan must do more to eradicate militants and terrorists operating within its country. The people of Pakistan have much to gain from a stable, peaceful Afghanistan, and a region that denies safe haven to terrorists." This fact has driven the President's approach, in which we ask Pakistan to take decisive action against all terrorists without discrimination, and not just selective actions against groups that carry out attacks in Pakistan. No partnership can survive a country's tolerance of militants and terrorists who are targeting U.S. service members and officials. Furthermore, Afghanistan reasonably asks that the Taliban insurgents be forced to fight on

Afghan soil, without recourse to safe haven or respite, and regeneration in neighboring states. We are prepared to work constructively with Pakistan to move against these terrorist groups, including the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e Tayyiba, and Jaish-e Mohammed.

Pakistan has said it shares our goal for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and seeks a strong relationship with the United States. We look to Pakistan to create the conditions that will help bring the Taliban to the negotiating table. Towards this end, the Secretary stressed the importance of the government of Pakistan denying safe haven to the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network. Our approach to implementing the South Asia strategy will be informed by Pakistan's actions.

When the United States and Pakistan work in concert, we can achieve significant results. As the President noted, our militaries have cooperated closely and effectively against common enemies. Pakistan facilitates logistical support for NATO operations in Afghanistan. Additionally, the Pakistan Navy is second only to the United States in its longstanding participation in U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces in the Arabian Sea, focused on maritime security and counter-piracy. Beyond security issues, with a population of over 200 million and a growing, entrepreneurial middle class, Pakistan presents promising opportunities for U.S. businesses.

But we remain concerned about the stability and security of the region, and of Pakistan itself. As long as certain terrorist organizations continue to operate and build their capabilities within Pakistan's borders, they pose a threat to Pakistan's own stability, as well as to the security of American citizens and service members in the region. It is in neither our interest nor Pakistan's that Pakistan be destabilized. And so we have a mutually shared interest in not just containing these organizations, but ultimately eliminating them.

We strongly encourage Pakistan to align its military and diplomatic efforts to disrupt the Taliban's operations and infrastructure, and to prioritize their constructive engagement in peace negotiations. Pakistan has much to gain by expanding their cooperation with us, and much to lose if they do not.

### **India**

As Secretary Tillerson noted in his October 18 speech at CSIS, the United States and India are increasingly global partners, with growing strategic

convergence. We welcome the central role of India in the Indo-Pacific region and throughout the world. Our two democracies have a shared commitment to uphold the rule of law, freedom of navigation, universal values, and free trade. Secretary Tillerson also noted that we view India as a partner for peace in Afghanistan and welcome their economic and development assistance efforts.

### **Budget Priorities**

For Afghanistan, this year we have requested \$782.8 million in civilian assistance. The FY 2018 Request reflects the critical role our assistance programs continue to play in our strategic partnership with Afghanistan, and as a complement to our military's ongoing operations in partnership with Afghan security forces to degrade and defeat al-Qa'ida and ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K). The request upholds our 2016 pledge made to the Government of Afghanistan and international community at Brussels, while continuing a steady downward glide path as the Afghan government takes steps toward greater self-reliance. The President is clear that we must help the Afghan government spur private sector growth to absorb the 400,000 young Afghans entering the job market yearly.

To further that goal of self-reliance, our assistance to Afghanistan promotes a stable government and society able and willing to reject the influence of extremist and terrorist organizations. With our assistance Afghanistan now has more effective rule-of-law institutions, an active parliament, and more effective government ministries. Millions of Afghan children – girls and boys – are enrolled in school; millions of Afghans now have access to healthcare; and, Afghan women are making valuable contributions across the country. Under the South Asia strategy, U.S. assistance will continue to promote economic growth, invest in human capital, combat corruption and the narcotics trade, bolster civil society, empower women, and strengthen the Afghan government's capacity to deliver public services.

Our FY 2018 request of \$344.6 million for Pakistan includes \$241.1 million for civilian assistance and \$103.5 million for security assistance. Let me explain how that fits into the new strategy. The \$100 million FMF request is focused on enabling Pakistan to stabilize the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region and fight terrorism. However, part of the President's new strategy means that we are evaluating the full range of tools that could encourage changes in Pakistan's actions, including examining the nature and scope of our cooperation with Pakistan. We are conducting a review of our assistance, to ensure it is aligned with

the level of cooperation we achieve in disrupting the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network. For example, before we move forward with future Foreign Military Financing for Pakistan, the United States will take into account Pakistan's efforts to address these central concerns.

Our civilian assistance bolsters Pakistan's democratic civilian institutions to help them foster long-term stability and promote market-based economic growth. This includes working with the Government of Pakistan to support its efforts to stabilize territory and implement political and economic reforms in areas vulnerable to violent extremists, including along its border with Afghanistan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). We contribute to protecting our core national security interests in the long term by helping Pakistan strengthen its civilian institutions and capabilities, including law enforcement, address the root causes of instability.

### **Conclusion**

The hard-won gains in Afghanistan – by the Afghans, the United States, NATO, and the international community – remain fragile but are worthy of defending. Under the strategy, our diplomatic, military, and assistance resources are aligned in support of a negotiated settlement to this long-running war. We have recommitted to helping the Afghan government and people navigate these challenges with a new approach that leverages additional support from allies, partners, and regional actors. Our commitment is not unlimited, and our support is not a blank check. But as long as the Afghan government continues to show real progress and make real reforms, we will continue to support them as our strategic partners in the fight against international terrorism. The Taliban cannot win on the battlefield. They must know that their only path to peace and political legitimacy is through a negotiated settlement with the Afghan government.

I look forward to today's discussion with your subcommittees on how Congress and the Administration can best support our South Asia strategy, including through foreign assistance resources. Together, we can advance our core U.S. interests in this vital but complicated region. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to working with you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Ambassador Wells.  
Mr. Huger.

**STATEMENT OF MR. GREGORY HUGER, ASSISTANT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN AFFAIRS, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. HUGER. Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Yoho, Ranking Member Deutch, my Congresswoman from my home district in St. Louis, Congresswoman Wagner, members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here to discuss the administration's plans for USAID assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan under the South Asia strategy. It is an honor to appear before you with Acting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, Ambassador Alice Wells, to discuss U.S. assistance that supports our national security.

I want to begin by thanking, as the Ambassador did, the men and women who have served in the U.S. military and our civilian agencies and their families who served and sacrificed in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the thousands of Afghan and Pakistani citizens who have served alongside us.

As was said, I bring to this position, which I have held for 2 months, experience within USAID and in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 5 years on the border, three of them based in Bagram covering eastern Afghanistan, and two of them working FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the consulate in Peshawar.

In the 2 months that I have been in this position, I have had the opportunity to travel to Pakistan and Afghanistan to meet our staff and many of our local counterparts, many of whom I have known for years.

When I went to Afghanistan, I was the head of the U.S. delegation to the senior officials meeting, which was the Afghan Government meeting with representatives of 38 countries that support Afghanistan meeting to review progress over the year, since commitments to support Afghanistan's development were made in Brussels. My takeaway from that meeting was that we do have a real partner in the national unity government.

President Ghani was very articulate in his praise of the South Asia strategy. That was shared by his team as well as the representatives from the other countries attending the meeting. His focus was on shifting from donor assistance to private investment as a long-term solution for Afghanistan and, in that context, addressing corruption and the other impediments to the functioning of a market economy in Afghanistan, including, of course, security. He also, together with his wife, First Lady, emphasized the importance of the empowerment of women. And one-third of the conference was spent on that subject.

My takeaway from my visit of last week to Pakistan, including visits to Islamabad, Peshawar, and Karachi was the strong support for the mainstreaming of FATA in a way that is not yet clearly articulated but which seems to be a priority for political parties, military, and the citizens more broadly. And I was very pleased to see the strong support in civil society for the effort to give resilience to communities to resist extremism, particularly among the youth.



Now, in Afghanistan, and we will talk more about this, I am sure, we are focused on three points: Helping sustain the gains in health, education, and women's empowerment; helping build stronger bonds between the government and the citizens through service delivery, credible elections, and reduced corruption; and through supporting increased private sector investment, particularly in the market areas of the larger urban areas, to create opportunity for the people and revenue for the government.

In Pakistan, we are focused on three main points: First, normalizing the border area, stabilizing the border area, and that includes mainstreaming FATA in whatever way the Pakistanis decide to do it and reincorporating those people who have returned; the second is supporting communities to become resilient to violent extremism; the third is to support private sector investment to create opportunities for the youth bulge.

Thank you for having me here. I am delighted to be here and look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Huger follows:]

**Testimony of Greg Huger  
Assistant to the Administrator  
Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs  
United States Agency for International Development  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and the Subcommittee on Asia and the  
Pacific  
“The President’s Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources”  
Wednesday, November 8, 2017, 10:00 a.m.**

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Chairman Yoho, Ranking Members Deutch and Sherman, and Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for inviting me here to discuss the Administration’s Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thank you for your leadership on these subcommittees as we face complex and evolving humanitarian and development challenges. It is an honor to appear before you with the Acting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, Ambassador Alice Wells, to discuss U.S. assistance that supports our national security interests, promotes our prosperity, and advances American leadership by helping our partners recover from conflict and promote the inclusive governance and economic growth needed to foster their own stability.

