

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2012 AND FUTURE YEARS DE-
FENSE PROGRAM**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2011

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Nelson, Webb, McCaskill, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, McCain, Inhofe, Chambliss, Wicker, Brown, Portman, Ayotte, Collins, and Graham.

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

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Madelyn R. Creedon, counsel; Gabriella E. Fahrer, counsel; Richard W. Fieldhouse, professional staff member; Creighton Greene, professional staff member; Jessica L. Kingston, Research assistant; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Gerald J. Leeling, counsel; Jason W. Maroney, counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff members; Roy Phillips, professional staff member; John H. Quirk V, professional staff member; Russell Shaffer, counsel; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: David M. Morriss, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Pablo E. Carrillo, minority investigative counsel; Daniel A. Lerner, professional staff member; Lucian L. Niemeyer, professional staff member; Christopher J. Paul, professional staff member; Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Kathleen A. Kulenkampff, Christine G. Lang, Brian F. Sebold, Bradley S. Watson, and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: Christopher Griffin, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Tressa Guenov, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Jennifer Barrett, assistant to Senator Udall; Anthony Lazarski, assist-

ant to Senator Inhofe; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde Taylor, assistant to Senator Chambliss; and Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. The committee this morning welcomes Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen for our hearing on the Department of Defense's fiscal year 2012 budget request, the associated future years defense program, and the posture of the United States armed forces. And we also recognize Secretary Hale and welcome him here this morning as well. We are thankful to all of you and your families for your dedicated service to the Nation and to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines at home and in harm's way around the globe and to their families. Your personal commitment to the welfare of our troops and their families shines through all that you do. The American people are grateful for that and we are grateful and eager to help wherever we can. The Department of Defense, as are all Federal agencies, is currently operating under a continuing resolution, a CR. That expires on March 4, 2011. If the current CR is extended for the whole year, then the Department's base funding of \$526 billion for fiscal year 2011 would be \$23 billion below the original fiscal year 2011 request of \$549 billion. Secretary Gates will describe to us this morning this situation as a crisis on his doorstep, and I hope that we will soon, as a committee, be in a position to enact a full year appropriation at an appropriate level and that the full Senate adopt such an appropriation. At a time when we face a budget deficit in excess of a trillion dollars and many in Congress are convinced that we need steep spending cuts to put our fiscal house in order, no part of the Government, including the Department of Defense, can be exempt from close examination. The Secretary of Defense has subjected the Department's budget to close examination. He has insisted on efficiencies, streamlining, cuts, and cancellations that we are told add up to \$178 billion over the course of the next 5 years. The fiscal year 2012 base budget request of \$553 billion is \$4 billion higher than last year's request but is a reduction in inflation-adjusted terms. We will be closely scrutinizing the Secretary's efficiencies initiative and will be looking for additional efficiencies as we move through the legislative process.

The total defense budget, which includes base funding for the Department of Defense and additional funding for overseas contingency operations, or OCO—that total defense budget declines from \$708 billion in fiscal year 2011 to \$671 billion in fiscal year 2012. That decline is due largely from our continued withdrawal from Iraq which results in the budget for the overseas contingency operations falling from \$159 billion in 2011 to \$118 billion in fiscal year 2012. Even as the defense budget request reflects difficult choices, it rightly requests increased funding for military personnel and health care, including funding sufficient to continue initiatives supporting wounded and sick service members, continued research into traumatic brain injury, TBI, post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, and psychological health, and fully funds a variety of family support programs. Notably, the budget request would reduce Active

Duty Army and Navy end strength by 7,400 soldiers and 3,000 sailors, respectively. The Army has announced its plan to reduce its so-called temporary end strength by 22,000 soldiers over the next 3 years, followed by an additional reduction of 27,000 soldiers between 2015 and 2017. As the Services resize their forces according to anticipated demand, we must ensure that any reductions avoid unnecessary increased risk or stress on our service members. The budget request also prioritizes funding for ongoing major operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. As Senators Reed, Tester, and I heard during our visit to Afghanistan and Iraq last month, both of these conflicts are entering critical transition periods. In Iraq, our forces are implementing the decision by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki, as set forth in the 2008 security agreement, to withdraw all U.S. forces from Iraq by December 31st, 2011. As we draw down, our goal is to leave behind an Iraq that is stable. Because Iraq will continue to need support in meeting its security needs, the budget request includes significant funds for starting up the Office of Security Cooperation within the U.S. embassy in Baghdad to make our security assistance available to Iraq. The transition from a DOD lead to a State Department lead for numerous bilateral activities in Iraq can only be successful if the Department of State and our other civilian agencies receive the resources that they need to take on these missions.

In Afghanistan, July 2011 will mark the date set by President Obama a little over a year ago for the Government of Afghanistan to take more and more responsibility for Afghan security and governance and by July 2011 for the beginning of reductions in U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The President's decision to set the July 2011 date has increased the urgency, as General Caldwell put it, to the efforts of Afghan leaders to prepare for this transition. General David Petraeus told us that NATO and Afghan officials are preparing to provide President Karzai by the end of the month a recommendation on which provinces and districts should be transferred to an Afghan security lead in the coming months. During our visit to Afghanistan, we saw significant signs of progress over the last 6 months, although great challenges remain. The Afghan army and police have surged by an additional 70,000 over the last year and are on track to meet the current target of 305,000 Afghan security forces by October of this year. President Obama's budget request for fiscal year 2012 includes substantial resources to continue supporting those Afghan forces which will bring closer the day when Afghan troops will bear the major responsibility for their nation's security, which in my judgment is and always has been key to success in Afghanistan.

On February 15, 2011, in an op-ed that appeared in the Chicago Tribune, General Caldwell said that, quote, while the international community has expended tremendous blood and treasure for this just cause, the remarkable story of the surge of Afghans, of a people committing themselves to the defense of their country, is a reason to hope for a successful long-term outcome. In an e-mail message to me, General Caldwell, who is in charge of training of Afghan forces, followed up that op-ed by saying, quote, it has become truly the untold story of the last 15 months. In that time, he said, Afghan men and women have swelled the ranks of the Afghan na-

tional security force to levels more than double the U.S. and NATO surge. And he continued that while the enormous increase in quantity is significant to the security of Afghanistan, our focus on the improvement of quality is even more important. And those two documents, the op-ed and the e-mail message to me from General Caldwell, will be made part of the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. The administration is also considering a proposal to grow the Afghan army by 35,000 men and the Afghan police by a similar number, which would bring total Afghan security force levels of 378,000 by the end of 2012. These additional forces would add important enablers, logistics, engineering, and intelligence and others, that would reinforce and sustain the transition of responsibility for Afghanistan's security to the Afghan security forces. I support this proposed increase, and I know from our conversations that Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen support it as well. I have urged President Obama, as recently as last Friday, to approve that request. In the field, Afghan security forces are partnered with coalition forces and deployed in the key regions of Helmand and Kandahar in equal or greater numbers than coalition forces. U.S., Afghan, and coalition forces are taking the momentum from the insurgency, particularly in former Taliban strongholds in the south. The Afghan army is increasingly in the lead in planning and executing operations. That is what the Taliban fear the most: Afghan security forces, as opposed to foreign forces, out in front providing security for the Afghan people. As support for the Afghan army and police grows, lower-level insurgent fighters are slowly beginning to reintegrate into Afghan society. Improving Afghan governance remains a major challenge to success. The government in Kabul is largely absent from Afghans' daily lives and corruption and mismanagement remain major obstacles. We must ensure that our forces are prepared to address other threats in other places besides Iraq and Afghan. We obviously must remain attentive to those threats around that region and throughout the world. I outline those threats in some detail in the balance of my opening statement, but I will put that in the record rather than reading it at this time. And I will turn now to Senator McCain.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Levin follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to join you in welcoming Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen and Secretary Hale to discuss the President's budget request for fiscal year 2012 and its impact on future years defense programs for the Department of Defense. Secretary Gates, you were asked to return to public service at a time when this country was embroiled in the turmoil of an unpopular war and another deteriorating war and Pentagon critics were abounding. Your historic tenure has been marked by a surge to victory in Iraq, a new strategy to defeat our enemies in Afghanistan, and the Department's lead on humanitarian responses around the world. Your service will also be noted for the substantial reforms for the defense acquisition process and your decisive actions to stop wasting taxpayers' funds on unneeded

and outdated systems. On behalf of my fellow citizens, I want to thank you for your outstanding service. I view you as one of the greatest public servants that I have ever had the opportunity of serving with. Today we are faced again with a demand for change. We are facing a harsh reality that runaway Federal spending has put this country on a sustainable path. And I agree with Admiral Mullen who observes in his written statement—and I quote—our debt is our greatest national security threat. The competing demands for our resources and the imperative we face to reduce our debt requires Congress to provide more leadership than it has shown in the past to restore fiscal responsibility. I believe we took a step in the right direction in last year's Defense Authorization Act by stripping the earmarks from the bill. Since then, both House and Senate have imposed moratoriums on earmarks for 2011 and 2012. I commend my colleagues in advance for restraining themselves from using earmarks, and I know it is tough for some.

I hope, Mr. Secretary, you will reinforce the President's commitment made during the State of the Union Address and recommend a veto of any 2012 defense bill that contains earmarks. I am concerned about the joint strike fighter. I know that you are. We have had many briefings, many discussions, but it has been a source of great frustration to you and to me and to members of this committee, but most of all, it has been an incredible waste of the taxpayers' dollar and it hurts the credibility of our acquisition process, our defense industry. It reinforces the view of some of us that the military industrial congressional complex that President Eisenhower warned us about is alive and well. I hope that we can make your position absolutely clear to the Senate today to prevent further wasteful action by Congress that will deny the resources it really needs but, at the same time, give us the kind of assurance that the F-35 can be put on the right track. I believe that as we move to try to reduce the deficit and the debt, almost everything is going to be on the table. Overall the base budget request of \$553 billion is \$13 billion less than the amount projected last year. I commend your efforts to get out ahead of the cuts by finding ways to improve the efficiency of the Department. Your decisions to reduce the number of senior military and civilian officials, freeze civilian pay, and halt with some exceptions the process of expanding the civilian workforce are sound decisions. I worry that we might, however, do some things that might cause us to see what we saw again in the 1970s and the 1980s. Reducing flying hours, deferring aircraft maintenance, and postponing needed facility repairs are not true savings, and I fear the possibility of a return to what we once knew as a hollow Army.

I have long said the Defense Department does not deserve a special pass from spending the American taxpayers' dollars efficiently. But I have also said that the savings we identify must be reinvested in critical defense priorities. One example of this reinvestment is the increased efforts to combat the trafficking of drugs and illicit materials through Mexico. This has become an issue of national security. And I look forward to working with you and our allies in Mexico to combat this scourge. Yesterday you stated, regarding the U.S. presence in Iraq—and I quote you—there is certainly on our part an interest in having an additional presence, and the

truth of the matter is the Iraqis are going to have some problems that they are going to have to deal with if we are not there in some numbers. I agree. We are now scheduled to be completely out by the end of this year. I think it is time we engage in active discussions with the Iraqis as to their future needs as well as any threats there might be to our National security if there is a complete withdrawal by the end of this year. In addition to Iraq, we will still have 98,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan. I expect our troops will remain there until they are no longer needed. A couple weekends ago, I was at Munich and our allies came up to me and said, well, you say you are beginning to withdraw in the middle of 2011. Why should we not go to our constituents and say we are beginning to withdraw? I think one of the worst announcements ever made, as far as the conflict in Afghanistan, was the statement that we would, quote, be beginning withdrawal in 2011. I am glad to see that 2014 is now the operative year, but it still is very unsettling to our allies and encouraging to our enemies. Success of our mission in Afghanistan must be assured to honor the sacrifices of our brave men and women, as well as coalition partners who have fought, died, and been injured there. Mr. Secretary, Admiral Mullen, Secretary Hale, we face many challenges in the year ahead which will require your continued skill and tenacity. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain. We have a quorum here and in a moment I will ask approval of a number of nominations and the committee budget. Before I do that, though, I just want to say, Mr. Secretary, I join and concur with Senator McCain and his comments about you and your tenure here as Secretary of Defense. It has been an extraordinary number of years. You have brought great capability, objectivity, and thoughtfulness to the job and great strength and independence and courage, and I very much commend you for it. I look forward to many more times when you will be before this committee, and I am sure that you do too. [Laughter.]

Chairman LEVIN. So I do not want this to sound kind of like it is anywhere near the end of your tenure here. I discussed the matter of the budget with Senator McCain, and I now would ask the committee to consider and approve a Senate resolution authorizing funding for our committee from March 1st of this year through February 28th, 2013. The funding resolution is consistent with the joint majority leader and Republican leader February 3rd agreement on committee funding and with the funding guidance provided to us by the Senate Rules Committee on February 7th. This matter is time-sensitive. All committees have been asked to report their budgets to the Senate by not later than today. So I would now entertain a motion to favorably report this resolution.

Senator MCCAIN. So moved.

Chairman LEVIN. Second?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Second.

Chairman LEVIN. All those in favor, say aye. [A chorus of ayes.]

Chairman LEVIN. Opposed, nay. [No response.]

Chairman LEVIN. The ayes have it. Now, we have some discussion that lies ahead of us on our rules. I would ask everybody to read those rules during the next week, and we will take up the

matter of our rules on Monday or Tuesday after we return. We also have in front of us 670 pending military nominations. All of these nominations have been before the committee the required length of time. Is there a motion to favorably report those nominations?

Senator McCAIN. So moved.

Chairman LEVIN. Is there a second?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Second.

Chairman LEVIN. All in favor, say aye. [A chorus of ayes.]

Chairman LEVIN. Opposed, nay. [No response.]

Chairman LEVIN. The motion carries. Thank you all. And we will now call on you, Mr. Secretary.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT M. GATES, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE; ACCOMPANIED BY ROBERT F. HALE, UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, COMPTROLLER

Secretary GATES. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the President's budget request for fiscal year 2012. But first I want to thank the members of this committee for your outstanding support of the Department of Defense, but especially your support of the men and women in uniform serving in a time of war. I know you will join me in doing everything to ensure they have all they need to accomplish their mission and come home safely. The budget request for the Department of Defense being presented today includes a base budget request of \$553 billion and an overseas contingency operations request of \$117.8 billion. These budget decisions took place in the context of a nearly 2-year effort by this Department to reduce overhead, cull troubled and excess programs, and rein in personnel and contractor costs, all for the purpose of preserving the global reach and fighting strength of America's military at a time of fiscal stress for our country. In all, these budget requests, if enacted by the Congress, will continue to our efforts to reform the way the Department does business, fund modernization programs needed to prepare for future conflicts, reaffirm and strengthen the Nation's commitment to care for the All-Volunteer Force, and ensure that our troops and commanders on the front lines have the resources and support they need to accomplish their mission. My submitted statement includes more details of this request.

