

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON U.S.
AFRICA COMMAND AND U.S. TRANSPORTATION
COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2014 AND THE FUTURE YEARS
DEFENSE PROGRAM**

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2013

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Reed, Manchin, Blumenthal, Donnelly, King, Inhofe, McCain, Ayotte, Fischer, Graham, and Blunt.

Committee staff members present: Peter K. Levine, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Creighton Greene, professional staff member; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; and Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: John A. Bonsell, minority staff director; Ambrose R. Hock, professional staff member; Anthony J. Lazarski, professional staff member; and Lucian L. Niemeyer, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Jennifer R. Knowles, Kathleen A. Kulenkampff, and Lauren M. Gillis.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Jeff Fatora, assistant to Senator Nelson; Mara Boggs, assistant to Senator Manchin; Marta McLellan Ross, assistant to Senator Donnelly; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Hirono; Karen Courington, assistant to Senator Kaine; Christian Brose, assistant to Senator McCain; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Todd Harmer, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Peter Schirtzinger, assistant to Senator Fischer; Craig Abele, assistant to Senator Graham; Joshua Hodges, assistant to Senator Vitter; and Charles Prosch, assistant to Senator Blunt.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. I want to welcome our witnesses, General William Fraser, Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, and General Carter Ham, Commander

of U.S. Africa Command, to testify this morning on the programs and the budget that's needed to meet the current and the future requirements within their respective commands. Please extend on behalf of our committee our gratitude to the men and women of your commands and their families for the many sacrifices that they've made on behalf of our Nation, and thanks to both of you for your long careers of leadership and service.

General Ham, this is likely to be your final posture hearing. So on behalf of the committee let me say that we've enjoyed working with you in various positions. We wish you and your family all the best as you embark upon another adventure in your life. Your job as Commander of AFRICOM has been truly challenging, coordinating and conducting a major multinational effort, and in building relationships throughout the continent of Africa. You and your staff at AFRICOM are to be commended for your performance in this effort. We thank you, sir.

The multitude of security and military-related challenges across your area of responsibility have been well known to the committee since the inception of the Africa Command. The issues associated with postwar Libya, ongoing conflict in Somalia, evolving threats in Northwest Africa, Sudan's support to Iran and its proxies, and enduring regional conflicts in Central Africa continue and in some cases have gained momentum since the command was stood up.

Given the Department of Defense's economy of force effort in the AFRICOM AOR, this committee has sought to provide AFRICOM greater flexibility and broader authorities to respond to the unique threats faced by your command, General Ham, and we look forward to learning more about the challenges that you face today and how we could enhance your command's ability to conduct operations.

There are three areas I want to call out for special attention. First, the attack in Benghazi last September was a poignant and powerful reminder of our need and the public's expectation for a capability to respond in real time to crises around the world. This committee recently heard from the Secretary of Defense and from General Dempsey on the Department's response to the Benghazi attack. It is clear that AFRICOM continues to struggle to secure basing rights and access which would allow for such a response or allowing us to conduct day to day certain military operations with partners in the region. Moreover, AFRICOM has received less in the way of resources and support than other geographic commands, and this problem indeed may grow in a resource-constrained environment.

So we look forward to learning of the action that the Department has taken to ensure AFRICOM is equipped in the future to respond to or, more importantly, to secure the intelligence to warn of such an impending attack.

Second, AFRICOM's efforts to combat the threat posed by al Qaeda, its associated forces, and other violent extremists have seen some success, but new challenges to sustaining progress seem to emerge daily. In Somalia, AFRICOM's investments are showing promise as the African Union forces continue to expand their territorial control and the nascent Somalia government is provided additional time and space to build its capacity and its capabilities. The committee looks forward to learning of Africa's plan to consider

building a more traditional military-to-military relationship with the Somali military.

The military operations led by General Ham which helped bring about the fall of the Qaddafi regime and the resulting outflow of small arms and other advanced munitions has drastically changed the security dynamics in North Africa. Over the past few months al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, has used its kidnapping ransoms to destabilize the Nation of Mali and to threaten nations across the region.

While successful French military action enabled by intelligence and aerial refueling support from AFRICOM has forced AQIM out of the population centers in northern Mali, the threat of terrorism emanating from Northwest Africa remains potent and the region is likely to be a source of instability for years to come. That instability is complicated further by key smuggling routes that move drugs, weapons, terrorists, and money which finance terrorist and other transnational criminal activity around the world. This committee looks forward to hearing your views, General Ham, on this dynamic situation as well.

Lastly, Operation Observant Compass, AFRICOM's named operation to assist the multinational military effort to remove Joseph Kony and his top lieutenants from the battlefield, remains of great interest to this committee. This committee—this is something where Senator Inhofe has been particularly involved and taken a leadership role. This committee has sought to ensure that this mission is adequately resourced, with additional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities as well as flexible logistics authorities to better support the nontraditional composure of this operation.

General Ham, we look forward again to your assessment of those operations and a report of hopefully any progress that's been made during the last year.

General Fraser, we know that things have been busy for you as well ever since you assumed your command at TRANSCOM. TRANSCOM has played a critical role in supporting our war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. TRANSCOM now faces the daunting task of returning thousands upon thousands of items of equipment and containers of material as we withdraw our forces from Afghanistan.

Less well known, but no less important, has been TRANSCOM's role in supporting various humanitarian and relief efforts around the world. We applaud those efforts as well.

TRANSCOM is also facing threats to its infrastructure on a day to day basis. At TRANSCOM you communicate over the unclassified Internet with many private sector entities that are central to the Department of Defense's ability to support deployment operations in the transportation and the shipping industries in particular. Much of the other critical communications and operations of the Defense Department can be conducted over the classified Department of Defense Internet service, which is not connected to the public Internet and therefore is much more protected against eavesdropping and disruption by computer network attacks.

You've been quoted, General, in the press as stating that TRANSCOM is the most attacked command in the Department of Defense, and we'd like to hear today about what those challenges

are and any progress that you've made in dealing with the problems.

TRANSCOM is facing many, many other challenges. The Ready Reserve Force, a group of cargo ships held in readiness by the Maritime Administration, is aging and will need to be modernized with newer ships over the next ten years. Sealift support is critical to our capabilities. We have relied on sealift to deliver more than 90 percent of the cargo to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Another challenging area is the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, or the CRAF program. I'm going to put my remarks about that program in the record.

Finally, this committee has sought to ensure that combatant commanders have what they need to succeed in their missions and we will continue to support the requirements of our warfighters in these conflicts. However, this year's posture hearings with our combatant commanders are being held under the specter of budget sequestration, which threatens to impose arbitrary cuts on our military forces unrelated to our National security requirements. As the committee heard last Tuesday, sequestration is already having an operational impact in the CENTCOM area, for instance.

So General Ham and General Fraser, please address the impacts and the risks associated with sequestration and the expiration of the continuing resolution, which is also looming, as it applies to your commands.

Senator INHOFE.

[The prepared statement of Senator Levin follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think your opening comments covered pretty much of it and I do agree with your concerns.

I know, General Ham, it's hard for me to believe that it's been two years now that you've been at that helm. We talked about some of the problems that were coming up when you came on the job and some of those problems are still there. We'll have a chance to talk about that and I appreciate it.

General Fraser, thank both of you for your service.

Back when we were talking about the sequestration—that would be about six weeks ago now—I made the comment that if it becomes inevitable, which we didn't think, I didn't think it would, and we had—several of us had legislation that would have changed that, including some at this table. However, I said, in the event that it becomes a reality, and we have to live with the top line that has been dictated. Wouldn't it be better if the decisions that were made to reach that were made by the Service Chiefs?

So I talked to all five Service Chiefs and they all agreed, number one, that that would be less devastating; and number two, that it would be—that it would be something that they would have time to do and put it together. I think that's happened. A lot has happened since then. We know that the House has got a program that's primarily the CR. It doesn't really address the sequestration quite as much.

But I will be wanting to get a response from you if you think that's a good idea. Hopefully that still might be a possibility, that

we can get the expertise of the Service Chiefs making these decisions as opposed to the President and his formula across the board.

The AFRICOM AOR is with 54 countries and 12 million square miles. I felt very good when we were able to establish AFRICOM as a separate command. However, I still believe it's underresourced, and I've talked to you about that in the past, as the squeeze takes place in the Middle East and we have the terrorism going down through Djibouti and the Horn of Africa. We know what's happening down there. It's not just in North Africa, but it's spreading.

I know when you talk about and the chairman talked about the Joseph Kony, I know that's a tough thing to deal with. But this isn't just one madman who's mutilating kids. This is a part of a terrorist organization and it has to be treated that way. It's been a tough, heavy lifting for you. So I know you've done a great job and I look forward to asking some of the specific questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.
General Ham.

