

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF VICE ADMIRAL FRANK
M. BRADLEY, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER,
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND; AND
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON, USAF, TO
BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA
COMMAND

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Washington, D.C.

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1 TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M.
2 BRADLEY, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES
3 SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND; AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN
4 R.M. ANDERSON, USAF, TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED
5 STATES AFRICA COMMAND
6

7 Tuesday, July 22, 2025
8

9 U.S. Senate

10 Committee on Armed Services

11 Washington, D.C.
12

13 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m.,
14 in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
15 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

16 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker, Fischer,
17 Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Scott, Tuberville, Budd,
18 Schmitt, Banks, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand,
19 Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Warren, Rosen, and Kelly.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Chairman Wicker: This hearing will come to order.
4 The Committee meets today to consider the nominations of
5 Vice Admiral Mitch Bradley to be Commander of the United
6 States Special Operations Command, and Lieutenant General
7 Dagvin Anderson to be Commander, United States Africa
8 Command. I welcome our witnesses and their families, and I
9 thank them for their continued willingness to serve our
10 nation.

11 If confirmed, Admiral Bradley will assume command at a
12 time when Special Operations Command, SOCOM, faces a
13 formidable challenge. SOCOM is being asked to build a
14 force capable of combatting the advanced militaries of
15 China and Russia while simultaneously remaining fully
16 engaged in the fight against violent Islamic terrorism. At
17 the same time, special operators must be ready to respond
18 at a moment's notice as our nation's premier crisis
19 response force.

20 It is clear to me that the role and importance of
21 SOCOM is greater today than at any time since its
22 establishment four decades ago. However, SOCOM's budget
23 does not reflect this reality. Its budget has remained
24 flat since 2019. Adjusted for inflation, that amounts to
25 roughly a 14 percent cut in purchasing power. To amplify

1 that point, SOCOM identifies \$757 million in unfunded
2 requirements for fiscal year 2026.

3 We want to ensure that SOCOM is fully resourced to
4 meet the demands placed on it. Admiral Bradley should tell
5 us how he plans to meet those demands and how we can help.

6 If confirmed, General Anderson will confront a growing
7 array of threats on the African continent. The Chinese
8 Communist Party views Africa as a critical link in Xi
9 Jinping's unprecedented global military expansion, and
10 continues to purchase new bases for the People's Liberation
11 Army.

12 Vladimir Putin remains fully engaged in his
13 destabilizing campaign to trade security assistance for
14 access to Africa's abundant natural resources. This is one
15 of Mr. Putin's ways to fund his malign activities around
16 the world. All the while, Islamic violent extremist groups
17 aligned with ISIS and Al Qaeda remain an enduring threat in
18 Africa.

19 Despite the growing complexity and scale of threats on
20 the continent, AFRICOM remains under-resourced in both
21 manpower and in critical capabilities like intelligence,
22 surveillance, and reconnaissance. I look forward to
23 General Anderson's assessment of Africa's importance to our
24 national security, as well as his description of what
25 AFRICOM's strategy should be to counter the growing threat

1 posed by China, Russia, and other adversaries across the
2 continent. I am particularly interested in how General
3 Anderson plans to use America's economic tools, including
4 the Office of Strategic Capital, to combat Chinese
5 influence.

6 If confirmed, our nominees will confront a global
7 security environment that is defined by emboldened,
8 aggressive dictators in Beijing, Moscow, Tehran, and
9 Pyongyang. They view this fight as a global fight,
10 unconstrained by geographic boundaries and the traditional
11 forms of warfare. This axis of aggressors blends
12 conventional military power with asymmetric tactics,
13 including economic warfare, disinformation, and the use of
14 proxy networks to undermine America's security interests.
15 The witnesses before us today will play a key role in the
16 Department of Defense's efforts to combat these challenges,
17 and I look forward to hearing them address these and many
18 other concerns during today's hearing.

19 With that I turn to my friend and colleague, Ranking
20 Member Reed.

1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 Admiral Bradley and General Anderson, welcome, and
5 congratulations on your nominations. I want to thank you
6 for stepping forward to continue your long careers of
7 service. I would also like to extend my appreciation to
8 your families who were with you every step of the way and
9 will continue to serve alongside you.

10 Admiral Bradley, you have been nominated to lead the
11 United States Special Operations Command, or SOCOM, at a
12 time of important transformation. Because of the efforts
13 and sacrifices of the Special Operations community over the
14 past two decades, the threat from ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other
15 violent extremist groups has been greatly diminished. Now
16 America's national security interests are challenged by the
17 aggressive and often coordinated ambitions of China,
18 Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

19 Our Special Operations Forces, or SOF, are not only
20 needed to maintain pressure on violent extremist groups
21 that threaten our homeland, they are also key to addressing
22 the challenges posed by these adversarial nations. As the
23 recently released SOF Operating Concept proposes, quote,
24 "Joint SOF capabilities will help deter conflict by
25 changing our competitors' political calculations, denying

1 achievement, or imposing costs that outweigh potential
2 benefits." This concept is ambitious and will require
3 close partnership with the military services and other
4 elements of the interagency, especially the intelligence
5 community, and with our network of allies and partners
6 around the world.

7 Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, I expect your
8 experience commanding Special Operators and SEALs around
9 the world will serve you extremely well. Today I would ask
10 that you share how you would plan to lead the Special
11 Operations community to adjust to the rapid pace of change
12 on the battlefield and how lessons learned from Ukraine,
13 Gaza, the Red Sea, Syria, and elsewhere can inform the
14 tactics and modernization efforts of SOCOM. Additionally,
15 I am interested in how you would leverage unmanned systems,
16 artificial intelligence, space, cyber information
17 operations, and other capabilities in SOCOM missions.

18 Finally, as a combatant command with service-like
19 responsibilities, SOCOM needs and deserves a senior
20 civilian to provide service secretary-like oversight and
21 advocacy for our Special Operations forces. Congress has
22 sought to empower the Assistant Secretary of Defense of
23 Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict to fulfill
24 that mandate. Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, I ask for
25 your support as the Department continues to work to fully

1 implement those reforms.

2 General Anderson, you have been nominated to lead U.S.
3 Africa Command, or AFRICOM. In Africa, our adversaries are
4 focused on building trade relationships while seizing
5 influence from us. China's military ambitions on the
6 continent are no secret, from their growing presence in
7 Djibouti to the more than 100 seaports that have been
8 constructed, financed, or operated by Chinese-owned
9 enterprises, and include service dual-use for future
10 military contingencies.

11 Russia has also expanded its military engagement in
12 Africa. It is investing heavily in disinformation
13 campaigns across the continent to spread anti-Western
14 movements, undermine democracy, and promote Russian-backed
15 authoritarian leaders, especially in West Africa.

16 General Anderson, given these challenges, AFRICOM must
17 continue to explore new methods to maintain U.S. security
18 interests in the region. Our forces continue to train and
19 advise partner militaries, but we are asked to do so with
20 fewer resources and troops going forward. I want to ask
21 you to share your views on the current security situation,
22 the best approach to establish and maintain close
23 partnerships with partner nations, and how we can seek to
24 engage a whole-of-government effort to address the
25 political and economic instability in Africa.

1 Indeed, stability is essential for any successful
2 nation. For decades, we have relied upon our State
3 Department diplomats and the U.S. Agency for International
4 Development, or USAID, to develop deep, lasting
5 relationships in Africa that can outlast China and Russia's
6 coercion. The outgoing AFRICOM Commander, General Langley,
7 described our competitive advantage against Russia as,
8 quote, "not just building military and security capacity.
9 The story needs to be told about the successes of USAID and
10 State Department, collectively, for all of our operations,
11 activities, and investments." I am deeply concerned that
12 our soft power leadership in Africa has been significantly
13 undermined over the past several months.

14 General Anderson, I would like to know your
15 perspective on the importance of diplomacy and development
16 tools to achieve our national security objectives in Africa
17 and how you would work to ensure our competitors do not
18 capitalize on the dismantling of USAID in the region.

19 Thank you both for your service and willingness to
20 lead and sharing your time. I look forward to your
21 testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Ranking Member
23 Reed. Now Admiral Bradley, you may make your opening
24 statement, and feel free to introduce any friends and
25 relatives you have with you, supporting you today.

1 STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M. BRADLEY, USN, TO
2 BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS
3 COMMAND

4 Admiral Bradley: Thank you, and good morning,
5 Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished
6 members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before
7 you today as the President's nominee to be the next
8 Commander of the United States Special Operations Command.
9 I am grateful to the President, to the Secretary of
10 Defense, and to Chairman Caine for their trust and
11 confidence in me for this important nomination.

12 I would like to recognize and thank the current SOCOM
13 command team first, General Bryan Fenton and CSM Shane
14 Shorter, and their families, for their leadership of the
15 SOCOM force and families these past 3 years.

16 I am privileged to be alongside my teammate Lieutenant
17 General Dag Anderson, a longtime friend and
18 Colleague, and if we are confirmed, I very much look
19 forward to teaming with him again in our new capacities.

20 I would like to recognize my family that are here with
21 me today. They have been critical to my service and to our
22 Nation and without whom I can't imagine being here today.

23 My best friend and wife of 34 years, Katie, is here
24 with me. The grounding rod and conscience of our family,
25 she has weathered the storms of this career, mentoring

1 young SOF families, rearing our four children, and keeping
2 me humble and centered. She grew up in an Army family,
3 daughter to an infantry officer who served in Vietnam
4 before joining me in the Navy, and has moved households 27
5 times in her life, a testament to resilience if there ever
6 was one.

7 Our children and their families are here with me as
8 well. Mary Katherine and husband Ralph, scientists and
9 parents to our first granddaughter, Rosemary Louise; our
10 oldest son, Henry, an FBI special agent, and his wife
11 Brianna, also an FBI employee -- we seem to be making
12 interagency cooperation a bit of family business here --
13 our son, Lieutenant Frank Bradley, a fellow SEAL, and his
14 wife Kiley, a public servant in Hawaii; and our youngest
15 son, James, a data scientist working in the national
16 industrial base on autonomous underwater systems.

17 I come from a small ranching community in southwest
18 Texas, where I learned the foundations of meritocracy at an
19 early age. I am the son of a World War II veteran, an Army
20 Air Corps Master Sergeant, who worked on P-38s from
21 Operation TORCH in North Africa to the final assault on
22 Berlin. After the war, my father ranched and served as the
23 Justice of the Peace, an elected judge, in our small Texas
24 community. I learned a deep appreciation for our democracy
25 and the judicial system watching him dispense judgement in

1 our community. His example of service and the allure of
2 adventure are what drew me to the United States Naval
3 Academy and the SEAL community, and I have had ample
4 opportunity for both in my 37 years since leaving Eldorado,
5 Texas.

6 My mother was the compassionate influence. As much of
7 a rancher as any man in our family, she and my grandmother
8 were the matriarchs who would weave discipline with love in
9 appropriate measure. Their influence looms large in
10 everything I do.

11 Finally, I must thank my siblings and the countless
12 coaches, professors, and pastors who have shaped me both on
13 and off the field. Special Operations is the ultimate team
14 sport, where to win is to live, and to lose often means
15 someone you care for does not. As such, I am grateful to
16 be a member of the most precise and lethal fighting force
17 the world has ever known.