Now I want to take this opportunity to address several issues that I know have been a subject of debate and concern since I announced the outlines of our budget proposal last month: first, the serious damage our military will suffer by operating under a continuing resolution or receiving a significant funding cut during fiscal year 2011; second, the projected slowing and eventual flattening of the growth of the defense budget over the next 5 years; third, the plan for future reductions in the size of the ground forces; and fourth, the proposed reforms and savings to the TRICARE program for working age retirees. I also would express the hope that the Senate will continue to reject the unnecessary extra engine for the F-35 as it did the last time the Senate spoke to this issue in 2009. I want to start by making it clear that the Department of Defense will face a crisis if we end up with a yearlong continuing resolution or a significant funding cut for fiscal year 2011. The President's de-

fense budget request for 2011 was \$549 billion. A full-year continuing resolution would fund the Department at about \$526 billion. That is a cut of \$23 billion. The damage done across the force from such reductions would be further magnified as they would come halfway through the fiscal year. Let me be clear. Operating under a yearlong continuing resolution or significantly reduced funding with the severe shortfalls that entails would damage procurement and research programs causing delays, rising costs, no new program starts, and serious disruptions in the production of some of our most high-demand assets, such as UAVs. Cuts in maintenance could force parts of our aircraft fleet to be grounded and delay needed facilities improvements. Cuts in operations would mean fewer flying hours, fewer steaming days, and cutbacks in training for home station forces, all of which directly impact readiness. Similarly, some of the appropriations proposals under debate in Congress contemplate reductions of up to \$15 billion from the President's original fiscal year 2011 request. I recognize that given the current fiscal and political environment, it is unlikely that the Defense Department will receive the full fiscal year 2011 amount. Based on a number of factors, including policy changes that led to lower personnel costs and reduced activity forced by the continuing resolution, I believe the Department can get by with a lower number. However, it is my judgment that the Department of Defense needs an appropriation of at least \$540 billion for fiscal year 2011 for the U.S. military to properly carry out its mission, maintain readiness, and prepare for the future, which brings me to the proposed \$78 billion reduction in the defense budget top line over the next 5 years.

To begin with, this so-called cut is to the rate of predicted growth. The size of the base defense budget is still projected to increase in real inflation-adjusted dollars before eventually flattening out over this time period. More significantly, as a result of the efficiencies and reforms undertaken over the past year, we have protected programs that support military people, readiness, and modernization. These efforts have made it possible for the Department to absorb lower projected growth in the defense budget without sacrificing real military capabilities. In fact, the savings identified by the services have allowed our military to add some \$70 billion beyond the program of record toward priority needs and new capabilities. And of the \$78 billion in proposed reductions to the 5-year defense plan, about \$68 billion comes from a combination of shedding excess overhead, improved business practices, reducing personnel costs, and from changes to economic assumptions. Only \$10 billion of that 5-year total is directly related to military combat capability. \$4 billion comes from restructuring the joint strike fighter program, a step driven by the program's development and testing schedule that would have taken place irrespective of the budget top line. The rest, about \$6 billion, results from the proposed decrease in end strength of the Army and Marine Corps starting in 2015, a decision I will address now. Just over 4 years ago, one of my first acts as Defense Secretary was to increase the permanent end strength of our ground forces, the Army by 65,000 to a total of 547,000 and the Marine Corps by 27,000 to 202,000. At the time the increase was needed to relieve the severe stress on the force

from the Iraq war as the surge was getting underway. To support the later plus-up of troops in Afghanistan, I subsequently authorized a further temporary increase in the Army of 22,000, an increase always planned to end in 2013. The objective was to reduce stress on the force, limit and eventually end the practice of stop-loss and to increase troops' home station dwell time. As we end the U.S. troop presence in Iraq this year, according to our agreement with the Iraqi Government, the overall deployment demands on our force are decreasing significantly. Just 3 years ago, we had some 190,000 troops combined in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the end of this calendar year, we expect there to be less than 100,000 troops deployed in both of the major post-9/11 combat theaters, virtually all of those forces in Afghanistan. This is why we believe that beginning in fiscal year 2015, the U.S. can, with minimal risk, begin reducing Army active duty end strength by 27,000 and the Marine Corps by somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. These projections assume that the number of troops in Afghanistan will be significantly reduced by the end of 2014 in accordance with the President's and NATO's strategy. If our assumptions prove incorrect, there is plenty of time to adjust the size and schedule of this change. It is important to remember that even after the planned reductions, the active Army end strength would continue to be larger by nearly 40,000 soldiers than it was when I became Secretary of Defense 4 years ago.

I should also note that these reductions are supported by both the Army and Marine Corps leadership. Finally, as you know, sharply rising health care costs are consuming an ever-larger share of this Department's budget, growing from \$19 billion in 2001 to \$52.5 billion in this request. Among other reforms, this fiscal year 2012 budget includes modest increases to TRICARE enrollment fees, later indexed to Medicare premium increases for working age retirees, most of whom are employed while receiving full pensions. All six members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have strongly endorsed these and other cost-saving TRICARE reforms in a letter to Congress. I understand that any kind of change to these benefits prompts vigorous political opposition, but let us be clear. The current TRICARE arrangement, one in which fees have not increased for 15 years, is simply unsustainable, and if allowed to continue, the Defense Department risks the fate of other corporate and government bureaucracies that were ultimately crippled by personnel costs, in particular, their retiree benefit packages. All told, the cumulative effect of the Department's savings and reforms, combined with a host of new investments, will make it possible to protect the U.S. military's combat power despite the declining rate of growth and eventual flattening of the defense budget over the next 5 years. As a result of the savings identified and reinvested by the services, our military will be able to meet unforeseen expenses, refurbish war-worn equipment, buy new ships and fighters, begin development of a new long-range bomber, boost our cyber warfare capability, strengthen missile defense, and buy more of the most advanced UAVs. But I should note this will only be possible if the efficiencies, reforms, and savings are followed through to completion. In closing, I want to address the calls from some quarters for deeper cuts in defense spending to address this country's fiscal chal-

lenges. I would remind them that over the last two defense budgets submitted by President Obama, we have curtailed or canceled troubled or excess programs that would have cost more than \$300 billion if seen through to completion. Additionally, total defense spending, including war costs, will decline further as the U.S. military withdraws from Iraq. We still live in a very dangerous and often unstable world. Our military must remain strong enough and agile enough to face a diverse range of threats from non-state actors attempting to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction and sophisticated missiles to the more traditional threats of other states building up their conventional forces and developing new capabilities that target our traditional strengths. We shrink from our global security responsibilities at our peril. Retrenchment brought about by short-sighted cuts could well lead to costlier and more tragic consequences later, indeed, as they always have in the past. Surely we should learn from our National experience since World War I that drastic reductions in the size and strength of the U.S. military make armed conflict all the more likely with an unacceptably high cost in American blood and treasure. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working through this next phase of the President's defense reform effort with you and your colleagues in the weeks and months ahead to do what is right for our armed forces and what is right for our country. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Gates follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Admiral Mullen?

**STATEMENT OF ADM MICHAEL G. MULLEN, USN, CHAIRMAN,
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

Admiral MULLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, and distinguished members of this committee, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the President's fiscal year 2012 defense budget. Before I do, however, let me just echo Secretary Gates' comments about the very real dangers inherent in failing to pass this year's budget. The fiscal year 2011 continuing resolution, if carried forward, would not only reduce our account by \$23 billion, it would deprive us of the flexibility we need to support our troops and their families. The Services have already taken disruptive and, in some cases, irreversible steps to live within the confines of the current CR, steps that ultimately make us less effective at what we are supposed to do for the Nation. The Navy did not procure Government-furnished equipment for another *Arleigh Burke* class destroyer. The Army and the Marine Corps have curtailed or altogether frozen civilian hiring. And all the services are now prevented from issuing contracts for new major military construction projects. Some programs may take years to recover if the CR is extended through the end of September. So I urge you to pass the fiscal year 2011 defense bill immediately. Even at a reduced top line, it will provide us the tools we need to accomplish the bulk of the missions we have been assigned. Accomplishing those missions into the future demands as well support for the President's fiscal year 2012 proposal.

As the Secretary has laid out, this budget, combined with the efficiency effort he led, provides for the wellbeing of our troops and

families, fully funds current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and helps balance global risk through streamlined organization, smarter acquisition, and prudent modernization. The Army, for instance, will cancel procurement of a surface-to-air missile and the non-line-of-sight launch system, but it will continue production of the joint light tactical vehicle and spearhead the development of a whole new family of armored vehicles. The Navy will give up its second fleet headquarters, reduce its manpower ashore, and increase its use of multiyear procurement for ships and aircraft, allowing it to continue development of the next generation of ballistic missile submarine, purchase 40 new F/A-18s, and 4 littoral combat ships and another LPD-17.

The Marines will cancel the expeditionary fighting vehicle and like the Army, reduce their end strength starting in 2015. But they will reinvest these savings to sustain and modernize the amphibious assault vehicle and the light armored vehicle, even as they advance a new concept of operations and restore much of their naval expeditionary skills. And the Air Force will be able to continue development of the next tanker, a new bomber, and modernize its aging fleet of F-15 fighters, all the while finding savings of more than \$33 billion through reorganization, consolidation, and reduced facilities requirements. None of this balancing will come on the backs of our deployed troops. We are asking for more than \$84 billion for readiness and training, nearly \$5 billion for increased ISR capabilities, and more than \$10 billion to recapitalize our rotary aircraft fleet. These funds plus those we are requesting to help build partner capacity in places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Yemen all speak to the emphasis we are placing on giving our troops and their partners in the field everything they need to do the difficult jobs we have asked of them. We must also give them and their families everything they need to cope with the stress and the strain of 10 years at war. That is why I am so pleased with the funds devoted in this proposal, almost three-quarters as much as the \$200 billion budgeted for operations and maintenance, to personnel housing and health care issues.

As you may know, the chiefs and I penned a rare 24-star letter to Congress this week expressing our unqualified support for the military health care program changes included in this budget. We sought equity across all health care programs with beneficiaries and health care delivery providers having the same benefits and equivalent payment systems regardless of where they live or work. That, in turn, led us to propose increases in TRICARE enrollment fees for working age retirees. These increases are modest and manageable and leave fees well below the inflation-adjusted, out-of-pocket costs set in 1995 when the current fees were established. We sincerely hope you will see fit to pass these increases. Please know that we will continue to invest wisely in critical care areas to include research, diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues and traumatic brain injury, enhanced access to health services, and new battlefield technologies. We understand that changes to health care benefits cause concern among the people we serve and the communities from which we receive care, but we also understand and hold sacred our obligation to care completely for those who have born the brunt of these wars, as well as those for

whom the war never ends. I am convinced that we have not begun to understand the toll in dollars and in dreams that war extracts from our people. As the grandsons and granddaughters of World War II vets still struggle to comprehend the full scope of the horror those men yet conceal, so too will our grandchildren have to come to grips with the wounds unseen and the grief unspoken unless, of course, we get it right. And I believe the investments we are making in wounded care and family readiness will pay off in that regard, but it will take time and patience and money, three things we seem so rarely to possess in this town.

That brings me back to this particular budget request. With limited resources and two wars in progress, we should be prudent in defining our priorities in controlling costs and in slaking our thirst for more and better systems. We should also be clear about what the joint force can and cannot do, just as we should be clear about what we expect from our interagency and international partners. Our global commitments have not shrunk. If anything, they continue to grow, and the world is a lot less predictable now than we could have ever imagined. You need look no further than Tahrir Square to see the truth in that. Foolhardy would it be for us to make hasty judgments about the benefits, tangible and intangible, that are to be derived from forging strong military relationships overseas such as the one we enjoy with Egypt. Changes to those relationships in either aid or assistance ought to be considered only with an abundance of caution and a thorough appreciation for the long view, rather than the flush of public passion and the urgency to save a buck. The \$1.3 billion we provide the Egyptian military each year has helped them become the capable professional force they are and, in that regard, has been of incalculable value. Of equal or greater value is increased appropriations for the State Department and our request in this budget for something called the Global Security Contingency Fund, a 3-year pooled fund between the Pentagon and State, that will be used to build partner capacity, prevent conflicts, and prepare for emerging threats. The request is modest, an initial \$50 million appropriation, along with a request for authority to reprogram an additional \$450 million if needed. But what it will buy us is in an agile and cost effective way to better respond to unforeseen needs and take advantage of emerging opportunities for partners to secure their own territories and regions. We must get more efficient, yes, but we must also get more pragmatic about the world we live in. We can no longer afford bloated programs or unnecessary organizations without sacrificing fighting power, and we can no longer afford to put off investments in future capabilities or relationships that preserve that power across a spectrum of conflict.

I have long said we must not be exempt in the Defense Department from belt-tightening, but in truth, there is little discretionary about the security we provide our fellow citizens. Cuts can reasonably only go so far without hollowing the force. In my view then, this proposed budget builds on the balance we started to achieve last year and represents the best of both fiscal responsibility and sound national security. I would be remiss, indeed, if I did not close by lauding the incredible effort of our troops overseas and their families as they finish one war in Iraq and begin to turn corners

in Afghanistan. I know you share my pride in them and their families and your support has been superb. And I know you will keep them foremost in mind as you consider the elements of this proposal. I thank you for your continued longstanding support of our men and women in uniform and their families, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Mullen follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Admiral Mullen, for your eloquent statement and for your great service. Secretary Hale, do you have anything to add before we begin?

Mr. HALE. No, thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. We will have a 7-minute first round. Mr. Secretary, you indicated that we are on track to end the presence of our combat troops in Iraq by the end of this year as decided upon by President Bush. Do you continue to support that decision?

Secretary GATES. Yes, I do.

Chairman LEVIN. And are you planning to begin reductions of our troops in Afghanistan by July of this year as ordered by President Obama with the pace to be determined of the reductions, determined by conditions on the ground? And do you support that decision?

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Can you tell us why?

Secretary GATES. Well, frankly, this was the most difficult part of the Afghan strategy going forward for me to come to support. I steadfastly, as some on this committee will remember—steadfastly—opposed any deadlines in Iraq and so came to this with a certain skepticism. But I also realized that there is a difference between Iraq and Afghanistan in this respect. The truth of the matter is the Iraqis want us out of the country as quickly as possible. On the other hand, the Afghans, at least a certain number of them, would like us to stay forever. They live in a very dangerous neighborhood and having U.S. forces there to support them and help them often in the place of their own troops is something that they would like to see. And so it seemed to me that we needed to do something that would grab the attention of the Afghan leadership and bring a sense of urgency to them of the need for them to step up to the plate to take ownership of the war and to recruit their own young men to fight. And I think that the comments that you quoted earlier from General Caldwell has illustrated that over the last year or so the Afghans have, in fact, done this to a considerable degree, particularly in terms of their own troops.

