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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE
POSTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY IN REVIEW OF
THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR
2020 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Washington, D.C.

1   HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE

2   POSTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY IN REVIEW OF THE

3   DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND THE

4   FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

5

6   Tuesday, April 9, 2019

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8   U.S. Senate

9   Committee on Armed Services

10   Washington, D.C.

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12   The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in

13   Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.

14   Inhofe, chairman of the committee, presiding.

15   Members Present: Senators Inhofe [presiding], Wicker,

16   Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Perdue,

17   Scott, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal,

18   Hirono, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Warren, Peters, Manchin, and

19   Jones.

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1   OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.

2   SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3   Chairman Inhofe: Our meeting will come to order.

4   We have a number of nominees to confirm, here. And,

5   since we now have a quorum, I would like to move to that.

6   It is present, and I ask the committee to consider a

7   list of 82 pending military nominations. All of these

8   nominations have been before the committee the required

9   length of time.

10   Is there a motion to favorably report these --

11   Senator Reed: So move.

12   Chairman Inhofe: -- 82 pending military nominations to

13   the Senate? There's a motion.

14   A second?

15   Senator Wicker: Second.

16   Chairman Inhofe: All in favor, say aye.

17   [A chorus of ayes.]

18   Chairman Inhofe: Opposed, no.

19   [No response.]

20   Chairman Inhofe: Ayes have it. That's done.

21   All right, we have a -- let's go ahead on this. I'm

22   going to just go ahead with opening statements, then we'll

23   have a round after we hear from our witnesses.

24   The committee meets today to receive testimonies on the

25   posture of the Department of Navy in its fiscal year 2020.

1   We welcome our witnesses: Richard Spencer, the Secretary of

2   the Navy; Admiral John Richardson, Chief of the Naval

3   Operations; and General Robert Neller, Commandant of the

4   Marine Corps. And we thank you, all three, for your

5   service.

6   The National Defense Strategy directs our Nation's

7   military to prepare for the return of great-power

8   competition. This means we must be prepared to deter and,

9   if necessary, decisively defeat, our near-peer adversaries.

10   And I think we all know who we're talking about. It's China

11   and Russia.

12   In order for the Department of the Navy to achieve that

13   goal, our Navy and Marine Corps must be manned, trained,

14   equipped appropriately. Significant progress has been made

15   in rebuilding the readiness, but, still, there's a lot of

16   work to be done.

17   With the alarming speed of modernization that we've

18   witnessed, both conventional and nuclear forces, China and

19   Russia now present a credible threat to the United States

20   and our allies. It's past time for action. However, we

21   must be smart, not hasty, as we modernize our military.

22   Recently -- recent history should be our guide, because,

23   without better acquisition performance, we could fall

24   behind, or further behind, our competitors. For example,

25   the last eight combatant lead ships cost $8 billion more

1   than their initial budget, delivery the last 6 months late,

2   with dozens of deficiencies. Another example is our -- the

3   9 to 11 advanced weapons elevators on the USS Gerald R. Ford

4   still have not been accepted by the Navy, nearly 2 years

5   after the ship's delivery, and some other areas, also, the

6   problems with that.

7   And, while the promise of new technology may be

8   alluring, it's no substitute for demonstrated performance.

9   I'm highly skeptical of claims by the Department of Defense

10   officials that early retirement of the USS Harry Truman will

11   result in a more modern and lethal force as well as

12   increased industrial-base workload. The reality is, the

13   Ford lacks functional weapons elevators and has significant

14   reliability problems. No combination of unmanned systems

15   has been shown to match and reach the lethality of the

16   aircraft carrier and its Air Wing. And the Truman proposal

17   will result in reductions, not increases, of highly skilled

18   employees. We'll have some questions and discussion on the

19   USS Truman during the course of this hearing.

20   Senator Reed.

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

2   ISLAND

3   Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

4   I want to join you in welcoming Secretary Spencer,

5   Admiral Richardson, and General Neller to the committee this

6   morning to testify on the plans and programs of the

7   Department of the Navy in our review of the fiscal year 2020

8   authorization request. We are grateful to each of you for

9   your service and for the service of the men and women under

10   your command, and for the support of all Navy and Marine

11   families. And thank them for us, please.

12   I particularly want to thank Admiral Richardson and

13   General Neller, as this is likely to be their last posture

14   hearing before the committee. We thank you for your

15   dedicated years of service to our Nation. As the leaders of

16   the Navy and the Marine Corps, you face huge challenges as

17   you strive to balance the need to support ongoing operations

18   and sustained readiness with the need to modernize and keep

19   the technological edge so critical to military success.

20   In the near term, the Marine Corps has $315 million in

21   the disaster emergency relief supplemental that they need

22   relatively quickly. I hope we can focus on the potential

23   consequences of delaying recovery activities and move the

24   disaster emergency relief supplemental forward.

25   In addition, because significant levels of funding are

1   being transferred to build the wall on the southern border,

2   the amount of reprogramming authority will be limited this

3   year. I remain concerned that the Navy, Marine Corps, and

4   other services may run short of headroom in reprogramming

5   authority, which could lead to other delays and shortages.

6   In addition, I'm concerned about the opportunity cost of

7   deployments to the border.

8   The Department of the Navy faces serious readiness

9   problems caused by deferred maintenance, reduced steaming

10   and flying hours, and canceled training and deployments. We

11   are all keenly aware of the collisions of the McCain and the

12   Fitzgerald, and the loss of life that resulted. And I'm

13   interested in hearing about the progress the Navy is making

14   in implementing changes that will ensure such incidents will

15   not happen in the future.

16   All areas of our naval forces are maintaining an

17   extremely high operational tempo. Demand is overwhelming

18   for attack submarines, air and missile defense cruisers,

19   destroyers, and strike fighter inventories. In addition,

20   the Navy is now in its seventh year of operating with fewer

21   than the legally required 11 aircraft carriers. The Ford is

22   listed in the Navy inventory, but that ship, which is more

23   than 4 years behind schedule, will not be ready to deploy

24   for many more months. In addition, during the next decade,

25   the Navy will need to buy the new Columbia-class ballistic

1   missile submarines to replace the Ohio-class submarines.

2   This is an extremely expensive undertaking that is on a

3   very, very tight schedule.

4   The Marine Corps continues to make modernization of

5   ground vehicles a priority, which requires balancing the

6   procurement of new systems while upgrading existing

7   platforms to meet current operational needs. The amphibious

8   combat vehicle will replace the aging inventory of assault

9   amphibious vehicles in order to provide the Marines with

10   increased force protection and enhanced lethality. The

11   Marine Corps is also partnering with the Army to develop the

12   joint light tactical vehicle, or the JLTV, to replace the

13   Humvee. I will welcome an update from our witnesses on the

14   status of these programs, particularly in view of Army plans

15   to cut back on the JLTV program.

16   Two years ago, Admiral Richardson, you released the

17   Force Structure Assessment that identified a new force-

18   structure goal. The Navy's current high level of operations

19   contributed, in part, to your conclusions in this assessment

20   that the goal for the Navy fleet needs to increase from 308

21   ships to 355 ships. I'd like to hear what progress the Navy

22   is making in filling these needs. I'm also interested in

23   learning how the plan to retire the USS Harry Truman, rather

24   than refuel her, is consistent with achieving the 355-ship

25   goal.

1   I, again, thank the witnesses for their service and

2   their sacrifice. I look forward to their testimony.

3   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

4   We'll now have our opening remarks by our witnesses.

5   Your entire statement will be made a part of the record.

6   And so, be brief, if you'd like.

7   Senator -- or Secretary Spencer.

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STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD V. SPENCER, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Mr. Spencer: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished committee members, on behalf of our sailors, marines, and civilian teammates, thank you for your bipartisan efforts to restore funding stability.

I would like to take a moment right now, though, and have everyone pause for a minute. Yesterday, as you read, we lost three marines and one civilian in an attack. It is still a very risk-full world out there.

I would be remiss --

Chairman Inhofe: I would ask, right now, though, that we bow our heads in silence for the lives of these, and the families, of these individuals.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Secretary Spencer.

Mr. Spencer: I'd be remiss, Chairman, if I wasn't to take a moment right now, since this might be my last time in front of you all testifying on a budget, to say that, wearing a businessman's hat, I could not have asked for two better business partners than in the CNO and the Commandant. I came into a situation that we are working our way out of. If I, again, carry the corporate term, it was a turnaround. We've done some herculean work, and these two gentlemen were side by side, no light between us as we went forward. And

1   I'd like to just acknowledge that.

2   The concept of a strategy is the application of limited

3   resources to attain a goal. Aligned to the National Defense

4   Strategy, the Navy strategy for restoring readiness,

5   strengthening relationships, and reforming our processes has

6   been set, and we will build on that with a disciplined focus

7   on our people, capabilities, and processes. This budget

8   prioritizes a strategy-driven, balanced approach to

9   investment. It builds on prior investments, sustains the

10   industrial base, and maintains our competitive advantage, if

11   not expands the perimeters as we move to a more cost-

12   imposing, survivable, and affordable future of the -- future

13   -- force of the future.

14   Restoration of readiness is underway, and we're seeing

15   progress, ladies and gentlemen, every day. My analogy is

16   that the wind vanes are all pointed in the right direction.

17   Although we might be a little frustrated with the velocity

18   of the wind, we are moving it continually, day by day.

19   We're building the strength of our team through hiring in

20   areas of critical need, such as cybersecurity specialists,

21   aviation technicians, scientists and engineers, human

22   resource specialists, shipyard workers, and digital warfare

23   officers. We're aligning and enhancing our educational

24   institutions' distributed-learning venues through the

25   Education for Seapower Review. And we're taking aggressive

1   actions to return private military housing to a premium

2   product, mindful that we recruit the individual, but we

3   retain the family. All of these actions have one common

4   thread through them: the goal of increased readiness.

5   We're building our capabilities through investments in

6   hypersonics, machine learning, additive manufacturing,

7   quantum computing, and directed energy. We're building the

8   fleet in pursuit of a 355-ship Navy, manned and unmanned, to

9   include the Columbia-class submarine, next-generation

10   frigate, and remotely-piloted platforms, such as Sea Hunter

11   and Orca. These efforts are increasing lethality through

12   increased distributed maritime operations.

13   To reach the Secretary's goal of 80-percent mission-

14   capable tactical aircraft, we've realigned investments to

15   spares, aviation engineering, and logistical support through

16   our newly-created Navy Sustainment System, which is based

17   upon best practices from outside the wire, as I say,

18   commercial best practices. As a pilot program, these

19   activities have moved us to review our processes in all

20   maintenance areas within the naval enterprise, to include

21   ship, weapon, and vehicle maintenance and sustainment.

22   Driven by the Marine Corps Force 2025 Capability Investment

23   Strategy, we're investing in the amphibious combat vehicle,

24   loitering munitions, and unmanned logistics systems in order

25   to maintain our competitive advantage. Exercising the

 1   Marine Corps operating concept is moving us to rapidly

 2   progress as a continuous learning organization as we adapt

 3   and experiment in our new competitive environment.

 4   Yet, while we effect the aforementioned, the Marine

 5   Corps is also contending with unprecedented double impact of

 6   Hurricanes Florence and Matthew, which together damaged or

 7   destroyed more than $3.7 billion of infrastructure across

 8   many of our East Coast installations. Camp Lejeune is a

 9   primary force-generator for the naval services, directly

10   contributing to the capacity and readiness of our force.

11   And that area took the majority of the blunt impact of those

12   storms.

13   Over the past year, we have meaningfully increased our

14   interaction with our allies and friends. Exercises and

15   education have strengthened our ability to operate;

16   therefore, increasing the depth of our collective ability to

17   deliver the resources requested. Compared to a year ago,

18   the increase and depth of our relationship with our allies

19   and friends has been the prime contributor to this good

20   outcome.

21   Our Navy has implemented 91 of the 111 readiness reform

22   and oversight council recommendations, transforming a

23   culture of accepting risk to one of understanding and

24   managing risk. We've reviewed and are in the process of

25   remediating our business processes following our first top-

1   to-bottom audit. The audit is now proving to be a tool

2   where we find we can leverage lethality. We're using this

3   information to streamline operations and reimagine how

4   support functions can be modernized in order to drive

5   continued learning and, therefore, producing ever-increasing

6   efficiencies for the American taxpayer. We owe it to them

7   to ensure every dollar that we invest -- every dollar -- is

8   invested in the most effective manner possible. I am proud

9   to work with this committee to keep that promise.

10   Thank you.

11   [The prepared statement of Mr. Spencer follows:]

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1   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Secretary Spencer.

2   Admiral Richardson.

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1   STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JOHN M. RICHARDSON, USN, CHIEF OF

2   NAVAL OPERATIONS

3   Admiral Richardson: Thank you, Chairman Inhofe,

4   Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the

5   committee.   Thank you for the opportunity to appear here

6   alongside Secretary Spencer and General Neller to discuss

7   the Navy's fiscal year 2020 budget.

8   You know, President Thomas Jefferson wrote that,

9   "Industry, commerce, and security are the surest roads to

10   the happiness and prosperity of our people."   And the causal

11   link between prosperity, order, and security is why he

12   deployed the United States Navy to combat piracy off the

13   Barbary Coast at the dawn of the 19th century.   And it's

14   why, for over two centuries, we have helped keep the seas

15   open for all and opposed those who seek to control the seas

16   at the expense of America and our allies.

17   Today, as outlined in the 2018 National Defense

18   Strategy, nations like China and Russia are attempting to do

19   just that, to stem the tide that has steadily lifted all

20   boats by unilaterally redefining international norms on

21   terms more favorable only to themselves.   Chairman, you

22   mentioned that in your opening statement.   The Navy and the

23   Nation are responding with more than 60,000 sailors deployed

24   aboard nearly 100 ships and submarines at this very moment

25   by sustainably operating around the globe, advocating for

1   our principles, and protecting our national interests.

2   To maintain this worldwide posture, the President's

3   FY20 budget offers a strategy-driven, future-leaning,

4   balanced approach to deliver a naval force up to the task in

5   this era of great-power competition. The single most

6   effective way to maintain our strategic momentum is to

7   provide adequate, stable, and predictable funding. This

8   makes everything possible. It solidifies strategic

9   planning, incentivizes our commercial partners, and

10   mitigates operational risk by maximizing our planning and

11   execution time.