18 On a strategic landscape where adversaries and
19 competitors challenge the rules-based international order,
20 your SOF provide the agility, precision, and nuance needed
21 to confront and disrupt these threats in competition. But
22 should the need arise, we are also ready to integrate into
23 the joint force to respond to crisis and engage in high-end
24 conflict, where the precise delivery of violence will be
25 critical to shaping success on the battlefield.

1 To this Committee and your predecessors I say thank
2 you. SOCOM's existence reflects the strong bipartisan
3 commitment in Congress to ensure the United States leads
4 the world in Special Operations, and that commitment has
5 paid off.

6 If confirmed, I will work closely with the ASD SO/LIC,
7 with my fellow combatant commanders, service leadership,
8 the Chairman, the Secretary of Defense, and this Committee
9 to sustain and strengthen the force, to man, train, equip,
10 and care for our SOF warriors and their families. I will
11 provide the Secretary of Defense and the President candid
12 and clear military advice, and I will remain fully
13 transparent with this Committee, ensuring that you have the
14 information necessary to continue your critical
15 constitutional oversight of our national defense.

16 I thank you for your service to our country. I look
17 forward to answering your questions and engaging with you
18 on the important work ahead.

19 [The prepared statement of Admiral Bradley follows:]
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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Admiral.

2 General Anderson, you are recognized.

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON,
2 USAF, TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA
3 COMMAND

4 General Anderson: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member
5 Reed, and distinguished Committee members, thank you for
6 the opportunity to appear before you this morning. It is
7 truly a humbling honor.

8 I am honored by the President's trust and confidence
9 in nominating me to serve as the Commander of U.S. Africa
10 Command, and I am grateful for the support of the Secretary
11 of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
12 I would also like to recognize General Langley's 40 years
13 of distinguished service and the strong leadership, and the
14 team that he and Sergeant Major Mike Woods forged.

15 I am joined today by my wife of 26 years, Liz, a
16 native of the great state of Maine. Her unwavering support
17 and sacrifice have been instrumental to my service and the
18 success of the mission. Liz is the heart of our family,
19 and despite nine schools in six states and three countries
20 she is the reason we have two strong and talented
21 daughters: Hala, who is watching from Paris today, and
22 Lilja, who is here with us.

23 My commitment to service is rooted in the values
24 instilled in me by my family. My grandmother, a nurse,
25 served her community well into her 80s. My grandfathers,

1 one a sailor in World War I and the other a Marine in World
2 War II, were ordinary people who answered the call during
3 extraordinary times.

4 My mother, Roberta, a special education teacher, and
5 my father, Charles, a police officer, modeled public
6 service, selflessness, and integrity. These values have
7 guided me through 33 years of military service. My parents
8 are watching from my hometown of Ypsilanti, Michigan, the
9 home of Rosie the Riveter and Willow Run, where, at the age
10 of 17, I learned to fly alongside these symbols of American
11 ingenuity and resilience.

12 It is an honor to sit beside Vice Admiral Mitch
13 Bradley, a Special Operations teammate and one of the
14 finest leaders and warfighters I have served with. If
15 confirmed, I concur with Admiral Bradley that it is truly a
16 team sport, and look forward to collaborating closely with
17 him, and all the combatant commanders, to confront the
18 complex emerging challenges of today.

19 My career has followed a non-traditional path, with
20 seven joint assignments across four commands, ranging from
21 conventional warfighting exercises in the Indo-Pacific, to
22 conducting special operations in the Middle East and
23 Africa, and from global mobility to stateside training.

24 My experiences abroad have shaped my career. I had
25 the privilege of studying in the Czech Republic, where I

1 witnessed an outpouring of support for America after 9/11.
2 Almost 23 years later, I had the honor to speak at the 80th
3 anniversary of the liberation of Plze. by Patton's Third
4 Army. Thousands gathered, waving Czech and American flags,
5 a powerful reminder of our shared values and enduring ties.

6 While I have flown several aircraft, the missions
7 flying the U-28, a modest single-engine prop, were among my
8 most rewarding. In under 2 years, a team of operators,
9 engineers, and acquisitions experts turned an urgent need
10 into a mission-ready, highly capable surveillance platform,
11 a testament to empowered innovation meeting battlefield
12 requirements.

13 As the Commander of Special Operations Command Africa,
14 I witnessed how Africa, strategically positioned between
15 the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific, is increasingly at the
16 convergence of great-power rivalry and terrorism. China is
17 expanding its approach from a focus on economic influence
18 to greater military and information operations. Russia's
19 actions are frequently destabilizing and run counter to
20 U.S. interests. Terrorist networks continue to exploit
21 ungoverned spaces, posing a direct threat to our safety and
22 security.

23 During my time at Special Operations Command Africa,
24 an American citizen was taken hostage in Niger. Within 96
25 hours, we located him, coordinated with multiple African

1 partners and European allies, and Joint Special Operations
2 Command executed the rescue. The speed and success of that
3 mission underscored the seamless integration of the joint
4 force and the importance of strong relationships. When we
5 called in the middle of the night, our partners answered.

6 If confirmed, I look forward to building on that
7 success and those relationships. I will keep this
8 Committee informed, I will be a responsible steward of
9 taxpayer dollars, and I will lead by example to advance
10 U.S. interests and counter adversary threats.

11 Thank you for your unwavering support of the men and
12 women of the U.S. military and thank you for this
13 opportunity. I look forward to your questions.

14 [The prepared statement of General Anderson follows:]
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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, General
2 Anderson, and thank you both for being with us. It is now
3 time for me to ask some standard questions that we ask of
4 all military nominees.

5 To exercise its legislative and oversight
6 responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and
7 other appropriate committees of the Congress be able to
8 receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of
9 information. So if you will just answer yes or no. You
10 can answer simultaneously. And we will be watching.

11 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations
12 governing conflicts of interest?

13 Admiral Bradley: Yes, Senator.

14 General Anderson: Yes.

15 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Just a yes or a no is fine.
16 Do you agree when asked to give your personal views even if
17 those views differ from the administration in power?

18 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

19 General Anderson: Yes.

20 Chairman Wicker: Have you assumed any duties or
21 undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the
22 outcome of the confirmation process?

23 Admiral Bradley: No.

24 General Anderson: No.

25 Chairman Wicker: Will you ensure your staff complies

1 with deadlines established for requests for communications,
2 including questions for the record in hearings?

3 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

4 General Anderson: Yes.

5 Chairman Wicker: Will you cooperate in providing
6 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional
7 requests?

8 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

9 General Anderson: Yes.

10 Chairman Wicker: Will those witnesses be protected
11 from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

12 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

13 General Anderson: Yes.

14 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree, if confirmed, to
15 appear and testify upon requests before this Committee?

16 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

17 General Anderson: Yes.

18 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree to provide documents,
19 including copies of electronic forms of communications, in
20 a timely manner, when requested by a duly constituted
21 committee, or to consult with that committee regarding the
22 basis for any good-faith delay or denial in providing such
23 documents?

24 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

25 General Anderson: Yes.

1 Chairman Wicker: And thus ends our standard
2 questions. Let me ask one that has become somewhat
3 standard, and we have gotten encouraging responses from all
4 of our witnesses.

5 Much of the funding in the defense reconciliation
6 bill, the Big Beautiful Bill, as the President calls it, is
7 unspecific and will technically be at the discretion of the
8 Department of Defense, though this Committee will write
9 recommendations for them. We do that because of the rules.

10 A quick yes-or-no answer from each of you. Do you
11 commit to follow the Congress' spending recommendations in
12 defense reconciliation, unequivocally? Admiral Bradley.

13 Admiral Bradley: Yes.

14 Chairman Wicker: General Anderson?

15 General Anderson: Yes.

16 Chairman Wicker: And Admiral Bradley, you, in
17 particular, will be receiving quite a sum of money for
18 SOCOM priorities, and we want to work together to make sure
19 it is used for the most pressing needs. So I thank you for
20 your answers there.

21 General Anderson, you talked about the activities of
22 China and Africa. You talked about the activities of
23 Russia under their dictator, Vladimir Putin. Why do they
24 do this? Are they helping Africa out of the goodness of
25 their hearts?

1 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate the concern.
2 I see that from my time at SOCAFRICA and my time on the
3 Joint Staff that there is growing activity from both China
4 and Russia on the continent. Both of those nations see
5 their futures running through the continent and as key to
6 their strategy.

7 I think we can look at several of the things that have
8 been done that have not necessarily been good for the
9 people of Africa. I think they are aware of that. I think
10 when we can highlight that it helps them understand the
11 risks of dealing with China and Russia, whether that be
12 debt diplomacy from China or the corrosive effects of the
13 Africa Corps, previously known as Wagner, in those
14 societies.

15 Chairman Wicker: Well, okay. And so when we have
16 programs such as PEPFAR or USAID, we would like to feel
17 that that really helps the people there. But we have a
18 strategic security purpose in doing that ourselves, do we
19 not?

20 General Anderson: Yes, Senator.

21 Chairman Wicker: Okay. And what is that?

22 General Anderson: Senator, these programs are
23 important as long as they provide for the security and
24 prosperity of our nation. And I think as we target those
25 in key areas they can help build stability in key regions.

1 Chairman Wicker: If we abandoned the playing field in
2 that regard, what would be the response in Moscow or
3 Beijing? I think they would be celebrating, would they
4 not?

5 General Anderson: Well, Senator, I know that if there
6 are opportunities, they will seize them.

7 Chairman Wicker: Yes. Now, on SOCOM, let me just
8 say, the SOCOM budget has been inadequate. There has been
9 a 35 percent increase in combatant command requests for
10 SOCOM support over the last 3 years. In the last decade,
11 there has been a 200 percent increase in crisis response
12 missions executed by SOCOM. Fourteen percent budget cut,
13 though, in SOCOM, as I pointed out in my opening statement,
14 since 2019, when adjusted for inflation, and in raw
15 numbers, 4,000 troops cut from SOCOM, and \$757 million in
16 unfunded requirements for fiscal year 2026.

17 Now Admiral, the reconciliation bill included \$1.64
18 billion to support SOCOM's readiness and modernization
19 priorities. Do you agree with me that SOCOM's budget is
20 inadequate to meet growing global demands?

21 Admiral Bradley: Senator, as you have described it, I
22 have heard General Fenton make a compelling case with the
23 same statistics and believe those to be true.

24 Chairman Wicker: And let me just point out to, and
25 make sure you agree. Reconciliation was always meant to be

1 additive to, not a replacement for the core budget, absent
2 real growth in SOCOM's future budget requests. Your
3 command will face significant resourcing challenges. Is
4 that correct?

5 Admiral Bradley: Senator, we will absolutely use the
6 resources that are provided to us, with ruthless
7 prioritization to go down through the tasks that are given
8 to us. Inevitably, though, with the current operations
9 commitment that exists, that will mean that we will have to
10 mortgage some of our modernization initiatives to be able
11 to pay for that readiness to sustain those current
12 operations.

13 Chairman Wicker: Well, listen. We will not be able
14 to be generous with either of you, but we do want to hear
15 what you really, really need. And we are going to be
16 depending on the two of you and your teams to let us know
17 that, because if something goes wrong and you did not have
18 the capacity to cover it, then they should not look to you
19 if this body has not provided you with the resources.

