

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND,
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND,
UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND, AND
UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COM-
MAND**

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Bill Nelson, E. Benjamin Nelson, Webb, McCaskill, Hagan, Begich, Burris, McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Chambliss, Thune, Martinez, Wicker, Burr, and Collins.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Richard W. Fieldhouse, professional staff member; Creighton Greene, professional staff member; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Thomas K. McConnell, professional staff member; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Joseph W. Bowab, Republican staff director; Richard H. Fontaine, Jr., deputy Republican staff director; Daniel A. Lerner, professional staff member; David M. Morriss, minority counsel; Lucian L. Niemeyer, professional staff member; Christopher J. Paul, professional staff member; and Dana W. White, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Kevin A. Cronin, Christine G. Lang, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: Jay Maroney and Sharon L. Waxman, assistants to Senator Kennedy; Elizabeth King, assistant to Reed; Christopher Caple, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson; Jon Davey, assistant to Senator Bayh; Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Julie Hotzhuefer, assistant to Senator Hagan; Brady King, assistant to Senator Burris; Anthony J. Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Sandra Luff, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde A. Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune; Brian W.

Walsh and Erskine W. Wells III, assistants to Senator Martinez; and Kevin Kane, assistant to Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. Today we have before our committee four of our combatant commanders for our annual posture review to discuss the issues and challenges confronting each of them. We welcome our witnesses today. Admiral Jim Stavridis is the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command. General Gene Renuart is the Commander of the U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command. We're joined also, of course, by General Kim Ward, Commander of the U.S. Africa Command, and General Duncan McNabb, Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command.

Let me first express on behalf of our entire committee our gratitude for your service and for the service of the men and women that you lead. I hope, and I know all of us feel the same way, that you will express to them our enormous respect and appreciation for their dedication to our Nation and for the many sacrifices that they are willing to make on behalf of their fellow citizens.

The issues before the committee this morning run the gamut from transportation and supply routes to support U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan and around the world, to the threat posed by narcotics trade within our hemisphere, to the defense of our homeland, to how to best engage nations in Africa as they confront threats from non-state actors and the regional implications of failed or failing states.

Admiral Stavridis, the challenges that we face in our own hemisphere are complex. The drug trade in South and Central America is booming and the violence associated with the drug trade is migrating northward, as you know. President Chavez continues to work to undermine U.S. interests in the region and to do everything possible to maintain his own power. Yet we continue to rely on his country for much of our Nation's petroleum. We're also confronted with Iran's nascent and growing interest in the region.

Your command has also seen gains over the past few years. Plan Colombia has enabled the Colombian government to expand security and government services to the farthest reaches of Colombia.

General Renuart, the brutal violence that we see in Mexico today reminds us of the situation that Colombia faced a decade ago. Nearly every week we hear a report of a senior official in Mexico being killed in a brazen attack. The root cause of the violence in Mexico is the same as in Colombia: criminal organizations using any means necessary to traffic illegal narcotics for enormous financial gain. The origin of these narcotics remains Colombia mainly, but the problems created from this trafficking run from Lima to Tijuana and America's southern border and northward. Governors from our southern border States are calling on the Federal Government to send troops to help defend against the possibility of this violence entering American communities.

Following a trip to Mexico earlier this month, Admiral Mullen talked about a "shared responsibility" for the cause of the crisis and said the United States had a shared responsibility to clean it up as well. The will be interested to hear how NORTHCOM is

working with the Mexican military to help address this violence and how NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM are working together along the seam of their respective commands to mitigate and deconflict our assistance programs.

Northern Command also has the responsibility for operating the Ground-based Midcourse Defense missile defense system deployed to defend the United States against a potential ballistic missile attack from North Korea. The Pentagon's Director of Operational Test and Evaluation recently wrote that "GMD flight testing to date will not support a high degree of confidence in its limited capabilities. We are interested to hear from you, General Renuart, about the testing and the performance of that system along with a number of other issues.

General Ward, the challenges on the African continent are staggering, we don't have to tell you, and the conflicts that rage across borders to fragile governments to nations where peacekeeping or peace-enforcing forces are the best and sometimes the only hope for security and stability. The terrorism threat from Africa, and particularly the potential for havens and recruiting grounds for terrorists in ungoverned or undergoverned areas, are cause for deep concern.

Last week before this Committee, Director of National Intelligence Blair described an al-Qaeda-affiliated group as the "most active terrorist group in northwestern Africa" and assessed that it "represents a significant threat to U.S. and western interests in the region."

The situation in West Africa is further complicated by the increased flow of narcotics from the SOUTHCOM AOR en route to Europe via West Africa. The consequences of cooperation between terrorists and traffickers of illegal narcotics are cause for great concern. We need to look no further than Colombia and the FARC in South American and Afghanistan and the Taliban in Central Asia to understand the importance of working with our partner nations to confront this threat.

General McNabb, TRANSCOM's planning role and preparation to support both the drawdown from Iraq and the buildup in Afghanistan will be critical issues in the coming 12 to 24 months. The Committee is eager to hear from you on transportation and logistics risks associated with this shift of resources and personnel.

With respect to supply routes into Afghanistan, in recent weeks we have additional security and political pressure on the critical supply routes that run from Karachi, Pakistan, up through the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan, as well as the apparent decision by the government of Kyrgyzstan to deny U.S. forces use of their air base at Manas.

The Committee would like to hear from you on TRANSCOM's role in helping to resolve these access and supply route challenges. Also, tell us if our allies are using or considering the use of Iran as a supply route. We also hope that you'll explain to the Committee the greatest risks to completing TRANSCOM's support missions and how you would propose to eliminate or to mitigate. Finally, given that our other witnesses are from geographical combatant commands, I hope that you will discuss TRANSCOM's support of SOUTHCOM, AFRICOM, and NORTHCOM.

One last item. During the Director of National Intelligence Blair's testimony before this Committee last week, all of us noted with great interest that he spoke of the risks associated with the current global economic downturn. We'd be interested in hearing from each of the witnesses about the impact of the economic downturn and in which nations you believe the risks to be most significant.

Our thanks again to each of our witnesses for your service to this Nation, for the service of the dedicated men and women who serve under your command.

Senator McCain.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I join you in welcoming our witnesses today and I'd like to echo your thanks to the witnesses and the men and women who serve under their command for their distinguished service to our Nation.

There's a number of important issues we hope our witnesses will address in this hearing. General McNabb, as the United States increases significantly the size of its forces in Afghanistan supply lines will obviously become even more important. It's been reported, for example, that the daily demand for truck deliveries into Afghanistan will increase by some 50 percent as an additional 17,000 troops deploy to the country. This increased demand comes at a time when our supply routes through Pakistan have grown increasingly dangerous and the government of Kyrgyzstan has evicted or announced the eviction of our forces from Manas Air Base.

Other possible supply routes are problematic, from those that would rely on Russian goodwill to a route that passes through Uzbekistan, which evicted our forces from the K2 base following the Andegan massacre, to an Iranian route which I understand some of our NATO allies are considering. General McNabb, I look forward to hearing your views on the viability of alternate supply routes and how we might deal with some of the problems they present.

I also hope we will hear about TRANSCOM's plans for maintaining its air mobility readiness, especially your thoughts on recapitalization of the current KC-135 aerial refueling tanker. I'm troubled by recent reports that suggest some members of Congress have advocated statutorily directing a split buy between Boeing and Northrop Grumman. The replacement tanker decision must be based on a competitive process that provides the warfighter with the best possible tanker at the best possible cost to the taxpayer. Obviously, splitting this contract would have a dramatic increase in the cost to the taxpayer. So we don't need an expedient political decision that is totally impractical and inefficient.

There are a number of developments in our own hemisphere. For instance, Hugo Chavez offered an island base for Russian bombers. Reportedly, a Russian general suggested that Cuba could host its own Russian bombers. You know, Americans and, frankly, members of this Committee are not quite understanding exactly what's going on here. You'll help us separate rhetoric from reality, I'm sure.

On Sunday, El Salvador elected a new government and, while President Fuentes has shown so far no affinity for the likes of Hugo Chavez, change continues to sweep through Central and South America, change that can have a direct impact on the security of the United States.

America's future is fundamentally tied to the stability, prosperity, and security of our southern neighbors. The recent increase in violence along our southern border is perhaps the chief example of the interplay between our own security and that of our southern neighbors. Today Phoenix, Arizona, is the kidnapping capital of America and gangs that were born in El Salvador and Nicaragua wreak havoc in our Nation's cities and towns.

Through the Marita Initiative with Mexico and via our various security partnerships throughout the hemisphere, we must help our southern neighbors help themselves in a concerted effort to fight crime, stop drug trafficking, and provide security for their people as well as ours.

In Africa, a continent rich in resources and talent and yet rife with corruption, disease, poverty, and civil unrest, the U.S. Africa Command faces unique challenges. The world and our government has long considered Africa largely a humanitarian mission, a matter of charity rather than opportunity. This needs to change. The 1998 bombings of our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya did much to remind us that our interests are intertwined with events in Africa and each year the distance between us seems to grow shorter.

From the perils of policy in the Gulf of Aden to a terrorist sanctuary in Somalia, to the numerous conflicts that rage in Africa, we face real challenges in our security operations and partnerships there. I believe it's imperative for the United States to develop a comprehensive strategy toward the African continent, one that integrates our security objectives with the development and democratic objectives that our best partners in Africa wish to attain.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

[The prepared statement of Senator McCain follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

Admiral Stavridis, why don't we start with you.

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES G. STAVRIDIS, USN,
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND**

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the distinguished Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and talk a little bit about Latin America and the Caribbean, a region of the world that I think is not America's backyard. That's probably the wrong expression. It's really part, as Senator McCain just alluded to, of a home that we share together here in the Americas. What happens to the south of us will influence what happens here in our own Nation, as we're seeing.

I'm very fortunate to be joined by three generals. As a Navy admiral, I always feel good to have generals around me. I feel a little safer. So three distinguished colleagues. Thanks for putting this hearing together, sir.

We had a good week at SOUTHCOM last week, reflecting a good year. What happened last week was we had three former U.S. hostages who had been held in Colombia for 5-1/2 years at Southern Command. They were there because they were rescued by the Colombian military in a very daring, audacious raid, which was a real example of the success of Plan Colombia and 5-1/2 years of the building of partnership capacity. So I think Colombia is on the right track and I'd like a chance to talk about that today.

Also last year in SOUTHCOM, we had the opportunity to send ships south to do, not anything combative, but rather to do medical activities. We did 200,000 patient treatments all over the region from KEARSARGE and BOXER. That builds on COMFORT's voyage the previous year, 400,000. We did 200,00 treatments ashore. This is all indicative of displaying the compassion and the competence and conducting great training for us down south, a way that we can connect with this region.

We had a very robust year in military to military exercises, the largest military exercise in the world in terms of number of countries participating. It's called Panamax, co-sponsored by Chile, Panama, and the United States. 22 countries participated last year. We had many other exercises with 15, 17, 19 different participants, focusing on everything from special operations to disaster relief. So a very robust schedule of military to military contacts, and I feel that's a good part of what we need to do in this region to maintain this positive mil-to-mil connection wherever we can.

Of concern, both the chairman and the ranking member have talked about the flow of narcotics moving from the Andean Ridge of South America, passing through the region that I focus on, up through Mexico, where my colleague General Renuart focuses—a deep concern. Last year we were able to stop 230 tons of cocaine, but the challenges in this narcotics situation are both on the demand side here in the United States, but also working with partners like Mexico and Central America through the Marita Initiative, which I support very strongly and I'm sure General Renuart does as well.

A particular subset of that I'd like to talk about today are the rise and the use of semi-submersibles, which are submarine-like creations built in the jungles of the Andean Ridge of South America, that can transport up to seven tons of cocaine, a very difficult target for us. We're seeing many more of those. I talked about that last year. We're focusing a lot of resources on interdicting those and working with our partners to do so.

I want to close by thanking the Committee for its support on our new headquarters building, which is going up next to a rented facility we've had in Miami for about 10 years. This Committee supported that along with the House and it's going strong, and we appreciate that very much.

I'll simply close by saying thank you to the Committee for the terrific support on behalf of the men and women of Southern Command. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today, sir.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Stavridis follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Admiral.
General Renuart.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL VICTOR E. RENUART, JR., USAF,
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND/COM-
MANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COM-
MAND**

General Renuart: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, members of the Committee. It is a treat, it really is a treat, to be back with you this year. It's especially an honor and a privilege today to represent the men and women assigned to North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command. Important to express our gratitude to the members of the Committee who have been such strong supporters of the men and women in uniform over the last year. We continue to serve proudly and we appreciate your support.

As commander of U.S. Northern Command, I'm assigned two missions: to defend the homeland against attack, and so topics like ground-based midcourse interceptors, topics like violence along the border, topics like partnering with my friend Jim Stavridis in the fight against narcoterrorism in our region, the movement of drugs, the support to law enforcement are all critical parts of our homeland defense mission, and I'm happy to talk about those topics with you today.

But also to make mention of our requirement to provide DOD support to civil authorities when Mother Nature takes a vote in the course of events in our country. So I'm pleased also to talk about the issues like the consequence management response force that we put on and funded and equipped and trained and evaluated and brought into service this year. We're part of a combined team. It's a national response. We coordinate with international, Federal, and State partners, with the governors, and with the National guards of each of the States, as well as the emergency managers. That collaboration is a real success story this year and I'm happy to talk about the successes that we've seen there.

We train hard to execute our mission. We exercise with all of our partners in government, and we must be prepared to ensure that we never let the country down. Our consequence management response force is a great example of an inter-agency approach and how DOD can support in a large-scale catastrophic nuclear, biological, or chemical event.

Those who wish us harm have not gone away. The threat is real. It is there. They only have to be lucky once. We work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to ensure that that does not happen. We want to keep the momentum that we built. We want to remain alert because the mission of protecting our families and our Nation is the most important mission we have.

Chairman Levin, I appreciate the opportunity to spend time with you answering questions today. I look forward to that dialogue. Thank you very much for your support and that of the Committee. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Renuart follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General.

General Ward.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL WILLIAM E. WARD, USA,
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND**

General Ward: Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide this overview of your Nation's newest geographic command, the United States Africa Command.

