

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR
2015 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE
PROGRAM**

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING
THREATS AND CAPABILITIES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:14 p.m. in room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Kay R. Hagan (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Hagan, Reed, Nelson, Manchin, Kaine, Fischer, and Graham.

Majority staff members present: Richard W. Fieldhouse, professional staff member; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Jason W. Maroney, counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; and Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Thomas W. Goffus, professional staff member; and Natalie M. Nicolas, minority research assistant.

Staff assistants present: Lauren M. Gillis and Alexandra M. Hathaway.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn A. Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Christopher Cannon, assistant to Senator Hagan; Karen E. Courington, assistant to Senator Kaine; Peter W. Schirtzinger, assistant to Senator Fischer; and Craig Abele, assistant to Senator Graham.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KAY R. HAGAN,
CHAIRMAN**

Senator HAGAN. Good afternoon. Today the subcommittee welcomes the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, or SOLIC, Mike Lumpkin, and the Commander of Special Operations Command, Admiral Bill McRaven, to receive testimony on the posture of U.S. Special Operations Forces and Department of Defense programs, policies, and operations with respect to countering emerging terrorism threats, in preparation for the committee's markup of the National Defense

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015. We look forward to your testimony.

Time permitting, today's hearing will both have an open and closed session. At the conclusion of this open portion, it is our intention to reconvene in room SVC-217 in the Capitol's Visitors Center for the closed portion.

The Quadrennial Defense Review, or QDR, released last week describes the continuing threat posed by al Qaeda and the associated groups this way, and let me quote: "Although core al Qaeda has been severely degraded, instability in the Middle East and civil war in Syria have enabled al Qaeda to expand its global reach and operate in new areas."

The QDR also highlights the role of Special Operations Forces, or SOF, in addressing these challenges. While the Department protects SOCOM from some of the deeper cuts required by Congress in its fiscal year 2015 budget request, SOF are not immune from budget pressures. Specifically, I understand the growth of SOF will now level off at 69,700 personnel, rather than the approximately 72,000 personnel that had been called for by previous QDRs.

Additionally, SOF rely heavily on enabling capabilities provided by the Services, including intelligence, logistics, and other support, that may be impacted by cuts to their respective budgets.

Lastly, I am concerned about the lack of a plan by the Department to transition appropriate funding for SOCOM from the Overseas Contingency Operations, or OCO, budget to the base budget in future years to protect the enduring SOF capabilities built over the last 12 years. Admiral McRaven, you recently testified that "SOCM relies heavily on OCO funding today, with the National Mission Force in particular funded with 67 percent of OCO." The committee looks forward to hearing both of your perspectives on these issues and the level of risk you believe the Department is assuming under the current budget pressures.

Of course, the ability of SOCOM to carry out the full range of missions it has been assigned does not solely rely on the size of its budget, but also on the authorities available to SOF. Last year, the office of the ASD(SOLIC) completed a report which raised a number of concerns about the "patchwork of authorities used by SOF to engage with partner nation security forces." With Secretary Lumpkin here, I hope we can hear your assessment of these authorities and what, if any, changes we should consider as we prepare for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

I also plan to ask for your assessment of recent changes to the human rights vetting requirements, the so-called Leahy vetting, and the impact of those changes on DOD security assistance programs carried out by special forces. The subcommittee is particularly interested in hearing about the process for remediating foreign forces once they've been flagged under the Leahy vetting.

A particular area of focus for this committee this year is the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, the ISR assets, given the Department's decision to reduce its planned capacity for around-the-clock unmanned combat air patrols. This decision, when coupled with our combatant commanders' comments about the small percentage of their ISR requirement that is currently being

supported, is concerning and I think we will all be eager to hear your assessments.

Admiral McRaven, let me take this opportunity to applaud you for the Preservation of the Force and Families Initiative and I also look forward to hearing your thoughts on what the committee can do to better support SOCOM in this regard.

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and I join you in welcoming our witnesses and thank them and the men and women of the Special Operations community for their continued service to our Nation. Their testimony today will play an important role in informing the development of the NDAA for fiscal year 2015.

As instability and violence spreads across the Middle East and North Africa, terrorist groups like al Qaeda are taking advantage of that chaos. Today al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations now operate in more countries and control more territory than ever before. At the forefront of our efforts to combat global terrorism are the men and women of Special Operations Command. As noted by Admiral McRaven in his prepared remarks, our special operators are engaged in more than 70 countries at any given time and are often our first line of defense against an evolving and increasingly dangerous terrorist threat.

However, demand for these elite troops continues to far exceed supply, placing enormous strain on the readiness of the force. Further, budgetary constraints are placing added pressure on our Special Operations Forces and the enablers they depend on to accomplish their missions.

I look to our witnesses to update the committee on the status of these forces, as well as outline efforts to ensure that these forces maintain the readiness and capabilities required to operate in an increasingly complex and challenging global security environment.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

I'm going to ask both of you to keep your opening statements three to five minutes. We do have copies of your prepared statements. So, Secretary Lumpkin, if you will begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL D. LUMPKIN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS/LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

Mr. LUMPKIN. Chairman Hagan, Ranking Member Fischer, distinguished members of the committee: Thank you for your steadfast support to our special operators in the United States Special Operations Command. The authorities and appropriations the Congress has provided the Department of Defense have allowed us to prosecute the current fight and ensure we are prepared to confront emerging threats and to protect the homeland. I'm pleased to testify with Admiral Bill McRaven, who has expertly led U.S. SOCOM for the past three years.

The threat we face, especially from al Qaeda, is continuing to change. Although the scale of the threat to the homeland has diminished, threats to our interests overseas are increasing. With their leadership depleting, al Qaeda still retains sanctuaries in re-

mote areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Terrorist organizations are also expanding in Syria, North Africa, and the Sahel. The threat continues to evolve. We must maintain our pressure on terrorist organizations to protect the homeland.

We are in a time of transition. We face a yet undetermined draw-down in Afghanistan and new fiscal realities. It may be more difficult to maintain pressure on al Qaeda in the traditional safe havens. I closely monitor how the cuts to the Services impact the readiness of U.S. SOCOM. We are assessing the impact on the critical enablers. For example, we are ensuring the cuts to the ISR fleet will not erode our ability and capability to find, fix, and finish targets. As we transition in Afghanistan and redistribute SOF to other theaters, we need to ensure our operation and maintenance accounts are resourced to support operations.

In accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, ASD(SOLIC) and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics are strengthening our roles in the oversight of U.S. SOCOM to maximize efficiencies and maintain oversight responsibilities of Major Force Program 11. These include routine interactions between my staff and U.S. SOCOM and frequent dialogue between me and Admiral McRaven. We owe the President the best strategic options to accomplish our national strategic objectives.