20 So thank you very much. Senator Reed, you are
21 recognized.

22 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
23 When General Fenton delivered the posture statement last
24 year he said, and I quote, "Our interagency efforts also
25 have included close cooperation with the Department of

1 State and U.S. Agency for International Development. With
2 the implementation of the Global Fragility Act in Coastal
3 West Africa fundamentally focused on preventing crises in
4 failed states before they can occur."

5 Similarly, AFRICOM Commander, General Langley,
6 testified, "U.S. investment focused on stabilization,
7 conflict prevention and peace-building, democracy,
8 governance, economic growth, and public health attack the
9 roots of terrorism and tyranny more than bullets and air
10 strikes ever will."

11 For both of you gentlemen, why are such efforts in our
12 vital national security interests and not just humanitarian
13 good deeds, and what do we risk by walking away from these
14 investments? Admiral Bradley?

15 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. In my 34 years
16 I have had the opportunity on many continents to work
17 closely with our humanitarian, our AID, our diplomats, and
18 I have seen the executors, even at the non-governmental
19 organization level, provide important capability for the
20 U.S. I also recognize, however, that there are many
21 priorities, as we just talked about, and the prioritization
22 of the budget across those is a difficult thing to balance
23 and to manage.

24 I pledge, and I believe, that throughout time we have
25 always worked as an integrated interagency to be able to

1 bring the multiple levers of influence and power that the
2 U.S. needs to achieve its policy objectives, and if
3 confirmed, I would pledge to continue that.

4 Senator Reed: General Anderson, and particularly in
5 Africa.

6 General Anderson: Yes, Senator. From my time at
7 SOCAFRICA, much like Admiral Bradley, I worked extensively
8 with State Department, USAID, and NGOs across the continent
9 to meet requirements. Africa is very much an economy of
10 force theater so we have to maximize the limited resources
11 we have. So going forward we will look at where we can
12 find those opportunities, whether it is with State
13 Department and the aid that they can provide, bringing and
14 working with the non-governmental organizations -- we have
15 worked closely with several in Africa -- also looking at
16 opportunities with the Office of Strategic Capital or
17 private equity as private firms may be able to invest and
18 help in some of these areas, as well.

19 And I think one of the things that AFRICOM is
20 positioned well to do is to convene people to have these
21 discussions, understanding we provide the military aspect
22 of it, we can provide a venue to bring folks together to
23 look at the security implications of these investments.

24 Senator Reed: And given the current situation, in
25 which the State Department is being hollowed out and that

1 USAID is being effectively abolished, have you lost a
2 valuable strategic tool?

3 General Anderson: Senator, I understand that is still
4 under review for the foreign assistance and that much of
5 that is being transferred to State, so if I am confirmed I
6 would have to assess what is available and how we can best
7 use that for our national interests.

8 Senator Reed: And Admiral Bradley, the same question.
9 Are you losing a very valuable tool?

10 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I am very confident that
11 however the distribution of those tasks and those efforts
12 are made, we will continue to work with them closely to
13 make sure we bring the best combination of those levers and
14 tools to bear.

15 Senator Reed: Admiral Bradley, what are your
16 modernization priorities for SOCOM?

17 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. As we look to
18 the future, the conflicts that SOCOM might be called to
19 participate in, I have had the opportunity this last 3
20 years to participate in General Fenton's leadership team as
21 a member of the Board of Directors. And we focused, as you
22 have seen and in his testimony, on how to penetrate and
23 power project in contested environments. We see that
24 through the lessons learned on the battlefields of Ukraine,
25 even into the Red Sea, and certainly as we contemplate what

1 a future fight against China might look like. So contested
2 environments and being able to arrive with the element of
3 surprise are a critical component.

4 A second priority, though, is also the ability to
5 operate within the ubiquitous technical surveillance
6 environment that is evolving around us today. It provides
7 certainly challenges to our ability to again arrive with
8 that element of surprise, but also opportunities. And
9 here, the partnership with CYBERCOM, with SPACECOM, and
10 with your Special Operators is particularly important. So
11 those strategic partnership and relationships and
12 modernization of that partnership I think is critical.

13 Senator Reed: Finally, General Anderson, if I may,
14 you have had valuable experience on the ground already as
15 commander of Special Operations in AFRICOM. With respect
16 to Somalia, do you think a continuous presence is
17 essential?

18 General Anderson: I am sorry, Senator. I missed --
19 where?

20 Senator Reed: In Somalia.

21 General Anderson: In Somalia. Senator, as you know,
22 we have had presence there for quite some time. We have
23 seen some limited success there in training their forces.
24 The Danab force is a capable counterterrorism force. I do
25 believe that that area is volatile. Al-Shabaab has shown

1 the desire and will to attack the United States and the
2 United States' interests. They are increasing cooperation
3 with the Houthis. So I think it is in our interests to
4 have some level of engagement in that region. Whether that
5 is with the Federal Government or the member states, I
6 think that is something I would have to assess, if
7 confirmed.

8 Senator Reed: Thank you.

9 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. Senator
10 Fischer.

11 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
12 you, gentlemen, to both of you and to both of your
13 families, as well, for your many years of service and
14 sacrifice.

15 Countering China has been, and will continue to be, an
16 important mission for both SOCOM and AFRICOM. The Indo-
17 Pacific region, one of the most strategically vital and
18 geographically expansive regions in the world, we have
19 SOCOM, and SOCOM must be able to rapidly engage where the
20 need is paramount over an immense expanse of land, sea, and
21 air space.

22 Admiral Bradley, as the United States military
23 prepares for a potential war with China, what do you
24 envision Special Operations Forces, what kind of role will
25 they be playing in the Indo-Pacific, and how will you be

1 able to balance that with other SOF responsibilities?

2 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. I believe that
3 the role that SOF has played over its history has been
4 founded on a critical value proposition that will be very
5 relevant, even more relevant against China, and that is our
6 ability to build strong relationships, to partner and to
7 build capacity, essentially to be a force multiplier across
8 a strong alliance, and to strengthen that alliance by doing
9 such.

10 In fact, the credibility we have generated over these
11 last two-plus decades in the counterterrorism fight give us
12 great ability to be able to help sustain and extrapolate
13 that credibility into the Indo-Pacific, where building
14 partnerships with our allies will be very critical. That
15 will allow us placement and access to then help develop
16 enhanced understanding of our adversaries' actions that
17 might be against us. And then if deterrence fails and we
18 cascade to crisis or conflict, it will give us the ability
19 to leverage that placement and access for the delivery of
20 irregular kinetic and non-kinetic effects.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Anderson, we
22 talked a little bit yesterday about the growing influence
23 of China on the continent, and talked about that influence
24 that they have and the threats that they are posing. What
25 do you think are the greatest areas of threats that you are

1 going to have to focus on if you are confirmed?

2 General Anderson: Yes, Senator, and I appreciate the
3 discussion that we had on this. I think China does pose a
4 significant threat to U.S. interests on the continent. We
5 have seen how they have used the Belt and Road Initiative
6 to be a primarily economic focus in the past. We are
7 seeing them expand into more information operations on the
8 continent, for providing the communist propaganda to the
9 continent. We are also seeing them engage in more
10 military-to-military engagements, which is concerning.

11 We are also looking at some of the infrastructure they
12 are looking to development, and ports that could become
13 dual use are of concern, especially if they have something
14 on the Atlantic. Atlantic base of sea-based Chinese ships
15 would greatly complicate our security picture writ large.

16 So working across Africa I think to identify where
17 China is not working in everyone's interests is important,
18 and I think also engaging in the information domain to
19 highlight some of these malign activities is important.

20 Senator Fischer: We also spoke a little bit about
21 losing some of our nation partners who have been a great
22 help to us on the continent. And we talked about looking
23 at National Guard and the partnerships that they have in
24 various countries, and not just in Africa but also around
25 the world.

1 Just briefly, could you kind of hit on the importance
2 of developing those or using those partnerships as tools to
3 help develop good relationships?

4 General Anderson: Absolutely, Senator. I think the
5 State Partnership Program is one of the best programs we
6 have within our Department. It establishes long-term
7 relationships, it allows engagement, and builds capability
8 and readiness for our forces as well as theirs.

9 I think what you brought up is an interesting point,
10 especially Nebraska, who has partners on the continent, but
11 also with the Czech Republic, as there are opportunities
12 that the State Partnership Program can bring these partners
13 together and help burden share some of the effort, so that
14 we can use the expertise -- the Czech's bring great
15 expertise and capabilities -- to help train our African
16 partners. And combined with the State Partnership Program,
17 I think there are some opportunities there, without a
18 doubt.

19 Senator Fischer: And Admiral Bradley, short question,
20 Mr. Chairman, please. What is your view on the importance
21 of the space domain with regards to Special Operations
22 Forces, and how would you leverage that new command? If
23 you would take that for a question for the record, the
24 Chairman is anxious to gavel me out.

25 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I will.

1 Senator Fischer: Thank you very much.

2 Chairman Wicker: Very, very fine question, Senator
3 Fischer, which is going to require a lengthy response on
4 the record. Senator Kaine.

5 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
6 congratulations to both of you for your nominations. I
7 just noticed, in looking at your bios, you both have had,
8 in your professional careers, some significant experience
9 in programs kind of with international partners. So
10 Admiral Bradley, your posting to the Italian equivalent of
11 their sort of SEALs, the Incursori, and General Anderson,
12 your reception of the Olmsted scholarship. Talk about how
13 in each instance this was important to your professional
14 development.

15 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. I think I was
16 most surprised and rewarded with being able to see the
17 world through the eyes of a different culture, and as close
18 even as the Italian culture is to America, in fact, many
19 immigrants, a large portion of the country here. But they
20 could still see the same event in a decidedly different
21 way.

22 I believe that experience both deepened my family's
23 closeness and appreciation for the rest of the world but
24 also helped to deepen my own empathy, to be able to
25 understand the way other people might see things.

1 Senator Kaine: So you clearly conveyed a benefit to
2 these Italian allies by being posted there, but also
3 received a benefit in return that has helped you in the
4 leader you are today.

5 General Anderson, tell us about the Olmsted program.

6 General Anderson: Yes, Senator, it was, in hindsight,
7 a transformative program to be able to study abroad and to
8 be immersed in the culture. Like I said in the opening
9 statement, when I was there after 9/11 you could not walk
10 through any town square without seeing a memorial to the
11 United States and to the Americans that were lost.

12 As a matter of fact, when I walked to school that
13 morning, on September 12th, there was a statue of Tomas
14 Garrigue Masaryk, the first President of the Czech
15 Republic. On that square you could not walk through it
16 because it was covered with flowers and candles, and across
17 the chest of the statue was, in Czech, a banner that said,
18 "We stand with you for democracy." It was a pretty
19 powerful reminder of what those relations mean and what the
20 American way of life and our values stand for to many
21 people.

22 Senator Kaine: And this was a number of years ago, at
23 a time when it probably would have been hard to imagine a
24 land war in Europe. But the relationship the United States
25 has had with the Czech Republic, including in the current

1 conflict in Ukraine, has been a very important one.