I would like to thank the women and men in our military who have served in Afghanistan – who, in some cases have given their lives – and I’d like to also express appreciation to their families. Our gratitude also goes to those thousands of brave American civilians who have served in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, whether they are development workers from the U.S. Agency for

International Development, diplomats of the U.S. Department of State, or the thousands of men and women working shoulder to shoulder with us as contractors and grantees implementing U.S. programs in the region. I would also like to recognize the local Afghan and Pakistani citizens who work – and sacrifice – alongside us to ensure their countries' futures are ones filled with increased access to opportunities, enhanced stability, and a hopeful tomorrow for their children.

As Assistant to the Administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, I bring extensive USAID experience across some of the U.S. Government's most important portfolios, including both Afghanistan and Pakistan. From 2010-2013, I served as USAID/Afghanistan's Senior Development Officer in Regional Command East embedded with the U.S. Military, working on stabilization efforts, and from 2013-2015, I was USAID/Pakistan Deputy Mission Director for our efforts in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Additionally, I served as Mission Director for USAID/Ukraine from 1994-1999, and was Associate Mission Director for USAID Egypt from 1987-1992. I am eager to continue USAID's important foreign assistance programs and to work with Members of Congress to further America's security and economic interests.

The President's FY 2018 Budget Request for assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan reflects our nation's efforts to advance our national security interests and further strengthen our peaceful partnership with both countries, while furthering the President's South Asia strategy. The United

States continues to work with both countries to enact the necessary reforms that will enable them to be more economically self-sufficient and less reliant on donor assistance over time. A stable Afghanistan that serves as a bulwark against violent extremism, along with a secure Pakistan that plays a constructive role in the region, are in America's national interest.

Over the past several years, with vital support from Congress, we have taken clear measures in Afghanistan and Pakistan to ensure our assistance promotes stable, inclusive, and increasingly prosperous countries. Continued investments in economic development, health, education, women's empowerment, and good governance builds social and economic capital, generates revenue, and strengthens public opinion of government legitimacy and effectiveness. This, in turn, promotes stability while simultaneously addresses factors that can push individuals towards violent extremism. Our assistance programs in both countries, therefore, promote economic growth, and advance U.S. national security interests. We appreciate this support from Congress, and the recognition that USAID's development programs are critical components for achieving U.S. national security objectives, and will, in the long run, improve the prosperity of the United States, and of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and our partners in the region more broadly.

### **Afghanistan**

The FY 2018 USAID request for Afghanistan is \$650 million in Economic Support and Development Fund (ESDF) assistance. These resources will facilitate economic growth and

bolster Afghanistan's capacity for self-reliance so they can better maintain the gains made in health education and other basic services. American assistance is closely coordinated with our Afghan partners, and President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah have demonstrated their commitment to these shared priorities. The Administration's FY 2018 request will be used to increase self-reliance and address factors that drive violent extremism.

Economic assistance programs will support export-led growth and create new jobs, particularly among women and youth, while facilitating opportunities for Afghan enterprises to forge new business connections throughout the region. We will continue to look for ways to attract private sector investment and support the Afghan government's efforts to increase domestic revenue generation—thereby reducing Afghanistan's reliance on international donor support.

Over the past five years, USAID has formed public-private alliances with 298 small and medium-sized enterprises in Afghanistan to help reduce the risks involved with business expansion. Afghan firms have shown their commitment by investing more than \$255 million of their own funds into these alliances to grow their businesses. USAID will foster economic growth by continuing to increase the productivity and incomes of Afghan farmers, building value chains that connect farmers, processors, and wholesalers, and expanding opportunities to export Afghan goods to international markets. Already, progress is being made. In late September, with USAID support, Afghanistan and India held a trade and investment show in Delhi, India,

attracting significant interest. A total of 1,700 Indian and Afghan businesses, VIPs, government officials, members of the media and organizers attended the show. Indian and Afghan businesses negotiated approximately \$240 million in confirmed and potential deals, including \$27 million in signed contracts for Afghan goods, joint ventures and investments.

USAID is helping Afghans develop the capacity to both advocate for and implement citizen-led reforms which reduce corruption and strengthen democratic institutions. A more accountable, responsive, and legitimate state can provide a credible alternative to the appeals of violent extremists. This includes enhancing the ability of key electoral, representative, judicial, and executive branch institutions to serve Afghan citizens and by supporting the growth of media and civil society organizations. USAID is preparing to support the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, respectively. During these elections, as in the elections in 2014, USAID plans to support the Independent Election Commission and Afghan organizations that provide independent oversight of the election process and collect pledges from presidential candidates on issues including anti-corruption and women's rights. To ensure we continue to support gains made in women's empowerment, USAID programs will directly support increased access to both basic and higher education, private sector employment and entrepreneurship, civil service and government employment, leadership development and civil society advocacy.

The Afghan government, in particular President Ghani and CEO Abdullah, takes anti-corruption efforts very seriously. USAID supports the Afghan government's efforts to combat corruption, which will require continued achievement of key reforms on their part. The seriousness placed by President Ghani and CEO Abdullah is reflected at the ministry level. Since June 2016, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has referred 84 corruption cases to the office of the Attorney General. MoPH officials, in partnership with the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC), have released a new anti-corruption plan tailored to the ministry. USAID, and the broader donor community, support the MoPH and MEC in these efforts. Building on this success, USAID has broadened our collaboration with the MEC on corruption vulnerability assessments with the Afghan Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Education.

USAID is helping the Afghan government to strengthen its justice system, to ensure that fair, impartial justice is accessible to all citizens. This year, USAID, in collaboration with Afghanistan's Attorney General's Office, launched a program placing 242 Afghan female law and Sharia graduates in a six-month internship in the provincial offices of the Attorney General in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

Additionally, USAID recently awarded the Afghanistan Measure for Accountability and Transparency project. The goal of this project is to reduce and prevent corruption in the government's delivery of public services by identifying and addressing vulnerabilities to corruption, supporting select Afghan government institutions to implement anti-corruption reforms, and strengthening local civil society organizations' ability to effectively monitor progress on reforms and advocate for their implementation where necessary.

Health programs will seek to preserve the gains made over the last decade-and-a-half by enhancing the ability of the Ministry of Public Health to provide basic health services and leveraging the private sector to complement its efforts. In 2016, close to one million mothers received prenatal care and approximately 700,000 deliveries were performed through World Bank-supported health facilities with assistance from USAID and the international donor community. This year, Afghanistan's Cabinet approved the collection of user fees for health care in government-owned health facilities. These health care user fees help recover costs and discourage the excessive use of health services and the overconsumption of care.

From primary school to the university level, USAID is strengthening the processes and institutions which undergird the national educational system to ensure that all children and young adults will have the chance to attend school and seek skilled employment. A nationwide education system with professional teachers using high-quality, relevant learning materials and



methodologies is essential to economic growth, democratic development, and stability. Today, according to Afghanistan's Ministry of Education, more than nine million students are enrolled in schools, 40 percent of whom are girls.

### **Pakistan**

The Administration's FY 2018 Budget request for Pakistan includes \$200 million in ESDF and \$11.25 million Global Health Program (GHP) funds. Pakistan continues to be an important partner for the United States. There are significant areas of divergence in our relationship that require attention, but our civilian assistance efforts are focused on advancing U.S. interests in this vital region.

The United States has supported the efforts of the Pakistani Government to re-establish the writ of the state in areas formerly controlled by militant and terrorist organizations. USAID's efforts have been to support civilian government institutions and to provide humanitarian assistance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The UN reports that 85 percent of Internally Displaced Persons have returned to FATA. USAID will work with civilian authorities and the international community on Early Recovery programs to re-establish livelihoods, reconstruct small infrastructure damaged in fighting, and help rebuild communities scarred by years of war. As Pakistan makes decisions on mainstreaming FATA, USAID will provide support to government institutions and civil society to implement Pakistan's reform

agenda. Funding will also support programming in targeted areas of Karachi and southern Punjab which are vulnerable to violent extremism. USAID will support civil society organizations that want to actively participate in the democratic process, assist the Government of Pakistan to deliver reliable municipal services to its citizens, and help Pakistan build the capacity of its institutions to manage upcoming elections, including the planned 2018 federal election.

Energy activities include technical and financial assistance that will help the Government of Pakistan attract higher levels of private investment into its energy sector, ultimately supporting stability and growth in the region. The United States will support Pakistan as it improves governance and policy reform efforts, incentivizes improved distribution company performance, upgrades the power transmission system, and attracts private investment to the sector.

Economic growth activities will work with Pakistan to support financial market development, promote regional economic connectivity, and provide assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises, further advancing Pakistan's economic stability. In agriculture, we will help Pakistan improve the business enabling environment and further develop value-chains, through a combination of policy reform work, capacity building, and improving crop-yields through the dissemination of improved technology. In the last five years, more than one million rural households have benefited from USAID assistance. USAID supports economic policy reforms that lead to an improved business environment that facilitates private sector development and

growth. For example, in 2015 USAID assisted the Government of Pakistan to enact an amendment to the Seed Law, which established the legal enabling environment for operation of private seed companies. This legislation is expected to stimulate competition and foreign investment.

Education assistance will continue to concentrate on helping Pakistan establish the environment needed to deliver quality education to primary school students; give access to tertiary education for those who otherwise would not be able to afford it; and create the resources needed for researchers to solve Pakistan's development challenges. In basic education, the U.S.-Pakistan Basic Education Initiative – encompassing the Pakistan Reading Project and the Sindh Basic Education Project – will continue with a focus on helping Pakistan improve early grade reading, build the capacity of current and future teachers; improve school infrastructure and management, and encourage community involvement. In tertiary education, assistance to strengthening university institutions and their academic programs will continue, as well as support for the Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program, with 50 percent of scholarships going to women.

