

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

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2014

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

POSTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in room SDG-50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Reed, McCaskill, Udall, Hagan, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Kaine, King, Inhofe, McCain, Sessions, Chambliss, Wicker, Ayotte, Graham, Vitter, and Blunt.

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

Majority staff members present: Gerald J. Leeling, general counsel; Mariah K. McNamara, special assistant to the staff director; Roy F. Phillips, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: John A. Bonsell, minority staff director; Steven M. Barney, minority counsel; William S. Castle, minority general counsel; John D. Cewe, professional staff member; Samantha L. Clark, minority associate counsel; Allen M. Edwards, professional staff member; and Ambrose R. Hock, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Brendan J. Sawyer, Alexandra M. Hathaway, Robert T. Waisanen.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn A. Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Stephen C. Hedger, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Christopher R. Howard, assistant to Senator Udall; Patrick T. Day, assistant to Senator Shaheen; Karen Courington, assistant to Senator Kaine; Stephen M. Smith, assistant to Senator King; Elizabeth O'Bagy, assistant to Senator McCain; Lenwood A. Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Joseph G. Lai, assistant to Senator Wicker; Bradley L. Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte; Craig R. Abele, assistant to Senator Graham; Joshua S. Hodges, assistant to Senator Vitter; and Charles W. Prosch, assistant to Senator Blunt.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. The committee meets today to hear testimony from Secretary of the Army John McHugh and Chief of Staff of the Army General Ray Odierno. Our hearing is on the Army's fiscal year 2015 budget request.

We meet with heavy hearts. Once again our Army must recover from an act of unspeakable violence here at home. Much remains unknown about the shooting incident yesterday at Fort Hood, including the question of what prompted this horrible attack. All that is certain is that lives have been lost and that families are grieving, and we all share in their grief.

Secretary McHugh, General Odierno, please convey this committee's condolences to the men and women of Fort Hood and the Army, and please be assured that this committee will fully support your efforts to care for those who are affected.

For more than a decade, the men and women of the Army had the burden of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have done all that we have asked and more to succeed, and remain resilient through repeated combat deployments. Last year, the sequestration required by the Budget Control Act, along with a higher than expected operating tempo in Afghanistan, led to a \$12 billion shortfall in Army operation and maintenance accounts, resulting in the cancellation of major training exercises and the deferral of required equipment, maintenance, and repairs.

Last year's Bipartisan Budget Act has begun to relieve those readiness problems by providing added funding to reduce somewhat the impact of sequestration in fiscal years 2014 and 2015. But the budget caps and sequestration will apply again with full force in 2016 and beyond.

The administration has proposed we increase revenues so that we can raise the defense budget caps by \$26 billion in fiscal year 2015, the budget before us. Whether by additional revenues or by other means, raising the budget caps to reduce their impact is essential and is contingent on bipartisan Congressional agreement. I believe we must pursue just that continuously and with determination in the months ahead.

Under existing strategic guidance, the Active Army will cut its end strength by approximately 82,000 soldiers to the planned force of 450,000 by the end of fiscal year 2017. If the budget caps remain unchanged, however, the Army would shrink to an end strength of 420,000, a force size which General Odierno has publicly said is inadequate to support our National defense strategy.

End strength and force structure reductions of this magnitude must be managed carefully to avoid the risk that the Army could become a hollow force, a force with inadequate training levels and insufficient equipment to accomplish its missions.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses on how the Army will reorganize to make the reductions required by the budget caps now in law, how the Army would spend additional money if Congress were to raise the caps as proposed by the administration, how it will decide which installations will lose combat brigades, whether additional reductions can be borne by units based overseas, what the impact of reductions required by the statutory budget caps is likely to be on military and civilian personnel, fami-

lies, readiness, modernization, and our defense posture around the world.

In developing a plan to address the statutory budget caps, the Army has also had to make difficult decisions about distribution of proposed cuts between the Active Force and the Reserve Force. The Department's planned end strength reductions would at the end of fiscal year 2017 provide an Active Army of 450,000, or 20 percent less from its wartime high of 569,000, an Army National Guard of 335,000, or 6 percent less than its wartime high of 354,000, and a U.S. Army Reserve at 180,000, or 10 percent less than its high of 205,000.

The Army's decisions on the allocation of aviation assets between active and Reserve units have been particularly controversial and we'll hold a hearing next Tuesday focusing on the Army's plans for change in active and Reserve component force mix due to the end strength reductions over the next several years.

The Army has repeatedly cancelled equipment modernization programs due to problems with cost or performance or with budget. This year's budget request proposes to cancel the Army's Ground Combat Vehicle, the GCV. The Army has three remaining new vehicle programs: the Joint Light Tactical vehicle, the Paladin Integrated Management Self-Propelled Howitzer, and the Armored Multipurpose Vehicle. Upgrades for the M-1 tank and M-2 Bradley are scheduled, but remain a year or 2 down the road.

The cancellation of the GCV, the gap in the Abrams and Bradley programs, and the slowing of other vehicle programs combined to raise serious questions about risks to the Army's ground vehicle industrial base. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how they plan to manage those risks.

Finally, the Army has been devoted to addressing the physical and emotional toll that 12 years of war have taken on our soldiers and their families. While there are numerous programs now and significant resources dedicated to support our soldiers and their families before, during, and after their deployment and service, we know there is more to do. We remain concerned with the incidence of suicides and sexual assaults and the continuing problems faced by many of our soldiers as they return from deployments to war zones, leave the military, seek new jobs, and transition to civilian life.

The committee's interested to hear updates from Secretary McHugh and General Odierno on their assessment of the steps that have already been taken to address these problems and the steps that remain to be taken. I invite them and I invite you both to begin your testimony by updating us on yesterday's events at Fort Hood.

Again, the committee is grateful for your great contributions to our Nation and I call on Senator Inhofe.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just identify with your deep-felt remarks about what happened yesterday. It happened that coincidentally I was with Secretary McHugh when they news came and we both got it at the same time of the tragedy at Fort Hood.

I can pretty much identify with the rest of your remarks, too. Given the deterioration of military readiness and capabilities over the last 5 years and the significant end strength cuts planned for the Army, we're all concerned that we can't meet the missions outlined in the defense strategic guidance without unacceptable risk to the force and our country. We have to remind ourselves and others that when risk goes up you're talking about lives.

We've been wrong before in the past when it comes to assumptions regarding the size of our ground forces. In fact, Secretary McHugh, you and I sat next to each other back in 1993 on the House Armed Services Committee when we heard testimony in 1993 by some expert that in 10 years we would no longer need ground forces. So we've been wrong before on where we are.

Today the greatest risk our military faces is becoming a hollow force and we'll have some questions concerning that. General Dempsey said the risk we face today is we have a significant near-term readiness risk that has been accruing. We're digging ourselves a readiness hole out of which it will take several years to climb.

Not only does the budget underfund current readiness; it mortgages future readiness. The bipartisan budget agreement gave a minor budgetary relief. The chairman has already covered the effects that would have in 2014, 2015, and of course the devastating effects I'm sure that, General, you're going to want to talk about should things happen this way and continue to 2017.

Yesterday—I don't see her here now, but it was kind of prophetic because—and I used this this morning on a show—Senator Ayotte asked the question—I'm going to go ahead and repeat what she asked yesterday at the hearing—"What steps are you taking to prepare for, prevent, and respond to threats to personnel and facilities in light of the 2009 Fort Hood shooting?" That was just yesterday morning before the Readiness Committee, and then of course the disaster happened shortly after that. So we'll have some questions concerning that and where we go from here, what the future's going to look like, and the security that we are going to have to offer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.
Secretary McHugh.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN M. MCHUGH, SECRETARY OF THE
ARMY**

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, let me express my appreciation to you, the ranking member, and in individual discussions before the hearing, too, the other members of the committee, for their heartfelt expressions of sorrow and support. It's deeply appreciated.

Obviously, as you noted, Mr. Chairman, this longstanding posture hearing is being held now under a shadow of the tragic events that happened just yesterday afternoon at Fort Hood. As I know you all understand, any time the Army loses a soldier we all mourn. When that loss comes at the hands of another soldier, and indeed when that event occurs at the very place that suffered so much pain, so much anguish, just four and a half years ago, it only

adds to the sorrow and the all-consuming sense of loss the Army is feeling this day.

Our first responsibility, as I know you share, is to the families of the fallen; also to those, of course, who have been wounded and those close to them, their family, their loved ones, as they make their way hopefully on a road to full recovery. Our thoughts and prayers, but most importantly our actions and our every effort, will be with those families, will be with those survivors, whatever the struggle. We have ordered all possible means of medical and investigatory support, as well as added behavioral health counselors.

I want to give a tip of the hat to VA Secretary Rick Shinseki, who immediately reached out and offered any support from the Veterans Administration in respect to needed personnel. In speaking, as both the Chief and I did, late last evening to Lieutenant General Mark Milley, for the moment the immediate need seemed to be met, but we're going to monitor that very, very carefully.

As I know all of you recognize, this is an ongoing investigation and one that occurred just 15 or so hours ago. Even at this point, the circumstances remain very fluid, but we recognize we owe this committee particularly, but also this Congress, the facts, what we know and when we know it. I want to promise all of the members here this morning that we will work with you as we go forward together so that we can effectively—you can effectively discharge your oversight responsibilities.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to take a brief opportunity to say to the Fort Hood community and to the Army family worldwide: This is a time once again to come together, to stand as one, as they have so many times before, drawing strength from each other.

As this committee knows so well, the past 13 years have been fraught with much loss, with much pain, much suffering. But through it all, the men and women of the U.S. Army, their families, the civilians who support them, have come through the storm together. And I know, as we have in the past, we'll come out the other side of this tempest, poorer for the losses, but stronger through our resolve.

Mr. Chairman, I can take a moment now to give you the updates that you've requested and then defer to the chief for the purpose of the posture statement if you'd like.

Chairman LEVIN. That would be fine, thank you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Based on our discussions last evening with Lieutenant General Mark Milley and a subsequent conversation I had about 10:45 with the Secretary of Defense, these are the facts as we understand them. But again, things are changing even at this moment.

The specialist, the alleged shooter involved, joined the U.S. Army in June 2008. When he first enlisted in the Army, he was an 11-Bravo. That's an infantry soldier, as most of you know. He later, upon re-upping, transferred his MOS to an 88-Mike, truck driver. We are tracking at the moment that he did have two deployments, including one four-month, approximately 4-month deployment to Iraq as a truck driver.

His records show no wounds, no involvement, direct involvement in combat, as General Millie said, no record of Purple Heart or any

injury that might lead us to further investigate a battle-related TBI or such. He was undergoing a variety of treatment and diagnoses for mental health conditions ranging from depression to anxiety to some sleep disturbance. He was prescribed a number of drugs to address those, including Ambien.

He was seen just last month by a psychiatrist. He was fully examined, and as of this morning we had no indication on the record of that examination that there was any sign of likely violence either to himself or to others, no suicidal ideation. So the plan forward was to just continue to monitor and to treat him as deemed appropriate.

The alleged weapon was a .45 caliber that the soldier had recently purchased. He lived off post. We try to do everything we can to encourage soldiers to register their personal weapons even when they live off post. We are not legally able to compel them to register weapons when they reside off post, but the minute that soldier brought that weapon onto the post it was not registered and it was under our rules and regs being utilized, obviously, illegally and with not proper clearance or foreknowledge by the command.