2 We also have a lot of programs where we bring military
3 leaders from other nations to the United States to
4 participate in programs at the Naval War College and the
5 Army War College and others. If you benefitted from the
6 experiences in the Czech Republic and in Italy, I believe,
7 from my own observation, these programs are also pretty
8 important to building relationships with foreign military
9 leaders who come to the United States. Do you share that
10 view?

11 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do.

12 Senator Kaine: The reason I ask the question -- I was
13 interested in the commonality in your resumes in this way -
14 - is I am very, very worried about the budget that the
15 Administration has submitted, and the recissions package we
16 voted on is dramatically undercutting these exchange
17 programs. I have not yet seen the effect in the DoD, but
18 in the recission package that we passed last week, it was
19 very nonspecific about details. But you can tell a little
20 bit from how these recissions will be used from looking at
21 the Administration's submitted budget.

22 The Administration's submitted budget for 2026
23 basically eliminates a lot of funding that goes into this.
24 The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs in the State
25 Department, which handles these programs for diplomats,

1 the recommendation is that it be cut by 93 percent, and
2 many of the RIFs that were done a couple of Fridays ago in
3 the State Department, laying off people who do this work.
4 This is the Fulbright Program, and this is other exchange
5 programs. These programs that the U.S. has funded have
6 educated more than 600 current or former heads of other
7 nations. They have come to the United States and gained
8 experience here. Eighty-eight Nobel Prize winners are
9 alumni of these exchanges, and the Administration proposes
10 to cut the budget by 93 percent. I am very worried about
11 that.

12 Let me ask one other question. How important is it,
13 in your work in AFRICOM or Special Forces, going forward,
14 that the U.S. be a strong competitor in the information
15 domain?

16 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I will start there. It is
17 critical. In the competition, in the information domain,
18 truth is the high ground. We in the United States have a
19 history of leveraging the truth, telling the truth, and I
20 think that is powerful.

21 Senator Kaine: General Anderson?

22 General Anderson: Senator, I think it is absolutely
23 critical across the continent, and I agree with Admiral
24 Bradley. The fact that we have a credible news source and
25 that we tell the truth is a very powerful information

1 operation.

2 Senator Kaine: The Administration's proposed budget
3 for 2026 slashes the U.S. Agency for Global Media's budget
4 by 82 percent. The Voice of America, the Middle East
5 Broadcasting Network, VOA Persian, all of these are being
6 dramatically reduced, and I think many of the RIFs that
7 happened at the State Department are in that space.

8 Mr. Chair, I would conclude, I would like to just
9 introduce in the record an article from the Washington
10 Institute of Near East Policy, "Here's How State Department
11 Cuts Would Impede U.S. Policy," dated July 3, 2025.

12 Chairman Wicker: Is there objection? Without
13 objection, so ordered.

14 [The information follows:]
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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Kaine.
2 Senator Cotton.

3 Senator Cotton: Gentlemen, welcome. Congratulations.
4 Thank you for your continued service. Thanks to your
5 families for their service and sacrifice, as well.

6 Admiral Bradley, Special Forces were targeted for
7 reductions in forces and funding in recent years by the
8 past administration. Could you explain what it takes to
9 turn a conventional soldier, sailor, airman, or marine,
10 into a Special Operator? How many years does it take to
11 build that kind of expertise and ability?

12 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. First, I have
13 to say we have the benefit of being able to draw from the
14 best and the brightest across the great population of the
15 United States. Our services do the principal recruiting,
16 and we have the opportunity to be able to draw from within
17 those recruits.

18 But Special Operations provides a very valuable
19 recruiting tool for those services, as well. Once a
20 candidate assesses into a service and has the initiative to
21 want to volunteer to come to one of our selection
22 assessments programs, a rigorous process, both of their
23 resume, of their psychological resilience, of their
24 physical capabilities begins, followed by some amount of
25 training and really grit determination. On the back side

1 of that, that may take anywhere up to a year, depending
2 upon the program. Then additional advanced training will
3 continue. And then finally, the operator or the member
4 will be assigned to an operational unit where, frankly,
5 another amount of apprentice to master a progression
6 begins.

7 And so for a fully up and around operator to reach
8 leadership status it is not uncommon for that to take 6 or
9 7 years.

10 Senator Cotton: So if Special Operations Forces were
11 to face cuts, you do not just lose capability. You lose a
12 lot of time, as well. That is correct?

13 Admiral Bradley: It does take time to build that
14 operator. Yes, Senator.

15 Senator Cotton: Versus, say, just for the sake of
16 comparison, the Army can send someone from the first day of
17 basic training through infantry training to an infantry
18 platoon in maybe 6 months. Obviously, they are brand new
19 privates just out of training, about 6 months versus many
20 years. I think we should be mindful of that contrast.

21 What is your assessment on how drones are changing the
22 modern battlefield? Every day there are new reports of new
23 developments in drone warfare in Ukraine. We saw a couple
24 of months ago Ukraine launched audacious attacks from
25 inside of Russia with pre-positioned drones. It appears

1 that Israel may have done something similar inside of Iran.
2 I know you have probably given this a lot of thought in
3 your current job and looking ahead to your future job.

4 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do not think it is unfair
5 to call this a revolution in military affairs. The
6 changing, accelerating pace of technology, the ubiquitous
7 information environment, and the advent of man-machine
8 teamed autonomy on the battlefields of the world today are
9 absolutely changing the character of warfare in our very
10 eyes.

11 Within Special Operations, and I believe the
12 initiatives, frankly, that you have initiated here with the
13 FORGED Act, the SPEED Act across the way, and the President
14 and the Secretary's initiatives to drive innovation within
15 the Department are critical to allowing us to use the
16 innovative spirit of our operators, to be able to capture
17 those problems and opportunities we see on the battlefield
18 and turn them into new man-machine teamed approaches.

19 Senator Cotton: Thank you. General Anderson, given
20 your current role and also the threat of drone attacks from
21 terrorist groups and your future role, what are your
22 thoughts on this question?

23 General Anderson: Yes, Senator, I appreciate that.
24 It is transforming the battlefield. We are at a critical
25 inflection point in history, much like the Industrial Age

1 matured in the early 20th century, the Digital Age maturing
2 now. As Admiral Bradley mentioned, it is not just the
3 drones we see today. It is what does it mean when we have
4 autonomy and AI behind those drones, and we have swarm
5 attacks. That is not necessarily science fiction. That is
6 in the future.

7 So we have to take this very seriously, not just
8 taking on the drone operations but also what do we do to
9 counter them and defend against them. This is a grave
10 concern for me as I look at the African continent, as there
11 are vulnerabilities out there for our forces. But it is
12 also a vulnerability for our partners, as well.

13 Senator Cotton: And I guess I should say this, not
14 just potential terrorist groups. It is also potential
15 insurgencies, uprisings, clashes of the kind that we see
16 with more frequency in Africa, as well.

17 Okay, thank you, gentlemen.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator
19 King.

20 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I want
21 to welcome both of you, congratulate you on your
22 nominations, and acknowledge Liz in the audience, a
23 resident of Maine, as you noted, General Anderson, proud
24 graduate of the University of Maine. I hope, Liz, you will
25 convey to your family in Maine that you saw me working. I

1 appreciate you being here today.

2 Mr. Chairman, I have a statement from our brother, Jim
3 Inhofe, on the AFRICOM legislation from 2008, when it was
4 first adopted, and I would like unanimous consent to enter
5 it into the record of this hearing.

6 Chairman Wicker: Without objection, it is so ordered.

7 [The information follows:]

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1 Senator King: As all of us know, Senator Inhofe was a
2 great champion of our interests in Africa, probably the
3 greatest in the Senate. I noted in his statement, again
4 from 2008, "My resolution recognizes the strategic
5 importance of the African continent and encourages the
6 Department of Defense, the State Department, and USAID to
7 work cooperatively together with our African allies to
8 bring hope to the continent."

9 We sort of have been talking around this today. We
10 just made one of the greatest geopolitical mistakes in my
11 lifetime in the last several weeks by essentially
12 abolishing USAID. And I do not expect either of you to
13 answer questions directly about that because it could
14 jeopardize your appointment. But there is just no
15 question.

16 The term "soft power" is kind of unfortunate, because
17 the emphasis is on soft, but it is power. And as both of
18 you have testified, communications is important,
19 relationships with the countries' stabilization, anti-
20 terrorism, developing good relationships, the PEPFAR
21 program, the malaria program, education programs, democracy
22 promotion programs are essential to our ability to compete
23 with the Chinese and the Russians in the African continent.

24 In talking to some friends who have been deployed
25 there, their view was that we just made an enormous gift,

1 particularly to the Chinese. And as the Chairman suggested
2 in his opening statement and questions, there is no
3 question in my mind that our recent actions in essentially
4 dismantling and abolishing AID has met with celebration and
5 approbation in Russia and China.

6 General Anderson, one of the things that concerns me,
7 and it relates somewhat to the AID question but more
8 generally, is the rise of terrorism. You mentioned
9 September 11th. That was 19 people. And my concern is
10 with our so-called pivot to the Indo-Pacific we are taking
11 our eye off the terrorism ball. Could you share with us
12 the thoughts about the status of Al Qaeda and ISIS in
13 Africa and what we should be watching out for and being
14 concerned of?

15 General Anderson: Yes, Senator. I appreciate that
16 concern, and if confirmed, I will definitely make this a
17 priority to assess, as it has been 4 years since I was at
18 SOCAFRICA.

19 With that said, though, we have seen the terrorist
20 groups move much of their operations into the ungoverned
21 spaces of Africa, both ISIS and Al Qaeda. We are seeing
22 ISIS active in Somalia, as well as in West Africa, ISIS
23 West Africa. AQIM and their affiliate, JNIM, are also very
24 active in the Sahel, both with intent to attack U.S.
25 interests. Whether or not they have that capability is not

1 clear.

2 So to your point, one of the greatest concerns we have
3 is having enough resources and enough relationships to be
4 able to understand how these threats are progressing. So
5 we have the adequate amount of indicators and warnings and
6 we know what the threat to the United States could be, so
7 we could take action.

8 The access is also critical with our partners to
9 understand what is happening with these threats, and I
10 would also say what is happening with some of the other
11 powers there and how they may be working with them or maybe
12 not acting in our interests, so that we can understand what
13 the threat landscape is on the continent.

14 Senator King: Well, I think one of the new duties of
15 your job, as you take this on, since State Department and
16 USAID is essentially retreating, you are going to have
17 diplomatic duty, whether you signed up for that or not.
18 But you are going to have to build relationships, not
19 necessarily strictly military, but with the local
20 governments and the local leadership. Do you see that as a
21 priority?

22 General Anderson: Senator, where we prioritize those
23 areas we have the best return on our investment. I think
24 it is important to build those relationships. I think it
25 is important to look at creative ways, as we go forward.

1 One of the greatest powers the United States brings is our
2 economy. That is largely done through private investment.
3 So finding opportunities in the continent as it continues
4 to expand and grow in population I think is an opportunity.
5 And then working with NGOs to identify some of these. I
6 have worked with several in the past that have been very
7 productive, and engaging some of those areas that you are
8 talking about, that we help them understand the environment
9 and then they are able to execute the actual engagements.