Chairman LEVIN. Is your mike on, General?

General Ward: It is now, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

General Ward: Again, thank you for this opportunity to provide you this overview.

Also with me today are Ms. Mary Flefner from the Department of Commerce, who is a member of my staff, as well as Mr. Gerry Lanier from the Department of State. I'm also honored to appear alongside my distinguished colleagues who provide such great, great collaborative efforts as we pursue our Nation's security objectives.

Last year, sir, I talked to you about our plan to put a headquarters together. Today United States Africa Command is executing our mission of conducting sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs and military-sponsored activities that are designed to promote a more stable and secure African environment. We work in concert with other U.S. Government agencies and international partners to ensure that our activities are harmonized. Our strategy is based on military-to-military efforts to enhance the security capacity and capability of our African partners.

In many engagements with African leaders during my time as Commander, United States Africa Command, and previously as Deputy Commander for United States European Command, the consistent message they give me is their intent for their nations to provide for their own security. Most welcome U.S. Africa Command's assistance in meeting their goals for security forces that are legitimate and professional, have the will and means to dissuade the terror and defeat transnational threats, perform with integrity, and are increasingly able to support the missions in support of international peace.

We work as a part of an overall U.S. Government effort. We work closely with the Department of State, the chiefs of mission and country teams, the United States Agency for International Development, the Departments of Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security, Agriculture, and other agencies doing work on the continent, and I fully support enhancements to the capabilities of our inter-agency teammates.

Similarly, we reach out to international partners, including Europeans, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, private enterprises, and academia. Their perspectives on the situation in Africa are valuable.

U.S. Africa Command is involved in military training, education, sustainment, and logistics support, among other activities, throughout our area of responsibility. The combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, headquartered in Djibouti, conducts training, education, and civil-military assistance that helps prevent conflict and promote regional cooperation among nations of eastern Africa. Oper-

ation Enduring Freedom-Trans-Sahara is the military component of the Department of State's counterterrorism partnership with north and west African nations. Africa Endeavor is an annual communications and interoperability exercise that this year will include 23 African nations.

We support the State Department's Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance Program that trains roughly 20 battalions of peacekeepers per year. The peacekeepers have been deployed on United Nations and African Union missions across the continent. We helped the Rwandans deploy some of their cargo to the United Nations mission in Darfur. Continuing deployments of the Africa Partnership Station provide training to the navies and coast guards of the maritime nations in the Gulf of Guinea and the coast of East Africa, helping them better secure their own territorial waters.

Given the lack of infrastructure within Africa and the island nations, our sustainment infrastructure, forward operating sites, and en route infrastructure are vital. I endorse upgrade projects supporting these infrastructure nodes. The enduring presence at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti makes possible our engagement in East Africa and other parts of the continent and supports our U.S. security goals in the region.

It is my honor to serve with our uniformed men and women as well as our civilian men and women of the Department of Defense, including our interagency teammates, who are making a difference on the continent each and every day. Their dedicated efforts are a testament to the spirit and the determination of the American people and our commitment to contributing to the well-being and security of our Nation and the people of Africa.

I thank you for your support for this endeavor and I too look forward to this opportunity to provide you with additional information. Thank you very much, sir.

[The prepared statement of General Ward follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General Ward.

General McNabb.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL DUNCAN J. McNABB, USAF,
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND**

General McNabb: Chairman Levin—

Chairman LEVIN. Put your mike on, please. Use your mike.

General McNabb: —and distinguished members of the Committee: It is indeed my privilege to be with you today representing the men and women of U.S. Transportation Command, more than 136,000 of the world's finest logistics professionals. This total force team of active duty, guard, Reserve, civilian, contractors, and commercial partners enables the combatant commanders such as General Ward, General Renuart, and Admiral Stavridis to succeed anywhere in the world by providing them unmatched strategic lift and end to end global distribution.

This Committee is well aware that it is our great people that get it done. It is our logistics professionals, using newly developed supply routes through the Northern Distribution Network, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Senator Levin and Senator McCain,

you both asked me about that and I look forward to going over that with you.

It is our total force air crews flying combat approaches on night vision goggles or air dropping supplies to our troops in Afghanistan. It is our air refueling crews delivering 5 million pounds of fuel every day at night in the weather, extending the reach of our joint force and coalition partners. With maintenance teams behind them, these crews execute more than 900 sorties a day. That's a takeoff and landing every 90 seconds, sometimes in the most austere places like Antarctica or the most dangerous, like a forward operating base under fire in Afghanistan.

It is our merchant mariners and military and civilian port operators, loading, offloading, and sailing more than 35 ships every day in support of the warfighter. It is our terminal operators moving thousands of containers, domestic freight and railcar shipments, pushing warfighters and their vital supplies to the fight. It is our contingency response groups and port opening experts arriving first to open up the flow in contingency or disaster relief operations in support of the combatant commanders.

It is our commercial airlift and sealift partners standing beside us, opening new avenues of supply into Afghanistan or supporting the Nation in times of surge. It is our medical crews and critical care teams tending to our wounded warriors, rapidly delivering them from the battlefield to the finest, world-class care on the planet, saving lives and families at the same time. And it is our crews bringing back fallen comrades, transporting heroes dressed in our Nation's colors, Americans returning with dignity to our country which owes them so much.

It is this logistics team, working from home and abroad, that gives our Nation unrivaled global reach, committed to serving our Nation's warfighters by delivering the right stuff to the right place at the right time. Whether sustaining the fight, providing disaster relief to friends in need, or moving six brigades simultaneously, we are there.

Chairman Levin, your support and the support of this Committee has been instrumental in providing the resources our team needs to win, and I thank you. You have given us the Large Medium-Speed Rollon-Rolloff ships and supported upgrades to our Ready Reserve Fleet, all of which have been key to our success over the last 7 years, and the new joint high-speed vessels will give us even greater flexibility.

The C-130J and the C-17 have come of age since 9-11 and have allowed us to change how we support the combatant commanders by the air. The current C-5, C-130, and KC-10 modernization programs will also make an enormous difference in our capability and reliability to support the warfighter.

My top priority remains the recapitalization of our aging tanker fleet. The KCX will be a game-changer. Its value as a tanker will be tremendous. Its value as a multi-role platform to the mobility enterprise will be incomparable. It will do for the whole mobility world what the C-17 did for theater and strategic airlift. It will be an ultimate mobility force multiplier.

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, I'm grateful to you and the Committee for inviting me to appear before you today. I respect-

fully request my written testimony be submitted for the record and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Ward follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. All the testimonies will be made part of the record.

We'll have a first round of 7 minutes. First to you, Admiral Stavridis. Secretary Gates in his testimony before this Committee in January expressed some real concern about "Iranian subversive activity," in his words. He went on to say that the Iranians are opening a lot of offices and a lot of fronts, behind which they interfere in what is going on in some of these countries, referring to Latin American countries.

Can you tell us—give us your assessment on Iranian intent and activities? What is the attitude of governments in Latin America relative to Iranian activities? Also, do you see any connection between the Iranians and the drug trade?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. First of all, we have seen, as Secretary Gates said, an increase in a wide level of activity by the Iranian government in this region, to include opening six embassies in the last 5 years, beginning the work in proselytizing and working with Islamic activities throughout the region.

That is of concern principally because of the connections between the government of Iran, which is a state sponsor of terrorism, and Hezbollah. We see a great deal of Hezbollah activity throughout South America. In particular, the tri-border area in Brazil is of particular concern, as in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, as well as parts of Brazil and in the Caribbean Basin.

So this connection between Hezbollah activity, the known connection between the government of Iran and Hezbollah, and the increasing activities of Iran throughout the region are a matter of concern for us, and I can provide additional information for the record on that.

Chairman LEVIN. Any connection with the drug trade that you've seen?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes. We have seen in Colombia a direct connection between Hezbollah activity and the narcotrafficking activity. Again, I'd be glad to provide the specifics on that for the record.

Chairman LEVIN. Admiral, give us an up to date assessment of the FARC in Colombia, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the FARC? And as our security assistance to Colombia declines as planned in the coming years, are the Colombians ready to operate successfully with less U.S. military assistance and advisers?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, the success of Plan Colombia in the last 10 years has been notable. I believe it has contributed to a diminution of the FARC from a high of about 18,000 members to about 9,000 or less today. It has contributed to the elimination of three of the key leaders of the FARC over the last year, to the rescue of the three U.S. hostages I alluded to, along with about a dozen other high-value political hostages who were rescued in that same raid. Kidnappings are down 80 percent, murders are down 60 percent, acts of terrorism are down 70 percent.

The government and the military of Colombia enjoy very high approval ratings by the people of Colombia. The FARC's approval rat-

ing is somewhere below 2 percent, as opposed to, for example, the army's approval rating, which is over 70 percent.

So I would say that the assistance of Plan Colombia over the past 10 years, a bipartisan effort, has been very successful in helping the Colombian people to achieve the success that they have achieved on their own. In terms of are they ready, I believe that they are. I am a believer that we can now begin to move the dial, if you will, from the hard power side of the equation to the soft power side of the equation in Colombia because of the capability that's been achieved by the Colombian armed forces, with some U.S. assistance over this past period, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

General Renuart, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation recently wrote "GMD flight testing to date will not support a high level of confidence in its limited capabilities." Do you agree that it is important to address the concerns raised by the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation about the GMD system?

General Renuart: Senator Levin, I absolutely agree that we have to continue a robust test schedule, and I believe that the Missile Defense Agency has that kind of a schedule on tap. I've spoken in some detail to the Director of the Operational Test and Evaluation Organization after his statement and two things struck me. First, he understands that it is important for us to continue aggressive testing and that up to date against the test regimen that has been in place we have had success. He would comment that high degree or low degree is a subjective view.

So I would add maybe a couple comments of my assessment. Over the last 11 tests, we've had 7 direct hits and, while certainly there were some misses early on, I can—I participated directly in the last 3 tests, each of which were successful. There were some comments in the report that the last test was supposed to have a decoy as part of that. The test vehicle did not adequately deploy the decoy, but the ground-based midcourse interceptor in fact was successful in finding and having a direct hit on the reentry vehicle.

So I continue to believe that the operational capability is good. I do believe and we're working very aggressively with the Missile Defense Agency to continue this test regimen, to increasingly include all the elements of the missile defense system, the SBX radar, the forward-based X-band system, and to continue to make the test as realistic as possible.

Chairman LEVIN. General, the last time we met you noted that we've had periods of constructive dialogue and cooperation with Russia over many years. Do you believe it makes sense now to pursue such engagement in cooperation with Russia on security matters, including the following: notification of Russian bomber flights; and, second, the possibility of cooperation on missile defense efforts?

General Renuart: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we have had success in the past with military to military dialogue with the Russians. I think that there is a real place for that dialogue in the future. I think Secretary Gates has continued to maintain the position that this dialogue is important to our National security.

With respect to the Russian bombers, the Committee members may know that just prior to the Russian action in Georgia last

summer the Russians in fact filed a flight plan on one of their long-range training missions that was going to come into the Alaska region. We welcomed that, had direct communication with the commander of the Russian long-range aviation, creating the means to do that and continue that in the future.

We hope we will return to that direct dialogue. We've collaborated on counterterrorism exercises with the Russians. Sadly, that exercise did not go, as a result of the Russian activity this past summer. But we look forward to the opportunity to re-open that, and I know both the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense are actively working with the Russians to reopen that dialogue.

Chairman LEVIN. And the possibility of cooperation on missile defense?

General Renuart: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think there are some significant discussions that need to occur and policy decisions made by the administration. But we think that there certainly is the opportunity from increased collaboration and confidence-building in the missile defense area.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General McNabb, in my opening statement I mentioned the increasing difficulties plus compounded by 17,000 at least additional troops complicates our supply efforts, as you well know, to further our effort in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan we don't have a convenient neighbor like Kuwait to provide us with—I think one of the most underestimated aspects of the conflict in Iraq was the assistance that the Kuwaiti government provided us with.

Give us—I don't have many minutes—a thumbnail sketch of the challenge and how you expect for us to meet it?

General McNabb: Yes, Senator McCain. The big part that you want to do on the supply chain is to make sure you have lots of options, you have lots of ways to get in there, so you're not relying on any one of those. I think, as you said, in Afghanistan—

Senator MCCAIN. And we just lost one, Kyrgyzstan.

General McNabb: Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Right.

General McNabb: And as you look at that, what you want to do is to make sure that, as I told General Petraeus, we will be there; we'll figure out and make sure that you never have to worry about this.

You're exactly right about Afghanistan. Landlocked. We probably couldn't ask for or find a tougher place from a logistics challenge of getting the stuff in. Obviously, we've been relying on air and that logistic line coming up from Karachi up from the south, through Pakistan into Afghanistan.

What we're trying to do, in conjunction with the State Department and with OSD and basically CENTCOM and EUCOM, is to establish in the north with the different nations up there to say, who's interested in helping us support Afghanistan, who's interested in peace and stability in that region? What we found was that a number of countries said, we would be in favor of that.

We've offered that we would use normal commercial means, their normal commercial rail and trucks, and we would use our normal commercial partner companies that would help do that, to bring the stuff in from the north. We've got 738 containers in the Northern Distribution Network right now and 90, the first 90, have been delivered to Kabul. So we are getting things down through the north. That again just offers another option—

Senator MCCAIN. What percentage is that of your monthly supply?

General McNabb: Yes, sir. If you looked at what we need to do to hold our own—and you mentioned a 50 percent increase—if we sit right now, if we average 78 containers a day getting into Afghanistan, we kind of hold our own, the days of supplies and so forth. As you say, that will go up as the 17,000 folks go in.

Right now we average—our weekly average has been holding about 130 to 140 containers a day getting through there. So we're getting more in than we need. What we hope is to be able to bring in about 100 containers from the north a day to supplement the Pak-Lok so we have lots of options to get stuff in.

Senator MCCAIN. I'd be very interested in seeing how you're going to do that, in light of the base closure and the other increased security threats, particularly using commercial operations, given what we know is going to be an escalation in threats to those supply lines.

Admiral, Phoenix, Arizona, was just designated the kidnapping capital of the United States, and I'm sure you may have seen that. There's a level of violence on the border that I've never seen before. Obviously, it spills over into the United States from time to time; and there's even greater threat that that spills over even more.