**STATEMENT OF GEN CARTER F. HAM, USA, COMMANDER, U.S.
AFRICA COMMAND**

General HAM. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Inhofe, and members of the committee. Thank you especially for this opportunity to discuss the contributions of the women and men of U.S. Africa Command. I'm honored to be here today with my friend and colleague General Will Fraser, whose support has been so essential to our activities in Africa.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the formation of Africa Command. We've evolved considerably since 2008, driven in part by events on the ground and in part by our own rethinking about the mission. Our operational capabilities and capacities have markedly increased and our security cooperation engagements have matured both in focus and effectiveness.

Our approach seeks to address the near-term threats to our National security while simultaneously building partnerships and fostering regional cooperation which contribute to achieving longer term U.S. objectives in Africa.

This past year has seen significant positive developments in Africa as well as some sobering reminders of the threats inherent in the continent's security challenges. Mr. Chairman, as you mentioned, in East Africa Al-Shabab has been weakened by the sustained operations of African forces with the support and enabling assistance from the United States and others. Somalia still faces significant political, economic, and security challenges, but the Somali people now have something they haven't had for a very long time, hope for a better future. And I'm proud that we've played a role in that.

In Central Africa, African troops, advised and assisted by U.S. Special Forces, have achieved some significant tactical gains against the Lord's Resistance Army and its leader, Joseph Kony. Today we are seeing increased levels of LRA defections, fewer LRA attacks, and enhanced cooperation between the military forces in the region.

In the Gulf of Guinea, maritime forces of the many nations in the region are increasingly cooperating to counter piracy, oil bunkering, and illicit trafficking. Most notably, two of the African Union's regional economic communities, the Economic Communities of West African States and Central Africa, have for the very first time crafted rules and procedures that facilitate maritime security cooperation, and I'm very proud that AFRICOM has helped bring these nations and these regional organizations together.

I highlight these three, Somalia, counter-LRA, and Gulf of Guinea security, because they at least to me offer great examples of what can be achieved through an African-led endeavor to which we provide support and enabling capabilities. The next area where such an approach may be useful is Mali. We've supported France's request for assistance and are actively supporting African nations deploying to operate in Mali.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Inhofe, while the increasing willingness of many African partners to actively address shared threats is encouraging, other trends in the region are deeply concerning. Terrorist organizations in West and North Africa are increasing their connectivity. The loss of four Americans in Libya and three more in Algeria underscores the threat presented by this growing network. Although each terrorist organization individually poses a threat to regional stability, the increasing collaboration amongst these organizations increases the danger that they collectively present. I'm convinced that if left unchecked this network will develop into one that poses a greater and more imminent threat to U.S. interests.

Countering the spread of violent extremist organizations has been our top priority. At the same time, we're tasked to focus on prevention through a very active partnership strategy. It remains clear that Africans must solve Africa's problems.

The fiscal challenges that you mention now place Africa Command's strategy to strengthen the capabilities of our partners at increased risk. I'm concerned about the impacts resulting from the combined effects of sequestration and the continuing resolution. We've already had to make difficult decisions based on the availability of funds, such as reducing reconnaissance flights. The budget reductions we face will cut theater security cooperation engagements and will reduce important joint and combined exercises. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Dempsey, has made clear, we will in fact be doing less with less.

We at AFRICOM, with the engaged support of the Service Chiefs, though, are not idly sitting on our hands. We're looking for new and innovative ways to address the many challenges in Africa. The Army's regionally aligned force, Navy's Africa Partnership Station, and the Air Force counterpart, Africa Partnership Flight, are programs the services have purposely designed to help us achieve our objectives. We look forward to the capabilities of the Marine Corps' new Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, which will bring improvements in our crisis response capabilities.

Let me conclude by simply stating that it's been my great honor to serve with the dedicated soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, and colleagues from across the U.S. Government who serve so unselfishly every day to advance our Na-

tion's interests in Africa. I depart in about a month, knowing that AFRICOM is in the best of hands. General Dave Rodriguez is an exemplary leader and an old friend. It'll be my privilege to see him lead the women and men of U.S. Africa Command well into the future.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, Senator Inhofe, members, I thank this committee for its unfailing support of our troops, their families, and of U.S. Africa Command, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Ham follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General Ham.
General Fraser.

**STATEMENT OF GEN. WILLIAM M. FRASER III, USAF,
COMMANDER, U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND**

General FRASER. Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Inhofe and distinguished members of the committee: It's an honor and a privilege to be with you here today representing the men and women of U.S. Transportation Command. Our total force team of over 150,000 men and women, military and civilian, is dedicated to providing reliable and seamless logistical support to our warfighters and their families around the globe.

It's also an honor to be here today appearing before you with my good friend and colleague General Carter Ham. Over the past two years I've had the opportunity to work with General Ham as he and his team made significant progress on the African continent and continued to meet the challenges of that expansive, diverse area of responsibility.

Carter and I go way back. We go much further back than just the last couple years of his service in AFRICOM. I've always admired his commitment to his people, his dedication to solving the toughest problems, and his selfless service. Carter, on behalf of all the men and women of U.S. Transportation Command, we wish you and your family all the best in retirement. God bless.

Distinguished members of this committee: Our active duty members, National Guard, Reserve, civil servants, and merchant mariners, and commercial partners must meet the challenges of the future. They have met the challenges of the past while maintaining a high operations tempo of combat operations which they are supporting, sustainment efforts, humanitarian relief, and crisis action responses. These efforts, from support following Super Storm Sandy to developing innovative ways to maximize the throughput into and out of Afghanistan, meeting the directed 68,000 troop reduction level by September 30, 2012, were made possible by the U.S. TRANSCOM team of dedicated professionals committed to ensuring our joint force maintains global logistics superiority.

Our component and subordinate command team, comprised of Air Mobility Command led by General Paul Selva, Military Sealift Command led by Rear Admiral Mark Busby, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command led by Major General Tom Richardson, and the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command led by Rear Admiral Scott Stearney, and the Joint Transportation Reserve Unit led by Major General Dave Post continue their flawless execution of our command's mission.

I have had the opportunity to observe firsthand during my travels in Europe, Central Asia, the Pacific, and all around the globe the support these world-class professionals provide, and I can tell you they are doing the Nation's business magnificently, without fanfare and often in stressful conditions. I could not be prouder of this total force team.

As we continue to sustain our forces abroad, we're also working towards our goal of becoming the government's transportation and enabling capabilities provider of choice. To meet that goal, we embarked on a comprehensive and collaborative 5-year strategic plan which will tackle the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities for continuing to project national power and influence. This strategic plan positions us to respond effectively and efficiently to our rapidly changing operating environment while accounting for the dynamic fiscal landscape that we now face.

We continue to work with our customers and our lift providers to pursue smart transportation solutions to reduce the cost of operations. Strategic guidance requires a military that is smaller and leaner, while at the same time to be more agile, flexible, and ready. As the global distribution synchronizer and distribution process owner, U.S. TRANSCOM is committed to working with the military services, the other combatant commands, government agencies, our allies, and commercial partners to synchronize distribution planning and synergize our distribution initiatives. This collaborative effort will ensure that we deliver a scaleable and resilient global distribution network from point of origin to point of employment, meeting the needs of all operational and operating environments.

As we look towards the future, we're also assessing the mission impact of funding reductions for this year and potentially beyond. Since U.S. TRANSCOM requirements are driven by our customer workload and readiness needs, as their demand signals decline our workload will be reduced. While the impacts of these reductions will not occur immediately, the long-term results will likely affect the business base of our commercial partners and our ability to support other combatant commands in the same manner as we do today. In the coming months, we'll continue to work closely with the military services and our commercial partners to mitigate the second and third-order effects of these reductions on our airlift, sealift, and surface capabilities, and we'll keep you informed of our progress.

Preserving our readiness remains critical to maintaining our capability to project power and provide support to our joint forces around the world.

Chairman, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of this committee, I want to thank you for your continued support of U.S. TRANSCOM, of all of our men and women military and civilian. I am grateful for this opportunity to appear before you today. I ask that my written statement be submitted for the record and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Fraser follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Your statement, of course, will be made part of the record, and we thank you.

We'll start with an 8-minute first round.

General Ham, you made reference to a reduction in flight hours, I believe, that have already been—are the result of sequestration. Can you expand a bit on that?