12   The foundation of naval power is our force of talented

13   and well-trained sailors. Important to our success, we

14   remain committed to recruiting and retaining diverse

15   shipmates whose intelligence, curiosity, energy, different

16   backgrounds, and varied viewpoints will catalyze the speed

17   and quality of decisions we need to outperform our

18   adversaries. As well, working with Congress, we continue to

19   transform our pay and personnel system to 21st-century

20   standards.

21   This budget also builds a bigger fleet, 54 battle-force

22   ships over 5 years, preserving our industrial base,

23   strengthening our ability to prevail in any warfighting

24   contingency. The budget fully funds the Columbia-class

25   ballistic missile submarine program, fulfilling our

1   existential imperative to deter nuclear attack on our

2   homeland.

3   The budget builds a better fleet, fielding state-of-

4   the-art systems that are more agile, networked, resilient,

5   and lethal. This budget recognizes that aircraft carriers

6   will be central to winning the future fight, which is why it

7   invests in the Gerald R. Ford class, delivering far more

8   combat power for less cost over their lifetime than their

9   Nimitz-class predecessors.

10   This budget also builds a ready fleet, steaming days to

11   exercise at sea, flying hours to train in the air,

12   sufficient quantities of ammunition and spares, and the

13   resources to conduct maintenance, today and in the future,

14   as the fleet size grows.

15   Meeting the Nation's and the Navy's responsibility is

16   not easy. It requires us all to work together. But, this

17   is what great nations, and only great nations, can and must

18   do. At the dawn of the Cold War, as this Nation took on the

19   challenge to go to the Moon, President Kennedy, a naval

20   officer, said, "We do these things, not because they are

21   easy, but because they are hard, because that challenge is

22   one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to

23   postpone, and one we intend to win."

24   I am grateful to this committee and to your colleagues

25   in the Congress for continuing this important work. We look

1   forward to sailing alongside you to build and deliver the

2   safest navy for our sailors, the strongest partner navy for

3   our friends and allies, and a navy that is the worst

4   nightmare for our enemies.

5   And I look forward to your questions.

6   [The prepared statement of Admiral Richardson follows:]

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1   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Admiral Richardson.

2   General Neller.

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1   STATEMENT OF GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC,

2 COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

3   General Neller: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed,

4 distinguished members of the committee, I'm here today to

5 testify on the posture of your Marine Corps, and I

6 appreciate the opportunity to be here, and I look forward to

7 your questions.

8   I know this committee, the Congress, and the American

9 people have high expectations for our marines. As our

10 Nation's expeditionary force in readiness, you expect your

11 marines to be ready to operate forward with our Navy in the

12 contact and blunt layers of a global operating model, to

13 assure our partners, deter our rivals, and respond to crisis

14 across the range of military operations. And, if deterrence

15 should fail and we are called to fight, you expect us to

16 fight and win.

17   As we hold this hearing, approximately 41,000 marines

18 are forward-deployed or postured in more than 60 countries

19 around the world, some in harm's way, as we found out all

20 too well yesterday, all engaged, doing exactly what you

21 expect of them, throughout our history, if you have called

22 upon your marines to respond immediately to crisis around

23 the globe, either from the sea, from forward bases, or from

24 home station. To meet your intent to be ready to suppress

25 or contain international disturbances, short of large-scale

1   war, we strive to prevent war by assuring our allies and

2   deterring rivals with ready, capable, and persistently

3   present naval expeditionary forces. Forward-postured naval

4   forces remain critical to that end, providing the Nation a

5   significant operational advantage through maneuver access

6   and our presence.

7   Now, supporting day-to-day operations through theater

8   security cooperation, building partner capacity,

9   humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief, or supporting

10   current global contingencies requires your expeditionary

11   force in readiness to be present. We recognize the

12   strategic environment is constantly changing, requiring

13   adaptations to our organization, training, equipment, and

14   warfighting concepts in order to provide our Nation the

15   lethal naval expeditionary force it demands. Your Marine

16   Corps is committed to building the most ready, capable, and

17   adaptable force the Nation can afford. This requires hard

18   choices as we balance commitments to our current operations,

19   work to rebuild our readiness, and pursue modernization

20   efforts designed to increase our competitive advantage over

21   our adversaries. Thanks to your efforts in Congress to

22   provide increased and on-time funding, you have made some of

23   our choices far less difficult.

24   Still, we remain challenged by the lasting effects of

25   Hurricanes Florence and Michael, both mentioned by Ranking

1   Member Reed and the Secretary, that hit the East Coast last

2   fall. The financial cost of these two storms totals around

3    $3.7 billion, but their impacts go deeper. And I look

4   forward to answering any questions on this issue that you

5   may have.

6   I do want to thank the Office of the Secretary of

7   Defense, the Congress, and the administration for their work

8   and support in approving $400 million of reprogrammed

9   resources so we can immediately begin addressing some of the

10   most pressing needs at Camp Lejeune. The Marine Corps

11   continues to work to address the remaining shortfall within

12   this fiscal year.

13   Despite these challenges, the Marine Corps remains on

14   the right path as we implement the National Defense

15   Strategy. We continue to develop effective warfighting

16   concepts through experimentation and invest in the right

17   capabilities while experimenting ruthlessly to validate our

18   choices in order to prepare for the future.

19   Most importantly to the success of your Corps, we

20   continue recruit and train the most qualified men and women

21   our Nation has to offer, men and women who raise their right

22   hand, yearn to earn the eagle, globe, and anchor, and serve

23   something greater than themselves, and represent the best

24   our Nation has to offer around the world.

25   The Navy/Marine Corps team remains our Nation's naval

1   expeditionary force in readiness, forward-deployed, forward-

2   postured, competing every day. And with the Congress's

3   continued support and commitment, we will ensure that we

4   must send our sons and daughters -- if we must send our sons

5   and daughters into harm's way, they will have every

6   advantage our Nation can provide.

7   Lastly, as mentioned by Ranking Member Reed, this was

8   likely to be my last appearance in front of this committee

9   as I close out 44 years as a marine, the last 4 as the

10   Commandant. And I want to personally thank this committee

11   for your support that you show every day to your marines.

12   Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

13   [The prepared statement of General Neller follows:]

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1   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, General Neller.

2   I've had a couple of systems I've talked about, and we

3 -- that I think are worthy of bringing up in this hearing.

4 First of all, Admiral Richardson, what is your current

5 requirement for aircraft carriers?

6   Admiral Richardson: Sir, the 2016 Force Structure

7 Assessment lists 12 aircraft.

8   Chairman Inhofe: I understand that you're now talking

9 about -- giving consideration to taking out the USS Harry

10 Truman. Now, my question -- my first question to you is,

11 Why would you -- it's my understanding that, over the last

12 -- for 22 days last summer, there was not a single aircraft

13 carrier strike group deployed. Right now, we know that we

14 have a need. And to take out, I guess, the Truman, you'd --

15 you could characterize that as being in midlife at this time

16 -- to take that out of the system, will you have something,

17 then, that can actually change our deficiency from two to

18 one? In other words, come up with 11, as opposed to 10.

19 So, what would motivate that decision?

20   Admiral Richardson: Chairman, thanks for that

21 question.

22   I like to think of the budget submission as a --

23 particularly with respect to the Truman, as a bit of a

24 discussion centering around three elements of the budget.

25 One is that we have, indeed, proposed not refueling the

1   Harry S. Truman at her midlife so that we can take those

2   funds and invest them into advanced technologies, all with

3   the idea of increasing naval power into the future. Our

4   budget, as I said in my opening statement, is forward-

5   leaning into those technologies.

6   Chairman Inhofe: But, that would have the result of

7   bringing our numbers down --

8   Admiral Richardson: It would, indeed.

9   Chairman Inhofe: -- to buy one additional carrier.

10   Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir. And so, the third leg

11   of that stool, Chairman, is really important, which is that

12   we've got a Force Structure Assessment currently underway,

13   and we've -- the combatant commanders are also studying

14   their requirements or OPLANs.

15   Chairman Inhofe: Now, when is that due?

16   Admiral Richardson: This is due later on this year.

17   And so, if we need to, it's early enough in the program that

18   we can reverse this decision. I think it's about $16

19   million, $17 million in the budget year. We are ready to

20   readdress that. If these studies show --

21   Chairman Inhofe: Well, I think that may happen,

22   because we're going to be -- of course, we're going into our

23   reauthorization, and that would be one thing that's -- I've

24   heard -- I'm not the only one who questions that decision,

25   but -- and you'll have a chance to respond more, because I

1   know others are interested in that.

2   Let me -- I know, Secretary Spencer, the question that

3   -- obviously, our favorite subject is, When do you project

4   that all 11 weapons elevators on the Ford would be ready to

5   be accepted by the Navy?

6   Mr. Spencer: Mr. Chairman, as you know, this is a

7   subject of great interest to me. What we're looking at

8   right now is, when she sails from her post-shakedown

9   availability, right now scheduled to be October. We've

10   taken two deliveries since we last talked. We're making

11   progress. We're working with contractors, application and

12   resources are being applied, and, rest assured, attention is

13   focusing down on it.

14   Chairman Inhofe: Okay. Well, let me just be sure that

15   we're clear, here. There are other areas of

16   underperformance, as you fully aware, such as the catapults,

17   the resting gear, radar, and the propulsion plan. They're

18   going to have to demonstrate reliability at the same point

19   that we'd be looking at the weapons elevators, isn't that

20   correct?

21   Mr. Spencer: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

22   Chairman Inhofe: And that was going to be July the --

23   July of this year, of 2019.

24   Mr. Spencer: That is correct. There are other items

25   that are pushing the availability out, such as the main

1   thrust bearings, propulsion, and just the whole general PSA

2   schedule.

3   Chairman Inhofe: And that now is going out to October?

4   Is that correct?

5   Mr. Spencer: That is correct.

6   Chairman Inhofe: All right. How confident are you

7   that this is going to take place by October?

8   Mr. Spencer: I --

9   Chairman Inhofe: Now's a good time to express that --

10   Mr. Spencer: It --

11   Chairman Inhofe: -- since --

12   Mr. Spencer: -- certainly is, Chairman. I am fairly

13   confident. This is new technologies. I don't want to use

14   that as an excuse, but I will tell you that we're confident,

15   working with the contractor, that this is the goal that we

16   will get the Ford out the door --

17   Chairman Inhofe: Yeah.

18   Mr. Spencer: -- in October.

19   Chairman Inhofe: That's a good idea, because we've

20   scheduled a meeting for October, so we'll have a chance to

21   --

22   Mr. Spencer: I will --

23   Chairman Inhofe: -- to look at that.

24   Mr. Spencer: I will call up the CO, and we'll have

25   lunch --

1   Chairman Inhofe: All right.

2   Mr. Spencer: -- on the ship.

3   Chairman Inhofe: Okay.

4   Now -- and one other system, here, because I know

5   there's some discussion on the CH-53K replacing the CH-53E,

6   and I'd like to get, kind of, an update on that. It could

7   be from you or from any of the other witnesses.

8   Mr. Spencer: Let me start, and I'm more than happy to

9   have the Commandant weigh in if he has other comments.

10   I think that you remember this has always been a

11   program, since I've been onboard, that we've kept an eye on.

12   As of this winter, it was not progressing to the speed that

13   I thought was appropriate, nor our acquisition folks. We

14   are having some negotiations with the prime supplier,

15   Lockheed Martin Sikorsky. I just most recently, Mr.

16   Chairman, sat down with the leadership of Lockheed Martin,

17   and we have, quote/unquote, "aligned our priorities as

18   partners."

19   Chairman Inhofe: Okay. I think that's a good idea.

20   You have new leadership there, you have a different

21   corporate setting than we did before, and that has to be

22   taken in consideration.

23   Yeah, we're going to stay with our time -- timing on

24   this, this round.

25   Senator Reed.

1   Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

2   Mr. Secretary, we mentioned, several of us, the damage

3   by Hurricane -- several hurricanes to Navy installations.

4   And Section 335 of the FY18 NDAA required the services to

5   send up the top ten installations that are vulnerable to

6   weather, extreme weather. We have not received that yet.

7   Your colleagues in the Air Force and Army have committed to

8   do so. Can we get a commitment for promptly sending up to

9   us the list of the ten most vulnerable installations?

10   Mr. Spencer: At 12:01, I will make sure that is

11   underway, Senator, and I apologize for the delay.

12   Senator Reed: It's -- thank you. It's -- you're in

13   good company with Secretary Wilson and Secretary Esper. So,

14   thank you very much.

15   One of the things that we've noticed through the course

16   of these hearings is that -- particularly when talking,

17   again, with Secretary Esper and his colleagues in the Army

18   -- they did a deep dive into their budget to try to find

19   savings before they asked for additional resources. Has the

20   Navy, Mr. Secretary and Admiral Richardson and General

21   Neller, Navy and Marine Corps made such a deep dive and made

22   proposed cuts?

23   Mr. Spencer: Yes, Senator. A way to look at -- I

24   think you're talking about the Army's Night Court that they

25   were having, et cetera.

1   Senator Reed: Yes, sir.

2   Mr. Spencer: Navy goes through a similar process every

3 single budget cycle, although this next cycle that we're

4 doing, we're actually calling it zero-base budgeting, where

5 we are zeroing everybody out, and everyone has to come in

6 and sing for their dinner as to their requirements. But, if

7 you look at our savings -- I was talking to Senator Perdue

8 about this -- if you look at our savings from authorities

9 you've given us, whether it be block buy, multiyear buys,

10 process improvements, from fiscal year '17 on, we have about

11 $30 billion worth of savings, compared to business as usual.

12   Senator Reed: Your comments, Admiral Richardson?

13   Admiral Richardson: Senator, I'd just echo what the

14 Secretary said. We do this pretty much every year, but

15 we've really turned up the heat, under the Secretary's

16 leadership, and those tens of billions of savings are

17 exactly what I'm tracking, as well.