10 Senator King: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I
11 will have a question for the record for Admiral Bradley
12 about brain health and the protecting of our troops from
13 traumatic brain injury. I will follow up on the record.
14 Thank you very much, gentlemen.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for your interest in that,
16 Senator King. Senator Rounds.

17 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
18 first of all, thank you for your service to our country.
19 To your families also, I just want to say thank you,
20 because you sacrificed a lot, as well, and we most
21 certainly recognize that, and we appreciate what you do to
22 help both of these gentlemen be successful in their
23 careers.

24 Gentlemen, I have heard from, at least now from 29
25 senior Department officials, including every service chief

1 and eight combatant commanders, that vacating the 3.1 to
2 3.45 GHz and 7.7 to 8 GHz bands of the spectrum would have
3 negative consequences for our warfighting capabilities.
4 Being forced to share these bands with commercial interests
5 in a non-optimal way would have the same impact.

6 Admiral Bradley, does the Special Operations Force
7 have capabilities operating on the 3.1 to 3.45 band and the
8 7 and 8 bands of spectrum, which would be used in a
9 conflict with China?

10 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. I have to say
11 that I am not intimately aware of all of the systems across
12 SOCOM. I can speak to my personal experience in these last
13 3 years. And I do agree that both directly, some of our
14 systems operated in those bands that we rely upon for
15 critical tactical capability, but also indirectly the
16 service systems that operate on those bands are very
17 important for us as we integrate with the Joint Force.

18 Senator Rounds: Thank you. would those capabilities
19 be negatively impacted if DoD were forced to share those
20 bands?

21 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I believe they would.

22 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Anderson, same
23 question. Does AFRICOM make use of capabilities which
24 reside on our make use of those bands of the spectrum?

25 General Anderson: Senator, Africa being a remote

1 location, we depend upon satellite communications that use
2 some of those bands, as well as the air and missile defense
3 systems that are on the continent.

4 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Admiral Bradley,
5 your predecessor testified earlier this year that SOCOM
6 makes up 3 percent of DoD's forces and less than 2 percent
7 of the budget, all while missions have increased by over
8 170 percent compared to the last decade. Is it fair to say
9 that if we are going to continue to ask more of SOCOM, more
10 resources will be needed to enable those increased
11 missions?

12 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. As I have
13 watched General Fenton make the compelling case about that
14 exact equation you described, I think that is a conclusion
15 that comes out. An alternative is we just do less, we do
16 fewer missions. We have to say no more times.

17 Senator Rounds: You are the tip of the spear. It
18 seems to me that we should be doing everything possible to
19 make sure that those young men and women have the best and
20 capable technologies and weapon systems available to them.

21 General Anderson, how do you assess AFRICOM's role in
22 countering Chinese and Russian influence in Africa,
23 particularly in regions where entities such as the Wagner
24 Group or the PRC-affiliated commercial ventures are
25 exploiting governance or security gaps? What strategies do

1 you believe are most effective in addressing these
2 challenges?

3 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate that
4 question. I think that is a critical area, how do we
5 counter what these powers are doing on the continent when
6 they run counter to U.S. interests. One of the areas, when
7 I was at SOCAFRICA, that was useful was engaging with the
8 partners and explaining to them what those risks were when
9 they were working with these partners, especially when
10 Wagner was trying to expand into the Sahel. While they
11 have gotten a foothold there, we were able to explain to
12 them the risks that that would entail, the corrosive nature
13 of those engagements, the lack of human rights that those
14 nations bring. That was helpful in buffering. It also
15 helped in some of the other Coastal West Africa states, as
16 well.

17 As far as China, I would say it is similar, engaging
18 and countering some of the malign influence operations that
19 are out there. We saw, across the Sahel, counter-Western,
20 counter-French, counter-U.S. propaganda take hold, and that
21 then turns the populations against our interests.

22 Senator Rounds: Would it be fair to say that there is
23 a combination of hard power, military power, but there is
24 also the desire to have not just that stick but the ability
25 to offer other capabilities, as well? Can you give me some

1 examples of what we would call soft power that might be
2 available or be very helpful to you, based upon our current
3 situations in Africa?

4 General Anderson: Yes, Senator. Across the breadth
5 of what our nation brings is important, whether that is
6 called hard power or soft power, its influence and how
7 could we engage constructively with them. Can we encourage
8 investment? Can we open sources to critical minerals? Can
9 we partner with the nations that are in our interest that
10 also benefit them, as well? Those are opportunities, as
11 well, that are slightly outside the military lane, but I do
12 believe we have the opportunity to convene some of the
13 right folks to have these types of discussions. And then,
14 again, engagement and building trust and partnership is
15 critical, as we found in the past.

16 Senator Rounds: Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen.

17 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator
18 Ernst.

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you,
20 gentlemen, both for being here today and your continued
21 service to our great United States. Your families, as
22 well. We appreciate their selfless service and sacrifice
23 on your behalf, as well.

24 General Anderson, we will start with you, and we will
25 continue to build upon what Senator Rounds was discussing.

1 History has shown that when America reduces her presence,
2 our adversaries are quickly seeking to fill the void. So
3 sustained U.S. leadership is essential to deterring those
4 threats and preserving stability. This is something we
5 talked about in my office, that I firmly believe that
6 presence is power, especially when it comes to the forward
7 posture of our American servicemembers.

8 General Anderson, can you speak to why continued
9 American leadership around the globe is essential, and in
10 your particular case in Africa, why it is essential that we
11 maintain a presence and how it is in America's best
12 interests.

13 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate the question,
14 and I agree that that engagement is absolutely vital.
15 Having that access and that engagement and building of
16 trust makes a difference in times of crisis or in times of
17 need. When we call in the middle of the night, we want our
18 partners to answer, and we want them to help.

19 At the same time, it needs to be in our mutual
20 interests. One thing I have found, as you talked about, in
21 SOCAFRICA is that we could often bring parties together
22 that normally would not. We could bring some of the
23 European partners together with the African partners and
24 create a dialogue. And sometimes just that American
25 presence as a trusted partner opened that door to be more

1 effective.

2 I would also say, as you mentioned, small investments
3 and small teams go a long way on the continent in working
4 with our African partners. As an example, I was the first
5 general officer to go back to Cote D'Ivoire after 19 years.
6 The very first person who met me was the chief of the army,
7 and the first thing he told me was he thanked me for the
8 training that the Special Forces team had given him as a
9 captain, 19 years before. And he said it was the best
10 training he ever had, and he was very excited that we were
11 able to restore relationship, because it was the best
12 training he had received, and he was looking forward to
13 that for his army.

14 And it did not take a persistent presence. It took
15 some episodic engagements and continued investment in that
16 partner. What I have found in Africa is many of those
17 partners that we work with are incredibly good partners.
18 They are not looking for a handout. They are looking for
19 helping hand. And if we can help them build that capacity
20 they are willing to try to stand on their own.

21 Senator Ernst: That is amazing, and thank you for
22 reaffirming what I have always believed, as well, is that
23 relationships matter. And our friends will never forget
24 that. Neither will our enemies. So we will continue on.
25 We could talk more about China's presence. I think a

1 number of our colleagues have covered down on that, so we
2 will go ahead and turn to SOCOM.

3 Admiral Bradley, thank you so much for your continued
4 leadership within the organization. And we have already
5 talked a little bit about the fact that SOCOM, you have
6 earned the reputation that the command can do more with
7 less. And I have heard SOCOM commander after SOCOM
8 commander come in front of the Committee and state it
9 really does not matter, we will salute smartly and move out
10 and execute our mission.

11 But we are reaching a point where, as you have very
12 clearly stated today, that if you do not continue to see
13 growth, especially just for inflation, within the
14 department, that you will have to do less. You will have
15 to dig in deeper and make the necessary cuts.

16 So we are in an era of heightened threats and
17 expanding mission demands. I believe that do-more-with-
18 less mindset can no longer be sustainable. Do you agree
19 with that?

20 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do, and, in fact, we have
21 adopted the term "less with less" to ensure we apply the
22 ruthless prioritization to achieve the highest priority of
23 those missions.

24 Senator Ernst: Mm-hmm. And given the increasingly
25 complex threat environment, we need to be able to

1 strengthen SOCOM's capacity to deter our near-peer
2 adversaries. So that does require us moving beyond a
3 stagnant budget. So if confirmed, Admiral Bradley, then
4 what is the vision for SOCOM and how do you do that
5 ruthless prioritization?

6 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. If confirmed,
7 our priorities are the priorities of the Department --
8 defend the homeland, ensure that we deter China, and ensure
9 that our force multiplication of an already strong alliance
10 is strengthened even further.

11 Senator Ernst: Thank you, gentlemen, very much, and
12 again to your families, thank you for your sacrifice, as
13 well. Thank you.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Ernst.
15 Senator Schmitt.

16 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
17 actually, Admiral, I am glad that you ended that way,
18 because that, those sort of prioritizations of America,
19 which is defend the homeland and really this pivot to the
20 Indo-Pacific has been absent in a lot of the questions that
21 have been asked. A lot of the questions that have been
22 asked, I feel like I have been teleported into the Foreign
23 Relations Committee.

24 And I want to ask you, since it was brought up -- I
25 had no plan to talk about this -- I am going to just read

1 off a few things: a half a million dollars for electric
2 buses in Rwanda, \$3.3 million for civic engagement in
3 Zimbabwe, \$300,000 to hold a private parade in Lesotho, and
4 almost \$900,000 for electrical reforms and voter education
5 in Kenya, \$1.2 million for an Afrobarometer public opinion
6 survey, \$116,000 for media strengthening activity in
7 Liberia, \$800 for promoting vegan food in Zambia, African
8 hide camping and tours to create adventure camps for
9 backpackers, graphic design training in Nigeria.

10 Do you think these are in the best interest of the
11 United States of America, given the scarcity that we have?

12 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I know there are a lot of
13 priorities that have to be balance through the budget
14 process.

15 Senator Schmitt: I know that, and I appreciate your
16 story. You were very willing to opine about other things
17 that were sort of policy matters, in my view. These are
18 policy matters. And I think that when we do this stuff, it
19 totally undermines the desire to have real soft power.
20 Like I am not disputing the idea that soft power exists.
21 My contention is that all of this nonsense that continues
22 to be defended, in many ways, inhibits the ability to do
23 exactly what you are articulating, which is there are smart
24 things to do that are not just about blowing things up and
25 killing people. But that has been crowded out with a

1 mission creep in this wandering foreign policy that just
2 believes that we can just do all of this do-gooding stuff
3 around the world.

4 And getting back to what you said at the end of your
5 last statement, which is, "Defend the homeland and
6 understand that our chief threat is in China," that is what
7 I wanted to ask you questions about, and I am going to.
8 But I cannot let this go without it being responded to.

9 Like we are moving away from this stuff, whether
10 people like it or not. Like the American people do not
11 support it. We have an Administration that wants to move
12 away from this stuff. And I applaud it. I might be in the
13 minority on this Committee. I do not really know. I do
14 not really care, because I think that is in the best
15 interest of the United States, and we can have a robust
16 debate about it.