Health assistance will focus on helping Pakistan strengthen health delivery systems and institutions at the national and provincial level and improve access to maternal and child health. Over the last six years, USAID has provided over 7.8 million women and children with quality maternal, child, and other health care services. USAID efforts have supported the provincial

governments in Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa improve their budgeting capabilities. With USAID assistance, these provincial governments have been able to now set aside \$97 million of their own funding for the provision of health care services.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT**

USAID takes oversight and accountability of its programs and use of U.S. taxpayer dollars very seriously. These countries are challenging environments, and USAID continues to refine and adapt its programs in order to achieve the best possible results and ensure appropriate oversight in the most efficient and cost effective manner. Both Missions have developed monitoring approaches to mitigate the limitations on mobility and reduced field staff in each country. The monitoring approach includes collecting data, as appropriate, from independent, third-party monitoring contractors; site visits by U.S. Government staff; remote monitoring of events using telecommunication technology, reporting by implementing partners, local nongovernmental organizations and civil society; and use of technological tools, such as time- and date-stamped photos. Multiple sources of monitoring data allows USAID to compare information received from separate sources to ensure the greatest degree of oversight possible.

USAID employs stringent oversight safeguards to protect programs from waste, fraud, and abuse and to ensure that American investments in Afghanistan and Pakistan achieve their intended impact. USAID modifies or suspends projects if performance is not on track or oversight

standards cannot be met. Other safeguards include partner vetting and third-party monitoring to better ensure that funds supporting projects do not benefit or further the legitimacy of the Taliban or other violent extremist organizations. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, USAID vets U.S. and non-U.S. companies, along with non-U.S. key individuals seeking to be prime contractors, sub-contractors, grant recipients, and sub-grantees, to determine whether or not they are associated with known entities or individuals associated with terrorist organizations.

## **CONCLUSION**

As USAID looks to 2018 and beyond, the Agency is committed to strategically investing in Afghanistan and Pakistan to support the Administration's South Asia policy. Economic assistance remains a critical tool to promote regional stability, and more broadly, U.S. national security. We will continue to make these important contributions while also safeguarding taxpayer funds. It is an honor to be able to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard. Thank you and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much to both of you for your patience and for being here.

Ambassador Wells, it was reported last week that there is a proposal on the table to have the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan in the White House. The report also confirmed that the actual office had been dissolved at State with the duties and functions fully integrated into the SCA Bureau.

Do you have any update on that decision? That would seem to many of us that State is no longer a key player when it comes to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ambassador WELLS. I am not aware of a measure to move SRAP to the White House. But within the State Department, we have completed a reintegration, a combination of the South and Central Asian Bureau with the Afghanistan and Pakistan offices. And this has been an initiative that the State Department has sought since 2016. It reflects very much this administration's view that the answer to Afghanistan is a regional one that we have to look beyond the stovepipe of AFPAK and understand how the region as a whole is going to contribute to the stabilizing.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Well, please keep us updated on any moves that way. Thank you very much.

Dr. Bera and I were happy to host First Lady Ghani, First Lady Bush, and many members of the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council last week. And they expressed gratitude for the assistance from the United States, particularly with the investment that we have made together in women's programs. But they suggested that we begin thinking about more long-term planning rather than implementing short-term programs. USAID has its Promote Program that recognizes the important role that women will have in Afghanistan's future. With Promote now about halfway through its 5-year mandate, are we starting to plan for the next iteration using what we have learned to help inform the next stage when Promote ends for more long-term programming, Mr. Huger?

Mr. HUGER. Yes, we are.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Poppy cultivation. A lot of us have discussed it. Up again last year. Eradication down drastically. Afghanistan produces about 75 percent of the world's opium. And not only does this cause a serious health crisis, but it also provides a great deal of funding for terrorists and incentivizes corruption and crime, yet the budget request for Afghanistan for the international narcotics control and law enforcement counter-narcotics effort was nearly cut in half to about \$44 million, from the nearly \$80 million in fiscal year 2016 actuals. How can we justify this great reduction in the request for the international narcotics control and law enforcement counter-narcotics program, while we know that production is up, and we know that terror groups fund their activities from drug trafficking?

Ambassador WELLS. There is a relationship between drug production and security. And right now, the overwhelming majority of hectares of opium grown is under Taliban control or in contested areas. And so critical to our efforts to counter narcotics are going to be steps to resolve the essential conflict with the Taliban.

The reason you have seen a decline in funding under INL for counter narcotics is because over the years, we have managed to

build a capacity within the government of Afghanistan. We have stood up under the ministry of interior, a counter-narcotics police force. There are two specialized units that are also working in close coordination in training with the DEA. And so we want to see a shift, because we are not there for permanent nation-building. This is about building the Afghanistan capacity.

I think in terms of strategy right now, the idea is not to go after the lowest person on the food chain, the farmer, but to go after the processing centers and the facilities that are the next level up, because it is critical to disrupt Taliban financing.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. I have another question about infrastructure projects, but we have Nikki Haley coming in at noon, so I will yield back the balance of my time and turn to Mr. Deutch, the ranking member.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Since 2001, the United States has provided over \$100 billion in economic and security assistance to Afghanistan. Can you comment on what you believe are the most important outcomes of this aid in the areas of economic development, gender equality, human rights education, health democracy, the rule of law. What are the most important security accomplishments from this aid? What have we gotten for \$100 billion? Both of you.

Mr. HUGER. If I could begin answering from the USAID perspective. As you said in your introductory comments, the progress in education, particularly of girls, has been very important. Very difficult, but very important. And that is something that we will continue.

The effort that Chairman Ros-Lehtinen mentioned in the Promote Program, which is focused on 85,000 women, who have at least a high school education, to help them play important roles in business, in civil society, and in government, has gotten off to a very good start. The infrastructure efforts that we have made, challenging as they have been, have produced a road transportation network that meets minimum requirements of the country, if maintained.

We have made contributions to the production, distribution of electric power, and we have helped Afghanistan make significant gains in health. Where, though, there is a long way to go, health care is available to a very large number of Afghans when it was not before.

These and many other concrete accomplishments are the result of our work in Afghanistan. It is definitely a work in progress. It is definitely facing opposition, but it is definitely worth continuing to achieve the outcomes envisioned in the South Asia strategy.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks.

Ambassador Wells, I am going to go a slightly different direction in my remaining time.

I think it is safe to say that the members on this dais all agree that there is no purely military solution to the war and, therefore, reconciliation of some sort is also going to be needed. The President said, Perhaps it will be possible to have a political settlement that includes elements of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Can you tell us what that political settlement would look like from the administration's perspective? And what would the key impediments to the

Taliban seeking to participate in the reconciliation process be? And is there any way for the Taliban to be a part of this that wouldn't jeopardize Afghani human rights?

Ambassador WELLS. The administration has always said not preconditions to negotiations, but end conditions. And the end conditions have been a cessation of violence, a cessation of ties to terrorist networks, and respect for the Constitution, including the provisions for women and minorities. And that continues to be the case.

You know, this is going to be—there is necessarily going to have to be an Afghan-Afghan conversation. President Trump was very clear that we are not there to micromanage how Afghans decide among themselves to live and to regulate their political life. And so, I think this has been a remarkably open approach by successive administrations, including the Trump administration. The impediments are, you know, foremost, the unwillingness to date of the Taliban to enter into negotiations with the Government of Afghanistan, whether privately or publicly. And so the challenge right now—the question is not whether we are prepared to support, you know, an Afghan-led and owned peace process. We are. And we have said that. And Secretary Tillerson has been quite explicit, that there is a role and a place at the table for moderate Taliban. And we look for them to join this process.

You know, the task right now is how do we get the Taliban to the negotiating table? And there are two parts to that. There has to be increased military pressure. For the last 4 years, they were waiting for us to leave. You know, not unreasonably, given that that was the policy of the prior administration. But, second, there has to be political pressure and coordinated international pressure on the Taliban. And that includes ensuring that the Taliban political commission in Doha is doing its essential function, which is facilitating, you know, peace negotiations.

Mr. DEUTCH. Okay. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Deutch.

Dr. Yoho is recognized.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ambassador Wells, earlier this week, the President issued a budget amendment with respect to the DOD budget. It called for additional funding for troops. He made it clear that he will not talk about troop levels, but that we will ask our NATO allies and global partners to increase their troop levels to support us. Does NATO have the level troops it has deemed necessary for the Afghan mission?

Ambassador WELLS. Our NATO partners have been interested in working with us to ensure the success of this South Asia strategy.

Mr. YOHO. I am sure they are interested, but have they increased the level of commitment since the change of leadership in our country?

Ambassador WELLS. We are confident that we are going to get increased levels of support from our NATO partners.

Mr. YOHO. As of yet, you have not seen that?

Ambassador WELLS. No. The process is ongoing, and we are confident that we are going to see that increased support.



Mr. YOHO. Okay. You have answered my second question, too, then.

Is the current request for \$1.13 billion for Afghanistan and Pakistan enough to implement this new strategy that we have?

Ambassador WELLS. Yes. We believe that the \$780 million, approximately, for Afghanistan, is an appropriate sum that represents about an 18 percent reduction from our previous request, but continues to build out in the essential three areas that Mr. Huger identified as being the pillars of our approach.