He is married. His wife was being questioned the last I was informed last evening. They are natives to Puerto Rico. Again, the background checks we've done thus far show no involvement with extremist organizations of any kind, but, as General Millie said to me last evening, and I know the Chief and I fully support, we're not making any assumptions by that. We're going to keep an open mind and an open investigation and we will go where the facts lead us, and possible extremist involvement is still being looked at very, very carefully.

He had a clean record in terms of his behavioral—no outstanding bad marks for any kinds of major misbehaviors that we're yet aware of.

So you know the conditions of those who were involved in the incident. There were three victims who have, tragically, lost their lives. The other killed in action in that moment was the shooter, who took his own life when confronted by a military police officer, a female. 16 others wounded, 3 that were considered critical, the others of varying severity but considered by and large stable. But we obviously are going to continue to make sure they get the best of care, because we want to ensure absolutely that no bad thing comes out of this more than already has.

So that is pretty much what we know at this moment, Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Secretary.

Mr. MCHUGH. And if it's appropriate I'll yield to the Chief for the posture comments.

Chairman LEVIN. General.

STATEMENT OF GEN. RAYMOND T. ODIERNO, USA, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY

General ODIERNO. Chairman, if I could just add a few comments. First, once again, we talk a lot in the Army that we have an Army family, and we've lost young people who are part of our Army family and we take that incredibly serious. For me, this hits close to home. I've spent a lot of time at Fort Hood personally. I was a brigade commander, a division commander, and a corps commander at

Fort Hood. I understand the resilience of that community, the resilience of the people there, how proud the soldiers are of what they do, and we will do everything we can to ensure they continue to move forward.

I would just say that I believe that some of the procedures that have been put in place following the incident four and a half years ago did help us yesterday. The alert procedures that were in place, the response, the training that has gone into the response forces that responded, I think contributed to making this something that could have been much, much worse.

So we will continue to monitor the force of the Army and the resources of the Army will be behind Fort Hood. We are very confident in the leadership of Mark Milley, who is, I think as many of you know, just returned from Afghanistan as the commander of a corps over there and is a very experienced commander, and we will continue to support them.

The only thing I would add to the facts that the Secretary provided, that this was an experienced soldier. He spent actually nine years in the Puerto Rico National Guard before coming on active duty. So he was a very experienced soldier, had a one-year deployment to the Sinai with the National Guard, and then had a four-month deployment in Iraq. It was the last four months at the end of 2011, from August to December 2011.

We will continue to work, work through this issue, and continue to investigate, and as we do that we will provide information to all.

The only other thing I'd say, this great interagency cooperation. The FBI has provided significant assistance, as well as the State of Texas, as well as the Veterans Affairs, as the Secretary pointed out. So we will continue to work this. We have an incredibly talented, resilient Army. We'll be incredibly—we'll continue to be incredibly resilient and move forward. But we will also reach out to our family, the victims and the families of our victims of this tragic incident.

That's all I have. If you want me to continue, I will continue with my statement.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. I think that would be appropriate, to give us now your posture statement.

General ODIERNO. Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, other members: Thank you so much for allowing me to speak with you this morning. I first want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your 36 years of service and all you have done for us as the chairman of this committee, and your leadership, your bipartisan leadership, in always supporting our soldiers and families, and also holding us accountable for doing what's right for our soldiers and for our National security. I want to thank you, sir, for that.

Chairman LEVIN. I very much appreciate that. Thank you.

General ODIERNO. Despite declining resources, the demand for Army forces actually continues to increase. More than 70,000 soldiers are deployed today on contingency operations and about 85,000 soldiers are forward stationed in nearly 150 countries, including nearly 20,000 on the Korean Peninsula. Our soldiers, civilians, and family members continue to serve with the competence, commitment, and character that our great Nation deserves.

A typical day for our soldiers includes patrolling alongside our Afghan National Army partners, standing watch on the Demilitarized Zone in Korea, providing security for an embassy in South Sudan, manning missile batteries in Turkey and Guam, and assisting recovery efforts from the devastating mudslide in the State of Washington.

As we consider the future roles and missions of our Army, it's imperative we consider the world as it exists, not as one we wish it to be. The recent headlines on Russia's annexation of Crimea, the intractable Syrian civil war, artillery exchanges between North Korea and South Korea, just to name a few, remind us of the complexity and uncertainty inherent in the international security environment.

It demands that we make prudent decisions about the future capability and capacity that we need within our Army. Therefore, we must ensure our Army has the ability to rapidly respond to conduct the entire range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance and stability operations to general war.

We certainly appreciate the short-term predictability in fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015 afforded by budget levels in the bipartisan budget agreement. The bipartisan budget agreement supports a fiscal year 2015 Army funding level of \$120.5 billion, but in reality it is still \$12.7 billion short of our request. The budget agreement will allow us to begin to buy back some short-term readiness by funding additional combat maneuver rotations, thereby increasing the amount of forces trained and ready for decisive combat operations.

However, we still are required to make tough choices and had to reduce our modernization efforts by ending four programs, restructuring 30, and delaying 50 programs. We continue to take significant risk in our facilities, sustainment, and home station training.

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review builds on the defense priorities outlined in the 2012 defense strategic guidance. Last year I testified that we can implement the defense guidance at moderate risk with an end strength of 490,000 in the Active Army, 350,000 in the National Guard, and 202,000 in the U.S. Army Reserve, and I stand by that assessment. However, sequestration is the law of the land and it will return in fiscal year 2016 without immediate Congressional action. The readiness gains achieved in fiscal year 2015 will quickly atrophy as we are forced to reduce future planned rotations and other planned training activities in order to fund immediate operational requirements.

Sustained readiness requires sustained training dollars and investment. Our modernization accounts will receive a 25 percent reduction, with no program unaffected. Major weapons programs will be delayed, severely impacting the industrial base both in the near and long term.

Under sequestration, for the next three or four years we will continue to reduce end strength as quickly as possible while still meeting operational commitments. As we continue to draw down and restructure into a smaller force, the Army will continue to have significantly degraded readiness and extensive modernization shortfalls. At the end of fiscal year 2019, we will begin to establish the appropriate balance between end strength, readiness, and mod-

ernization, but for an Army that is much smaller. From fiscal year 2020 to 2023, we begin to achieve our readiness goals and reinvest in our modernization programs.

We will have no choice but to slash end strength levels if sequestration continues in order to attain that proper balance. As I said earlier, we'll be required to further reduce the Active Army to 420,000, the National Guard to 315,000, the U.S. Army Reserve to 185,000. At these end strength funding levels, we will not be able to execute the defense strategy.

In my opinion, this will call into question our ability to execute even one prolonged multi-phase major contingency operation. I also have deep concerns that our Army at these end strength levels will not have sufficient capacity to meet ongoing operational commitments and simultaneously train to sustain appropriate readiness levels.

The President's budget submission supports end strength levels at 440 to 450,000 in the Active Army, 335,000 in the Army National Guard, and 195,000 in the U.S. Army Reserve. I believe this should be the absolute floor for end strength reductions. To execute the defense strategy it's important to note that as we continue to lose end strength our flexibility deteriorates, as does our ability to react to strategic surprise. My experience tells me that our assumptions about the duration and size of future conflicts, allied contributions, and the need to conduct post-conflict stability operations are optimistic. If these assumptions are proven wrong, our risk will grow significantly. Under the President's budget we will achieve a balance between end strength, readiness, and modernization 3 to 5 years earlier than under sequestration, and that would occur around fiscal year 2018 and at greater total force levels.

In order to meet ongoing and future budget reductions, we have developed a total force policy in close collaboration within the Army and the Department of Defense. The Secretary of Defense directed that the Army not retain structure at the expense of readiness. Additionally, the Secretary of the Army and I directed that cuts should come disproportionately from the Active Force before reducing the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve.

Our total force policy was informed by the lessons learned during the last 13 years of war. We considered operational commitments, readiness levels, future requirements, as well as costs. The result is a plan that recognizes the unique attributes, responsibilities, and complementary nature of each component, while ensuring our Guard and Reserves are maintained as an operational and not a strategic reserve.

Ongoing reductions, coupled with sequestration level cuts over the next 7 years, will result in a total reduction of 150,000 soldiers and 687 aircraft and up to 46 percent of our brigade combat teams from the Active Army. The National Guard will be reduced by 43,000 soldiers, 111 aircraft, and up to 22 percent of the brigade combat teams it currently has. And the U.S. Army Reserve will be reduced by 20,000 soldiers.

The end strength cuts to the Active Army will represent 70 percent of the total end strength reductions, compared with 20 percent from the National Guard and 10 percent from the U.S. Army Reserve. This will result in the Guard and Reserves comprising 54

percent of the total Army end strength, while the Active component will comprise 46 percent. The Army will be the only service in which the Reserve outnumbered the Active component.

Under sequestration we cannot afford to maintain our current aviation structure and still sustain modernization while providing trained and ready aviation units across all three components. Therefore we've developed an innovative concept to restructure our aviation fleet to address these issues. Overall we believe this plan will generate a total savings of \$12.7 billion over the POM.

Of the 798 total aircraft reduced under this plan, 687, or 86 percent, will come out of the Active component and 11 aircraft, or 14 percent, from the National Guard. We will also transfer about 100 UH-60s to the National Guard.

As with end strength, we are disproportionately taking cuts from the Active component aviation, and in fact we will eliminate three full combat aviation brigades out of the Active component, while the National Guard sustains all of its brigade structure.

This plan allows the Army to eliminate the obsolete airframes, modernize the fleet, and sustain pilot proficiency across the total force. The result is an Active and Reserve aviation force mix with more capable and prepared formations that are able to respond to contingencies at home and abroad.

Let me be very clear. These are not cuts we want to take, but we must take based on sequestration. I believe our recommendation delivers the best total Army for the budget we have been allocated.

The Secretary and I also understand that the American people hold us to a higher standard of character and behavior. Combatting sexual assault and harassment remains our top priority. Over the past year the Army has established more stringent screening criteria and background checks for those serving in positions of trust. Army commanders continue to prosecute the most serious sexual assault offenses at a rate more than double that of civilian jurisdictions, including many cases that civilian authorities refuse to pursue.

We appreciate the continued focus of Congress as we implement legislative reforms to enhance the rights of survivors and improve our military justice system. We continue to take this issue very seriously. I also know how much work remains to be done in this area.

We are also aggressively and comprehensively attacking the issue of ethical leadership individually, organizationally, and through systematic reviews. We've initiated 360-degree assessments on all officers and especially commanders. We've implemented a new officer evaluation report to strengthen accountability. For our general officers, we conduct peer surveys and develop specific ethics focus as part of our senior leader education program. We have also implemented 360-degree assessments for our general officers.

We also appreciate help with two issues impacting our ability to maintain the right balance for our Army. First is the Base Realignment and Closure process, which is a proven, fair, cost-effective means to address excess installation capacity. With the reduction

of over 200,000 soldiers from our Army and lower budgets, we need a BRAC to reduce unsustainable infrastructure.

Second, we are extremely grateful for the high-quality care and compensation provided to our soldiers. We have endorsed proposals that recognize their incredible service while allowing us to better balance future investments in readiness, modernization, and compensation.