This is conducted in close coordination and honest discussion with the Congress as you exercise your oversight, authorization, and appropriations responsibilities. We are moving from a state of perpetual war to perpetual engagement, engaging with partners to build their capacity, engaging problems before they become too big to fix, and engaging in direct and indirect action to disrupt and destroy our enemies.

As we move towards a globally networked perpetual engagement, our efforts are grounded in the experiences that demonstrate the success of this approach. Columbia and the Philippines are case studies in how a small investment of SOF, resourced for an enduring time frame, can have positive results. In the Philippines, a task force of about 500 special operators and supporting general purpose forces helped degrade a serious transnational terrorist threat from Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah. In Columbia, we provided counterinsurgency training and humanitarian assistance to prevent narcotraffickers from developing sanctuaries. This effort in Columbia not only resulted in a far more secure and prosperous nation now, it has emerged as an exporter of regional security.

We have the same opportunities in Africa and the Middle East. Our support to the French in the Sahel has been critical in stemming the tide of extremism in Mali. Modest support to AMISOM in the Horn of Africa has helped to reverse the trajectory of Al Shabaab. These discrete activities and operations constitute a global SOF networks required for perpetual vigilance.

I am proud to represent the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines and civilians of U.S. Special Operations Command. Their sacrifices in this war are immense. Since October 2001, 385 special operators have been killed in action and another 2,160 have been wounded. I'm committed to doing everything I can to ensure these warriors have the best training, equipment, and support we can

provide. Working closely with Congress, we will surely have the right strategies and policies in place to employ them effectively.

Thank you for your continuing support and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lumpkin follows:]

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Secretary Lumpkin.

Admiral McRaven.

**STATEMENT OF ADM WILLIAM H. McRAVEN, U.S. NAVY,
COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

Admiral McRAVEN. Thank you. Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer, distinguished members of the committee: Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to address you. This is the third hearing I've been to with this committee in my time as the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

I'd also like to recognize my friend and colleague Assistant Secretary Michael Lumpkin. We have a great partnership and I value ASD(SOLIC)'s oversight and support of SOF.

Madam Chairman, I'm pleased to say that since my last hearing SOCOM has made some great strides in dealing with the current conflicts, preparing for the future conflicts, and, most importantly, taking care of our people. SOCOM continues to provide the world's finest warriors to the fight in Afghanistan. As we approach the end of 2014, your Special Operations Forces will be ready to adjust to whatever decisions are made regarding our future employment in that country. Globally, we are developing plans to better serve the geographic combatant commanders, who, owing to the past 12 years of engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, have gone underresourced with SOF forces.

SOCOM, as the DOD synchronizer for the war against terrorism, is also working hard to better coordinate our activities locally, regionally, and globally with both the geographic combatant commanders and the U.S. Ambassadors. I believe the future of Special Operations will be in helping to build partner capacity with those willing nations who share our interests. This will mean strengthening our existing allied relationships and building new ones. No nation alone can stem the rise of extremism and we need our friends and allies more now than ever before.

Our future as a Special Operations Forces is also inextricably linked to the general purpose force and the interagency. The past 12 years have shown us that a whole-of-government effort is required to be successful against extremism, and in SOF we have always relied heavily on our fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines for support around the globe.

Finally, we have gone to great lengths to take care of our most precious resource, our people. The Preservation of the Force and Families Initiative (SOPOTFF) has already seen a marked improvement in the morale and the wellbeing of those who serve in SOF. While we still suffer from the tragedy of high suicide rates, I believe we have laid the foundation for keeping our force and their families strong and resilient into the future.

Once again, thank you for your interest and your unwavering support for the men and women in Special Operations. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral McRaven follows:]

Senator HAGAN. Thank you to both individuals. Thank you so much for your statements and what you do for our country.

I do want to go ahead and begin the questions and we'll have 6-minute rounds.

While efforts were made to protect the Special Operations Forces' capabilities in the fiscal year 2015 budget, I understand SOCOM did sustain significant cuts in relation to what it had planned prior to the Budget Control Act and the Bipartisan Budget Agreement, possibly most notably in your opening testimony the leveling off of the SOCOM growth from currently 69,700 personnel, almost 3,000 fewer than had been previously planned.

Admiral McRaven, what is the impact of these cuts to the SOF capabilities, particularly with regard to the organic enabling capabilities like combat support and combat service support? Under the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative, the Department has proposed \$26 billion above the fiscal year 2015 budget request for various readiness, acquisition, and installation support activities pending the availability of additional funds. So in conjunction with both of those, how much of that \$26 billion would be for SOCOM versus other purposes?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. The leveling off at 69.7 will mean that we're going to have to prioritize our efforts globally. We had built a plan based on 72,000, so now it's just a function of making sure we can continue to meet the priority demands globally. I think we can do that with the current level of effort of 69.7.

The initiative you were referring to as the passback, we will get approximately \$400 million for SOCOM and most of that money I will place back into readiness. So it is important for us to make sure we're maintaining our readiness as we continue to project forces around the world. As was mentioned earlier, we have folks—I think this week we're actually in 84 countries around the world. We've got approximately 7,000 people deployed globally right now, and we think that and possibly more is going to be an enduring requirement.

I'll add one more thing, ma'am. The cuts to us or the leveling, if you will, to 69.7 is important and again I think we can prioritize our efforts. Where I'm concerned is the cuts to the broader services. As you pointed out in your opening comments, ma'am, we get our enablers, most of our enablers, from the Services. We get a lot of our readiness support from the Services as well, so they will provide us F-18s for our joint tactical air controllers to work, they will provide us our ship steaming hours for our SEALs to do underway. So things that affect the Services absolutely affect—the cuts to the Services absolutely affect U.S. SOCOM.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Over the past 12 years the Department has built and sustained a number of enduring capabilities using OCO. Without a transfer of funding from OCO to the base budget in the coming years, much of these capabilities could be lost. The problem is especially acute for the Special Operations Forces. Admiral McRaven, you testified that U.S. SOCOM relies heavily on OCO funding today with the National Mission Force, in particular funded with 67 percent from OCO.

To both of you: Given the downward pressures on the base budget, how does the Department plan to transition funding for SOCOM's enduring requirements from the OCO budget to the base budget in future years?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Ma'am, I work regularly with the Comptroller and the leadership in the Department to make sure not only that they, one, understand the reliance of U.S. SOCOM on the overseas contingency operations funding, but to do whatever possible we can to transition OCO moneys to base moneys to support long-term operations. So we're working through the issue. It's quite complicated, as you're aware, but it has everybody's attention. We're doing what we can to make it.

Senator HAGAN. Can you put that in dollars to me versus the percent? How much money are we talking about?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Do you know, Admiral?

Admiral MCRAVEN. I do, yes, ma'am. We've got about \$2.4 billion of OCO that goes on top of our about \$7.8 billion in base.