Mr. YOHO. And the normalizing and stabilizing border areas, resilient communities, and the private sector investments, you both agree that is where we need to focus on?

Ambassador WELLS. Yes. From the State Department's perspective, very much so. And from the President's speech, the idea that this is not a blank check, that we need to help Afghanistan shift from a donor economy to a private sector fueled economy.

Mr. YOHO. I am glad to hear you say it is not a blank check. You know, I have got in front of me—and, Mr. Huger, I am going to come to you.

Pakistan is among the leading recipients of U.S. foreign assistance in post-9/11 period. Congress appropriated more than \$33 billion in assistance from 2002 to 2016, including \$10.5 billion in economic development, humanitarian aid. In addition, there was an extra \$14 billion in CSF funding which is the Coalition Support Fund.

When I look at that kind of an investment, you know, I always wonder what kind of return on an investment did we get? And so, I think one of the things that we can do is look at approval ratings. And it is interesting to me, with that kind of money that the American taxpayers have allowed to be spent by the people in government; in 2015, 22 percent people that were polled in Pakistan viewed the United States positively. Twenty-two percent. And I guess we should be excited about that, because that is up from 14 percent in 2014. That is about where Congress is. That is according to the Pew Research. However, the thing I find interesting is 78 percent of the Pakistanis polled view China favorably with only 3 percent responding unfavorably. You said you have been in that region for 5 to 6 years. What are we doing to change our tactics to get a better response for the money that the American taxpayers are spending?

Mr. HUGER. Thank you, Congressman Yoho, for the question, it is a very important—

Mr. YOHO. I am going to report this back to Lauren.

Mr. HUGER. Yes, indeed.

The focus of our strategy is in the national security interest of the United States and, going forward, to identify things that are also in the national security interest of Pakistan. It is not a popularity contest at a popular level where, from one month to the next, the polling would show what percentage of people love or hate us. It is about our national security, which is tangentially related to the popularity, but not directly.

So our focus on helping secure the border, helping Pakistan, as it seems to want to do now, to find a way to mainstream that ungoverned space called FATA into the province of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, or in whatever way they want to do it, is absolutely transformational from a historic perspective. Making that a success, and with it, helping to reabsorb or reintegrate 1.6 million people who were displaced by conflict from FATA and are now coming back, 85 percent are back, the rest will be returning, those are things that would make a different Pakistan. That is good for Pakistan. That is good for us. That is good for the region. So it is not a popularity contest. It is about national security of the United States and the countries where we are working.

Mr. YOHO. I appreciate you. Ambassador Wells.

Ambassador WELLS. If I could just add, you know, these polls capture something, and oftentimes it is a response to a policy issue that Pakistanis disagree with. But if you ask Pakistanis, where do you want to study? Where would you like to work? Where would you like to get medical care? I mean, the pull of America and the West is quite strong. And I think as we, you know, continue our engagement with Pakistan, it is really about how does Pakistan want to be a member of this international community and the expectations not only we hold, but our international partners hold in asking Pakistan to take these specific steps to combat terrorism.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Dr. Yoho.

And we are so pleased that our subcommittees have been joined by the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Eliot Engel of New York. And I am very pleased to yield whatever time he may consume to him right now.

Thank you, Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I want thank you, and I want to thank Mr. Yoho and also Mr. Sherman, Mr. Deutch, for letting me participate today in making a statement.

I wanted to ask Ambassador Wells a few questions. And, Ambassador, thank you for your service and for your time this morning.

I want to talk about Afghanistan, because we are 16 years into the war there. After all that time, this conflict obviously remains our most important foreign policy priorities, and there is an enormous amount at stake, obviously, for our country, for Afghanistan, for the region. In August, President Trump announced his South Asia strategy at Fort Myer, Virginia. He told the world that we will win and that we will defeat them and defeat them handily. It was a lot of tough talk, but it really left me with more questions than answers, because we don't know the details, we don't know how this plan will bring the conflict to an end. And I want to just talk about that.

You know, I voted for all the AUMFs back in 2001, 2002. And I am really very much chagrined that we are still operating on that. We should have this Congress attack foreign policy and do what is right, rather than relying on a Congress when I was here, but I would venture to say 80 to 90 percent of the members still here were not here back then. So I have some questions.

Madam Ambassador, is the administration's position that the war in Afghanistan will come to an end by military victory won on the battlefield?

Ambassador WELLS. No. Victory is a sustainable political settlement that results in a stable Afghanistan whose territory is not used to threaten the United States and our partners.

Sir, I had the opportunity to accompany the Secretary on his trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. And there I was able to see, you know, the impact of the strategy in each of those countries. For Afghanistan, it is a recommitment to that country, the knowledge that we are prepared to stay with them as they have to undertake what are very difficult and necessary reforms. It is telling the Pakistanis that we are not leaving, it is not 1989, that you need to count on our presence. And instead of hedging, you know, identify how to mediate the legitimate interests that you have in Afghanistan at a negotiating table. And in India, it is recognizing the role, positive role, that India can play in Afghanistan's economic stabilization.

And so, I found across, you know, the region, the strategy was extraordinarily resonant. And I do believe that after 4 years of counting us out, we have changed the dynamic, and we have changed the conversation, and we are going to see progress as a result.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Let me ask you this: Has the administration provided American troops in Afghanistan additional authorities beyond the train, advise, and equip mission essentially putting them back into more of a combat role?

Ambassador WELLS. The mission is still a train, advise, and equip. I think both Secretary Mattis and the President have made mention to authorities being provided that will allow for more aggressive targeting. That is not really my area of expertise, so I do defer to my defense colleagues. But the number of troops, the commitment of our troops, and the ability of our troops to, you know, actively and aggressively assist the Afghan forces will make a difference.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, Secretary Tillerson said this is a war that will come to an end through a negotiated settlement. He said, We will not win, but the Taliban won't win either. If that is true, why are we, then, sending more troops to Afghanistan?

Ambassador WELLS. As Secretary Mattis testified, and I believe General Nicholson, the conflict has been stalemate, a stalemate generally in favor of the government, but a stalemate. And it had not—the Taliban have not yet been convinced that they are not going to win on the battlefield. And so the provision of additional forces to enhance the train, advise, and assist and to push it down to a lower level we believe is going to be quite significant in making a difference on the battlefield, along with the additional air assets that are being provided.

And so, as I said at the outset, a key impediment to achieving a peaceful negotiated settlement is the unwillingness to date of the Taliban to engage directly with the Government of Afghanistan. We have to change that calculus of the Taliban using both military and political means.

Mr. ENGEL. You mentioned earlier that the administration believes the war will come to an end through a negotiation. So let me ask you: What is the administration doing to prepare for this nego-

tiation, and why aren't we more focused on touting a potential peace process?

Ambassador WELLS. We remain very active in all of the regional architectures that have existed and have been developed to reinforce a message that supports a negotiated political solution. I just recently hosted a quadrilateral meeting with the Chinese, the Afghans, and the Pakistanis. I look forward to participating in the Heart of Asia Conference that is coming up; the Kabul process; there is an international contact group; there are a variety of diplomatic initiatives that continue to work very closely. But fundamentally, we need to get the parties to agree to talk to one another directly. And that involves changing the Taliban's calculus.

We also believe—I also believe that we need to improve the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan to see better cooperation between the two countries. And so we have been supportive of General Bajwa, chief of army staff's recent visit to Kabul, his commitment to undertake specific initiatives with his Afghan counterparts.

So on a variety of levels, bilaterally, trilaterally, and then larger international groupings, we are pursuing this effort, sir.

Mr. ENGEL. I don't believe that we should cut and run in Afghanistan. I don't believe that we shouldn't care about what happens there. Obviously, it is very important. But I think you can understand that many of us are worried about getting bogged down in a situation where we can't get out and use it more and more as justification. And as the years go on and on, and we are still going back to an AUMF that is old and antiquated—and by the way, I said this under the previous administration and under this administration, I would say it under any administration—I do think Congress has to play a much more important role. We are a coequal branch of government, and we should be playing a more important role if, indeed, the effect of our policy is going to be to wear us down and keep us there in a war that we cannot win, that admittedly we cannot win. You know, what changes? What changes 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now?

Ambassador WELLS. And I think the steps that the government of Afghanistan is taking and needs to take to enhance its inclusivity to make itself a more attractive partner to demonstrate that the central government is representative of all the Afghan people are critical. And so, both President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah, when they met with Secretary Tillerson, discussed the Kabul Compact. The 200 Metrics that the Afghans themselves have developed, to be able to measure specific reforms across the fields of economics, governance, security, and reconciliation are an important symbol of the fact that with President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah, we do have partners that we can work with in this effort at reform.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, and thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Engel. We are honored by your presence and thank you for the questions.

And I would like to recognize Ambassador Wagner to take over our part of the subcommittee—joint subcommittee hearing.

Thank you, Ambassador.