General HAM. Mr. Chairman, most of our operations are funded by the services through the service components, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Special Operations, for Africa Command. In two of those components, Navy and Air Force, we have had to constrain our flight operations because of the service component's funding challenges. Two specific examples: I have asked my Air Force commander to maintain a heightened alert posture with transport aircraft to move crisis—to be postured to move crisis response forces more readily. That requires him to sustain flight crews on a short leash, if you will, heightened alert posture. That eats into their normal training and sustainment flights and that's where the Air Force component is having difficulty having sufficient money to do both of those requirements.

On the Navy side it's similar. I'd prefer, Mr. Chairman, to give you the operational details in a classified response. But suffice to say that I've had to curtail—I've had to decrease the frequency of some operational reconnaissance flights, again because of the inability to fund the normal flight operations.

Chairman LEVIN. That's already taken place?

General HAM. It has, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

General, there's been some adjustments to the AFRICOM Commander's In Extremis Force and other contingency response forces which hopefully will put you in a stronger position to respond to a contingency. Have those changes already been made and can you tell us what improvements might be the result?

General HAM. The most notable change, Mr. Chairman, was on the 1st of October a dedicated Commander's In Extremis Force, CIEF, was established for AFRICOM. This was long in the planning, supported by Admiral McRaven and those in Special Operations Command. The unit actually is based in Colorado as part of the Tenth Special Forces Group. They always have an element, the immediate response element, forward deployed in Europe and have since the 1st of October, where we have stationed that force in a number of different places in Europe.

There is still some work to be done. That force does not yet have all of its enablers in terms of intelligence, aviation support, and some other capabilities that we would like that force to have. But it is a significant improvement from where we were prior to the 1st of October, where the arrangement was that I shared the Commander's In Extremis Force with Admiral Stavridis and European Command.

The other services have made similar improvements. The Army's regionally aligned force, I have a capability to—should there be an operational requirement, I can go to the Secretary of Defense and ask to use that force operationally should that be necessary. And General Amos and the Marine Corps have proposed a new Marine Corps Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force specifically tailored for crisis response in Africa, not yet formally approved, but we think that that will be available in the relatively near future,

and I'm most appreciative to General Amos for making that force available.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Now, the forward element that've made reference to which is deployed in Europe, in your judgment is it able to get to Africa more quickly actually from where it's deployed in Europe than it would be if it were somehow deployed in Africa? I know it sounds a little bit counterintuitive, but is it actually not the case that you can actually get from, particularly if it's in Italy or Southern Europe, to Africa more quickly because of the capabilities and the infrastructure than would be the case if you could find a location in Africa?

General HAM. Mr. Chairman, what we're seeking to do is use the Commander's In Extremis Force along with two other forces to build a theater response capability, with one element based in Djibouti where we do have an enduring presence—that force is now stood up—one in Southern Europe that could respond across Northern Africa, and another in a site to be determined, but that would be principally focused on response in West Africa. I think that would give us a significantly improved posture from what we have today.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

On the cyber security issue, General Fraser, have you experienced cyber attacks to the degree that I indicated in my opening remarks? And if so, with what effect? And what are your plans to address this threat?

General FRASER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you've stated in your remarks, we are and as best as I can tell continue to be the most attacked command. In fact, as I testified last year, in '11 we had over 44, nearly 45,000. This last year in 2012 it actually had quadrupled. It is an area that we have significant concern, but we have taken a lot of action, and it is not in one area. We're taking a holistic approach as we work this specific issue.

If I might highlight just a couple of things.

Chairman LEVIN. Please.

General FRASER. First off is we had within the command a number of what I would call touch points, by which industry and others can come into the command and they could connect with us. Our objective was to develop a more what we term a secure enclave and collapsing that network so that there were fewer touch points in order to get into the command. This would enhance our abilities to have defensive posture there, so that if people were trying to get into our network that we would be able to see it, we could defend it. We have been successful in that as we have collapsed this to fewer touch points and have not had any significant intrusions into our network.

Another area that we're working on very closely is with our commercial partners. We have moved out in a very deliberate manner with commercial partners and have actually held three forums this last year where we brought in other agencies, to include law enforcement and others, with CEOs and CIOs who actually came to TRANSCOM, and we focused on this cyber threat that is there. They were very well attended, upwards of nearly 100 each time that we held one of these conferences.

We were able to brief them in, to give them some information that they did not have before, and allowed them to further go back and take a look at their networks and how they are working with us.

From that came an agreement, in working with our partners, that we began to write into our contracts the need for more cyber awareness, cyber security. So what we started doing then was last year in the spring time writing into our contracts the need for us to have an understanding of what their information assurance plan is. We were not directive in this, but we wanted to know, what are you doing to protect your network.

Also in that contract, we stated that we wanted to have an agreement as a part of a collaborative nature to know when their networks were—in which they had activity that got into their network, that they were either having data that was exfiltrated from their network or if they had someone in that was playing with their data. So we made sure that we had in the contracts that we would have this reporting that would come back to us.

When we get those types of reports, then we have a process and procedure by which we would ensure that law enforcement is advised, that we would offer any assistance that we have, and then we would stand up a team to determine what impact this might have had to our operations.

The other things that we have continued to do is to reach out to other agencies to ensure that we're not missing anything in the defense of our network. So it's a collaborative nature in working with all of our partners, collapsing the network to a secure enclave, and then writing it into our contracts to better understand what the threat may be.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General. If you could furnish to the committee some examples of that contract language, not necessarily with the names of the contractors, just the actual kind of language which you're incorporating relative to cyber attacks in your contracts, we would appreciate it if you would do that.

General FRASER. Yes, sir.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. And also, you are aware, I believe, that we included a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013—it was Section 941, which requires certain contractors to report to the Department about penetrations of covered networks and information systems. If you could, after using that or reviewing that language, if you would let us know if there's anything else that we need to do to be helpful to you in your efforts, please let us know.

General FRASER. Thank you, sir. We will, and we look forward to the Secretary's guidance in accordance with the language as written.

Chairman LEVIN. Very good. Thank you so much.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start off with something a little unpleasant, but it deserves to be brought up, I think, over and over again, even though

the media doesn't care about it, the whole Benghazi thing. It's incontrovertible right now that the second attack, the one on the annex, was one that was premeditated, it's one that was a terrorist-coordinated attack. And yet we knew that the day after. At the very latest it would have been on the 12th we knew that. Everybody knew that. They've testified even before this committee that they knew.

And yet this administration sent out Susan Rice to lie to the American people and say this is something that was a response to a video. Now, all that's behind us now. I think it's going to go down in history as one of the really great cover-ups. That's beyond us. And again, the press doesn't care. It's really disturbing to me.

But this thing just doesn't go away. Yesterday CBS came up with some documents and I'll read just two sentences out of this release: "The documents viewed by the Intelligence Committee members indicated numerous other changes were made to the talking points, including the removal of certain references on the attacks."

Now, what they're talking about here and why this is different, all this stuff happened before the attack, saying it was going to happen.

"The source who reviewed the documents also flagged several emails prior to Benghazi attacks from the officials in Libya to Washington that supposedly specifically warned of an imminent attack within days before this attack."

I only bring this up to just ask you the question—I don't believe them, but I do believe you, General Ham. I've gotten to know you very well. We've worked closer together probably than you have with any other member on your AFRICOM. Let's assume this is right. Did anyone tell you prior to this as the AFRICOM commander about this, that they were predicting this was going to happen?

General HAM. Senator Inhofe, I've looked at the intelligence over and over and, while clearly the situation in Benghazi was worrying, I do not find intelligence that—

Senator INHOFE. They didn't tell you—

General HAM. No, sir.

Senator INHOFE.—what I'm reading right now? They didn't tell you?

General HAM. No, sir.

Senator INHOFE. I believe you. I believe you.

All right. I'd like to ask both of you the question. In my opening statement I talked about sequestration, how critical this is because it's on the heels of an expanded budget that would take us down by \$487 billion and so we're all concerned about it. So six weeks ago I talked to the commands, all six of them, and asked them the question that in the event it becomes inevitable—and I didn't think it would; at that time we had in fact, Senator McCain and I and several other of the Senators here, said that we thought there was a way to do this where it could have been less and less of a threat.

But I said at that time, in the event we're wrong and that they end up having to do this, wouldn't it be better to take that same top line and work within that so that the commanders would be in a position to make those adjustments, as opposed to just a formula

that goes across, that cuts across. They all said yes, it would. Do you two agree with them?

General HAM. I do, Senator.

General FRASER. Yes, sir, I do.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you.

General Fraser, I don't quite understand how this works. There's not going to be time for you to explain it, but TRANSCOM and its components are paid for their services by their customers, the service components and other agencies. Are they finding themselves strapped to the point where you're not getting the adequate funding through this very unique mechanism that you would really need to do the job to your expectations?

General FRASER. Senator, as of right now they are paying us—we are a working capital fund, the Transportation Working Capital Fund.

