

Testimony

United States Senate Committee on Armed Services

By

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on

Emerging US Defense Challenges and Worldwide Threats

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Chairman McCain, ranking member Reed and distinguished members of the committee thank you for inviting me once again to provide testimony on our major defense issues and global security challenges.

Let me say, straight out, my congratulations to the committee and to your leadership, Senators McCain and Reed for your seminal achievement with the FY 17 NDAA. We have not had such a critical transformational piece of defense legislation in 30 years since the passage of Goldwater-Nichols in 1986. You have stopped the drawdown of our ground forces, particularly, the Army who has borne the brunt of 15 years of war, is still doing heavy lifting around the world, yet, it was the Army who was asked to reduce its force structure to pay for needs in the other departments. Makes no sense. I applaud your bold reforms on defense acquisition, military healthcare, security cooperation and the reduction of flag officer and SES billets. And, of course the much needed increase of funding to depleted readiness accounts.

DEFENSE CHALLENGES:

It will take the help of the new President and the new Congress to complete what you have begun because there are major capability gaps and serious funding issues remaining. The Budget Control Act (sequestration) must be ended. Frankly, it's not sufficient to be the best military in the world, or to spend more money on defense than the next five or so militaries combined, what is critical is that the US military is so superior in capability that our adversaries are unwilling to challenge us because we are such a credible deterrent. We achieved this during the Cold War and it was a factor in the Soviet Union collapse. Regrettably, this superiority is dangerously eroding. Over the course of the past 2 ½ decades since the end of the Cold War, the capacity of US armed forces has been continuously decremented and coupled with the rapid closing of the military superiority gap by potential adversaries, the US military is ill prepared to meet the many and various security challenges it faces around the world today and in the

future. Readiness is down across the board in all the services with pilot training, safety and aircraft maintenance reaching critical levels. The Army Chief of Staff, General Milley, known for straight-talk, in testimony before this committee told you that because only one third of his combat units were ready for combat, that the Army is at “high risk” for winning a conventional war. We have not had a service chief make a statement like that in 40 years. Other service chiefs could make similar statements. As you know, we have the smallest Air Force since 1947, and a 270 hull Navy, while moving to 308 ships, the Navy will be retiring ships faster than they can be replaced. In constant dollars we are spending about the same on defense as we did almost 3 decades ago. Alarming, for today’s defense budget we are fielding 35% fewer combat brigades, 53% fewer combat ships, 63% fewer combat aircraft squadrons along with a dramatic increase in overhead not directly related to war fighting combat power.

The technology advantages that were enjoyed from the end of the Cold War are closing rapidly and in many cases have closed: precision guided munitions, space-based technology, stealth, offensive and defensive missiles, long range rocket artillery and ground warfare. Our revisionist adversaries Russia, China and to a lesser degree North Korea and Iran are developing asymmetric capabilities to minimize the air and sea power technology advantage we have enjoyed for years by fielding significant long range anti-shiping and anti-aircraft missile capability. These forces are forward deployed in Eastern China challenging western Pacific access and Western Russia at Kaliningrad challenging Baltic Sea access. The Russians who are fielding a revolutionary tank, the T14, Armata, the first ever, no crew in the turret (they are in a protective capsule in the forward main body), has an improved gun system, and has their 2nd generation active protection system (APS). The Israelis launched an Armor brigade, their very best, to conduct an approach march from West to East Gaza, during the last conflict in 2014, with APS on each combat vehicle in order to destroy the rockets/missile infrastructure that they could not accomplish with air power. They rode

through a gauntlet of sophisticated, anti-tank systems and did not lose a single vehicle, due primarily to APS.

The US Army has not fielded a single combat vehicle with APS, (although with your mandate and funding they will begin soon) despite that the US defense industry has had this proven technology for over 10 years, which was a DARPA initiative. While funding is usually an issue with new technology this is not a funding issue nor is it the White House, the Congress, or OSD, this is the Army's acquisition system, their labs and tech base, who steadfastly pushed back on this technology preferring in-house design as part of a risk averse culture to new, outside technology. Thank you to this committee and the Congress at large in seeking acquisition and innovation reform which demands not only major organization and systemic changes but a fundamental cultural change in accepting risk and failure as part of the innovation process.