There's been alls by governors, including the governor of Texas just last week, to send more troops to the border. And we have mounted this massive effort. Yet my information is the price of an ounce of cocaine on the street in the United States remains the same.

Maybe you can give us an assessment of the situation, where you think it's leading, and whether you think we need additional troops along the United States-Mexican border, and your assessment of whether the Mexican government is winning or losing in this existential struggle with the drug cartels?

Admiral Stavridis: Let me, if I could, sir, also get General Renuart into this conversation, as Mexico is part of his—

Senator MCCAIN. We'd be very interested in you too, General.

Admiral Stavridis: But you're absolutely right that it's part of a connection that flows from the south.

Sir, I'll submit for the record on the price of cocaine. I'll find out exactly what that is. I believe in the United States the price of cocaine has actually gone up a little bit over the last year or two, although there are some indications that because of the movement of cocaine to Europe via Africa, as a matter of fact. So the point is extremely well taken.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Admiral Stavridis: As I look at Central America and the nexus between Central America and Mexico, I feel it is crucially impor-

tant that we the United States be very involved, both with our Central American partners and specifically with our Mexican friends in that zone of violence along the northern tier, where I think 6,000 people were killed last year just south of that border and, most shockingly perhaps, about 700 Mexican law enforcement and military personnel.

So I'm very hopeful that by military to military cooperation in Central America—I'll let Gene address military to military with Mexico—we can be helpful as the security forces of those countries seek to appropriately deal with the threat that they're dealing with. With that, I'm going to let Gene comment on the Mexican portion of your question, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. And also, General, as part of your answer to the question, if you would include the aspect of the price of cocaine.

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely. We'll add that to the record in our answer as well. My perception is, with Jim Stavridis, that the price has marginally increased. A lot of the implications—

Senator MCCAIN. First of all, is the Mexican government winning or losing?

General Renuart: Senator, I would say that the Mexican government is taking aggressive action to win. They are building momentum. I would not say they are losing. Now, that will sound a little unusual, given the violence we've seen. But my direct interaction with both the senior leaders of the Mexican military has left me with the perception that President Calderon has given very specific guidance to the military to be much more aggressive in their presence.

Senator MCCAIN. How important has been the Marita Initiative?

General Renuart: Senator, I can't tell you how important that is. That is a huge effort. The Mexicans see that as a real outreach and partnership, and it is making a difference in the confidence. We are working with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency to accelerate the deliveries of some of those capabilities.

Senator MCCAIN. Is the Mexican government making any progress in addressing the issue of corruption that goes to the highest levels?

General Renuart: Senator, I do believe they are. I'll give you an example. In Juarez, where we've seen this violence, the Mexican government has put nearly 10,000 military and Federal police, all who have been vetted, into the region. They've taken the local police out of their responsibility and supplemented or replaced them with Federal forces. That is beginning to return to some sense of normalcy in Juarez. But they are also going through a long-term process to vet each of the Federal police and local police leaders. So I think they're making progress.

Senator MCCAIN. And they're effective, the Mexican military?

General Renuart: Senator, they have been very effective when they've been in place. The challenge for the Mexican government is sustainment of that effort because their military is not that large. So we're working with them in a direct relationship to build more of the capacity to allow them to sustain that effort in some of these cities.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to all of you for your service and leadership to our country. I want to continue, General, with this line of questioning. As you've said in your statement, homeland defense is the preeminent mission of the two commands that you lead. Let me ask you to indicate to us how much of a threat to our homeland security you view drug-related violence from Mexico?

General Renuart: Senator, thank you. And I'll go back to Senator McCain's comment. Phoenix is a good example of the nexus between the drug trade and gangs, all of which are in, if you will, a business to make money with illicit trade. We are seeing as there is pressure brought to bear in the efforts between both of our commands to reduce the flow of drugs, we're seeing a more aggressive behavior on the part of the cartels and then their related gangs here north of the border.

So it is a real concern for security in our country. I am pleased with the interface that we have both with Jim's folks in the interdiction peace and ours, but also our partnership with law enforcement to help bolster their efforts along the border. But it is a real concern.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Can you describe for the Committee some of the things that troops under your command, the Northern Command, are doing now to deter and prevent drug-related violence from Mexico?

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely. And I must say right up front that it is a partnership between the National Guard and the Northern Command team—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General Renuart: —who work this daily with each other. But for example, we are, in the area of mil-to-mil with the Mexican government, we are providing training for some of their unique force capabilities that allow them to conduct raids on some of the cartels.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Okay.

General Renuart: Seizing weapons, for example. We are providing technology to Customs and Border and other law enforcements to identify tunnels that may have been dug underneath the border.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And those are technologies that we've developed in combat situations?

General Renuart: Absolutely, a great transfer from Afghanistan into our Southwest border.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Okay.

General Renuart: We have—we man and operate a series of sensors along the border—cameras, listening posts, etcetera, aerial vehicles, both manned and unmanned, with night vision capability, again to provide that information to law enforcement authorities, who then conduct the appropriate operations.

We think we can continue and expand that. We have a planning team in place today at the Department of Homeland Security looking at just this kind of additional support, both Guard, Reserve, and active component, and partnering with the law enforcement agencies and the States to ensure that the governors get the kind of support they feel they need.

Senator LIEBERMAN. That's encouraging, and you anticipated my next question. I know, because many of us here are on the Homeland Security Committee as well, that the Department of Homeland Security is now focused on this threat to our homeland security from drug-related violence from Mexico and they have developed plans for reaction to any escalation of the violence. So I'm glad you're working together with them.

Let me ask a couple of specific questions about that. As you know, at least one of the governors in the Southwest has suggested that there ought to be National Guard now placed along the border. What do you think about that?

General Renuart: Well, Senator, I think certainly there may be a need for additional manpower. Whether that is best suited or best provided by National Guard or additional law enforcement agencies, I think this planning team will really lead us to—I think certainly there are capabilities that the National Guard uses, for example some of their aircraft that have the full motion video capability, that are helpful to Customs and Border.

But I think defining the mission for all forces, the team along the border, is critical. This planning effort this week I think will give us a good way to answer the questions and concerns of the governors.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So it's a little early to answer the question specifically. You sound a bit skeptical about just placing Guard on the border, but rather use Guard and active resources together with our partners?

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely. This is a whole of government problem and I think the best response is an integrated approach, and we're working toward that aggressively.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And you're working on a plan on that. That was actually going to get to my next question, which is: Is there a trigger in your mind now for what kind of escalation of violence from drug-related activities from Mexico would bring Northern Command more actively involved in this battle?

General Renuart: Senator, I think we've had the trigger. To use the example of the city of Juarez and Chihuahua Province in Mexico, 1700 drug-related murders in the last year. So that kind of violence that close to our border I think was the sounding horn, if you will, on the need for an integrated approach.

So we have been working at a constant level over time. I think the highlight of this kind of violence and the proximity to our borders elevates the necessity to work aggressively. I think both Secretary Gates and Secretary Napolitano understand that and have given us all mandates to work this problem aggressively, and I think we'll have good plans come out of this work this week.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate it.

You know, I'm very grateful for the work that has been done at the Northern Command to improve our homeland security since 9-11. We usually at these hearings ask only about the current threats, but I want to just ask you to take a minute to talk about what under your command we have done since then in terms of aviation security, that is the security of the American people from a threat from the air, and also to just say a word about the consequence response management force that you're standing up. I bet

most members, most people in the country, probably most members of Congress, don't know about it, but it's going to be critically important.

General Renuart: Senator, thank you for that. Two points. First, on September 11th the air picture that NORAD looked at to defend our Nation looked outwards, away from our borders. The air picture the FAA looks at every day to control traffic was essentially inward, although certainly they do have the approaches. But the two pictures weren't married together. We didn't have an FAA representative in our operations center on September 11th. TSA did not exist.

Today we collaboratively with the FAA look at every one of the 7,000-plus aircraft that are airborne at this minute today around our country.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And that's commercial, military, and most private?

General Renuart: Yes, sir. And if one of them deviate from the appropriate procedures—radio, what have you—that is highlighted both to the FAA and to NORAD immediately and we are able to then use some of those alert aircraft that we have now around the country, in many more locations than we've ever had before, to identify this particular aircraft and determine its intentions, and then take some action should it be required.

So we've come a long way since those days on September 11th in that regard.

With respect to the consequence management force, I think September 11th alerted us that we needed to have a capability if an event like that were taken to a higher level, nuclear, biological, or chemical. Secretary Gates has been aggressive in both mandating a mission for me and our commands, but also funding and allowing us to equip a consequence management response force that's designed against a catastrophic event such as a nuclear, biological, or radiological event in our country.

That force—the first of those forces stood up on October 1st, fully funded, fully equipped, fully trained and exercised. In fact, we just completed what's called an emergency deployment exercise this past week down at Camp Blanding in Florida. It is a superbly trained force that can allow us to come in and augment existing nuclear, biological, chemical capabilities. The States have a small civil support team. The regions, there are 17 kind of regional consequence response forces, much smaller, only about 200 people.

Senator LIEBERMAN. This force is over 4,000?

General Renuart: It is, Senator. Our force is about 4,600 to 4,800 depending on the units assigned. It's designed to come in to provide response. It's not a law enforcement force. It is a response force, to provide medical care, decontamination, urban search and rescue, and those kinds of capabilities to sustain over time in one of these events.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you very, very much. That should make all of us feel more secure.

General Renuart: Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first of all ask Admiral Stavridis and General Ward a question. I have talked to you personally about my interest in the various train and equip programs, 1206, 1207, 1208, CERP program, and then the expansion of that, and the CCIF, as to how they're progressing and how valuable they are to your commands. Admiral?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, very valuable. Anything that builds partnership capacity is of terrific value in this world to the south. Just to pick up a thread from Gene Renuart and Senator Lieberman's conversation a moment ago about what specifically are we doing about the situation not only in Mexico, but in Central America, it's good to remember the Marita Initiative provides funds not just for Mexico, but for Central America, Haiti, and in the Dominican Republic. So these maritime approaches can be addressed using the kind of funding that you just talked about.

We've used some of those to help our partner nations equip themselves with better radars, intercept boats, a night vision detection capability, command and control. So it all fits together in how we establish a pattern of stopping this flow of narcotics and allowing the partner nations to know what's in the water around them. That's one specific example.

Another is the hostage rescue in Colombia, was something that could not have been done without that partnership capacity.

Senator INHOFE. Good. Thank you, Admiral.

General Ward?

General Ward: Well, Senator, I concur. Those programs that deal with training and equipping our partner nations to better enable them to conduct counterterror activities, to have better ability to control their internal borders, are very valuable. The equipment pieces, including things such as was mentioned by Admiral Stavridis, information systems, the radar systems, the equipment pieces that go to their mobility requirements inland as well as things that they do in their coastal territorial waters, have been very instrumental in increasing their capacity to take care of those challenges.

Likewise, those programs for us for greater capacity as well as for—

Senator INHOFE. I notice—I would also say, and I noticed in your written statement—I actually read it—you talk about the fact that in the IMET program, of the 52 countries, you now feel that there will be 46 of those countries by the end of this fiscal year that will be participating in that.

General Ward: Yes, sir. The IMET program, we anticipate about 46 of those countries will participate in IMET. The International Military Education and Training Program I think provides long-term benefit for our National interest as well as transforming those militaries in positive ways.

Senator INHOFE. And you agree with that, I assume, Admiral?

Admiral Stavridis: I do. In particular, we like to use those IMET funds at WINSEC, which is a very valuable institute for us.

Senator INHOFE. Once there was a time when we thought we were doing them a favor in this program. But we quickly learned that once they are tied into us in that kind of relationship, that remains.

General Ward, there are a lot of problems that people don't really think about. Everyone's familiar with Sudan. Everyone's familiar with the pirating off the east coast. But such things as the LRA, the Lord's Resistance Army. Right now, in my opinion we have the three presidents that are in agreement with each other and are all trying to work on this guy, Joseph Kony. Would you want to tell us how that's coming along and how significant you think that is to do something about that particular person, Joseph Kony, and his LRA program?

General Ward: Thank you, Senator. That part of the continent, the heartland, as many Africans describe it, the eastern Congo, a long-time area where the internal strife has been affecting neighbors, the fact that Uganda, Rwanda, and Congo came together to look at a way to deal with the problem of the LRA and Kony and the effect that they were having on the population, very substantial.

It has been positive insofar as disrupting the activity of Kony. It's been positive in addressing some of the training and recruiting practices that he and his element have performed in that part of the Congo. The degree of cooperation continues amongst those three nations and we look for that to continue and make a positive difference in that part of the continent.

Senator INHOFE. I think that is a huge success. You know, you had President Museveni and Kagame, both having military backgrounds, there's a little bit of a problem with them getting along with each other. Now with Kabila, they are cooperating now. I'm glad to hear that progress is being made.

In Zimbabwe, I notice you didn't spend a lot of time in your written statement on that or didn't mention Mugabe. They're apparently trying to work out a program where he had the opposition—very similar to Burundi—working together. Do you think that might work? Do you think Mugabe might work in that program and start getting cooperation?

General Ward: I hesitate to say. I don't know. I think clearly the initiative that's under way with that potential being there is a positive development, and I would certainly look forward to something positive coming from this arrangement that Mugabe and Tsvangirai have put in place.

Senator INHOFE. Okay. Let me ask a question of you. Probably, General Renuart, you might be the best one. I'm not sure. Maybe some of the rest of you have some ideas. It's been 5 years now since we lost the battle of Vieques. At that time, I can remember when General Laseo was actually testifying before this Committee, where he threatened the lives of some people you're looking at right now.

We had made the statement that they closed down that particular facility that offered a type of training that in my opinion—I think most of you would agree with this—couldn't be replaced anywhere else. Now, as we anticipated, since it is closed, they are now coming back. The very people who wanted it closed in the first place are saying, is there any way in the world we can get this thing opened back up and use this facility?

I know it's not a question anyone would anticipate, but have you got any thoughts on that? Can it be resurrected?