Senator INHOFE. Yes, working capital fund.

General FRASER. We generate revenue. They have the resources and then we accomplish the mission that they task us to do. Then they pay for that service that is provided.

Senator INHOFE. Does that put you in a position where you're not really in the same strapped situation that many of the other services are?

General FRASER. Sir, I am in a strapped situation because over time the working capital fund has been drawn down. I am directed to have seven to ten days of working capital fund available to me in order to be able to respond in a timely manner and, having those resources with all the authorities and responsibilities that I do, I can execute operations and then I go back later and then I get paid for that. What has been happening, though, is, coupled with the closure of the Pakistan border and actually having to execute different routes that have been more expensive, those bills have been higher and we've been relying on the working capital fund as one example where that's been drawing down.

The services also have other problems in paying their service-level bills and things of that nature, therefore drawing down the working capital fund. So we are seeing some issues there.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you very much.

General Ham, you and I have talked about this before. We did something pretty smart on this committee way back on September 11 or shortly after that when we recognized, with the squeeze that's going on in the Middle East and a lot of the terrorist activity going down through Djibouti and the Horn of Africa, to assist the Africans, not to do something for them, but to assist them in building their African brigades, five African brigades.

It started off, as was anticipated—at least in my mind it was—and then it seems to have slowed down. I'd like to know—I know you have the same commitment to complete those standby brigades, but are you getting there as fast as we ought to get there?

General HAM. We are not, Senator. Each of the five regional economic communities of the African Union has a plan to establish a regional standby force. Those plans have not progressed in some cases in any material way, and today none of the five regions has in my military view the capability that they ought have to be able to respond in short order to regional crises.

Senator INHOFE. I think that's right. I know that ECOWAS was I guess among the first ones, and a lot of that was under the leadership of President John Kufuor. They were a little bit ahead. But it hasn't reach that, and I regret that you're going to be stepping down in April and will be replaced I guess by General Rodriguez, and we're going to be trying to give new attention to that.

The LRA, any update you'd like to give us on that? I'd like to mention—I think I did in my opening statement—that a lot of people think this is just one guy that's mutilating kids and that was true the first time that I saw the product of his labor, where they would cut the ears and the noses off these little kids and force them to kill their parents and all that. That has expanded into a major terrorist group. So I think it's one that has gotten little pockets of followers around now where it's not quite as one general unit.

Are you satisfied that we're doing what we should be doing? I think your answer is going to be yes because I know you're working very hard on it. Any comments on that?

General HAM. Senator, the work does continue. Again, as I mentioned in my opening comments, I think it is a pretty good model of a way in which we can provide, for lack of a better term, unique U.S. military capabilities to enable an African force. We do a lot of intelligence. We help them with funding for rotary and fixed wing aircraft, mobility, information-sharing, communications leaflets that have elicited numerous defections and the like.

Just in terms of money, sir, over the last year we've spent \$138 million on counter-LRA, expected to be about \$157 million this year. It's not an inexpensive proposition, but in terms of achieving the desired state of minimizing the effectiveness of the LRA, bringing Kony to justice, and simultaneously building capacity of the African forces, I think we're doing okay.

Senator INHOFE. I do, too. I think you're doing a great job there. And while you say it's not cheap, it is pretty cheap when you consider the other operations that are going on. You might occasionally have a helicopter or something like that, but it's primarily intelligence, communications, and coordination. And I think you're doing a great job.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Reed.

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

First let me thank and commend General Ham for his extraordinary service to the Nation and the Army. You've done a remarkable job, sir, and we thank you. I know foremost in your thoughts has always been the men and women you lead, and it's been evident in your contribution to the Nation. Thank you, sir.

Let me ask a question. First, with the collapse of the Qadafi regime in Libya and turmoil in the Maghreb there has been the fear that weapons, particularly MANPADs, are filtering through and proliferating. Can you give us a sense in open session of your take on that particular issue?

General HAM. I would, Senator. The details probably ought to be in a separate session, but it's very clear that in the collapse of the Qadafi regime weapons, man-portable air defense systems, crew-

served weapons, individual weapons, explosives, have gone really in two directions. We thought initially that most would transit into northern Mali and we certainly have seen significant evidence that that has been the case. Al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, other organizations, are significantly better armed now than they were before.

What we didn't see quite so quickly, but now believe certainly to be the case, is movement of weapons in the other direction, some of which we believe have ended up in Syria. General Mattis is more qualified to speak on that than I am, but certainly that proliferation of weapons I think poses a continuing destabilizing effect across the region.

Senator REED. You are, not just the United States, but NATO and all of our allies have a proactive program to interdict these systems and to, obviously, prevent their dispersal?

General HAM. Senator, there is a multifaceted approach for the U.S. Government, principally led by the State Department in terms of strengthening border security and helping the host nations deal with this. There's a small component that is a weapons buyback program. We have a small role along with others in the U.S. Government to facilitate that program. I would characterize it as having, frankly, modest success. Still many thousands particularly of the MANPADs that we believe existed in Libya prior to the revolution remain unaccounted for.

Senator REED. This leads to another issue, too, is that in your mission in Africa a great deal depends on local governance, policing borders, interdicting weapons. That role is a shared role, not only with you, with the Department of State, with NGOs in certain cases. We frequently talk about the impact of sequester and other budget restrictions on DOD operations. Are you seeing significant impacts on your State Department and those non-DOD assets that you depend upon?

General HAM. Not yet, Senator. We haven't seen it manifest itself. But clearly if sequester continues for the balance of this year I believe that there will be some very real consequences in what our brethren at State are able to deliver.

Senator REED. And that will have an impact on issues like we just talked about?

General HAM. Yes, sir, certainly.

Senator REED. Let me just another final question with respect to Mali. We engaged over the course of several years in trying to develop a professional military force in Mali. We did tactical training, we had Special Operations, Special Forces troops there, etcetera. Then there was a coup. We talked with General Rodriguez about this. As we go forward, we're going to have to continue to partner with indigenous forces, but we also have to emphasize the proper role of the military.

Can you comment upon that, since you observed some of the effects of our training and our lack of training when it came to the roles of government?

General HAM. Yes, sir, certainly. In Mali both good and bad, I suspect. The unit with which we were primarily engaged was not a unit that participated in the coup. It was the parachute regiment, which was actually repressed by those who did lead the coup. But

we did have interaction with others in the Malian Government, in the Malian military.

My greatest disappointment is the senior leaders in the former Malian military with whom we interacted, while they didn't support the military coup, they took no action to resist it. I think there are some lessons learned in that for us, that in our training, as you mentioned, Senator, we have to focus not only on technical and tactical training, but more on values and the professionalism that is required of a military in a democratic society. And we can improve and need to improve in our engagement in that area.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

General Fraser, Senator Levin and I were in Afghanistan and Pakistan about six weeks ago and I got the impression that the retrograde operations are picking up momentum significantly. The land-LOC, the GLOC, was opening up in Pakistan. Can you comment on sort of where we are in terms of that retrograde operation?

General FRASER. Yes, sir. Thank you very much. It is continuing to accelerate. We have multiple lanes that we're able to use out of Afghanistan now because of the agreements that have been struck with a number of different nations. The proofs of principle that we have executed are showing us that we have the right process, we've got the right procedures in place. Do we have the level of velocity that we want to have? Not yet. It will continue to improve as time goes on.

I was in Pakistan last month and had very good discussions with them. Shortly after that, all the agreements in place, all the processes for getting the right permits, it was not long after that, though, that we executed our first proof of principle of exporting items from Afghanistan. It was containers initially. The processes went very smoothly. The containers arrived down at Karachi. The next level that we're going to work is some wheeled armored vehicles.

So that is continuing to move in the right direction. I am encouraged by what I am seeing. Also encouraged by what's going in. As you know, when the border closed the Karachi port was full of over 7,000 pieces of equipment, containers, things of this nature. We are at less than 2,000 now. So we have been moving that into Afghanistan since last year. So that continues to get better.

The other one that we did was a new import process by which we moved some containers that were shipped in the local area into Karachi and has now moved in. This is going to open up the foreign military sales equipment that has been held in a couple of locations, and so just last week we sent a booking notice to our commercial partners that we're going to start booking more cargo for the foreign military sales equipment.

Additionally, in the agreement we agreed that we will not take a pause at the border crossings there; we'll continue to ramp up, and we've continued to increase the number of bookings that will come as far as export goes. So I'm encouraged by what I'm seeing, especially on this last visit out there, that the capacity is built. We need to now continue to accelerate the velocity.