I must say I was very pleased to have—and I recognize the risk of the message we were also sending to our adversaries, to the Taliban. However, it seemed to me that if the Taliban was messaging to all of their people that we were all leaving, that our troops were all leaving in July, that they would be in for a very big surprise come August, September, and October when we are still hunting them down in very large numbers. So on balance—and I will say it was a close call for me, but I came to believe that it was the right thing to do. I must say I very much support and applaud NATO's decision to accept the idea of a full turnover of security responsibilities to the Afghans by 2014 because I think that bookends the July 11th statement and lets everybody know that we

are not leaving precipitously. We are going to do this based on conditions on the ground, and we will continue to carry the fight to the Taliban.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. Admiral Mullen, do you want to add anything to that? Do you agree basically with what the Secretary said, or do you have a different view?

Admiral MULLEN. No, no. I agree with that. I would say again a very tough part of the whole decision process. Certainly not the signal that we are not staying is one that is of great concern in that part of the region for a long time, and at the same time sending the message that we, in fact, are going to get to a point where we turn this over to them I think was very important. And I have seen the effects of that in their leadership in the military and the police. It has given them a sense of urgency that they did not have before the decision was made. I also think, with respect to the Taliban specifically, with where we are right now, they have got a lot more things to worry about in terms of just how well they are doing because they are not doing very well, and they know we are going to be there beyond July. They had a really bad year. That does not mean this year will not be tough. It will. It will be very difficult on both sides. But we have made a lot of progress because we have committed the resources to get this right.

Chairman LEVIN. Relative to the size of the Afghan security forces, there is a request, a proposal currently under consideration within the administration to increase the size of the Afghan national security forces by around 70,000 personnel. That would raise the target end strength for the security personnel of the Afghans to about 378,000. Now, those forces, as I indicated, would include some key enablers, including intelligence and logistics. As I also indicated, I spoke to the President now twice on this subject and very strongly support the increase that is being considered for the reasons which you have just talked about and which I talked about in my opening statement in terms of the importance of the Afghan security forces taking responsibility for security. They are very much supported by the Afghan people and they are targeting an enemy that is detested by the Afghan people, to wit, the Taliban. Our partnering with the security forces has really improved greatly, many more partnerships between our forces. The training is intense and very successful. The operations are joint. We witnessed that when we were down in Kandahar. So my question to both of you, Secretary Gates, and of Admiral Mullen, is the following. Do you support the proposal to increase the size of the Afghan national security forces as is being considered?

Secretary GATES. Well, first of all, I would say that we have all recognized from the beginning that being able to turn security over to Afghan forces to deal with a degraded Taliban was our ticket out of Afghanistan and to accomplish our goal of making sure we are not attacked out of there again. I think the issue is under discussion within the administration. We do have a request from the commander. And the issue is under discussion in no small part because of the question of sustainability. How big an army can we afford? Because let us not kid ourselves. Nobody else is contributing to this in any significant way. And we have in our overseas contingency operations budget for fiscal year 2012 \$12.8 billion to pay for

the Afghan national security forces. So the question is how long can we afford to do that, and you cannot do that indefinitely. So then can you look at an increased number of Afghan forces in the same terms as you look at our surge as something that is temporary until this problem gets solved, and then those numbers begin to go back down again. And so this is one of the big issues that we are discussing and I expect a decision in the fairly near future. But this is really the core issue that I think is under discussion.

Chairman LEVIN. And, Admiral Mullen, do you support that?

Admiral MULLEN. I think, Chairman, you know that the recommendation was teed up from somewhere between 352,000 to 378,000. That is the range. I certainly share the concern the Secretary has spoken of in terms of the sustainability of this. And you also characterized in your opening statement a specific recommendation from me. We are still very much in discussion inside the administration on where this comes out. As the Secretary said, I think in the near future we will have that. There are a lot of issues at play here. None of us disagree with your assertion or your statement about the importance of this part of the mission, training them and turning it over to them. It has gone incredibly well over the course of the last year. So how fast we can move, how much more there should be is still very much in discussion and the comprehensiveness of the issues that are associated with this are being reviewed as we speak, and I think it will be resolved here in the near future.

Chairman LEVIN. And the bottom part of that range you mentioned would represent an increase from the current goal. Is that correct?

Admiral MULLEN. Right. We are at 305,000 at the end of this year, and 352,000 would be—the range that is in discussion is 352,000 to 378,000.

Chairman LEVIN. And so even if the approval were at the bottom of the range, that would represent about a 45,000 increase. Is that correct?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay, because we save a lot of money having their forces there trained and equipped rather than our forces in terms of relative costs. I think you both would agree to that. Would you?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir.

Secretary GATES. Absolutely.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. Senator McCain?

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Gates, did you recommend to the President the date of July 2011 as a date to begin withdrawal?

Secretary GATES. No, sir, I did not.

Senator MCCAIN. Did you, Admiral Mullen?

Admiral MULLEN. No, sir, I did not.

Senator MCCAIN. On the issue of our continued presence in Iraq, obviously the casualties have been reduced dramatically, but I think it is also obvious that the Iraqi military does not have a lot of the technological capability that they need to combat this kind of insurgency that is still out there. But also, if they want to have

an air force, it seems to me they need that kind of technical assistance, a number of other areas of modernization of their forces. And it is necessary. We are not talking about continued combat operations on the part of the United States, but they do need the kind of technical assistance that they will need to maintain their security. Do you agree with that?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir.

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. So is there any discussion that you know of going on with the Iraqi Government concerning the future role of the United States in Iraq besides the fact that we are now scheduled to leave by the end of the year?

Secretary GATES. There have been a number of informal conversations with the Iraqis about this. Our concern, as I indicated yesterday, is principally in three areas: intelligence fusion, logistics and maintenance, and in air cover in providing the ability to protect their own air space. Right now, under current circumstances, as of the 1st of January, we will have 157 Department of Defense military and civilians, along with several hundred contractors, basically processing foreign military sales, and that would be it. As I have indicated, I think this Government is very open to a continuing presence that would be larger where we could help the Iraqis for a period of time. I am not actually concerned about the stability of the country, but I am concerned about their ability to address these three issues in particular. But the fact is we have a signed agreement that President Bush signed with the Iraqi Government, and the initiative for this needs to come from the Iraqis. My hope is that once they sort out who their new defense minister is going to be, which has been a problem in putting together their government, that then we will be able to move forward with this dialogue with the Iraqis. I think it is little bit, frankly, in Iraq like the strategic agreement itself in the sense that our presence is not popular in Iraq. And so the politicians, I think, the leaders understand the need for this kind of help, but no one wants to be the first one out there supporting it, very much like the security agreement itself. So we will continue that dialogue, but at the end of the day, the initiative has to come from the Iraqis. They have to ask for it.

Senator MCCAIN. I take it you were pleased with the House's decision on the—what did you call it? The additional engine yesterday?

Secretary GATES. The extra engine.

Senator MCCAIN. Extra. Excuse me. Yes, extra engine. I take it you would support efforts over here to do the same.

Secretary GATES. Absolutely.

Senator MCCAIN. I share your optimism about our success in Afghanistan, which has confounded many of the critics. And I also share you view that there is a long way to go. But do you share that same optimism about Pakistan? There have been some very serious disruption, obviously, with this American citizen who is now being held in prison, the whole role of private contractors, the continued allegations of relationships between ISI and the Taliban. I am deeply concerned about the situation in Pakistan, which obvi-

ously is vital to the sustained and long-term success in Afghanistan.

Secretary GATES. Let me just say a word or two and then turn to the Chairman because he has spent a lot more time in Pakistan in the last few years than I have. I worry a lot about Pakistan. It has huge economic problems. Those problems were significantly aggravated by the terrible flooding last year. They have a serious internal terrorism threat that is seeking to destabilize Pakistan itself. And I worry that some of those terrorists might try and provoke a conflict between Pakistan and India. So I think that there is a lot to be concerned about with Pakistan. That said—

Senator MCCAIN. And there is still sanctuary in Pakistan.

Secretary GATES. That said, there are still the sanctuaries. But I will say the Pakistanis have 140,000 troops on that border. These things improve step by step, but not as quickly as we would like, but we get to a better place over time. If you had asked me 2 years ago if the Pakistanis would withdraw six divisions from the Indian border and put them in the west, I would have said, impossible. If you would have asked me if we would begin coordinating operations on both sides of the border with Afghan and ISAF forces on the one side and the Pakistanis on the other, I would have said, that is very unlikely. And they are chipping away at some of these sanctuaries. It is very important what they have done in south Waziristan and SWAT, but it is a mixed picture, and it is something we just need to keep working at. And the Chairman has worked at it about as hard as anybody.

Admiral MULLEN. On the military side, Senator McCain, I am more optimistic than I have been. I mean, the Secretary talked about the cross-border coordination, the work that we have done with them. But on the political side, the economic side, at least from my perspective, it looks worse than it has in a long time. So I share your concern. The vector is going in the wrong direction overall for the country. We are very unpopular there. You have seen that. It gets highlighted in each crisis. We provided extraordinary support for the floods last year—we, the military. And then that registers in a popular way shortly. You have an incident like the one we are going through right now, and our popularity is back down in very small numbers. So I do think we have to stay at it. It is where lots of terrorist organizations head, not just al Qaeda. They are more combined in their efforts than they have ever been. So I do think we have to continue to work at it, but I am concerned as I have ever been.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, just briefly. Anything more on the Wikileaks investigation?

Secretary GATES. Well, sir, after our last hearing, I went back and I had been told that I had to keep my hands off of it because of the criminal investigation. But I have been able to narrow an area that I have asked the Secretary of the Army to investigate in terms of procedures and the command climate and so on that has nothing to do with the accused individual, but to see what lapses there were where somebody perhaps should be held accountable.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks, Secretary and Chairman, for your service, for your leadership, for your testimony today. I believe that the President's budget for the Department of Defense is a budget that recognizes the times of economic stress we are going through particularly with regard to our National deficits and debt but also meets our defense needs. And I appreciate, Mr. Secretary, your advocacy of the budget but also your warning that we have got to be very careful about cutting too deeply into our defense budget. I have noticed some change of terminology around here which concerns me which traditionally, as we have discussed the various components of the Federal budget, when we got to discretionary spending, we distinguished between defense and non-defense spending. And the defense spending had a more protected status, if you will, and I think it was for a good reason, which I believe I know you and all of us on the committee believe, which is that we have no greater responsibility in our National Government than to protect our security. It is the underpinning of our freedom and our prosperity. So we have to be very cautious about cutting below a level that we can continue to fulfill that—well, it is really a constitutional responsibility to provide for the common defense. And I have noticed now the difference between defense and non-defense discretionary spending in terminology seems to be fading, and I think we do that at our peril. So it does not mean, obviously, that everybody at the Pentagon wants we are going to say yes to or that we can tolerate wasteful spending.

I know the two of you have been very aggressive about that in the programs you have set forward. But I hope as we go forward in these very difficult economic times with a lot of stress politically on everybody here, that we keep that primary responsibility we have for the National security in mind. And frankly, without going any further on it, I think for those of us who are committed to doing everything we can to continue to give you the resources and the men and women in uniform to protect our security, it compels us to look much more directly and act more boldly on the most expanding part of our national deficit and debt, which is the entitlement programs that are non-defense. So with that invocation, I will now proceed to say that—I just want to pick up on what Senator McCain said earlier about the input we got at the Munich security conference this year. It was quite significant to me on Afghanistan. The first was I thought there was a real change in opinion from our European colleagues, that we really are making progress in Afghanistan, and they feel good about it. Normally we have been concerned—I have been—that they would leave the fight before we did. They turned the tables on us this time, and they said we are committed now through NATO to the 2014 exit date from Afghanistan. We are worried that you in America are going to begin to leave earlier, and they still have in mind, notwithstanding all the transition to 2014, this July 2011 date. So I would ask you if you would care to respond to that, and of course, part of that is just to urge that whatever we do in July 2011, be mindful of the effect it will have not only on the Afghans and the region but on our European allies.

Secretary GATES. I would just make two comments. First, I had a NATO defense ministers meeting last December and it was really quite extraordinary because I do not think I have ever seen so many ministers so optimistic about how things were going in Afghanistan. I did not encounter a single one who was pessimistic or who felt that the effort was for naught and that we were not headed in the right direction. So there was a level not just of sort of grudging support but a general feeling of cautious optimism that we finally had all the parts right in this thing, the civilian strategy, the military strategy, had the resources there. When I took this job there were 17,000—12,000—13,000 Europeans or other partners in Afghanistan. There are now 50,000. They have really stepped up to the plate. Now, we are carrying the bulk of the burden, but they are doing a lot as well. By the same token, one of my missions in next month's defense ministers meeting is to ensure that in fact whatever we do in July does not start a rush for the exits on the part of our allies, and I would say particularly those who have the largest contingents there. There are a lot of countries that are making a real contribution, but they have fairly limited numbers of people there. I think that our principal allies and those who are the principal contributors are probably okay, but I need to be able to reassure them that this is going to be conditions-based and that it will be gradual. The other aspect of this is I do not think it—the other point I will make to them is it should not be mathematical. If we take out 1 percent or 2 percent of our troops, or whatever the number is, that does not mean everybody gets 2 percent because in some of them 2 percent—you know, when you have only got 10 guys there, you get a problem. So I think that we need to ensure that their forces are taken out on a conditions-based arrangement as well. And I think this is the challenge for General Petraeus. And what we have been thinking about—the way I think he is thinking about it is that when we turn over security responsibility, sort of three things will happen to the foreign troops that are there. A few will stay to continue to provide a strategic overwatch and safety net, if you will. Some will be reinvested in the neighboring district where the security is not as good yet, and then some portion would be allowed to come home. And so I think that that is the approach that he is taking, and frankly I have not seen from the defense ministers, at least, signs of nervousness or a feeling that they would be compelled to make significant withdrawals themselves before the timing that they have already announced.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Well, I appreciate that reassurance. What you found at the defense ministers meeting is exactly what we found in terms of the cautious optimism at the Munich conference. I appreciate it. I think you are right on target in your focus for the next meeting coming up because it sounded to me as if they need that reassurance. And I will just tell you that one of the—not on the defense side, but one of the people high up in one of our major NATO allies? foreign ministry said that they were worried that if we withdrew a small proportion of our troops in July, that there would be a tendency of their political community to take it in absolute mathematical numbers. You know what I am saying. So, okay, for us it is only 1 percent, but let us say it is 1,000. They are wor-

ried that at home their parliament is going to say, well, how about taking out 1,000 of our troops as a result.