We must keep in mind that it is not a matter of if but when we will deploy our Army to defend this great Nation. We have done it in every decade since World War II. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure our soldiers are highly trained, equipped, and organized. If we do not, they will bear the heavy burden of our miscalculations.

I'm incredibly proud to wear this uniform and represent the soldiers of the Active Army, the Army National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve. Their sacrifices have been unprecedented over the last 13 years. We must provide them with the necessary resources for success in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you to the entire committee, for allowing me to testify here today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The joint prepared statement of Mr. McHugh and General Odierno follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you both.

Secretary McHugh, do you have anything to add on the posture statement at this time?

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Chairman, I want to be respectful of the committee's time. I obviously have a statement, but by and large it tracks what the Chief said. I fully endorse all the comments he made, and if it suits the committee and you, sir, I think I'll just—if you'd like, I could enter that into the record.

Chairman LEVIN. That would be fine. We will enter it into the record.

Let's start with a 7-minute first round.

Secretary—first of all, let me thank you both for those very heartfelt comments about the events at Fort Hood. The Army stands as one and I hope that everyone in that family knows that Congress stands with them as one. As I mentioned, if there's anything that we can do to be helpful in the aftermath of this, to help the grieving families and the installations, please just call on us. We will all be there for you and for them.

On the question of sequestration, this is one of the issues which I believe we've got to hit head-on. It's going to affect not just this year, and it already has, despite a bipartisan budget agreement which has reduced somewhat the impact of sequestration. It's going to have dramatic impacts, as you have just described, General, in 2016.

In the 2015 budget, however, the administration has requested—not requested so much as it has opened up the possibility, I guess, and I guess “requested” is accurate, an additional \$26 billion, raising the caps by that much for fiscal year 2015. It has indicated it is going to recommend additional revenues to pay for that additional \$26 billion in spending above the Budget Control Act caps.

I believe that the Army's share of that \$26 billion would be—and correct me if I'm wrong on this—\$4.1 billion for readiness and \$3.4 billion for the investment accounts. Does that sound about right?

Mr. MCHUGH. That sounds correct, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Can you indicate what priorities you would spend that share of those funds if in fact we authorized and appropriated that additional funding?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, Senator, briefly, and then the chief has submitted an unfunded requirements list that embodies the 7.5 and I'd let him detail that. But as you noted, it's basically 60–40, with 60 percent going to try to accelerate our readiness recapture and also to some efforts with respect to SRM and other modernization programs that we view as vital.

But, Chief.

Chairman LEVIN. Could you then submit the highlights in your judgment for the record. There is a request that we have already I think received now, is that correct?

Mr. MCHUGH. Correct.

Chairman LEVIN. Then within that, are there highlights that you might want to mention?

General ODIERNO. Yes, Mr. Chairman. First, again about \$1.8 billion of that will be directly related to operational tempo, which is the training and readiness dollars, which will be invested in all of the components to immediately increase their readiness. We have taken a lot of risk in base operations support and about \$1.5 billion would be invested. What does that mean? That's our training facilities. That is our training ranges, which we've had to reduce the maintenance of and sustainment of and the building of, which impacts our overall training.

We also have not been able to keep up with our installations support structure. We've taken risks there. We're only funding that at 50 percent. So we put about almost a billion dollars back into that to help us sustaining the facilities that are necessary for our soldiers.

We're also investing about \$200 million in institutional training to continue to ensure that we improve and sustain our ability to train our noncommissioned officers, officers, and new soldiers at the rates we think are appropriate, to include initial aviation training and other things.

Then finally, we've invested—it would go to high-priority modernization programs, such as the AH-64, the UH-60, the Gray Eagle intelligence platforms that we have that are key for the future, as well as engineer capability that we have not been able to upgrade and update that we know is essential based on our experiences over the last 13 years.

In addition to that, I have submitted and it will come forward an initial \$3.1 billion in UFRs that are not included in that number, and most of that is a carryover from the shortfall that we had over the last couple years, which goes again at more readiness.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

The budget request includes numerous personnel-related proposals intended to slow the growth of personnel costs. Among these are a pay raise below the rate of inflation, a 1-year pay freeze for general and flag officers, reduction in the growth of the housing al-

lowance over time, a phased reduction in the subsidy for military commissaries, a series of changes to the TRICARE program.

Do you—and there's further reductions, as you've indicated, in the end strength of the Army and the Marine Corps. General, first of all let me ask you, do you personally support these proposals?

General ODIERNO. I do, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. And were the senior enlisted advisers consulted with—consulted during this process?

General ODIERNO. We had several meetings that included the senior enlisted advisers.

Chairman LEVIN. Do they agree with these proposals?

General ODIERNO. They do, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Army aviation, there's restructuring which has been proposed. I think you highlighted it in your written statement and I think you may have made reference to it in your oral testimony, including the fact that the Army National Guard would transfer low density, high demand AH-64 Apache helicopters to the Active Army and the Active Army would transfer over 100 Black Hawk helicopters to the Guard.

My question is, do all the Service Chiefs approve that recommendation? I'm asking you now as a member of the Joint Chiefs. Did all the Service Chiefs approve that?

General ODIERNO. In the meetings that we've had, several meetings within the Department of Defense, and we've all agreed to the budget allocation and how we would conduct the budget, to include ARI, Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. And that is included in this?

General ODIERNO. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Did the Secretary of Defense approve? I'm talking about that specific proposal, because that's going to be one of the issues which is going to be very closely debated here and very closely analyzed here. So I want to know if everybody approved that. Did the Secretary of Defense approve that?

General ODIERNO. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. And how about the Chief of the National Guard Bureau? Did he approve it? Did he at least have an opportunity—

General ODIERNO. He was in every meeting that we conducted when we had discussions both internal and external to the Army within DOD.

Chairman LEVIN. One quick last question. I have about six seconds left. I believe it would be helpful if the President would announce a specific troop level number for the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan after 2014 as quickly as possible, and not wait for a bilateral security agreement to be signed by the next president. It obviously is not going to be signed by this President of Afghanistan. I think it would be helpful in terms of steadiness and stability and certainty and confidence about an ongoing presence in Afghanistan if our President would announce a specific troop level for that presence after 2014.

My question I guess would be of you again, General: In your view, would that be helpful for Afghanistan's security through the rest of this year?

General ODIERNO. Senator, I believe that the sooner we can come and provide them information that relays our commitment to them, I think it helps us as we move forward in Afghanistan.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary McHugh, last night we were together at an event where we had a lot of people from Fort Sill in Oklahoma when you got the phone call of the tragedy that took place. I know the buzzing around the room there was, even though it happened twice at Fort Hood, it could just as well have happened at Fort Sill and other places; is that right, from what we know now?

Mr. MCHUGH. From what we know now, we're viewing this as a threat across the entire Army.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. I think it was kind of prophetic yesterday during that hearing—I think I mentioned this in my opening statement—that Senator Ayotte was kind of challenging that we haven't really done enough and expressed a concern, and just coincidentally hours after that is when this took place. I know that that meant a lot to all of us.

Since this happened just last night, do you have any just immediate thoughts about this that you'd like to share with us?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, I think Senator Ayotte is posing a statement that we question ourselves about every day, and certainly particularly this day. While I would suggest we have done a great deal since the tragedies at Fort Hood in 2009 both across-installation type measures to what we're doing to try to track insider threats and what we're trying to do to make sure we can identify those soldiers who may have the kind of behavioral health challenges that could lend them to violence, we're doing things a lot differently and, as the Chief has mentioned, as we watched some of the events unfold yesterday we saw some of the benefits and gains made out of that Fort Hood, first Fort Hood experience.

But something happened. Something went wrong, and we didn't know what that was, and if we failed in some way against our current policies we need to be honest with ourselves and with you and hold ourselves accountable. But if we identify new challenges, new threats we hadn't recognized before, we have to put into place programs to respond to that.

Senator INHOFE. I appreciate that.

General Odierno, I wrote down one of the quotes that you made in your opening statement, that we could "barely sustain one long-term contingency operation." Did I write that down correctly? And were you talking about with a force of 450,000?

General ODIERNO. That was with a force of 420.

Senator INHOFE. Okay.

General ODIERNO. And I said it would be very—in my opinion, it is doubtful that we'd be able to conduct one prolonged, sustained, multiphase campaign.

Senator INHOFE. That's a strong statement. This is the time for strong statements. People have to understand the situation that we're in.

Now, with that you're probably assuming that would be with a trained and ready force; is that correct?

General ODIERNO. That's correct, sir.

Senator INHOFE. And that would be moderate to high risk? Or what risk level?

General ODIERNO. It would be high risk, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Already high risk, even with a ready and trained force?

General ODIERNO. It has to do with the size. It's about the size, which is—you've reduced your Active component, you've reduced your National Guard, you've reduced your Reserve. And it has to do with assumptions. If it goes past one year, it will be very difficult for us to sustain that in the long term based on the capability and capacity that we have.

Senator INHOFE. General, we never talk about this, but there are a lot of people out there that don't like us. And we've got a lot of countries that have great capability relative to ours now. This is something we haven't really had to live with before, and I know that they're aware—it's not just us in this room that are aware of that statement, that we could just do one.

If we're in the middle of one long-term contingency operation, what do you think's going through their minds, potential adversaries out there?

General ODIERNO. Well, the thing we talk about all the time is one of the things—the reason we have an Army, an armed forces, is to prevent conflict, deterrence. And deterrence is a combination of capacity and confidence. It's important for us that we have the capacity and confidence that is interpreted by others that compels them not to miscalculate. What I worry about is miscalculations that could occur.

Senator INHOFE. The whole thing back during the Reagan Administration was the deterrent that is offered by our strength, our force. I think we all agree with it.

I did some checking just this morning. We've gotten back as far as the beginning of World War II. You talked about the fact that we would, if we're having to go on down to, with sequestration—of course, the big problem's going to be the year 2016—you'd be talking about 420,000 Active, 315,000 Army Guard, and 185,000 Army Reserves. So the Reserve component when you add those together is 500,000.

I think—are we overlooking something? Because we went back as far as World War II and we've never had the Reserve component larger than the Active component. Do you think that's accurate?

General ODIERNO. I'd have to go back and look. What I would tell you is over the last 10 years or so that has been the case, where the Reserve component is bigger—I mean, the Active component is bigger.

Senator INHOFE. Do you have any thoughts or comments about that?

General ODIERNO. Well, I think it's a tricky combination. What I would say is it is—as I say all the time, we are very complementary. We need all three of the components. They're very important to our strategy. However, they bring different attributes. The attributes that the Active component brings is a higher level of readiness and responsiveness. As we reduce the size of the Active com-

ponent, the responsiveness and the ability to do this is significantly degraded, and that's the cause for concern.

We still need the Guard and Reserve at levels because they provide us the depth and capability in order to execute longer term strategies. They also provide us some very unique capabilities that we don't have in the Active component.

Senator INHOFE. Well, let me compliment you. You have been outspoken. You've actually said things that sometimes others don't. One of your quotes was: "If we do not have a legislative solution that provides our leaders with the time and the flexibility to shape our force for the future, we will create a hollow force, we will very quickly go to extremely low levels of reduction in the next six months."

Then you had made a statement before the House Armed Services Committee that if sequestration were allowed to occur the Army would begin to grow hollow within months.

Are we hollow now?