17 But I do want to ask you, because we are in this great
18 powers competition, how does SOCOM assess the right balance
19 between sort of the counterterrorism mission that has
20 existed for a long time, and is not necessarily going away,
21 versus this kind of direct action, and especially as it
22 relates to irregular deterrence and China's gray zone
23 activity that is happening in the South China Sea and
24 places where our allies are really -- a real threat. We
25 are not talking about electric buses in Rwanda. We are

1 talking about, you know, communist China here.

2 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. Having had the
3 opportunity to be a part of our counterterrorism operations
4 since 9/11, I have seen us achieve some great successes to
5 diminish the threat against the homeland. The credibility
6 that has come from that gives us a very powerful entrée
7 with the alliance members in the Indo-Pacific. All of our
8 national defense strategies since 2018, the INDSG all
9 illuminate the importance of that alliance. I believe that
10 force multiplication effort is a critical capability.

11 As you know, General Fenton is the coordinating
12 authority for counter-VEO, as well, within the Department
13 of Defense, and so still maintains a principal
14 responsibility to be able to oversee and advise the
15 Secretary on the approach for counterterrorism.

16 The most acute of those threats, those VEOs with
17 external operations, aspiration, and capability, are the
18 top priority threats that we, as a whole, integrated
19 interagency, orient our priorities against. And I believe,
20 in many cases, and one instance in particular, the case in
21 the Philippines is a great example --

22 Senator Schmitt: I was going to ask you about that,
23 yeah.

24 Admiral Bradley: -- where our work with the Filipinos
25 over the last two decades has allowed them to be able to

1 keep that terrorist threat at bay, and frankly, allowed us
2 to weather a very difficult diplomatic season with a
3 particular leader there, and now come out an even stronger
4 ally.

5 Senator Schmitt: I agree. I think that is a great
6 example, which completes sort of like the last question I
7 have, in limited time. Do you feel like our other really
8 important allies in that region, say Australia and Japan,
9 are prepared or sufficiently ready to work alongside us the
10 way that the Philippines has?

11 Admiral Bradley: Sir, I absolutely believe the
12 Australians are, and I believe our other allies are working
13 to come to that place, as well.

14 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Thank you. Good luck.
15 Congratulations.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator
17 Schmitt. Senator Warren.

18 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
19 congratulations to both of you on your nominations.

20 So the American military is built to defeat our
21 enemies, not to create more of them. And that is why
22 Republican and Democratic administrations have worked to
23 reduce risks to innocent civilians as part of military
24 options. In fact, the last Trump administration issued DoD
25 first instruction to establish policies to mitigate

1 civilian harm after concerns grew about civilian casualties
2 in the campaign against ISIS.

3 Now, one of the tools that commanders now have in the
4 toolkit is working with Civilian Harm Mitigation and
5 Response advisors, from refining war games to real attack
6 planning in the Middle East and Africa operations, and
7 more.

8 Vice Admiral Bradley, your predecessor at Special
9 Operations Command recently said that these experts, quote,
10 "assisted commanders and their staffs in mitigating
11 civilian harm without compromising lethality." What's
12 more, their knowledge, quote, "enhanced precision,
13 preserving legitimacy, and enabling mission success."

14 So Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will
15 you commit to keeping civilian harm prevention experts at
16 SOCOM to advise you and your team?

17 Admiral Bradley: Senator, first, just to resonate, it
18 is not only an obligation to adhere to the law of armed
19 conflict to protect civilians, it is critical to our
20 success and competition to represent our values. I believe
21 that every uniformed, every civilian, and every contractor
22 that is employed or in oversight of the use of lethal force
23 has a critical obligation to be able to do that, and I do
24 commit to keeping that as a focus for our command, if
25 confirmed.

1 Senator Warren: Thank you. That is a strong answer,
2 and I appreciate it.

3 Other tools in the toolkit here are the Civilian Harm
4 Mitigation and Response Action Plan and DoD's Policy
5 Instruction on Civilian Harm, which outlines DoD's plans
6 and policies to reduce civilian harm risks. AFRICOM has
7 made progress in implementing these policies, including
8 through training allies and partners on how to reduce risks
9 to innocent civilians. We are serving as a model that our
10 other partners are now beginning to adopt. In May, the
11 Nigerian Air Force announced its own Civilian Harm
12 Prevention Plan. These are efforts that save innocent
13 lives.

14 Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed,
15 will you carry forward these efforts to integrate civilian
16 harm mitigation planning into AFRICOM operations and train
17 allies in the region to help them do the same?

18 General Anderson: Senator, to echo Vice Admiral
19 Bradley's importance of this, this is a critically
20 important show of our values. It is also important that we
21 maintain the laws of armed conflict, and when we engage
22 with our partners that we help them education and that we
23 model this. And this has been something that, when I was
24 at Special Operations Command Africa, we did. We worked
25 with partners, and when we saw things or heard of things

1 that were credible, we encouraged them to investigate and
2 to look into this. And then we gave them assistance, as
3 needed, in order for them to conduct their own
4 investigations. So I will continue, if confirmed, to take
5 that on at AFRICOM.

6 Senator Warren: I appreciate that. I want to hit one
7 other point here, because we also need to reduce harm to
8 our own Special Operators. I have worked with Senator
9 Ernst and others on this Committee for years to address
10 high levels of brain injury caused by blast overpressure.
11 Exposed servicemembers have reported debilitating systems,
12 from seizures to depression to suicidality. And now
13 preliminary research is showing high rates of heart
14 disease, chronic pain, hypertension, even links to brain
15 cancer and neurogenerative diseases. Clearly, we have a
16 lot more we need to learn.

17 So let me ask, Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, you
18 will oversee tens of thousands of Special Operations
19 personnel. Do you support DoD partnering with outside
20 experts to study the long-term effects of blast
21 overpressure?

22 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do. I have seen great
23 benefit from our partnership with academic and other
24 organizations that are studying this problem critically.
25 Our number one SOF truth is that people are more important

1 than hardware, and the critical part of those people is the
2 intellectual capacity. Of course, that is jeopardized by
3 these brain health issues. And we see them as a critical
4 contract with our operators and our operators' families to
5 ensure that we keep them sustainable.

6 Senator Warren: Oh, I appreciate that very, very
7 much. If you are confirmed, I will be calling on you to
8 help us with that. There is language in both the House and
9 the Senate NDAA that would help us get this study, and
10 there are lots of organizations like Home Base
11 Massachusetts who have the expertise to help us get these
12 answers. We owe this to our servicemembers.

13 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator
15 Tuberville.

16 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
17 morning. Thanks to both of you. Thank you for what you
18 have done for our country over your careers, you and your
19 families. What a sacrifice it has been. But you have done
20 an outstanding job.

21 Admiral, I think for far too long we have had our eyes
22 on other things and not on our hemisphere, whether it is
23 illegal migrants, drugs, or both. So what is Special
24 Operations community doing to assist the militaries and
25 governments in our hemisphere, like Panama, to combat

1 narcoterrorists?

2 Admiral Bradley: Senator, in my current capacity I am
3 not privy to all of the activities that SOCOM is engaged in
4 in the Southern Hemisphere. But in listening and watching
5 General Fenton and his leadership over these last 3 years,
6 I know that the partnerships that our teams have been
7 engaging in and developing remain critical to being able to
8 help them build capacity, to be able to defend themselves,
9 but also to provide security locally, which, of course,
10 helps to prevent and secure our southern border, as well.

11 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. I am sure you are up on
12 the point of the Darién Gap and the problems it has caused
13 over the years, and relationship with our Special Ops down
14 in that area, training people. That will probably be in
15 your forte going forward. What are your thoughts about
16 cooperation activities with Latin America, as going into
17 this job?

18 Admiral Bradley: Yes, sir. I think, as the
19 counterterrorism fight informs us, it is far better to find
20 the root of the problem well away from our borders than it
21 is to have to defend them internal to the United States.
22 And so if confirmed, making it a priority to provide
23 assistance to all of our combatant commanders as far
24 forward as possible and with those partnered forces to help
25 them to be able to secure their own territory.

1 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. And we have problems all
2 over the world, but if we do not watch our back door then
3 we are going to have really problems within our country,
4 which we already have.

5 General, I think we need to be reinforcing our
6 military presence in AFRICOM. Unfortunately, under the
7 previous administration we seemed like we were doing just
8 the opposite. In Niger -- you and I talked about this in a
9 meeting in my office -- the vacuum that was caused there.
10 China, Russia, Iran were all too happy to fill the things
11 that we were doing there.

12 What is your assessment of our withdrawal from Air
13 Base 201 and have we learned from these lessons, and your
14 thoughts about maybe the future there.

15 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate that
16 question, and there was significant investment that went
17 into that air base. It was in a key area for us to be able
18 to monitor the threat, so the loss of that is one that we
19 will have to find creative ways to continue to get the
20 indicators and warnings of what the terrorists are doing in
21 this area.

22 I think we also have to understand that there is some
23 volatility across the continent, so how do we make smart
24 investments with the partners that we can continue to
25 sustain. I will say that the relationships that we built

1 in Niger with the military over several decades are still
2 there. When the time is right, I believe there will be an
3 opportunity, but that time will have to be determined, and
4 if confirmed, I will look at what that is.

5 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. After your confirmation, I
6 guess by telling the Committee, and people even watching at
7 home, why do we need to have presence in Africa? What are
8 your thoughts?

9 General Anderson: Africa is key to any strategy. It
10 is just on strategic terrain, just the waterways that it
11 forms between the Straits or Gibraltar all the way down
12 through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. It is critical
13 minerals and resources that are on the continent that we
14 need for the future economy. Both China and Russia see
15 their strategies going through the continent, and they are
16 going to engage there.

17 So we can cede that ground or we can compete in that
18 ground, and I think we have a very powerful tool to compete
19 with. As Admiral Bradley mentioned, nobody brings more
20 credibility to the counterterrorism fight than the U.S. As
21 a matter of fact, when we rescued that hostage in Niger,
22 the next morning there was an influential blogger that
23 posted, "The Americans came like the lion in the night.
24 They killed their enemies and rescued their own." No other
25 nation on Earth could do that. And that is a powerful

1 symbol across the continent and around the world of what
2 our military and what the United States is capable of. And
3 I do think that some level of engagement in Africa does
4 matter. I agree it is an economy of force, but a small
5 investment goes a long way, so that we do not have
6 strategic surprise that then distracts the United States
7 from focusing on the rising threats in the Pacific and
8 other areas.

9 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Tuberville, and
11 well said, General Anderson. Senator Sheehy.

12 Senator Sheehy: Thank you, Chairman. General, I want
13 to thank you for what you just said there, because we have
14 been hearing a lot today about how pulling back investment
15 in certain programs in Africa is going to end the world and
16 cede the entire dominance to China. The reality is what
17 you just said is what the real power projection is. When
18 we can display to the world that we are going to protect
19 our interests and our people ruthlessly, no matter what,
20 that is what the real power projection of the U.S. military
21 is about. The SOF stuff is absolutely important. Being
22 able to project economic power and stability is important.
23 But nothing will ever supersede what you just said, so
24 thanks for saying that.

25 Thanks to both of you and your families for what you

1 have done for this country and continue to do.

2 Admiral, over to you. We are facing a very
3 challenging naval atmosphere against China. They are
4 building ships faster than we can, 230 times faster than we
5 do, as a matter of fact. So if we should face a maritime
6 conflict, our most asymmetric advantage is going to be our
7 undersea Special Operations capability, how we can project
8 that power, manned and unmanned.