Secretary GATES. You know, the interesting thing about particularly the Europeans who are in Afghanistan—most of them are in coalition governments and most of their publics are opposed to their participation.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Secretary GATES. And I think it needs to be said these governments have shown some real political courage in being willing to commit to the alliance and to Afghanistan the forces that they have in the absence of political support at home.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I could not agree with you more. Final word. My time is up. But the other thing that I found very heartening is that I think our NATO allies, particularly following the meetings you have referred to, have stepped back and understand not just that we are doing better in Afghanistan, but this is the first time NATO has gone to war. And a failure in this first time at war, interestingly outside of the geographic area of NATO, would have terrible consequences for NATO's credibility, and NATO's credibility at this uncertain, dangerous time in the world is critically important to the stability and security of a lot of other places far from the U.S., Europe, and Afghanistan. So I think we are at a point where the alliance is really moving together in a very positive way. I thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was glad to hear that statement, Secretary Gates, what you said about the 17,000 to 50,000. Somehow I had missed that. But I am glad to know that more are coming to the table. Senator Hagan and I spent New Year's Eve with the troops in Afghanistan and had a chance to spend a little time to get out to the training area. When we talk about what is going to happen in reduction and so forth, a lot of that is going to be dependent on the success and the training of the ANA and how they are coming. And I was very pleased. She was here a minute ago and she seems to be gone now, but we were both surprised at the Kabul military training center, the segregation of infantry and artillery and how they are doing that on two sides of the mountain. You know, we are used to seeing how we do it in this country. And I was most impressed with their training. And to accommodate some of these potential discussions on withdrawal, I would just like to know your opinion as to how we are coming with that training. Is it ahead of where you thought it would be, or are you as impressed as we were when we went over and witnessed it?

Secretary GATES. I think we both should address that briefly. But I would say that what General Caldwell has done in the last year or so I would characterize as nearly a miracle. And it is not just the numbers. A year ago 35 percent of the recruits or the new soldiers, Afghan soldiers, qualified on marksmanship. It is now in the 90s. They have a literacy program going for officers, for NCO's, and even for some junior enlisted that is going to make a huge long-term difference in Afghanistan. So I think that the quality of what they have been doing and the speed with which they have

been doing it and the ability to accommodate the significant increase in the numbers being trained and getting quality training has just been really quite extraordinary and I think has played a big part in the progress that we have had over the last year.

Admiral MULLEN. I would say very briefly, sir, I think the number I saw the other day was 24,000 trainees in training right now. That number was minimal a year to 2 years ago, I mean, literally in the hundreds because all you did is you recruited and you put a soldier or a policeman in the field. What also gets lost here is sometimes as we focus on the military side of this, there has been an extraordinary jump on the police side as well behind the military, as it was in Iraq. So we are making a lot of progress there. And I would just commend General Caldwell and all his people because they put in the structure. You have seen for yourself the kind of training. It has really been an exceptional effort over a very short period of time.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. We even had an opportunity to talk to some of the ones who are being trained to be trainers. They are excited. They are looking at careers. I was very shocked and very pleased. As you know from previous meetings, I always bring up the 1206, 1207, 1208, CERB, CCIF, these programs that I have been very enthusiastic about and I think have been very successful. I was pleased that the 1206 funding was increased in this from \$350 million to \$500 million. The thing that I am confused about, because I am not sure what it means, is this pooled funding because when I first read about this, I thought is this returning back to what we were trying to get away from, in other words, having more of the concentrated commanders in the field, having greater authority, and this type of thing. How does the pooled funding work? Would either one of you like to share that with me?

Admiral MULLEN. This is actually a \$50 million appropriation, should it be approved, initially State Department money, with an opportunity to reprogram upwards of \$450 million between us. So there is no specificity that says how much State would reprogram at this point or how much DOD would. What is really critical here—and this goes back to your support of 1206, 7, and 8—is it gives us the flexibility and the ability to meet an emergent sort of this year maybe even this month need which, heretofore, we just have not been able to do. And we see it year after year in country after country. So it actually is very consistent with what has happened in 1206, 7, and 8 in terms of the strategic thrust, although some of the mechanisms will be a little different.

Senator INHOFE. Well, that is good. I am glad to hear that because I did not want to dilute that program that I think has been very, very successful. You know, recently we hear more and more about China and Russia and their further advance than we thought they were on the fifth generation of fighters, the T-50, J-20, or whatever that is over there. The decision that we had made to move backwards a little bit or move the 124 F-35s out of this 5-year period or delay them—was that decision made before we realized that they were perhaps a little further along in developing fifth generation fighters in other countries that might be sold eventually to people who could be our enemies?

Secretary GATES. I think that, first of all, the way I have characterized it, Senator, is that when I was in China, President Hu rolled out the red carpet and the PLA rolled out the J-20. You know, we have expected them to—they may have flight-tested it a half a year, a year or so before our intelligence estimated they would, but the truth is it will be quite a while before they have any numbers. The latest estimates on the Chinese side would be that by 2020 they might have 50 deployed and by 2025 maybe a couple hundred. We will have 325 F-35s by the end of 2016, even under the revised program, which with the F-22s gives us over 500 fifth generation aircraft. We will have 850 F-35s by 2020 or fifth generation aircraft by 2020 and about 1,500 by 2025. So there is still a huge disparity in terms of these aircraft. And frankly—I do not want to get into it too much in an open hearing—this is their first low-observable aircraft, and given the challenges that we have had—and we have been at this now better than 20 years—frankly, I think they have got a long road in front of them before this becomes a serious operational aircraft in any numbers.

Senator INHOFE. I am glad to hear that. My time is expired but I want to ask a question for the record, and it might be more appropriate to respond to it for the record. You commented about your visit to the Far East, and at that time you were talking about North Korea will have developed an ICBM within 5 years. We hear about our intelligence estimate talking about Iran's capabilities in 2015. I would like to have an update on those estimates for the record, if you would do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral MULLEN. Chairman, if I could. Back to just a specific on the F-35, the Secretary's decision to move those aircraft to the right—those are STOVL aircraft. I actually think—

Senator INHOFE. Those are the Marine version?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes. That actually puts us in a better position to deliver the Navy and the Air Force version sooner because those two versions are actually doing pretty well in testing and development. So I thought it was a wise decision and to give the Marine Corps, give us—give the Navy an opportunity to work on this airplane for the next 2 years. It was at the front of the queue and actually it was holding up the development of the other two airplanes.

Secretary GATES. And I would just say that the first Air Force variant of the F-35 will go to Eglin in May and others will flow through September to begin training, and the Navy variant will be at Eglin in fiscal year 2012.

Senator INHOFE. That is very helpful. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe. Senator Ben Nelson?

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, for your service to our country. Secretary Gates, for the past several years, the need for a new U.S. Strategic Command headquarters has been under consideration. It has been apparent and identified as a requirement. So I have been extremely pleased with the progress made toward addressing this vital need. The existing facility's shortcomings and problems have put STRATCOM's mission and its personnel at some risk. STRATCOM's existing headquarters was built in 1957 and it has weathered 5 decades

with little renovation. So for any combatant command, of course, these problems would be challenging if they continue to have electrical service and cooling water and other problems, but for STRATCOM, these facility maintenance matters are just untenable and they stand in the way of some of the most important national security missions. General Chilton, the retiring commander of STRATCOM said it best, that the STRATCOM headquarters is the nuclear command and control mode for the United States and that we must make the appropriate investments. So I am very pleased that this budget represents that and wonder if you might have any comments on it and, as well, Admiral Mullen.

Secretary GATES. I just have one comment and that is Admiral Mullen and I were there a couple of weeks ago for the change of command at STRATCOM, and the building looks a lot like it did when I walked in as a 2nd lieutenant in 1967.

Senator NELSON. Well, the electrical systems are probably the same as well. But thank you very, very much. In addition to the concerns that have been raised about continuing our relationships in the Middle East right now, the fiscal year 2012 budget presumes that the military, in terms of Iraq, will depart on December's plan. We have had a lot of discussions here about whether or not it is important to do that or appropriate to do that and what kind of assistance and advice will we continue to provide the Iraqis. But as we are looking at our budget and trying to find ways to economize in the Department of Defense, is there a plan to have the Iraqis pick up more of the costs of any retention that we might have of our personnel there to provide the advice and the training that will be required?

Secretary GATES. Not at this point, Senator. To tell you the truth, we have not really done much in the way of the budget looking beyond the 31st of December because we are assuming that we will come to December 31st and that will be it. So we would have to revisit that issue. I think we would have to take a look at whether the Iraqis could do that. They are running about—even with the price of oil where it is, they are devoting about 14 percent of their GDP to security, and they are running, I think, a \$15 billion or thereabouts—\$10 billion to \$15 billion deficit this year. We should be so lucky. But we really have not gone down that road yet.

Senator NELSON. But if we are in a position to where we are requested and we make the decision to continue some relationship there, would it be possible to look at that from the standpoint of the budget? It is not that I want to drive their budget into the ditch any more than I want ours to continue to be there. We have got to find a way to balance it for them and for ourselves as well.

Secretary GATES. I understand, and we will certainly take that into account.

Senator NELSON. I appreciate that. In terms of ISR assets, the Department has put forth spending about \$4.8 billion on procuring another 110 airframes for the budget. Can you speak about what the infrastructure and personnel will cost? Maybe this is for Admiral Mullen. The personnel costs and the infrastructure costs for adding these additional ISR assets.

Admiral MULLEN. I would have to get back to you with a detailed response.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator NELSON. Sure.

Admiral MULLEN. Certainly the infrastructure and personnel costs are incorporated into the budget and that is how the services actually bring it forward. And it has become more and more significant. But I would also say, Senator Nelson, I mean, it has just become such a critical part not of just what we are doing now but what we are going to do in the future. We oftentimes think about the future sort of out there by itself, what is going to happen in 5 or 10 years. One of the things that has happened in these wars is there are a lot of capabilities that we have developed, rapidly field that will be every bit as relevant in a few years as they are right now. And ISR probably leads the pack with respect to that.

Senator NELSON. In that regard, we are living the future right now as we see it develop around us, and I hope that as we do that, we will continue to find a way to do it, obviously, as efficiently and as cost effectively as possible but not be short on personnel simply because we may end up with fewer pilots, but the piloting is obviously done a different way. So I hope that you will consider that. And also, Secretary Gates, in growing the forces and the capacity of the Afghan national security forces, we have talked about the numbers increasing and you mentioned sustainability of the numbers and the range from the lower and we are adding 40,000 and looking at a higher range of 378,000. Can we establish what we think would be a sustainable number as we look forward? Because, obviously, that is a pretty sizable percent of the population. Now, it is good to have people working. There is no question about it—fully employed. But do we have some idea of what the Afghans can support and sustain into their future? Secretary Gates?

Secretary GATES. The sustainability issue, at least for the next number of years, is more what the U.S. can sustain because the Afghans' ability to sustain a military force would be a fraction of the size of what they already have, much less what they may increase to, which is why I think of the size of their force more in terms of a surge like ours so that once we have defeated the Taliban or degraded them to a point that a smaller Afghan force can keep control where it is almost like the Afghan local police or smaller numbers of the Army can manage to keep the Taliban or others inside the country down to the point where they are not a threat to the stability of the government or to the people of Afghanistan. They cannot afford a force the size that they already have. And so I think the only way we can think of it or the way we ought to think of it is something that we would be willing to support for a few years.

Senator NELSON. In the short term?

Secretary GATES. Yes, for a few years. But then it seems to me, particularly if there is a political solution to this war, as we all believe there needs to be ultimately, that they could get by with a significantly smaller force. We probably would have to help them even then, but it would be a dramatically smaller bill than it is now. And if it is a smaller bill, we may be able to get other countries to help us as well.

Senator NELSON. Well, hopefully, the NATO support would extend to providing help for the sustainability into the future because until we secure the country, a political solution is going to be very difficult.

Secretary GATES. Well, and just as an example, I mean, the Japanese basically pay the salaries for the Afghan national police. That is their contribution. They do not have troops there, but that is not a small thing that they are doing.

Senator NELSON. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Nelson. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, I want to thank you for being here today and commend both of you for your long and distinguished service to our country. Before I ask any questions, I just want to say that I believe our Government's most important responsibility is to protect the American people. And this is a deeply held personal belief for me. I am from a military family. My husband is in the Guard and is a veteran of the Iraq war. So I applaud your efforts to ensure that our brave men and women in uniform have everything that they need to fight and win our wars. And supporting our men and women in uniform is certainly a solemn and sacred responsibility that we have. As we draw down in Iraq and our country confronts a fiscal crisis, I think it would be a mistake to drastically cut the size of our military or our readiness.

That said, you appreciate—and I know based on Admiral Mullen's comments—that we face a fiscal crisis in this country and that we face great challenges in balancing the need to protect our country and to make sure that we serve and provide for our troops with the need to cut back in all areas. I want to commend Secretary Gates for proactively going forward to look for efficiencies and billions of dollars in savings. And as a new member of this committee, I want you to know that I look forward to working with the Department of Defense to bring reforms forward and efficiencies to fruition and also to look for additional cost savings. I have a question based on having the appearance of Secretary Vickers the other day for his nomination, and that is that he testified that 25 percent of the detainees that are being released from Guantanamo are going back into theater and engaging in hostilities again. I wanted to ask Secretary Gates whether that is an accurate figure and how that is informing our release decisions from Guantanamo.

Secretary GATES. Well, that is about the right figure based on the latest information that I have. And I would say that we have been very selective in terms of returning people. One of the things we have discovered over time is that we are not particularly good at predicting which returnee will be a recidivist. Some of those that we have considered the most dangerous and who have been released or who we considered dangerous and potentially going back into the fight have not, and some that we evaluated as not being much of a danger or much of a risk we have discovered in the fight. And then I would say that the National Defense Authorization Act of 2011 imposes some additional restrictions on who we can release, and the Congress put me in the uncomfortable position of having to certify people who get returned, that they are no longer

a danger. So I will tell you that that raises the bar very high as far as I am concerned.

Senator AYOTTE. One of the concerns that I think this raises as well is if we are able to capture a high-value target in an area where we may not currently be engaged in a direct conflict, where are we going to put these individuals if the President still goes forward to attempt to close Guantanamo?

Secretary GATES. I think the honest answer to that question is we do not know if we capture them outside of the areas where we are at war and are not covered by the existing war authorizations. One possibility is for such a person to be put in the custody of their home government. Another possibility is that we bring them to the United States. After all, we have brought a variety of terrorists to the United States and put them on trial in Article III courts here over the years, but it will be a challenge.

Senator AYOTTE. Would that cause you to make a different recommendation to the President on closing Guantanamo given the challenges that it presents?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think we are in the position, frankly, that the prospects for closing Guantanamo, as best I can tell, are very, very low given very broad opposition to doing that here in the Congress.

Senator AYOTTE. But we also are not using it to add additional detainees there that might be appropriate for holding at Guantanamo either, are we?

Secretary GATES. Not at this point.