General Renuart: Senator, I'm probably not the right person to tell you specifically on the capacity to resurrect that training. I will say that we have recently moved the islands of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands into the NORTHCOM area of interest. On my first visits down there, it was clear to me that one of the challenges that we have is to continue to extend the visibility of our homeland further to the southeast in areas of detection of illicit trade and trafficking, a significant human trafficking area there, certainly also in the area of air sovereignty and air defense, as we saw the participation Senator McCain mentioned of Russian bombers in the region.

So I think there is an opportunity for us on a small basis to put some capacity into that area that maybe hasn't been there in quite a while and that could be integrated into our National homeland defense system. So we are looking to work with both the Navy and the National Guard to see how we might take advantage of some of the systems and equipment that is still in place in the Vieques area.

I might defer to Jim Stavridis for a Navy view on this.

Admiral Stavridis: I think you've got it exactly right, and I wouldn't speak for the Navy. I'm a joint officer, like everybody else up here.

But, sir, I'll be glad to take that one back to my good friend Admiral Roughhead. I think he'll be interested in looking at that. It was—Vieques, as you know, was the crown jewel of maritime training at one time.

Senator INHOFE. Well, if you would do that I would appreciate it.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

General Renuart: We'll collaborate and get you a common answer to that, Senator.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General McNabb, roughly what percentage of contract airlift do you depend upon and how cost effective and efficient do you think it is? And does it depend on the area of operations changing from one theater to another?

General McNabb: Senator Reed, we have a civil Reserve air fleet, as you know, and we depend on that when it's fully up to be about 40 percent to almost 90 percent of the movement of passengers, about 30 percent of the cargo, which is the bulk cargo.

Today I would say during normal operations we do about \$500 million worth of business. Today we do about \$2.5 billion worth of business with them. They have been very instrumental in our ability to both resupply Iraq and Afghanistan. We do have missions, cargo missions, go directly into Afghanistan, which has really helped free up things like Manas. So as we do options we make sure that we do that.

The civil Reserve air fleet, the one issue is the fact that you've got to really look hard at the threat to see if you can operate it forward. If you can't take it in there, you have to stop at an inter-

mediate base and then transload to a C-17, C-5, 130, and that's the portion that obviously we look at.

As we think about Manas, I say that it's useful but not essential, because we just need to make sure that we have bases that are in there close. Something that CENTCOM's looking very closely at, other places where we could bed down airplanes. Obviously if we could keep Manas that would be great. If not, we do have other options.

I would say that we depend to a great deal on moving - - the cheapest possible way to move cargo—that's palletized cargo—is on the civil Reserve air fleet.

Senator REED. General Ward, your command, does it rely extensively on contract airlift or are you directly supported by military aircraft?

General Ward: We are directly supported by military aircraft, Senator. We do some contract aircraft, but we are directly supported by military aircraft.

Senator REED. Are you concerned, the general concern that there are some operations that might be tactical in nature, that this contract aircraft wouldn't be suitable for? Is that a concern that you have?

General Ward: Not at this time.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Admiral Stavridis, you mentioned the tri-border area. Can you generally describe the level of HUMINT that you have there? Do you have, you think, good insights into what is going on there, or is that an issue of concern?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, we have good coordination with the three national partners who are in that region, Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. Via their capability, we then receive a reasonable level of HUMINT in that area. But we don't have SOUTHCOM in—I don't feel the need for it as long as we work well with our partners in that region.

Senator REED. General Renuart, have you received comments or complaints from the government of Mexico that some of these bands are being supplied with weapons from the United States?

General Renuart: Yes, Senator. In fact, from the very first meeting I had with both General Galvan and Admiral Sainez, the leaders of their military, they mentioned the very large percentage of weapons that are captured in that area seem to come from the United States. That message has been continuous and loud. I think it was brought up to the President when he and President Calderon visited. Certainly it was brought up to Admiral Mullen when he visited with General Galvan just a week or so ago.

It is a principal concern. Not all of these weapons directly come from the United States, but in many cases are brokered by illicit weapons dealers that do reside here. I know that our law enforcement partners have had some success and are continuing to work that aggressively.

Admiral Stavridis: Can I add to that?

Senator REED. Yes, sir.

Admiral Stavridis: I get the same thing in Guatemala, in Honduras, in El Salvador, in Nicaragua. The same weapons are flowing from the United States through Mexico and down to Central Amer-

ica. So I too receive that comment and I associate myself with Gene's remarks.

Senator REED. Do you gentlemen think it's troubling that countries that we see as in some cases teetering on the edge of stability point to with—and I presume you think it is accurately point to—the fact that one of the greatest threats to them is coming from weapons that are flowing, it seems with great numbers, into these countries from the United States?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, I do, and I think that—I know there are diplomats like Ambassador Tom Shannon over at State Department who are working hard on this. I think it's something we should try and address.

Senator REED. Let me—General Renuart, please.

General Renuart: Senator, just if I could add a point. There are and continue to be more successes in this regard. For a period of time, it was difficult to get what I'll call the forensics of these weapons captures back from the Mexicans. After some active intervention with their leadership, we are now getting much more of that information. That is allowing us to begin to take some—"us" meaning the inter-agency—legal action here in the U.S., with some success.

So we're building confidence now with our partner, at least in Mexico, and I think in the other countries as well, that we'll actually sort of do something about it if they continue to share information.

Senator REED. Let me just a final point on this, is that our allies in this effort cite the situation of easy access to firearms in the United States as a major threat to their stability and consequently as a major national security threat to the United States.

Admiral Stavridis: I think that view is held by our friends in Mexico and in Central America. It is concerning that that's a threat to them, and certainly the violence that is brought from this cross-border flow of money and guns generally south, narcotics generally north, is finding its way into this kind of gang violence and other things we see in places like Phoenix.

Senator REED. Just a final point. Do you think this, the perception that this problem exists, in any way inhibits the ability or the willingness of these governments to cooperate with the United States?

Admiral Stavridis: No, sir. I find it one of the ways they would like to cooperate more.

Senator REED. They would like us to do more?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes.

General Renuart: I agree with that.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Reed.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Renuart, I want to ask you about a study by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve that you and I have discussed before. It was released last year, and it asserted that there is "an appalling gap in our Nation's ability to respond to the use of a weapon of mass destruction on our soil."

You've talked this morning, in response to questions from Senator Lieberman, about the standing up of a 4,000-member consequence management response team and that is certainly great progress. But as I recall the report, it was very critical of how these teams were going to be put together and whether one team would be sufficient. I believe that the report actually called for three such teams.

We're now a year later. What is your assessment of our ability to respond to the use of a weapon of mass destruction? Let me ask more specifically. What is your assessment now, in responding to the commission saying that there is this appalling gap?

General Renuart: Senator, thanks. I think I can very confidently say that the wording used by that commission doesn't exist—the situation doesn't exist today. First, in terms of the ability to plan and integrate together, the National Guard Bureau and Northern Command are integrated in a way never before in history. We collaborate on every planning effort. I mentioned to Senator Lieberman that we are at DHS today working on Mexico border security planning, and we are there in partnership with the National Guard Bureau.

As you know, each State has a small civil support team that allows them to assess a nuclear, biological, chemical event, but with not a lot of muscle to do much about that.

Senator COLLINS. Those are very small.

General Renuart: They are small, about 22 people.

In addition, there are 17 so-called CERFPs. They are another response team built within the National Guard. They're spread around the country. I monitor the readiness of each of those. But they are also relatively small, about 200 or so people. They do have an ability to do consequence management, but on a smaller scale.

As you mentioned, we have the first of three planned consequence management response forces now fully trained and equipped. We are building the second one as we speak. It will be operational on the 1st of October of this year. As you mentioned from the report, we have a tasking from the Secretary of Defense to build three of these teams total. So we'll build the third in the next year.

That will allow us something on the order of about 16,000 trained and equipped individuals, teams, organizations, capable of responding to a large-scale event. All of this is an integrated approach, so that it's not replacing something the State has. It's augmenting it and supplementing it.

We are now building the collaborative planning process to be able to go from very small to very large with the appropriate size force to provide assistance to FEMA and to the governors and the States. So I think I'm very pleased with the progress, and I think that if that report were written today it wouldn't even mention that.

Senator COLLINS. That's great news. Nevertheless, General Blum, who's now your deputy, I believe, and was the head of the National Guard Bureau, testified in the past that 88 percent of the Army National Guard was very poorly equipped. And in a hearing before our Homeland Security Committee in July of 2007 I asked General Blum whether that lack of resources was adequate to re-

spond to a catastrophic event, and he testified that in a no-notice event, which obviously is what a terrorist attack would be, we are at risk, we are at significant risk.

Well, it's now about a year and a half later since he gave that very sobering assessment. Is the National Guard now sufficiently equipped so that we're no longer at significant risk in your view?

General Renuart: Well, my good friend Craig McKinley, now the new four-star chief of the National Guard Bureau, I'm pleased to say, I think would echo my comments. But my assessment is for the areas of homeland security that you've described that the National Guard is equipped at better rates than they've ever seen in their past. It varies with each State, so I won't give you a specific percentage. I can get that and add that to the record if you'd like.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

General Renuart: But we also sponsor a Reserve component advocacy working group at our headquarters, that gets just to this issue: How do we ensure that we put into the budget adequate resourcing so that the National Guard can conduct its homeland missions? I'm very comfortable with the progress we've made. There is a commitment on the part of Secretary Gates to continue that progress. So I think if General Blum were here today he would not give you that same, very sobering assessment and he'd be much more positive in his comments.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

General McNabb, in 2001 at my request the GAO studied the security of munitions, weapons, ammunition, being moved within the United States by surface transportation under the supervision of TRANSCOM. Are you familiar with that GAO report?

General McNabb: Ma'am, I am not.

Senator COLLINS. The report was classified because its findings were so alarming in terms of the security of the weapons as they were being moved from point to point within this country. Without getting into the classified details—and I would inform you that originally there was no intention of classifying the report, but the findings were so serious that GAO and DOD decided that it should be classified. A major issue, again without getting into the classified details, was the availability of depots throughout the United States to receive weapons shipments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To your knowledge, are those depots now open and available to receive shipments 24 hours a day?

General McNabb: Ma'am, I will take that for the record. But in general, when you think about what General Renuart just talked about with NORTHCOM, there is a lot more of what we are talking about in conjunction with NORTHCOM getting their arms around all of this—working with the services, because ideally obviously the services have a big play in that. But I would say that the way that we work together to bring again the whole of government approach to these kinds of issues, because you are talking significant dollars—depots are run by the services—again, I will take that for the record, take a look at it, and we'll come back with kind of a combined answer that includes OSD and NORTHCOM and us.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

General Renuart: Senator, just a quick add-on. We were given a responsibility for more of that security. I can tell you that there are—I monitor the movements each day. In a classified environment I could tell you how many are moving today and where. We monitor that and sort of flight-follow those movements.

In terms of the hours of the depots, I think we're going to need to come back to you with specifics. But I can also tell you that we have, if you will, way points that these shippers can use if for some reason a depot is not accessible. There are DOD installations that provide them sort of temporary haven during their movement.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Collins.

Senator Bill Nelson.

Senator BILL NELSON. I want to compliment General Ward and Admiral Stavridis as you are adapting to this new policy where you're not only a warrior, you're also a diplomat. Secretary Gates actually commented on this policy. He says: "Broadly speaking, when it comes to America's engagement with the rest of the world, it's important that the military is and clearly seen to be in a supporting role to civilian agencies."

You've been doing that, Admiral Stavridis, General Ward, as you're setting up Africa Command. You're doing that.

Admiral Stavridis, what would you say to General Ward on your experience in prioritizing the coordination with those civilian agencies?

Admiral Stavridis: Senator, you'll be glad to know that General Ward and I just brought our staffs together for 2-1/2 days of very specific conversation on all this, to include a great deal of our personal time and all of our senior leadership. We learned a lot from each other, and I'm learning things from the way Kip Ward is doing business and hopefully we were helpful to him.

I would say that fundamentally both General Ward and I understand, based on these conversations, that SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM do defense and that State Department does diplomacy and AID does development. But as you said, what we try and do is be in a supporting role wherever we can. So we are, for example, at SOUTHCOM, to give you one specific example, we are taking all of our theater security cooperation plans about our military to military activities and we're actually going and sitting with our partners at State and AID and looking at how our training activities, our human rights seminars, our disaster relief work, how that can be supportive of what AID does as they do development and what State does as they do diplomacy.

So we very much see ourselves as taking a supporting background role. We do not want to militarize our foreign policy in any way. We want a civilian face on these activities and civilian leadership, but we want to seek to be helpful in supporting them where we can. That's been our approach.

Kip?

Senator BILL NELSON. I'm going to short-circuit this if I may, General Ward, because I've got some other questions that I need

to get into. Just suffice it to say, congratulations on what you're doing.

Admiral, are you satisfied with the Fourth Fleet that's standing up? Does it give you the projection?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, the Fourth Fleet has been very positive for SOUTHCOM and our efforts. The ability of that planning staff in Newport, Florida, to reach back to the Navy and obtain the assets has been a singular success. I talked earlier about our ability to bring Navy ships like the BOXER and the KEARSARGE into the region to do medical activities. That's an example of it. Disaster relief off of Haiti, that's an example of it. Our counternarcotics interdiction of last summer and this past fall, that's an example of it.

So we're very satisfied with the Navy's decision to stand up the Fourth Fleet.

Senator BILL NELSON. General Renuart, NORTHCOM is responsible for missile defense operations to protect the homeland.

General Renuart: Yes, sir.

Senator BILL NELSON. We're developing a national missile defense system. Do you think that the system needs to be operationally effective, suitable, survival, and cost-effective?

General Renuart: Yes, sir, I do.

Senator BILL NELSON. Do you think that we need to take the steps needed to make sure that the system is all of those things?

General Renuart: Senator, I absolutely do, to include the robust testing that should be carried out.

Senator BILL NELSON. In that GMD testing program, should it include operational testing?

General Renuart: Senator, it should absolutely. In fact, I will tell you the last two tests had operational crews actually conducting that missile launch.

Senator BILL NELSON. What are you doing in coordination with the Missile Defense Agency and Strategic Command to realistically test the ground-based missile defense system?

General Renuart: Senator, we have become a member of the missile defense executive board, which up until about a year ago we did not participate in. That allows us to drive an operational requirement into the test and development and budgeting process. We work directly with now-General O'Reilly, the commander, to ensure that we at each test add a more operational feature to it. He has been very supportive of that, and we continue to work aggressively to get more and more of an operational flavor into the test program with each subsequent mission.