Senator HAGAN. That's 2.4?

Admiral MCRAVEN. \$2.4 billion is what we get in terms of OCO that goes into our total budget. So yes, ma'am, that does become a concern when that money's not available. As you pointed out, the majority of that—I'll qualify that. The National Mission Force, about 60-plus percent of their readiness, their O&M money, comes from that OCO.

Senator HAGAN. Admiral McRaven, in your opening comments you talked about the Preservation of Force and Families. You've focused a great deal on that effort, which I appreciate, and I'm sure it certainly has made a difference to the stress on our special operators and their families. I'm proud that in fiscal year 2014 we authorized \$5 million for up to three pilot programs to assess the feasibility and benefits of SOCOM by directly providing this family support services.

Do you believe the families of the special operators face specific Special Operations Forces-unique challenges when compared to other military families?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Ma'am, I would say the challenges that the SOF families face are very similar to the Service families. I wouldn't distinguish between the two. But what we've looked at is, we are partnered with the Services in all of our family programs, so we work very closely to make sure that if a Service has a family readiness program or a family resiliency program in the area we will absolutely send our members there.

However, what we're finding is, because of the increase and the sustained rate of deployment for our SOF servicemembers, their families I think over time will face additional stresses as their servicemembers continue to be deployed for the foreseeable future.

Senator HAGAN. Of the pilot programs, how are they working? Do you have any examples?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Ma'am, we haven't started those yet. We will start those now. This year we're beginning to take a look at the pilot programs. Now, we have a number of resiliency programs with other organizations. We're tapping into some of the resiliency programs within the Services. So with this money we're building the programs and we're beginning to implement them this year.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you. I do think that OCO funding is going to be a huge issue.

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. If I could, I'd like to follow up on a number of the points that you brought up.

Admiral, when we talk about the size of the force from the projected 72,000 to the 69.7, where do you accept the greatest risk when you're looking at not meeting that original number?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. What we have actually done, over the course of the last few years we, we U.S. Special Operations Command, have been working with the geographic combatant commanders and recognizing that the war in Iraq was over and that we were drawing down in Afghanistan, we've worked with them to develop a plan to reapportion the forces that are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan to support their needs.

So as look at the areas where we are centering most of our effort, we will continue to be heavily focused in the Central Command region. We are probably putting more effort now into Africa than we have in the past. We're reinforcing our efforts in Latin America and in Europe. And then of course we're continuing to pivot as best we can to Asia.

What I'm having to do, of course, is to prioritize our resources. What I would tell you, though, is that prioritization is sometimes dependent upon the host nation's desire to accept available force. So I will have the available force, I think, even with the 69.7. The challenge is going to be whether or not the host nation wants to have a SOF footprint in their country. That of course is all about the geographic combatant commanders and the chiefs of mission and how they're able to work with the partner nations to make that happen.

But I will have an available force of about 12 to 13,000 that we can deploy globally for 365 days a year, and that is the force that's been built up really since 2001. So we've been fortunate that as we've doubled the size of the force from 33,000 now to coming up on 69,000, so there is available capacity out there.

We will still have to prioritize. I don't want to mislead you.

Senator FISCHER. But you're talking about how you are going to prioritize. When you look at the other Services and the proposals there to sacrifice manpower—you folks are very dependent on the other forces. You alluded to that in your earlier comments about the planes. We need the guys with the planes, we need the guys with the bases. When we look at the other Services that are going to be cutting manpower, how does that affect you guys and the added risk that your forces are going to face because of the enablers?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. Great question. To be honest with you, I'm not sure we know just yet. I think we'll have to see how the Services take their cuts and how those cuts influence support to U.S. Special Operations. Intuitively, we recognize that as the Services begin to draw down there will be less of some specific military operational specialties, the MOSs, that we think we'll need. I have a tremendous partnership with the Service Chiefs and with the geographic combatant commanders. So as they draw down and the GCCs make their demands known for SOF and for the con-

ventional forces, we are all partnered together to make sure that we are shaping the force as best we can to meet the demands of the geographic combatant commanders.

Senator FISCHER. So you're continuing to coordinate with the other Services as well?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, absolutely. Almost daily.

Senator FISCHER. And they take your prioritization—when they're looking at their future plans, they are tying in yours as well?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. So that you can still meet the mission that you have?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. To clarify, though, my priorities are really based on the priorities from the geographic combatant commanders. So I don't prioritize the force. What I do is I request input from the geographic combatant commanders. My job as the supporting commander is to provide them forces.

Now, there does come a time when I kind of run out of forces, and so I've got to work with the GCCs and the Services to do the best we can. But the priority is from the GCCs.

Senator FISCHER. Do you look at those guys and do you discuss with them what that level is that they need to have in order for you to perform your mission?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, absolutely.

Senator FISCHER. And you feel confident that the numbers that are being put forward now, that those missions can still be performed?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. I'm confident right now that with the 69.7 we will be able to meet the majority of those missions. Now, again, it depends—

Senator FISCHER. But also with the other Services?

Admiral MCRAVEN. With the Services.

Senator FISCHER. With their cuts in manpower—

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER.—are you going to be able to meet this?

Admiral MCRAVEN. I think it's unknown at this point in time. Again, I would tell you that intuitively I would say we're going to be strained on some of the key enablers, but empirically I'm not sure I can give you an answer just yet until we see how those cuts manifest themselves.

Senator FISCHER. And if you are constrained that's going to determine then where your forces are going to be deployed. You mentioned not just the Middle East, but also Africa and the pivot to the Far East as well.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. So that will affect your mission.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, it will, yes, ma'am.

Now, what we are doing is we are partnering very closely with the respective Service components in a region. For example, I have a theater special operations command in Africa who is partnering with Army Africa to make sure that we are able to give General Rodriguez the very best capability that he needs. So we are—we're kind of exchanging things. So I may not have enough special operations helicopters, but Army Africa has a combat aviation brigade

that has helicopters that will do the job. So again, we're partnering in those areas where we have a delta and they have a surplus, to get the best package available.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator HAGAN. Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service to our country.

Following up on Senator Fischer's comments, take for example the Air Force's plan of 55 steady-state drone patrols. Is that going to be enough for you for your ISR needs?

Mr. LUMPKIN. If my understanding is correct, the SOCOM requirement is 44 what they call CAPs. These are the orbits. The reduction is going to have an effect, the Air Force reduction, on support of U.S. SOCOM. They can source 15 CAPs organically, U.S. SOCOM, based on reprioritization of aircraft and movement. But that puts a significant burden on the Air Force, and their downsizing will have an impact.

We're still looking through what that will look like and the scope and regionally where it will be. One of the challenges we see as the threat disperses globally and takes on farther reaches, it makes it harder to get places. So basing for those RPAs, those remotely piloted aircraft, becomes more difficult as you spread them across the globe. Your orbits don't always have the same impact as they do in a more concentrated area.