Senator AYOTTE. I wanted to ask you about the reset equipment for combat within the budget. I am concerned about the lower funding levels proposed in fiscal year 2012 to reset equipment for combat units returning from deployments. I wanted to get your thoughts on that part of the budget. On September 11th, 2010, the New Hampshire National Guard deployed the largest number of guardsmen and women since World War II for our State, and these troops will be returning in the second half of this year. I know that reset is more than just buying equipment. It includes manning time and time to train. So restoring readiness levels takes time. But I also know that the National Guard units have historically been at the end of the food chain in getting new equipment and resources for training. This can impact their readiness for Federal missions but also can impact their responsiveness to State emergencies. So with this in mind, how confident are you in that the amounts included in the fiscal year 2012 budget for the services for reset will allow all units in the active and Reserve components to be able to address the critical readiness needs that we have going forward?

Secretary GATES. One of the things that has happened over the past 4 years that I am very proud of is that when I assumed this position, the historic equipment on hand percentage across the board for the National Guard was about 70 percent, and when I took this job, it was at about 40 percent. It is now on a national basis at about 77 percent. And what has changed now compared with the past, just to your point about the food chain, is the Guard now is getting the same kind of equipment that the active force has. So they are getting much higher quality equipment. At the

same time, they are getting more equipment. How fast we can do this for units that are coming back from conflict is going to be a challenge because it is a lot of money. One of the concerns that I have about the continuing resolution is that there is some reset money in there, and it is going to be very difficult for us to execute. One of the things that we will have to do, if we get a yearlong continuing resolution, we will have to pretty close to shut down the recapitalization of the humvees at Red River and Letterkenny depots. And so all of these things are tied together, but it is going to be a challenge. Until a year or 2 ago, we would have testified to you that we will need reset money for at least a couple of years after the conflict ends, and we think that is probably now a longer period of time, longer than 2 years. The problem is that when the conflicts end, that reset money for the most part has come out of these overseas contingency operations budgets, and finding the dollars for a significant reset after the end of the conflict, if we are not getting any OCO funding, I think will be a big challenge for us.

Senator AYOTTE. I know that my time is up. I thank you very much, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen. I appreciate it.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Aloha, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen and Secretary Hale. I want to thank you all for your leadership and service for so long. Secretary Gates, if this is your final budget testimony before this committee, I would like to say that I appreciate the excellent job that you have done leading our military. I want to also thank the brave men and women of our armed forces and their families for their service. Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, I applaud the steps taken to care for our servicemembers' mental wellbeing. I believe that taking care of those defending our Nation is a responsibility and not a choice. I also believe that the healing process should also account for families as well. I am interested in hearing your thoughts on the progress the Department is making in helping families as a whole as they work through the challenges of PTSD, TBI, and other stress-inducing situations for families.

Admiral MULLEN. Thanks, Senator Akaka. I know that you have focused on these issues, and all of us greatly appreciate that. I think we are in a much better position than we were a few years ago, but we also have a much better understanding of the size of the problem. And I will speak specifically to families first. While there early on was a great deal of focus on spouses, in terms of the stress that they have undergone, what I have seen certainly over the course of the last couple years is an increasing awareness and understanding of the need to address the whole family, including the kids, as they have been stressed. I mean, if you are in a high-end, high-rotation unit and you were 10 years old when these wars started, and you had mostly your dad, but mom and dad, on their fourth or fifth deployment, you just went off to college and you basically almost have not seen your dad. And there are issues associated with that that I think we are going to have to deal with in the long run. A 15-year-old in one of these military families—their whole life has been at war. That is something a lot of us have

never been through. So there has been an extraordinary amount of effort placed in terms of prioritizing inside each of the services to get at the major issues. And it is not just the stress and the mental stress. We are short health care providers, although we are up dramatically from where we were in 2001. We were in the 1,000 range in 2001. We are over 7,000 now. We have got TRICARE health providers that are almost 50,000, but we are still short. The country is short, and we have got to figure out a better way to break through, to join with the VA, another committee I know that is near and dear to your heart as chairman, and work together with the VA and, quite frankly, with communities throughout the country to get at this. And the last thing I would say is the initiative that the First Lady has undertaken and announced with the President about a month ago, an extraordinarily important issue focused on military families across a number of issues to include this—it is wellness. It is education. It is employment. It is child care—signed up by all the Secretaries from every department, 16 of them, is a huge step forward in terms of giving this visibility in a way that we just have not had before. So I am more optimistic than I have been, but we have got some substantial steps that need to be taken.

Secretary GATES. I would like to just mention two things, Senator. One is one of the significant changes, I think, we have made in the last 3 years or so—we have moved virtually—we used to pay for—most of these family programs associated with those who are deployed and the challenges that they have been facing have been in the supplementals and in the OCO funding. We have over the last 3 years moved virtually all of that money into the base budget so that long after the war funding ends, we will be able to sustain these family-oriented programs. This year, I think we have \$8.3 billion in the budget for these programs, and that is about a \$200 million increase over fiscal year 2011.

Senator AKAKA. And I know your concern goes back also to the TRICARE program probably needing more resources than they have had before. Secretary Gates, I believe that an electronic medical record system would be very beneficial to current and former military families and members, as well as the health care providers. Mr. Secretary, can you provide an update on where the Department is on electronic health records?

Secretary GATES. We will get you an answer for the record that has the details. I will tell you we have made a lot of progress, but it is not fast enough as far as Secretary Shinseki and I are concerned. He and I met, just the two of us, about 2 weeks ago to try and accelerate this effort. So he and I will meet again with our staffs in the middle of April—or in the middle of March rather—to assess where we are and what needs to be done to move this forward and get it done. And then we will have a follow-up meeting at the end of April. I have found, unfortunately, with these huge bureaucracies, whether it is Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense, that things like this that are big projects do not move very fast if they do not get high-level attention. So Secretary Shinseki and I are both committed to making as-fast-as-possible progress on this.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Akaka.
Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, I very much appreciate the fact that you opened your testimony with highlighting the damaging effects of a year-long CR on the Department. I am very concerned about these impacts. And Senator Bill Nelson and I recently wrote to our leaders suggesting that we should be working on the defense appropriations bill right now. I made a similar suggestion to our leaders last fall, advice that unfortunately they did not take. But I will say to my colleagues that it is inconceivable to me that we have spent the past 10 days debating the FAA reauthorization, not to say that that is not important, but it pales in comparison to the urgency of acting on the defense appropriations bill. So I hope our Senate leaders heard you loud and clear today and that we will return next week and make that our first order of business. And certainly the impact that you have outlined is a disaster, and there is just no need for us to be debating a bill that is not urgent when we should be doing a high priority bill and certainly the passage of the defense appropriations bill is the highest priority. So thank you for your testimony on that.

Admiral Mullen, in your testimony you stated that one of the greatest success stories this year has been the growth and development of the Afghan national security forces. You went on to say that that has gone incredibly well. And I understand that that is going well generally, and I also understand how imperative it is that we build up those forces so that we can eventually leave Afghanistan. But I want you to know that I am concerned that the focus on so rapidly increasing the number of Afghan security forces is shortchanging the vetting of those recruits. Recently six U.S. military personnel, including Private 1st Class Buddy McClain of Maine, were killed by an Afghan border police officer. And the press have reported that in the past 13 months, Afghan personnel have attacked our military personnel or our coalition partners six times. What are we doing to better vet those Afghan recruits to ensure that tragic incidents and attacks like this do not occur?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, certainly it is, Senator Collins, each one of them, a tragedy. To go to the overall structure, when I go back 12 months or 15 months with General Caldwell and what we had then versus what we have now, we have moved incredibly quickly. But we have also focused on the quality of the move, and by that I mean the quality of the instructors, the quality of the infrastructure, a substantial training program that was virtually nonexistent there before. The Secretary talked earlier about the improvement in literacy. We are now focused very much on the need to both train in specific skill sets, and all of this while we are obviously fighting a war, moving pretty quickly, moving very quickly to ensure, as best we can, that nothing like that in the security forces, the military or the police, occurs. I would assure you there is a tremendous amount of focus on this with respect to the leadership. That said, tragically these things do occur on occasion. They did in Iraq. They do in Afghanistan. And while we will do everything we can to eliminate them, I would not sit here and tell you that we will be 100 percent successful with respect to that. Every one of

these is investigated thoroughly. Every one of them. In fact, the one to which you refer—you know, I went through this with General Campbell specifically. What happened? What do we know about this guy? What was the background? And there was not a lot there with respect to his background that would have led him to specifically take that action to kill our six troops. So we take that. We investigate it. We certainly integrate that back into what we are doing, but it is a big challenge.

Senator COLLINS. Secretary Gates, I applaud you for holding accountable both military and civilian personnel who have failed to perform adequately. On Tuesday, Senator Lieberman and I met with one of the victims of the Fort Hood massacre, Sergeant Alonzo Lunsford, and he was accompanied by friends and family members, as well as other family members who had lost loved ones in this attack. And the very first question that they asked Senator Lieberman and me and the one that I pose to you today is when will the supervisors that filed such misleading officer evaluation reports regarding Major Hassan be held accountable. These evaluation reports ignored his increasingly erratic behavior, his poor performance as a physician. We know from our investigation that one of his commanding officers told the people at Fort Hood you are getting our worst, and yet when you read the officer performance evaluations, they are glowing by and large. So this attack occurred 15 months ago, and what the victims and their family members are asking us is when will these individuals be held accountable.

Secretary GATES. At my request, the Secretary of the Army has undertaken an investigation to address this specifically, and the latest information that I have is that he is nearing decisions on this. So I do not have a precise time line, but I think in the very near future he will be reaching his conclusions and taking whatever actions he deems appropriate.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. My time has expired. I am going to submit some questions for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator COLLINS. Admiral Mullen, I do want to mention to you that I am very concerned about the increase in suicides among the National Guard. I recently had the honor to welcome back a company of Maine National Guard men and women who have spent a year in Afghanistan. And it seems to me we are doing a better job in helping the active-Duty Force which has those resources more readily available, but I am really concerned about whether we are providing that same kind of support to the Guard and Reserve.

Admiral MULLEN. I said this many times. We would be nowhere close to where we are in these wars without the extraordinary performance of the Guard and Reserve, and they deserve every bit the attention that everybody else has gotten. Certainly on the suicide issue, it is a huge concern to all of us. The services are working it and, in particular, the surge in that over the last year on the Guard side. So there is a great deal of effort to try to, first of all, understand it and then address it, as we have in the services as well.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Collins. I think Senator Collins speaks for all of us on that issue of suicide. Thank you.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin by associating myself with the remarks of Chairman Levin and Senator McCain and others about your extraordinary service, Mr. Secretary, to the Nation throughout your tenure in difficult times and making difficult judgments. Thank you for what you have done and we continue to wish you well as you continue to serve. Admiral Mullen, I know in October you will finish your tour, and I will add that commendation to you for your extraordinary service of 43 years in uniform in the United States Navy and to all your colleagues at the Defense Department. Let me emphasize what you all have emphasized. It is absolutely critical to fund the defense budget going forward in a non-ad hoc, every 60 days but over a long period of time to provide certainty for programs, certainty for strategy. But there is another aspect of our National strategy that is increasingly important and that is the role the State Department will play in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mr. Secretary, I would assume that you would stress with the same urgency the need to fund those types of State Department programs in Iraq and Afghanistan because otherwise what you have accomplished and, more specifically, what young men and women in our military forces have accomplished could be severely jeopardized and our National security severely threatened if we do not follow through. And a concern that many of us have is that you are able to summon an almost reflexive response by the American people when you talk about helping men and women in uniform. That same response is not elicited when people start criticizing foreign aid which this could be labeled. And I just think it would be helpful if you would comment on this issue of the need also to support that effort.

Secretary GATES. First of all, I would say that for the entire time I have been in this job, I have been an advocate for more money for the State Department. And actually this dates back to my days in CIA when we had case officers collecting information that any good political officer in the Foreign Service could get, but there were not enough. So it has been a concern of mine all along. I would say that right now it is a critically urgent concern because if the State Department does not get the money that they have requested for the transition in Iraq, we are really going to be in the soup. We have spent probably close to \$800 billion or \$900 billion, perhaps more importantly, more than 4,000 lives, and here we are at the end game and it reminds me of the final scene in "Charlie Wilson's War."

We have spent billions to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan, and we could not get a million dollars to build schools in Afghanistan in 1989 and 1990. The same thing is going to happen in Iraq. If we cannot have a transition to the State Department and the police training function, if they do not have a presence in various places throughout Iraq, much of the investment that we have made in trying to get the Iraqis to the place they are is at risk in my view. The Chairman mentioned the need for State Department funding in his opening statement. But you would find, I think, extraordinary support across the entire Defense Department for their

budget, but more importantly our real worry that all that we have gained is potentially at risk if we do not have the kind of State Department presence and State Department activities in Iraq. And here is the other piece of the problem and it goes to the continuing resolution. The State Department cannot spend the money to get ready right now. This is getting toward the end of February. There are facilities to be built. There are people to be hired, and they cannot do any of that. And so we are going to run out of time in terms of being able to get this accomplished. So I hope that the passion in this reflects just how strongly we feel about this. This is really, really important.

Admiral MULLEN. Senator Reed, just quickly, you talk about Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a global issue. This is not a lot of money invested in places around the world that prevent conflicts. The military does this. We have to do it with our partners in the State Department, otherwise we are going back for a lot more investment and a lot more casualties.

Senator REED. Mr. Hale, please.

Mr. HALE. Let me just offer a brief additional point. For the first time, in Fiscal 12 State will request a budget under the Overseas Contingency Operations Fund. It will be very important for Congress to enact that and isolate the money that are associated with these operations, so I hope that's favorably received.

Senator REED. That's an excellent point, Mr. Secretary. Just, with Afghanistan, too, you mention Charlie Wilson's War. That was, we learned a very expensive lesson about not spending the million dollars in 9/11. And frankly, particularly with Afghanistan, where at a point we might have to, you know, relearn that lesson, because the threats that are being organized against the United States and our allies are still emanating from border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, unless I'm mistaken. Is that a fair judgment, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary GATES. Absolutely. The Chairman refers to it as the epicenter of world terrorism. And while al Qaeda has metastasized and has branches in Yemen and North Africa and elsewhere, the reality is, that border area with Afghanistan and Pakistan is still the heart of the problem.

Senator REED. And let me make one follow up point about Afghanistan, because as the Chairman mentioned, we were there recently. We are building an increasingly credible force there, but it's a force that the government of Afghanistan cannot afford indefinitely. It's much cheaper than our troops. But this is not just a 2- to 3-year commitment. This has to be a multi-year commitment to support their forces in the field. Not singly the United States, but the international community. And we have to start now and build that in. Is, I think, is that another point you would agree with?