Mrs. WAGNER. [presiding]. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, for 5 minutes for questioning.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The American people have every right to be concerned when we are talking about putting more troops into Afghanistan, considering the fact that we have been there as long as we have, and been suffering casualties. The 2,400 dead does not include the wounded that we have had in Afghanistan, which is a tremendous cost to families across our country. And I think that it behooves decision-makers, if they are going to try to use military force as a political tool, achieving political ends, that we are also looking at what is necessary for that to succeed. Let me just know that I am not as great an expert as probably either one of you are, but I do have a long history in Afghanistan. And the Constitution of Afghanistan, as far as I can see, and people I know who are totally immersed in Afghan culture, are constitutionally foisted on these people is totally contrary to their culture, say, centralized in Kabul power when, in fact, Afghanistan has the most decentralized social framework of any country I know. I mean, it goes right down to the village level, village family tribal, and then provincial, and ethnic, and then way back up to Kabul. Are we going to be making any changes in the Constitution that so far has not succeeded?

Ambassador WELLS. If I could start on the question of the use of military force. I agree with you, sir, it is—it is an awesome responsibility. The troops that are going in today are performing a very different function. It is a train, advise, and assist function. It is—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I would like an answer to my question.

Ambassador WELLS. Absolutely.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Are we doing—

Ambassador WELLS [continuing]. On the Constitution—

Mr. ROHRABACHER [continuing]. Any reform of the Constitution and the way the government works?

Ambassador WELLS. The Constitution is an Afghanistan document.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We foisted that on them. I was there when we did.

Ambassador WELLS. And it was endorsed by Loya jirga, but underneath the Constitution, within the Constitution, there is the ability for the Afghan Government to amend its Constitution. It can follow its own Constitution—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Are there moves to do that? Are there efforts to do that?

Ambassador WELLS. I am not aware that there are efforts now.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Obviously, the Constitution has not worked to create a better Afghanistan, because we are talking about sending more troops into Afghanistan.

Let me ask this: Fifteen years ago, we developed a fungus that could be dropped from the air and would affect only the poppy plants, and would eliminate the poppy production for not only that year, but for 10 years, but would affect no other crop. Are you aware of that?

Ambassador WELLS. I am not aware of the program.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Are you aware of that?

Mr. HUGER. No, sir, I am not.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, let me note for the record, I have stated this publicly, stated in hearings like this. Obviously, our government has not been willing to stop the poppy production. That is a major source of revenue for those people who have been killing and maiming our American soldiers who have gone to Afghanistan.

As far as Pakistan, let me ask you this about Pakistan. So you have stated Pakistan has been our partner? You had mentioned partner?

Ambassador WELLS. In combating al-Qaeda, and currently in combating ISIS, we have worked closely with Pakistan and achieved significant results. Historically, you know the Cold War history. But more recently, there are elements of partnership, and then elements of extreme disagreement, which is the focus of the south Asia strategy today.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me just note that in—when 9/11, which got us all involved in this, 9/11, I think there were two Afghans involved in 9/11, and the rest were Saudis, and it was planned in Pakistan. And, you know, we have had, as I say, suffering—the Pakistani people are suffering under their own government. And I think before we commit more troops to that part of the world, we should certainly seek changes in the way those areas are governed, or all we are doing is condemning more people to die and to be maimed.

And, Madam Chairman, this is a very serious issue. And we know we are up against radical Islam. But we can't just solve it by thinking—I don't buy any of the reforms that you have been talking about are going to make any difference in Afghanistan, because you haven't gone to the heart of what isn't working. And if we just send more troops, we are going to have more dead bodies, and it doesn't make sense to me.

Mrs. WAGNER. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair now recognizes the ranking member of the Asia Subcommittee, the gentleman from California, Mr. Sherman, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Ambassador, in private conversations with the Pakistani leaders, do they tacitly admit that at least elements of their government were aware where bin Laden was? Or do they stick to the talking point that, oh, we were looking for him, every element of the Pakistani Government was looking for him, we just couldn't find him?

Ambassador WELLS. Sir, I have never heard any Pakistani leader suggest that Pakistan knew where Osama bin Laden was located.

Mr. SHERMAN. And they tend to suggest that they were looking real hard and they just couldn't find him.

Since 2001, we have provided over \$100 billion of economic and security assistance to Afghanistan, not to mention the blood and treasure of fighting the war, and \$20 billion of economic assistance and military assistance to Pakistan. I want to focus a little bit on human rights. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported over 700 people were disappeared, kidnapped, never heard of again. And that is just in 2016. Elements of the Pakistani government and military just see it as a good political tactic to cause their opponents to disappear.

Ambassador, I would like to get you to focus on one particular incident. Two years ago, in November 2015, Sindhi leader Dr. Anwar Laghari was brutally murdered in Pakistan. The Pakistani Government has not been responsive to numerous inquiries about that murder, and he was murdered while he was conducting political activities. His perpetrators have not been brought to justice. Days before his death, he had sent a memorandum to the U.S. Government about human rights violations by Pakistani security forces.

But now here is the new information. Just a few days ago, Dr. Anwar Laghari's son, Asad Laghari, was found dead in suspicious circumstances, very possibly poisoned. I had met with Asad Laghari when he was in Washington. He was pursuing a master's degree at Mehron University of Engineering and Technology at its U.S.-Pakistan Center for advanced studies in water.

What is suspicious about this is that Asad Laghari's death comes just weeks after I had, along with six other Members of this House, sent a letter focusing on human rights issues in Sindh. And that letter especially focused on disappearances, murders, extrajudicial killings. To what extent does the administration take up these human rights issues and disappearances with the Pakistani Government? And to what extent was the issue of human rights and disappearances in Sindh been raised at the recent visits to Pakistan by yourself and by Secretary Tillerson?

Ambassador WELLS. So we regularly raise the human rights situation in Pakistan. As you know, our human rights report on Pakistan is quite candid about the—you know, the disappearances, the other abuses that we see, and that organizations inside of Pakistan, including journalists and human rights organizations themselves, document. And, so, this is a serious concern.

Mr. SHERMAN. And did Secretary Tillerson bring this up directly and orally in his conversations?

Ambassador WELLS. I am not able to comment on whether he brought them up directly, but I can assure you——

Mr. SHERMAN. How about you?

Ambassador WELLS [continuing]. That we bring them up directly, the Ambassador and the consulate——

Mr. SHERMAN. Can I ask you to personally bring up, with high-level Pakistani authorities, the November 2015 death of Dr. Anwar Laghari and the death just a few weeks ago of Dr. Laghari's son, Asad Laghari?

Ambassador WELLS. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Shifting to Pakistan, any chance that the doctor who helped us, I believe his name is pronounced, Dr. Afridi, is going to be released?

Ambassador WELLS. We continue to raise Dr. Afridi's case in every high-level encounter, and we have not yet seen the Pakistani Government move to do so. As you know, we have withheld \$100 million in assistance as a result of his continued incarceration.

Mr. SHERMAN. Not enough. Let's do more.

I was going to bring up, for the record, the issue of Ahmadi Muslims. Sorry for the mispronunciation, but I want to pick up on Dana Rohrabacher's point. Is it the policy of the United States in

Afghanistan to destroy poppy crops to the full extent that that can be done without destroying legitimate agriculture?

Ambassador WELLS. The destruction of poppy crops is always sensitive, and our policy has always been to support the destruction of poppy crops in areas where local leaders agree to this strategy. For most local leaders, this is difficult because of who is impacted most directly, which is the local farmer. So, sir, I recognize the concern, its attention. But, at this stage, the overwhelming majority of poppy is being produced in Taliban-controlled and Taliban-contested areas. The Taliban has become addicted to the drug trade, which is, you know, why we do need to go after the next higher level of drug—

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, it is hard to go back to my district and say we died by the thousands to protect poppy farmers that are sending heroin to the United States, because that is the crop that they prefer to grow and we don't want to be unpopular with them.

Ambassador WELLS. But we are, sir, working very closely with the police forces, the counternarcotics police forces, and the two specialized units that we helped set up to target the next level up quite aggressively in order to try to—

Mrs. WAGNER. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes. So I say welcome to the witnesses, especially Mr. Huger, who hails from Missouri's Second Congressional District and is a Priory graduate, and your daughters, a graduate of my alma mater. So, welcome, sir.

The continued involvement of the Pakistan military in the civilian government is damaging to the country. Assistant Secretary Wells, my understanding is that the fiscal year 2018 request for Pakistan's IMET account is five times the amount request for fiscal year 2016. Can you please explain this increase in IMET funding, what it will be used for, and what the figure is, please?

Ambassador WELLS. IMET funding has been a useful tool for us to establish relations with members of the Pakistani military and through those training courses, to try to inculcate some of the values that we believe are essential to appropriate civilian military relations in any country, certainly in any democratic country.

Mrs. WAGNER. I am glad you mention values, Ambassador Wells. Does the IMET program contain coursework on human rights and democracy? And I do have some concerns as to why it was increased five times the amount since fiscal year 2016.

Ambassador WELLS. I would have to check on the number being a five times increase. I am sorry I can't respond to that. But, traditionally, our IMET courses do have a very heavy component of rule of law, of respect for—you know, of how a military operates, and more time—respect for human rights. And so, yes, that is a critical component of many of our IMET programs.

Mrs. WAGNER. I don't believe that the program does include specific and vigorous coursework on human rights and democracy. So I would like you to—

Ambassador WELLS. I will take that back.

Mrs. WAGNER [continuing]. To take that back and put forward some of the coursework. And I would also like an exact number and some reasoning as to why it was increased five times from—in 2018 over fiscal year 2016.



[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE ALICE G. WELLS TO QUESTION  
ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE ANN WAGNER

The Administration's request for Fiscal Year 2018 actually decreases the level of funding for the IMET program in Pakistan to \$3.5 million, or approximately 27 percent lower than the Fiscal Year 2016 level of \$4.8 million.