Anything you'd like to add, Admiral?

Admiral MCRAVEN. No, thank you.

Senator NELSON. When we pull out of Afghanistan, do you feel confident that you can keep enough SOF forces in the area so that if, for example, something happened that we had to go back in, that we can do it on a quick turnaround and get back in?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Thank you, Senator. From a policy perspective, as we look at the absence of a bilateral security agreement, is what I'm understanding you're asking the question about, the absence of one will make things significantly more difficult to conduct the counterterrorism operations that U.S. SOCOM and U.S. CENTCOM work in conjunction with the interagency.

So options are being looked at on what that would look like. But it becomes significantly more problematic on how we would do business and to meet the threats to this Nation without a bilateral security agreement.

Senator NELSON. With the new demands that you have spoken of with regard to Africa, Latin American, and so forth, how can you take the reduction from 70-some thousand down to 69.7? How can you deploy those forces in a way that you're meeting these expanding threats?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. Again, it comes to prioritization and access. These are the real two issues. So if a geographic combatant commander has a priority and I have the available force, which at 69.7 I will have the available force, then I can obviously prioritize it to him. One of the areas where again it becomes a little bit of an unknown for us is the access that we may be granted by a particular nation. The great thing about Special Operations Forces is we are a small footprint, we are low cost. You can put a small Spe-

cial Forces detachment in there or a SEAL platoon in there that I think gives you great return on your investment. And if the policymakers decide that they don't like the direction we're heading, it's pretty easy to reverse the decision and pull them out.

So that is kind of fungible across the globe. Having said that, there are a lot of nations where we are prepared to provide forces to that may or may not be willing to accept them. The plan we've developed makes the assumption that a lot of these nations will be willing to work with us and partner with us, and that's how we have kind of built our plan for the future.

If that turns out to be a bad assumption in some cases, then we may have more or less depending upon what the demand signal is of Special Operations Forces.

Senator NELSON. Have some of the rough patches of several years ago between Special Operations Forces and the CIA being in various locations around the world where the question was a conflict and how all of that relates to the chief of mission, has that been smoothed out in the last two or three years?

Mr. LUMPKIN. From my personal experience, to see where we were when I was in uniform in 2001 to where we are today, the relationship has grown significantly and we're in lockstep, especially when you get outside the Beltway. Things get better. When you're forward in the operational areas, the relationship is good. There's natural tension here in the Beltway, but our relationship with CIA leadership is good. I see more things playing out in the press than the tensions I feel working with the leadership here in the city.

Senator NELSON. Thank you.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I would even go so far as to say our relationship with the CIA is fabulous. I've been on the ground with the Agency continuously for the last 10, 12 years and I will tell you they have magnificent intelligence officers. We are partnered not only at the chief of station level, but at the chief of mission level, in many of the Nations we talked about. We have personal and professional relationships that were brought together under fire. I have never seen them this good and I have a great personal and professional relationship with Director John Brennan.

So it's the best I've ever seen in my 37 years of doing this business, sir.

Senator NELSON. Thank you.

Senator HAGAN. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you both.

If we went to the zero option in Afghanistan for whatever reason, Admiral McRaven, what do you think would happen?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I'm not really in the business of speculating, but if we go to a zero option I am concerned that we will have a rise of al Qaeda. So I think we need to be clear-eyed about the fact that al Qaeda still operates, admittedly in a much less virulent strain, in the federally Administered Tribal Areas. And of course, we see some al Qaeda pockets up in the northern provinces of Kunar and Nuristan.

I think we're doing a pretty good job right now, both the military and the interagency, of keeping them at bay, keeping their heads down. I think that requires continuous pressure. I'd be concerned

that if we went to a zero option, as Secretary Lumpkin said, it would make that a lot more challenging. Does it mean that we couldn't do it? No, sir. I think we would find a way to keep the pressure on. But it would make it significantly more challenging.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I agree with President Obama when he says that we can't leave any troops behind without a bilateral security agreement. That's just a terrible spot to put our folks in. So I hope we can get a BSA.

But I would just—my two cents' worth, if we don't have a significant capacity for at least a while in Afghanistan, I could see this thing turning pretty badly against us, and I hope we can avoid that.

Secretary Lumpkin, do we have the authority legally under the AUMF or other authorities to deal with al Qaeda threats that are emerging throughout Africa and in Syria?

Mr. LUMPKIN. If it's, again, one of those al Qaeda affiliates, then the AUMF gives us the authority to act as necessary.

Senator GRAHAM. Are we locked in by their organizational structure? I mean, can the enemy use their organizational structure and naming to deny us the capabilities to protect the country? Do you know where I'm coming from?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I think, I believe, where you're heading with this. I think that if there is an affiliate, an associate, and it's been recognized, regardless of what they call themselves in the relationship, I think that—of course, we'd go to the lawyers' group, but my sense is that we would probably be in a good place to use the AUMF.

Senator GRAHAM. Does the Congress need to do anything from your point of view to enhance your legal standing?

Mr. LUMPKIN. The AUMF has served us very well and gives the Department the ability to do what's necessary. Currently, however, I think we're at a point where the AUMF—at some point we need to relook at it to make sure it serves us the best way. And I look forward to working with the Congress if the decision is made to go down that road.

Senator GRAHAM. From a general perspective, Admiral McRaven, Secretary Lumpkin, is al Qaeda diminished, about the same, or on the rise?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I think that if we were to kind of change the way we look at it maybe, is that it is much broader. It is spreading. So it's expanding. However, as it's doing that, as it fills security vacuums globally, it takes a while for it to take hold and to have the ability to organize and to attack the homeland.

So to answer your question, I would say currently, today, it is spreading globally, but its ability to attack the homeland is diminished.

Senator GRAHAM. Are you sure about that?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I believe that to be true.

Senator GRAHAM. Libya is an example of it spreading and being lethal to those in Libya who served our country.

Director of National Intelligence Clapper said that the 26,000 al Qaeda affiliate members, whatever you want to call these folks, in Syria are beginning to present a direct threat to the homeland. Do you agree with that?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Let me take one step back, if I may. When I talked about al Qaeda being—I mentioned specifically the homeland, as it being a threat, its ability to attack the homeland is diminished

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Mr. LUMPKIN. It remains a regional threat.

Senator GRAHAM. But he said they were engaging in plans to eventually attack the homeland, that these are Europeans and people from all over the world that are going to Syria to get the experience, and they will go back to Europe, some may come back to America; that he thought that the al Qaeda presence in Syria represented a threat to the homeland. Does that make sense to you?

Mr. LUMPKIN. The threat of the number of foreign fighters in Syria—if we get into specifics, I'd rather shift it to the closed session.