General ODIERNO. We are in some ways, because we cannot sustain the level of readiness that we think is appropriate. We are rebuilding it this year because of the bipartisan budget agreement. So we'll make some progress in 2014 and 2015. But in 2016, as sequestration comes back in line readiness will immediately dip again. So for a 3- to 4-year period until we can get our forces aligned, we will not be trained and modernized the way we would like to be, which begins to create a level of hollowness.

Senator INHOFE. My time has expired, but for the record if you would, I'd like to have you respond to the relative degree of a hollow force that we had in the 1970s and that we were close to in the 1990s, where are we with that situation back then? You remember that very well.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Reed.

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

Mr. Secretary and Chief, thank you, too. This is a tragic situation at Fort Hood, and I'll comment. One of the things that strikes me is that this is—the particular situation I have no insight on, but you had an individual who had, like so many others in the service, deployment. In fact, his deployment wasn't as extensive and as multiple as many people who are serving. He had already been identified as having mental health problems. He was being treated, et cetera. The Army was doing its best for one of its own. And yet we still have these tragic consequences.

But I think one of the great leadership dilemmas you're both going to face over the next years is that there are other young men and women who have these issues, who may even be treated, some may not even be identified, and we have to, obviously, get to the bottom of this and learn from it, et cetera. But this is a consequence of 10 years of uninterrupted warfare for the Army, and many things you have to do and think about are going to have to be in the context of how do we deal with soldiers that have these,

some obvious issues and some not so obvious. It's a huge responsibility.

I know you understand this, but I think that should be explicit at this moment.

General Odierno, one of the principles of a reduced force is that it is more readily deployed, faster, quicker, with more lethality, better training, and better not only—I hate to use the word “productivity,” but a much more efficient force. And one of the points you just made, and I think it bears reiteration, is that because of many factors the Active Force can be faster out the door, better prepared as units. Simple things like constant access to ranges, constant unit training.

Can you elaborate on that?

General ODIERNO. Senator, it has to do with complexity, and as complexity grows it requires more of what you just discussed. So for example, there are some things that aren't as complex. So let me give you an example. A port-opening team, that's not complex training, so we can train that and that can be done. But as you get to complex operations, such as brigade combat teams and what we might ask them to do, the amount of training is significant in order to build the collective capability that is necessary, the integration of company, platoons, integration of air and ground, the integration of intelligence, the integration of fires. All of that takes a significant amount of training, because that integration is very, very difficult and complex and it requires our leaders to do much training.

That's why we need certain capability in the Active component, because they need to be ready. So if we need to deploy them, they have already gone through that training and they are prepared to do that. We send them and they can immediately begin to do that. That's why it's so necessary to have that capability ready and prepared to go in the Active component.

As you get smaller, it becomes even more important because you don't have the depth that we once had. So that even becomes more important.

Senator REED. Is there a metric for this, in the sense that every unit that's notified for deployment has to do predeployment training. My sense—and again it's a sense; let me get your reaction—is that for an Active Force who's been continually engaged in all these complex operations you've talked about day in and day out, that predeployment training is a certain number of days or weeks, but for units, in fact they might have individual members with more expertise, et cetera, but in terms of the unit deployment it's a longer period of time.

Do you have those metrics?

General ODIERNO. We do. I can lay this out for you in detail. But what I would tell you is for Active component units, in reality they need to be prepared to immediately go out the door. It has to do with personnel readiness as well as unit collective training readiness. That takes a lot of effort to even sustain the right level of medical, dental, other readiness that is required for them to deploy.

Senator REED. The recollection is that in a unit that is required to deploy, a company within hours, a battalion within a day or less, and then the brigade within that same sort of hourly notion, it was

a lot different than other units, even active units. So that's something I think that has to be appreciated.

The other issue here, too, is with respect to size. It goes back to, are there technologies that you need to compensate for the decreased size? Put another way, the soldier of 2014 has a lot more firepower, effectiveness, than the soldier of 1974, I can assure you of that. So are there things that you need? Are there things that help sort of put in context this number, not just, well, back in 1976 we had a million under arms, now we only have 500,000?

General ODIERNO. I am very aware of that. I don't like doing those comparisons because the capabilities that we have in our Army today are much greater than they have ever been. Our individual soldier, the capability he has, the way he's equipped with the sights, weapons systems, information technology that we've given him, makes him incredibly more capable. The systems that we have that are integrated, whether it be a heavy, light, or medium capability, is much better than it's been in the past.

So our investments have paid dividends and our units are more capable than they were before, which allows us to get smaller. Again, there comes a point where you get too small and it's just a matter of numbers, and that's what I'm worried about.

Senator REED. I have a few seconds remaining, so just more of a comment than a question. Looking at ourselves is interesting, but we have to look at the adversaries also. They're getting more sophisticated, particularly potential, and we have to take every range of potential engagement. Some of them are getting very sophisticated in terms of their air power and others, where we have since 50 years, the Army has fought with total air superiority, and we have to begin to think about maybe it won't be total.

So I think—I hope that informs sort of some of the issues in terms of your structural changes you're making, because at times where you could rely on other platforms for close air support you might have to bring your own. Is that in your thoughts?

General ODIERNO. If I could just make a couple comments, and I appreciate that.

Senator REED. Yes, sir.

General ODIERNO. One is that we have really changed how we use our attack helicopters, and we use it—we use it much more in close support, direct support to our ground forces in a variety of different scenarios. We're also now going to have to use it as a reconnaissance-surveillance platform, which is critical to any success. That's becoming more critical, how you fight for intelligence and how you understand and develop the situation.

The only last comment I'd make on modernization, the one thing that we have to do that we have not done yet, it is this combination of mobility, survivability, and lethality. Over the last eight years, we have focused on survivability, so we've lost mobility and we have not increased our lethality. So as we go to the future it is incumbent on us that as we invest in our S&T we have to invest in better mobility, combined with better survivability, with increased lethality. That's where we need to focus our modernization programs, and have that connected to our reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities. That's what's going to provide us with the advantage with a smaller force.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Reed.
 Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to add my voice along with all of us with an expression of condolences to the families of the tragedy that has taken place.

First of all, General, I'd like to associate my remarks with what Senator Reed just stated. We always talk about how more capable we are. We are facing a much more capable adversary as well. I think that it's interesting to note the efficiency of the recent Russian movement into Crimea. Even though it was unopposed, it was a pretty impressive operation, wouldn't you say?

General ODIERNO. It was.

Senator MCCAIN. And they showed some capabilities and coordination of forces that maybe we hadn't quite expected.

General ODIERNO. Whenever I look at another force, the one thing you look at is not only its technical capability, but its ability to coordinate, synchronize, organize. What we have seen is some very sophisticated synchronization, organization, integration.

Senator MCCAIN. Including the fact that we did not intercept any communications amongst those various branches in the execution of this operation.

When did you first start serving in the U.S. Army, General?

General ODIERNO. I first entered West Point in 1972 and started serving in 1976, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. So you've had a chance to observe a lot of things happen in the world and a lot of engagements and a lot of activities the United States has been involved in. Would you say that in your judgment that the world is more dangerous now in many respects since the end of the Cold War, or the same or less so?

General ODIERNO. Senator, the comment I've made repeatedly, it is the most uncertain that I have seen it, which in itself makes it somewhat dangerous because of the uncertainty that we're seeing around the world and the unpredictability that we're seeing around the world across many different areas. It's not just limited to one place. It's limited—it's occurring on almost every continent.

Senator MCCAIN. And one would argue that it's not prudent to continue to reduce our defense capabilities. Wouldn't that make sense?

General ODIERNO. Again, there is concern because of the uncertainty that we see, and that's what concerns me.

Senator MCCAIN. We hear statements made by unnamed administration officials that this is, quote, "the end of land wars, there are no more land wars." In your experience and background and knowledge, do you think that that's probably a good idea, to plan for no more land wars?

General ODIERNO. As I said, Senator, in my opening statement, every decade since World War II we have had to deploy Army forces. And we continue to have Army forces deployed today. So my opinion is we want to have a balanced joint force, which requires also the capability to deploy land forces.

Senator MCCAIN. You know what I find interesting is that when General Meyer came here before Congress and testified that we

have a hollow Army it got headlines all over the world. Now, basically what you're saying is that we are headed towards a hollow Army.

The Chief of the U.S. military in Korea testified here just recently that he had enough operational capabilities with the forces that are now in Korea, but he does not have the sufficient or battle-ready units to reinforce him in case of a crisis in Korea. Do you share that view?

General ODIERNO. I don't know exactly what he said and what the context was. So I feel uncomfortable commenting on that, Senator. What I would say is we are working very hard to build the readiness that we can do everything we can in our commitment to support our allies on the Korean Peninsula.

Senator MCCAIN. But a lot of those units are not combat operationally ready?

General ODIERNO. They are not at this time.

Senator MCCAIN. They are not.

So now we are presenting you with a 2-year reprieve, and then sequestration kicks in again. One, I would be very curious how that affects your capability to plan. And two, what will the further impact of sequestration be on the U.S. Army in your view?

General ODIERNO. One of the things I worry about the most is, the reason we've been able to do the things we've been asked to do in the past is we had a sustained readiness capability. So in other words, we had consistent funding. We were able to continue—a continuous sustainment of readiness throughout the force. We have not been able to do that.

So 2014 and 2015 helps us. We will rebuild readiness to some level. But in 2016 we will lose that readiness again. You need consistent readiness funding in order to sustain the level of readiness necessary for us to be capable to respond the way the American people expect us to if we're needed.

Senator MCCAIN. So how do you plan?

General ODIERNO. Well, what we're doing is I've got to prioritize. So what I have to do is I have to take part of the force and make sure they are ready to go, which means there's other parts of the force—

Senator MCCAIN. But I guess my question—

General ODIERNO.—are getting less.

Senator McCain:—is sequestration, no sequestration. You probably have to dual plan.

General ODIERNO. Right now I plan for sequestration. That's the law of the land, Senator. And we try to build scenarios and give some recommendations on what funding we might need in order to create a readiness level and a size of the Army that is acceptable. That goes back to, as we've said, we think the force should be about 450,000 in the Active component, and the money to sustain that force that would be necessary.

Senator MCCAIN. I'm hearing, General—and I know you are, too, and I'd like to get your comment on the record. I'm hearing from a lot of very bright and talented young officers in all Services that this kind of lifestyle, where operations are cancelled, where deployments, they don't know from one day to the next, the degree of readiness and training in capabilities that they expect to have are

not becoming—are not real, and many of them are questioning whether service in the military is a lifestyle that they want to pursue.

Are you hearing those same kinds of rumblings, especially amongst the best and the brightest?

General ODIERNO. What I would say is, if we continue along this path where we go up and down and uncertainty about what the size of the Army will be, what the type of readiness will be, it will start to impact those who want to stay. So far it has not. And we are doing everything we can to sustain the experience that we have in the force. But if this continues for 10 more years I would be very surprised if it does not begin to impact those who want to continue to serve.

It is not about amount of deployments—

Senator MCCAIN. How about 2 more years?

General ODIERNO. Excuse me?

Senator MCCAIN. How about 2 more years?

General ODIERNO. It's unclear. I don't know. But what I say often is I don't know what will be the thing that finally—the straw that breaks the camel's back on this. We are working very hard to ensure we keep our very best and so far have been able to do that. But I don't know how much longer we'll be able to do that.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

Senator McCaskill.