Since Fiscal Year 2010, the following IMET-funded programs for Pakistan have included human rights, democratic norms, rule of law, and/or civil-military cooperation in their curricula:

- Gender-Based Violence and Women's Health;
- Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights;
- Legal Aspects of Defense Support for Civil Authorities;
- Civil-military Responses to Terrorism;
- Legal Aspects of Combatting Terrorism;
- Military Judge Course;
- International Law of Military Operations;
- Military Police Basic Leadership Course;
- Military Police Captains Career Course;
- Judge Advocate Staff Officer course;
- Operations Law;
- International Military Law Development Program;
- International Military Law; and
- Military and Peacekeeping Operations Law.

Additionally, senior Professional Military Education (PME) programs, such as the war colleges, staff colleges, and National Defense University, all include democratic norms and human rights in their curricula.

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Mrs. WAGNER The administration's funding request for the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Program would decrease the Afghanistan account by nearly 50 percent, and the Pakistan account by nearly 40 percent. My understanding is that this account is used to support criminal justice institutions and the judicial sector, fight corruption, and reform security forces. Assistant Secretary Wells, is this how this account was used in Afghanistan and Pakistan? And what gains does the administration hope to make by cutting this program?

Ambassador WELLS. We have supported these programs for many years at significant amounts of funding and have to show for it, you know, specialized structures now, institutions that have been developed, counternarcotics police forces that have been stood up, special investigative units that are working in conjunction with our drug enforcement agency. And so the cut in funding also reflects the idea that having stood up these institutions, we are able to transfer now the responsibility to these host government agencies while continuing to work with them in partnership.

Mrs. WAGNER. And you believe these institutions have, in fact, been stood up and are, in fact, fighting corruption and reforming—and reformers have been put in place in the security sector?

Ambassador WELLS. We have stood up these institutions. We continue to work with them and to mentor them. But the change in funding reflects a shift, again, toward shifting the responsibility to the host government.

Mrs. WAGNER. I just want to make sure that we are shifting priorities, especially as I see IMET plussed-up over five times, that we are also shifting toward increased human rights and democracy programs at all levels. Thank you.

Mr. Huger, is the administration intending to reduce the democracy and governance programs that we fund in these countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Mr. HUGER. We are focusing our efforts on the points that I mentioned. Within them is—helped to reduce corruption and to have credible elections in Afghanistan, and to help Pakistan establish governance in the ungoverned area of FATA. FATA has had the Frontier Crimes Regulation since 1902 when the British established it. And there is significant will among the people in FATA to normalize their legal framework. So our emphasis on normalizing the border area will include helping the government establish local jurisdictions that can respond to the needs and desires of the population.

So we intend to have a very significant focus on governance and Democratic elections in both countries.

Mrs. WAGNER. Great. Thank you, Mr. Huger. My time has expired.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Brooks, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I have got some comments, and I am going to ask some questions.

This war began in 2001. Now it is ongoing for roughly 16 years. That is the longest active military conflict in the history of the United States. Early on, the Taliban government was toppled, and al-Qaeda, to a very large degree, was destroyed. And, quite frankly, goals were achieved. Our American military won.

Later on, Osama bin Laden was killed as a result of our presence in Afghanistan. Another goal was achieved, and America's military won yet again. However, we have persisted in Afghanistan, despite those victories and achievements by our military. And the cost, in monetary terms, is estimated to be as low at \$800 billion to \$1 trillion, as high as \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion, when including "long-term medical care and disability compensation for servicemembers, veterans and families, military replenishment and social costs," according to a study by Harvard economist Linda Bilmes.

Moving on, in a more difficult part of the cost are lives lost and casualties incurred. We have had roughly—well, more than 2,000 American military personnel who have lost their lives, roughly 1,000-plus American contractors, civilians, who have been serving in this war zone who have also lost their lives. And we have had roughly 20,000 wounded American casualties, many of whom have come home with debilitating injuries.

We had a protester at the beginning of this hearing, and I am going to make some comments about him. The protester's remarks were about: How long are we going to stay in Afghanistan? And, quite frankly, in my judgment, those views reflect the views of a growing number of American citizens who grow justifiably weary of America's treasury spent, American lives lost, and American men and women coming home horribly injured and permanently disabled.

Earlier this year, on August the 21st of 2017, the President, in a speech, stated, "My original instinct was to pull out, and, historically, I like following my instinct." Someone apparently persuaded

President Trump to disregard his instinct, and, rather than pull out, we are now looking at a dramatic increase in our troop levels and ultimately our casualties and our costs.

So I want to get back to one of the questions that was raised by an audience member. How long are we looking at before we can declare victory? We didn't do it after we toppled the Taliban and debilitated al-Qaeda. We didn't do it after Osama bin Laden was killed and justice obtained. Are you talking years? Are you talking decades? And at what cost?

Ambassador Wells, in your judgment, are we talking years or are we talking decades?

Ambassador WELLS. I am sorry, I can't answer that question. But I would note, as the President said in his speech, that the reason he reverted was because he was convinced that the national—the threat to our own national security remained. And if you look—

Mr. BROOKS. Well, okay, I am sorry. That is not answering my question. But nonetheless, I am going to follow up on your comments. I am also familiar with his speech and he is talking about terrorists, correct? Please, for the record, state yes, not just nod your head.

Ambassador WELLS. Yes.

Mr. BROOKS. Okay. Does that justify then us invading every single other country on the planet in which there are al-Qaeda or Islamic State forces? Is that the suggestion there, that that is the justification for still being in Afghanistan despite this already about being the longest active military engagement in the history of the United States?

Ambassador WELLS. Sir, I think this is specific to Afghanistan's role as being a launching pad for the attack on 9/11.

Mr. BROOKS. But we have killed those people.

Ambassador WELLS. Al-Qaeda continues to operate—

Mr. BROOKS. But al-Qaeda continues to operate in a dozen, at least a dozen, other countries in the Middle East, and in Africa, and in Asia. But let's get back to Afghanistan more particularly. Is it your testimony that you have no judgment, no insight whatsoever, on behalf of this administration, that will help the American people ascertain how many more lives will be lost, how many more of our American troops will come home disabled, and how many more years we will be there, and at what great cost? You have no estimate whatsoever?

Ambassador WELLS. So the judgment is that there are multiple terrorist groups operating in ungoverned spaces in Afghanistan.

Mr. BROOKS. Okay. That is not answering my question, Ambassador Wells. My question is, do you have a judgment as to the length of time—I am not asking for an explanation. I am already at the end of my 5-minute remarks. But do you have an estimate of the length of time and how much more cost there is going to be to the American people with this engagement in Afghanistan?

Ambassador WELLS. The President's strategy specifically does not attach a calendar to this commitment—

Mr. BROOKS. I understand the President—

Ambassador WELLS [continuing]. Because it will be conditions-based. And so I am not able to answer you on how long this will take.

Mr. BROOKS. So it could be decades?

Ambassador WELLS. We would like to get to the negotiating table as soon as possible.

Mr. BROOKS. It could be decades, and thousands more of American lives lost, tens of thousands more of American lives coming home disabled, and trillions of dollars spent that we don't have, can't afford to get other than by borrowing, and we can't afford to pay back. Is that your testimony?

Ambassador WELLS. We would like to get to the negotiating table as soon as possible.

Mrs. WAGNER. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you.

Mrs. WAGNER. Seeing no more members present in committee, I would like to thank the witnesses for their testimony here today, and I would declare the Joint Middle East and Asia Subcommittee hearing on the President's Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:27 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

## A P P E N D I X

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

**Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa**  
**Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman**

**Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific**  
**Ted Yoho (R-FL), Chairman**

November 1, 2017

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held jointly by the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

**DATE:** Wednesday, November 8, 2017

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT:** The President's Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources

**WITNESSES:** The Honorable Alice G. Wells  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Acting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan  
Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

Mr. Gregory Huger  
Assistant to the Administrator  
Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs  
U.S. Agency for International Development

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*



# COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Middle East and North Africa and Asia and Pacific HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 11/08/17 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:04 AM Ending Time 11:26 AM

Recesses ☐ (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ )

## Presiding Member(s)

*Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Wagner*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

## TITLE OF HEARING:

*The President's Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources*

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*GOP- Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Yoho, Reps. Rohrabacher, Brooks, Kinzinger, Zeldin, Wagner  
Dem- Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Sherman, Reps. Cicilline, Bera, Frankel, Gabbard, Schneider, Lieu*

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an \* if they are not members of full committee.)

*Rep. Engel*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐  
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

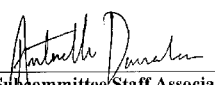
## STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

*Questions for the record from Chairman Ros-Lehtinen  
Questions for the record from Representative Sherman  
Question for the record from Ambassador Wagner  
Representative Connolly's statement for the record*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED 11:26 AM

  
Subcommittee Staff Associate

**Statement for the Record**  
*Submitted by Mr. Connolly of Virginia*

President Trump's FY 2018 international affairs budget represents a unilateral retreat from U.S. global leadership, and Afghanistan and Pakistan are no exception. The President's budget requests a 43.4 percent cut to non-humanitarian foreign assistance for these two countries. While these appropriations represent just one part of a much larger U.S. government response (including defense funds), their role is critical. President Trump's own stated strategy for Afghanistan and the surrounding region would require significant diplomatic resources and capacity to implement, but he has failed to invest in both regards. In terms of budget, personnel, and strategy, the President's plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan is perilously out of sync and endangers long-term U.S. security interests.