Senator GRAHAM. Sure.

Mr. LUMPKIN. But it does make significant challenges and increase the threat to Europe and the homeland.

Senator GRAHAM. Admiral McRaven, you've been at this for a very long time and our country owes you and people like yourself, really the best among us, a great debt. If you could, could you give us a sense of where the world is headed in terms of danger and threats to the United States? I can't imagine that sequestration is a good thing, but we all imposed it upon ourselves and many of us would like to fix it. Is the world more dangerous in terms of the threats that we face as a Nation?

SOF people are just super men and women, but you do have your limits. What worries you the most at night about the threats we face?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I'm concerned about the second and third order effects of terrorism as much as I am about the first order effects. The first order effects obviously are tragic and another strike on the homeland is something that we need to expend a lot of resources to ensure it does not happen.

But you raised the issue a few moments ago about ISIL, about AQI in Iraq and Syria, and Al-Nusra and some of the bad actors that are in Syria. My concern there is that you are—Syria is becoming an area where people are coming to get their jihad and, more importantly than that, it's creating pressure on the Levant in ways that we've never seen before. So the number of refugees that are flowing into Lebanon, the number of refugees that are flowing into Jordan, a lot of this has created second and third order effects by the al Qaeda and al Qaeda affiliates that are in Syria.

So I think it is easier to kind of explain of someone like AQAP. We know that al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is probably the number one threat to the homeland in terms of plots that we may see generating from there. But I think we also have to be very cautious and concerned about what the extremists can do to create regional effects that have global dynamics and global effects related to them.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Senator HAGAN. Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you very much, and thank both of you for your service. I'm going to go preside here, so I'll be very quick.

Admiral McRaven, I'm concerned about the Special Ops within the National Guard, 19th and 20th, and how that is going. I know there was a movement, let's say, a few years back to eliminate that.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Not on my watch, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. How are they performing?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, they perform magnificently. We are—I tell the story, on one of my very first trips to Afghanistan I got on a helicopter in Bagram, went down to Kandahar, picked up a couple soldiers, spent most of that evening talking with a Special Forces soldier. He had a Special Forces tab on. We got chatting. It wasn't until the end of the evening that I realized he was a 20th Special Forces Group guy.

The work that they did for us in Afghanistan was tremendous. No, sir, there is certainly no move afoot on my end to—

Senator MANCHIN. I know it wasn't—I'm sorry, I didn't refer to your end. There has been a move afoot before.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, they bring great value to what we do.

Senator MANCHIN. That's all. We needed to get that on record. Thank you.

Let me just talk about and ask questions briefly about the bitcoins in cyberspace, what's going on, the ability to use this new form of currency, if you will, to support terrorists, arms sales, things of that sort. Are you following that pretty closely? Do you have concern about that?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Yes, we do track that. The counter-threat finance program is a tremendous return on investment for the small amount of money we can put to follow the money of terrorist organizations. We have cells that focus on this. Each of the geographic combatant commanders have this and there's one at U.S. SOCOM, and it's a very tight-knit group that works together to address issues.

Senator MANCHIN. The digital currency like Bitcoin, does that cause you concern about how this money, how this currency moves?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Well, how any currency moves between terrorist organizations, those who want to do us harm, causes us concern.

Senator MANCHIN. But bitcoins seem to be the hottest thing right now.

Mr. LUMPKIN. It is, it is the trend, absolutely.

Senator MANCHIN. We've asked—I've been very outspoken on this. I'm very concerned. I serve also on the Banking Committee and I'm very concerned about what we see and a lack of oversight, if you will, and also the volatility of this and the ability to be able to use it for—the unscrupulous people using it for the wrong reasons. I would say that would be a great concern for our security.

Mr. LUMPKIN. Absolutely. Thank you, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. I'm going to have to run, but I thank you so much. I'm sorry.

Senator HAGAN. Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Well, thank you, Madam Chairman.

Admiral McRaven, can you just give us—and I know this is an open session—sort of a response to how you're adapting SOCOM to a battlefield that's increasingly dominated by cyber operationally,

in terms of interfering with equipment that you have a huge superiority in, the whole spectrum? Can you give us a sense of that?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. Our approach really has been to stay closely partnered with the National Security Agency and now Cyber Command as we look at our cyber requirements. So cyber—National Security Agency and Cyber Command have done a great job for the last 12 years that I have spent time intimately with the cyber support teams that come from Cyber Command, that come from NSA in supporting us.

What we do is we provide our demands. So if we're looking for a particular individual, then we will make sure that we are linked with the NSA. They will through their technical means figure out how to identify that person. So instead of us in U.S. SOCOM building an additional capability to conduct cyber operations, we use the experts at Cyber Command and at NSA to do that.

What we do have is we have a small element at all of the combatant commands now that help us with the planning and the access to NSA and the CYBERCOM.

Senator REED. You have I think emphasized the defensive aspects of CYBERCOM. Can you comment on any planning or consideration of offensive operations that would involve SOCOM and cyber threats?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I'd prefer to hold that to a closed meeting if I could.

Senator REED. That's more than fair.

The other issue too is that we're at a transition point in many places. One transition point might be sort of shifting from active preemption activities that SOCOM undertakes against threats either to our forces or to the homeland, to more training of indigenous forces so that they can be capable of that. Can you comment upon sort of how you're trying to navigate that transition point?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Absolutely, sir, and I appreciate the question. As we look forward for U.S. Special Operations Command and what we're trying to provide the geographic combatant commanders, we're looking for how we balance the two. Our thrust, if you will, is building partner capacity so that the host nation can take care of its own security problems. But we should never forget that if we need to, we need to be postured to conduct unilateral or partnered operations that only we and potentially our partners have the capability to do.

At the end of the day, my feeling is we need to continue to keep pressure on al Qaeda and the associated movements, on the extremists that are out there. We do that by partnering with the host nations where there is an extremist problem or where they are bordering on an extremist problem and being postured to conduct direct action if authorized to do so by the President.

Senator REED. This also raises a question that Senator Fischer and others have raised, which is the resources that you need from the non-SOCOM commanders to do that, the training, running ranges, all those things that would help you train local forces and also train your own forces. Again, you've commented on that, but do you see that as a particular concern in terms of your mission to train local forces?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, most of the training that we will do with the host nation will be in their own country. So when we go down we find—we use their range facilities. If they don't have range facilities, through various authorities, 1206, 1207, or 1208, we help kind of build those. It's a modest MILCON, minor MILCON approach. But all of—not all of, but the bulk of our training is done in country. So we don't have a conflict with the big services in terms of ranges for training the locals.