18   Senator Reed: And Commandant?

19   General Neller: Sir, there are specific programs that

20 we have dropped from the budget that we felt we could accept

21 risk. There was risk to dropping them, but we did it,

22 because we wanted to generate resources for other more

23 important things. And we continue to look at what we call

24 core/non-core actions that we do and things where we could

25 possibly, maybe, outsource that or not do it at all in order

1   to generate additional resources based on the fact that we

2   -- as generous as the Congress has been, we have to be

3   prepared to be able to do with whatever we receive in the

4   future.

5   Senator Reed: Thank you.

6   Mr. Secretary, there is a significant amount of MILCON

7   construction that has been designated by the White House to

8   be shifted to the wall. And I presume, simply by the fact

9   of asking for the MILCON, that these are serious

10   investments, and that, from a military standpoint, your

11   position would be, they should be -- they should take

12   priority, perhaps, over other funding, including the wall?

13   Mr. Spencer: Yes, Senator. The process that I've been

14   made aware of is that the list was going up, then we will be

15   asked to prioritize, at some point. And I will make sure

16   that my prioritization expressions are given.

17   Senator Reed: I -- the sheer size of the request will

18   limit, to a significant degree, what you can protect. And I

19   would presume that there will be projects there that are

20   critical to the Navy and the Marine Corps that, for the

21   demands of the southern wall, will be taken away. And from,

22   again, a military standpoint -- there are other factors, I'm

23   sure, but from the military standpoint, do you think that's

24   a wise diversion?

25   Mr. Spencer: When asked, Senator, I will give my best

1   advice to the Secretary.

2   Senator Reed: Thank you.

3   General Neller, I mentioned the JLTV. Can you give us

4   an idea how you and the Army are going to work together if

5   they try to scale this program down, in terms of putting it

6   in the field?

7   General Neller: Senator, we have a stated requirement

8   right now in the acquisition objective. I think it's about

9   8800. And we're starting to field, actually, this year, for

10   the first time. So, I have not heard specifically from the

11   Army that they are definitely going to reduce their

12   acquisition objective, because that may have some effect on

13   the unit cost, which will be passed on to us. So, overall,

14   we have -- we've been looking at ground vehicles, and we're

15   trying to get no more ground vehicles than we need. And so,

16   I'll have to engage with the Chief of Staff of the Army on

17   this. But, right now, we're fielding the vehicle and trying

18   to get rid of our old Humvees and -- the oldest Humvees

19   first, and replace them with JLTVs to give marines the

20   newest piece of gear that they can get their hands on.

21   Senator Reed: Thank you.

22   And just a final comment, in just seconds left.

23   Admiral Richardson, again, you mentioned the Columbia class.

24   It's going to require a lot of scrutiny, a lot of oversight,

25   and a lot of collaboration. It's a great challenge, but

1   necessary. We have to replace the Ohio class. So, thank

2   you for your work, and I encourage you to keep a close and

3   sharp eye.

4   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5   Senator Wicker [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Reed.

6   Senator Inhofe has stepped out for a few moments and

7   asked me to preside for a few moments.

8   General Neller, let me begin with you and, certainly,

9   thank you for your four decades-plus of service.

10   Let's talk about amphibious ship procurement and the

11   current budget proposal. I was heartened to hear Admiral

12   Richardson say that the budget submission is an opportunity

13   for a bit of discussion about some of these issues. The

14   Navy deferred LPD procurement to 2021 and LHA procurement to

15   2024, saying that, in pursuing the National Defense Strategy

16   priorities, it was unable to take advantage of last year's

17   addition of advanced procurement funding for either FY-2020

18   LPD or an adjustment to the LHA. Does the Marine Corps

19   still have a stated need for 38 amphibious ships, as

20   indicated in the Force Structure Assessment?

21   General Neller: Yes, Senator.

22   Senator Wicker: And do we have those 38 ships today?

23   General Neller: No, we do not.

24   Senator Wicker: Do you foresee eliminating the Marine

25   Corps' core mission of amphibious operations at any point in

1   the future? For example, in a potential conflict with China

2   or Russia, would our amphibious Marine Corps likely play a

3   key role?

4   General Neller: Based on the plans I've seen, I would

5   say yes, but it's more than that. It -- I think we have to

6   look at the ability to come from the sea with the Navy as

7   part of a maritime strategy. And I think the CNO and I are

8   aligned with that. So, yes, they would be part of that

9   planning and in those operations.

10   Senator Wicker: Okay. And let me just ask you, then,

11   how the F-35 exercise went, recently. The Essex Amphibious

12   Ready Group and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit recently

13   completed the first combat deployment of the F-35 Joint

14   Strike Fighter. During this deployment, the F-35 saw action

15   in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. How does the F-35 expand

16   the effectiveness of U.S. amphibious forces? And what did

17   we learn about the F-35's logistical and material footprint

18   aboard the USS Essex that can be applied to future

19   iterations of large-deck amphibious ships, sir?

20   General Neller: Senator, I have not received the After

21   Action from the 13th MEU. I expect to get that within the

22   next week. I can tell you that the material readiness of

23   the airplane while they were deployed was -- exceeded what I

24   expected. They averaged above 70-percent readiness at some

25   point. Actually, in 1 month, they were close to 80. They

1   had six jets aboard the aircraft. They did operate in the

2   airspace above Afghanistan and Syria. So, their material

3   readiness was good. There actually -- there are lessons

4   learned, as far as the aviation maintenance onboard ship and

5   the things you have to do, but they set themselves for -- up

6   for success. They had us -- they did a good job on the

7   parts block, and they did a good job bringing experienced

8   maintainers. This is a bigger jet than we're used to, so

9   there are some deck-handling things that have to go. So,

10   all that stuff will come out. As far as the capability, as

11   far as information and the passage of information and what

12   they were able to do or not do, that's what I'm looking

13   forward to hearing in the After Action Brief.

14   Senator Wicker: And when do you think --

15   General Neller: Overall, it was -- in the next week.

16   And I believe they will be up on the Hill to brief, also,

17   Senator.

18   Senator Wicker: But, overall, it's a positive --

19   General Neller: It was -- material readiness was the

20   thing we were concerned with, being away from a home base.

21   And the material readiness was excellent.

22   Senator Wicker: Great.

23   And I think Senator Reed, in his opening statement,

24   mentioned that he'd like to have a comment, at some point,

25   about how not refueling the Truman is consistent with our

1   goal of 355 ships. But, let me ask this question instead,

2   Secretary Spencer. And it's with regard to the amphibs.

3   Last month, during the Seapower Subcommittee hearing on Navy

4   shipbuilding programs, I asked Secretary Geurts if, instead

5   of deferring procurement to 2021 and 2024, could the Navy

6   apply incremental funding to the LPD and LHA in FY20? He

7   said the Navy could apply incremental funding to the LPD and

8   LHA in FY20, if authorized to do so by Congress.

9   And I'll ask you the same question. Could the Navy

10   apply incremental funding to the LPD and LHA in FY20, as --

11   if authorized by Congress? And, if Congress approves

12   incremental funding in the FY20 NDAA for the LHA and LPD,

13   would that allow the Navy to accelerate how it spends the

14   350 million that was appropriated in FY19?

15   Mr. Spencer: Yes, Senator. If, in fact, you authorize

16   and appropriate our authorities or -- to go forward with the

17   funding, yes, the answer is, indubitably.

18   Senator Wicker: Thank you very, very much. Well,

19   we're certainly going to pursue that. And I appreciate the

20   candor of our witnesses today.

21   Senator Shaheen.

22   Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23   And thank you, gentlemen, for being here this morning.

24   Admiral Richardson and General Neller, thank you both

25   very much for all of your years of service and the excellent

1   job that you provided to this country and to the committee.

2   I'm sure that the committee is going to miss you a lot more

3   than you're going to miss the committee.

4   Secretary Spencer, you and I have had the opportunity

5   to talk about the importance of the Shipyard Infrastructure

6   Optimization Plan and the commitment that you have to make

7   progress on that. It calls for $21 billion in investment

8   over the next 20 years, and a number of needs, one of which

9   is drydock capitalization -- recapitalization. And I just

10   wanted to pick up on Senator Reed's concerns that he

11   expressed about money being taken from military construction

12   projects, like those that are laid out in the Shipyard

13   Optimization Plan, because of their need to address our

14   military needs, going forward. Four of the projects that

15   are on that list of military construction projects are at

16   the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. At least three of those are

17   critical to the continued expansion of the drydock and the

18   ability of the shipyard to continue to work on our attack

19   submarines that are so critical to maintaining the defense

20   of this country. So, can you talk about the importance of

21   these projects to maintain our submarine fleet, and how

22   delaying or taking money from these projects would impact

23   our national security?

24   Mr. Spencer: Senator, you and I have talked before,

25   and I'm more than happy to present to the whole committee

1   the importance of our ability to, not only purchase, but,

2   equally important, maintain the ships that we have, to get

3   them back out to the fight. When we score our MILCON

4   projects, there is a prioritization. This is obviously a

5   very serious prioritization. As I said earlier, my job, in

6   this case, is to provide the best advice that I can to the

7   decision process. And I will represent exactly that.

8   Senator Shaheen: And have you been asked to do that

9   yet? And is there any new criteria that has been laid out

10   by Secretary Shanahan in the Department of Defense about

11   they're going to determine which projects to take money

12   from?

13   Mr. Spencer: None that already has been discussed, and

14   the timing has not been presented to me as to when he'd like

15   my opinions.

16   Senator Shaheen: So, you haven't been told of any

17   reprioritization that is being done by DOD.

18   Mr. Spencer: Not as of this date, Senator.

19   Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

20   And, General Neller, there's been recent reports, that

21   I know you're aware of, where you've expressed concern about

22   the readiness challenges that are presented by taking

23   funding and troops to address the southwest border. Can you

24   talk a little bit more about what your concerns are there?

25   General Neller: Senator, I wrote a memo to the

1   Secretary of the Navy laying out eight fiscal shortfalls

2   that the Marine Corps had, one of which was the cost of

3   putting marines on the border. So, the marines on the

4   border, their readiness, I've checked -- personally checked

5   the readiness of every unit down there. And, with only one

6   exception, there was no impact to their actual readiness.

7   In fact, a couple of units improved their readiness. So, to

8   say that going to the border was degrading our readiness is

9   not an accurate statement.

10   That said, there is a cost there, a small cost compared

11   to the others. And we have a shortfall of just under $300

12   million, of which the border mission is less than 2 percent.

13   So, what I was looking was for some assistance in

14   trying to get money to reprogram, because we have to pay our

15   bills. And short of that, we would have to look at other

16   places to get the resources. So, that was the intent of the

17   memo. And -- but, there are a number of things out there

18   that we don't have funding for, some due to other mandates

19   put on us by this body, some by the Department of Defense.

20   So, my intent was to just simply lay out for my boss what

21   these were and ask his support in trying to figure out how

22   we might fund them.

23   Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I appreciate that

24   clarification.

25   One of the concerns, Secretary Spencer, that has been

1 expressed about our current state of readiness in terms of

2 -- is the industrial base that we have, that we're going to

3 need as we ramp up our shipbuilding. Can you talk about the

4 efforts that the Navy's taking to rebuild this industrial

5 base and to focus on research and development to support

6 shipbuilding efforts?

7   Mr. Spencer: Yes, Senator. It goes across the board.

8 Whether it's shipbuilding, aircraft building, weapons

9 building, we are tremendously focused on the supply chain,

10 because, beyond the prime, who we interface with directly,

11 is this underlying matrix of organizations providing parts

12 into the platforms. It's critical, on many fronts, whether

13 it goes to the cyber protection of the data that they're

14 holding to produce the parts to us, all the way to the

15 actual parts. You're finding that, in the Navy/Marine Corps

16 enterprise, the acquisition side is going deep, personally,

17 themselves, alongside contractors to ensure the health and

18 the warning signs and friction points that we have in the

19 supply chain, and how we can rectify them. As an example,

20 in certain areas we're sitting there, going, "Okay, if, in

21 fact, supplier A is industrial-capacity-limited, why don't

22 we go to our allies, if, in fact, it's not a critical,

23 confidential part, and actually rely more on our allies?"

24 As you know, we're legally allowed to, in many cases,

25 include up to 50 percent foreign parts. We're now flexing

1   that muscle again to make sure that we are exhausting the

2   whole field of availability.

3   Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you.

4   I'm out of time, but I'll submit a question for the

5   record to try and learn a little bit more about exactly what

6   we're doing.

7   Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you, Senator

8   Shaheen.

9   Senator Cotton.

10   Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen.

11   Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson, I want to

12   return -- it was touched upon briefly, the collisions of the

13   Fitzgerald and the McCain. In 2017, after those collisions,

14   you both initiated a review of the root causes, and arrived

15   at a number of corrective actions. Our National Defense

16   Authorization Act last year also included 11 related --

17   provisions related to those reviews to improve the readiness

18   of our naval surface forces. Could you please update the

19   committee on the current state of readiness, in light of

20   those corrective actions, and also tell us what corrective

21   actions have not yet been fully implemented?

22   Mr. Spencer: Senator, I'll start and then be more than

23   happy to turn it over to the CNO.

24   Out of the 111, 91 we discussed and arbitrated, we have

25   underway corrective actions, some that were immediate, such

1   as turning on AIS, which is the identification system, when

2   transiting busy passages, through our longer-term

3   remediation, which is the education process, four ships for

4   watch-standing, and also the equipment and systems that we

5   are putting in place to enhance the education process.

6   CNO?

7   Admiral Richardson: Senator, I'll just pick up from

8   there. Every one of the measures that we committed to do,

9   both to ourselves and with the Congress, are on track or

10   complete. And we have really moved the discussion from,

11   certainly, regaining a safe-to-operate perspective to moving

12   through a climate of compliance into a culture of

13   excellence, which is where your Navy should always be

14   operating. This included a number of different measures

15   across a very wide spectrum, including, first and probably

16   foremost, the return of schedule and training and

17   certification discipline in the 7th Fleet. And so, now we

18   are ensuring that we certify all ships to go out and do the

19   missions that they are assigned, and they have the requisite

20   maintenance and training time to do those.