Senator REED. Thank you much, sir, and thank you, General.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. I want to thank the witnesses. General Ham, I'd like to echo the views of my colleagues and the American people in thanking you for your outstanding service to the country, and I'm sure you feel some sense of relief from not having to appear before this committee again.

General Ham and General Fraser, very briefly, we talk about the sequestration effects on our ability and our readiness and our capabilities. What is the effect the you're seeing and foresee that we will see on the morale and eventually retention of the men and women who are serving today of this profound uncertainty that affects their lives?

General HAM. Senator, you captured exactly the right word. It is uncertainty in both the military ranks and in our civilian workforce. They're not sure what to expect of their government. The looming threat of furlough for our civilian employees; for our military members and for their families, the programs that this committee and this Congress have supported, will those be sustained?

I don't think we yet understand what effect this uncertainty may have in the recruiting and retention of our civilian workforce and perhaps even more importantly, on the recruiting and retention of what I think is the crown jewel in all of this and that's the sustainment of the incredibly talented all-volunteer force we have. I think there are a lot more unknowns right now, sir, than knowns.

Senator REED. But there could be some—all of that could be in some jeopardy?

General HAM. I believe it is, sir.

Senator REED. General Fraser?

General FRASER. I would agree with General Ham. We hear this from our workforce both on the military and the civilians. Most certainly I would highlight our civilian workforce and the significant concerns that they have at this time of a potential furlough.

The loss of potentially 20 percent of their income between April and the end of September is undue burden, undue stress upon them and their family members. It also goes into other areas about security from a perspective of their job. The reason I highlight this is because the workforce has begun talking to us that if they have issues with financial obligations and we understand the fact that they've got security clearances and financial responsibility is a piece of that. This could be an unintended consequence of that.

Now, there's ways to adjudicate that, but I think it shows this uncertainty, the concern, and the stress that's upon our family members and the other things that General Ham—

Senator MCCAIN. So over time both you and General Ham agree this could affect morale and retention and over time recruitment?

General FRASER. Yes, sir, I agree.

General HAM. I do, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. General Ham, prior to the attack in Libya were you aware of the multiple attacks against western interests in Benghazi, including the British ambassador, the Red Cross, the U.S. consulate, and the British pulled their mission out of Benghazi and the Red Cross suspended operations? Were you aware of all of that?

General HAM. Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. So what was your assessment of the threat?

General HAM. That the threat in Benghazi and more broadly—

Senator MCCAIN. In Benghazi?

General HAM.—in eastern Libya was growing, that there was a renewed presence of extremist organizations that posed a threat, not only to western interests, as exhibited by these attacks, but also to the fledgling Libyan Government.

General HAM. Did you recommend any changes in force posture or alert status based on this threat picture, particularly on the date of September 11th?

General HAM. Sir, as 11 September approached and there were the obvious concerns of the anniversary event, we did posture Marine forces afloat in West Africa, Fleet Antiterrorism Support Teams in Southern Europe, the personnel recovery team with aviation at Camp Lemoniere in Djibouti, and we ensured that we had access to the shared European Command-Africa Command Commander's In Extremis Force, which was at that point based in Europe.

Senator MCCAIN. But, General Ham, seven and a half hours went by and we were unable to get any forces there. As you are well aware, two of the Americans were killed in the last hour. That doesn't seem to me that you had forces there capable of responding. Certainly they didn't respond.

General HAM. Sir, they didn't. As I replayed the events of that evening over and over in my mind, when the first attack commenced and then essentially ended shortly, about an hour or so after it began, I didn't know at that point that there was going to be a second attack. If I could turn the clock back I'd do different.

Senator MCCAIN. I say with respect that if an attack had taken place, that already we didn't know the whereabouts of the Ambassador at that time, it seems to me that would bring some urgency to getting some forces there.

Did you discuss this with Secretary Panetta or General Dempsey or the President during these attacks?

General HAM. We did, sir. I happened to be in Washington that day and did meet personally with General Dempsey and with then-Secretary Panetta shortly after the first attack began.

Senator MCCAIN. Were any of your recommendations were you told not to execute?

General HAM. No, sir. I requested forces be placed on alert both overseas and in CONUS. The Chairman and the Secretary approved that.

Senator MCCAIN. Did you believe at the time that, given the nature of the weapons used in this attack, that it was a coordinated terrorist attack?

General HAM. In the first attack, I will admit during, as the events were unfolding, it was unclear to me. But it became clear within a matter of a few hours that this was a terrorist attack, at least in my opinion.

Senator MCCAIN. See, this is the conundrum we face here, is that you and General Dempsey and Secretary Panetta all testified that they knew right away that it was a terrorist attack. And yet the American people literally for weeks, at least 2 weeks, were told we don't know. And this disconnect between the assessment that you,

the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, then-Secretary of Defense all immediately concluded, as those of us who are not nearly as knowledgeable as you are, because we don't believe that people bring rocket-propelled grenades and mortars to spontaneous demonstrations—for 2 weeks in the height of a presidential campaign, the American people were told by the President of the United States, "We don't know."

Well, of course we did know. Of course we did know. And that's why some people are a little bit offended that some of us continue to pursue this issue. Four people died and four people's families deserve to know exactly what happened and what transpired. Particularly again two of those brave Americans died in the last hour of a seven and a half hour attack.

So it seems to me that, given September 11th, given the warnings, given the entire situation, why we were unable with all the forces—you just enumerated so many of them—why, with all the forces that we have in the region, we were unable to get forces there in order to save especially the last two individuals' lives, is something that I think the American people deserve to know.

And I thank you both.

My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Ham, would you want to respond to that? I'd be glad to hear that.

General HAM. Mr. Chairman, if it's okay.

Yes, sir. As I began to say, Senator McCain, that night stays with me, as I know it does with you and with others. As I said, we didn't know that there was going to be a second attack and we thought, frankly, that after what we felt was the culmination of the attack at the Special Mission Facility, that frankly the effort now shifted to recovery of Ambassador Stevens, who was then the lone unaccounted for American.

And again in the context of then, not now, with the dispatch of the small team from Tripoli to Benghazi, we thought assurances from the Libyans, which obviously proved to not be fulfilled, that that recovery mission was going to proceed in good order. It did not.

Sir, if I could, if I could turn the clock back I would make different decisions based on what I know now as opposed to what I knew then.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I thank you, General, for that very candid response. Again, I thank you for your service and we're very grateful for it.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator DONNELLY.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To General Ham and General Fraser, thank you for your service. General Ham, thank you so much for everything you've done for our country in your career.

General Ham, has the AFRICOM region become as central a center for terrorist activities as the CENTCOM region has been?

General HAM. Sir, I don't think it quite yet rises to that level, but it certainly is trending in that direction.

Senator DONNELLY. As you look at it, do you see it as an increasingly, as you said, increasingly growing area, that we may look at

this in a few years and see this as equal to or more even than the CENTCOM region at this time?

General HAM. It's hard to predict in the future, Senator. Remember that it is in the Central Command region that is the home of al Qaeda. I don't see any indication that al Qaeda main, if you will, or Al-Qaeda's senior leadership seeks to reposition to Africa. But certainly their are associates and affiliates and an increasing number of people who adopt that al Qaeda ideology are present in Africa.

Senator DONNELLY. Now, as we look at lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq, is our plan in AFRICOM—you talked about the five regional forces that are developing over there between the countries on the military side—is our plan to have them stand up and be the main force, with us guiding behind the scenes, in the AFRICOM region?

General HAM. Sir, countering the effects of these violent extremist organizations, terrorist organizations, has to be a very broad approach. There is a military component and that's what I am principally engaged with. But I recognize that the military component will not be decisive. There is a military component that has to contribute to security and stability, but it really is the U.S. Government's interaction with African nations and regional organizations to address the underlying causes. Good governance, economic development, health care, education, all of those programs I think will have a longer and more lasting effect. But the military component helps set the conditions under which those longer-term operations and activities can take place.

Senator DONNELLY. As we look at this, I know the French have a presence in Mali. Are we primarily on our own other than that, or are other nations in there with us?

General HAM. Senator, there are a number of nations, both African and from outside the region, who are contributing in meaningful ways to the operations in Mali. A number of European countries have pledged training through the European Union and also bilateral relationships. Many of them are already on the ground in Mali and in other West African countries.

I think in principle there is broad agreement that, while the initial reaction and activity operation by France was necessary, this must transition to an African-led activity as quickly as the conditions allow. I think that's the next transition point.

Senator DONNELLY. Are we the point of the spear in coordinating all the other nations on these efforts?

General HAM. No, sir, we're not. The Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, is the principal coordinating organization. We and many other nations are supporting ECOWAS in their efforts.