Senator BILL NELSON. In doing that, are you going to be able to reconcile the test and evaluation responsibilities with your mission to defend the homeland?

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely. In fact, as we prepare for the next test series that will occur, we have added on our behalf, on our request, some complications in the communications network we use for command and control, just to test those kinds of possible system failures that may occur.

Senator BILL NELSON. The bottom line question that I'm not going to ask you, but that we have to ask in this Committee, is: Is it operationally effective so that in fact if we had the threat it could do the job?

General Renuart: Senator, I think, as you know, we're right now in a mode of very limited threat. Essentially, North Korea is the system that we are focused on. Senator, I'll tell you, if we felt the North Koreans were going to shoot a ballistic missile at us today, I am comfortable that we would have an effective system able to meet that need.

Senator BILL NELSON. That's particularly true because of the layers, such as the Aegis system and so forth—

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off. Go ahead, please.

Senator BILL NELSON. No, I'm just going to—we'll just conclude this with, the chairman has given me the responsibility on the Strategic Subcommittee to be able to answer the underlying question, is the National missile defense system operational today? Now, if you're talking about the layer, such as Aegis, the answer to that is yes.

But if you're talking about the one shot from Vandenberg or from Alaska, today the answer is no.

As you suggest, when that threat may materialize, maybe it will be. But we've got to have absolute clear eyes with regard to the capability of this system.

By the way, Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the new three-star who is the head of Ballistic Missile Defense. He is approaching this straightforward, transparent. He answers your questions. He's absolutely committed to operational testing. I think it's a new day there and I want the compliment the General.

Chairman LEVIN. I would join Senator Nelson, by the way, in that reaction to the commander there.

General Renuart: Sir, I would also echo that. He has been very focused on bringing the operational user into this process. So I think we're on the right track.

Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Nelson.

Senator Martinez.

Senator MARTINEZ. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

General, welcome all and thank you very much for your service and your testimony today.

Admiral, I want to start with you, obviously, from the many areas of interest that we share. But as we look at the Venezuelan situation, the declining price of oil, do you see perceive any change in the ability of Venezuela to project itself in the region, given the diminution of their financial status?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I do. As always, whenever I discuss Venezuela, I'd like to begin by pointing out the United States has enjoyed a long, positive relationship with Venezuela stretching back 150 years. Clearly we have some political differences right now. We do have correct professional military to military relations with the Venezuelan military.

My assessment is, like any other nation that sees a reduction in its revenues, there will be effects on the ability of the Venezuelan military to not only continue the high level of arms purchases, \$5 billion over the last 4 years, more than \$20 billion in contracts, all of it with Russia, I think the ability to consummate all of that and then to maintain and train and equip these very expensive systems

would be diminished significantly with the loss in oil revenues, yes, sir.

Senator MARTINEZ. By the way, speaking of that level of purchases, those are very disproportionate to the region and to what any other country may be doing in the region, correct?

Admiral Stavridis: That's correct, sir.

Senator MARTINEZ. Do you have any clue from all of that type of data, as well as the recent naval exercises with Russia, as to what are the intentions of Venezuela as it relates to the military projection in the region?

Admiral Stavridis: I do not, sir.

Senator MARTINEZ. I wanted to ask a combined question of General Renuart and yourself, Admiral. It really has to do with the regional perception of our country, as well as the—Sunday we saw where a new government was elected in El Salvador, in an area where this government, while it might be perceived to be folks that are not particularly friendly to our country, I do like the statements that the new president has made so far. But whether it is that, the trend in other neighboring countries, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, certainly the situation which continues in Cuba—what do you perceive that we as a country—and obviously I'm now asking you in your merged role as diplomats as well as military—what should we be doing in the region?

Some would suggest that the fence on the border is a very bad signal. Others would talk about different issues. What is your assessment?

Admiral Stavridis: Sure. Let me address El Salvador first. State Department has come out and congratulated President-elect Mauricio Funes on his election. By all standards, it is a very legitimate process that unfolded, with high voter turnout. President Funes has indicated a real willingness to continue to work strongly with the United States.

We count El Salvador on a military to military basis as among our strongest partners in the region and we're looking forward to continuing that very strong relationship and, based on what I've heard, that's what I expect will happen.

Looking at the region very broadly, I think it's the nature of something good, actually. It's that in all of the Americas today, every country is a democracy, with one exception, and that of course is Cuba. But every other country is a democracy. Senator, you know democracies don't always agree. There are going to be political disagreements. From my lane doing defense and looking at military to military, I would believe that our military to military engagement across the spectrum of political actors in the region is a very positive aspect of what we need to continue. So we work very hard to have positive military to military relations with Ecuador, with Bolivia, with Nicaragua, with Brazil, with Argentina, with Colombia, with Mexico, etcetera, etcetera.

So I would say that from a defense lane, strong military to military activity is a very positive force as we work through these occasional disagreements amongst friendly democracies.

General Renuart: Senator, I might just add a couple points, if I may. First, SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM have created a relationship, a transparent relationship across the borders of our combat-

ant command lines, if you will, on the map, that I think is very positive. I call it we share prisoners routinely with our staffs back and forth. We two have had staff to staff talks. We put liaisons, for example, in the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South down in Key West. They put liaisons in our Joint Task Force North along the Mexican border.

Mexico I think could be put into many of the same categories that Jim mentioned. They are eager to reach out to us in a mil-to-mil way. They see that relationship as very positive. I think we need to continue with that. In Mexico the military is one of the most—the National military is one of the most highly respected organizations in the country.

Mexico also sees a role for itself looking south. It is a considerable economic power in that area and it is increasing its trade to the south, and I think that's a positive element. It also allows Mexico to begin to collaborate with the Nations to its south on the illicit traffic issue as well.

So I think from the U.S. perspective, we have to continue that certainly positive mil-to-mil. The soft power we bring is very important. One thing we've found with the Mexicans in particular is that our experiences of inter-agency cooperation are a very positive element for Mexico, and they are trying very aggressively to learn how to do that better, and that will help them in the counter-narcotics fight.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you very much.

Admiral, do you have any insights into the recent purge in Cuba?

Admiral Stavridis: No, sir, I do not, other than I think it shows that Raul Castro has completely consolidated power in that country.

Senator MARTINEZ. There's an interesting article in this week's Newsweek by—

Admiral Stavridis: Castaneda.

Senator MARTINEZ. —former Foreign Minister Castaneda.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. I saw it. Thank you.

Senator MARTINEZ. Well, if you get a crystal ball available to you at any point, let me know.

General Ward, I wanted to ask you about the piracy issue near Somalia in the past year, where you know we've had a considerable amount of disruption to commercial shipping. Any insights into that issue and what can we do to continue to try to stave off those problems?

General Ward: Senator, as you know, the counter-piracy effort is led on the water by Central Command, the Combined Task Force 151. There has been considerable progress made as the coalition of nations supporting counter-piracy has increased. That is an international coalition of nations. We support that through our activities ashore as well as through our limited facilities in Djibouti as those nations participate in the counter-piracy activity.

But I would offer, as I think most of us know, that the root of the piracy issue in the Gulf of Aden there and the Indian Ocean is the result of the lack of an effective government there in Somalia. So our efforts to support the establishment of effective institutions of government there in Somalia would be the long-term fix to the piracy that goes there. It also exists on the east coast—correc-

tion, the west coast of Africa, certainly not to the degree. But in that regard, our efforts to work with those nations to increase their capacity to provide for their own maritime safety and security have gone a long way to helping address the threat of piracy.

We look to increase those efforts in the east, along the east coast of Africa, again adding to the capacity and capability of those nations to coordinate, to share information, to have visibility over their territorial waters, and to be able to do something about it once something is detected. So those efforts continue, the large increase in naval presence afloat with that coalition, as well as tactics being taken by commercial shippers to address the issue, because even there are measures that recently they have been taking to help address piracy issues as well.

So it's been a combination of those things that have led to what has been received or seen as a reduction in the level of pirating that goes on in the Gulf of Aden and there in the Indian Ocean.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, sir.

General McNabb: Senator Martinez, if I could just add to what General Ward mentioned, in working with CENTCOM and with AFRICOM, but it is with our commercial partners, working with MARAD, as we have MSC ships, but also we have a lot of commercial U.S. flag vessels that are taking our cargo across that area. We are working very closely on those techniques about how you get through, when should you convoy, how do you make sure you've got visibility, and when you are the type of ship that may be a little bit at risk then you'll be escorted.

It's all of those kinds of things. MSC also, working with MARAD, has asked our commercial partners that if they need we have anti-piracy assessment teams that will join them and say, here's some techniques that you can use. Again, everybody is working together with the idea that obviously you have the military who are watching this, but also there's a lot of things that our commercial folks can do to make sure that they help themselves. And all of that is going on.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, General. I'm sorry we didn't have time to talk about KC-135, but maybe in the second round.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Martinez.

Senator Ben Nelson.

Senator BEN NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen.

The piracy issue, if my history recollection is right, is reminiscent of what President Thomas Jefferson had to deal with with the Barbary pirates. Who would have thought in 200 years we'd be dealing with something like that again?

General Renuart, you spoke earlier about the consequence management force that became fully funded, equipped, and trained on October 2008. Can you speak to how this force will work with the National Guard civil support teams? The funding for the civil support teams has been cut for the last 3 years. So will we be able to have a full partnership there with adequate resources to be able to fund it?

General Renuart: Senator Nelson, thank you for that question. I think it's important that we continue to push for adequate funding

for each element of these forces. As I mentioned earlier, no one of them can stand alone and do this job. As I mentioned to Senator Collins, the integration and partnership with the National Guard is at a level really never before seen in terms of its collaboration, coordination, and communication.

But what we've tried to do is to tier our approach so that the first responders will always be the State and local responders. The CST is integral to that. We have 55 of those teams funded. My sense is the budget—the upcoming budgets allow them to sustain that effort. They don't necessarily allow them to grow. We are working on some training opportunities that will expand their training under the NORTHCOM flag in exercise funding.

The second layer in terms of size and capacity is the CERFP, and it is a force of about 200 guardsmen as well. There are 17 of them around the country. On any given day, about five or six of them are what I'll call green across the board, all the people, all the equipment, and all the training, and they are on a tiered set of alerts so that they could respond in due course if an event occurs.

We are advocating for some additional funding, especially in the area of pharmaceutical supplies for some of those teams, to grow them a bit. The Department seems supportive of that, so I don't think that's in jeopardy.

The consequence management response force that is under my command is a much larger force, designed to come in, if you will, on top of the existing both civilian and military forces to provide long-term sustainment of a large-scale effort, catastrophic effort. Right now we have about \$130 million in our budget for the next few years to grow and build those forces. That's for National Guard. The active duty comes out of its existing O and M budget. That's not at risk at this point.

So I'm not uncomfortable. It's something we just watch and pay attention to. But I think we have the capacity to grow each of those appropriately over the coming years.

Senator BEN NELSON. Well, as a former governor, I hope that we'll be in a position to make sure that the CSTs are able to respond appropriately. Not that long ago, I realized by first-hand inspection that resetting the equipment needs was way behind on the curve. We put some more money in for that, but I'm not sure that we've achieved the level of reset that we had hoped to. So I hope that we'll keep pushing for that, because without the equipment the capabilities are going to be diminished, there's no question about it.

General Renuart: Senator, just one quick point to finish on that. I look at the readiness numbers of each of those on a weekly basis, as does General McKinley. We collaborate on advocacy within the budget on those issues, and we continue to keep them very much at the central part of our focus. So we too are concerned that we not let that capability sort of deteriorate on the vine, and we'll work that hard.

Senator BEN NELSON. I'll see General McKinley I think next week and I'll go over this with him as well.

I am encouraged by the efforts to make commands seamless by avoiding overlap or underlap by working together. As COCOMs, I would hope that perhaps this seamless approach would apply to de-

termining what kind of equipment you need, because part of the complaints—part of the reason for complaints about cost overruns and the challenges we've had with waste and questions about the costs of equipment—by working together perhaps we can avoid some of that that Secretary Gates has mentioned and we're all concerned about, given the fact that we want to get the biggest bang for the military buck that we can, particularly as it comes to equipment.

Would you agree that your working together can help us overcome some of that? Admiral first?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, very much so. As we mentioned, in our staff talks with NORTHCOM and our staff talks with General Ward at AFRICOM, and we have staff talks scheduled for the Pacific Command later this year, we're trying very hard to do precisely that, too synthesize all of our requirements, our approaches. I think there's great, no pun intended, money to be made there.

General Renuart: Yes, Senator, I'd absolutely agree. In fact, I know my great contributing partner, Duncan McNabb, who owns the lift of all of the world, gets a lot of questions about tankers and airlift. But I will tell you that in our air sovereignty mission tankers are equally critical to us. So we try to collaborate on each of these issues, so that the Department gets a true sense of the requirement.

General Ward: Senator, I would even carry it beyond, not just equipment. To the degree that we collaborate, the entire resources available to our Nation are better used. So we take that very seriously, not just with our combatant command partners, but also our inter-agency partners, working as closely as we can to assure ourselves that those resources are in fact used wisely and appropriately and are in fact not duplicated or in an overlapping of posture.

General McNabb: Senator, from our standpoint as TRANSCOM, we're always going to be the supporting command of one of these folks or one of the other theater commanders. Whenever they say, this is what we need, we've got to be there, but we obviously have to have already exercised that and made sure that we are there, that we have the systems and processes all set. I talked about General Renuart. When you look at where NORTHCOM and TRANSCOM as they work through consequence management, how fast can you react to a disaster relief like a hurricane or a CBRN event, our ability to have already worked that out and already have that all set, so that our staffs and our command centers already know exactly how this will go down, with General Renuart saying, here's what I need, and then we flow the forces to him, all that works well.

I would say the same thing with Admiral Stavridis and General Ward, General Petraeus, Admiral Keating, General Craddock. In every case, they know that when they say, here's what we have—and we can have a dialogue back and forth and say, if we can do it this way, you just tell us when you need it; we'll figure out the best way. It might be multi-modal. It may be Guard and Reserve. It may be commercial. There's lots of different ways of doing it, and we're always looking at satisfying the warfighter first, but making sure that we're doing it with an eye towards the taxpayer as well.