Given the challenges our adversaries are presenting and the decades of military decline in capability, we now must fix it, but we cannot rely on the much maligned acquisition system to get us there. This must be an urgent, high priority effort and your directed changes help: service chiefs back in the acquisition process to help drive it, separating out the research and development function at OSD (they are the future), rapid prototyping to dramatically accelerate production of what works, trial and error experimentation and accepting that failure is an answer and not a necessarily bad answer.

The service chiefs certainly know what future capability they desire but it's also appropriate for others to make observations that at times seem quite obvious. A few tidbits of my own:

- a. The joint force is how we fight and while our success is technology dependent equally important are adaptable, flexible JT force organizations that can react

to the unexpected and are grounded in up to date doctrine that truly advantages our technology.

- b. The ground force today is essentially organized and equipped as it was in the 1980s, yet considerably smaller (Army 200K less). Furthermore enabling forces like artillery, armored reconnaissance, engineers, air defense, theater support, etc. have been reduced to levels that compromise our ground force ability to field campaign quality forces. Our ground force is not in balance and they must rethink their organization, doctrine and put together a modernization program that moves away from the 1980 legacy systems and embrace advance technology that is available and push the R&D hard for new technology.

- c. The Navy battle formations are vulnerable to long range anti-shipping missiles which can be sent en masse, challenging the best of our air defenses. Doesn't it make sense to embrace the reality that the undersea affords our combat power significant protection and stealth and therefore charge our fleet design around the principle that whatever is on the surface as to capabilities that can be accomplished under the sea, we should get on with it, and therefore redesign our fleet? Don't we need to move from the large aircraft carrier to smaller platforms yet more of them to give us some redundancy and flexibility?

- d. The time is here to recognize that the future of air power is unmanned. It's not a technology issue, it's largely about culture. A pilot with a multi-functional team at a remote station is an enhanced air power capability.

Modernizing while supporting significant operational demands is not easy, but it has been done before. Leaders like General Marshall, Admiral King, General LeMay, Admiral Rickover and General Abrams transformed our land, sea and air forces before in periods of great challenge. Their efforts fielded trained, disciplined and modernized formations that won on battlefields from Normandy to the Philippines, from Kuwait to Iraq.

The Defense Department capability to fight is second to none, as the record speaks for itself, but its ability to manage effectively the business like functions of the DoD are, at best, third rate. In as much as DoD is not a business, it does have vast business-like functions that it must manage; real estate (housing, barracks, maintenance facilities, warehouses, training areas, ship yards, airfields), lodging (transient and guest quarters), utilities (power plants, electrical grids, water treatment facilities), new product development and production (research, development and acquisition) maintenance (from a pistol to an aircraft carrier) and the largest healthcare enterprise in the world. Much of these non-warfighting functions lend themselves to major reform as public-private partnerships (PPP) similar to the highly successful PPP, the Army residential initiative, or RCI, which led to the transformation of 88,000 Army units. Quality of life and family satisfaction rose exponentially while cost and maintenance were driven down.

The new Secretary of Defense should consider appointing as his deputy a successful Fortune 500 CEO who has executed a turnaround of a large business in the last 5 years. The comptroller should no longer be someone that simply has knowledge of the DoD federal budget and programming process but rather is a major corporate CFO, who should be the DoD CFO, therefore understands rigorous financial review, cost

basis analysis, auditing, internal reporting, cost controls and holding the organization accountable for financial efficiency as well as waste.

GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES:

Our new President and his national security team will be confronting global security challenges on a scale not seen since the rise of the Soviet Union to super-power status following WWII. Radical Islam is morphing into a global jihad; ISIS is the most successful terrorist organization in history despite losing major territory in Iraq, it has expanded into 35 countries and is motivating followers to kill their fellow citizens around the world; Al Qaeda is a thriving revitalized organization; the Taliban control more territory in Afghanistan than at any time since the successful invasion of 2001; revisionist powers Russia, China and Iran are seeking some form of regional domination; North Korea is a rogue nation with an unsteady leader who is building a nuclear and ballistic missile arsenal and threatening to use it; and advanced adversarial states are conducting cyber attacks and espionage activities at exploding levels in stealing intellectual property, technology and critical information.

What makes this such a dangerous situation is that unlike previous security challenges, the US today is failing miserably to adequately meet these threats, so much so that our adversaries are emboldened and our friends and allies no longer trust us.

WHAT CAN BE DONE:

1. American Leadership - Recognize that American leadership is crucial and indispensable to global stability and security which is so vital for a progressive and growing world economy. Without strong American leadership the world becomes a more dangerous place. As such, we should reassure our allies that the US will stand with them against regional aggression and help them organize to meet the challenges of radical Islam.

Also, it is critical that our allies are not simply relying on the US defense umbrella but are tangibly contributing to their own local and regional defense while investing their fair share.

2. Radical Islam - must not simply be named as a political and religious ideology fighting a war within a great religion, which does not mean that the US is at war with Islam, but radical Islam must also be defined and explained so that the American people can be informed and educated. As such they can better understand why this is the multi-generational security challenge of the 21st century and equally important for the American people, who are our eyes and ears, in how to recognize the dress, behavior and speech of a radicalized Islamist terrorist who is living among us. Similar to the communist ideological threat where the US helped craft a strategy and organize a regional political and military alliance, we must now form a global alliance and develop a comprehensive strategy to defeat the movement and its ideology.

3. ISIS: Iraq/Syria and the World Beyond -

- Overall— First and foremost the POTUS as CINC needs an assessment of the current situation, future plans and if the desired end state is less than satisfactory then what will be needed is a comprehensive campaign plan to defeat ISIS, not simply in Iraq and Syria but a strategy as well for the 35 countries where ISIS has expanded , particularly with its external terrorist network.
- Iraq— The military campaign led by Iraq and supported by the US will eventually succeed in retaking Mosul. How long it will take depends on ISIS desire to resist. They eventually

abandoned Fallujah and Ramadi after initially resisting. How Mosul ends is very important because if it winds up in sectarian strife and there is no unity in governance and security after, then it will contaminate any chance of political unity in Iraq, at large, which is as significant to success as the military campaign. US policy should be all-in on its focus for political unification in Iraq and diminishing Iranian influence which has grown exponentially at US expense since Iraq was abandoned politically in 2009 and militarily in 2011. Iraq is a country of consequence in the region with wealth, an educated class of people, and a huge potential for political and economic progress. US policy must counter the Iranian desire that Iraq remain a weak, but stable country, and allied with Iran as part of its strategic objective to dominate the Middle East region. Our diplomatic effort to date has been feeble with the Secretary of State rarely visiting the country and not surprising, as a result, a lack of focus in achieving our strategic political objectives. The new administration will face near term decisions of withdrawing or keeping U.S. forces in Iraq and, if so, how many will stay, how long and for what mission. Certainly if we have learned anything after the disastrous 2011 pull out, is that US forces are a stabilizing factor that not only impacts security but the vital issue of political growth and unity. Post WWII Europe and Japan, South Korea after the Korean War, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are vivid examples.

- Syria –There is no effective plan to defeat ISIS in Syria as there is not a capable ground force. The Syrian Arabs and Kurds assisted by US SOF is simply not sufficient. The CINC must be presented with alternative ground force options which includes neighboring countries, NATO and the US along with the associated risk.
- ISIS beyond Iraq and Syria –With ISIS in 35 countries as part of its external terrorist network, the US and our allies should assist these countries where needed with intelligence, training and technology.