Senator McCASKILL. Thank you.

Secretary McHugh, the Defense Finance and Accounting Services was set up by the Secretary of Defense back in 1991 in an effort to try to better manage the business systems at the Department of Defense. Since its inception, they have consolidated more than 300 installation-led offices into 9 sites, reduced the number of systems from 330 to 111. Obviously, they work off a working capital fund where they charge their customers. There's not a direct appropriation.

I was a little concerned when I saw that you launched an Army Financial Management Optimization Task Force pursuant to your directive, that would move from the DFAS some functions directly in the Army. I worry about that. So what I need to ask you is why, because what we're going to do is, if everybody does that, we're back to where we began, with a lot of duplication, a lot of one branch not knowing what the other branch is doing in terms of systems.

As we are trying to get to an audit, it seems to me that decision you've made, at least at the superficial level, looks like you're rowing the boat the wrong way.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you for the question, Senator. I know you understand full well the Army does not control DFAS. So there's been a number of reports that the Army was going to close DFAS centers at Rome, New York—

Senator McCASKILL. Right.

Mr. MCHUGH.—or other places. And I have to tell you that's not true. We don't have that power even if we would choose to do so.

As I know you understand as well, in these enormously difficult and challenging times the Army is looking at virtually everything

we do to try to see where we can be more efficient, more effective, and frankly save money. Over the past several years we have deployed a number of ERPs, including GFIBs. Those are systems by which we internally within the Army track our bills, pay our bills, et cetera, et cetera. And those have to date been very successful.

So what I asked our Army folks, financial management folks, to do was to set up two hubs to take a look at how we might optimize our structure and how we might indeed pursue auditability. You're absolutely right, we're under a legislative requirement to be fully auditable by 2017. We feel we are on track, and part of the pursuit of that auditability includes the deployment of these ERPs that enable us to, we think, become more efficient.

But we haven't made any decisions or any choices, and we need to find out exactly what these systems look like and if there is opportunity to save money. I have had discussions, our Army FM&O folks have had multiple discussions, with the Comptroller General of the Department, at the moment Secretary Bob Hale, who does own DFAS. He's carefully watching this.

So we don't have an intent one way or another to take business away from DFAS necessarily. But I think it's important for all of us to know. DFAS, you correctly noted, Senator, is run on a transactional basis. In other words, for every action, transaction they complete, they're paid by the service. As we come down in numbers—we're talking anywhere from 420 to 450—as the other services reduce, there's going to be fewer transactions. So I don't control DFAS, but I think they're going to have to make some management decisions as well.

Senator MCCASKILL. I don't think there's any question about it. I guess my plea to you is I would like to be as engaged in this process as much as possible. I know Bob Hale is leaving and his replacement will take this over. But I have sat on this side of this desk way too many times and found inefficiencies in business systems as it relates to the various branches working with and sometimes against each other.

If we're going to go this opposite direction, if we're going to bust up DFAS, I think we need to be very thoughtful about it and make sure that we're not driving up the cost for the remaining branches. If you decide to take some of this internally, you're going to drive up costs for the remaining branches and we may be robbing Peter to pay Paul. That's why I want to stay on top of it and make sure that all of this gets thought out across the board.

Mr. MCHUGH. Senator, a more than reasonable request, as always, and we'll send a team over at your convenience to brief you and make every effort to keep you informed.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

General Odierno, I know that you have stood up the Special Victim's Counsel in the Army with great rapidity and I'm very proud of that. I know that there are many, hundreds, of victims that have gotten their own counsel as a result of you prioritizing that, and all of us appreciate it very much.

I was very, very concerned about the media coverage around the Sinclair case because it was so inaccurate. I want to say very clearly for the record what happened in the Sinclair case. What happened in the Sinclair case is the prosecutor wanted to drop the se-

rious charges. The prosecutor wanted to say: I'm done. The special victim's counsel, a captain, who was working with that victim as a result of you standing up the unit so quickly, wrote a letter to the command saying: This case should not be dropped.

That special victim's counsel was doing exactly what the Senate and the House and the President signed into law, advocating for that victim in that environment. Couldn't have been more correct in what she did, that victim's counsel. Somehow that judge twisted that into undue command influence.

Well, that's a problem we're going to have to deal with. But I wanted the record to be very clear and I want to get assurances from you that the message will be sent to victim's counsel that that victim's counsel did what she should have done, not in any way do anything that's inappropriate within the UCMJ.

I don't know how the judge got to that interpretation. I don't know how a command is influenced by a command—by a captain who's writing a letter saying this is a serious case and it should not be dropped. If it were not for that commander, that case would have been over. There never would have been a day in court where that general would have had to take the stand and admit maltreatment of one of his subordinate officers or would he have ever had to even plead to the more serious charges that he ended up having to plead to.

So as much as people were outraged about the sentence, I want to make very clear that this was not an example where it should be some kind of mark on the side of the ledger that we should be doing away with command involvement in cases. Just the opposite. I want to make sure that you understood what actually happened in that case and that from the very top there is not a message that goes out to special victim's counsels that they should retreat in their obligations.

General ODIERNO. If I could just make one comment, Senator. I hold quarterly an advisory council. I bring in victims and advocates from around the Army. I just held one last week. The one message that was absolutely clear from everyone in that meeting was the importance of the special victim advocate and the difference that is making with each and every one of our victims and survivors that go through this.

So we are absolutely dedicated to this, and we believe it's showing great benefit for us as we go through the process.

Senator McCASKILL. Thank you very much, General.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCaskill.

Senator Chambliss, you got here just in the nick of time to ace out Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. It's always that way.

Senator CHAMBLISS. We're probably both going to ask the same question on A-10.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Mr. Secretary, General, let me first express my sympathy to the Army nation, obviously, for what happened yesterday, and just know that you're in our thoughts and prayers.

Gentlemen, one of the proposals that's in the Secretary's budget was the moving of the commissaries towards a more businesslike approach, which I agree with. I think that we need to operate our

exchanges, our commissaries, on a business formula. But what we're doing is we're exacting some pain from particularly some of your enlisted personnel who depend on the commissaries and exchanges probably to a greater degree maybe even than the officer corps.

Rather than exacting that pain right now, Senator Warner and I have a stand-alone bill that would delay the implementation of this until—of the Secretary's budget, until the study that comes out that end of this year. We're not exactly when, but it will certainly address the issue of the commissaries.

I'd just like you guys' comment on that as to where you think we are relative to moving towards a businesslike formula with the commissaries. How is this going to impact our active duty as well as our Guard and Reserve folks who have access to those facilities?

General ODIERNO. First off, as we've taken a hard look at this, in general terms as we looked at this, commissaries provide about a 30 percent benefit on items that they buy in the commissary. With the proposal to run a business that is one that runs and pays for itself, that goes down to about 20 percent savings. We think the 20 percent savings is still quite significant and we believe that that savings legitimizes the fact that we should make—as you mentioned, improve the business processes of the commissary.

We will still, though, provide additional funds for commissaries, for example, that are overseas, that really it's almost impossible to run in an efficient way because of the movement of goods and things to get people the goods that are necessary, and maybe in some remote areas. So it'll be—it'll be looked at on an individual basis. But for the most part, this efficiency in my mind is essential, because we have to improve these business practices. And I think it still provides quite a significant benefit for all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines as we go through this process.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Any comment, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. MCHUGH. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I fully support what the Chief said. We looked very carefully at those operations where we had a reason to believe all soldiers, enlisted or officers, really had no other alternatives other than the commissaries, as the Chief said, particularly overseas, but also in our remote locations.

This is something that I know Congress through their MWR activities, oversight activities, going back as far as my time on the Hill, have been looking at this, and it's been the long-held belief of many that there are significant savings to be made. We think that we can do both, certainly in a way that does not unduly impact our junior enlisted soldiers.

I would just note, because of the fiscal challenges we face, these kinds of efficiencies, economies, have already been budgeted in. So if we have an order to stand down while some commission looks at it, we'll certainly respect that directive, but we'd have to find the money somewhere else. Generally, for all of these kinds of initiatives, we have to go right back to the kinds of accounts that we've already hit hard over the last 2 years. So there would be significant challenges to not going forward.

Senator CHAMBLISS. General Odierno, in defense of standing down the entire fleet of A-10 aircraft, the Air Force has emphasized that the A-10's sole usefulness is that of being close air sup-

port, discounting its capabilities in CSAR and forward air control roles. While there are without question other assets that can perform the CAS mission, none can do so with the same maneuverability, loiter time, and targeting capability of the A-10.

Could you give us your thoughts from an Army perspective as to whether or not the Air Force's decision to stand down that entire A-10 fleet is in the best interests of the national security?

General ODIERNO. As we talk to our soldiers, they will tell you that they, obviously they support and are getting great support from the A-10 aircraft and the Air Force. A lot of it has to do with the visual deterrence that it provides, low-flying, visible both to us and the enemy itself, and the impacts that it has. So the A-10 is a great close air support aircraft, as far as we're concerned the best close air support aircraft.

However, as we've done in Afghanistan, there is a significant amount of missions of close air support being flown by other platforms, such as the F-15s and the F-16s. And the Air Force has come to us and told us that they absolutely believe that this will be able to meet our needs in close air support. So we are working with them in the future to develop those techniques and procedures that would be necessary to provide us the proper support of F-16's.

We have had several discussions about this and we are supporting their effort. But a lot of it has to do with this visual piece, and we have to work with the Air Force on how we replace that once the A-10 goes away.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Was there a recommendation from the Army with respect to retirement of A-10s?

General ODIERNO. We did not make a recommendation to the Air Force to retire them. But they have worked with us to ensure us that they will continue to provide us the best close air support.

Senator CHAMBLISS. My time has run out here. This is not in the form of a question, but just to let you know I do have a concern relative to competition or lack thereof on the BAE Bradley tracked vehicle, that I know there's some consideration being given to as to how we approach that, that weapon system. I may submit a question for the record to you on that.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Chambliss.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Chairman, may I just say one thing?

Chairman LEVIN. Please. Please, Secretary McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. I hope I get the opportunity to say something a little additional about another member who's dear to us. This is the last Army posture hearing for Senator Chambliss. I just wanted to express our Army and my personal appreciation for all that he's done. Saxby and I go back quite a ways. So I'll miss seeing him here, but I wish him, and we all wish you, the best in the future. Thank you, Senator.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thanks very much. It's been a great relationship.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you both. I can't say that I'm going to miss Saxby Chambliss because I won't be around to miss Saxby Chambliss. But if I were around I would miss Saxby Chambliss, put it that way.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Good morning, gentlemen. We all have heavy hearts this morning, as has been discussed over and over again. In Colorado our thoughts and prayers go out to you and our soldiers and the Army families at Fort Hood. I think we've also been in awe of the heroes who responded to the tragic events of yesterday.

The valor of those first responders comes as no surprise to many of us. In my home State of Colorado we've just been in awe as our soldiers have deployed over and over again to combat in Afghanistan. They've trained our allies. They've tracked the enemies of humanity during the counter-Lord's Resistance Army operations in Africa. And they've saved many lives and much of what we hold dear in Colorado while battling both wildfires and floods over the last year. They've been great neighbors and friends to say the least. We're just so lucky to have them living, these heroes, living amongst us. We're forever grateful for what they do day in and day out.