Senator REED. Let me ask you a question that was a concern of Senator Graham, too, and he asked me to mention it. You might want to take this one for the record but it might require a more extensive answer. That is, if you or your forces detain an individual in Afghanistan there's a pretty clear pathway to get that person through our system and ultimately into the Afghani system. Outside of that AO, can you comment on the policy or the obstacles to successfully detaining someone who's a threat?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I'm going to take your advice and take that one for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator REED. Thank you. Well, that's a thoughtful response.

Let me ask a question that's very narrowly focused. JIEDDO, which we're all familiar with, has been a critical institution in terms of protecting our forces against improvised explosive devices. They're sort of being reformulated. It would seem to me that in your role particularly, not only protecting your forces in the field, but training and protecting forces as this threat evolves, and unfortunately it's going to evolve, what do you see the relationship with JIEDDO? Could you take that into your command? I know there's been several posed. One it's an OSD office, one it just goes away, or it gets distributed. Do you have any views on that, because I think you would be sort of the point of—no pun, but the point of the spear when it comes to these weapons.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. We haven't done any looking into bringing JIEDDO into U.S. SOCOM, so I'm not prepared to answer that just yet in terms of an organizational change. Having said that, we work daily with JIEDDO. I have liaison officers up there, they have liaison officers with us. They are embedded with all of our forces in Afghanistan. They have done a tremendous service for this Nation over the last decade-plus.

What they ended up doing, of course, with the same methodology that they used to find IEDs, kind of a network analysis methodology, is very helpful as we look at bad actors and other networks around the globe. So as they have, rightfully so, I think, begun to shift their focus—they continue to focus on IEDs, but they also have this ability to look at networks—we are tapping into the great expertise they have to make sure we understand what the problem on the ground looks like. And they are a very valued partner.

Senator REED. Just a final comment. Given the fact that your forces are the most forward deployed of any forces we have and will be more so in the future, you're the first probably point at which you will see different developments in IEDs, different developments in network behavior, disguising networks, et cetera, so you will I

assume have a feedback loop also wherever JIEDDO ends up or if it ends up anywhere.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir, I expect sir.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Senator HAGAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thanks to our witnesses.

Just a report back from the field. Senator King and I did a CODEL recently to Israel, Lebanon, and Egypt, and heard a lot of real positives about the work of Special Forces, especially in the training mission that you've described. For purposes of a massive budget, even a massive defense budget, I think the training that we do with other nations might be one of the best investments we make, not only in the short term, kind of building capacity, but in long-term relationship-building. The folks we train end up being defense ministers and prime ministers and presidents. That's an investment that really works. So I wanted to praise you on that.

Mr. Lumpkin, I just wanted to look at—or Secretary Lumpkin—page 3 of your testimony. You had a statement that caught my eye: “We are ending the longest prolonged period of war in our Nation’s history.” Is that your personal opinion or is that the administration’s position, or both?

Mr. LUMPKIN. When I look at just the number of years that we’ve been engaged in conflicts, direct conflicts, since 2001 until today, if you’re looking at those long periods, I used that as kind of an absolute from my perspective.

Senator KAINE. The word I was interested in was “ending.” I think it’s—I know it’s the case that administration witnesses before this committee—and I’m not sure if it was you or not, but we had a hearing on the authorization for use of military force in May where we were asking how long will this war go on that was initiated 9–14–01 through that authorization. And there was some testimony that it would go for a decade more. There was some testimony that it might go for another 25 or 30 years.

But the way I read this testimony, it sounds like there’s a suggestion that at the end of our sort of 2014 activities in Afghanistan, as we move to the next level, that the war is ending. Is that how the administration now sees the end of the Afghanistan theater of operations, that the war is ending?

Mr. LUMPKIN. The President has given very clear guidance that he sees us coming off of a wartime footing, that we’re moving forward to look at—the threats will be there, but direct conflict in the sense of a traditional war, we see that coming to an end.

Senator KAINE. Just wrestling with what Congress should do, if the war is ending at the end of our 2014 activities in Afghanistan, then should the authorization expire?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Again, as I mentioned to Senator Graham earlier, I think we’re at a point where, while the AUMF has supported the needs of the Department in order to execute the missions at hand in order to protect the homeland and American interests, I think we’re at an inflection point that it may be a time to look at the AUMF to see if it does need adjustment to better serve this country.

Senator Kaine. Whether there might be a need to consider sort of a chapter two version?

Mr. Lumpkin. Potentially. And I look forward to working with the Congress as they consider and shape these issues.

Senator Kaine. It was interesting, this morning we had a hearing about a nominee, a very qualified nominee, I'm proud to support him, Admiral Rogers to be head of Cyber Command and the NSA. It was an interesting hearing because he's the nominee, not the acting. But we were running into a lot of terminological questions that I think revolve ultimately around this question of what are we in? Is it a war or is it a counterinsurgency?

For example, he testified that Edward Snowden, his activities were clearly wrong, violated the law, had cost American lives, but he wasn't sure whether he would label him a traitor. He was—Senator Graham asked him a question about whether we were at war and he originally said we're in an engagement, not sure it's a war. But then he clarified: I mean, we're not in a cyber war right now.

When pressed about what cyber activity has to do with whether we're at war, he initially testified that if cyber activity led to the need for armed conflict then that would be a war. But then when I asked him, well, what about a cyber activity that would knock out our power grid and disrupt our economy and then we do the same thing to the other side, with no armed conflict, is that not a war, he acknowledged these are pretty big, important questions that we don't have a current definition of.

My chair and ranking member and Senator Graham and I have talked a lot about these issues. I'm very troubled that the AUMF of 9-14-01 has no temporal limitation, no geographic scope or limitation. I think it is being used in ways that I think might be appropriate for the Nation's defense, but I think were clearly beyond the contemplation of the members of Congress who voted for it at that time.

I think the end of U.S. operations in 2014 in Afghanistan, hoping that there will be a second chapter because of the successful negotiation of a bilateral security agreement, I think that is an excellent time to try to devise a chapter two, because I think continuing to leave an AUMF that is just completely open-ended, I think it poses real significant challenges for our oversight. If members who are qualified to do great jobs have a hard time with the terminology about what it is we're doing, I think it creates challenge on the battlefield. I think it creates significant challenges for our citizens to try to understand what we're in.

I think some of the controversies about programs like NSA are less about the four corners of the NSA program than they are about what is it in fact that this particular program is supporting, is it a war, is it a half-war engagement, is it counterterrorism, is it something else. I think the Special Forces side of our military are going to be probably uniquely necessary to be at the table to try to determine what in fact this chapter two is.

One last question, if I might, Madam Chairman. I know my time is almost up. But if the AUMF were to expire, obviously the President would still have significant powers, the traditional powers, the Commander in Chief powers to defend the Nation, the powers created by international law. There are separate statutes that deal

with counterterrorism activities. Has there been work done to, to the extent of either of your knowledge, to determine, in the absence of the current AUMF, would the DOD, more broadly our defense establishment, have the tools necessary to wage the battle against terrorism that is needed circa 2014?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Clearly, the President does have constitutional authorities as the Commander in Chief. We have previously—al Qaeda prior to September 11 has been engaged in the past, so it can be done.