Secretary GATES. I made the point earlier. I mean, I think that the international community and Afghanistan cannot afford a force of 375,000 ANSF indefinitely. We have to think of this, I think, more as a surge for the Afghans. And with a political settlement and with the degrading of the Taliban, perhaps the size of the ANSF can come down to a point where it's more affordable for us and for everybody else. But we have, just as an example, I mean, our fiscal year 12 budget has in the O Code \$12.8 billion to support

the ANSF for one fiscal year. We can't sustain that for many years. And so, a lot depends on being successful by 2014 in getting the transition to the Afghans. And even if we have to support it for a little after that, if we have most of our troops out of there, it's still going to be a lot less money for the American taxpayers.

Senator REED. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed. And when you go to your NATO meeting, I hope that you would also see what support we might be able to get for the continuing cost of an Afghan army from some of our NATO allies. In that regard it would be helpful as well.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any chance you'll reconsider leaving, Secretary Gates?

Secretary GATES. No, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. I didn't think so. But, I just can't thank you enough for what you've done for the country. Admiral Mullen. And, I just want to say something about the administration here. I know we have our differences. But when it comes to Iraq and Afghanistan, I think the policies you've created, the policies the President has supported, have been very sound. And we're about to reap the benefits of operations that have been tough, difficult, sometimes mismanaged, but that's the nature of war. And we're very close in Iraq. So, I just want to build on what Senator Reed said. I'm going to be the Ranking Member of the Foreign Operations Accounts on Appropriations. And I'd like for you to put in writing to me and Senator Leahy what you said about this account. Let's give a real world example. What did it mean in terms of the Egyptian crisis to have a good dialogue with the Egyptian military, Admiral Mullen?

Admiral MULLEN. It was huge. It was the benefits of 30 years of investment of the interaction that we've had with thousands of them in our schools, the values that have rubbed off over time with them, the ability to sustain those contacts, and then see them act in such a responsible way.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I think that's a real world example of where 30 years of investment really paid off. And this account has been reduced to 45 billion in the House. And I do share my House colleagues' desire to reduce spending, and no account is above scrutiny. But the \$5 billion that is flowing to Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan on the civilian side of the Overseas Contingency Operation Account, what, are you telling us that, basically, that should be seen sort of as emergency spending and not counted against our baseline?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I think, I mean, certainly some of it tied to the military. But I think the Kerry-Lugar-Berman piece, that's a 5-year program at a billion and a half a year. That isn't military, and that's what we were talking about earlier. Sustaining that is going to be critical, not just now, but in the long term.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I guess the point I'm making, we're surging on the civilian side as we draw down our troops. And the civilian-military partnership is essential to holding and building.

Admiral MULLEN. Right.

Senator GRAHAM. There are funds going to Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan on the civilian side that I think will be just as important as any brigade, and I would like to treat those funds as a national security asset. And I will do everything I can on the Republican side in the Senate to make sure that we protect those funds—

Admiral MULLEN. Sure.

Senator GRAHAM.—that you can't hold and build without. Now, here's what a waste the American people—we're talking about fiscal austerity at home. What is the percentage of GDP spending on defense when you count all appropriations?

Secretary GATES. Well, two facts. First, if it's, first, the base budget alone—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary GATES.—is 3.7 percent of GDP. The, if you take all the war funding for fiscal year 11, and, plus the base budget, it's about 4.9 percent of GDP.

Senator GRAHAM. Historically—

Secretary GATES. But there's another fact that's worth noting—

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Secretary GATES.—and that is that as a percentage of Federal outlays—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary GATES.—with the exception of the late 1990s and early 2000s, at 18.9 percent it is the lowest level of Federal percentage of outlays since before World War II.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Now, we need to understand that as a Congress here, the Secretary of Defense has just told us, and, since World War II terms, we're on the very low end, at a time when I think the threats to our Nation are growing exponentially. Now, as we pull down in Iraq, it is your belief, if the Iraqi government would ask for American troops to be left behind to perform the three functions you suggested, it would be in our National security interest to say yes?

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir. I believe that.

Senator GRAHAM. Now, there's a fourth component—security for those who are going to be in the lead. The State Department, the Department of Justice, Agriculture Department, the police trainers. My concern is, if we don't have a sufficient military footprint, then the State Department literally has to build its own security apparatus, which will be in excess of \$5 billion. Do you think, all things being equal, it would be better for the U.S. military to be able to continue to provide security?

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir, I do. And I'm, partly because we would also have the helicopters and things like that. The private security contractors that State's going to have to hire to perform that role will not have some of the, quote, unquote, enablers that we have.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, see, this is the dilemma. And we need to know this soon. Because the State Department needs to build capacity. Do they buy helicopters? Do they buy 54 MRAMs? And is it wise to hire a private contractor army to replace the American military if the Iraqis will allow the American military to perform that function. So, the sooner we know the answer to that question, the more likely we are to be successful. Because I have grave concerns about building a State Department army. And so, that's must

my 2 cents worth. Detainees. Admiral Mullen, our special operators are all over the world as I speak, is that correct?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. And the threat from terrorism is just not confined to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Admiral MULLEN. It is not.

Senator GRAHAM. What would we do as a nation if we were able to capture a high level al-Qaeda operative in any country outside of Iraq or Afghanistan, let's say, Somalia, Yemen, as examples. What would we do with that detainee?

Admiral MULLEN. We don't have an answer to that question.

Senator GRAHAM. See, now, this is a big deal to me. We're in a war, and capturing people is part of a intelligence gathering. It's an essential component of this war. Do you agree with that, Admiral Mullen?

Admiral MULLEN. Right.

Senator GRAHAM. It is better to capture someone than it is to kill them in a lot of cases, is that correct?

Admiral MULLEN. It is.

Senator GRAHAM. It's hard to capture someone if you don't have a jail to put them. And all those on the other side who want to stop renditions, we need to come up with an American jail, because we're in, the only alternative is to kill them or go to renditions. I hope, Mr. Chairman, that sometimes this year Republicans and Democrats can have a breakthrough on this issue to help our men and women fighting this war, because it is a very spot to put the special, a tough spot to put the special operators in. And our CIA doesn't interrogate terror suspects any longer. And these are things we need to talk about and get an answer to. Afghanistan. Not only is it miraculous what General Caldwell has done. It's stunning to me that we're in 2009 and 10, and 30 percent of the NCO corps in Afghanistan could read. When he took over, he tested the Afghanistan army for literacy, and on paper, every NCO should read at the 3rd grade level. And when they tested the NCO corps, 70 percent could not read at the 3rd grade level, and he is going about fixing that. So, you're dead right. But, we need to know, after 8 years of involvement, 90 percent of the Afghan army could not shoot to NATO standards 18 months ago. So, after all these years we're just finally getting it right. In many ways, we've been in Afghanistan with the right formulation for about 18 months. Is that a fair statement?

Admiral MULLEN. That's a fair statement. And you've, it's a very difficult discussion to have because it was 10 years ago when this started.

Senator GRAHAM. I just want the American people to know that we've made mistakes, but we're finally getting it right. One last thought. When 2014 comes, I am very optimistic that there will be a better Afghan police and army than we have today, that we can transition. But I've been discussing among my colleagues and others about what an enduring relationship with Afghanistan would look like. It is my belief, Mr. Chairman, that a political economic and military alliance with the Afghan people, at their request, would be incredibly beneficial to our long-term national security interest and could be a game-changer in the region. To both of you,

what do you believe the effect of an enduring military relationship would be on the future security of Afghanistan and the region as a whole if the Afghans requested of us to have joint airbases past 2015? Would that be something you think it would be wise for us to talk about and consider?

Secretary GATES. Absolutely, Senator. I think that, you know, to go to, Admiral Mullen's comments about Pakistan a little while ago, there is a big question in the whole region whether we will stick around. And it's in Afghanistan, it's in Pakistan, it's all over the area. And a security agreement with Afghanistan that provided for a continuing relationship and some kind of joint facilities and so on for training, for counter-terrorism and so on beyond 2014, I think would be very much in our interest. I think that it would serve as a barrier to Iranian influence coming from the West. I think it would serve as a barrier to a reconstitution of the Taliban and others coming from the border areas in Pakistan. So, I think it would be a stabilizing, have a stabilizing effect, not just in Afghanistan, but in the region.

Senator GRAHAM. One final thought—and I hate to run over. Would you also agree that it would give an edge to the Afghan security forces in perpetuity over the Taliban, and you might, with that kind of a relationship, get by with a somewhat smaller army?

Secretary GATES. Absolutely.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Graham. Senator Hagan is next. We have a vote now on the Senate's schedule for 12:10, and we're going to try to work around that vote and to work through that vote. I'm going to turn the gavel over now to Senator Udall, because I have to leave for a few minutes as well. But, we're going to try to keep going right through that vote the best we can.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will actually cut my own questions short, because I have to preside over the capsule that's on the Senate floor at noon. But, I do want to say to all three of the individuals here, thank you so much for your service and your testimony, and the excellent work that you do for our country. And I did want to agree with Senator Reed and Senator Graham on the concern, and Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, your concern about the funding for the State Department and the foreign aid. I think that is critically important. And as you both said, it certainly was evident as to what has taken place just recently in Egypt. I did want to talk a little bit about the health of the Special Operations Forces. And, Admiral Mullen, in your prepared remarks you acknowledged the continued stress on the force from 9 years of constant conflict. And last week Admiral Olson, Commander of the U.S. Special Operation Command, told an industry group that difficult and repeated deployments of Special Operations personnel are causing some fraying around the edges of the force. And Admiral Olson also made the point that demand for Special Operations Forces will continue to outstrip supply for the foreseeable future. Given the demand for these Special Operations Forces, not only in CENTCOM, but also in other parts of the world, for partnership and capacity-building activities, how does the Department intend to address the readiness issues identified by Admiral Olson? Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates?

Admiral MULLEN. I think, actually, the force has expanded, I think, from, when these wars started, around 30,000 to on a way to upwards of 56,000. I think, you know, there are insatiable appetites and requirements for Special Forces. The vast majority of them are in CENTCOM. That said, they actually are in many, many countries around the world, and they're making investments for the future so that we don't have to go to war in other parts of the world. I think his statement about fraying around the edges is right. They've been on, had a significant number of deployments. I think in Iraq, actually, in Iraq and Afghanistan they'll typically be the last forces out. So, the pressure is going to continue there. We've worked a, you know, very, very hard both increasing size to increased dwell time. But as we do that, quite frankly, Petraeus asked for more, because they have such an impact. So, we're on a very, we're on a knife edge there with respect to this. They're extraordinary in their performance and their execution. I consider the Care Coalition, which is the group that takes care of wounded families, families of the fallen, to be the Gold Standard in our military with respect to how we approach that. That said, they're pushed very, very hard. From a readiness standpoint, as they come back and dwell time will increase, I think we'll be fine in terms of giving them the time, and then to be able to disperse them to other parts of the world, which we have not been able to do in the kinds of numbers and requests, because they've been so tied to CENTCOM. So, I think we will be able to meet that. But it's going to be awhile until we, you know, get on the down side of both these conflicts.

Secretary GATES. I would just add that with the increase in SOCOM and their higher level of activity, another one of the things that we've tried to do is move a lot of the SOCOM money, a lot of the Special Forces money, into the base budget, so that once these wars end we are able to sustain the larger Special Forces that we have, and properly equip them.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you. The international security environment, particularly in cyberspace, continues to evolve. Cyber threats to our electrical grid, telecommunications, military networks, critical infrastructure, and the financial system pose serious concerns to our National security. Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, what is the Department's strategy to recruit, train and retain cyber specialists, and what is the way forward to centralize the military cyberspace operations and Cyber Command, and to synchronize the defense networks?

Secretary GATES. I think we've made a lot of progress in this area. The creation of Cyber Command was an important step. I directed the Service Secretaries about a year ago to consider training in the, in cyber, to be their, one of their highest priorities and to ensure that all the spaces that we have in our schools for teaching cyber skills be filled at a priority level. And I think they've made a lot of headway. We have a lot of money in this area. This budget for fiscal year 2012 has a half a billion dollars for cyber research at DARPA. And so, and I think we're in pretty good shape in terms of protecting the dot-mil world. And this last summer, Secretary Napolitano and I signed a memorandum of understanding that give, that begins to move us in a direction where we can begin to do better at protecting dot-gov and dot-com. The reality is, there

was a big debate, and it went on in the Bush administration, and it continued in this administration, of people who did not, for, did not want to make use of NSA in domestic cyber protection because of civil liberties and privacy concerns. And what Secretary Napolitano and I did was arrive at an agreement where DHS senior officials are now integrated into NSA senior leadership. They have their own General Counsel, their own firewalls, their own protections, so that they can exploit and task NSA to begin to get coverage in the dot-gov and dot-com worlds. This is really important. And I think it's a start. But we still have a long way to go.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you. Admiral Mullen, anything to add to that?

Admiral MULLEN. No. Ditto. I mean, it's a huge concern.

Senator HAGAN. Yes.

Admiral MULLEN. A growing threat. A lot has been done. Schools are filled. But we've got a long way to go.

Senator HAGAN. I think it's good that the schools are filled, it's positive. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator Chambliss is next.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I don't know what all this conversation is about, about saying great things about you because you're leaving. We're planning on you being, both being around here for awhile longer to help us make some very critical decisions. And whether it's voluntary in your case, Secretary Gates, or your time is up, whatever, Admiral Mullen, to both of you, you provided a very valuable service to our country over this last short term. And I'm not even counting the years and years and years that both of you have given. So, thank you very much for that service. And whether we've agreed or disagreed, you've always responded to me in a very professional way. And I'm very appreciative of that relationship. And I want to echo what Senator Graham said about this detention and interrogation issue. I mean, guys, we've got a real problem there that needs to be addressed in the short term. I'm sure you've probably seen what, the way in which Director Panetta responded yesterday to a question I asked him about if we did capture bin Laden or Zawahiri. And that just highlights the fact that we don't have a plan, and we really do have to figure out something here. We thought Baghrum might be the answer. But it looks like it's obviously not long-term. So, we look forward to working with you on that. I continue to have, Secretary Gates, a TACAIR issue that just really bothers me with respect to where we are now. And the further we get into the F-35, the more I'm concerned about this.

In May 2009, just to go back a little bit, General Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, testified that the military requirement for the F-22 was 240, or 60 more than DOD was willing to purchase. That summer there was a concerted effort made to strip funding for seven additional F-22's out of the fiscal year 10 NDAA. And, ultimately, obviously, and you've taken a lot of credit for the fact in your budget that the F-22 has been terminated and there's a huge savings out there. First, there was an argument that the F-35 would be more affordable than the F-22. Secretary Gates, on July 16, 2009, in a speech in Chicago you personally stated that

the F-35 would be less than half the total cost of the F-22. Since that time, the F-35 experienced a Nunn-McCurdy breach due to cost increases, and DOD has recently restructured the program again, delaying deliveries and again driving up the cost. Last month your own Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation Office established that the unit cost of a Joint Strike Fighter average over variance has doubled since the program began to approximately \$116 million per copy in fiscal year 10 dollars. And things may even get worse. Of note, the price per copy for the last F-22s purchased was \$130 million. Second, regarding the threats the U.S. may face in the future and our ability to maintain air supremacy, you downplayed the threat and stated again on July 16, Mr. Secretary, of 2009 in that Chicago speech that, and I quote, "China is projected to have no 5th generation aircraft by 2020."