Senator BEN NELSON. I appreciate it.

My time has expired. Just one, hopefully for the record. If you could provide more information about the arms that are being supplied to Mexico. Are they manufactured in the United States or are they just brokered through a broker in the United States? Do they flow through the United States? Are they illegal or legal weapons in any event under U.S. law? I'd like some more information on that. It would be very helpful.

General Renuart: Senator, we'll collaborate and get an answer for you for the record with some more detail on that, absolutely. [The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator BEN NELSON. That would be very helpful.

Thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Nelson.

Senator Chambliss.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service to our country and thank you for your leadership.

General Renuart, we are certainly pleased with where you have landed with this last assignment. We still miss your leadership at Moody.

General Renuart: Sir, I miss it as well.

Senator CHAMBLISS. You discuss in your statement the issue of aircraft capitalization and air sovereignty. I want to quote what you said there. You said: "Our ability to maintain air sovereignty in the future is at risk. Legacy fighters are aging and will be stressed to maintain reliability and capability as we move into the 2013–2025 time frame. The tradeoff between modernization of airframes and transformation to fifth generation aircraft could limit efforts to keep pace with emerging technologies."

I agree with that statement. I think it's very fair and accurate. You go on to talk about the role of the F-22 as well as the F-35 in air sovereignty and in homeland defense generally.

Looking out over the next 10 to 15 years, General, how concerned are you about the ability of legacy non-Stealth aircraft to play that role with respect to domination of the airways as well as general homeland defense? And where does the F-22 and the F-35 play into this in your mind?

General Renuart: Senator, thanks, and I really honestly really do miss Valdosta, Georgia.

I think first, as the combatant commander responsible for the defense of the homeland and the sovereignty of our air space, it is important to me to ensure that over the long term we continue to recapitalize those resources, as I mentioned in my statement. I think that there are really two tiers that we need to pay attention to. First is is there a peer competitor nation who would threaten us? That certainly would require the best capability the Nation has.

I think there is a second tier. That is, can I go find that aircraft that's not complying with FAA regulations somewhere in our United States? That may not require the same, very high end capability, but certainly capability nonetheless to find and fix that target, very high or low altitude, large radar cross-section or small radar cross-section.

I think both of those requirements talk to advanced aircraft capabilities. As you know, the F-16 will begin to go out of service here shortly. Much of my air sovereignty force resides in the National Guard, many of whom are flying some of the older versions of the F-16. So as I see that end of service approaching, I still have the requirement to maintain the sovereignty of our air space. I've worked very closely with the chiefs of the services, not just the Air Force but the Navy and the Marine Corps as well because they certainly can contribute to this mission. I've worked closely with Duncan McNabb on air refueling tankers to ensure that we have a robust, sustainable capability.

The F-22 certainly is a marvelous aircraft. It gives a variety of capabilities. I think we have already used it in our air sovereignty missions, primarily in Alaska, but occasionally here in the lower 48. The F-35 offers again an all-aspect capability that will be helpful, not just to see aircraft, but to see ships on the surface of the ocean, small radar cross-section, cruise missile, that kind of threat.

So both of those fit very well into the capabilities that I think we'll need in the next 10 to 15 to 20 years. The numbers—I maintain the requirement for a certain level of capacity and rely on the services to provide that. So I try not to get into specific numbers of airplanes with the services or with the Committee, but rather maintaining a level of capacity for the country. Certainly those aircraft will both fit into that for the future.

Senator CHAMBLISS. And are you comfortable with where you see us headed over the next 10 to 15 years about having that capacity?

General Renuart: Senator, I'm very comfortable in the 10 to 15-year point. I'm a little more careful on the 5 to 10-year just because there is a production build and we want to make sure we can sustain the existing force. The Air Force is working very aggressively to look at bridge capacities in there. So far I'm comfortable with their approach. They haven't determined the final answer yet.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Admiral, your security cooperation arrangements throughout SOUTHCOM and the Southern Hemisphere in large part allows you to be successful in your mission. Almost everything you do at SOUTHCOM is in partnership with other countries in that region. One of the best ways we have to build and sustain those partnerships is through the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Both Chairman Levin and I serve on that board at WINSEC and we have seen first-hand the value of training WINSEC conducts and the partnerships with our southern allies and what it does to create that good feeling between our respective countries.

I was pleased to see you mention WINSEC in your written statement. If you would amplify as to what your thoughts are on WINSEC, and in particular regarding how it helps you carry out your mission.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. As you know, I serve on the board of visitors of WINSEC along with you and the chairman. Every year we have about 1500 students from 23 different countries. It's a tremendously positive personal contact event for all of them to come. They come with their families. They spend a year in Georgia. It's a terrific positive event that will cause them to be bound with the United States in many ways forever.

So it's an irreplaceable aspect of our security cooperation down south. There's an extremely high component of human rights training that goes on in every one of those courses. Between 10 and 35 percent of the time in every course taught there has to do with human rights, which is a very important part of how we can share lessons across all of these militaries throughout the region.

So I'm a very firm believer in it. I'm a satisfied customer. The U.S. Army runs it, but I'm proud to be on the board of visitors and I'm proud of the work that goes on down there. And it is fully transparent. I would invite anyone who wants to come and visit at any time, and I'd be glad personally to facilitate that with the U.S. Army. We don't do it as a dog and pony show. We'll bring you in there to see a class, to walk through the classrooms, to walk through the teachers, lessons, books. It's a transparent facility that is doing very, very good work in the region in my opinion.

Senator CHAMBLISS. General McNabb, we have this ongoing conversation relative to the C-5 and the C-17. I view those airframes as not being in competition with each other, but as making a significant complement one to the other. But with respect to the C-5, all those airframes are old. We keep the modernization program constantly on the books. The C-17, we're flying it 150 percent of the anticipated rate that we thought we'd be flying it in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now we're looking at whether or not we're going to continue that line of C-17s.

What's your thought about where we are from a current capacity rate with respect to those aircraft and where do we need to go in the future?

General McNabb: Thank you, Senator Chambliss. Where I sit is the program of record that has 205 C-17s, re-engining the C-5Bs and the one C and two Cs, and then doing the avionics modernization program on the As, that mix of airplanes satisfies the requirements that I have, the 33.95 for outsized, oversized cargo, and then obviously I have the craft to carry the bulk cargo as well.

So right now that is—that came out of the Nunn-McCurdy. They looked at a lot of options, including additional C-17s or re-engining all the C-5s, and they came up with this mix. I was part of that as the vice chief, but also as the AMC commander, so I'm comfortable that that meets those needs.

We have MCRS-2016 that is in the works right now, about to be taken to OSD in May. It is looking at the additional things that have happened since the mobility capability study did, the increase of the ground forces, the change of the way we use the airplanes—as you mentioned, the C-17, the higher usage; how do we do the intra-theater. It's also looking at the tanker capability and the sea-lift as well.

So that's the latest study. We'll take a look at that. But lots of—as the different studies have gone on—Senator McCaskill tasked the size and mix of the airlift force and it confirmed the same, so this mix about works.

The good news on the C-5 re-engine program is the first three have been delivered to Dover. They're going to go out there in the system and we'll test it out. When I talked to Lockheed, I said I'd like to have the reliability like we have on the C-17 so that we can get it out and trust it that it'll go back and forth with high reli-

ability. Well, they promised 75 percent as a minimum. It looks like 81 percent is what the test is showing.

So we'll go out there and wring it out, and I'm really excited about, as you say, that complementary capability of those C-5Bs that become re-engined will be huge. The C-5As, again we'll put the avionics modernization program and that'll allow it to fly in the airspace all over the world.

So I think the overall mix we have about right, unless something changes. I will say from my standpoint, more modern airplanes is better because anything, if you can trust it, it's got more reliability, you don't have to put backup airplanes out there and so forth. Multi-modal also plays well.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Chambliss.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. First of all, I want to congratulate Admiral Stavridis on the rescue of Keith Stansell, Thomas Howes, and Mark Gonsalves, as well as the 12 other hostages, last July from the FARC. I can remember watching that shaky video and just thinking how professional and how remarkable the operation was, and I can assure you the pride that you felt in watching that rescue was shared by millions of Americans. It was certainly a great moment for SOUTHCOM and for our country and for all of our partners in that mission. I'm just sure it must have been an extremely gratifying and emotional event for you.

Admiral Stavridis: It was. The Colombian military, which undertook that operation, is to be highly congratulated in every sense.

Senator HAGAN. Very good.

General Ward, in my home town in Greensboro, North Carolina, I have a large number of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They talk to me frequently about their situation and their home and their fears for their safety, for their family members and associates there. There is also a situation where if there is a violation of an immigration status that there's fear that people who are deported back to the Congo will be murdered when they arrive.

I wondered if you could update us on the security situation there. And then in addition, I read quite frequently about the use of rape as a weapon against young women and children and old women in the Congo. There was a recent article that Bob Herbert wrote in the New York Times talking about that it's really hundreds of thousands of victims, and the fact that should they live the humiliation of themselves and their family members is widespread.

General Ward: Senator, to be sure the violence that can be perpetrated against civilian populations in the Congo and other parts of the continent is absolutely deplorable. We through various mechanisms are doing our part in providing increased capacities for these nations to, firstly, deal with these rebel and renegade groups that operate inside their territories.

As was mentioned recently, the collaboration that exists between three governments—the governments of Uganda, the Congo, and Rwanda—to address the LRA in the eastern Congo was I think at this point in time something that we should all look at in a very optimistic way as signaling a degree of cooperation amongst those

regional neighbors to address a common problem that has done the sorts of things you described as it terrorizes the populations of those areas.

The use of violence, rape, murders, and other atrocities that these groups commit against citizens in these areas is something that we all look at in a very negative way, and to the degree that we can continue to support efforts to address that I clearly say we ought to take every opportunity we can to do so. We do that in conjunction with the Department of State, with the U.S. Agency for International Development, as they work their activities to, one, help increase the effectiveness of the institutions of government in those region. Obviously, our role there is as we work with these nations increasing their capacity from a security point of view to deal with that threat that exists.

Programs such as the Defense Institute for International Legal Structures, where we provide some support to these institutions, these governments, where in fact they catch and apprehend folks who have done these crimes and can prosecute and punish accordingly, we also support. To be sure, those are deplorable situations that we pay attention to and do our best to do something about.

Senator HAGAN. It's certainly a horrible thing to read about and to think that that's going on on a daily basis. It's most concerning.

I have another question I wanted to ask you, about oil theft. You discussed the serious problem of oil theft in the Niger Delta. In your written testimony you stated that in Nigeria oil exports have been reduced by up to 20 percent due to banditry, and in a country in which 95 percent of the foreign exchange earnings come from the oil industry certainly a 20 percent reduction in exports is a serious blow to that country's economy.

Can you expand on this problem and what is being done to address it?

General Ward: The country of Nigeria, Senator, a sovereign nation, has its own requirement to provide for the security of its—within its borders. We, through various programs, work with the Nigerian government to increase their capacity to in fact deal with these problems of illegal oil bunkering as well as other threats against the oil infrastructure there in the Niger Delta.

We do not get actively involved in activities, but we in fact are involved in our training work. As you know, there is the Africa Partnership Station, which is a training program where we work with the Nations in the region, the Gulf of Guinea, to increase their capacity to do several things: first, to detect what goes on inside their territorial waters; two, to address it in some common way; and then, three, to do it in a way that helps to increase and promote security, such that the work being done by those in the military and other security forces are in fact—that work is in fact work that contributes to additional security, as opposed to alienating populations, alienating the local community, etcetera.

Our programs for increasing their military capabilities include training, it includes equipment, it includes common operational procedures that lead to better inter-operability among these nations as well. That is an ongoing program, an ongoing project that we have, working with the Nigerian government, but also other

governments there in the Gulf of Guinea, to address that problem of illegal bunkering.

I would also add that when it happens, effective training for illegal bunkering, it also transfers over into other areas: illegal fishing, which also robs those nations of a very, very valuable resource that can be used to support their population. So illegal fishing, illegal oil bunkering. It also gets to the point that we talked with SOUTHCOM, the flow of illegal drugs, trafficking in people. They're all tied. They're all enhanced—correction: Our ability to correct those issues are enhanced through our military to military cooperation and military to military support, and training and assistance programs that address these common threats that exist in the region.

Senator HAGAN. If there is such a stealing of the oil, though, there's got to be a distribution network set up to deal with it. I was just wondering, from a security measure and an oversight, do you see this distribution system also?

General Ward: We don't see it in great fashion. I will take that and get a better answer back to you. But what we do know is when it does occur it is done through black market channels, that bunkering that exists. The local population, again because of the wealth distribution, will use that to augment their own resources that they can bring to account. But it is there. We don't know the extent to which it goes on in sight of the government, but it's clearly—unfortunately, it also wastes a lot of the resource. So in many respects it all goes back and it contributes to pollution and other negative effects there on the environment as well.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator Thune.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you all very much for your service to our country.

General Renuart, I wanted to come back to the issue of air sovereignty for just a moment. In your prepared testimony you discuss the impact that retiring legacy fighters will have on air sovereignty operations and highlight the importance of continuing planned recapitalization programs. According to a GAO report released in January, even under F-22 and F-35 fielding schedules an air sovereignty alert fighter gap will exist by the year 2015. Added to this, the GAO report states that the Air Force has requested the Secretary of Defense's approval to accelerate the retirement of over 300 F-15s and F-16s in the fiscal year 2010 budget, many of which are performing alert duties.

If approved, retiring these aircraft earlier than is currently planned will likely begin affecting air sovereignty alert operations in the near term. I guess my question is, do you agree with the GAO's findings that by 2015 some of the units that are currently performing air sovereignty alert operations will no longer have aircraft with which to perform that mission?

General Renuart: Senator, thank you for the question. The GAO report took a good hard look at the air sovereignty mission, both from the operator standpoint, our perspective, and the service provider's perspective. I think that their point is well taken, that if we

don't make some clear decisions now that we will see a gap out there in the future, given the current sustained role of air sovereignty missions.

I've made the strong case that that level should continue for the foreseeable future and I think have support from the Department to continue that mission. Given that, then we have to build some bridge strategies that will allow for us to ensure that the basic requirements for this mission are met. But as a joint service activity, I can pull that from a variety of different possible service providers. Certainly the Navy has the capability, as do the Marines, as well as the Air Force.