21   We also addressed the surface warfare officer career

22   path. And so, as I alluded -- illuminated in my written

23   statement, the amount of training throughout that career

24   path, and the amount of sea time that an officer accrues

25   before he goes to command, has almost doubled, across the

1 board. And so, there's a lot more experience being gained.

2   And finally, in addition to the amount of training, the

3 quality of that training has increased considerably through

4 the use of high-fidelity simulators, which are being

5 installed in our schoolhouses and in our fleet concentration

6 areas. So, to put it broadly, we're making progress across

7 this entire broad front to get to that culture of

8 excellence.

9   Mr. Spencer: Senator, we can send you a little

10 followup that I know Senator King had asked for. And being

11 a data-centric person, it's the numbers behind what we just

12 presented you.

13   Senator Cotton: Thank you.

14   Just to tie a bow on this line of questioning, how

15 confident are you that we have no more ships in our Navy

16 that have some of the deficiencies that those After Action

17 Reviews cited, and that the leaders and sailors on our ships

18 now have been fully trained and have the skills that they

19 need to avoid such a terrible tragedy in the future?

20   Admiral Richardson: I'm confident we're on the right

21 track, sir.

22   Mr. Spencer: Ditto.

23   Senator Cotton: Okay.

24   Secretary Spencer, let's turn back to the Truman now.

25 There's always been a few lines of questions here. Could

1   you tell us, very simply, was the decision about the Truman

2   a decision driven by budget considerations or by strategic

3   considerations?

4   Mr. Spencer: It was a hybrid, Senator. Then-Deputy

5   Secretary Shanahan, when we were planning budget rollout,

6   the thinking amongst the Navy that we worked on was, we have

7   three buckets. We have legacy systems, we modernize legacy

8   systems, and the third bucket was what we call Funding Force

9   2.0, which is what we've referred to as our future warfare

10   systems, whether that be quantum computing, AI, machine

11   learning, et cetera. Couple that with the fact that -- I

12   want to make sure everyone understands this -- the Ford will

13   work. The Ford is not a Nimitz. The Ford has 30-percent

14   higher launch capability for sorties than the Nimitz. It

15   takes 25-percent less people. It is a more efficient

16   machine. So, as I look at modernizing a fleet, much like in

17   the commercial world, when organizations modernize aircraft,

18   modernize trucks, modernize cars, modernize ships, they will

19   move for 20-percent efficiencies and abandon the assets that

20   they have. This is not an easy decision whatsoever,

21   Senator, but, in light of the technologies that we have

22   coming forward -- and I defer to the Chairman that there's

23   still work to be done, here -- the thought process was, we

24   have a much more capable, much more lethal, much more

25   projecting platform. Three of those in the fleet will make

1   up on a capacity argument. That was the primary decision.

2   So, we can take those dollars and then deploy those into

3   Force 2.0 as the competitive -- changes.

4   Senator Cotton: So, my time's almost expired, but just

5   to -- one final question here. Surely, though, if this

6   Congress provided you the money necessary for both the

7   Truman refueling and also the rest of your shipbuilding

8   plan, you wouldn't turn that money down and say, "No, we

9   don't need the Truman."

10   Mr. Spencer: I would not turn that money down.

11   Senator Cotton: I didn't think so.

12   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

13   Senator Warren.

14   Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15   So, thousands of Active Duty troops and National

16   Guardsmen are currently deployed on the southern border.

17   This operation is going to cost at least a half a billion

18   dollars. So, I've repeatedly written to the Department of

19   Defense, asking whether the deployment impacts military

20   readiness. Each time, the answer has been no. General

21   Neller, last month you wrote a memo to the Navy Secretary

22   identifying nine factors, and I'll quote, "imposing

23   unacceptable risk to Marine Corps combat readiness and

24   solvency," end quote. One was the border deployment, and a

25   second was the President's plan to take funding away from

1   military construction for a border wall.

2   Now, General Neller, I know you did not expect this

3   memo to become public, you did not release it, you were just

4   doing your job by assessing risks. Ranking Member Reed and

5   I, along with several other committee members, sent another

6   letter to the Department yesterday, because that's our job

7   as members of this committee, to ask questions about the

8   impact of these risks. So, let me ask. Have any exercises

9   been canceled, or were any units sent to the border instead

10   of going to scheduled training exercises? Just factual

11   questions. General?

12   General Neller: No exercises, to my knowledge, have

13   been canceled. There have been some, due to funding.

14   So, Senator, if I could just embellish for a second.

15   You're correct, I had a list of eight unresourced

16   requirements, of which one was the mission to go to the

17   border. And what I tried to articulate was, if we did not

18   get funding for these, the total cost of these, about $300

19   million, of which the border mission, right now, to date,

20   costing about 6.2 -- if we didn't get additional money, then

21   we would have to look at other sources for money, which

22   could potentially include other exercises, which would

23   eventually affect the readiness of the force.

24   Senator Warren: So, I understand that, but I'm not

25   quite sure I heard the answer to the question. Are you

1   saying no exercises were canceled?

2   General Neller: There was an exercise that we reduced

3   the number of people that were going there, but we have

4   relooked at our finances, and we're going to cashflow, at

5   least for this quarter, those exercises, and we're going to

6   continue to do the exercises.

7   Senator Warren: Were any exercises delayed because

8   people were sent to the border?

9   General Neller: No.

10   Senator Warren: Okay. And were any units sent to the

11   border instead of going to scheduled training exercises?

12   General Neller: There were some units that went to the

13   border that were scheduled to participate in exercises, and

14   they were not able to do so because they were in that

15   mission.

16   Senator Warren: So, they were diverted to the border

17   instead of doing their --

18   General Neller: A small number, yes --

19   Senator Warren: -- their exercises. Okay. Can you

20   just say a word about what are the opportunity costs of the

21   border deployment?

22   General Neller: It depends on the unit. Some of the

23   units have gone down there, and they have done tasks that

24   are more in line with their core mission, like engineer

25   units or MP units. Aviation units that were assigned to

1   that early on have actually improved their readiness,

2   because they are able to fly certain profiles. Other units,

3   one particular unit is doing a mission today that's not part

4   of their core competency, so it -- but, for 60 days, they

5   can handle that, but it will affect their readiness.

6   Senator Warren: Okay. So, when I have raised these

7   issues with DOD officials, they seem to deny disruptions to

8   readiness. I'm seeing something of a disconnect here.

9   Secretary Spencer, maybe you can shed some light on

10   this. DOD officials assured me, in writing, that the

11   President's southern border deployment and the transfer of

12   military construction funds for a wall do not present

13   significant readiness risks. But, we now know that concerns

14   about readiness have been raised internally. Same question

15   to you. What are the opportunity costs of the border

16   deployment?

17   Mr. Spencer: I answered the same as the Commandant,

18   Senator. There are some that actually benefit from the

19   deployment, because they can actually do their job that

20   their core competency is, some not. But, let's bring it up

21   -- and the whole reason that I asked both the CNO and the

22   Commandant for a memo such as this is, I feel I have to

23   know, being the chief executive of the service, to know

24   where the stresses are. This was item G on the whole list.

25   The main stress that we were dealing with at the time,

1   Senator, was the hurricane, which was imposing the greatest

2   cost on the Marine Corps. Five-hundred men for a month at

3   the southern border is $1.25 million. In my mind, is that

4   affecting my readiness stress? No, it's not.

5   Senator Warren: All right. I understand that it's in

6   a context. But, as I said before, part of our job is to

7   explore where we have valid concerns to military readiness.

8   You're doing your job when you raise those concerns. We're

9   doing our job when we ask about them.

10   You know, the Commandant of the Marine Corps has said

11   that border deployment and the transfer of military

12   construction funds for a wall contribute to an unacceptable

13   risk to the Marine Corps' combat readiness and solvency. I

14   think it's time for the President and Congress to listen to

15   him, and we should keep asking these questions.

16   Thank you.

17   Thank you, both.

18   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Warren.

19   Senator Rounds.

20   Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21   Gentlemen, first of all, thank you for your service to

22   our country.

23   Secretary Spencer, you recently commissioned a report

24   to review your cyber operations within the Department of

25   Navy. In it the report was very critical of current naval

1   operations with regard to cyber operations, and it went to

2   great lengths to point out some of the failings within the

3   system today. But, I also found it very refreshing, in that

4   it laid out, for everyone to see, the challenges that you

5   face, and it clearly puts a focus on the need to make

6   significant changes. I find that, if you would have taken

7   out the Department of Navy and you would have put in any one

8   of our other branches, I suspect, other than the anecdotal

9   examples, you would have found a consistency across the

10   entire Department of Defense. So, number one, I want to

11   thank you for laying this out for everyone to be able to see

12   and to review, but also for laying out, not just the

13   challenges, but some solutions that I think are moving in

14   the right direction.

15   I'd like you to talk a little bit about one part, in

16   particular. And that is, as we move to a 355-ship Navy, and

17   as we talk about the security of every one of those ships

18   and all of the work that we do to protect each one of those

19   ships, compare that with what our near-peer and peer

20   competitors are doing. They're not stealing our ships.

21   They're stealing our information. And we need to take a

22   change, in terms of the culture, about how we protect our

23   information, just like we protect our other assets.

24   Would you care to comment a little bit about, number

25   one, about where you're going with that? And I've got one

1   other question I'm going to -- I want to ask you about. So,

2   if you could, a little bit, share where you're going with

3   this, and just how deep in this went to not just

4   cybersecurity, but to all other aspects, whether it be

5   acquisitions, logistics, and so forth, modernization.

6   Mr. Spencer: Senator, it -- thank you for the

7   question, because it is timely. This was driven primarily

8   out of some exfiltrations that happens in our supply system.

9   And that's where the concern for the study started. Rest

10   assured, when it comes to classified information within the

11   Navy itself, we are good at that. Where we're concerned

12   about is out in our contractor -- cleared-contractor

13   relationship base. That's where it started.

14   Now, where did it progress from there? One, we need to

15   take immediate remedial actions, which we are underway right

16   now, with our supplier base, when it comes to our cyber

17   protection. You will hear the Navy and ourselves talk about

18   -- it's not how quickly we can get to the fight. One of our

19   battles is going to be getting off the pier, because cyber

20   is around us continually, 100 times a minute, a second,

21   whatever analogy you want to use. It's there, it's present,

22   it's not going away. We need to up our game, not only on

23   cyber defense, because you can't have one side of this

24   equation, you have to be offensively agile as you do

25   defensively agile. They both complement each other. We

1   have to move into that realm. We're going to be asking for

2   probably more authorities, in general, the DOD, when it

3   comes to this, because it's a balanced equation.

4   Immediately, in the Navy, we are in the process, right

5   now, of -- underneath Ron Moultrie, who was a primary member

6   of the team, he is helping us coalesce our business plan to

7   go forward with our cyber remediation process. That goes

8   from data hygiene all the way to organizing what the

9   organization would look like. We're sending a leg prop up

10   to you all to entertain adding a fifth Assistant Secretary.

11   One of the reasons here is that we need to get the people of

12   gravitas, who have the education, who have the experience to

13   deal in cyber, to get them into a position like that and

14   give them the authority to organize and effect the solutions

15   that we need.

16   Senator Rounds: I found one other part of this to be

17   interesting, in that I think this could be transferred --

18   this concept of using the outside resources to not only look

19   at the cyber side, but also on your acquisition side and on

20   your maintenance side, as well. Last fall, I asked specific

21   questions about your attack submarines, the numbers that

22   you've got. You've still got a number of them sitting at

23   dock, because you're not getting them in to drydock, which

24   means we've got nuclear attack submarines taxpayers have

25   paid for that can't be used today. In fact, a number of

1   them, including the USS Boise, can't dive. You've also got

2   legacy and Super Hornets, of which, 2 years ago, I believe,

3   we were estimating the operational capability at 40 percent.

4   My understanding is, it's pretty close to that same level

5   today. Can you share with us a little bit about the

6   direction that you're going with regard to those, and

7   whether or not you're making progress on those legacies,

8   both the Navy and the Marines?

9   Mr. Spencer: The good news that I'm very happy to

10   bring to you right now is, our F-18, both Navy and Marine

11   Corps, the Es and Fs and the legacies are not boasting

12   somewhere up around 67 percent availability. And this is

13   part of our Navy sustainment effort that we're focusing in

14   right now. We have a ways to go when it comes to surface

15   ship and subsurface ship maintenance. That is apparent.

16   Senator Shaheen brought it up. We need to do our shipyard

17   modernization. This is all about flow. We have the

18   fundamental understanding now. Now we need to apply the

19   resources to get those out into --

20   Senator Rounds: You need to be at 80 percent, correct,

21   on the Hornets, to make your mission?

22   Mr. Spencer: By end of fiscal year, yes, Senator.

23   Senator Rounds: Thank you.

24   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you. That's good news. I was

1   not aware that that's where we were right now. Because we

2   were down as low as 40 percent.

3   Thank you, Senator Rounds.

4   Senator Jones.

5   Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6   And thank you each for your service.

7   But, Secretary Spencer, I want to particularly thank

8   you for the time and -- that you've shown me in my first 15

9   months here. It's been a really enjoyable and informative

10   experience, what I've had. So, thank you for that.

11   You have stated -- I guess this would be mainly to

12   Admiral Richardson and General Neller -- that we have

13   increased rates -- we're looking at 5100 sailors and trying

14   to increase the rates. I'm particularly interested in the

15   pilot ranks. How diverse are our pilot ranks in the Navy?

16   And what is the Navy doing to kind of increase the diversity

17   for men, for minorities, as well as females? Senator Cotton

18   and I have a bill that we're -- introduced to try to

19   increase Junior ROTC and some other things to try to

20   increase that diversity. Could you talk about those

21   programs a little bit, and what you're doing?

22   Admiral Richardson: So, I'll tell you, in the Navy,

23   and then I'll turn it over to the Commandant.

24   Just like you, Senator, we're doing everything we can

25   to make sure, as I said in my opening statement, that we

1   bring in a diverse workforce across the entire Navy, not

2   only in our pilots, but everywhere, in that regard. We've

3   opened up all of our jobs to women. Certainly, we

4   encourage, you know, a diverse population across the board,

5   not only in terms of assessing them, but also -- you know,

6   look at that population 25 years down. Is the leadership

7   retaining that diversity as it gets more senior? And so,

8   we've got a number of efforts that I'd be happy to come and

9   brief your -- you and your staff on in detail to get after

10   that. But, suffice it to say that this is the competitive

11   edge of the future, is diversity, and we're -- take it very

12   seriously.