4. Syrian Civil War- A frustrating calamity and a growing human catastrophe where so many opportunities to at least try to change the momentum against the Assad regime were squandered. No one has seriously proposed a military solution to the Syrian civil war, although a military victory in a civil war is not without its historical precedence. What was proposed by national security team key leaders and by analysts outside the administration were limited military options that could change the momentum against the regime and force a political solution. Clearly some of these options are not as viable now with the Russian incursion and increased Iranian assistance. However to continue to simply negotiate when all the opposition parties are not at the table and the Russians and Iranians or not serious, is futile. The U.S has no leverage in the negotiations, particularly, as Russian and Syrian air power focuses on destroying US backed and other moderate opposition forces. It was a major policy failure to permit Russian airpower to bomb the Syrian opposition forces the CIA was directly assisting. We warned the Russians not to bomb but they did it anyway.

They should have been told if they did bomb US backed Syrian forces, then the US would reply in kind and bomb the Russian backed Syrian forces, particularly their air power. I still believe that establishing safe zones inside Syria near the Turkish and Jordanian borders is a credible option. It would be a major morale boost for the Syrian opposition and enhance the role and support of the Syrian moderate opposition groups with other groups, to say nothing of the tens of thousands of Syrian civilians who will be protected.

5. Afghanistan – After 15 years the war is not winnable. The security situation is worsening and as such the government of Afghanistan is getting weaker. While there are many Afghan issues that contribute to the current situation, it is critical to understand how US policy contributed to the current outcome if we are to turn it around.

a. When the Bush administration decided to go to war in Iraq in December '01, after the successful invasion of Afghanistan in November, Afghanistan became an economy of force effort, with the minimum military resources applied. As such, the Afghan security forces were not developed fully, the Taliban re-emerged in 2004/2005 and no increase in force levels occurred until 2008 when President Bush was able to deploy additional forces that year because of the availability of forces due to the military success in Iraq.

b. In 2009, faced with a still worsening security situation, President Obama decided to employ a counter - insurgency strategy that was successful in Iraq and escalate the forces required. However, he did not provide the recommended forces that Generals

McChrystal and Petraeus requested as the minimum force to defeat the Taliban. The POTUS cut the force request by 25% and decided to withdraw the same forces in 15 months regardless of the situation on the ground. At this decision point, Afghanistan was doomed to a protracted war. All US combat forces were withdrawn eventually by 2015.

c. Two Taliban sanctuaries exist in Pakistan where the Pakistan military provides intelligence, training, and logistics assistance to enhance the Taliban operational performance while providing continuous safe haven. No insurgency has ever been defeated while it maintains sanctuary outside the conflict area.

We are in this current situation largely because the war in Iraq itself became protracted and much needed forces could not be applied to Afghanistan, US ground forces, particularly the Army is too small to fight two counter insurgencies simultaneously, and the Obama policy was not to win the war but to end US involvement. The new administration must call for a political and security assessment and face the harsh realities of possibly squandering 15 years of US combat in Afghanistan in a war not winnable. What's required is a new strategy with a commitment to force the elimination of sanctuaries in Pakistan and a commitment to provide to the ANSFs the enablers they need to turn the momentum: intelligence, attack helicopters, strike fighter support, medevac, anti-IED capabilities, much needed logistics and increased CT Special Operations Forces. Without an on-the-ground assessment, I honestly cannot tell you if that is sufficient, how many additional troops are required to support those functions and for how

long. I do know this, without the US and Afghan resolve to win, we never will.

6. Russia –The US once again faces the need to prepare for great power competition and confrontation. Russian aggression along the eastern and southern front of NATO presents military challenges to European security not seen in decades. Russia desires to be a global power operating with considerable influence on the world stage. As such Putin wants to be treated as an equal with the US. Our basic strategy in dealing with Russia should be through strength and resolve. Rebuilding the military, closing capability gaps, moving beyond a troop trip wire in Eastern Europe are major factors in a credible deterrence. Deterrence is not achievable simply with enhanced capabilities, your adversary must believe you intend to use it. Putin has known for several years now that the US is paralyzed by the fear of adverse consequences and therefore he is quite emboldened. That must change. Of course the US should continue to dialogue with Putin but US concessions should not be on the table as a condition for better relations as the Obama administration did with the “reset” strategy in giving up missile defense systems in Eastern Europe. The result, no reset, but increased Russian aggression in Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, Syria and provocations in the Baltics. For progress in US / Russia relations we can try to find common interests but Russia's aggressive behavior toward US allies must stop. That must be the US condition for an improved relationship.