Our military and foreign assistance strategies in Afghanistan and Pakistan must reflect the reality that there cannot and will not be an overwhelming U.S. military presence in Afghanistan in perpetuity. Self-sufficiency in the areas of security and economic development must be our goals for Afghanistan. Domestic and foreign threats to Afghan stability and hindrances to effective reconstruction and relief initiatives should be considered direct threats to our mission and our personnel that do remain in country. We cannot be satisfied to trudge along in Afghanistan amassing an ever larger number on our ledger for investment, while ignoring the forces that actively undermine the effectiveness of U.S.-led assistance.

Beyond foreign assistance funding, President Trump has declined to invest in the human resources necessary to carry out the State Department's and U.S. Agency for International Development's missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan. At State, only four out of twenty-two assistant secretary vacancies have been filled, and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs still lacks a nominee. At USAID, only one person has even been nominated to fill the ten deputy and assistant administrator positions. Such a hollowed out diplomatic presence means that we are disproportionately relying on our defense apparatus to pursue diplomatic and development goals.

On August 21, President Trump announced his administration's new Afghanistan strategy, which contained lofty rhetoric but little substance. He failed to articulate a ceiling on troop numbers or a timeline for withdrawal. His plan purports to end "nation-building," and instead focuses on eliminating the terrorist threat in the region. But he fails to recognize that it is our aid and reconstruction efforts that will eliminate terrorists' sanctuaries in Afghanistan, not a permanent U.S. military presence.

There are regional influences that the U.S. must work hard to align with our interests in Afghanistan. Promoting cooperation with Pakistan and blocking the assistance Iran provides to the Taliban are essential components to a broader strategy. Afghanistan shares a 1,600 mile border with Pakistan, and it is in the mountainous border regions of both countries that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have taken refuge. In his speech, the President pressured Pakistan to eliminate terrorist safe



havens within its borders and highlighted the importance of our regional partners like India providing more economic and developmental support. But these diplomatic pledges are not credible given the Administration's emaciated State Department and foreign assistance budget for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

There are U.S. soldiers who are risking their lives and incredible amounts of U.S. funding being put to work within Afghanistan, and we must have a clear understanding of how those resources are best put to use. To that end, the work of Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John Sopko has been invaluable, and SIGAR's mission must be supported. In the most recent quarterly report, SIGAR shared that U.S. Forces-Afghanistan has classified information that has until now been publicly reported, including important measures of Afghan forces performance such as casualties and capability assessments. Given that more than 60 percent of the \$121 billion in U.S. funding for reconstruction in Afghanistan has gone to these forces, this restriction of data is a blow to transparency and accountability.

The Trump Administration's budget and strategy raise serious questions about the preservation of U.S. national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how the President's budget can help realize a secure and stable future for the people of these two countries when it decimates our diplomatic and development accounts.

**Questions for the Record Submitted by  
Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
For Acting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan for the Bureau of South  
and Central Asian Affairs at State Alice Wells  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa  
“The President’s Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources” –  
November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Question:**

We understand that the Kabul Compact is not a bilateral agreement and that the Afghans have taken ownership of this initiative. However, we also understand that we have not made their progress on these reforms a condition for our continued assistance. Why not? Wouldn’t conditioning our assistance on their success with this Compact help create a greater sense of urgency for achievable reforms?

**Answer:**

Since the launch of the Afghanistan Compact (formerly known as the “Kabul Compact”) in August 2017, the Afghan government has continued its diligent work to implement its reforms and meets with U.S. representatives monthly to review progress and the way forward. The Afghan government has correctly associated its own legitimacy with its ability to enact these reforms, and as such, is acting with significant urgency to carry out these reforms. While progress is not specifically tied to U.S. assistance, we have repeatedly emphasized President Trump’s admonition to the Afghan government that our commitment is not unlimited, our support is not a blank check, and the American people expect to see real reforms, real progress, and real results.

The Afghan government has already made progress on some of the Compact’s most important objectives. Notable actions in response to Compact benchmarks include the replacement of 150 ineffective or corrupt generals and steps to strengthen anti-corruption prosecutions by enacting legislation to provide the Anti-Corruption Justice Center a dedicated funding stream, which supports its independence to pursue further prosecutions against high-ranking officials and influential public figures. The Afghans have hit almost all of their economic benchmarks thus far, including enabling private-sector companies to apply for licenses to build fiber-optic networks and reforming the budget process to make budgeting more realistic and less dependent on international donor funds. The Afghans are now making long-overdue progress on elections planning in an effort to hold credible parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019 and demonstrate their commitment to democracy.

Some existing U.S. assistance to Afghanistan has already incorporated conditionality based on progress on reform implementation. In accordance with section 7044(a)(3) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2017 (Div. J, P.L. 115-31), the Department of State will report on the establishment of goals and benchmarks for the Government of Afghanistan for its use of U.S. assistance through the Economic Support Fund (ESF) – the major vehicle through which U.S. economic assistance

flows to Afghanistan – and International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) assistance before the initial obligation of such assistance. In submitting this report and in subsequent progress reports, the Department is preparing a framework that uses objectives set under the Compact.

**Question:**

What is it exactly that we are looking for from Pakistan in terms of concrete steps that they are abandoning their support for terror groups and are willing to eliminate the safe havens? How do we balance pressuring the political establishment in Pakistan for these steps without unintended consequences of possible increased military control in Pakistan?

**Answer:**

Pakistan has played a critical role in supporting some U.S. national security objectives in the region, including efforts to degrade al-Qa'ida, as well as in ongoing operations against the ISIS branch in South Asia. We have repeatedly recognized the efforts of Pakistani security forces to counter terrorist violence and restore government control to parts of Pakistan that have been used as terrorist safe havens for years. These are important and meaningful steps that have come at significant cost, in lives lost by both Pakistani civilians and security personnel.

However, terrorist organizations in Pakistan do not just launch attacks in their own country. Many, including the Taliban and the Haqqani Network, carry out attacks in neighboring countries and pose a significant threat to regional stability, as well as to U.S. security interests. As part of our new strategy, the President and Secretary of State have made it abundantly clear to Pakistan that our approach has changed, and that Pakistan must take action to deny safe haven for the Taliban, Haqqani Network, and other groups operating within its border that pose a threat to U.S. interests in the region. Specifically, this includes actions to detain militants, arrest their leaders, remove militant networks operating in Pakistan, and pressure the Taliban to come to the negotiating table. We also acknowledge that security remains a core challenge in Afghanistan. The Taliban continue to exert control over large areas of the country, particularly in rural areas, and have shown the capability to launch attacks throughout the country and in neighboring countries.

Our conversations with Pakistan have focused on specific actions it can take to demonstrate fully that it is a willing partner with the United States in countering terrorism and ensuring security and stability in the region. These include dismantling safe havens in Pakistan and working with the United States and others in the region to promote a political settlement in Afghanistan.

We are also sensitive to the importance of continued civilian democratic governance in Pakistan. One of the ways by which we continue to promote democratic institutions in Pakistan is through our civilian assistance, which bolsters the capacity of the civilian government to protect Pakistani citizens while fostering stability and economic growth. For example, our support to the Government of Pakistan will help it implement democratic and economic reforms in areas vulnerable to violent extremists, including along its border with Afghanistan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). By strengthening the capacity of Pakistan's civilian institutions, we help ensure stability and growth in a key country in the region and advance our core national security interests.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted by  
Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
For Assistant to the Administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs  
for USAID Gregory Huger  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa  
“The President’s Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources” –  
November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

1. **We have heard from some in Afghan civil society that an over-emphasis on numbers and outputs at the expense of quality and impact has, in some instances, had a detrimental effect on USAID/State's ability to meet U.S. policy and development goals related to women's empowerment. For example, an over-emphasis on numbers of girls in school without regard to how the education they receive improves their quality of life or future opportunities. Please describe how USAID/State's approach to women's empowerment programming ensures quality and on-the-ground impact, beyond mere numbers.**

**Answer:**

The Administration’s South Asia strategy continues the U.S. government’s long-term commitment to providing assistance to empower women to participate fully in Afghan society, supporting women’s leadership development in the public, private, and voluntary sectors; enforcing existing law and Constitutional rights of women; improving women’s and girls’ access to education and healthcare; strengthening and expanding economic development opportunities for women; and increasing women’s political participation and empowerment. USAID’s approach to women’s empowerment is designed to maximize quality and on-the-ground impact. Reaching women is a cross-cutting aim of all USAID programs.

With regard to women’s education, given the extremely low number of girls receiving any type of formal education, past USAID education programs focused on increasing the access to education for girls at the primary, secondary, post-secondary, and university levels given the fact that girls were not allowed to go to school during the Taliban years. Today, with millions of girls attending school, USAID programs work in partnership with the Afghan government to increase the quality of education. Primary education quality is being improved through a new early grade reading curriculum, including training of teachers and new textbooks to improve literacy and numeracy in grades 1-3.

The quality and appropriateness of post-secondary education programs also are increasing. For example, we are working with 11 regional and Kabul area universities on associate, bachelor, and master’s degrees in relevant fields that have private sector and government demand for skilled workers. These include degree programs focusing on food technology, medical technology, and Master’s in Business Administration. Afghan universities are starting career centers that link universities to industries and the jobs market. This is a new approach for Afghan educators and businesspeople, and is gaining traction. Additionally, university scholarships have

been awarded to 730 young women for bachelor degree programs in Afghanistan since 2014, and the application process for 180 master's degree program scholarships is now underway.