I think that we are at a natural inflexion point. I think it's a good time to sit back and look and see where we're at, look at the threat in the future, and make sure we clearly craft something that has left and right flanks, that has a program time to relook to make sure it serves our interests, and gives us the ability to engage the threats that face us not only today, but also tomorrow.

Senator KAINE. Admiral McRaven, would you have any additional thoughts on that?

Admiral MCRAVEN. No.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much for that.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

We're going to do one more quick round of six minutes and then if necessary we'll proceed to the closed session.

I wanted to ask about section 1208. Admiral McRaven, you pointed out that 1208 authority has been an enabler for our military operations against foreign terrorist organizations. Why is this authority so important to the counterterrorism operations and do you believe that an increase of the authority above the \$50 million is necessary, and if so why?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. I can tell you that wherever we are training forces to conduct counterterrorism operations, host nation forces, surrogate forces, to do that, we are using the 1208 authority. It is just an authority, of course, so it is an authority right now for me to use up to \$50 million to be able to provide training, equipping, minor MILCON, important things, as we build this surrogate force.

I'll defer to assistant Secretary Lumpkin. I know that ASD(SOLIC) is requesting an increase in that authority for all the reasons you just laid out. We are finding that our execution rate in that authority already this year is closing in on \$50 million because the demand signal out there for this kind of training and support is so great. Frankly, I think as we move forward and we find that we need to continue to put pressure on extremist groups that are out there, we will need more training and probably more authority. But I'll defer.

Senator HAGAN. Secretary Lumpkin, let me ask you, as part of that: How do you differentiate support provided to the partners under section 1208 versus other support provided under more traditional security force assistance authorities?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Thank you very much. Let me go back to the 1208 first and then I'll come back to that. As you're probably aware, I'm not only Assistant Secretary of Defense, but I'm also performing the duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. So I have the ability to look across the entire policy enterprise, just beyond this

SOLIC world and domain. When you have that kind of view, you truly see the benefits of the 1208 program and what it does to create operational forces in support of U.S. interests. It's a tremendous capability.

We do have other authorities, and this goes back to in your opening statement about the patchwork. We also have the 1206, which does the global train and equip in support of counterterrorism operations and things of that nature. We've got counternarcotics authorities. We have the—which we have Section 1004, which gives us the ability to help U.S. law enforcement in support of their operations in counternarcotics operations, which is this real nexus between narcoterrorism and even al Qaeda and how they merge the fungible moneys and how it passes across the different bodies.

We have the global security contingency fund, which is a new fund that we have available that we're working. It's dual key authority with State. We're kind of in the nascent stages and we're working through it.

But one of my jobs is to grab these different authorities and to make sure we're leveraging them to the best of our ability to support U.S. interests. That is truly no small endeavor, to make sure we're getting the best bang from the buck and the best return on investment for the American people.

Senator HAGAN. You mentioned the global security contingency fund. Do you think that Ukrainian assistance will come under that area to help build the capacity of the security forces?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Because this is a dual key authority in conjunction with State, I personally have not engaged with folks at the State Department on this issue. But I'm more than willing to do so, absolutely.

Senator HAGAN. In the fiscal year 2014 Defense Appropriations Act, it included an expanded human rights, or Leahy, vetting requirement for the DOD training, equipping, and assistance programs. To both of you: Do you agree with the intent of the Leahy vetting requirements, and will the changes that have taken place impact training and other engagement activities conducted by the combatant commanders?

Mr. LUMPKIN. At the Department we fully support both the letter of the law and the intent of the Leahy legislation. Most of our programs involve a training component as well as an equipping component, so we already—the equipment addition for the most recent legislation is not going to have a significant impact on what we're doing.

Just for a scope, I was just briefed that the State Department does about 170,000 Leahy vetting line items per year. So it is a massive undertaking. I have had some initial discussions with them to make sure they can accept this additional—

Senator HAGAN. How many more additional do you think it might involve?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I'm trying to quantify that now, but from the Department and within SOLIC I don't think it's going to be that significant, to be honest with you, as we go forward, because again most of our pieces already have a training component. So the equipping component usually comes along with it.

Senator HAGAN. In my opening remarks I mentioned something about the remediation process. Do you have any recommendations for improving the vetting process or for a remediation process, and what do the other partnering nations actually do for remediation?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. The remediation process is an area where we have an inter-agency working group that's getting together to see how we can improve the process. As Secretary Lumpkin said, I am fully supportive of the Leahy human rights vetting, always have been. My concern has always been in the process and how expeditious the process is for us to get to a solution whether or not a particular unit has in fact committed gross human rights violations or has not and therefore we can either continue on with training or not.

That process I think needs improving between State Department and the Department of Defense and actually Capitol Hill. We are working with all three of those in an effort to figure out how do we adhere to the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, but do so in a manner that allows us to get back into a training venue as rapidly as possible if we can confirm that no gross human rights violations have occurred. So I think there's a good faith effort going on amongst the inter-agency to get to that point.

Senator HAGAN. Of the 170,000, do you have any idea a percent or number that people don't make the vetting? And then, you mentioned gross human rights violations. Is domestic violence included in any of these?

Mr. LUMPKIN. If I may, my understanding is that 2 percent don't pass the vetting requirement, of the 170,000. I don't have the answer on the domestic violence piece, but I can take that one for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Admiral, you used the term "irreconcilable" to characterize the most extreme elements of our adversaries, the terrorists. How do you separate those who you believe are reconcilable with those who are irreconcilable? What's the difference here?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. I think it requires thorough analysis. We don't take any steps to go after anyone unless we know for a fact that they are kind of on the irreconcilable number on the counterterrorism part of direct action. I'm not sure I can give you a great example of who somebody—I mean, I know who we think is irreconcilable. Whether or not they are irreconcilable I think remains to be seen.

But we do look at a body of people—al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, some of the most virulent members of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, core al Qaeda, al Qaeda in the Islamic Lands of the Maghreb. We know that the leadership there I would contend is irreconcilable, that no amount of negotiations, no amount of placation, is going to put them in a position where they're prepared to support universal values as we know them.

So as we look at all of the threats out there, I think a determination is—I know a determination is made as we go through the proc-

ess of determining whether or not an individual needs to have action against them. And that is, again, a very, very well defined, thorough process to get to that point. But there are a lot of irreconcilables out there.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, do you have anything to add to that?

Mr. LUMPKIN. No, ma'am, I don't.

Senator FISCHER. For both of you gentlemen: Last week I discussed the growth of extremists in Syria who want to attack us here in the United States with General Austin at a hearing. His response was, and I quote here: "They've grown at an exponential rate and unless we do something to retard that rate a bit and prepare ourselves to counter this threat going forward, then I think we're going to have a significant issue."