The Air Force is working very aggressively to build that strategy. We are being very supportive of them in terms of the key requirements for air sovereignty to continue in the future. I think we still have a little work to do in terms of having a firm plan to sustain this over time.

I mentioned earlier to Senator Chambliss I think there's a bridge capacity that needs to be created, and General Schwartz and his team are working on that now. Until I see the results of that, I can't—I'd be careful to be too definitive in an assessment at this point, Senator.

Senator THUNE. Do you foresee units that currently don't have a full-time alert mission, say for example like the South Dakota Air National Guard, picking up a full-time alert mission in order to mitigate that fighter gap? Is going to some of the Guard units a possibility?

General Renuart: Yes, Senator, I think absolutely. As we get a better sense of what that recapitalization line will look like, whether it is refreshing existing aircraft, upgrading radars, and the like on existing aircraft, or procuring new—there will also be a discussion, I think, on moving this mission around to a variety of units. Certainly we have done that, for example. As Ellington Afghan Base drew down its F-16 missions, we relied on Tulsa and other units to come in and fill that gap. So certainly we will continue to meet the requirement, and that's the bottom line for us.

We're comfortable with any of our Guard units. It requires some training, but we can do that and have them pick up the mission as it may be required.

Senator THUNE. As I'm sure you know, we would love to continue to have a discussion with you about that where South Dakota's concerned.

Admiral, a question for you regarding the January 22, 2009, executive order to close the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay within 1 year, in which the President also ordered an immediate review of all of those detention facilities. The review I think mandated certain participants be included, one of which was the Attorney General, who's responsible for coordinating the review, as well as the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others.

Additional review participants can be designated by the Attorney General. As the regional combatant commander responsible for the military's JTF in Guantanamo, you have valuable first-hand expertise on how dangerous some of these detainees are and the requirements for their proper disposition. I guess my question is: Has the

Attorney General requested you or any of your subordinates to take part in the administration's review of all Guantanamo detentions?

Admiral Stavridis: He has not asked me personally. Attorney General Holder came down almost immediately upon taking office and spent a great deal of time on the ground in Guantanamo Bay. He had very detailed discussions with the two-star admiral who's down there. I think he has a full-sight picture. We stand ready to answer any questions that are posed by the Secretary.

Senator THUNE. Could you in your knowledge of those discussions that were held provide any details about perhaps dealing with the proposal that might transfer Gitmo detainees into facilities in the United States? Are you familiar with the discussions?

Admiral Stavridis: No, sir. Those are not really in my purview. My job is to provide humane, transparent, and legal care to the detainees, and we do that every day in accordance with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Convention and the Detainee Treatment Act, which is U.S. law, and we'll continue to do that. But disposition is outside of my purview.

Senator THUNE. I compliment you on the treatment that you do provide. I think everything I understand is very good in terms of all the things the detainees are permitted to do, the way that they're cared for, the opportunities they have to worship, and everything else. I think the issue is that over the course of this next year as this study is completed, that will concern many members of Congress is, if in fact they are not housed or stationed at Guantanamo, what will be the alternative, and would that entail putting them somewhere here in the United States?

There are a couple of bases in particular that have been mentioned, both of which I think the delegations from those States would find objectionable. But as you perhaps know, there was a vote in the Senate last year, a 94 to 3 vote, that that not be a solution.

So as this process plays out, to the degree that you are apprised of what's happening and could share any details about that with this Committee, there will be a very high level of interest, I can assure you, in the Congress about that.

So thank you. Thank you, Admiral.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Thune.

Senator Burris.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to commend our distinguished panel for all the work that you do on behalf of the people of this great country and the people of the world. So congratulations, gentlemen.

I'm going to really focus, in the interest of time, on two areas, two of the commands. I noted that the three geographic commands all addressed inter-agency cooperation in the statements and specifically a new inter-agency organizational model at the Southern Command and the Africa Command. I'm interested in how success with inter-agency organizations' inclusion can be used in other commands. I'm also very interested in the future of the Africa Command; also interested in the Transportation Command's response to increased fuel prices and any piracy concerns related to our transportation assets.

Let me begin with my question to the Southern Command. I understand that the USNS COMFORT, a Navy hospital ship, its home port is in Baltimore. It's preparing to deploy next week for a 4-month humanitarian assistance mission through Latin America and the Caribbean. The hulking hospital ship, three football fields long and one wide, which must be a monster, will deliver medical, dental, veterinarian, and engineering assistance in support of, the term, "Continuing Promise." This mission is the Southern Command's fourth in as many years, and the public diplomacy value of a visit by the COMFORT are immeasurable, according to DOD and State Department officials.

So Admiral, have the Nations receiving the COMFORT expressed any concern, those that have received assistance from it, expressed any concern about the visit of the COMFORT? What is their reaction to that service coming to them?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, it's been overwhelmingly positive. COMFORT made a voyage 2 summers ago and did 400,000 patient treatments through 12 different countries. The public response to that was extremely positive in each of the Nations, and we have very detailed information about that and I'd be glad to share that with you as a matter of record. In fact, I'd like to.

This summer's voyage of the COMFORT for that reason is called Continuing Promise. The first one was "The Promise" because it was the first time we were lucky enough to have a hospital ship, and this year's voyage is to show that we want to continue those good effects.

It's important to note that this is a ship that's full of nongovernmental volunteer organizations, such as Operation Hope, for example, one of our partners. It has full inter-agency cooperation. It's very tied into and supportive of the individual country teams. It functions under the direction of the ambassador when it gets into the individual port. It has been received with open arms in every port visit it's gone to in the past, and we anticipate the same this summer, sir.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you.

Let me go to Africa Command. I noted that you've addressed the HIV treatment program in Africa, but no other broad-spectrum military treatment. General Ward, what consideration has your command given to securing a visit from the hospital ship? Is that ship going to head for any African ports?

General Ward: Senator, clearly, given the success that the hospital ship program has had in other geographic commands, we too are looking at it as an augmentation to our security cooperation and the benefits that we can provide to the continent of Africa. The nations in Africa, there are currently five that have the capacity to bring that large vessel into port. Most of them are on the Mediterranean, and so therefore what we have done in the meantime, as we continue to pursue the benefits of the hospital ship, is to incorporate those like capabilities aboard our Africa Partnership Station, bringing medical, dental, and veterinary treatment, as well as providing a platform for training the regional medical personnel to embark upon those platforms when they are in their geographical areas along the coastline, receive training, treat local residents, and then continue on.

We do see this as a viable option and as we conduct our security cooperation planning efforts in the future we see the hospital ship program as one that we too would like to take advantage of as we continue to provide this type of support to our African friends.

Admiral Stavridis: Senator, if I could just add to concur completely with General Ward. This was a subject of discussion between AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM at the staff talks that I mentioned earlier. We learned a lot from how General Ward's folks are doing what he calls Africa Partnership Stations, which is a terrific program. We want to try some of those things. Hopefully he had a chance to look at the hospital ship program. It's a good example of how we're trying to cooperate amongst ourselves here to be efficient.

Senator BURRIS. Regarding the Africa Command's headquarters location, upon the command's establishment there was speculation that Africa Command might be permanently located in Europe or in the United States. Some have argued that Africa Command's headquarters should be located in Africa. I understand it's in Stuttgart, Germany; is that where it's located? Is that any hindrance to the service that you can give the continent of Africa, General Ward?

General Ward: Senator, at this time it is not a hindrance. As we stood the command up—and this occurred about a year ago—the location that we had there in Stuttgart, Germany, provided the facilities, provided the geographic locational relationship that we need as we work with our European partners, as well as working with the Nations of Africa.

Again, the headquarters itself, the planning that we do there—the continent is obviously so large, wherever the headquarters is, quite candidly, sir, we would be going someplace else, as reflected in the tremendous travel that I do on a weekly basis throughout the continent of Africa.

Right now, where we are works for the command. Our focus, our priority, is to show our African friends, show our international as well as inter-agency partners, that the creation of the command is enhancing the delivery of security assistance programs on the continent. The headquarters location at the current time is not a factor in our ability to do that in an increasingly effective way.

As time goes on, I'm sure that this decision might be revisited. But at the current time it does not at all impede the ability that we want to have and that is—the results we want to have, and that is increasing the capacity of these African nations through our robust military to military programs, as well as our other military support activities.

Senator BURRIS. My time has expired, but just one quick question for General McNabb. Is there any problem with the piracy in the transportation of our assets?

General McNabb: Yes, Senator. What we are doing, a couple things. On our MSC ships and ships that they charter, we have security teams that are aboard them. For our other commercial liners, we work with MARAD to make sure that they know the latest techniques and how to link in with JTF-151, make sure that they are working very well, especially ships that are more at risk, ones that are slower and have a lower freeboard. We're working that out

with MARAD to make sure that we do that. And we've also offered to those companies anti-piracy assessment teams that would could and help them and say: Hey, here, if you encounter this here are some things that you can do from a tactics, techniques, and procedures.

So it is one that I'm concerned with. I really like, again, how the inter-agency has worked together on this, are working with MARAD and the Navy in particular, and then with both CENTCOM and AFRICOM. All of that has played out very well.

Senator BURRIS. Mr. Chairman, I have some more questions, but I'll just submit them. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Senator Burris.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, I'm sorry I had to leave during the hearing. I had a meeting in my office, but I did follow a good bit of the hearing when I wasn't here on the TV screen in my office.

First of all, I'd like to say I appreciate all of your willingness to come by and talk to us personally and our staff. It's been very valuable to explore some issues that we're not going to be able to go into in a whole lot of depth today. But I do want to follow up on a number of those.

I watched the exchange between Senator Reed and the Admiral and General Renuart on the shipment of guns. I'd just like to raise a cautionary voice here, that we really need to be careful that we're not understating the problem that we are facing along our border and in the country, or causing people to view it in an improper context, that this is simply gun show loophole, guns going down there, and these people—basically, we're arming the threat that we face.

As you now, it's much, much more sophisticated than that. We're talking, just with the Mexican drug cartel, a business that runs about a \$25 billion profit, from what I've seen. They're highly trained. A lot of these individuals are, as you know, are former Mexican army soldiers, some of whom were trained by our own special forces. Their tactics are very sophisticated. You don't get an RPG, an automatic weapon, or a hand grenade at a gun show. So we need to make sure that people understand that as we're discussing what we're going to do about it.

There have also been some exchanges here talking mainly about the situation on the border, and I think it's important for people to understand that this is not simply a Mexican problem and it's not simply a border problem. What we have seen along the border has illuminated the problem for a lot of people in this country, but it's a national security problem. The Mexican cartels by the evidence that I have seen are operating in 230 American cities right now. There were reports that the outdoor marijuana plantations in California—by the way, marijuana is now the number one cash crop in California; it just outstripped wine about a year, a year and a half ago—are run principally by the Mexican drug cartels.

So we have a situation and it's transnational, which, Admiral, you used in your testimony a couple of different places. I've been trying to get that word in the lexicon as well. But it's also sort of trans-command here, because so much of it initiates in your com-

mand, but so much of the response is going to have to come out of your command, General.

So my question really is, at what point does a transnational organized criminal threat become an insurgency or something tantamount to an insurgency? And if so, what do we do about it?

General Renuart: Let me, if I could. Senator, absolutely we should make no mistake, this is a transnational, very complex, well-integrated, apparatus. It flows from the sources, some of which are in South America, certainly to the distributors, many of which are here in our country.

You are correct in saying that there is a presence in our Nation in hundreds of our cities. In fact, the DEA just a week and a half ago announced some fairly significant efforts that they had concluded, yielding the arrest of some 700 distributors, and these were distributors in our country, not the cartel members in Mexico.

So this is a problem that we have to deal with. And you are absolutely correct to say that the Mexican drug cartels are much like an insurgent organization. They are well trained, they're well equipped. Their tactics are good. Those in the Gulf cartel area are some of the most sophisticated around.

Having said that, we need to ensure that we have created an inter-agency capacity that can start at the source and continue all the way through the retailer, if you will. Our role is to ensure that Jim's folks and ours are integrated each day. We do that through his JIATF-South and my JTF-North. We both partner with the full inter-agency effort and we are supportive as we can.

I think that, as we come further to the border, our role is to then help the Mexican military, who as you know is the principal element of the law enforcement effort. They certainly are the credible, less corrupt—or the lack of corruption in the Mexican military is noteworthy. They are carrying this role for their government.

As we move to the border, we partner with our law enforcement to help identify and stem the flow as much as we're able. Then of course, the law enforcement has, if you will, the retail element there.

So I think this is an effort that will require even closer work, more aggressive work, but it is one that is significant.

Admiral Stavridis: I agree with Gene's remarks. Senator, I agree with your comments. I believe that, as I mentioned earlier, sir, this is really about finding a supply chain, understanding it, reverse engineering it, and killing it. That's the process we need to undertake. To do that, it has to be international cooperation, inter-agency cooperation.

Sir, I'd love to get you down, or any member of the Committee, to JIATF-South, JTF-North, and we'll show you how these seams fit together. It's been something we've been working very hard.

Senator WEBB. For our purposes, I think we may be looking at the necessity of a more robust Federal response. I think we're going to have to have that debate up here.

General McNabb, when you and I visited in my office we were talking about the alternative supply routes into Afghanistan. You addressed a good bit of that today. I have two thoughts for you. One is, I asked if you could get me a comparison—and this is—for the record, Mr. Chairman, I would like to see this—a comparison

of the cost and the time and the load capability of the different approaches that we are now taking.

In other words, what we are moving through Pakistan right now, say, take a container. Per container, what's the cost of moving it that way, what's the time, what's the volume that we are able to move over a period of time, say a quarter, 3 months, whatever it is, from the different approaches that we're taking. If you could give that to us, I would appreciate being able to look at it.

General McNabb: Senator, if I can give you kind of a rough order of magnitude cost. We do it by container for the land.

Senator WEBB. You don't have to say container, but what I'm trying to do is I'm trying to get something that's measurable, where we can look in a logical way as to what these changes are going to do to the re-supply pattern in there.