Other examples include:

- USAID supports continued improvement in women's economic opportunities, including in the agriculture sector. On November 26, over 200 women attended a USAID-supported "women's credit shura" in Herat. The event raised women's awareness about agricultural credit, with several microfinance institutions and financial experts sharing their knowledge with the women. The Governor of Herat and the Deputy Minister of Commerce both encouraged the women to be entrepreneurs and to build their businesses.
- As of October 2017, USAID's women's empowerment program, Promote, has developed a highly acclaimed leadership training curriculum that has reached over 10,300 young women and adolescent girls since the program began in 2014.

Following the completion of a number of surveys that identified skill gaps and demand in business sectors most open to female employment inclusion - finance, healthcare, education, and internet and communications technology (ICT) - USAID was able to address the needs of these key sectors.

Under the scholarship program there are currently 360 female scholars studying via a network of 56 vetted local training institutes in the disciplines of: accounting, micro finance, medical and dental technology, retail sales, media, and digital literacy.

As anecdotal evidence, we welcome you to view USAID/Afghanistan's recently posted YouTube interview with Nilab Shams, who acquired technical skills in Information Technology (IT), and secured a full-time job in a large international firm.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scHNi5qR1aE>.

**2. How is USAID/State responding to repeated requests by Afghan civil society for increased programming in rural areas (outside of provincial capitals) and more support for women-run community based organizations that can reach needy populations in areas where security restrictions will not allow U.S. Government personnel to go?**

**Answer:**

USAID has responded to requests by Afghan civil society for increased programming in rural areas and has provided more support for women-run community based organizations that can reach needy populations in areas where security restrictions will not allow U.S. Government personnel to go.

In 2017, USAID and its partners have worked with women on civil service training for government employment, leadership training for improved self-efficacy, private sector support for workforce development and entrepreneurship and civil society strengthening for advocacy.

Since its start in 2014, our interventions have benefitted more than 29,000 women representing all 34 provinces, including those from communities in rural areas.

Under USAID's program "Promote," the civil society component began in 2015 and has engaged with 156 CSOs, and more than 1,000 individual coalition members; and 233 awareness raising sessions were conducted in 20 provinces. One grantee, for example, worked in Shibar and Yakawlang districts of Bamyan province, putting up 300 posters in public spaces with messages promoting women's access to economic opportunities, while another conducted training on advocacy skills and the law to eliminate violence against women for 40 women in four Parwan province villages of Madat Khil, Qalay Wazir, and Sayed Khil of Jabal Saraj district.

- 3. What programs are we currently running in Afghanistan with regard to elections and election reform? Parliamentary elections were initially called for July of next year. What are the chances of that taking place next year at all? What reforms have we identified that the Afghan government needs to work on in order to best prevent voter fraud and election fraud, such as ballot stuffing?**

**Answer:**

USAID is currently providing technical assistance through UNDP to assist the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to implement reforms and prepare for upcoming elections. There is broad agreement that one of the most critical reforms to reduce electoral fraud is the implementation of polling-center specific voter lists. In previous elections, Afghan voters were not assigned to specific polling centers. A voter could vote in any polling center in the country. This resulted in an oversupply of ballots throughout the country because election officials only had rough estimates of how many voters might show up on election day. Excess ballots were susceptible to ballot stuffing particularly in locations that had poor oversight of the electoral process. Recognizing this problem, the new Afghan electoral law requires that voters be assigned to polling centers. Polling-center specific voter lists will not eliminate, but should reduce the impact of fraud. USAID is supporting UNDP efforts to assist the Afghans in developing a voter registration system that will accomplish this goal. However, we continue to be very concerned about the limited time available to conduct this voter registration exercise before planned July 2018 parliamentary elections. Indeed the voter registration plan just announced by the IEC is not consistent with a July date. Most observers believe that the earliest the vote would take place would be in October 2018.

**Questions for the Record Submitted by  
Congressman Brad Sherman  
For Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian  
Affairs Alice Wells  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa  
“The President’s Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources” –  
November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Question:**

How is our foreign aid and policy toward Pakistan helping to counter human rights violations against Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan?

**Answer:**

As part of our engagement on human rights and religious freedom in Pakistan, we regularly raise our concerns regarding the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community with senior Pakistani officials. This includes our concerns with Pakistan’s implementation of a range of laws that institutionalize discrimination against Ahmadiyya Muslims. To reinforce our direct engagement with Pakistan, we work closely with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations on ways to address human rights violations against Ahmadiyya Muslims. Recently, we raised our concern in our statement at the Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan in Geneva on November 13. The full text of our statement can be found here:

<https://geneva.usmission.gov/2017/11/13/u-s-statement-at-the-universal-periodic-review-of-pakistan/>. We meet with members of minority religious communities, including Ahmadiyya Muslims, in Pakistan and the United States. These meetings help us document the challenges faced by members of religious minority communities in Pakistan in our annual International Religious Freedom Report and Human Rights Report.

Civilian assistance remains a crucial element of our policy of promoting religious freedom in Pakistan. The State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor implements \$25.1 million in programming in Pakistan, including support to defend the rights of religious minorities, including Ahmadiyya Muslims, to counter sectarian narratives, and to promote interfaith collaboration among religious and community leaders.

**Question:**

What nuclear security initiatives in Pakistan are or have been supported by US funding, so as to help Pakistan secure and control its nuclear assets from theft and transfer and to help nuclear risk reduction? How much funding does each receive, and what is the total US funding for nuclear security in Pakistan? (Please provide annual or multi-year data for the 2000s and 2010s for the above questions).

**Answer:**

The Government of Pakistan is well aware of the range of potential threats to its nuclear arsenal and has a professional and dedicated security force. Over the last decade, the United States and Pakistan have both participated in nuclear security-related fora such

as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), the Nuclear Security Summit process, UNSCR 1540, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)-hosted meetings of Nuclear Security Support Centers. Through such fora, participating countries share best practices related to nuclear security.


Verbal only to House Committee Foreign Affairs senior staff by H (Patti McNerney): Any related USG initiatives or funding requests have been properly notified to the respective congressional committees.

**Question:**

After China joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2004, China built or is building four reactors in Pakistan—Chashma 3 and 4 in Punjab, and KANUPP 2 and 3 near Karachi, Sindh. Does the US government consider these Chinese actions to be a violation of China's NSG commitments? Has the US government raised these issues with Pakistan and China, and what steps is it taking with Pakistan and China on this issue?

**Answer:**

NSG membership does not require legally binding commitments from participating states. We believe that ongoing Chinese nuclear cooperation with Pakistan is inconsistent with the political commitments China made when joining the NSG. We have consistently raised this issue with China in our bilateral engagements, and it is a regular topic of discussion in NSG meetings.





**Question for the Record Submitted by  
Congressman Brad Sherman  
For Assistant to the Administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs for  
USAID Gregory Huger  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa  
“The President’s Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Objectives and Resources” –  
November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Question: To what extent is U.S. foreign aid to Pakistan equally distributed across its provinces in terms of their share of the population? Given that the population percentage across Pakistan’s provinces (2017 census) is Sindh 23%, the Khyber-Pashtun province 15%, Balochistan 6%, the Tribal areas 2.4%, and Punjab 53%, do each of these areas receive the corresponding above percentages of U.S. economic aid to Pakistan, and why?**

**Answer:**

U.S. assistance programming and budgeting priorities in Pakistan are based upon a combination of factors, such as implications to the U.S. national security interest, the development needs of a particular area, the ability of the U.S. Government programs to operate, and the amount of funding allocated to a province for development purposes by Pakistan’s own federal government. While Punjab remains the most populous province, it has higher development indicators in literacy and health compared to the other provinces and a high percentage of the Pakistani federal government’s own divisible pool for development. Therefore, U.S. assistance is directed to areas where the combination of the factors listed above is greatest, such as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In addition, USAID is implementing numerous national programs, facilitating development gains in key sectors across Pakistan.

U.S. efforts provide important assistance at the provincial level. In the energy sector, USAID has contributed to major renovation and upgrades of generating systems on dams, thermal plants, and through distribution networks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, Punjab and Gilgit Baltistan. Through USAID’s governance/stability activities in the FATA and KP, USAID supports the return and recovery on internally displaced persons. It continues to rebuild communities ravaged by conflict and natural disasters, support civil society organizations participate in democratic process and help the GoP deliver reliable municipal services to this sparsely populated region of Pakistan. In education, in Sindh and KP provinces, USAID provides assistance for school construction and repairs. Finally, in the health sector USAID’s efforts include improving the quality of service provision in Sindh, developing health professional, expanding community-based outreach and prevention, and applying evidence-based interventions to reduce maternal mortality and end preventable deaths of newborns and children.

USAID assistance programs also work at a national level. In Pakistan's energy sector, USAID is working with all of the distribution companies to improve management, performance maintenance, upgrade equipment and opportunities for private sector engagement. USAID's economic growth and agriculture support focuses on rural areas emphasizing private sector development, especially by increasing access to new technologies while improving management practices for high-value sectors, such as dairy, textiles, and agri-business. USAID also builds business-to-business links to encourage regional trade and economic integration. In education, USAID's nationwide efforts focus teaching reading and improving education quality across Pakistan.