To both of you: Do you agree with his assessment?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I do. Left unchecked, the problem is only going to get worse.

Senator FISCHER. Admiral?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, I do.

Senator FISCHER. And at what point do you see these extremists in Syria becoming a threat to the United States, to the homeland?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I think that the threat is already bleeding over beyond the borders of Syria, as we're having a spillage into the surrounding nations, which increases, as Admiral McRaven mentioned earlier, the pressure in the Levant. So I can't give you a definitive date when the homeland is in direct threat, but it's not in the too distant future.

Senator FISCHER. Admiral?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, I would agree with Secretary Lumpkin. Again, my concern about the threat and Syria, while we can talk about some of the threats in the closed session, I do think one of the greater threats is the pressure that they are putting on the Levant and the pressure on Lebanon and the pressure on Jordan and how that will have a cascading effect across that area, which will have a cascading effect across both North Africa and Southern Europe and eventually the United States.

Senator FISCHER. Can you speak in open session about how we're preparing for those threats?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I cannot. I'm sorry, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Also, General Rodriguez last week described eastern Libya as the fastest-growing area of extremism, and also stated that his biggest intelligence gap was from northern Mali to eastern Libya. Can you describe the extremist threat that we're seeing now in eastern Libya, either of you gentlemen?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Well, I don't want to get into—

Senator FISCHER. How does that compare to other regions? Where does that fall on a scale there?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I think that's kind of the important part, is where does it fall on the scale. My sense is that Libya isn't where Syria is today, but again, left unchecked, left without the proper engagement and building the partnership capacity with the nascent Libyan forces, that we could end up in a situation where it's not too dissimilar if no attention is paid to it.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, I would agree with the Secretary.

Senator FISCHER. Where do you see, I guess, our gaps in this region? Can you speak about that in open session?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Again, I'd prefer to do that in closed session.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator HAGAN. All right. I had about one or two more quick questions.

Senator FISCHER. You can have my time.

Senator HAGAN. I don't need to take your time. You can have time, too, but I did want to just mention, going back to the Leahy vetting, this is an area that I know that Chairman Levin is interested in, looking at the remediation process. So I hope that SOCOMs going to continue this conversation with us.

One question on the rapid acquisition authorities. Admiral McRaven, SOCOM is unique among the combatant commands in that it not only generates requirements, but also performs acquisitions to provide solutions to these multiple needs and problems. For urgent requirements, I understand the Capabilities and Developments System, Urgent, can be used when the SOF units identify a time-sensitive capability gap or requirement related to the possible loss of life or mission failure. Do you believe it would be advantageous for SOCOM to have additional or more flexible rapid acquisition authorities, and if so what would you suggest?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am. The combat mission needs statement is what a soldier downrange will submit through the process if he has a requirement that is, again, very urgent, loss of life, or it puts us in a position to have a comparative advantage over the enemy. As soon as that combat mission needs statement comes in, we convene a group at U.S. SOCOM and we take a very quick look at this. We turn this within about 24 hours to determine whether or not we can meet the needs of the soldier downrange.

The only issue we have with the combat mission needs statement right now is it is procurement money. So we can go out and procure a system for him. What we can't do is—we don't have any RDT&E authority within the combat mission needs statement. So if there was something that really required some development and it may mean we couldn't get it to him on the battlefield in the shortest period of time, but we might be able to get him a better product if we had a little bit of RDT&E money that we could apply towards that authority of the combat mission needs statement, do the RDT&E, figure out what the development is, and then get it downrange to him. So that's the only thing I would add there.

Senator HAGAN. But you're saying that still from a timeliness factor?

Admiral MCRAVEN. I'm sorry, ma'am?

Senator HAGAN. It's still a timeliness factor?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, it is, absolutely.

Mr. LUMPKIN. And, ma'am, if I may, we work with U.S. SOCOM within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. We have the Counterterrorism Technical Support Office, and what we do is we have the ability and we do have research and development dollars in order to support when we can, where we can. We also support

the interagency as well on requirements, as well as State and local law enforcement, and there is also an international component to it as well where we work with our partners and allies to develop technologies.

But we can help, but there are limitations still.

Senator HAGAN. Let me ask one quick question on Syria. Do you agree that, absent a change in the balance of power on the battlefield in Syria, that the Assad regime will not come to the negotiating table in a good faith manner? And in your view are there a sufficient number of moderate and vetted elements of the Syrian opposition to change the balance of power on the battlefield? And do you believe that we're in a position to conduct a large enough training and equip program for the vetted moderate elements of the Syrian opposition force to have a type of impact if we chose to do so?

Mr. LUMPKIN. A lot of questions there.

Senator HAGAN. I know. I can go back to them. The question is training the moderate and vetted elements of the opposition force.

Mr. LUMPKIN. I would prefer to talk about that in a closed session, to be honest with you.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Senator, I can tell you that I have the capacity to do that. If a decision is made to train moderate Syrians, we in the Special Operations arena have the capacity to do that.

Senator HAGAN. Okay. A final question, on attacking the financial network of the Haqqani network. A major support for the insurgency in Afghanistan is the Haqqani network, based out of the sanctuaries in Pakistan. They provide support both in terms of conducting cross-border attacks against the United States, against the coalition and Afghan forces, and terms of providing financial support and equipment to the insurgency.

The Haqqanis have a widespread financial network that supports their numerous licit and illicit activities in the region. To both of you: In your view, do we have an in-depth understanding of the banking and business relationships, both illicit and licit, that finance the Haqqani network?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I would submit it's a work in progress. So I would say we're working to get that, because it changes and it adapts. So we're working that.

Senator HAGAN. How are we doing to track this financial network and then go after their business interests that support the network? And what are these businesses?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I think that's a closed session item, to be honest with you, ma'am, if possible.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Ma'am, I can tell you we do work with the FBI and we work with Treasury and we have, a little bit like in the counterthreat finance piece, we do have folks that are looking at how the Haqqani network functions. I think we understand the basic structure of it. The hard part is I'm not sure we understand the exact mechanisms that if we interdicted would really make a difference.

I think also a lot of people don't fully appreciate that it doesn't cost a whole lot to train and equip a Haqqani fighter to move from Pakistan into Afghanistan. So you would have to undercut a very

large portion of their funding, I think, in order to have a significant impact on the fighters that we see in the P2K area in Afghanistan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Well, no other questions?

Senator FISCHER. No.

Senator HAGAN. And Senator Kaine, you said no, too. Well, then we're going to adjourn. Do you want to go to closed session?

Senator FISCHER. Yes, please.

Senator HAGAN. We will adjourn and we will very, very quickly proceed to SVC-217. This session is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:27 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]