Senator DONNELLY. How do we increase as we look at this the chance for success of those regional armies? You had talked about they are not where we had hoped they would be and we look toward a path forward. How do they stand up quicker, better, more successfully?

General HAM. I think it requires a multi-pronged approach. Part of it is our bilateral efforts and the bilateral efforts of other contributing nations, many of which are in Europe, but increasingly Brazil

and India and others, to build the capabilities of individual African states. But there has to be in my view a more focused and coordinated effort from the African Union headquarters directing the regional economic communities and establishing standards and expectations for the regional standby forces. I think that principally is a diplomatic effort in engaging the African Union.

But I am encouraged because there is for the first time a memorandum of understanding between the African Union and the U.S. Government that kind of formalizes our relationship. So I'm hopeful that we can make some progress in the near term.

Senator DONNELLY. Do we have metrics as we look forward? There's no guarantee you can hit numbers or plans or whatever, but here's where we hope to be next year in Africa, here's where we hope to be the following year, here's where we hope this to have expanded in five years, so that we can start to turn the tide back on this.

General HAM. Sir, we at Africa Command have developed each year and refine each year, in concert with the U.S. ambassadors, what we call a country plan that does in fact establish specific programs with measurables, that says where do we want to go. We don't yet have that same kind of arrangement with the regional organizations and I think that's a next step for us.

Senator DONNELLY. General Fraser, you had talked about cyber security before in regards to TRANSCOM. Do you know the source of the cyber attacks that are taking place?

General FRASER. Sir, a number of them are scanning the network, they're just hackers trying to come in. So we see a myriad of attacks. There is also some advanced persistent attacks out there that we continue to defend against.

Senator DONNELLY. Are any of these of country of origin elsewhere that you know of?

General FRASER. Sir, we continue to do the analysis on the various threats that we have out there and some of these are passed over actually to another agency to actually delve deeper into that because of the sophistication that is used.

Senator DONNELLY. In working with our contractors and suppliers, is there or have you detected any effort that these cyber attacks using the contractors and suppliers to be a back door into your systems?

General FRASER. Sir, I've had one report where we are working with a company, but that was principally a download of data and activity that occurred on their network. It was not a back door attack into us.

Senator DONNELLY. General Ham, in regards to Benghazi, one of the great concerns of everyone, including you and everyone else, has been the time it took for response. So as we look forward, are there plans being made with State, with the consuls, with the embassies, to see how we can reduce that time level before you are there?

General HAM. Those discussions are under way, Senator, in a number of different ways. One is should there be an increased presence of Marine security guards at diplomatic facilities in Africa and other places around the globe. That discussion continues.

But I think the fundamental discussion that's occurring between Department of State and Department of Defense and in fact more broadly across the government is the fundamental nature of the Department of Defense's security role with regard to diplomatic presence. As you know, the primary responsibility has been with the host nation, and if we're going to alter that that has some consequences. If we're going to posture forces that can respond in crisis on very, very short time lines in a geographic area as large as Africa, then that also has some consequences.

We've taken some initial steps in that, as I outlined, in terms of having an East, West, and North response force. But even that, the distances involved and the times involved preclude response within an hour or so. This will take us I think some further study and some hard choices, some hard resourcing choices, about how quickly must DOD be postured to respond in response to a State requirement.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you both very much. General Ham, again thank you for all the years of service to our men and women.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Donnelly.

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for being here today.

General Ham, I'm concerned about the threats in Africa as we see them growing and they continue to grow. With the reductions in funding that have been talked about here previously, do you believe that we're going to have to start to rethink our strategy and maybe look for more direct involvement by the United States in that area?

General HAM. Senator, I think with sequestration I do believe we will have to revisit the Defense Strategic Guidance of January 2012. I don't know that that will necessarily shift us to a strategy that gives primacy to U.S. intervention as opposed to building partner capacity and reliance upon other nations. That'll be a difficult choice to make. It's perhaps faster for us to respond, but in the longer term I think that increases the demands on U.S. military forces, rather than what we seek to do through building partner capacity is eventually reduce the demand, the global demand for U.S. forces, by increasing the capabilities of others.

Senator FISCHER. What areas do you think that we need to start to focus on? If we are looking at cuts then, besides the partnerships, what areas? I believe that General Rodriguez testified before the committee that he felt we needed to see increases in surveillance, aircraft, satellite imagery. Do you agree with that assessment or where would you look to change the focus then?

General HAM. Senator, I would agree. The most significant shortfall I have at present and projected into the future is intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, the ability to see, know, and understand the operating environment. So I think that shortfall will continue to have the greatest impact on the command.

Senator FISCHER. Do you see other areas where we need to focus on as well?

General HAM. I think one of the programs I like a lot that this committee and the Congress have supported are the so-called dual

key authorities that Department of Defense and Department of State, that those two Secretaries can control together in an effort to help build partner capacity in nations. I think that's an area where we can probably operate more efficiently and with greater prioritization.

I think in general, Senator, that's what the budget constraints are going to cause us to do, is to take a much sharper prioritization to our military-to-military engagements in Africa. There are some exercises and other training opportunities that we have been doing in past years that, frankly, will probably fall by the wayside.

Second, I think it will drive us to increased multinational approach to building partner capacity, as opposed to our exclusively, almost exclusively, bilateral building partner capacity activities to date.

Senator FISCHER. Senator Inhofe and Senator Donnelly both alluded to this and you answered in response to their questions about your timing, being able to respond to crisis within your command. As we see the terrorist networks are overlapping across commands, how do you think the coordination works between the regional commands that we currently have today, and is that going to help us at all in responding quicker to crisis?

General HAM. We have some good examples recently in our collaboration with both Central Command and European Command. The Secretary of Defense has given us in Djibouti and Yemen some authorities to do very rapid sharing of forces between the two combatant commands, though the geographic boundary exists right there. That allows General Mattis and I to very, very quickly transition a capability, a military capability that was dedicated to me, to operate in support of him in Yemen or someplace else, or vice versa.

I think we will need more of that kind of flexibility because the threats that we face, of course, don't respect our boundaries. They work transnationally and regionally. We've got to be increasingly flexible in applying our authorities and our capabilities across those boundaries.

But I'm encouraged, Senator, by the direction in which we're moving.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, General.

General Fraser, thank you for coming to my office to visit with me, and I appreciated the information that you provided.

You said that the number of attacks has increased, I believe, fourfold, is that correct, in the last year?

General FRASER. Yes, ma'am, that's correct.

Senator FISCHER. And you talked about the collaborative nature that you have with regards to those cyber attacks with private sector partners, correct?

General FRASER. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. This interaction with your private sector partners, do you believe that's the most effective way to share information, and is it a good approach to take?

General FRASER. Ma'am, we are—that's not the only thing that we're doing. As I mentioned earlier, in coordination with the newly stood up cyber center that we have on our operations floor in what we call the fusion center, this neighborhood watch capability that

we have, where everyone is working together in a collaborative nature, is actually enhancing us all, from our commercial partners as well as us just in TRANSCOM, in our ability to maintain the connectivity that we need to accomplish our job.

So it's all of that working together that is making us as effective as we are. Why we're able to get together and work this in a collaborative nature is because everybody understands the importance of it. So I am encouraged by what we're doing. We continue to move forward in a partnership with them and sharing this information.

Senator FISCHER. Why are you such a prime target?

General FRASER. I believe it's because 90 percent of what we do is on the unclassified network. We do have a number of things that we can do from sensitive operations or movement of sensitive or classified cargo. We do that on the SIPRNET, on the High Side, and through other means. But because of how much business that we do with industry and with our commercial partners, that's done on the unclassified side. So therefore I also think that that's one reason.

Another reason is, too, because there's no other nation that can do what we do and do it the way we do it in order to deploy, sustain, and then redeploy our troops and respond in a timely manner for support of a humanitarian crisis to save lives, decrease human suffering, or respond to a crisis in another region where we've supported other COCOM's. So I believe there's a learning that others want to know.

As I visit other countries and I talk to them about it, they don't have a transportation command. They don't have the collaborative nature that we have here as we reach across and they're actually developing a global campaign plan for distribution which synchronizes across all the COCOM's, to be able to be agile, flexible, and responsive with our forces. So I think there's a learning that's also going on to get an understanding as well as they try to collect the data.

Senator FISCHER. Just briefly, without the investment of TRANSCOM are your private sector partners viable? And if not, what happens?

General FRASER. There's significant concern in the industry right now and we are working through both the land, air, and maritime executive working groups to understand what the future's going to look like. Because of the budget uncertainty that we have with a continuing resolution, we see that we are not doing the level of work that we had anticipated and programmed and forecast for the future. So when '13 was built, rates were built, they expected a certain amount of business, both organically and with respect to all the services, but they're under pressure, and so the inability to do things such as exercises that have been changed, revamped, and consolidated.