7. Iran- The Islamic Republic of Iran is totally committed to their number one strategic objective: to dominate and control the Middle East by spreading the Islamic Revolution. They regard the US as their enemy and the major impediment to achieving this objective. US strategic

policy toward Iran should be to counter their number one goal in concert with our allies. They will continue to use proxy fighters and terrorists and provocations against US capabilities to humiliate the US in order to weaken the relationship between the US and our regional allies. We should counter these activities to strengthen not weaken our commitment to our allies. Adverse aggressive Iranian behavior that violates UN sanctions, the nuclear deal or the international order should not be tolerated. Action should be taken beginning with sanctions and escalating as needed. It is likely as the US and allies express a resolve and intent to thwart Iran's strategic goals that they may indeed terminate the nuclear deal. If they do not the US should not terminate until such time as they begin to cheat as we know they will if they are not already. Tough, demanding inspections and priority targeting by US and allied intelligence services is crucial to effective monitoring of the nuclear deal. It was Iranian informants who gave up the secret underground nuclear sites in Fordow. It's just a matter of time.

8. China- The most important bi-lateral relationship of the 21st century. Two economic giants who have global interests in the world economy, expanding trade, stimulating the economic growth of developing countries while insuring the global commons continues to be a major pathway for enhancing stability, security and economic well being. The Chinese have become hard-core capitalists and their outreach to every region of the world is staggering. Their global investment portfolio is beyond anything the world has seen.

All that said, what is clear is that China desires to dominate and influence the Pacific in a way that the U.S. has done for 70 years after WWII. The thought that China had only a defensive military strategy is

no longer the situation. China is projecting military power into the South China Sea by establishing forward military bases and capabilities as part of a strategy to enhance their influence over the countries in the region as well as the global commons. The US also has valid interests in the region as an ally to every Pacific nation. Our allies doubt our resolve given the US selective disengagement policy and it is critical for the new administration to be clear with China about US Pacific interests and that we will go and come as we please and that we intend to back our allies' self interest. Avoiding confrontation is desirable, certainly, but at times, may not be avoidable. We cannot let our desire to avoid confrontation lead us to a point of concession and weakness. The US has many shared economic and environmental interests that can be pursued in enhancing the Pacific Asia economy and quality of life but these interests should always be pursued from a position of strength and resolve.

In closing, the complexity of the global security challenges the US is facing cannot be over stated, they are diverse, formidable and dangerous. The FY 17 NDAA is attempting to begin to stop the precipitous multi-decade decline of the US military which drove by necessity the strategy change from the ability to wage two major regional conflicts to something far less. Sadly to demonstrate how far we have fallen, we could not fight two low tech ground insurgencies, void of air and naval power, in Iraq and Afghanistan simultaneously. We fought them sequentially, a reality from which we have not recovered.

President-elect Trump must return American leadership to meet these global challenges and do so in cooperation with our allies. His national security team as

priority one must develop a comprehensive national security strategy which is threat and national interest based. It should see the world as it truly is, based on honest, straight forward assessments. As such it should be the foundation for US foreign policy and US defense strategy. DoD defense strategy must drive force sizing and force capabilities. Not the budget or available funding. But DoD also must responsibly make tough choices on priorities because there never are unlimited resources. A strong military force is essential to maintaining the credibility of President-elect Trump's foreign policy. The existence of sufficient, capable and ready military forces combined with a credible intent to use them, when our national security interests are at stake, serves to prevent war and confrontation. Much must be done to rebuild the US armed forces and this committee as well as the House Armed Services is critical for success.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.