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Opening Statement

Rep. John F. Tierney, Ranking Member

Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations Hearing on "Dawood National Military Hospital, Afghanistan: What Happened and What Went Wrong? Part II"

September 12, 2012

Thank you, Chairman Chaffetz. And thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

This Subcommittee has long been concerned with the issues of corruption and mismanagement of US taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan. In 2005, I co-authored bipartisan legislation with then-Congressman Jim Leach that led the way to the creation of the Commission of Wartime Contracting, which issued its final report last fall estimating up to \$60 billion in waste, fraud, and abuse of U.S. taxpayer funds in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Under my Chairmanship, this Subcommittee conducted multiple investigations into allegations of corruption in U.S. contracting related to the war in Afghanistan. In partnership with the minority, we investigated jet fuel contracts in Kyrgyzstan and the Host Nation Trucking contract in Afghanistan. Our investigation of the trucking contract found that contractors were making protection payments to our enemies with U.S. taxpayer dollars.

I support Chairman Chaffetz's continuing investigation, including today's focus on Dawood National Military Hospital in Afghanistan. In July, this Subcommittee held a hearing at which four current and former military officers recounted their first-hand observations of the mismanagement and corruption at the hospital. The conditions these witnesses described were truly appalling: no hot water for hygiene, no cleaning supplies for sanitation; even a lack of heat during the winter. Due to contracting fraud, the morphine given to patients was counterfeit and did little to relieve patient suffering. Corruption permeated the highest levels of hospital leadership and the Afghan Army's medical logistics system.

In response to these revelations, I called for an expansion of the Subcommittee's investigation. I believe we must change our spend-first, ask-questions-later approach to reconstruction in Afghanistan, where the U.S. has already committed nearly \$100 billion to

reconstruction efforts. To that end, I welcome today's hearing to further our examination of what happened at Dawood hospital.

We must all recognize, however, that the problems at the hospital and within the Afghan Army's medical logistics system are longstanding. In fact, U.S. support for Dawood hospital began around 2005—five years before senior military officers began raising their concerns and ultimately, recognizing the need for outside assistance, and four years before Lieutenant General Caldwell assumed command of the NATO training mission. With the former commander and his deputy here before us today, I want to know how the conditions deteriorated to this shameful point, how our mission could progress for so long without more attention to these important issues—including from the DOD Inspector General, and what steps General Caldwell and General Patton took to confront these challenges. Going forward, I also want to know how our current training and equipping mission can be improved to ensure Afghan participation and accountability.

In the course of this investigation, the Chairman has raised concerns that Lieutenant General Caldwell and Major General Patton inappropriately interfered with the Defense Department's Inspector General's oversight at Dawood hospital. I share those concerns. The Chairman has gone further, however, and suggested that their motivation was political – to influence the 2010 congressional elections. At our last hearing, several witnesses testified that an objectionable comment was made. However, some of the witnesses also stated that the comment was dismissed as inappropriate for consideration. I look forward to learning more about what happened and to hear directly from the Generals what their motivations were.

Additionally, it is my understanding that due to the utmost professionalism of the DOD Inspector General, the alleged attempts at interference did not impair the Inspector General's ability to timely perform its critical work in Afghanistan. Indeed, the witnesses at our last hearing on Dawood hospital testified that the Inspector General's work directly led to significant improvements in the conditions at Dawood hospital. Nonetheless, any interference with the DOD Inspector General's important oversight would be unacceptable. The DOD Inspector General is currently investigating this particular allegation and I look forward to reviewing the report when it is completed.

Thank you and I look forward to our hearing this morning.

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