9 Would you take a moment here and just explain to me
10 your commitment to that program and how we are going to
11 make sure it remains dominant?

12 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you, and thanks for
13 your service in that community, as well. I believe, from
14 my time serving in our undersea community, that the
15 partnership between Special Operations and the Navy in this
16 regard is singular in the world in its sophistication. The
17 ability to arrive with the element of surprise is
18 unparalleled through this approach. It gives us advantage,
19 asymmetric advantage, not just in warfighting but also in
20 the ability, in competition and in crisis.

21 The Special Operations community has a unique and
22 growing and deepening relationship with the United States
23 Navy in this regard, and if confirmed, I would very much
24 look forward to advancing that and continuing to maintain
25 that asymmetry.

1 Senator Sheehy: Thank you. And for both of you a
2 similar question. The last time we fought a war in
3 INDOPACOM we had about 5,000 seaplanes that were a critical
4 part of our logistical and tactical network across the
5 region, from moving insurgents, to supplies, to logistics,
6 to rescuing ships' crew and downed airmen in areas that, at
7 the time, were out of range.

8 Right now we have precisely zero planes that can land,
9 or any aircraft that can land on water in the entire U.S.
10 military. And General, with your background in non-
11 standard aviation, as I do too -- I used to fly seaplanes
12 and PC-12s like you -- this is a capability that as we are
13 entering a new era of great power competition I believe we
14 need to reinvest in it, and SOCOM would be the tip of that
15 spear.

16 I recently worked with INDOPACOM to try to
17 reinvigorate the ability for them to access this
18 capability. Would either of you care to comment on what
19 you think amphibious aviation could mean for our ability to
20 project power all over the world?

21 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate the question.
22 I do think there are several types of new technologies,
23 emerging technologies, that we need to invest in that allow
24 different types of logistics and different types of
25 support. Seaplanes could be part of that. I think

1 unmanned systems, semisubmersibles, but a plethora of
2 capabilities that allow us to operate in a contested
3 environment, with a combination of manned and unmanned
4 systems is critical. And in the Indo-Pacific, there is a
5 lot of water across that area, so having the ability to
6 operate in those areas, and to be able to resupply small
7 islands I think will be very important to a potential
8 Pacific fight.

9 Senator Sheehy: Yeah. I would say on an AO that in
10 some cases is over 90 percent water, having the entire AO
11 be a runway seems like a pretty good idea.

12 I was recently in Kenya, Djibouti, Egypt. I went over
13 there for a reason. We also served many years in the
14 Middle East. But Africa is now going to have 2.5 billion
15 people, become the most populous continent in the world
16 here, potentially, in the next decade. And it is very
17 possible that the 21st century could be an African century.
18 And as that 2.5 billion people plug into the global
19 economy, as they become global citizens, active on the
20 internet, as they become banked, as they become crypto
21 citizens, we are going to have to reckon with the great
22 power competition that is happening there.

23 And as I look at some of our engagement across the
24 Horn of Africa, and through all of Africa really, what do
25 you see that your biggest challenge is going to be? What

1 do your first 90, 120 days look like, as you try to grapple
2 with the fact that we have a massive geopolitical
3 battlefield emerging?

4 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate those
5 comments, and I agree that Africa is growing rapidly.
6 There is a large youth population. That youth can either
7 be challenged to contribute to the global economy or they
8 could become terrorists or other nefarious actions.

9 What I would say to that is that the first thing I
10 would look at is do we have the right access and placement
11 in order to have the indicators and warnings to prevent
12 that strategic surprise. And to your point earlier, I
13 think it is a combination of hard power and soft power, as
14 you put it. But having the relationships and the trust to
15 have the access, when needed, in order to project power, to
16 be able to counter terrorism, to be able to respond to a
17 crisis somewhere on the continent, and then also to
18 understand what other powers are doing.

19 So my first few days, if confirmed, would be focused
20 on assessing that, and do we have the right posture and
21 footprint, and what can we do to maximize the indicators
22 and warnings.

23 Senator Sheehy: Thank you. I am out of time, but I
24 would also encourage you to take a look at Camp Simba and
25 upgrades required there. It is a key point of power

1 projection for us in that region. Thank you.

2 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Sheehy. Let me
3 ask both of you, with regard to the first set of questions
4 Senator Sheehy brought up about seaplanes, that sort of
5 capacity. Is there anything on the horizon in that regard?

6 General Anderson: Senator, there are a few out there
7 that are being developed. I know DARPA is working on a
8 project. There are some other companies that are looking
9 at seaplanes and unmanned seaplanes, as well.

10 Admiral Bradley: Senator, across Special Operations
11 there have been experiments with that kind of capability.

12 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Thank you very much.
13 Senator Kelly.

14 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral
15 Bradley, General Anderson, thank you for being here and for
16 continuing to volunteer to serve our nation.

17 SOCOM and AFRICOM both leverage economies of force
18 principles, so applying limited resources for having an
19 outsized impact. And this requires some careful planning
20 and using the right assets against the right problem.

21 Within this economy of force principle, how important
22 are interagency partnership, like the Department of State,
23 for SOCOM and AFRICOM's campaign plan?

24 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I will start. Across the
25 Special Operations community our partnership with the

1 integrated interagency, also our law enforcement, Federal
2 and, frankly, even our local law enforcement partnerships
3 have been critical to us over these last 25 years. And I
4 see that as nothing but growing in the future. If
5 confirmed as the SOCOM Commander, the relationships that we
6 have inside our integrated interagency, cultivating those
7 and sustaining them I think would have to be a top
8 priority. I can tell you that today the state of those
9 relationships, from my current experience, is, frankly, a
10 high-water mark certainly of my 34 years, and I suspect
11 even longer than that.

12 Senator Kelly: And General, do you share that view?

13 General Anderson: Senator, I agree that we have very
14 limited resources, and so we have to partner across all
15 government agencies to maximize those resources and to find
16 where we can complement each other. We provide the
17 military piece of that, but to Admiral Bradley's point, my
18 entire career with Special Operations has been working with
19 multiple different agencies in order to maximize that,
20 whether that is the FBI and using legal authorities in
21 different parts of the world, working with our intelligence
22 community, or with State Department and others to make sure
23 we leverage the full authorities and capabilities of our
24 nation.

25 Senator Kelly: One of my big concerns here is the

1 impact that the cuts to USAID within the State Department
2 is going to have on our ability to build some trust with
3 partner nations. That is a concern of mine. I am not
4 going to put you on the spot here on that topic, but I
5 think it is something that I hope the two of you think
6 about.

7 Admiral Bradley, China and Russia currently waging
8 some irregular warfare campaigns against us and our allies
9 in a lot of different places. PRC is using violence to
10 impose their will in the Philippines in the Second Thomas
11 Shoal, and Russia has a long history of using irregular
12 warfare, most recently in Ukraine. And leveraging your
13 most recent experience as the Commander of JSOC, how does
14 the U.S. effectively wage irregular warfare to compete and
15 win with Russia and China in the gray zones?

16 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. In my last 3
17 years I have had the opportunity to be a member of the
18 SOCOM Board of Directors and really watch our theater of
19 Special Operations commands who are responsible for
20 operations from the joint SOF community inside those areas.
21 And I can tell you that our principal advantage that the
22 SOF value proposition brings is understanding, and enhanced
23 understanding, of those insidious actions, which are really
24 preying on our alliance structure. Being able to
25 illuminate that predatory activity gives our diplomats and

1 our whole-of-government and our allies power to be able to
2 stand against it and be resilient to it. That, in turn,
3 strengthens our alliance and deepens our credibility when
4 we want to partnership and build capacity there.

5 Senator Kelly: Great. Well, thank you. And finally,
6 in my last minute here, General Anderson, I traveled, and
7 it has been about a year and a half now, in the Sahel, and
8 part of Africa where Wagner is pretty active, especially on
9 social media, to exploit coups in Western Africa, commit
10 human rights abuses. And when the Russians gain a foothold
11 in these countries they use a significant amount of
12 disinformation to intimidate the local population, stifling
13 opposing views, while they claim to provide security.

14 So General, how does Russia's social media activity
15 impact security and stability in AFRICOM?

16 General Anderson: Senator, I think that is one of
17 Russia's greatest weapons that they are employing across
18 the continent. One of the things they use quite often is
19 disinformation. They play on historic grievances, historic
20 colonial issues, fears of sovereignty, and they play that
21 up into an anti-democratic, anti-Western that then has
22 impacts to U.S. support.

23 I believe that the Russian influence in the
24 information operations was critical in turning populations
25 against the French in the Sahel. I think it is very much

1 not in our interest with what the Russians are doing in the
2 information domain.

3 Senator Kelly: Not only in Africa but, if I could
4 just take a couple more seconds, do you feel like we are
5 losing this information warfare with the Russians, Chinese,
6 Iranians?

7 General Anderson: Senator, I refer to what we
8 discussed earlier. The truth is incredibly powerful. We
9 have that still. We are still a very credible source of
10 information. We need to leverage that. I think we need to
11 be more aggressive about that in this domain. But I would
12 not say we are necessarily losing it. But if we do not
13 engage, we risk losing it.

14 Senator Kelly: Thank you.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Scott.

16 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. Admiral Bradley,
17 General Anderson, congratulations. First off, thanks for
18 your service. Thanks to your family for being here. Thank
19 you for their sacrifice while you have served. You both
20 are going to do an outstanding job.

21 Number one, do you believe that the government of
22 China has decided to be our adversary?

23 General Anderson: Senator, I do.

24 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I concur.

25 Senator Scott: So this Committee has put a lot of

1 effort into getting rid of Chinese drones, in the military
2 and in our country, and we have made a lot of progress. As
3 you know, we are seeing drone warfare increase around the
4 world. We have watched what happened in Ukraine. We have
5 watched what has happened in the Red Sea. We have watched
6 what the Houthis have been doing to shoot down ships.

7 So do you believe drone technology is going to be
8 important in warfare, going forward?

9 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do.

10 General Anderson: Absolutely, Senator.

11 Senator Scott: So do you think it is really important
12 to make sure that we do not have, you know, Chinese
13 products in our military, such as drones?

14 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I know that there are
15 nefarious aspects to Chinese products that come out. We
16 must be careful not to include any of those.

17 General Anderson: Senator, I would agree that we need
18 to make sure that we do not open back doors or other
19 vulnerabilities. We need to understand what products we
20 are using.

21 Senator Scott: So whether it is Chinese drones,
22 computers, printers, drugs, products like garlic that is
23 grown in raw sewage, do you think it is important that we
24 make sure none of that -- none of that -- is used by our
25 military, or never dependent on any of it?

1 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do resonate with those
2 thoughts, and though I cannot speak to all the details,
3 certainly we must be cautious of anything that comes from
4 China that would be part of our kill chain or part of a
5 military chain of production.

6 General Anderson: Yes, Senator. I think that is
7 something that we need to assess is where are those
8 critical vulnerabilities, where do we need to ensure we
9 have alternate supply chains as we look at the future.

10 Senator Scott: How about drugs? Do you think we
11 ought to be buying Chinese drugs for our service men,
12 service women?