13   Senator Jones: Great. Thank you.

14   General?

15   General Neller: Senator, if I look at the gross

16   numbers, particularly in aviation right now, for pilots, the

17   stats are not really good. So, it's going to take a

18   concerted long-term effort to create a better statistical

19   look at -- so that we have more men of color and ethnicity

20   and women across the whole force, let alone in aviation.

21   But, I can tell you, for the last 4 years, the number of

22   accessions for officers in the Marine Corps has been 24, 25,

23   26, and, last year, over 30 percent of those that accept a

24   commission into the Marine Corps were men of color and

25   ethnicity and women. A lot of that comes from the Naval

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1   Academy, because we have been able to increase the number of

2   midshipmen that can join the Marine Corps. Used to be

3   limited to 16.6 percent. In the last couple of years, it's

4   been around 25. And that's been a great source of us for

5   men and women.

6   So, it's going to take -- it's not going to get fixed

7   in 4 years, because it takes 22 years to make a colonel, to

8   be an air group commander or be a MEU commander. It takes

9   15 years to make a squadron commander. So, we'll continue

10   to track this and pay attention to it, but anything you or

11   any other of the committee members can do to encourage

12   people to serve in the military, to be involved in science,

13   technology, and math, whether it be high school JROTC,

14   although that is, by itself, not supposed to be a recruiting

15   place; that's just a place to develop leadership in our high

16   school students. But, anything you can do in any area to

17   encourage young men and women to join the military -- Army,

18   Air Force, Navy, or the Marine Corps -- it would be

19   appreciated.

20   Senator Jones: Great. Thank you, General.

21   Secretary Spencer, Admiral Richardson, as you know,

22   Alabama's had an important role on building of the LCS, and

23   we're kind of looking forward to the transition to the fast

24   frigate. Can you tell us, just briefly, about the

25   importance of the frigate's role in the NDS? And do you see

1   the Navy holding to the procurement schedule for the

2   frigate?

3   Admiral Richardson: Senator, we do. It's extremely

4   important that we make this transition to a -- frankly, a

5   more lethal, small surface combatant as we look at --

6   forward and do the Force Structure Assessment, as we look at

7   employing the Navy in a distributed way, using this

8   distributed maritime operations concept. These fast

9   frigates are going to be an important part of that. Yes,

10 sir.

11   Mr. Spencer: And, just to add to that, Senator,

12 putting my business hat on and my Title 10 hat on, this is

13 one -- going to be one of the most robust competitions that

14 we'll have, having five potential forms being submitted into

15 the competition. It's quite exciting.

16   Senator Jones: Great. Thank you.

17   Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield the remainder.

18   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Jones.

19   Senator Perdue.

20   Senator Perdue: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

21   I want to thank the three of you and all your teams for

22 a couple of things. One is, last November, we received our

23 first ever in U.S. history DOD audit. I'm not a

24 beancounter. I don't think that's what we should be about,

25 but I do think we need to look at being the most efficient

1   we can be so our men and women get everything they need.   I

2   also want to thank you for the $30 billion of what looked

3   like to me real savings, Mr. Secretary and the team, in the

4   -- just in the last 2 years.   So, this is, directionally,

5   very encouraging.

6   Admiral Richardson: Billion, sir.

7   Senator Perdue: I'm sorry.   Billion.

8   Admiral Richardson: Yeah.

9   Senator Perdue: Thirty billion.   Let's put a B in

10   front of that.   Apologize.   Thank you.

11   I have two questions.   Mr. Secretary, I'd love for you

12   to talk to us -- you made a quote, 2 years ago now, or in

13   December of '17.   I'm going to quote you, if that's okay.   I

14   think you won't mind this.   "CRs have cost the Department of

15   the Navy -- continuing resolutions have cost the Department

16   of the Navy roughly $4 billion.   Between 2011 we've put 4 --

17   since 2011, we've put 4 billion in a trash can, put lighter

18   fluid on it, and burned it."   Do you still stand by that?

19   Mr. Spencer: Most definitely, Senator.

20   Senator Perdue: So, would you also acknowledge that $4

21   billion -- compared to the deployment at the border, $4

22   billion would have really materially impacted our readiness,

23   would it not?

24   Mr. Spencer: It would, Senator.

25   Senator Perdue: Sir, would you talk to us just a

 1   little bit about the specific impacts of continuing

 2   resolutions? We've had -- in the last 44 or 45 years since

 3   the '74 Budget Act, we've had 187 continuing resolutions.

 4   In the last 10 years alone, one-third of our time has been,

 5   basically, under a CR. So, I'm very concerned. We're

 6   halfway through our fiscal year right now. We're looking at

 7   September 30th this year. Would you talk to us about what

 8   momentum damage that would do to what we've done in the last

 9   2 years? And then I have one more question about

10   maintenance, if we can get to it at the end.

11   Mr. Spencer: I'll be very quick with this, Senator.

12   The work that you all have done in both this chamber, across

13   the way at the House, both in authorizations and

14   appropriations over the last 3 years with the '17 RAA, the

15   '18/'19 budget, is absolutely spectacular. You've heard me

16   say that it's the foundation of readiness, and we're

17   building upon it. We are. A CR will knock us off our game.

18   It'll be the most painful thing we've had. And what's more

19   bizarre to me is that it would self-induced.

20   Admiral Richardson: Senator, if I could pile onto that

21   --

22   Senator Perdue: Yes, sir.

23   Admiral Richardson: -- just a little bit. I'll tell

24   you, I completely agree with the Secretary. This would be

25   like a punch in the gut. Just some specifics. It would --

1   it looks like it would be almost 16 billion less than the

2   budget request. Of course, it's not just the amount, but

3   also the inability to start new things. And so, there would

4   be no start to the aircraft carrier refueling, the fast

5   frigate program that we just discussed, the advanced helo

6   training system, and a number of others. There would be no

7   quantity increases to the Virginia-class SSN, the carriers,

8   the oilers, and many other programs. And so, the list goes

9   on. And we would not be able to assess the people that we

10   need to fill gaps at sea. And so, it would be devastating.

11   Senator Perdue: General Neller, you have a helicopter

12   I also believe is due for delivery this year that would be

13   delayed until at least 1 full year. Is that correct?

14   General Neller: As the CNO and the Secretary said,

15   Senator, I mean, everything is impacted. You know, we come

16   up with a program and a plan based on what an anticipated

17   budget number's going to be. And, although it would be

18   better than the BCA number, it still would have impact and

19   cause us to have to go back, and would stall our progress on

20   readiness and modernization.

21   Senator Perdue: Thank you.

22   Admiral, supply chain. We've -- other people have

23   talked about it. You guys have talked about it repeatedly

24   here. After sequestration years and cutting the military by

25   25 percent, the supply chain is totally devastated. I've

1   seen that. I've lived in the supply chain most of my

2   career, and I've seen that just in the last week. I was --

3   I visited -- you guys were gracious enough to let me visit

4   the Truman yesterday. I want to thank you for that.

5   One of the things I'm concerned about is, at

6   procurement now, you do have some flexibility over a

7   multiyear facet. I think it's 3 years. Under maintenance,

8   though, if you don't spend money in one year, it rolls to

9   the -- it doesn't roll to the next, it basically has to be

10   reappropriated. Would you be comfortable -- or do you see

11   value in a pilot program to test providing multiyear

12   flexibility in ship -- in depot maintenance appropriations?

13   Admiral Richardson: Sir, thanks for that question.

14   And thanks for coming out to Truman yesterday. It was an

15   honor to have you onboard.

16   Sir, absolutely is the answer to your question. A

17   pilot program, I think, would be terrific, because it would

18   match the funding window to, really, the job at hand. And

19   so, this would give us flexibility throughout the -- before,

20   during, and after a maintenance. Before, we could get the

21   supply chain, the material purchased, the planning done, all

22   of that, in order and in place. During, as adjustments

23   always occur, it would give us more flexibility to move

24   funds from one project to another. And then after, it would

25   allow us to recoup funds that we didn't spend efficiencies

1   and apply them to other projects. So, across the board,

2   that type of flexibility would be very helpful. And I'd be

3   happy to participate in a pilot program of that type.

4   Senator Perdue: Thank you, sir.

5   Mr. Spencer: It only makes business sense, Senator.

6   It would be a great pilot to try.

7   Senator Perdue: Well, that would be a shame, to try

8   something commonsense that might help you guys, wouldn't it?

9   In closing, Mr. -- General Neller, I just want to thank

10   you. Forty-four years is a long time to be doing anything,

11   and America is better off because you were at the -- on the

12   wall. Thank you, sir.

13   Thank you.

14   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Perdue.

15   Senator Blumenthal.

16   Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

17   And I want to join in thanking you, General Neller, for

18   your service. Forty-four years is a long time, but you have

19   an extraordinary and distinguished career, and it will be a

20   model for many of our marines for a long time.

21   And thank you, Mr. Secretary and Admiral, for your

22   service, as well.

23   I was encouraged to see, Admiral Richardson, your

24   remarks about the Virginia-class submarine. And I was

25   encouraged that you agree that we should seize this moment

1   of opportunity to build at the rate of three per year. I

2   would assume that you also believe that we need to

3   strengthen our workforce with training and the capability to

4   build those submarines, correct?

5   Admiral Richardson: Sir, I had the chance to go up to

6   Groton and visit Electric Boat. And one of my main topics

7   was exactly that. And I'll tell you, this is something that

8   is really good for the Nation. Electric Boat and Newport

9   News Shipbuilding, together, the two shipyards that build

10   our submarines, have reached deep into the community

11   colleges and high schools to start building skilled

12   workforce at that level, at that age. And so, all of those

13   folks who would, historically, maybe go to low-paying

14   service jobs or those sorts of things are now doing really

15   high-level work -- pipefitters, welders, electricians, et

16   cetera -- to meet this workforce demand that's going to

17   allow us to build these amazing ships.

18   Senator Blumenthal: And they have begun expanded

19   apprenticeship programs and skill training, on-the-job

20   training that is building that kind of dedicated workforce

21   in southeastern Connecticut. Not only there, but throughout

22   the supply chain, which is critical to the future of our

23   national defense. The construction of three Virginia-class

24   submarines in fiscal year 2020 is good news for our national

25   security as well as for that workforce and for Connecticut.

1   I'm going to do everything I can to support and bolster this

2   effort. I hope it will be a smooth process in this year's

3   budget cycle. But, I appreciate your commitment to this

4   effort.

5   Let me ask you about another area that I think is

6   tremendously important to our national security. And I know

7   that, Secretary Spencer, you've been asked about the report,

8   which I think you said is due at noon today.

9   Mr. Spencer: I said I'd get it underway, sir, at noon

10 today. I don't know if I can deliver it today.

11   Senator Blumenthal: Well, we'll anticipate it whenever

12 it's delivered.

13   Mr. Spencer: Thank you, sir.

14   Senator Blumenthal: But, you would agree that climate

15 change is a national security issue, correct?

16   Mr. Spencer: Rising waters are a threat to me at all

17 times, yes, sir.

18   Senator Blumenthal: And the prospect of famine, of

19 flooding, drought, wildfires, the disruption that climate

20 change causes around the world is a national security

21 threat, correct?

22   Mr. Spencer: I would agree with you, sir.

23   Senator Blumenthal: Is -- do you believe that opinion

24 is shared throughout the Department of Defense among your

25 fellow service Secretaries?

1   Mr. Spencer: I loathe to comment on something I

2 haven't asked them about, but I know that, in discussions,

3 we share concerns about the events that you just discussed.

4   Senator Blumenthal: Are you satisfied that our

5 Department of Defense is, not only acting, but also planning

6 adequately into the future for this national security

7 threat?

8   Mr. Spencer: I do, Senator. And the reason I'm

9 pausing, I'm thinking about three reports I just read

10 internally, primarily how the Navy is hipping into direction

11 from the Department of Defense and what we're doing in that

12 regard. So, the answer would be yes.

13   Senator Blumenthal: Climate change is really a threat

14 multiplier, because it inflames the global instability, it

15 exacerbates those floods and food shortages and droughts and

16 all of the humanitarian crises, which increasingly breed

17 terrorist threats to this Nation. We live in that world

18 now. And I thank you and your fellow members of the

19 Department of Defense for your awareness of this issue, no

20 matter what the climate of opinion is elsewhere in this

21 administration.

22   Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

23   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

24   Senator Sullivan.

25   Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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1   And, gentlemen, thank you for your testimony and your

2   service.

3   And I think -- Admiral Richardson and General Neller, I

4   think this is your last posture hearing. So, thanks for

5   your wonderful service. Forty-four years, General. I'm

6   sure the one thing you probably won't miss, in terms of your

7   Marine Corps, is these kind of hearings. So -- you don't

8   have to answer that.

9   I'm also glad to see our colleagues, like Senator

10   Warren, are raising their concerns about combat readiness

11   for the military. I think we all share that. What did the

12   2010-to-2016 25-percent cuts in the DOD budget do to combat

13   -- to readiness for our combat forces? Twenty-five-percent

14   cuts --

15   Admiral Richardson: I'll --

16   Senator Sullivan: -- from 2010 to 2016. A lot of

17   people don't remember that, but --

18   Admiral Richardson: I think that -- Senator, I'll just

19   take the first stab at this, then I'll just -- I think it's

20   been said before, that budget instability and insufficiency

21   has done more damage to the military than any enemy.

22   Senator Sullivan: General?

23   General Neller: Sir, as much as we don't want to admit

24   it, we need resources to be able to buy gear, train, and

25   maintain the force. So, when we were in the period of time

1   -- the forward-deployed forces, I believe, we're as ready as

2   we could make them, but the difference between that and

3   today is that the folks that were back home and on the

4   bench, their overall readiness was -- is not what it is

5   today.