Well, I heard what you said earlier in response to Senator Inhofe, but the fact is that last month China flew their first 5th generation fighter, the J-20, which your own intelligence experts predict will reach IOC with 20 aircraft, a 20-aircraft squadron well before 2020. Also, over a year ago Russia flew their 5th generation fighter, the PAC FA, which, again, your own intelligence experts predict will have an IOC date well before 2020. Thirdly, Mr. Secretary, a year ago in this very room, when DOD was in the process of notifying Congress of an F-35 Nunn-McCurdy breach, you had just fired the F-35 program manager, and I asked you if you were going to revisit the issue of additional F-22 production. You responded, and I quote, "No, sir, because the IOCs, based on information that I was given in preparation for this hearing, the IOCs for the Services, for the arrival of the training squadron at Eglin all remain pretty much on track."

Well, even though we do have a plane you say that's on schedule going to Eglin in May, and additional planes going in September, those are all test airplanes. And a few months after you made that statement, the IOC date for the Air Force version slipped from 2013 to 2016, the IOC date for the Navy version slipped from 2014 to 2016, and the Marine Corps version has gone from a projected IOC date of 2012, or next year, to being on a 1-year probation and not even having an IOC date. In light of all these developments, I hope you can understand why I am extremely concerned as we go into this budget about where we're headed, gentlemen. And in light of General Schwartz's stated military requirement I need to ask you one more time, Mr. Secretary, is the Department considering the purchase of any additional F-22s?

Secretary GATES. No, sir. We are not.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Well, DOD is spending billions of dollars to buy hundreds more 4th generation fighters, F-18s. And DOD has linked at least some of these additional F-18 purchases directly to delays in the F-35 program. And I can understand that. Can you explain why it makes sense to invest billions of taxpayer dollars in buying 4th generation F-18s, which are basically useless whenever there's contested airspace, rather than buying additional F-22s, which can fly anywhere, anytime, in any airspace?

Secretary GATES. Well, sir, first of all, let me say about the F-35 that the new program manager, Admiral Venlet, probably the best acquisition person we have in uniform, has completed a com-

prehensive tactical baseline review. I think we have, now, it, he took several months to do this. I think we have greater understanding and granularity in terms of progress on the F-35. The reality is, both the Navy and Air Force variants have made substantial progress over the last year. The Air Force version flew twice as many flight tests as had been originally planned. It is training aircraft that are going to Eglin. And, both for the Air Force and the Navy. We are investing money in upgrades to the F-22. There's, there are hundreds of millions of dollars in the fiscal year 12 budget to upgrade the F-22. Some of the lessons learned from the F-35 and the F-22 are being put into upgrades for our existing 4th generation aircraft that our people believe with those upgrades can take on the adversary's best aircraft. I finally would say that this is China's and Russian's first low observable aircraft. We've been at this 20 years. I think that they are likely to run into a number of the same challenges we did early in our stealth programs. And I think that our tactical air situation will be in good shape. In addition, the Air Force is going back to, they have realized that they can upgrade some of their 400 F-16s to give them additional capability and sustainment, as well as the early block F-16s, and they're upgrading the most recent blocks of F-16s. So, I think that combining all these different programs that we have in modernizing TACAIR, plus getting on with the F-35, now under new management and new leadership, I think that we're in reasonably good shape. And I would finally say, the last procurement that is, has been negotiated with Lockheed Martin, the LRIP 4, actually has resulted in a fairly substantial decrease in the price of the F-35 for that particular buy, and we hope that we can continue that trend.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Well, there's no question but that you're increasing the risk, Mr. Secretary, and I hope that we don't get down the road and realize that was too far a reach for us from a risk standpoint. I have a question that I'd like to ask Admiral Mullen for the record, and it's on a little bit different tack. Admiral Mullen, as you know, we're struggling with this issue of the deficit as well as debt reduction long-term. I have quoted you several times, as have a number of us, in saying that the number one national security interest of the United States is the long-term debt that we face. Would you mind just sending us a written statement amplifying on that record? Because your opinion, I can tell you, resonates around the world with respect to that issue. And I'm thankful that you stood forward and you made that comment. And I'd just like you to amplify it for the record.

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I've tried to stay out of trouble in doing that. But it really in its simplest form focuses on the, or, I, what would, I believe, be a shrinking national security budget. And we are now involved in, as we should be, looking at ways to save money and do it more efficiently and effectively. But at some point in time, it has, it will have a dramatic, it could have a dramatic effect literally on the size of our budget, and that's going to have a dramatic effect on the size of our, on our force structure. And that's the danger that's there, given the National security requirements, which seem to be growing, not reducing, not getting smaller.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Chambliss. And thank you, Senator Chambliss, for your work with Senator Warner on this very important challenge related to our annual deficits and our long-term debt. And I know there are many senators who are eager to work with you in this important mission. Thank you. Senator Blumenthal. You're recognized.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I join the Chairman and Ranking Member in thanking you and others on the committee for your extraordinary service, both Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates. And, in particular, for your continued commitment to the JSF and the single-engine, and the sub building program, which I know was reiterated as recently as yesterday in remarks in Florida. So, I assume that will continue. And I want to express my thanks. In particular, I'd like to focus on one area of your prepared testimony, Admiral Mullen, relating to the injuries on the part of many of these young men and women returning from these conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan—traumatic brain injuries that are new in their magnitude and number—and ask you perhaps to describe more specifically what is being done in terms of the treatment, both in-service and veterans, and perhaps what can be done to enlist the growing number of private efforts, for example, the Woodruff Foundation, which you may be familiar with, that could provide resources.

Admiral MULLEN. One of the areas we've struggled in throughout these wars is the stigma issue, you know, will I raise my hand and ask for help. On my most recent trip into Afghanistan, which was December, I was with the Command Sergeant Major there for the 101st, and he relayed to me an extraordinary statistic, which essentially had those that were in concussive events, essentially they were returning to duty at about 98 percent. We have put in place procedures, if you are in a concussive event, within 50 meters, et cetera, you get pulled out of the fight. One of the reasons that the return to duty rate is so high is because we're treating them well literally in the battlefield, as fast as possible. And they're ask, they're willing, because they're not going to get sent home, they're willing to raise their hand and say, I need some help. Now, we've got a long way to go on stigma, in post-traumatic stress, et cetera, in families with the same challenges. But we actually have made some progress there. We have, at the same time, I have been struck, in the traumatic brain injury, the difficult ones are the mild ones. The most serious are ones that become very obvious. But it is the mild ones oftentimes that your, you don't see your symptoms for months, or you don't admit you have them. And it is those who obviously are in the military, those who transfer then, who transfer out of the military back to communities throughout the country. And I've also been struck, I'm going to use a comparison, when you look at Walter Reed or Balboa, or the Intrepid Center for the amputees, and where we are, we're, I would argue, leading the world with respect to that. That's just not the case in traumatic brain injury because there's a lot of newness to this that surprised me. We know a lot about the brain, but we don't know a lot about how these injuries affect the brain. So, we've tried to reach out, not just, not to reach and understand it just inside the military, but reach

experts throughout the country who are contributing in ways—there's a Brain Center at UCLA, for instance, which has contributed significantly—and to get the best minds that we can across, throughout the country to help us work our way through this. But, I'm struck that we're in the nascent stages of this even at, you know, even in this year, in so many ways.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Is there a specific command or a structure within either the Pentagon or dealing through the VA that is coordinating this effort?

Admiral MULLEN. There is, there's not a single point of contact. There's, obviously, a significant effort inside the Pentagon. And we have taken steps to try to work with the VA, and then also understand the capabilities that are out in the country as we've engaged for those who've transferred back home. But there's an awful lot we still have to do to make those connections so we're all working it together, which is going, which I think would be the most effective. And we're just not there yet.

Senator CHAMBLISS. And, to take a related subject, I'm sure you are familiar with reports about the danger of a combination of different pharmaceutical drugs—

Admiral MULLEN. Yes.

Senator CHAMBLISS.—in treatment of post-traumatic stress and similar kinds of phenomenon. And I wonder if you or Secretary Gates could describe efforts being made to address those dangers.

Admiral MULLEN. Sometimes we're slow to need because we've gone through a time where we have, in too many cases, over-medicated, too many xcripts. Not just in the battlefield or back here when they get back, but also in the VA. What, in particular, the Army has done recently is put in place a much more aggressive multifaceted treatment regime which expands beyond drugs to yoga, to acupuncture, to other forms which have proven positive to support those who've been through the kind of combat that they've been through. So, I'm actually encouraged by that significant effort put forward now to try to back off of that over-medication. That's not in, that's going to take us awhile. But, certainly it's a concern we all have.

Secretary GATES. I'd say there are two additional problems here that we have to deal with. One is servicemembers stockpiling prescriptions. And the second is, the frequency with which service members will go outside the military healthcare system and get prescriptions. And we don't have any visibility into that in terms of just how much medication they're taking, or how those drugs all interact with one another. So, these are all areas that we're aware of and trying to work on. But we've still got a ways to go.

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

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here. The light's on. Can you hear? Is that better? All right. I won't touch it. I'm new here, you know. What do I know? I want to add my concern to those that have been expressed already about the Joint Strike Fighter and what is happening with that program. I appreciated your comments about the efforts to get the program back on

track, and I certainly hope that that is correct and the program will go forward and it will be effective with those efforts to readjust it. I also want to commend the Department on your decision to cancel the planned purchase and production of the Medium Extended Air Defense System program, MEADS. As I said, I'm new here, so I'm still getting the acronyms down. But, I think it's important, as the Department found, that we can't afford to purchase MEADS and make the critical investments that we need to make in the Patriot over the next two decades. And so, I certainly hope Congress will support your decision and press for the continued Patriot modernization. Admiral Mullen, during the House hearing yesterday you touched on something that you just referenced a little bit just now in your exchange with Senator Blumenthal, and that is about research into what the, we need to know about brain injuries. You talked about the importance of consistent and sustained support for research and development in our military budgets. Can you talk about whether you feel like the budget that's been submitted adequately addresses that to prepare us for the future? And what have been the most cost-effective efforts that the military's used to leverage R&D in the budget?

Admiral MULLEN. And I'll be very specific to focus on Secretary Gates because, and he spoke earlier, his frustration that if you're a leader of one of these bureaucracies, there are things that, if you really want to get it done you're going to have to focus on it personally. This is another area, probably 2 years ago, 3 years ago, that he made a priority to ensure that we actually were growing in S&T and R&D. And I said yesterday, true R&D. Because what's happened over the course of the last two decades is many of the programs we've talked about—I'll use JSF—has R&D money, but what it's really become, it's become program money, and it's not true R&D. So, I think for, particularly as budgets tighten and we look to capabilities in the future, we can't buy it all, we can't protect against everything. But having a robust S&T base, 6.1 through 6.5 and .6, is really important in terms of being ready for things in the future. So, even in these times where there's an extraordinary amount of pressure on the budget, and I think that will increase, I think we have to continue to get that right. You talk about most effective. I mean, I think the investment—and this is not an uncontroversial, sometimes an uncontroversial investment—but I've watched DARPA over the, you know, over many years work, and they really reach at some of the, to get at some of the most difficult problems. And I think we need to be mindful of sustaining that investment as well, for example. And one other comment is, the S&T or the R&D investment in the medical field to get at brain research, and that, as I understand this budget, that actually is in pretty good shape as well.

Secretary GATES. I would just amplify that by saying that in this budget there is \$1.1 billion for and TBI and PTS research.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. In New Hampshire we have a very significant defense industry that has been doing a lot of cutting edge research, and I know that DARPA's role has been very important in promoting that research. The National Guard and Reserves, as you all have said, has played a huge role in allowing us to be effective in Iraq and Afghanistan. And in New Hampshire, as

Senator Ayotte pointed out, we've seen the largest deployment of our Guard since World War II. And I appreciated everyone's expressed commitment, again, to the health and well-being of all the servicemen and women and their families. One of the things that we have done—and Admiral Mullen, again, I think you've been briefed personally on the Full Cycle Deployment program that we have in New Hampshire, that is a model to help families both as they're preparing for deployment and when they return, as well as the member who's being deployed. This program has been supported by Congressionally-directed spending—earmarks—which are not likely to continue. And so, are there, are you looking at models like this as you think about developing ways to be most effective in supporting Guard and Reserves who are deploying? And are there ways in which, as the Congressionally-directed spending ends, that we can continue to support these kinds of programs that have been so effective?

Admiral MULLEN. Senator, when you speak to this, and as you have spoken to the, and the way you've spoken to it, I'm immediately reminded of the need to be, build resilience in our people and families, literally from the first day they come into the Guard, Reserve, or on active duty in all services. We've come to understand that. We've actually made some significant progress there, but we still have a long way to go. We've built more of it in our members than we have in our families, and we need to build it in the families as well. The, I would need to get back to you with a more specific answer on, because I want to know more about the, where your program, where the New Hampshire program is. Because what we do try to do is canvas the field and look at the best programs that are out there, and then inspire others to grab those. And so, in particular, I'd be happy to do that and get back to you. As I speak, I really don't know where there resourcing side of it is with respect to that kind of, with respect to the program in New Hampshire.

Senator SHAHEEN. I withdrawal very much appreciate your getting back to me. Thank you. My time has expired.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator McCaskill is recognized.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, as always, for being here. And I want to say, Secretary Gates, that I know the President has an awful lot of hard decisions to make this year. I think one of the hardest decisions he has is how he's going to replace you. Let me start with a topic that is very difficult, I think, for you all to get your arms around, and that is the incredibly serious allegations that have been made about sexual assault within the military. I'm not assuming that the allegations that are contained in a lawsuit that was recently filed are true. But if we take them as factual, then we have a real serious problem, that a woman in our military was raped by more than one member of the military, and the video shared around the unit of this rape that had occurred. A woman raped and who goes to the chaplain, and the chaplain tells her that she needed to go to church more, if she would attend church more. The rape kits are only kept for a year. I can't think of a police de-

partment in the country that would only hold onto a rape kit for a year. I just think that we have got to look at this problem in a systemic way in terms of, do these women have a safe place they can go? Are we gathering the evidence quickly? Or, do we have experts available in terms of prosecuting these cases? But if someone rapes a woman and the evidence is there, and that person doesn't end up in prison, then we have failed. And I know that you all feel probably as strongly about this as I do. But I'd like you to address this and tell me what, who I should deal with within the military structure to follow up and make sure that we make some obviously very important changes that are needed.