There's also a reduction further that's going to be taken with sequestration. So this lack of predictability, the lack of flexibility that's there, they are feeling the pinch. They have come to me and they've talked to me, which is why we're bringing this into the executive working groups to make sure that we're all on the same sheet of music and have the same understanding of what the business is going to look like for the future.

That lack of predictability and stability right now creates great uncertainty. We have already had, as a result of the change in operations in Iraq, all very positive, but because the capacity that had been built on the air side of the business, we have had several companies that have actually had to go into bankruptcy and into restructure. There is one that has had to shutter their doors. They are no longer in the business.

There is also concern in the maritime industry now as the amount of cargo that we're moving starts to come down. So they're looking to shift their business into different lanes and going into different areas.

The other impact as a second, third order effect is potentially, because of the high cost of crews, is there has been some discussion about reflagging some of the ships from U.S. flags, and this could result in a changeout of the crews as well. So there is concern across all the industries.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir, very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Thanks to Senator King for his courtesies.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. I want ought thank Senator King, too. We've got a markup in Judiciary about the SALT weapons ban, which is obviously an important topic to everyone in the country, and I'm going to try to get to that. But Senator King, thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to go out of order here.

General Ham, thank you for your service to our country. I want to get right into some questions I think are important, at least in my mind.

Do you know a Lieutenant Colonel Wood?

General HAM. Sir, I've met him briefly and yes, I do know who he is.

Senator GRAHAM. He was assigned to the site security team in Benghazi, Libya, General, is that correct?

General HAM. In Tripoli, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. In Tripoli, a 16-person team providing additional security to our Ambassador and our State Department officials in Libya; is that correct?

General HAM. Yes, sir, it is.

Senator GRAHAM. He says that he reported to you three times a week or someone in your command through VTC about the situation in Libya. Is that an accurate statement?

General HAM. Partially, sir. The special security team, a DOD entity, operated exclusively under what we call chief of mission authority, meaning they took all of their direction from the chief of mission.

Senator GRAHAM. Right, they were under their operational control. But he told you or your command what was going on in Libya; is that correct?

General HAM. Yes, sir. There was frequent communication.

Senator GRAHAM. As a matter of fact, I want to compliment your organization for informing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense. My point is that through Lieutenant Colonel Wood's interaction with your command he was able to know of the August 16th cable from Ambassador Stevens telling

the State Department: We cannot defend the consulate if attacked in a coordinated way. And Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey said that they knew of all the communications coming out of Libya to the State Department regarding the threat environment in Benghazi and Libya in general. I think that has a lot to do with your command and I want to compliment you on that.

Do you have any idea how the Secretary of Defense could have known of the reporting from the State Department about the threat condition in Benghazi and the Secretary of State be unaware?

General HAM. Sir, I don't have any insight into that.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Just for the record, Lieutenant Colonel Wood requested an extension to go past August of 2012 to help the Ambassador. The Ambassador wanted his team to stay there. Would you have approved that request if it had come before you?

General HAM. Sir, it would not have been mine to approve, but—

Senator GRAHAM. Would you have supported the request?

General HAM. I would and I did, and I explained that to Ambassador Stevens, that if there was such—if there were a request to extend the team, we at AFRICOM were prepared to do so.

Senator GRAHAM. And he was sent home in August at the same time these cables were coming from our Ambassador, we cannot defend the consulate from a coordinated attack.

Now let's get to the—and he said on 12 October for the Congress, Lieutenant Colonel Wood said, it was only a matter of time until we were attacked. We were the last flag flying. So hats off to Lieutenant Colonel Wood.

Do you know a Representative Jason Chaffetz?

General HAM. I do, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. He visited you on October the 5th at your headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. Do you recall that visit?

General HAM. I do, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. You went together on October 6th to Tripoli to visit the embassy country team. Do you recall that visit?

General HAM. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you recall him asking you what military assets you ordered deployed to Libya once you learned that the embassy's Special Mission Compound in Benghazi was under attack? According to Representative Chaffetz, you responded that you could have deployed assets; however, it was not requested. Do you recall saying that?

General HAM. Not in those specific terms, Senator. I recall having a discussion about the forces that were available, the forces I requested of Secretary of Defense be placed on heightened alert, in some cases—

Senator GRAHAM. Did you ever recommend to Secretary Panetta, General Dempsey, the President or anyone in authority to move assets into Libya?

General HAM. Yes, sir, and they approved that and the teams did move.

Senator GRAHAM. So what was the closest team?

General HAM. The team that was best postured to move was the Fleet Antiterrorism Support Team in Rota.

Senator GRAHAM. So when did they begin to move?

General HAM. I don't know—I don't know precisely when they began to move. They arrived in Tripoli about 24 hours after the attack.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I guess my point—were fighter aircraft available in Aviano that could have gotten into Libya within 24 hours?

General HAM. They could have been, sir. I did not so request—

Senator GRAHAM. Did you ever suggest that we deploy any military asset quicker than 24 hours?

General HAM. I did not. I considered, but did not request the deployment of fighter aircraft.

Senator GRAHAM. Did anybody ever ask you, General Ham, what do we have to get to the aid of these folks quickly? Did anyone ever suggest that we use an F-15 or F-16 to buzz the compound once the Ambassador was found missing?

General HAM. Not to my knowledge, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Were you ever told to stand down in any of your efforts to move people into Libya because we were concerned about violating Libyan air space?

General HAM. No, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Were you ever tapped on the shoulder by anyone and said, you're going ahead of yourself here? No one ever suggested to you to stop what you were doing?

General HAM. No, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. So how could it be that, given this threat string—and you didn't—did you know when the attack was going to be over when it started?

General HAM. Certainly not.

Senator GRAHAM. What kind of reaction was there in the system when the Ambassador was found missing?

General HAM. Shock, to be sure; and all-out effort to find him and hence the diversion of the unmanned system to get that overhead as quickly as possible.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, an all-out effort. Did we have air assets within two to three hours of Libya? Was there any 130s available to go in? Were there any AC-130 gunships?

General HAM. I know for a fact there were no AC-130s in the theater. I would have to check if there were any C-130s.

Senator GRAHAM. Could you do this. Could you give this committee in writing a detailed analysis of the military assets available that could have gotten into the Benghazi area within 12 hours?

General HAM. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. And please tell us what you recommended and who you recommended to what to do with those assets.

General HAM. I will, sir.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator GRAHAM. Did you ever talk to the President of the United States?

General HAM. Not on this matter, no, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. When the Secretary of Defense turned to you and said, there's really nothing we can do within 24 hours to help these people, what was his reaction?

General HAM. Sir, it wasn't—it wasn't that kind of a conversation. It was—the initial discussion was about the initial reports of an attack, trying to gather information, what's happening, what forces are available to respond. That's what precipitated the alert to the Fleet Antiterrorism Support Team, to the Commander's In Extremis Force.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, just finally, did it become apparent to everybody in the room there's nobody can get there within 24 hours?

General HAM. Pretty quickly. Not necessarily the 24 hours, because the Fleet Antiterrorism Support Team and the Commander's In Extremis Force could have arrived earlier. But then, again knowing what we knew then, different than what we know now, the attack culminated and seemed—

Senator GRAHAM. Did you stop their deployment?

General HAM. We did not. We timed the deployment then in concert with the embassy to say, when do you want this, when do you need this team to arrive.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. My time has run out.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator KING.

Senator KING. General Ham, just for the record, you used a term that gave me a start. You said "Al Qaeda main." Can we make it clear that there's no "e" on the word "Maine" in that phrase? [Laughter.]

General HAM. Certainly, Senator, yes. al Qaeda senior leaders.

Senator KING. I appreciate that.

The question's been asked and I think Senator Graham's questions were around this. I'm less interested in the details of what happened and more interested in what do we learn from it. I think the question's been asked several different ways. I don't want to prolong it, but it seems to me the strategic challenge—and it's fortuitous that you two fellows are here at the same time—is how do we increase response time while still maintaining a relatively small footprint? That's really, it seems to me, the ongoing strategic issue. I know you've talked about it. I don't expect a lengthy answer, but I think it has to do with transportation, because we don't want a big base in Africa, I don't think, but on the other hand, as we learned in Benghazi, we want to be able to get people—and not necessarily in the context—I mean, the Benghazi case was a State Department emergency. There may be other emergencies where American interests are threatened on a short-term basis.

I just suggest to you, I hope that's something that's in the planning and discussion stages, because I think that's the strategic challenge that we face. Do either one of you guys want to address that?