6   Senator Sullivan: Just want to talk about an issue --

7   probably won't surprise you -- I want to talk about the

8   Arctic. You know, China and Russia are making big moves

9   into that part of the world, because of resources,

10 transportation routes. We're an Arctic nation because of my

11 State, Alaska. The Russian buildup has been dramatic. Four

12 new Arctic brigades, a new Arctic command, 50 airfields by

13 2020, 30-percent increase in Russian special forces in the

14 Arctic, 40 icebreakers, 13 more being built, huge SNAP

15 exercises, in the tens of thousands. This committee, in a

16 bipartisan way -- I see Senator King is here -- has been

17 very focused on this issue -- new Arctic strategy, strategic

18 Arctic ports, icebreakers. And I want to commend you, the

19 three of you, on your focus on this issue, as well.

20   Mr. Secretary, can you talk about some of the Navy's

21 plans, in terms of freedom of navigation operations,

22 training on Adak, that you and I have gone out to see that

23 very strategic naval base that kind of breaks your heart to

24 see that it's been shuttered, but the opportunities there.

25 And then, General, cold-weather training and other

1 opportunities in Alaska and other places. You know, when

2 you look at our military and our threats, North Korea,

3 Russia, China all present cold-weather, mountainous threats,

4 in terms of terrain. And I think we need to do more in

5 training in that area.

6   Can you three gentlemen talk about some of our

7 interests and what you're doing in that important strategic

8 space for America?

9   Mr. Spencer: More than happy to, Senator. Let me lead

10 off, and I'll be more than happy to hand it over to both the

11 CNO and the Commandant.

12   As you and I have discussed and we've presented to this

13 committee before, the Arctic is a focus of ours, and we've

14 never taken our eyes off of it. We've been up there since

15 1964, if I'm not mistaken, under sea, making sure our

16 presence was known under sea, and in the air. But, now

17 we're taking a more proactive step. We have up to three

18 exercises that you've been made aware of in Alaska. We have

19 one on Adak that we hope to have funded. NORTHCOM is the

20 COCOM that is coordinating that.

21   Senator Sullivan: And that's amphibious operations and

22 --

23   Mr. Spencer: That is amphibious operations.

24   Senator Sullivan: -- other P-8 sub-hunter ops?

25   Mr. Spencer: Correct. Exactly. Take the airfield,

1   then bring in the P-8s, fundamentally.

2   We have been, in concert with the Coast Guard and you,

3   looking at the needs and the possibility of a strategic port

4   up in Alaska. I think this summer --

5   Senator Sullivan: At this committee's behest, correct?

6   Mr. Spencer: That is correct, Senator.

7   We -- the CNO and I have been talking about the

8   possibility of bringing some ships up, maybe up to Valdez --

9   again, training north of the Arctic Circle. We learned this

10   in the most recent Trident Juncture, where we had ships

11   above the Circle. And we need to learn again what we have

12   done in the past, exercise those muscle movements, get the

13   sets and reps so we're ready to fight up there, if need be,

14   and/or just to do our freedom of navigation and/or diligent

15   maneuvers up there.

16   CNO?

17   Admiral Richardson: So, I'll just pile on to that, if

18   I could. Since the last time we testified before this

19   committee, I've signed out the Strategy Outlook for the

20   Arctic -- I'm happy to share that with you immediately --

21   which talks about our strategic objectives to defend U.S.

22   sovereignty up in the Arctic -- as you said, we are an

23   Arctic nation -- to ensure the Arctic remains stable and

24   conflict-free, protect the freedom of the seas, and promote

25   partnerships with U.S. Government and other Arctic nations.

1   Since that time, we've been putting our money where our

2   mouth is, too. You know, we're not just talking about this,

3   we've done four major exercises up in the Arctic. Arctic

4   Edge, where more than 1500 military personnel were up in

5   Alaska to test our ability to operate up there. As the

6   Secretary mentioned, we did the Ice Ex, with two U.S.

7   submarines and one British submarine up there. Trident

8   Juncture, where we brought a carrier strike group north of

9   the Arctic Circle for the first time since 1991, in

10   November. I can tell you, much has changed since 1991, but

11   it's still extremely cold and hard to operate, up north of

12   the Arctic Circle. And so, we regained some of those

13   muscles. And then, in February, Arctic Exercise. And then,

14   as the Secretary mentioned, looking forward to September of

15   this year, if we can get the environmental clearances and

16   everything to do a exercise up in the Arctic, amphibious

17   with our Marine Corps partners, as well, which will include

18   not only a takedown and a P-8 -- in Adak, but also the

19   important part of logistics and refueling ashore, and all of

20   those things.

21   Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22   And, General, I can get your details from you later on

23   this.

24   [The information referred to follows:]

25   [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1   Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

2   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

3   Senator Heinrich.

4   Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Chairman.

5   Gentlemen, I was very pleased --

6   Chairman Inhofe: Yeah, let me interrupt for just a

7 moment.

8   We do have a vote coming up. And so, Senator Reed is

9 going to go down and vote early, and come up, relieve me,

10 and I'll vote late, and we'll keep on working through.

11   Senator Heinrich.

12   Senator Heinrich: Thanks, Chairman.

13   Gentlemen, I was very pleased to see the focus that the

14 DOD is now putting on hypersonics, and, in particular, the

15 $2.6 billion request for prototyping across the services.

16 As you probably know, Sandia National Labs has long played a

17 critical role in developing this technology, and is the core

18 reason why we have -- we actually have a capability now

19 that's ready to prototype.

20   One of the things I've discussed with lab directors,

21 who are really eager to transition this technology to

22 industry, and believe it may actually be important to co-

23 locate the R&D and the manufacturing of these systems. What

24 will the role of the lab community and industry partners be

25 as we seek rapid development of this capability? And is

1   there some value in making sure that the feedback loop

2   between R&D, engineering, and manufacturing is as tight as

3   possible?

4   Secretary.

5   Mr. Spencer: Senator, from day one coming here, one of

6   my comments was that I have to be able to work, and so does

7   Navy enterprise, as a partner with our -- with industry.

8   This is a prime example of it. But, what's really exciting

9   about this project is, not only are we partners with

10 industry, the Navy, Air Force, and Army are partners, as we

11 signed out an MOU to work together across our traditional

12 stovepipes. So, we're applying combined resources together

13 to get the goal forward, which is why you're seeing

14 hypersonics dragged to the earlier dates. It's going to be

15 critical, as we transition from R&D to manufacturing, that

16 there not be a stutter-step, there's no light between R&D

17 and the transfer to actual production. I believe

18 everybody's onboard with that. The proof will be in the

19 pudding, but you can guarantee that the --

20   Senator Heinrich: Yeah.

21   Mr. Spencer: -- three service Secretaries and their

22 acquisition arms are looking at it this way.

23   Senator Heinrich: Well, I really appreciate the joint

24 approach on this, because we're behind the eight ball, we're

25 a little late to the party, and we need to speed things up.

1   And I think making sure that all of those capabilities, the

2   center of excellence in manufacturing, are as tight as

3   possible. It's going to be really important.

4   Admiral Richardson, I was very encouraged by the Navy's

5   rapid demonstration of laser weapon systems on surface

6   ships. In a short period of time, the Navy has successfully

7   deployed a 30-kilowatt laser on the USS Ponce, the 150-

8   kilowatt laser on the USS Portland. You have an $80 million

9   unfunded requirement in this area. If that were funded,

10   what would it allow the Navy to do?

11   Admiral Richardson: Sir, first, let me thank the

12   committee and the entire Congress for all the support in

13   this part of our business. It's really been terrific.

14   What the -- including that on the unfunded priority

15   list does is allow us to accelerate it even further, right?

16   So, in the -- the budget moves very aggressively in this

17   area already -- the submitted budget. But, if we got a

18   little bit more money, we could move even more aggressively,

19   still. And so, I've been, you know, privileged to kind of

20   visit the direct-energy corridor. I was just recently out

21   at our labs in California. They're working at every

22   possible part of this, from the weapon itself, getting

23   higher and higher powers, and then the integration with the

24   combat system, shore-based test facilities. We're taking

25   this very seriously across a full range of powers.

1   Senator Heinrich: Is the Navy looking at high-powered

2 microwaves, as well, for --

3   Admiral Richardson: We are.

4   Senator Heinrich: -- high-velocity threats, like

5 cruise missiles or hypersonics?

6   Admiral Richardson: Indeed, we are, sir. And so, we

7 -- when we talk about directed energy or electric weapons, a

8 lot of times we go right to the lasers, because --

9   Senator Heinrich: Right.

10   Admiral Richardson: -- that's so exciting, but there's

11 also a tremendous amount of work being done in high-power

12 microwave.

13   Senator Heinrich: Secretary Spencer, I want to sort of

14 finish up here with a workforce question on artificial

15 intelligence, and really the need to make sure that we're

16 building the workforce for these coming changes now. I had

17 a conversation last week with Secretary Wilson, General

18 Goldfein, on the idea of potentially -- whether it would be

19 beneficial to create a mission occupational specialty for

20 this type of workforce. I'd just love to get your input on

21 what you think we need to be doing now to make sure that

22 we're developing a workforce that can handle and care for

23 the kind of data that is going to be required, and whether

24 it would be helpful to consider a mission occupational

25 speciality for that type of workforce.

1   Mr. Spencer: Senator, a very timely question, because

2 this obviously does feed to Force 2.0, as I just was

3 describing earlier. When I look at it through Navy lenses,

4 the way that I view artificial intelligence is, that is the

5 development of an algorithm that I can take and then apply

6 to my machines so they can learn. I think, in the clearest

7 path, what I would like to see is possibly, at the DOD

8 level, have your AI development, and Navy be able to go up

9 and check that algorithm out of the locker, out of the

10 development field, and then apply it to the needs that they

11 have, or amend it to the needs that they have. That would

12 be the most efficient, I believe, way to go forward.

13   That being said, we need to ring the bell right now,

14 say, "Doors are open," and bring as many of the great minds

15 to interact with AI right now.

16   Senator Heinrich: Great. Thank you, Secretary.

17   Thank you, Chair.

18   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Heinrich.

19   Senator Peters.

20   Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21   Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony here today.

22   Secretary Spencer, this budget does not request funding

23 for additional littoral combat ship procurement. And I

24 understand that the Navy plans to shift from buying LCS to

25 the next-generation frigate, called the FFGX. And I know

1   you plan to purchase nine hulls by fiscal year '24, with the

2   first purchase coming fairly quickly, in fiscal year '20.

3   But, recently, Vice Admiral Merz, the Deputy Chief,

4   testified to the House that the Navy will be reevaluating

5   its force structure plan, citing specifically -- and I'm

6   going to quote him right now -- quote, "We know we are heavy

7   on large surface combatants, and we'd like to adjust that to

8   a more appropriate mix, especially with the lethality we're

9   seeing coming along with the frigate."

10   So, my question to you is, How are you approaching the

11   industrial base, given the potential to increase the Force

12   Structure Assessment requirement above the current

13   requirement for 52 small surface combatants?

14   Mr. Spencer: The -- Senator, you've hit a nail on the

15   head. The supply chain is absolutely critical in this

16   regard, no matter which way we move, with what provider. As

17   I said earlier, the excitement about this program is -- as

18   you know, there are five forms that we're considering, so

19   it's going to be a very competitive competition. But, we're

20   not just looking at the ship, per se. One of the things

21   that we have really moved forward on is, when we look at the

22   acquisition of a platform, equally important is the

23   sustainment of that platform. You might have heard us say

24   that, traditionally, if you look back, 70 cents on the

25   dollar was spent on acquisition, and 30 on sustainment.

1 We're shifting that model completely because of what we've,

2 obviously, learned. It's going to be critical that, in this

3 competition, we understand where the supply base is, the

4 health of that supply base, and the ability of that supply

5 base's resiliency.

6   Senator Peters: Well, do you believe the current

7 budget request, then, bridges the gap? Because we're going

8 to have a gap there in funding to make sure the industrial

9 base can continue to operate.

10   Mr. Spencer: I believe it does. We're going to listen

11 to industry. Right now, that has not become an issue, but

12 we will listen to industry when it comes to that point.

13   Senator Peters: Very good.

14   The Navy's budget also -- request -- includes a request

15 for ten large unmanned surface vessels across the future

16 years defense plan, and planned at about two per year,

17 beginning in fiscal year '20. So, it's clear the Navy is

18 continuing to embrace the benefits of unmanned platforms,

19 particularly given the opportunities for low-cost, high-

20 endurance platforms that can be reconfigured with a variety

21 of payloads and can often serve as a force multiplier to the

22 manned force out there.

23   So, my question is to both Secretary Spencer and

24 Admiral Richardson. Can you provide more detail on how you

25 expect the Navy's unmanned surface vehicle family of systems

1   to develop? And what are the specific benefits that you

2   hope that these platforms are going to offer the fleet?

3   Mr. Spencer: Let me just provide, again, from a Title

4   10 point, buying of these platforms. You all have told us,

5   in no mixed terms, that we are to move with urgency. And

6   that message is being transferred all the way down

7   throughout the whole naval enterprise. This is a prime

8   example of where we're going to acquire these platforms, and

9   we're going to build, you know, use, break, learn, cycle,

10   continually. And this is a prime example of a platform that

11   we'll do this on.

12   CNO?

13   Admiral Richardson: Sir, I -- the benefits of unmanned

14   in this area almost speak for themselves. We can send a

15   ship out there for a lot longer. Oftentimes, in terms of

16   endurance, the people are the limiting factor there. We can

17   send them into higher-risk areas, you know, so all sorts of

18   benefits. And I agree with you that this large vessel will

19   allow us a diversity of payloads, from weapons payloads to

20   logistics payloads. The Commandant and I have been talking

21   about some terrific opportunities for naval integration

22   using these. The first couple, we'll be working very

23   closely with the Strategic Capabilities Office to get those

24   two going, and then we'll partner very closely with

25   industry. We'll probably use mature designs for the hull

1   form and those sorts of things. The real R&D part in this

2   is, you know, what about the unmanned, what are the

3   autonomy, how do we get into that, particularly when it -- I

4   mean, there's all sorts of dimensions, not only from a

5   safety dimension, a security dimension, an ethical

6   dimension, when you start to think about weapons employment.

7   And that's why we have them in the account -- the R&D

8   account, where they are right now.