Secretary GATES. Well, Senator, it is a problem. And it's a serious problem. I have zero tolerance for any kind of sexual assault, as do the leaders of all of the Services. And I've worked with Admiral Mullen and the Service chiefs and Service Secretaries to ensure that we're doing all we can to respond to sexual assaults. I've engaged, had a number of meetings myself with the senior leadership of the Department. I've focused on four areas—reducing the stigma associated with reporting, ensuring sufficient commander training, ensuring investigator training and resourcing, and ensuring trial counsel training and resourcing. We've made some progress. We've hired dozens more investigators, field instructors, and prosecutors, and lab examiners. We've spent almost \$2 million over the past 2 years training our prosecutors better. Generally, the defendants go to somebody who's specialized in this kind of allegation or crime, and our prosecutors tend to be generalists, and so we don't do very well in the court, and so we've spent this money to try and make our prosecutors effective. More victims are stepping forward. We have had improvement, or, an increase in the number of court-martials. We've gone from about 30 percent of alleged violators being court-martialed to about 52 percent now. So, at least it's headed in the right direction. We've expanded the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and Victim Advocate Program 10-fold, from about 300 to 3,000. We now have an advocate at every base and installation around the world, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. I heard some suggestions and comments yesterday in the House hearing that I take very seriously and would like to pursue. One of them is ensuring the confidentiality of the relationship between the victim advocate and a victim, ensuring, or, providing a military lawyer for victims. Commanders have the authority to move somebody out of a unit. I'm worried by the press accounts that that hasn't happened, and so they're considering over on the House side legislation that would create this as a right for somebody who's been a victim so they can get out of a unit where the person who attacked them is in the same unit, and so on. And so, I think there are some ideas that I heard in that hearing yesterday that I think are definitely worth pursuing. So, we do take it seriously. We, I've taken this seriously, frankly, because sexual assault is a problem on university campuses.

Senator MCCASKILL. Right.

Secretary GATES. And, you know, Texas A&M, just like every big public—

Senator MCCASKILL. Right.

Secretary GATES.—university in America has a problem with this. And one of the suggestions that I've made to our folks working on this is to get in touch with some of the universities that have the best prevention programs in the country, to see if we can learn something from these universities. So, I think we have a broad program to try and tackle this. But there is no question that there's more to do. And I just invite Admiral Mullen to comment.

Admiral MULLEN. I testified over here in 2004. I was a vice chief of the Navy on this subject. And there was a lot of work that needed to be done. It was very obvious in all the Services. I testified with my three vice Service chiefs. And so, I think what the Secretary, I mean, I agree with what the Secretary said in terms of, we've made progress. It's not enough. It's completely intolerable. And it has to be answered, I think, on the sort of the skill side, as well as the leadership side. And I just, I still hear too many anecdotal stories where it's ongoing, including in theater. We visit, with my wife, we visit VA hospitals, and females talk about trying, having come in the military, previously sexually assaulted before they came in, coming into the military, looking for a safe haven, and finding out that it isn't. It's almost, you know, it's an intensity that certainly is not expected. This is, as you know, Senator, a vastly under-reported offense. And so, we can see the statistics we have, but it's the ones that we don't have that we've got to get after as well. So—

Senator MCCASKILL. I guarantee that—

Admiral MULLEN.—while we've made a lot of progress, there's a lot left to do.

Senator MCCASKILL. And I guarantee that it's more under-reported in the military than it is even on a university campus or in the civilian population at large. I would just make one suggestion. Having spent many, many, many, many hours and days in courtrooms prosecuting sexual assault cases as a young prosecutor, I relied heavily on people who had specialized in prosecuting those crimes for my training. I relied heavily on the victim advocacy network that we had on, in terms of rape victims. In the civilian sector in any major city you're going to have a large group of people with great expertise. I know they would volunteer their time to help train and mentor people that you need to have this expertise, whether it's people at the emergency rooms that are gathering rape kits, having a victim advocate with the victim at the hospital when the rape kit, or the medical facility, where the rape kit is gathered, whether it's victim advocacy. I think you could find, and I've mentioned to General Quantock at Fort Leonard Wood that I would be happy to assist him getting in touch with this expertise that exists out there. And I think that these people that do this, they aren't rape prosecutors and sexual assault prosecutors because they're making big money. They're very much true believers and want to help in this regard. Same thing with the victim advocacy organizations. I think this is one where you might be able to get a lot of free training and get you guys up to the point where the civilian population has gotten over the last 20 or 30 years. And thank you for your interest in this. And I'll continue to follow up. I want to, I know I'm out of time. I just want to let you know, two questions that I want to do for the record. One, obviously, is continuing, the

problem we're having auditing the Pentagon. I cannot see how we can continue to give you what you ask for if we can't see the measurable progress in terms of auditing the Pentagon. And I will have a series of questions about the financial management system that's in place. And the last thing is pointing out for the record and questions for you for the record, that I know the GDP of Afghanistan is not large enough to pay for the military we're building. And I think it's time that we be very, very honest with the American people that we're building the military for the Afghan, for the Afghanistan nation, for the Nation. And it is, what, 12 billion a year? And their GDP isn't even that high. So, once we're gone, I think we're going to be on the hook to help pay for this military for a long time—cheaper than our folks being there. But I think we need to begin to talk about the responsibility for paying for this military down the line. Because clearly Afghanistan can't afford the army we're building. Thank you.

Secretary GATES. Senator, the contact person that you asked for is Dr. Cliff Stanley, who is—

Senator MCCASKILL. Okay.

Secretary GATES.—the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you very much, Secretary Gates. Thank you all for being here.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator McCaskill. Before Senator McCaskill leaves, I think we would both agree that Mr. Secretary, you could take one of those difficult decisions off the President's desk if you would reenlist—

Senator MCCASKILL. Yes.

Senator UDALL. —for a year or two more. But we'll leave that decision to you, as it properly should be. But I, too, want to thank both of you and Secretary Hale for your leadership, and for the courageous decisions that you continue to make, and for telling the Senate of the United States the truth as you see it. I did want to follow up on what Senator McCaskill also just mentioned about the GDP in Afghanistan. I think you both know that the fiscal year 11 National Defense Authorization Act required the President, through the offices of the Pentagon and the State Department, to provide an economic strategy for Afghanistan. Could you speak to where we are with that process, and how important you think such a strategy would be to the overall success? And then, specifically, we've got the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, and what further role would you see for that particular task force?

Secretary GATES. I'll take the second part of your question first. This task force is one of those things that creates incredible antibodies in the bureaucracy, because it doesn't fit anyplace, and, both in the Department of Defense and in the Department of State. And I think it's an honest answer to say that without in effect the protection of the Secretary of Defense, this operation would not, could not be sustained. My belief is that Paul Brinkley and his team have made a huge contribution, both in Iraq and in Afghanistan. It was Paul that took the team to Afghanistan, of private sector geoscientists and others, and were able to do the estimates of the extraordinary mineral wealth that exists in Afghanistan, if only there were the security to exploit it. And so, I think they've made

a real contribution, and I hope they will continue to do that. But, I think it's fair to say that they face a lot of bureaucratic resistance in doing that. In terms of the, I, you know, we talked earlier about the cost of the Afghan security forces. And that's why I believe—and we've talked about it before in this hearing—that we essentially need to look at the size of their force as a surge as well, and that once they have a political settlement inside Afghanistan, and the Taliban is degraded in terms of their capabilities, the need for the Afghans to have a smaller military than they have now. Because we can't sustain \$12.8 billion a year for very long. The economic strategy for Afghanistan is, and the task force, really go hand-in-hand. And I think there's a significant effort at the embassy in terms of trying to entice private sector individuals as well as foreign investors to invest in Afghanistan. But where they, I have to admit that where the economic strategy for the country stands, I'm just not certain. I'll have to get back to you.

Senator UDALL. Admiral Mullen, do you have any comments to add?

Admiral MULLEN. I would add only that, again, what Paul Brinkley and his team have done has truly been extraordinary—

Senator UDALL. Yes.

Admiral MULLEN.—in both countries. And under incredibly difficult circumstances in the countries. Although the circumstances back here may have been more difficult. So, how to sustain that is actually an open question. And I think we do need to do that.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

Admiral MULLEN. And that becomes the heart of, I think, sort of, the longer term investment there, not just nationally, but internationally.

Senator UDALL. Yes. I, too, would like to add my compliments to Mr. Brinkley. I've heard many stories about how effective he is, how dedicated—

Admiral MULLEN. Yes.

Senator UDALL. —he is. And so, I hope he understands that many of us here on the Hill, Mr. Secretary, know what accomplishments he's had.

Secretary GATES. Well, and to Admiral Mullen's point about the conditions in which they have worked, several members of Brinkley's team, including Brinkley, have been wounded in attacks. So, they've been really out there on the front lines trying to work these problems.

Senator UDALL. Could I move to a question about the popular uprisings in the Middle East we're seeing in Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, and elsewhere? The people coming out on the streets for a variety of reasons. Do you, how do you analyze those countries' leaders' ability to command their security services? Easy for me to ask of, a detailed answer, I'm sure.

Secretary GATES. Well, I think it varies from country to country. And with, we talked at the beginning of the hearing about the discipline and the professionalism of the Egyptian military, and there restraint that they exercised under some fairly difficult circumstances. In Tunisia, the military also stood aside and, basically, did not defend Ben Ali. And so, I think in each of these countries, though, the circumstances are going to be different. But the one

that these armies seem to have in common—certainly in Egypt and in Tunisia—is a sense that they are a national institution, and even though somebody may have been in power for a long time, they see themselves as having a special relationship with their people. I know in my conversations with Minister Tantawi, we talked often about the relationship that the Egyptian army had with the Egyptian people, and that it would protect its people because they were the people. And he delivered, I think, in an exemplary fashion. You know, the, just to defend our intelligence folks a little bit, I think that they'd done a pretty good job of describing the rising temperature in a number of these countries, and the economic and social pressures that were building in a number of these countries, particularly related to the youth bulge, the 15- to 29-year-olds who have educations and can't get a job, and the, it, and the petty corruption that makes it, and nepotism that makes life difficult for ordinary people. And, clearly, Ben Ali was quite surprised by what happened in Tunisia. He didn't expect to, in two weeks to be pushed out of power. And I think that President Mubarak was in the same situation. And I think that the U.S., you know, there's been a lot of to-ing and fro-ing about how we've handled this. But the truth is, I think the U.S. has pretty consistently, primarily privately but also publicly, encouraged these regimes for years to undertake political and economic reform because these pressures were building. And now they need to move on with it, and there is an urgency to this. And events move very quickly. We were talking at one point, if Mubarak had given his first speech when he declined to run for office again in September, when he changed the government, when he promised constitutional reform—if he had given that speech three weeks before, he'd probably still be the president of Egypt. So, being able to latch onto the speed with which these events are moving, and have people who have seen, relatively, perceive a static situation in their countries, to appreciate that it's not static, that these pressures are building and they do need to get out in front of it, is, I think, what we've been trying to do.

Senator UDALL. Yes. Our advice and encouragement may hold more weight in this region and other regions of the world, as those leaders and those countries look at the example of Egypt and Tunisia, perhaps others. I have to wonder, Admiral Mullen, Secretary Gates, Secretary Hale, what the British intelligence services were generating in 1776. I think there was, there are these tipping points that you talk about that can't be predicted. Thank you again for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. [presiding] Thank you very much, Senator Udall. And I just have one additional point and then we'll close it, because I know that you folks are running late on your schedule. And that has to do with the size of the Afghanistan army. I want to give you some statistics about comparing the Iraq army and the Afghanistan army. And I know the situations are different. But I still want to give you these statistics. Iraq has fewer people than Afghanistan. The Afghan population is about 30 million. Iraq about 27 million. But in Iraq you've got 665,000 Iraqi security forces. In Afghanistan you've got a goal, 378,000 would be the new target if it was accepted. So, it would still be about half the size of the Iraqi security force, with more people to secure. So, I would, first of all,

I think, probably based on that, but some other things, not agree that the increase, the proposal for the increase would be more than they would need, even if over time there would be a lesser need for security. Hopefully there will be a lesser need and, obviously, if there is you could reduce it. But I wouldn't necessarily plan on there being a need for less than 378,000. Second, when you describe a surge force, in your mind, Mr. Secretary, I would hope that the surge force that you believe it should be looked at, as, would be a, that the surge force would be the 378, and not the current level. So that it would be the additional 70 that would be viewed as the surge, and not the current level, which I believe you spoke at, as a surge force.

Secretary GATES. And I would tell you, Mr. Chairman, the budget that we have submitted would accommodate the additional growth.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Well, that's reassuring. Finally, I totally agree, both the need for an objective, an honest view about the cost. I think that is essential. That's what you pointed to, and rightly so. But I would just reiterate my hope that when you meet with your colleagues at a NATO ministerial that you really would drive home the fact that there's going to be an ongoing need, whether it's at 305,000 or whether or not it's at 378,000, that there really needs to be a sharing of that burden among our NATO allies. We cannot carry the 12 billion alone, I agree with you. But just they way they have not, it's been kind of spotty, frankly, in terms of NATO support, on the trainer side, not nearly still what we had hoped for. But, you're properly giving good grades to those who have come through. And a lot of our NATO allies really have. And some of them have taken greater losses proportionally than we have, and we should recognize that. But, I really would hope that you would reinforce that they are going to need a significant military and a security force, that that is the ticket to success, as well as to an exit. And, or, at least, a significantly reduced number of foreign troops which, in turn, is part of success. And that they should come through financially with some ongoing expected support for the Afghanistan security forces. That would be my summary. Admiral Mullen?

Admiral MULLEN. Sir, just one quick comment. I've been working NATO pretty hard since 2004. I've never seen them more together than they have become over the last couple of years in this mission. And your comment earlier about, out of area—or, maybe it was Senator Lieberman. But I really do think, you know, success here bodes well for the future of NATO, and not succeeding does the opposite. And then, second, we've talked a lot about NATO here. Well, there are 49 countries total that are providing forces right now. So, there are an awful lot of non-NATO contributing countries who've made a difference as well, and are very focused on sustaining that for a period of time. Some of them very small numbers. I understand that. But, they've really made a difference, and we appreciate their contributions as well.

Chairman LEVIN. Yes. I think, I made the mistake of saying NATO when I should have said NATO and other coalition forces. You're absolutely right. And a number of those non-NATO countries have made contributions also way out of proportion to their

population, way out of proportion to their financial ability. And I think we should recognize that. And their losses sometimes have been out of proportion as well. And we do appreciate that. We want to thank all of you for coming. Again, we're grateful for your service. We hope to see a lot more of you than you expect, Secretary Gates. And, Admiral Mullen, we always love to have you here, and know that you want have too many more visits. But again, we hope, know that all of them will be as helpful as this one was this morning. Secretary Hale, thank you. We'll stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:42 p.m., the committee adjourned.]