General HAM. I'll start, Senator, if that's okay. And I do agree with you. The challenge for us I think begins—first of all, we're much better at prevention than we are at response. Prevention is a lot cheaper, but that necessitates better understanding of the operating environment, and hence my concern for increased intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, so that we have that better understanding and we can perhaps, as we have done in some

places, a preventive deployment, if you will, a reinforcement to prevent an activity from occurring, rather than responding to crisis.

General FRASER. Sir, if I might add on TRANSCOM's part, one of the things that I find that is good about the command is the flexibility and the agility that we have, so that we have a rather robust intelligence shop. We maintain constant contact with all of our combatant commands, so that when there is an event, whether it's an attack, whether it is a natural disaster, an earthquake, a tsunami, whatever it may be, one of the things that we initially do and as part of our process is to start looking at what is in the system and what do I have available.

As soon as we know that, then we're able to take action and, dependent upon what it is that we may be responding to, we have authorities, for instance, to start putting aircraft on alert, to put crews into crew rest so that they'll be immediately able to respond. We have different levels of alert postures. Those are some of the things that we start doing right away.

Numerous times they're never called upon. But immediately within the system, the global nature of the mission and the fact that we're around the globe somewhere, we're able to put our hands on assets dependent upon what the combatant commander's needs. So there's a lot of flexibility and agility in the system.

If I might add, I do have a concern as we move to the future. Because of the cuts that are occurring, there's going to be an impact, I think, long-term second and third-order effects of this readiness and this posture level. So will we have that flexibility and agility in the system if the readiness levels begin to lower to lower levels, and what risk will that present to the system and the rapid response that is required in the future? So it is something we're going to have to keep an eye on. It's something that we'll make sure that we continue to work with our combatant commands and our commercial partners.

Senator KING. I appreciate it. I think to me the Benghazi situation gives us an opportunity to learn. One of my principles in a situation like this is after-action assessment and say, what could we have done differently. I'm sure you've done that. But to me the fundamental question is how do we get assets where they're needed in a fairly short time, whether it's 2 hours, 4 hours, 6 hours? It depends on the circumstances. But I'm sure you're working on that, your command is working on that.

General Ham, I certainly appreciate your service to the country and wish you the best of luck. I'll join Senator McCain. I'm sure that one thing you won't miss is appearing before this committee. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator King.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of our witnesses that are here today for their distinguished service, and I very much want to thank you, General Ham, with your impending retirement, for everything that you've done in AFRICOM.

I want to reiterate what you also heard from some of my colleagues. I was deeply impressed when General Dempsey testified

before the committee, certainly the level of briefings that you had provided up the chain of command with regard to the deteriorating security situation in eastern Libya. So I very much appreciate that.

I have a follow-up question to what Senator Graham was asking you about with regard to what happened in Benghazi. When General Dempsey testified before this committee along with Secretary Panetta, he said that essentially you had recommended the extension of the site security team in Libya, in other words the 16-person team that Senator Graham was asking you about, the security team that was present, that was not extended. It went there until August 5th.

When General Dempsey testified before this committee, he said that you personally had recommended the extension of the special security team, you were aware and briefed on the August cable that the Ambassador had indicated that the consulate could not withstand a coordinated attack. And according to General Dempsey's testimony, you were told, no, that there wouldn't be an extension.

So how did that come about? Who told you no? Who made the call that the site security team should not be extended?

General HAM. Senator, to the best of my knowledge there was no request from the Department of State to the Department of Defense to extend the team. That's how the process began, was a request from State to Defense for this augmentation, as you know, Senator, twice extended. But I'm unaware—I do not believe there was a request for a third extension.

My support for the extension was, first, we were postured to do so, that if State so requested we had the people ready to—some of them were those who were already deployed that would be extended. Some would be replacement persons. So we were ready to respond to an extension should one be directed.

But there was also, I will admit to a selfish motivation. Though the team operated exclusively under the Ambassador's authority, it was good for us to have military people in Libya who were establishing contacts, building rapport, building relationships, building their understanding of Libya, that we knew would pay off for us in establishing a military-to-military relationship with the Libyans. So I had a selfish motivation in the DOD presence.

Senator AYOTTE. So as General Dempsey told us, he said that you actually called the embassy to ask whether they wanted an extension of it. Do you recall doing that?

General HAM. I do, Senator. I had numerous conversations by phone or by secure video teleconference with Ambassador Cretz and with Ambassador Stevens, and Ambassador Stevens visited the AFRICOM headquarters on the 20th of August and we had face-to-face discussions then as well.

Senator AYOTTE. So when you had these conversations, what were you told in terms of why they were not asking to keep the security team there?

General HAM. I did not—I did not have that discussion with Ambassador Stevens. It was simply my point to him to say: You know, if State asks and the Secretary of Defense, obviously my boss, approved it, we were postured to support the team.

Senator AYOTTE. Did you think it was a good idea that the team remain longer?

General HAM. In my personal view, yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. And did you express that to the State Department?

General HAM. Only to Ambassador Stevens, and previously the Ambassador Cretz, and certainly to General Dempsey.

Senator AYOTTE. Just so we understand, this team actually when the British ambassador's convoy was attacked, actually helped recover and helped them when they were attacked, as I understand it. So it had provided substantial assistance when there had been other attacks in the area, particularly on our allies.

General HAM. Senator, some members of the team did occasionally travel into Benghazi at the request and direction of the Ambassador and, as you might expect from U.S. military personnel, if there is a mission to be accomplished they're going to find a way to try to do it.

Senator AYOTTE. Just trying to understand what occurred and also what lessons we can take from this. As I understand it, you have at the headquarters, AFRICOM headquarters, you have inter-agency representatives, where you have from nine different Federal agencies that meet together to talk about and coordinate AFRICOM's activities. Could you explain what that is and how does that working group work together, and thinking about it in light of a situation like this, where what we don't want is DOD thinking this is what we should be doing to protect the consulate and this is the best course of action, but Department of State not taking that information in.

Could you tell me, did that working group take up the security? Does it take up security issues? Did it in this instance?

General HAM. Senator, one of the directions given to U.S. Africa Command is a mission set very similar to other geographic combatant commands. But there's a special direction that says that in Africa we will give particular attention to a whole-of-government or interagency approach to achieving the United States' interests in Africa. That's resulted in a presence within the command, as you mentioned, for multiple different U.S. Government agencies. They don't sit as one body, but rather they are interspersed throughout the command.

What those non-DOD personnel bring to us for the most part is African expertise and experience and the particular experience and expertise of their home organizations, be it Homeland Security or Agriculture or Treasury, certainly State and the Foreign Service, U.S. AID, and many other organizations.

They're coordinated by a very senior Foreign Service officer who serves as my deputy commander for civil-military activities, a very senior Foreign Service officer, a three-time ambassador. He coordinates the interagency role in the government.

So what that says is that we have an opportunity because of the presence of those interagency personnel in the command to have a very strong connective relationship with the U.S. country teams, who are also multiagency, but also back to the agency headquarters in Washington. And that gives us some great benefits.

Senator AYOTTE. It sounds like a very good working group. In the context of what happened in Benghazi and thinking about the protection of the consulate, the prior course of attacks that of course you reported up the chain of command, was that ever discussed in that inter-agency working group in terms of the deteriorating security situation and what actions we should be taking to ensure protection of personnel and to deal with the situation there?

General HAM. Yes, ma'am. It was a serious point of discussion for a number of months—growing concern over the increasing presence of individual extremists, some of them with strong al Qaeda links, growing concern over an expanding network, particularly in eastern Libya, and this caused us to concentrate our intelligence collection efforts, which were few, frankly, but those that we did have, to coordinate our collection efforts in eastern Libya to better understand the emerging situation.

Senator AYOTTE. I know that my time is up. One of the things that I'm struggling with—I think about that group and I know that, as I understand it, your deputy in that group is a pretty senior ranking official in the State Department—why we wouldn't have thought about having the communication of extending the site security team, in light of all these discussions and the situation as it was unfolding in Benghazi. Was that just not an issue taken up by that group?

General HAM. Ma'am, we did have that discussion. As mentioned, Senator, we were prepared to extend the team. I do not know the decisionmaking process within State that led to an extension not being requested.

Senator AYOTTE. So this was discussed with this team. There was—as I understand it, Chris Dell is your deputy on that team, who is a pretty high-ranking official in the State Department. But when you had these discussions you don't know why they didn't go up and the decision in the State Department wasn't made to extend the team?

General HAM. I do not, Senator.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Now we have finished our first round. Is there anyone who wishes to ask any additional questions at this time? [No response.]

If not, we thank you both. A special thanks again to those who work with you, and a special good-luck to you, General Ham.

We'll stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:21 a.m., the committee adjourned.]