I've got great respect for the brave men and women in your sister services and there's no doubting the importance of air and sea power. But the simple fact is the missions I've just described require soldiers who bring boots onto the ground. That's why I'm worried about the potential cuts in the Army's end strength and the effect that those cuts would have on our soldiers and our ability to project power and our very communities.

I'm also increasingly disturbed by the public conflict between the Active component and the National Guard. If there's one thing we've learned over the last several years, it's that we need a well-trained, well equipped, multi-component Army.

We're also facing the potential, as we've been discussing here this morning, for significant budget-driven reductions if Congress doesn't get its act together and we don't stop sequestration from kicking back in next year. In light of that, we literally can't afford a delay in the critical decisions that are before us while a committee spends months or years conducting a study for the sake of a few attack battalions.

If we freeze force structure changes to the Guard, we will still have to absorb cuts through even deeper reductions in end strength and iron on the active side. In my mind that's not a responsible compromise. This is a complex and emotionally charged issue and we're not going to solve it by going to war with ourselves.

I think of Winston Churchill, if I can paraphrase him. He said: "We're out of money. It's time to start thinking." So with that in mind, I've got some questions.

Mr. Secretary, let me start with you and I want to thank you publicly for agreeing to my request to withdraw the Army's request for a land acquisition waiver for the Pinyon Canyon Training Area. With the Pinyon Canyon controversy finally put to rest, our soldiers will be able to conduct the training they so need, while our ranchers can do their vital work without fear of losing their land. It's a rare win-win scenario, and I was proud and honored to work with you and your team to make it a reality. I know the great people at Fort Carson will make good use of that training area, and I know they'll continue to work to protect the land for themselves and future generations.

So, with all of that in mind, would you describe the types of training that our soldiers need to conduct to prepare for full-spectrum operations? And what are your main concerns about the threats facing the current and future force? And then if I could, on that note, how does access to quality training areas like Pinyon Canyon factor into the Army's assessments of installations?

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Senator. Let me first of all return the compliment. Not just I, but all of us in the Army, greatly appreciated the leadership, the courage really, that you consistently showed on resolving the Pinyon Canyon issue. I totally agree with you, it's win-win, and we can all get back to what concerns us most, in our case soldiering and training those soldiers, in the case of farmers and ranchers doing God's work out on the land. So thank you for those efforts.

As you noted, suggested, in recent years our focus on training has really been on the counterterrorism initiative. That's recently switched to a train and assist mission, and that, coupled with the fact that we just have had dwindling resources, has really caused us to greatly diminish the complexity of our training and to by and large not have the funds to do decisive action training.

We are utilizing our return, of course out of Iraq, but also out of Afghanistan, to now return to decisive action training, more complex training, the type of mission sets that the Chief spoke about earlier. We'll have 19 CTC rotations this year. 17 of those will be for decisive action training. That is in no small measure thanks to the relief that this Congress provided through the bipartisan budget agreement for 2014 and 2015.

But as the Chief said, if we go back to 2016 those kinds of buybacks will be immediately lost and we'll have to do the best training we can at a much lower level of proficiency and complexity. The Chief went into some detail about how the more complex missions require larger troop formation sets, require the integration of fires and infantry and your overhead close air support, et cetera, et cetera. In the case of our attack platforms, for example, we are integrating unmanned aerial platforms, the Gray Eagle, which adds even more complexity.

So the ability to do that kind of training, you need land, you need clear air space. While the major portion of those occurs at Fort Polk and out at the CTC in California, obviously the training opportunities at Pinyon Canyon have and remain vital, and the stability that the recent agreement brings I think will obviously be a consideration should we get to a point where we begin to evaluate bases for possible drawdown. As you know, it's a very complex system and it's interrelated. But every asset that a post, camp, or station can bring to the table is something on their side.

Senator UDALL. Again, I think this is a great example of everybody sitting down, listening, and working out a way forward. So again I want to thank you.

General, let me direct a question to you that I think you can answer for the record because my time is about to expire. But I want to return to the National Guard force structure comments I made. I know you spoke to this as well. If the Army were prevented from making those changes pending the findings of the independent commission, what would the ripple effect be? The money would

have to come from somewhere. So am I right in saying that there would be significant effects on the Active Army and/or the Army Reserve?

General ODIERNO. There would be, up to \$12.7 billion over the POM, over the entire period.

Senator UDALL. You answered the question. We don't need to ask the question for the record. So thank you.

Thanks again for your service and for being here, gentlemen.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Udall.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of you for your leadership and service. Yesterday—first of all, I share the sentiments of all my colleagues in offering my thoughts and prayers to those who have been affected by the tragedy at Fort Hood yesterday.

In the Readiness Subcommittee yesterday in the morning, we actually talked about the issue of insider threats. There have been a number of reports—I know, Secretary McHugh, that you've been working on this along with the other services. Also, the Homeland Security Committee has been working on it, which I also happen to serve, along with the Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson.

So it is my hope that we will all really get together, the work done, that you're doing, along with what Homeland Security is doing, to review not only yesterday's incident, but the most recent incidents, to make sure that you have the tools that you need, whether it's reviewing security clearances, other issues. So I look forward to working with you on that.

General Odierno, I wanted to follow up on Senator Chambliss's discussion on the A-10. I know you're surprised by that. About 10 days ago, Senator Donnelly and I were in Afghanistan. I was glad to hear you say that you often hear feedback from those that serve underneath you in terms of their support for the A-10, because I wasn't even raising it with people on the ground and they were pulling me aside and saying to me: The A-10 is very important to us. In fact, I had a guy pull me aside and tell me a story about how the A-10 had helped our Special Forces on the night before on an incident that they were dealing with in Afghanistan.

So I believe that there is a strong feeling on the ground toward the close air support mission of the A-10. This was reaffirmed for me in Afghanistan. Again, it wasn't an issue I was affirmatively raising. Actually, I had people pulling me aside to tell me this.

One of the concerns I hear—I appreciate what you said, that the A-10 is the best close air support platform that we have. In answer to Senator Chambliss, you said that you'd be working with the Air Force to develop the close air support tactics, techniques, and procedures for other aircraft that the Air Force wants to use for this mission, including the F-15 and the F-16.

Here's my concern. My concern is that we already have the TTP's for the A-10, don't we? We don't have to develop procedures on how to deal with close air support for the A-10?

General ODIERNO. Yes.

Senator AYOTTE. So when I hear talk about that it's the best close air support platform, we know that their pilots are very fo-

cused on the close air support mission that they perform, not only in Afghanistan but also in Iraq, as you know from your service in Iraq—the very fact that we have to develop new TTP's for other aircraft to really look at this issue, I worry about this in terms of our close air support capability gap, and that we're going to be putting ourselves in a risk situation.

So we already have it in place and we already know it works. So that worries me, to think we would take this on.

Do you have a comment on that?

General ODIERNO. Senator, I would just say clearly the A-10 has been supporting ground forces for a very long time and, as you've said and I have said, we're incredible confident in it. This is another example, though, of the impact that budget reductions are having on our military.

Senator AYOTTE. Right.

General ODIERNO. We have to make hard decisions, and they're just really tough, difficult decisions. My guess—in fact, I know General Welch will tell you he flew A-10s; he's a big supporter. But we have to make difficult decisions. That's why we're into—we have to be able to figure out how we can best utilize multi-role aircraft. That's what we're going to have to work together. And they have been providing close air support in Afghanistan with those platforms. But there are some things we have to adjust, because it is not quite the same as the A-10 is with ground forces.

Senator AYOTTE. Right, exactly, because the F-15 and the F-16 in terms of survivability, they have to come in much faster. One of the benefits, as you've described, is the visual, but the ability to go at a slower pace because it's a huge—we know, it's got much more survivability, just the nature of it. It's a beast, in a good way.

But I worry about this because close air support to me shouldn't be a secondary function. It has to be a number one function when we think about our men and women on the ground. Would you agree with me on that?

General ODIERNO. It is critical to us. In fact, the Army has made decisions in the past because of our reliance on close air support in the kind of systems we develop. So it's critical. We rely on it completely.

Senator AYOTTE. Right.

General ODIERNO. It's very important to us.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, I thank you.

I wanted to ask you about—General, you spent years serving in Iraq. I appreciate your leadership there and everything that you did in Iraq. I just wanted to get your thoughts. As we're looking at where we stand with regard to post-2014 force posture in Afghanistan and our continued involvement in Afghanistan, are there any lessons that you see in terms of what's happening now in Iraq that we should be mindful of as we look at our commitment in Afghanistan?

General ODIERNO. I would just say that, as we have recommended, the Joint Chiefs have recommended, we believe it's vitally important that we have a force that remains in Afghanistan. There's nothing that shows commitment like having people on the ground there every day, and I think that provides confidence not only to the military, but confidence to the political leaders, that we

are going to stand behind them as they continue to improve. I think that's important.

I think not only that; it's important for us to be there in order for us to continue to build the institutional capacity that's necessary for Afghanistan to sustain stability over the long term.

Senator AYOTTE. Don't we also—we've seen, unfortunately, a resurgence of al Qaeda in Iraq. Don't we face a similar risk in Afghanistan if we don't have a follow-on commitment there?

General ODIERNO. My experience tells me that when they sense a level of instability they will do everything they can to exploit that instability.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, General.

I wanted to add my support for the chairman's comments earlier. Having just gotten back from Afghanistan, I believe it's very important that the President announce what our follow-on commitment is going to be in Afghanistan, consistent with General Dunford's recommendations. It's important that we do so now. Obviously, that commitment would be contingent on signing of the BSA, and I believe also more responsibly handling the detainee issues there.

But the commitment now, we need to send that signal to the Taliban with the elections coming up this weekend, with the fighting season beginning there, that we remain committed to ensuring the security of Afghanistan in a way that will not allow the resurgence of al Qaeda again, to make sure that our country is protected.

So I really appreciate the chairman's comments on that, and I would like to support the President in his follow-on recommendations and I look forward and I hope that he will make that announcement soon.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary and General. Again, my deepest sympathy to all of our men and women in uniform and to all of you that support the military directly, and to all of us from West Virginia and around the country that support you for what you do.

General Odierno, I recognize and appreciate the need to modify the structure of the Army to better fit today's operational requirements and fiscal constraints. Getting cost savings by retiring low-priority weapons systems is a good way to do this and I strongly support it. However, I am less clear about the value of moving Army National Guard Apaches into the active duty. Guard Apaches have performed exceptionally well in Iraq and Afghanistan. I think that we all identify and recognize that.

Here's where my concerns would come from to try to understand. The cost of a Guard Apache battalion is about \$32 million per year. The cost of an active duty Apache battalion is about \$75 million per year. So that we know the cost. We don't know exactly what the cost buys us, the difference of 32 to 75. If any of you—General, if you could answer that.

General ODIERNO. Absolutely. Well, it has to do with the amount of training, simple. What we try to do with the National Guard is we want to maintain pilot proficiency, which we do very well at.

But as I had stated earlier, with Apaches it's much more than that. It has to do with collective training. It has to do with doing reconnaissance, surveillance missions. It has to do with combining with UAVs. It has to do with conducting combined arms training at the company-squad, company, battalion, and brigade level.

So the Active component does more days of training in order to develop those more complex entities, where the National Guard simply doesn't have the time to do that. And if we did, it would be like an Active component unit.