13 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I have to say I cannot
14 speak to the details of our drug production chain. Sorry.

15 General Anderson: Senator, I am not familiar with the
16 details of that either.

17 Senator Scott: Off the top of your head, so you think
18 we ought to have Chinese drug in our bodies, should anybody
19 be relying on them when we go to war? Do you think they
20 might hold them back?

21 General Anderson: Senator, that could be a risk, any
22 time we become dependent on a sole source. And I have full
23 faith in the American system, and I would prefer American-
24 made medicines.

25 Senator Scott: I was encouraged to see Secretary

1 Hegseth announce last week that he was removing CCP cloud
2 services out of the DoD, which was added, unfortunately,
3 during the Obama era initiative.

4 So last question. Do you think it is really important
5 that we continue to do everything we can to get all Chinese
6 products, all Chinese apps, everything, drones, computers,
7 printers, drugs, everything, as much as we can, out of our
8 supply chain for our military?

9 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do agree with that.

10 General Anderson: Yes, Senator, I agree we should
11 eliminate as many vulnerabilities as we possibly can.

12 Senator Scott: Thank you.

13 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Scott.
14 Senator Rosen.

15 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Wicker,
16 Ranking Member Reed for holding this hearing. And I want
17 to thank our nominees and your families, of course, for
18 your service -- it takes a whole family when you give a
19 lifetime of service -- and, of course, your willingness to
20 continue to serve, and congratulations on your nominations.

21 And I want to go right into the Houthis and their
22 relations with al-Shabaab, because the Iranian-backed
23 Houthis are diversifying their military capabilities and
24 leveraging regional conflicts to expand their influence.
25 U.S. intelligence reports indicate that the Houthis are

1 working to provide weapons to al-Shabaab. This development
2 is incredibly concerning, as al-Shabaab could utilize more
3 sophisticated Houthi weapons to target U.S. equities in the
4 Horn of Africa, such as our base in Djibouti.

5 So to both General and Admiral, please, to the extent
6 that you are able in this open setting, can you share more
7 about the growing partnership between the Houthis and al-
8 Shabaab, the risk that it poses, not only to the U.S.
9 equities but personnel in the region, global shipping in
10 the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden? How are we going to address
11 this challenge?

12 Since you are closest, Admiral, I am going to start
13 with you.

14 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. The Houthi
15 militia and Iranian-supported renegade element inside Yemen
16 has been a destabilizing force in the southern Arabian
17 Peninsula and across the Horn for some time, and continues
18 to act belligerently. Any connection that they might make
19 as an outreach to a violent extremist organization, like
20 al-Shabaab, an al Qaeda affiliate, definitely bears close
21 concern and, frankly, interdiction. The potential for them
22 to partner is what we would see with grave concern.

23 If confirmed as the SOCOM Commander, I would have the
24 responsibility as a coordinating authority for an advisor
25 to the Secretary on counter-violent extremist

1 organizations, and a combination of those two actors would
2 be a serious measure.

3 Senator Rosen: Thank you. General?

4 General Anderson: Yes, Senator, I appreciate that
5 question. As having been the Commander of Special
6 Operations Command Africa, I am well aware that the al
7 Qaeda affiliate, that al-Shabaab is, is fully intent, has
8 full intent to attack U.S. interests in the U.S. homeland,
9 if they can build the capability. The concern is that
10 cooperation now across the Red Sea with the Houthis, who
11 are backed by the Iranians, and what that could mean, and
12 give them the capability, not just have the will but now
13 the capability, to attack the U.S. or U.S. interests in a
14 more robust way.

15 And again, the Houthis and al-Shabaab operate in
16 critical terrain for the United States and for global
17 shipping. And so the means for them to disrupt that and
18 have impact on our interests is significant.

19 Senator Rosen: So we need to do everything we can to
20 stop that partnership.

21 I want to move on to talking about ISR strategy in the
22 Sahel. We know that Senator Kelly was talking about the
23 Sahel a little bit, but I want to go a little bit further,
24 because since our withdrawal from the two air bases in
25 Niger last year, at the behest of the host nation, our

1 ability to conduct ISR within the Sahel, throughout the
2 African continent, has been severely degraded. This also
3 hurts other activities, as well.

4 So to both of you, can you speak to the challenges of
5 our withdrawal from Niger, the loss of the ISR, what is
6 poses to countering this violent extremism in the region,
7 these partnerships between the Houthis, al-Shabaab, and
8 other things, any other groups, and what are the latest
9 updates to establishing ISR basing elsewhere in Africa?

10 General Anderson: Senator, I appreciate that
11 question, and we did use the ISR coming out of Niger
12 extensively. The loss of that does make it more difficult.
13 There is never enough ISR to meet global demand, as I
14 understand, and that Africa, as an economy of force
15 theater, will have limited assets available. I think it is
16 important that we balance the exquisite high-end ISR
17 capabilities where most needed, and then look at investing
18 in other capabilities, whether it be emerging technologies
19 that can allow some surveillance, partnering with key
20 partners in the area, having intel-sharing agreements so
21 that we can gain understanding from them on the ground. I
22 think those are all critical areas as we look at balancing
23 the ISR demand across the continent. As to where they
24 could be in the future, if confirmed, I would look into
25 that. I am not privy to those plans right now.

1 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Admiral?

2 Admiral Bradley: Senator, just quickly, the evolving,
3 ubiquitous information environment provides us an
4 opportunity here, the space-SOF-cyber triad, an opportunity
5 to be able to leverage what we call horizontal ISR, to be
6 able to leverage more and more information available
7 publicly, that people are freely giving through their use
8 of social media.

9 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
11 Budd.

12 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
13 both for being here. I enjoyed our meetings last week in
14 the office. Congrats on your nominations, and thank you
15 for your service and your sacrifice and that of your
16 families, as well.

17 Admiral Bradley, in our conversation last week, and I
18 have said it publicly in this room many times, before this
19 hearing, we need more and not fewer Special Operations
20 Forces. A large reason is because of their ability to help
21 train our foreign partners. And you highlighted in your
22 Advance Policy Questions that SOF are uniquely suited for
23 building partner capacity in contested and sensitive areas.

24 So how is SOCOM building partner capacity,
25 particularly in the Indo-Pacific, and what is the Joint

1 Force getting in return for those efforts?

2 Admiral Bradley: Senator Budd, thank you. I very
3 much appreciated the time to visit with you, and thank you
4 for your great support for all of our bases, my current
5 headquarters there in the great state of North Carolina.

6 Sir, I think the example that best illustrates the
7 essence is the Philippines, where over a period of 20 years
8 our -- well, for over 100 years, our strong societal
9 relationship with the Philippine society has been strong.
10 But just within these last 20, our ability to help train,
11 advise, assist the Philippines to counter the terrorism
12 threat in their country has deepened that relationship and,
13 in fact, helped us to withstand a very troubled period,
14 diplomatically, during the Duterte regime. And now, on the
15 back side, we have an even stronger alliance with the
16 Philippines, which will be critical as we look at any
17 action of deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

18 I certainly would not want to speak for Admiral Paparo
19 to talk about the overall region and where this fits
20 relative to his other priorities, but I know from a SOF
21 perspective our contribution to partnerships throughout the
22 region are important, and we really bring that credibility
23 from the counterterrorism fight to help leaven and deepen
24 those.

25 Senator Budd: Thank you very much. General Anderson,

1 I want to read you a quote from DoD's 2024 Annual Report to
2 Congress on Military and Security Developments Involving
3 the PRC. I will tee it up with this, and I will ask you a
4 question about it. It says, "Some of PRC's Belt and Road
5 Initiative projects could create potential military
6 advantages such as PLA access to select foreign ports, to
7 preposition necessary logistics to sustain naval
8 deployments in water such as distant as the Indian Ocean,
9 the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean."

10 So here is my concern. I am concerned about the PRC's
11 access to ports and the potential military advantage that
12 this could give them. So alongside Senator Kelly and
13 Scott, I introduce the Strategic Ports Reporting Act. It
14 is a bill to require monitoring of the PRC's access to
15 foreign ports.

16 So if confirmed, do you commit to looking into the
17 PRC's access to foreign ports in your area of
18 responsibility?

19 General Anderson: Senator, if confirmed, I will look
20 into that, definitely.

21 Senator Budd: Thank you. And would you be willing to
22 share with us some of your concerns in that area,
23 particularly with PRC access to foreign ports?

24 General Anderson: Senator, I think as we have seen
25 across the Indian Ocean and into the African AOR and to the

1 Atlantic and even the Mediterranean, China is investing in
2 ports globally. I think that should be concerning to us.
3 I think it should be concerning to us not only that they
4 could potentially use those as dual-use military ports but
5 what access could they deny U.S. forces or U.S. commerce as
6 necessary in time of conflict.

7 So I think this is an absolutely critical area that we
8 need to understand, the vulnerabilities that may be posed
9 by this. It does not mean that we do not believe in free
10 commerce and economics, but at the same time we need to
11 understand our national security interest and what this may
12 entail.

13 Senator Budd: Thank you very much. A question about
14 the North Carolina National Guard. In particular, we have
15 state partners in the AFRICOM AOR. It is Malawi, Zambia,
16 and Botswana. So General, how do you view the future of
17 the State Partnership Program and its ability to strengthen
18 regional stability in Africa?

19 General Anderson: Senator, I think the State
20 Partnership Program is one of the greatest programs we have
21 within the Department. It builds long-term relationships.
22 The nice thing about the National Guard and the partner
23 nation is those same people will see each other decade
24 after decade, and that builds a really powerful
25 relationship that I know we can build upon. As a matter of

1 fact, it was the California National Guard that we called
2 upon to get the first information in Ukraine, because they
3 had long-standing relationships with that State Partnership
4 Program there. The same thing can happen in Africa, where
5 a small investment can have a great return for us in the
6 future.

7 Senator Budd: Thank you both. Chairman.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Further questions? We
9 are told that Senator Shaheen is on her way.

10 Senator King: I can fill a little time, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Wicker: And there is a vote going on also.
12 But yes, the gentleman is recognized.

13 Senator King: I was struck by the Admiral's comment
14 that they had moved 27 times in their career. My first job
15 was moving furniture for Allied Van Lines in this area.
16 Most of our customers were military families, and I will
17 never forget a military spouse saying, "In terms of damage
18 to the furniture, seven moves equals a fire." So
19 congratulations on surviving multiple fires.

20 [Laughter.]

21 Admiral Bradley: Thank you, Senator.

22 Chairman Wicker: Senator King, I am a veteran myself,
23 and I only served 4 years active duty. It seems to me that
24 those people who have made 20 moves have been able to throw
25 away a lot of things that my children and grandchildren may

1 have to deal with, since I have not moved now in over 30
2 years.

3 We think, within 10 seconds, Senator Shaheen will
4 materialize. There is a vote going on, and we are trying
5 to do our best.

6 [Pause.]

7 Chairman Wicker: I do not believe we will be able to
8 go on with our hearing, so I want to thank our witnesses
9 for their testimony. And there will be an opportunity for
10 questions on the record. So I would remind members, or I
11 would inform members, that questions for the record will be
12 due to the Committee by 5 p.m. today.

13 And with that we are adjourned.

14 [Whereupon, at 11:19 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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