9   Senator Peters: Great. Thank you.

10   General Neller, you -- the Marine Corps has been

11   conducting advanced naval technology exercises with the Navy

12   to leverage both the industrial and academic intellectual

13   base with prototypes and get it into the hands of marines as

14   quickly as possible so that we can be on the cutting edge of

15   new technologies but learn from our marines in the field.

16   Could you briefly just tell us and inform us, What lessons

17   did the marines learn during the technology exercise in

18   2018, and are we going to be continuing those kinds of

19   exercises?

20   General Neller: Well, first, Senator, yes, we will.

21   We just did another one down at Camp Lejeune, as far as mine

22   countermeasures, where we have -- basically, we invite

23   vendors to show up for certain technologies. The one in '18

24   -- they're all kind of running together. We've been doing

25   about one big one a year, give a certain theme with these

1   surface-to-surface movement, and they show up with their

2   capabilities, and then -- they talk to the marines, they

3   learn what the marine requirements are, they make a change

4   to their thing, and the marines kind of say, "Hey, we think

5   this has got value, and this one does not." And so, we can

6   narrow it down.

7   So, we'll continue to do that. We just recently did a

8   big exercise with the Navy on the West Coast, called Pacific

9   Blitz, where we had a number of technologies and ideas being

10   demonstrated, where we looked at expeditionary-based

11   operations where we would employ a marine force to, as part

12   of the naval force, control maritime seaspace. So, we'll

13   continue to do that, and we'll -- the ships that you were

14   just talking about with the CNO and the Secretary are of

15   great interest to us. They could be platforms, as the CNO

16   said, to carry weapons, they could carry logistics. And

17   we're seeing now that we need to have some sort of a

18   connector that allows us to move from place to place. And,

19   if it's unmanned and it can still do the job, that just

20   makes it safer and easier, and it reduces our costs and our

21   risk.

22   Senator Peters: Thank you.

23   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Peters.

24   Senator Tillis.

25   Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1   Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

2   Secretary Spencer, thank you for the work out at

3   Annapolis last week on sexual assault. I think that it was

4   a great discussion, great coming together of expertise. And

5   so, it was a good meeting. A great outcome will be specific

6   proposals that we can work together on to make sure that we

7   make progress in this Congress. But, I thank you for being

8   here.

9   I want to go quickly in -- with limited time, to

10 General Neller. General Neller, you don't strike me as the

11 sort of person that gets rattled very easily, but I've seen

12 and had a number of discussions with you on the MILCON

13 challenges that we have down at Camp Lejeune. I don't know

14 if it's been covered in any of the other meetings -- I've

15 got two competing meetings going -- or discussions, here --

16 but, can you outline for this committee your chief concerns

17 over the billions of dollars of MILCON backlog that we have

18 at Camp Lejeune, how it affects capabilities, readiness, and

19 the operations of the base?

20   General Neller: Senator, it's really not a backlog,

21 it's an emerging requirement. As you know, Hurricane

22 Florence struck the Carolina coast in September of last

23 year. And, fortunately, the storm went from a category 4 to

24 a 2, but then, when it did come ashore, it sat on top of the

25 -- that part of North Carolina, rained for 3 straight days,

1   rained over 30 inches of rain. And so, when the roofs came

2   off some of these 40-, 50-, 60-, 70-year-old buildings, and

3   the water went in, we had a lot of damage. And it's not

4   visible. It's not like down in the Panhandle, when Michael

5   came across with category-4 winds and actually leveled

6   buildings. So, it -- when you drive around, you don't see

7   it. It's more inside.

8   And so, we've gone through. The PPV vendor is working

9   to fix the housing that was damaged aboard the base. And

10   they're about a 50-percent improve in their process. That

11   was a painful thing, to get that going. But, they're

12   working that. But, we've gone through and looked at all the

13   buildings, and we've prioritized about 30 buildings we think

14   the costs of repair is not worth it, that we think they need

15   to be replaced. And the total bill's about $3.5 billion.

16   The 400 million that we got in reprogramming last week will

17   be helpful, but -- so, we still have this remaining bill. A

18   lot of this money, the Department says they're going to put

19   it in FY20. And so, we're hopeful that that will be part of

20   the program. But, we still have about $450 million we could

21   legitimately apply this fiscal year if we were to get the

22   money.

23   Senator Tillis: You tell me what the impact is on --

24   what are you doing to make do? Some of these buildings, I

25   would assume, are inhabitable, and you're having to figure

1   out how to continue to operate. Can you give me an idea of

2   how it's disrupting the day-to-day operations at Lejeune?

3   General Neller: We've had to move people around to

4   different places and spaces. We've had to make adjustments

5   on some of the communications. And, in some cases, the

6   marines are just continuing to operate in the building,

7   making the best of what they have. The buildings are not

8   unsafe, but their ability to have heating or air-

9   conditioning is limited. And so, it's a pretty

10 expeditionary environment, which is something we're used to,

11 but -- and you can do that for a limited period of time, but

12 it would be nice to be able to work in a more normal

13 environment, in a garrison environment.

14   So, we're confident that we'll get these things fixed.

15 Some of the buildings that they're in eventually would be

16 razed and a new building would be built, because that's what

17 we think it's going to take. We know for a fact from the

18 storm that all the new buildings -- and the Congress has

19 been very generous with all the MILCON down at Camp Lejeune

20 and many of our other bases -- all the new buildings

21 suffered very little to no damage. So, we've got a lot of

22 old buildings down there that we think we need to replace if

23 we're going to continue to be able to survive what's likely

24 to be continued storms in the future.

25   Senator Tillis: Secretary Spencer, I appreciate, also,

1   your prompt action after a committee where I was a little

2   bit animated on housing, a month or so ago, and want to

3   continue to work with the -- with all of DOD on what I think

4   are unacceptable housing conditions. I've gone down to Fort

5   Bragg. I'm going to be visiting Camp Lejeune, going to

6   spend some time. And you've got to separate the storm

7   damage from some of the problems that existed before that.

8   We'll have to sort that out. But, do you also -- and,

9   Admiral Richardson, do you share the Commandant's view that

10   this military construction recovery down at Camp Lejeune is

11   a top priority?

12   Mr. Spencer: Yes.

13   Senator Tillis: Thank you all.

14   Last thing I'll leave you with -- I left it with

15   Secretary Wilson in the hearing last week -- is that -- I

16   understand the funding request. I tend to support what your

17   priorities are, and hope to provide the funding. I think

18   that you need to look ahead and game out what the likelihood

19   is of getting that funding, versus something less than that,

20   and, you know, worst case, a sequester, and need to

21   communicate, in very specific terms, what your Department

22   will have to do to react to that, not here in the committee,

23   but there needs to be a very clearly delineated list of

24   everything that shifts to the right as a result of

25   Congress's failure to give you all the resources that I

1   think you need and you deserve.

2   Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Tillis.

4   Senator King.

5   Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6   Gentlemen, I'd like to start my questioning with a

7   plea. We've had testimony from the SOUTHCOM commanders,

8   over the last 2 or 3 years, that we have intelligence about

9   drug shipments coming to the United States by sea. Of the

10   100 percent that we have intelligence on, we're only able to

11   interdict 25 percent because of lack of maritime assets.

12   Since this hearing started, 12 Americans have died of

13   overdoses. Our country is under attack. People are dying.

14   People are dying in my State, one a day. Please, see if you

15   can find a way to allocate LCS or other maritime assets to

16   work with the Coast Guard to interdict those drug shipments.

17   It is inexcusable that we know of a drug shipment and can't

18   do anything about it because of a lack of maritime assets.

19   If you want to respond, Mr. Secretary, I'd be delighted,

20   but, basically, this is a heartfelt request to try to use --

21   to do something that's within our power to do.

22   Mr. Spencer: Senator, could not agree more. The CNO

23   and I have been talking, along with Admiral Faller, down in

24   SOUTHCOM, exactly about this. This is a mission that fits

25   the LCS, and I think, this coming quarter or so, you'll see

1   our response in that regard.

2   Senator King: Thank you. I'd deeply appreciate that,

3   and I'll look forward to continue to work with you on that.

4   To just a somewhat lighter question, a major change is

5   -- you're talking, now, about a large surface combatant.

6   You're in the early stages. Can we assume that that's going

7   to follow a similar path of the new frigate program of

8   existing hulls, working with partners, and that kind of

9   approach to this project?

10   Admiral?

11   Admiral Richardson: If I could, just -- the short

12   answer is yes, we're going to try and really shorten the

13   acquisition cycle, and we do so by leveraging more advanced

14   and mature technologies, hull forms all the way up to combat

15   system sensors, weapons --

16   Senator King: Good.

17   Admiral Richardson: And then we take more rapid,

18   shorter acquisition steps, if you will, to follow that

19   Moore's Law curve, or that exponential curve, a little bit

20   more closely, with smaller steps.

21   Senator King: Appreciate it. Thank you.

22   And I should have, at the beginning -- I've had some

23   exchanges with naval officers here over the last month or so

24   about the accidents with the McCain and the Fitzgerald.

25   I've sought data. I've met with you at the Pentagon. I

1   want to express my appreciation for the forward-leaning

2   approach that you've taken, the data you have supplied.

3   That doesn't mean I'm always going to be happy. So, keep at

4   it. I want to see the data, on a quarterly basis, specific,

5   ship-by-ship, in terms of training levels and all of the

6   issues that were identified in the reviews of those two

7   crashes. I think it's very important. But -- trust, but

8   verify, I guess is what I'm saying. And I intend to

9   continue to verify. And I -- but, I do appreciate what the

10 Navy has done and the responsiveness that you've shown.

11   Secretary Spencer, last year we talked about the audit,

12 what you expected to find. You said you saw 4 to 7 years, I

13 think, as a ramp-up to get to a clean audit. Now that we've

14 had a year, any modification of your estimate? And are you

15 satisfied with the process, thus far?

16   Mr. Spencer: Senator, no update on the date. I will

17 say that we've come in a year. I'm not kicking it out one

18 more year, keeping 4-to-7 being a constant. We learned a

19 tremendous amount, and we are underway right now,

20 remediating the findings from the audit itself. But, the

21 remediation is only one of the steps we're taking. It's

22 what we're learning from the remediation. As an example, in

23 the way that we monitor our real estate, in the way that we

24 keep tabs on armaments. We're finding many different ways

25 to improve the way we do it. Best practices from both other

1   services, other forms of government, and outside the --

2   Senator King: So, your conclusion is that the audit

3   has certainly performed a useful function.

4   Mr. Spencer: Its ROI is a multiple, sir.

5   Senator King: That's excellent. I appreciate that and

6   look forward to future progress.

7   One, just, short comment at the end. You had an

8   exchange -- I believe it was with Senator Rounds -- about

9   the cyberthreat. I deal with cyber in two other committees,

10 and one of the things that's come out in recent hearings is

11 the threat via subs, that the major contractors are pretty

12 secure and strong, and our adversaries are now going through

13 a little six-person engineering firm that supplies one screw

14 to a major contractor, and that's how they get into the

15 system. I commend to you that as a risk factor that I think

16 needs real attention. I also commend to you the Red Team

17 approach to get their attention.

18   Mr. Spencer: Senator, you've hit the nail on the head,

19 and that came out in the review that we just had, our

20 cybersecurity review. But, I'd like to turn around and say

21 hat's off to you and Congressman Gallagher for setting up

22 the Solarium. We look forward to seeing what's going to

23 come out of your organization in that regard. There is not

24 enough time and there's not enough resources to be put

25 against this issue right now. We've got to get the gray

1   matter starting it, and then we're going to start effecting

2   the remediation.

3   Senator King: We had our first meeting yesterday.

4   We're on our way.

5   Thank you, Mr. Chair -- Secretary.

6   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7   Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.

8   Senator Reed has returned. We're under -- a vote is

9   underway. I'm going to go vote, come back. We're going to

10   work through it.

11   Senator Hawley.

12   Senator Hawley: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

13   Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. Thank you, as

14   always, for your exemplary service.

15   I have heard much praise for your work, as reflected in

16   this budget in a lot of areas, but particularly in an area I

17   want to ask you about, in the investments in unmanned,

18   undersea, and surface platforms. I want to ask you about an

19   unmanned aerial system, the MQ-25 Stingray. I understand

20   this is the first of its kind unmanned aerial system that

21   will serve as a refueling station for other carrier-based

22   aircraft. And many proud Missourians are working on this

23   program in St. Louis. Of course, they have my firm support.

24   Secretary Spencer, can you update the committee on the

25   Stingray's progress and when you expect it to enter service?

1   Mr. Spencer: I'm going to defer to the CNO, here, on

2   exacts. This is a fast-track acquisition, and it's a large-

3   platform fast-track acquisition. We are tremendously

4   impressed with what we've heard coming out of St. Louis on

5   the different manufacturing style that they're going to use

6   on the MQ-25, which is -- without going into the weeds, is

7   going to actually speed time dramatically for our receipt of

8   this.

9   CNO?

10   Admiral Richardson: Sir, first, let me tell -- talk to

11   the military benefit of this tanker -- unmanned tanker,

12   which will be able to stay in flight for so much longer that

13   a manned tanker would be. And then, it liberates five F-18

14   strike fighter aircraft to do strike fighter missions

15   instead of tanking missions. So, military utility couldn't

16   be stronger.

17   As well, the approach to acquisition, as the Secretary

18   said, has been unique, in that we partnered with industry

19   very, very early on to define the requirements

20   appropriately, going back to Senator King's discussion

21   regarding technical maturity, so that we can get this out

22   into the fleet as quickly as possible. And so, for a

23   sophisticated aircraft program, we let the contract for this

24   program in 2018, and we expect this to be on deck in 2024, 6

25   years, which is pretty good, by recent metrics.

1   Senator Hawley: Yeah, that's outstanding. Thank you.

2   Admiral, can I just ask you about the -- how the

3   Stingray's deployment will change how air carrier -- or

4   carrier air wings operate? I think you started to gesture

5   towards that just now, but we'd -- if you would say some

6   more about this.

