

this authority and would require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report 15 days prior to the provision of support under this authority to any country that has not previously received with information and a certification regarding the use of the authority. Finally, the provision would extend this authority through December 31, 2021.

The House bill contained no similar provision.

The House recesses.

*Framework for obtaining concurrence for participation in activities of regional centers for security studies (sec. 1214)*

The House bill contained a provision (sec. 1202) that would amend section 342 of title 10, United States Code, to clarify that travel, transportation, and subsistence expenses are included among the costs of activities of the Regional Centers eligible for waiver of reimbursement.

The Senate amendment contained no similar provision.

The Senate recesses with an amendment that would require not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, to establish and submit to appropriate congressional committees a Memorandum of Agreement or similar arrangement setting forth a framework for the procedures required between the Department of Defense and the Department of State to obtain the concurrence of the Secretary of State, as required by law or policy, to allow non-defense and non-governmental personnel of friendly foreign countries to participate in activities of the Department of Defense Regional Centers for Security Studies. The conferees expect the framework to include elements that streamline procedures for concurrence, delegate approval to the lowest practicable level, require measures to issue concurrence decisions within 14 days unless there are extenuating circumstances, and provide for procedures for rapid consideration of alternate attendees.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to Afghanistan and Pakistan

*Extension of authority to transfer defense articles and provide defense services to the military and security forces of Afghanistan (sec. 1221)*

The House bill contained a provision (sec. 1211) that would extend for two years the authority to transfer defense articles being drawn down in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the authority to provide defense services regarding such transfers to the military and security forces of Afghanistan.

The Senate amendment contained a similar provision (sec. 1213) that would extend the authority to transfer defense articles for one year.

The Senate recesses.

*Extension and modification of reporting requirements for special immigrant visas for Afghan allies program (sec. 1222)*

The Senate amendment contained a provision (sec. 1214) that would renew a reporting requirement under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 to assess the health of the Special Afghan Im-

migrant Visa (SIV) application process and identify any delays in orderly visa processing.

The House bill contained no similar provision.

The House recesses.

The conferees are concerned by reports that the SIV application process continues to suffer from inadequate interagency coordination which has resulted in undue delay, needless stress on applicants, and a sizable drop in SIV admissions this year.

The conferees note the critical work performed by Afghan partners in support of United States and coalition efforts and the importance of sustaining the SIV program. In all operations the military depends on robust and trustworthy relationships with local partners. If the United States wishes to achieve success in current and future operations overseas, it must protect those who help enable that success. Local partners in other potential conflict zones are watching how the United States treats its networks in Afghanistan; the policies and practices used there will influence confidence and loyalties elsewhere when supporters are needed. As the United States continues to protect its interests around the world, it will need the assistance of willing partners. Ensuring the SIV program is effectively managed and resourced is one way to communicate America's steadfast commitment to our partners.

*Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (sec. 1223)*

The Senate amendment contained a provision (sec. 1211) that would extend the authority to continue certain established provisions applicable to the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), including the use of funds, transfer authority, and acceptance of contributions to provide assistance to the security forces of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan, including the provision of equipment, supplies, services, training, and funds to develop the capacity of Afghanistan's security ministries.

The House bill contained a similar provision (sec. 1521).

The House recesses with an amendment that requires the Secretary of Defense to provide an assessment of the Government of Afghanistan's ability to manage, employ, and sustain equipment divested under the ASFF.

The conferees note the emphasis in this provision placed on the resources allocated to integrate women into the security forces of Afghanistan. The conferees, however, do not encourage the Department of Defense to allocate funding for women and girls programming simply for the sake of meeting a goal. The conferees are aware that previous funding has not always been applied in the most effective and judicious manner and encourage the Department to ensure going forward that any funds spent on such efforts are valid and verifiable.

Additionally, the conferees are disappointed by recent public decisions regarding a lack of transparency on basic information such as kinetic strike data, ANDSF development, retention, and casualty rates, and progress on achieving the central tenants of the bilateral U.S.-Afghanistan Compact. The restriction of information in this manner undermines public confidence, hinders necessary congressional oversight, and raises legitimate questions about the efficacy of current U.S. efforts in Afghanistan.