The second question I would have is, there's been a lot of discussion and a lot of verbiage up on the Internet and this sort of thing about NATO, some NATO countries moving supplies through Iran, making a deal there. Do you know what stage that approach has reached?

General McNabb: Senator, I do not, and we are not in any way contemplating using Iran.

Senator WEBB. I understand the United States is not, but it's been widely reported that other NATO countries are.

General McNabb: I saw that General Craddock, in his role in NATO, is saying that if individual countries want to negotiate that. That's what I saw as well. I would just tell you that we're not in any agency thinking about Iran, for all the reasons that you and I talked in your office.

Senator WEBB. Right.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Webb.

Senator SESSIONS.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Senator Webb, I was late because I was at a Judiciary Committee hearing on the Mexico matter. We've had Customs and the attorney general from Arizona and others. I concluded fundamentally the best thing we can do to help Mexico is to dry up these organizations, as Admiral Stavridis indicated, and they are flowing money back in huge amounts, so it gives them the power. And if we target those we would help Mexico a lot.

They're doing a lot better. I believe a lot of the violence is because Calderon is standing up to these guys and taking them on. If he'll stay at it, I believe they'll be as successful as President Uribe in Colombia. But it's life and death. They'll kill you, and it's a dangerous bunch. He has got to break that group because it threatens the good and decent people of Mexico and their ability to have a good government.

General McNabb, on the tanker, this is such an important issue. It remains the Air Force's number one acquisition priority, is that correct? And you have to be responsible for all of that in TRANSCOM. Aren't a lot of these aircraft 50 years old or more in age?

General McNabb: Yes, sir. They're Eisenhower—the 135s are Eisenhower-era tankers, 46, 48, that average right now. By the time they start being replaced, it'd be 50 years.

Senator SESSIONS. So it's been a priority for how many years now?

General McNabb: Well, Senator Sessions, starting in '99 when I was the Air Force programmer we were working hard on the replacement to the 135.

Senator SESSIONS. So we're about 10 years off and we still haven't gotten there. I hope that we can get there. I believe it's possible.

I will just add for my colleagues' sake that it was reported that the Northrop Grumman-EADS aircraft that was going to be built in my home State of Alabama by American citizens was 25 percent less expensive than the competing aircraft, 17 years later, newer, in design, and had larger capacity and capability, which is why I assume the Air Force chose it in the competitive process.

So where we go and how we get there I don't know, but it would be folly and damaging to the integrity of our entire acquisition process if somehow politics caused us to do something that's not right. We ordered that thing bid. It ought to go to the best bidder. If we have to do—we can analyze a dual situation perhaps and see how that comes out, but in the long run we need to get the best aircraft for the best people, and I think you correctly decided that.

General Renuart, you remain committed, do you not, and the military does, to the completion of the deployment of the 44 missiles in Alaska and a few in California that would complete the anti-missile system, that would give us a protection against a limited missile attack?

General Renuart: Yes, sir, we do. That 44 production rate is the number we remain committed to.

Senator SESSIONS. And we've got what, 26 now already in the ground?

General Renuart: We have 26 operational silos, Senator. We've moved some in and out to do maintenance and that sort of thing, but yes, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, all I would just say is, yes, this has been 20, 30 years of research and development. These systems do work. I'm absolutely convinced, aren't you, that if a missile was launched from North Korea, as they're talking about launching, and it came all the way to the United States, that this system would effectively knock it out of the air?

General Renuart: Senator, I am confident that with the capabilities that are designed into the system, the various radars and sensors, it would give us good enough information against that single target to be successful.

Senator SESSIONS. I think so, too. I just think it would be foolhardy to—there are costs, are there not, if you were to substantially reduce the assembly line production of those missiles? Wouldn't we probably have contract penalties to pay and it end up costing more per launch vehicle than we would if we went on and completed it?

General Renuart: Senator, I think General O'Reilly, the commander of MDA who owns that process, is better suited to give you

specifics. But my sense would be any time you stop a contract there are costs to that. So my sense would be in this case there would be some costs.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, we're more than halfway there and I think we need to just go on and complete that.

Now, with regard to the proposed site in Europe, this is a matter I think of real importance. This is not a small thing. We've asked our friends in Poland and in the Czech Republic to participate in a system that would defend virtually all of Europe and the United States from attacks from Iran, and they've gone along with us on that. I am, I've got to say, disturbed, troubled, worried, that some of the politicians are now talking about, well, we'll just make a deal with the Russians and maybe they'll promise us something and we won't go forward with this site, maybe.

Is that your pay grade?

General Renuart: Senator, you've just jumped it up about three above me.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, at any rate, we spent all these years doing the system. Now, with regard to a system that would be deployed in Europe, isn't the key thing in all of these systems the guidance system that's on the nose of the rocket? Isn't that the most complicated and critical component? We've got a lot of missiles, but the question is whether we can guide it to the collision point; isn't that right?

General Renuart: Yes, sir. I wouldn't—and again, I'm not an expert on the technical means, but I would tell you that the success of this capability is based in the system of systems. It is the radar sensors. It certainly is the guidance system on the missile. It is the ability to update that in transit. And it's the collaboration of the many space and land-based, I call them radars, although some are different kinds of capabilities. But all of those together give you the precision that allows you to strike a target in space in that regard.

So it is, as we've mentioned with Senator Levin, it is the combination of all of these that can give us success.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, we've proven, I think, in the Pacific that we have the radar systems that all come together so fantastically it's amazing, and the guidance system to make that thing work. I guess all I'm saying is that, with regard to the European site, we're talking about a two-stage rocket instead of a three-stage rocket that we have in Alaska and California. In many ways, isn't that really a simpler launch system?

I know we have to test it, but it's not a quantum leap forward. If you've got the guidance system, in theory at least it should be simpler to have a two-stage system than a three.

General Renuart: Senator, I'd like to defer that to Pat O'Reilly, because—

Senator SESSIONS. Well, you just need to agree with me that it's logical.

[Laughter.]

Chairman LEVIN. You're doing really well, General. Stick to your guns.

[Laughter.]

Senator SESSIONS. Well, that's the logical thing. We may have to test it and prove it, but a two-stage system is certainly not some-

thing we can't perfect. We've perfected a three-stage which is more complex.

So I just—I would say this for the record. I believe that independent sovereign nations that were once part of the Soviet empire are independent sovereign nations. They have a right to decide who they sign treaties with. They have a right to decide what kind of defense systems they'll deploy in their nations. I think we ought to be prepared to defend that and not be taking any action that might be interpreted as an affirmation of Russia that they have the right to tell these countries how to conduct their defense.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Senator McCaskill.

Senator McCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Last, not a bad place to be, although a lot of material I wanted to talk about has been covered by other Senators, and I will not go back over it. I do want to encourage you—I know that the study that we asked for on the C-17 and the C-5 is pending and we're anxious to get the information from that as soon as it's available. We have not yet seen any information from that.

There are some bad habits we have in Congress, and that is a tendency to be very parochial when it comes to you buying things. I've got to confess my parochial interest, obviously, in the C-17. It's pretty obvious. I represent Missouri. Boeing is an important employer in my State.

But, having said that, what is confusing to me is when it seems like to me that you may not be asking for things because you know that there's enough political will to give it to you anyway as an add-on. I guess my question is, if we're utilizing the C-17 at 159 percent—I mean, we're just flying the wings off of those things—why are we not asking—why are you not asking for more? And could it be that you're encouraging our bad habits in terms of being parochial by knowing that if you don't ask for it we're all going to pile in and put it in the budget anyway?

General McNabb: Senator, I hope we are not. I will only say that from the standpoint of any of these, you start with the requirement. You will look at a number of different options, and it really is competition that will kind of come up with the best mix. My responsibility as TRANSCOM is to kind of take a look at everything that goes in and say, okay, does this meet what I need to do for the combatant commanders that I support? As long as it does, what we'll try to do is make sure that you get the most cost-effective mix that actually meets those needs.

It really does depend on that competition, on the cost, for instance the re-engining of the C-5 vice how much does a new C-17 cost. That's what they did in the Nunn- McCurdy. They brought that all together and said, hey, there's lots of different ways of doing this, and they brought everybody together and came up with, okay, here's the fleet mix that we think makes the most sense both for the warfighter and the taxpayer.

Again, I was part of that. I would say that it was very open. They went through the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, which is all the vice chiefs of the services, reconfirmed the requirements, made sure that we have that right, and then turned that

over and said okay to in this case John Young, who is overseeing that, and said: Okay, here's all the parts of the puzzle; let's come up with the best mix overall.

I think that, hopefully, we are the honest brokers to come back and say: Hey, this is the best overall way to do this, and of course that's what you see in the program of record.

Senator MCCASKILL. I'll be anxious to see the results of the study. I want us all to break these bad habits and I want to make sure that you're not enabling us by maybe not being as forthcoming with what the real needs are and by the way you put this thing together. There's a lot of habits we have that are really hard to break and we don't need enablers. So help us with that.

I particularly am interested in, obviously, that the plan to do the A and P on the C-5 ended up being obviously way more expensive. It's another one of those textbook cases of incredible cost overruns. So now looking back—I don't want to be a Monday morning quarterback here. I don't think that's fair. But looking back, I'm not sure that that modernization program was, frankly, the best bang for the buck since it's turned out to be way too many bucks.

Let me talk a little bit about the Iraq drawdown as it relates to equipment. What kind of plan is in place in terms of what's coming back? And what about the rolling stock versus the white property? What I'm really concerned about in terms of the contracting is, how much is walking way with our contractors, and what's on top of that? Who's paying attention to our inventory?

We've had problems with our inventory over there, whether it's guns or other things. Obviously, that's been a big issue for us, and I'm concerned. Who's in charge of getting our stuff back and making sure contractors don't call it their own when it's not theirs?

General McNabb: Obviously, CENTCOM is putting together their plan on how they will bring that back, and they are sorting out now what are they going to bring back, what are they going to leave behind maybe for the Iraqis, or what are they going to move to Afghanistan. So they're going through all of that.

I will say, the oversight of the contracting, making sure that's all done, is under CENTCOM's purview. I would say that what they do with us is they say, okay, here's how much we think we're going to bring out. And I make sure that on the supply chain side, the transportation but also the distribution network, is to make sure that I've got plenty of lift to be able to do that.

Senator MCCASKILL. And you've not gotten any heads-up yet about what kind of lift you need to start to begin to expect over the next 18 months to 2 years?

General McNabb: Yes, ma'am, they have. I want to make sure that we were not a long pole in the tent and we are not. We have plenty of lift, especially because of our commercial partners. As long as we give them a, hey, here's what's available, our U.S. flag industry, both air and sea, is actually tremendous if you can give them advance requirements, and obviously we can use that. It's one of the great advantages we have, and that's cheaper than using military-unique type vessels.

So I think that right now I know that we are not the long pole in the tent. The big part there is just to say, hey, as soon as you

have it really definitized let us get that out to the market and then we can get it even cheaper on the market as well.

Senator MCCASKILL. The cost-benefit as to whether we leave it or bring it back is being done by CENTCOM?

General McNabb: And the services. So they will work with—for instance, if it's on the equipment it'll be CENTCOM as the combatant commander working with the components, their service components, to say, okay, how do you want to do that. Obviously, resetting and preposition, what might we also do in prepositioning and leave it in theater for that, all of that's being worked out.

Senator MCCASKILL. I just want to know whose shoulder I need to look over, because I'd like to pay attention to that. I think it's—we've learned some lessons. I just want to make sure we've learned them.

General McNabb: Yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. General Renuart, as we talk about the National Guard and equipment, it seems to me that there is this rub between civilian needs of equipment and military needs. I think probably it varies with each Guard how much they're drawn to almost a seduction of getting all the military equipment as it relates to that side of their responsibility, which is huge now since they've become more operational as opposed to strategic.

On the other hand, I know what a Humvee costs and I know what a pickup truck costs or a passenger van, and I know in our State, in terms of their domestic mission in terms of ice storms and flooding that is obviously not major flooding where you need a vehicle that goes through water, you need to transport people—I'm worried that we're spending big, big, big money on Humvees when a real good utility SUV for a fraction of the cost is what we should be buying.

Would you comment on that?

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely. I don't want to—well, I guess for the record, as you know, the Guard has their principal deployment mission, if you will, is a significant one. So we need to ensure that they are adequately equipped, properly equipped and trained for that mission. In my role overseeing what I'll call the support to civil authorities and homeland security mission, we look at the capabilities that each of our partners in the National Guard have and look at what might be used out of that operational pool, because you don't have to buy anything else and you don't overuse the equipment to a degree. We also look at maybe some unique capabilities that really only apply to that mission.

You're absolutely right, in your State certainly tornadoes and floods and ice storms, but also planning for the large—the New Madrid Fault is a huge issue along all of the border States of the Mississippi and Missouri Valley.

So we try to advocate for those unique pieces of equipment, things like portable cell phone towers, interoperable communications devices that allow law enforcement and active duty and Guard military to talk to each other. We try to make sure those are included in the funding lines either of the State or of the DOD budget to provide to those States.

So we are sensitive to your concerns. We try to buy—we try not to buy Cadillacs when a Jeep will do.

Senator MCCASKILL. It's like Apache versus Chinook. I mean, we've got Apache helicopters in our Guard and I'm like, do we need those in Missouri? We need to take people in them.

General Renuart: Yes, ma'am. So as we continue this road map with the National Guard—and it is a partnership. Craig McKinley and I talk about this on a routine basis. He works with the services for those operational force requirements. He and I work together with the services on those homeland security kinds of things. And we try to be good stewards of that.

But we do try to take advantage of the equipment that they already have so that we don't procure new just to make it for the unique mission that they might have in the homeland.

Senator MCCASKILL. I would just encourage you to muscle up on your side.

General Renuart: We will do that, yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. I think if you muscle up on your side it's going to in the long run give our folks the equipment they need most day to day in terms of what they're doing. Not that they don't need some of the other, but I just think that if the pendulum is going to naturally swing away from the dual use equipment—I hope you keep advocating, because it's obviously much less expensive—

General Renuart: Yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. —and desperately needed.

General Renuart: Absolutely, we will.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

We're not going to be able to have a second round, but the record will be open for questions. If Senator McCaskill has no other questions, there's no one else here to ask; I will bang the gavel. Thank you very much for your testimony. It was very, very helpful.

[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]