The other thing that's happening here, which—excuse me, Senator, because I know you probably want to ask another question. But remember, we're taking out all of our reconnaissance-surveillance aircraft, the OH-58. We're taking the Apaches to replace that. So if we don't do that, we will not have a reconnaissance-surveillance capability in the Active component. And because of the amount of training it takes for us to be proficient at that, that's why we'd like to put it in the Active component.

The bottom line is I would certainly love to have a larger capacity of Apaches where I could do both, but I can't. I don't have the money. So I had to make—we had to make a difficult recommendation.

Senator MANCHIN. I understand. There's a \$43 million per battalion difference. So when we're looking at it from a cost effectiveness, I have not heard when I was governor of the State of West Virginia and now in my role as a Senator, I have not heard from anybody in the military that the Guard was not able to perform whatever mission you asked when they were in active, when they were in the active rotation. So that's a hard one for us.

General ODIERNO. See, it's a time issue. There's nothing the Guard can do about it, because they do the best they can with the time and resources we give them. But this takes much more time. So when we use them we have to give them—we give them a lot of—

Senator MANCHIN. But you're moving Black Hawks over, correct?

General ODIERNO. Yes. Again, the integration of Apaches and the integration it takes to do that is a bit more complex than the Black Hawks.

The other issue is the Black Hawk much better fits their homeland defense and State missions than the Apache, and it'll help them to improve that capability.

Senator MANCHIN. If there's a possibility I can sit down with yourself or whoever you would put in that position on front, me and my staff would be very happy to be able to work with you.

General ODIERNO. I'd be happy to, Senator.

Senator MANCHIN. And if I can—and maybe, Secretary, this might be directed to you. We talk about the tooth to the tail ratio, that it's easy to say how many front-line soldiers and how many back office guys. I know we've been right now talking about the front line. Are we having the same rapid reduced, reduction, as far as our back line as we do the front line?

Mr. MCHUGH. Proportionately, yes. You have fewer officers, so you obviously proportionately have fewer total numbers. But we are very carefully and very closely, principally through the G-1, General Howard Bromberg, and our Assistant Secretary of Army

for Personnel, to try to ensure that we're taking down all of our ranks in an appropriate way, so that we have the right numbers in the right places.

It becomes very, very challenging, particularly when the President asked us to try to protect a reversal, a surge if you will, which requires us to look very hard at some of the NCOs, senior NCOs.

Senator MANCHIN. If I may, my time is going to elapse.

Mr. MCHUGH. Yes, we're doing I think what you would want us to do.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay. The dovetail to that is going to be: The last time I think you told me one of the major initiatives we have is to diminish significantly the number of contractors that we employ. I've had a hard time since I've been here finding out what that number really is and how much of a reduction you have been able to make towards that reduction. Do you have any numbers at all?

Mr. MCHUGH. You asked—then I'll defer to you—you asked me last year and I believe the year before that what was the number of contractors in Afghanistan. I can tell you at the end of the first quarter, fiscal year 2014, there were approximately 78,136 DOD contractors, of which 70,161 were Army contractor personnel.

Senator MANCHIN. And then how many men and women in uniform did we have at the same time?

Mr. MCHUGH. At that same time, the Army boots on the ground were about 52,000.

Senator MANCHIN. So we have more contractors in Afghanistan than we do boots on the ground?

Mr. MCHUGH. Our fighting force has generally been less than the support force behind it.

Senator MANCHIN. How many contractors are still in Iraq, sir?

Mr. MCHUGH. We're not in Iraq.

Senator MANCHIN. I know, but I know we have contractors there.

General ODIERNO. There are contractors—I don't know the exact number, but there are contractors there that are supporting—that are supporting the equipment that the Iraqi government is purchasing, and that's by FMS contract.

Senator MANCHIN. That means we're supporting that from the DOD budget?

General ODIERNO. No. That is the dollars they pay.

Senator MANCHIN. My final one, just for you, is if you could provide me a list—and we've talked about this. We want to make your job the best we possibly can. But if we have laws, redundancies, things that are strapping you and holding you back, no different than any of us that are requiring you to buy weapons or buy any other type of support from our States that you might not want or need, we've got to get serious about this.

We're asking you—and I really appreciate the military, Department of Defense, Secretary Hagel, for truly putting a budget forward that tried to address what the new modern Defense Department would look like. Can you give me any list of any laws that you would like to see us try to help change that would give you the ability to do your job in a much more efficient, effective manner?

Mr. MCHUGH. In fact we're working on that right now. Congressman Thornberry from the great State of Texas on the House Armed

Services Committee has asked a very similar question. He has expressed an interest in working with us to identify legal and internal regulatory burdens we've put on ourselves in acquisition and modernization programs, et cetera. So I can't speak for Congressman Thornberry, but we'd be thrilled if you'd be an active part of that.

Senator MANCHIN. Absolutely, very active.

I'll finish this up with saying that I know it's very difficult when we ask the question for you to be able to tell us, okay, I don't need this, I don't need this, and I don't need this, and it's being produced in this State and this State and this State. But there are some of us here that really care about that, and if there's something in my State that we're supplying that you don't need and you can show you don't need it, I'll be the first to say let's not do it. So I would appreciate straightforwardness on that, too, sir. Thank you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Manchin, there are three things I'm going to make reference to, Senator Manchin, that you've raised very appropriately. This last issue that you raised, we've met with Congressman Thornberry as a matter of fact and Congressman McKeon. There's a letter that has gone out, signed by Congressman—Chairman McKeon, Congressman Smith, Senator Inhofe, myself, and Representative Thornberry, on exactly this subject that you have raised.

The reason that Congressman Thornberry signed it is he's the likely successor to Congressman McKeon. So that's a very important subject. We will get you a copy of that letter and make a copy of that letter—put that in the record.

[The material referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator MANCHIN. Since I'm not a likely successor of you—

Chairman LEVIN. At some point. [Laughter.]

Senator MANCHIN. I do understand that. I just appreciate the diligence on this, because I think it's important for them to do their job.

Chairman LEVIN. It's a very important point you've raised.

Next, another issue which you've raised is on the Apache issue and the question of the Black Hawk and Apache and the funding that's involved in that. What we'll need for the record is the funding issues on that, the impact of that, because, Senator Manchin, we've been told that this is part of an integrated aviation restructuring package which saves \$12 billion. So we're all going to need to see exactly how that works, what those numbers are, how it's integrated, where these alleged savings are, because it's a very important issue. We're going to be looking at this—

Senator MANCHIN. With a cost of \$43 million per battalion, sir, and basically I've witnessed and basically seen the performance of the Guard, which has been exemplary. But there is much more to it that maybe I don't know. We're willing to sit down and work through this.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, we all ought to get these numbers, because that \$43 million saving, which I don't doubt at all, apparently, according to General Odierno, is because the training is much more shorter period and it needs to be expanded when

they're active duty. But whatever it is, we're all going to need that data, and we need it for the record, because I think all of us are going to be looking very, very closely at that issue.

Thank you very much, Senator Manchin, for raising that issue.
Senator VITTER.

Senator VITTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to both of you for your service, and certainly my thoughts and prayers and condolences go out to all of the victims' families at Fort Hood, as do all of ours.

General, you have consistently testified that the minimum in your opinion to maintain any sort of adequate readiness for the Army is a 450,000 Active component, correct?

General ODIERNO. That's correct, Senator.

Senator VITTER. That is still, as I understand it and as you have identified, the lowest level in terms of Army readiness since 1940; is that correct?

General ODIERNO. The lowest number of soldiers. I have not said that, but that is in fact true.

Senator VITTER. I believe you have also said that that meets our minimum readiness requirements, but with a "fairly high level" of risk; is that correct?

General ODIERNO. That's correct, Senator.

Senator VITTER. In your Army career, have you ever lived through a similarly fairly high level of risk?

General ODIERNO. I would say that my assessment is based on the uncertainty in the world and the fact that we're not sure when we'll be able to respond. I do have some concerns about the readiness of our force, especially over the next 3 to 4 years as we're transitioning in losing end strength, and that our readiness is decreasing. So I have some concerns.

What keeps me up at night is will I have enough soldiers properly trained and ready to deploy if they are asked to do that.

Senator VITTER. I'm not trying to push you in any corner. I'm just asking, that fairly high level of risk, have you experienced that before in your Army career to the same extent?

General ODIERNO. No.

Senator VITTER. Okay. In light of this, General, can you speak to the benefit, necessity in my opinion, of maintaining our joint rotational training centers and the benefit they provide?

General ODIERNO. They are absolutely essential to what we are trying to do now as we rebuild our readiness to operate and conduct decisive action and do combined arms capability and rebuild that in our force. The way we do that is centerpiece our combat training centers, specifically the National Training Center at Fort Irwin and the JRTC at Fort Polk.

Those are critical to our strategy moving forward and our training. We are investing in them. They will be the ones who certify and conduct and ensure that our brigade combat teams and enabler packages are trained in order for us to be prepared for future conflicts. They are critically important to us.

Senator VITTER. Great. Thank you, General. I assume it's fair to say the nature of their training is particularly important and well suited to the types of conflicts we face today?

General ODIERNO. We have in fact developed the scenarios there that I believe best represent not only the conflicts of today, but the conflicts we will face in the future. And it's a challenging leader development place where our leaders learn to think, adapt, to current and future operations that are absolutely critical to us as we look forward to our success.

Senator VITTER. Thanks, General.

General, we just went through, of course, a programmatic environmental analysis and assessment for basically cuts, reductions, in the Army. That was very recent. Given that deliberative and rigorous process the Army just went through, will the Army use the same, fundamentally the same process, the same metrics, the same considerations, in the next round of analysis?

General ODIERNO. Yes. We did that analysis to get us down to 490,000. As we continue to reduce the size of the Army, we will do the same analysis. The Secretary and I, although we have to have further discussion—I think he probably should comment as well—we believe the criteria used were pretty good the first time.

Mr. MCHUGH. We in fact have issued the programmatic environmental analysis stage 2 to the bases, and we're beginning the process of collecting data. Part of that, frankly, is because, as we've talked in a number of occasions this morning, sequestration remains the law of the land, and if we have to go down to the 420 that the Active component would be directed toward under that, under the BCA, we have to know exactly where the structure and force lies so that we can make the best decisions we can.

As the Chief said, the requirements and the determinations, the inputs, that we used the first time seemed to work pretty well. So we'll remain flexible, but those are pretty much the tracks that we remain on.

Senator VITTER. So again, Mr. Secretary, not to prejudge anything, but the basic analysis, the basic metrics, the basic tests you used the first time, will continue?

Mr. MCHUGH. Basically. But again, you come to different conclusions as your numbers change.

Senator VITTER. Yes, I'm not saying where that leads. I'm just saying the basic criteria and metrics should be the same; is that fair to say?

Mr. MCHUGH. It is fair to say. It's also fair to say that at that point, should we make additions or deletions or whatever, that obviously would be part of the public record and we'd allow people the opportunity to make comment on it.

Senator VITTER. Okay. Just a last question. The DSG clearly states that risk should not be taken in the capability to rapidly respond with ready forces, but rather risk should only be accepted in the ability to sustain large-scale ground operations and the regeneration of forces. General and Mr. Secretary, in terms of this fairly high level of risk you admit we're accepting at 450, is it limited to that ability to sustain large-scale ground operations versus to rapidly respond?