7   Admiral Richardson: Well, it'll extend the range of

8   the Strike Fighter Air Wing, right, because we'll be able to

9   go out -- tank those aircraft, and allow them to go out to

10   do their mission even further. But, I'll tell you what,

11   sir. This is just the beginning for unmanned for us with

12   the Air Wing. I think that one of the most exciting parts

13   of this will be to integrate unmanned with the aircraft

14   carrier crew, in terms of launching and recovery, and then,

15   of course, integrating it with the other manned parts of the

16   Air Wing. Lots of lessons learned as we continue to

17   advanced unmanned aircraft.

18   Senator Hawley: Yeah. Thank you very much.

19   Let me just shift to a broader set of questions in the

20   Indo-Pacific theater. The NDS focuses our attention on the

21   fait accompli scenarios. And, of course, the -- in the

22   Pacific, arguably, the decisive theater from the NDS

23   standpoint, when it comes to a fait accompli scenario

24   involving Taiwan, which is one that is featured prominently,

25   much the focus of our attention and planning, how are we

1   doing with our current capabilities on our capacity to

2   prevent a fait accompli scenario in that specific instance?

3   Go ahead, Admiral.

4   Admiral Richardson: Sir, I'll just echo Admiral

5   Davidson's thoughts. And, you know, he's the Indo-Pacific

6   commander primarily responsible for making sure that we are

7   ready, in all respects across the entire Joint Force and the

8   interagency, for that contingency.

9   Senator Hawley: And do you feel that we are making

10   progress, here, towards -- from your -- with -- from the

11   Navy's point of view, with the capacities, the capabilities

12   that are required -- I mean, are we making progress, here,

13   in getting to where we need to be to prevent a fait

14   accompli?

15   Admiral Richardson: Sir, I think that one of the major

16   strategic messages of the budget submission that we're

17   discussing today is that it looks exactly at that problem.

18   If you integrate across the size of the force, the

19   capability of the force, and the readiness of the force,

20   it's focused on our pacing threat, which is the Indo-

21   Pacific.

22   Senator Hawley: Can you tell me, we -- there have been

23   -- there's been some discussion, of course, about aircraft

24   carriers today. But, from a broader point of view, can you

25   tell me how you see the carriers contributing to our

1   toughest fights in that theater, with China? I mean, what

2   is it -- as we think about their major investments,

3   obviously --

4   Admiral Richardson: Right.

5   Senator Hawley: -- what is that, strategically, the

6   carrier -- how does the carrier contribute -- how will it

7   contribute in that theater, in the decisive theater, to that

8   fight with China?

9   Admiral Richardson: Right. The -- there's been a lot

10   of discussion about aircraft carriers and their role in the

11   future. So, I appreciate the question. One, again, going

12   back to our budget, the acquisition of the -- of another

13   Ford-class aircraft carrier, and the purchase of two of them

14   at the same time, capturing a $4 billion savings, but is a

15   firm a statement as we can make that aircraft carriers are a

16   lethal, survivable part of that future. With respect to the

17   theater that you just described, in a very high-end fight,

18   the carrier is the most survivable airfield in the theater,

19   able to move 700 miles a day and really confound any kind of

20   a targeting problem.

21   Beyond that, sir, it gets very classified, very

22   quickly, but suffice it to say that a competently run

23   aircraft carrier, using distributed maritime operations

24   concepts, can inflict a tremendous amount of damage against

25   an enemy in that theater.

1   Senator Hawley: Okay, I'll look forward to an

2   opportunity to take that up further with you in a classified

3   setting. I do think you allude to the very significant

4   investment that these carriers require, and I think it's

5   incumbent upon us to make sure that it's an investment that

6   meets our strategic priorities.

7   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8   Senator Reed [presiding]: Thank you.

9   On behalf of Chairman Inhofe, Senator Kaine.

10   Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11   And thanks, to all the witnesses.

12   I especially just want to offer my congratulations,

13   Admiral Richardson, General Neller, for your wonderful

14   service. You guys each have Virginia ties. Admiral

15   Richardson, a Petersburg native.

16   General Neller, congratulations on the UVA Cavaliers.

17   That was a -- an exciting evening. There are four Senators

18   who have degrees from the University of Virginia. Neither

19   of the Virginia Senators had either the talent or judgment

20   to be in that number. It's King, Whitehouse, Capito, and

21   Cornyn. But, it was exciting. But, again, I just want to

22   offer my thanks.

23   I have two questions that are sort of a followup, not

24   to repeat other questions that have been asked about the

25   refueling of the Truman. I associate myself with others'

1   questions on these. But, one of the references was to this

2   future-force study that's being done. And I want to ask two

3   questions about it.

4   This is -- the first one is a broad one. Do you think

5   we're going to see other surprises when that is done -- ship

6   classes that are being considered for early retirement, or

7   other things like that? What would you let us know that we

8   ought to be watching for as that study is being done?

9   Admiral Richardson: So, I'll tell you that, one, as

10   we've talked about many times, the security environment has

11   only become more complex. And so, we would see that the

12   Force Structure Assessment would address that increasing

13   demand signal for maritime security. I think that the next

14   25, 50 years, easy, are going to put a lot of

15   responsibilities on maritime security, and the U.S. Navy in

16   particular.

17   There are, additionally, new technologies. And so,

18   we'll have to see where those new technologies take us. I'm

19   of a mind that we need to move into that new technology

20   space on an evidenced-based approach. We can't just take a

21   leap of faith when our Nation's security is -- you know,

22   with the stakes that we're claiming. And so, we'll look for

23   a lot of experimentation and evidence on which to base those

24   decisions.

25   And then there are those sorts of enduring qualities of

1   payload volume and energy, and those things will allow a

2   platform from which that innovation can take place. And so,

3   certainly, as soon as we get any kind of inklings, I would

4   say that that would be the area that we're moving. If there

5   are places where legacy types of approaches fail to yield a

6   return on investment, then we'll be informing you of those,

7   as well.

8   Senator Kaine: Thank you. One -- we've had a number

9   of classified briefs about both the Navy and Marine Corps'

10   operating concepts as we talk about future needs. And one

11   concern I always have is whether both the Navy and the

12   Marine Corps' operating concepts are being represented in

13   any future analysis of shipbuilding, aircraft procurement,

14   force structure. Will both the Navy and the Marine Corps be

15   signing off on the next iteration of Force Structure

16   Assessment, shipbuilding plan, aircraft procurement

17   strategy?

18   Admiral Richardson: Sir, the Commandant and I share

19   just about everything. And so, something this -- of this

20   impact, we would absolutely habitually share them and

21   address every concern that they would have.

22   Senator Kaine: General Neller, anything you want to

23   add on that?

24   General Neller: On the previous comment you made,

25   Senator, I think, you know, amphibious capabilities have a

1   -- an image in people's mind that we're going to storm the

2   beach. That's just one thing that they do, and, quite

3   frankly, 97 percent of the stuff they do every day is to do

4   the second line of effort in the National Defense Strategy,

5   which is maintain alliances and build partnerships, and also

6   create presence out in the contact zone. And so, we do need

7   to look at the capability of those platforms to make sure

8   they're more increasingly survivable and increasingly

9   networked. And so, those are things that -- the CNO and I

10   sit on a Navy/Marine Corps Board. Our staffs bring us these

11   issues. We try to stay as linked as we can through naval

12   integration and make sure that the programmatics are in line

13   with where we think we need to go. And I think you're going

14   to see -- in training and experimentations, just like we did

15   at Pacific Blitz, you're going to see more and more U.S.

16   Marine, U.S. Navy operations, where the two commanders are

17   together. In fact, at that operation, probably the most

18   unique thing is, they took their staffs and put them

19   together as one staff. So, you had a blue-green staff, and

20   so -- to try to get rid of any of the seams or areas where

21   there wasn't complete interoperability between the two

22   forces. And I think it worked out well.

23   Senator Kaine: Great. Thank you.

24   Admiral?

25   Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could come back just

1   very quickly, with respect to the shipbuilding program that

2   was discussed earlier, the enduring need for 38 amphib

3   ships, our current shipbuilding plan gets us to 36 by FY24,

4   the 5 years.

5   Senator Kaine: Right.

6   Admiral Richardson: With this incremental funding

7   authority that we've been discussing, we might be able to

8   accelerate and get even closer to 37. And so, we're paying

9   a great deal of attention to meeting that requirement.

10   Senator Kaine: Excellent.

11   Mr. Chair, thank you. Appreciate it.

12   Senator Reed: Thank you.

13   On behalf of Chairman Inhofe, Senator Gillibrand,

14   please.

15   Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

16   Admiral Richardson, statements from both the President

17   and the Secretary of State seem to call into question this

18   administration's commitment to defend our NATO allies. At

19   the same time, we're building a new, low-yield nuclear

20   missile so that we can more easily threaten nuclear war

21   against Russia in order to protect the very allies that it

22   is clear to me this administration does not care about. So,

23   what do you think would make NATO feel safer? Having the

24   U.S. build a new nuclear weapon that dangerously lowers the

25   threshold for nuclear war, or have the U.S. commit to

1   defending our allies, which has successfully kept the peace

2   in Europe for almost 70 years?

3   Admiral Richardson: Senator, if -- ma'am, I'm sorry --

4   if I could answer that, I would say both --

5   Senator Gillibrand: Yeah.

6   Admiral Richardson: -- that the Nuclear Posture Review

7   makes clear that we would enhance our deterrent effect,

8   including extending that to our allies with the development

9   of these low-yield nuclear weapons, and that would also help

10   defend our NATO allies.

11   Senator Gillibrand: I understand it's the Department

12   of Defense's position that the low-yield nuclear weapons

13   program is focused on deterrence. But, does not it also

14   make it more possible that it could be used?

15   Admiral Richardson: Ma'am, I think that the logic

16   would be that, if there's an asymmetry in the nuclear

17   arsenal, if you will, if our opponents have options that

18   they could use that we have no real deterrent symmetric

19   approach, that this imbalance is, in fact, the thing that

20   might lower the threshold to use. And so, that is the

21   theory behind advocating for these new capabilities.

22   Senator Gillibrand: Secretary Spencer, we continue to

23   see significant cyberattacks on the defense industrial base.

24   More specifically, reports continue to show China's interest

25   and success in the illicit collection of critical maritime

1   technology and information through both defense contractors

2   and universities directly supporting Navy research and

3   development. I'm alarmed by the persistent vulnerability.

4   What can happen if China continues to collect maritime

5   information and technology at this rate?

6   Mr. Spencer: It's disastrous, Senator.

7   Senator Gillibrand: What concrete steps has the Navy

8   taken to mitigate and counter these threats?

9   Mr. Spencer: That was the reason, Senator, for setting

10   up the Cybersecurity Review, which was just delivered to me

11   3 weeks ago, and we're now rolling out the plan.

12   Senator Gillibrand: And how is the Navy collaborating

13   with the intelligence community, academia, and industry to

14   improve the defense of Navy-affiliated contractors and

15   universities?

16   Mr. Spencer: That is actually in the plan, Senator,

17   which -- I'm more than happy to brief you and/or this

18   committee at any time. That is the key. It's not simply

19   one avenue. It's the whole universe of players.

20   Senator Gillibrand: Can you expand a little bit on

21   potential fixes that can help the Navy more effectively

22   protect maritime information?

23   Mr. Spencer: CNO will weigh in, here, for a second.

24   Admiral Richardson: Ma'am, if I could, just to support

25   the Secretary, we've -- a lot of this has to do with just

1   ensuring that our contractual arrangements with academia,

2   industry, includes measures to secure their, you know,

3   cyberspace, if you will, right? And so, a lot of this is

4   making sure that there's increasing accountability by prime

5   contractors for their subcontractors' performance. As

6   Senator King illuminated, a lot of that vulnerability comes

7   through the subs. Strengthening the security and oversight

8   by making sure that data is encrypted, both at rest on those

9   servers and in transit, dual-factor authentication. Some of

10   this is pretty low-hanging fruit --

11   Mr. Spencer: Web.

12   Admiral Richardson: -- and well-known things. But,

13   ensuring that they are contractually required, and that

14   there is a response mechanism and allowance for oversight

15   there, are some of the measures we've already taken.

16   Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Admiral. And will you

17   please submit that report to the committee, and to me

18   particularly, so I can read it? Thank you.

19   Admiral Richardson: Most definitely, Senator.

20   [The information referred to follows:]

21   [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1   Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

2   General Neller, for a variety of reasons, including

3   current civilian-sector employment numbers, the military's

4   having a tough time meeting its own recruiting goals. We've

5   heard, too, about the portion of young Americans who do not

6   meet medical fitness and education standards to join the

7   Armed Forces, shrinking the pool of potential recruits. At

8   the same time, the President's proposed budget would slash

9   money from domestic agencies that directly address these

10   challenges, programs to support childhood nutrition, public

11   education, healthcare for low-income families, and others.

12   Do you agree it's possible for cuts to domestic spending to

13   further limit the number of Americans qualified for military

14   service?

15   General Neller: Senator, I'd have to speculate on

16   that, but you know as well as I do that less than 30 percent

17   of the American youth that are qualified -- are qualified to

18   join our military. Now, you take the propensity of those in

19   that 30 percent, and you get a smaller number. That said, I

20   can only speak for the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps has

21   been successful in making our recruiting goals and

22   maintaining our quality of those applicants to become

23   marines, since 2006. We -- our recruiters work very, very

24   hard, and it's not easy to do. But, clearly, anything that

25   we can do within the Nation to increase the health, the

1   educational level of our youth, of our citizenry, would make

2   it easier and better for us to find more and more people

3   that were qualified to serve in the military.

4   Senator Gillibrand: We had hearings -- just to close

5   the loop, Mr. Chairman -- in the Ag Committee specifically

6   on this issue, because obesity just continues to rise. And

7   so, the importance of Food Stamps became obvious, because if

8   you are a family on Food Stamps and you cut your nutrition

9   amount, the last week of every month, they can't get fresh

10   fruits and vegetables at an affordable price, so they eat

11   high-carb, high-fat foods that tend to be very inexpensive.

12   And the actual consequence of hunger is obesity.

13   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14   And thank you for -- all for your service.

15   Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you, Senator.

16   And thank all three witnesses. It's been good. I

17   think we've accomplished a lot, a lot of interest. And we

18   thank you for your time and your effort and your service.

19   [Whereupon, at 11:33 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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