General ODIERNO. I think the risk that we have is not for rapid response. The risk is not—the risk over a couple years is readiness, because it takes time to catch up as end strength reduces and the investment we have in readiness and modernization to catch up.

Where the risk comes into play again is in the size, and if we have to do multiple contingencies, which is what the defense strategic guidance requires, it really has to do with the size plus the readiness. We will still have the rapid deployment capability, but our ability to do a major contingency and another one clearly is at risk based on the size and capability that we have inside the Army at a lower level.

Senator VITTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Vitter.

Senator Donnelly.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, General, on behalf of everyone in Indiana, our sympathies to the entire Army family, to those who were injured and lost their lives. Please know our thoughts and prayers are with all of you in the Army family.

Mr. Secretary, as you know, DFAS, the headquarters are in Indiana. I know how hard those folks work, the excellence and quality of their work, the pride they take in it and in serving their country. I would just ask you that you keep us in the loop and keep us informed as you move forward in the DFAS process. We would appreciate making sure that you keep us in the loop, and I know you will do that.

Mr. MCHUGH. Absolutely, Senator. As I said to Senator McCaskill, that's a very reasonable request. I would just note again, it's not our intent to, nor do we control the structure and the processes of DFAS. But rather, we're just trying to ensure within the Army we're doing what we control as well as we can.

Senator DONNELLY. Understood.

I was with Senator Ayotte when we were in Afghanistan and the Ukraine recently, and part of the discussion was about the equipment that's leaving Afghanistan. And while we were in Ukraine, the defense minister, prime minister, was talking to us about how desperately they need almost everything—communications equipment, other equipment. I was just wondering if there has been any discussions about whether there's a match-up between some of the things that are heading out that we have in excess and the needs of friends like Ukraine and other places in Eastern Europe.

General ODIERNO. Senator, what we do is, we have identified excess property, as you very well know. What the process is we identify that. That is available for other nations. They have to request it and they request it to our government, and then we would make decisions and then provide that equipment. So we have identified all of that excess equipment. Any country can ask for that equipment.

The issue becomes if they have to fund it themselves or if we gift it, but that's a decision that would be made based on the request that is presented to us. But we certainly have that list of equipment that anyone is welcome to look at and let us know. We have not specifically—we have not been asked so far to specifically look at could Ukraine use some of that equipment.

Senator DONNELLY. The reason I mention it is because in effect they said they've basically been stripped of almost everything they had. Their navy was taken from them. So they have in their conversations with us told us how much they appreciate the friend-

ship, how much they look forward to continuing to working with us, and how much they look at the U.S. Army as a model for where they'd like to be at some point in the future.

One of the areas that I have been working on a lot over the past few years is JIEDDO, the impact JIEDDO has had trying to figure out fertilizer formulas that are non-explosive, trying to figure out how we can have our young men and women come home without one more IED occurring. As you know, JIEDDO is going to a smaller footprint. I just wanted to ask what your plans are as you look at this, so that we're not in a place where we're back to zero in effect and have to start and ramp up all over again.

What are your hopes for JIEDDO and what are the continuances that you plan to have with it?

General ODIERNO. First, as we went through this process of looking at the future JIEDDO, we all agree the Army—I'll speak for the Army. The Army specifically agrees that we need JIEDDO to sustain itself, because the threat of IED's is not going away. They are becoming more complex, they're becoming more sophisticated. We need a process that allows us to constantly look at this, so we can develop the tactics, techniques, procedures, and use the technology necessary for us to continue to move forward.

So we absolutely agree with that. We also in the Army have established the Asymmetric Warfare Group in TRADOC that will connect to JIEDDO and help us to help them to identify future threats and development systems. So for us it's critical for the way ahead.

We agree that it should remain under the Department of Defense. We think that's the best place for it because then they can resource it through all the different capabilities that the services have, because this is not a single-service issue. It is a multi-service issue.

Senator DONNELLY. You have as the Army taken such a significant lead in this effort. I remember some years ago when Mr. McHugh and I were both Congressmen that I had a constituent whose son was over there. He ran his own machine shop and he had spent the last month and a half—basically, he told all his customers, I'll get back to you when I can—and created an extender so it could catch a line, that it was 30 feet, 15 feet, 5 feet. He said: Look, if I can't get somebody else to do this, I want my son to come home safe. He said: I came up with this all on my own at night.

Those are the kind of things that JIEDDO has been able to help improve on, develop, take to 10 degrees further. So we certainly don't want to lose the capability that we have there.

When we look at the mental health screening that's going on and the challenges that we face in that area, do you think there's a way to try to have more mental health screening tools associated with the periodic health assessment that goes on every year?

Mr. MCHUGH. We're always looking, as I mentioned a number of times this morning, for ways in which we can do things better. The challenge we face, particularly as we look at what occurred just yesterday at Fort Hood, is that we are doing everything we can to destigmatize in the soldier's mind the reaching out for help before it becomes a larger problem. We've really increased our behavioral health encounters within the Army by over 900 percent.

We view that as positive. Folks are reaching out more. They're asking for help more voluntarily. But then sometimes things happen like happened yesterday that we fail to understand.

We have for a deploying soldier five discrete behavioral health touch points: 180 days prior to deployment, within 90 days of when they get to theater, 30 days after redeployment, 90 days after redeployment. Then for every soldier, regardless of your deployment status, we do a behavioral health assessment each and every year.

So we're trying to keep as close a watch on our soldiers as we can. But clearly we believe there are more things we can do to identify problems in the more discrete stages of their development, try to get soldiers added help where under our current tool kit it may not be so obvious.

Senator DONNELLY. I'll finish with this. On that trip we also met with the Israeli Defense Forces. One of their folks in this area said what they also try to do is have their platoon leaders—they push it down, so that they can help, give them as much training as possible, so when they look they can try to pick something up, see something that's a little out of normal and report it back up. I would hope we would take a look at that.

General ODIERNO. Absolutely the key. We've now put behavioral specialists into brigades. We didn't have that before. So we've now done that.

Here's the biggest problem we have, and really it's a dilemma. The problem is sharing information and how you protect an individual's rights with sharing information so the commanders and the people at the lower level understand that maybe there was a previous problem. So the Secretary and I are really doing the best we can to come up with processes that allow us to share information, because in a lot of cases that's the problem. So we're much better at it, but there are some limitations to what we can do and we're trying to do the best we can.

That's one thing I think we should try to work together on, is how we can better share information so that the chain of command, as you have said, has the ability to really understand when soldiers are having problems. That's to me, that's the thing we have to focus on.

I would just make one other comment—I know we're over time and I apologize, Mr. Chairman—is that the other thing is behavioral health—we have invested a lot in the Army, but there are just some times when they don't want to have it in the Army; they want to be off post. We have to look at how we provide behavioral health off post and how we're able to do that and the funding that allows them to do that properly. It's a combination of all of those things I think that would really help us in this area.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you both. Again, our sympathies to the entire Army family.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Donnelly.

Senator SESSIONS.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Thank you all, and our hearts and prayers go out to those who suffered loss in the Army family at Fort Hood and the whole Army family.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your leadership. You've been a candid and effective leader, I believe.

General Odierno, it's a pleasure to have you again here. I remember visiting you when you were doing some of the best work ever I guess was done in Iraq. It was a very tough time and professionals credit you with changing the ground, the actions on the ground, in a way that was positive for America. I couldn't be more proud of you and your service.

I am a supporter of the Defense Department. I believe that it has been disproportionately squeezed in our budget process. But I am not unaware that Admiral Mullen told us, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, that the greatest threat to our future is the debt. We're told, Secretary McHugh, by CBO a few weeks ago that this year we paid \$211 billion in interest on our debt this past year, and it will rise to 880 10 years from today.

That's an annual increase in expenditure of our government discretionary spending by \$650 billion. So I believe we need to maintain a vibrant, effective, mobile, hostile military. But all of us I think acknowledge, do we not, that it means tightening belts and seeing how we can do those things at lower cost. I know you've been working toward that end and in fact have made progress.

But you accept that notion, do you not?

Mr. MCHUGH. I don't disagree with a word that then-Chairman Mullen said. I think from the Department of Defense's perspective we are not just willing, we're anxious to do our part. We went through a first round of \$487 billion worth of cuts, and then came in in a second round of some \$500 billion worth of cuts.

The thing that worries us now is not just the size of those cuts, which becomes very sizable under the BCA, under sequestration, but the rapidity, the rapid nature of the implementation of them. So we want to do our part and we think we are. But there does come a point beyond which national security becomes—

Senator SESSIONS. I agree. I don't believe 420,000 is sufficient for the Army. But I don't know why we'll have to go there. I'm going to have to be shown that, because I'm ranking on the Budget Committee and we are wrestling with these numbers. You have to know, I know you know, the President will not allow any additional money for the Defense Department unless he gets an additional equal amount increased to non-defense discretionary. This doubles the cost of any relief to the military.

The Ryan-Murray bill this year did help. I know you agree. So what I can't understand is this. You've said and, General Odierno, you noted, that in fiscal year 2016 it kicks in again. But this is the way I read the funding levels. This year we're at \$496 billion, is that correct, for the DOD? Do you have that number?

Mr. MCHUGH. I deal in Army numbers.

Senator SESSIONS. I'm sure that's true. Well, as I see—and another thing. We want to be sure the Army is fairly treated as you work through this process.

But my understanding is, the numbers I have, are we're spending this year \$496 billion for the Defense Department. Next year, 2015, Defense will get 498. The next year, in 2016, it will remain flat again basically, but it goes to 499. But the next year, 2017, it jumps 13 billion to 512; and increases \$13 billion each year for the

next 5 years. That's under the soldier, under the Budget Control Act. And there are not further cuts. Staying flat at a time of low inflation, even low inflation, is somewhat squeezing of your budget, I acknowledge.

But in the years to come we're showing growth that actually exceeds CBO's projection of inflation. Am I wrong about that?

Mr. MCHUGH. I don't have the DOD figures in front of me. But as you know, Senator, the Army has already experienced significant cuts. We're coming down from a high of \$144 billion in our base budget in fiscal year 2010 to \$121 billion roughly in the fiscal year 2015 BBA. And even at a flat line, our costs don't flat-line.

Senator SESSIONS. Let me ask you this. How are you functioning this year? How many soldiers do we have this year, 2014?

General ODIERNO. As we stand right now, we're about 522,000 soldiers. We're not functioning, Senator. That's the issue. We are not. We are not ready. We are not funding our training. We had to cut significant modernization programs. We're not functioning.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I understand that. But if you reduce from 512 to 450, that would be 60,000 soldiers. And if the other parts of the DOD are tightening their belts, why—I've just got to be convinced that we're not able to sustain ourselves at a steady growth rate.

So there's a predictability. If the Budget Control Act is not changed, there is predictability. We are flat for 2 more years and then we grow at 2.5 percent a year for 5 years. So you have a certain predictability there.

I don't want to see the Army disproportionately cut. The danger to me always was this year, and Ryan-Murray helped, because if we hadn't fixed the problem this year we'd have been in a real fix. It would have really done it.

So, General Odierno, my time is up, but I'll let you explain. Isn't it true that the problem you're facing right now is you're having to make decisions to reduce costs that really won't pay off until the out years, and you have an additional burden on you right now to keep this Army under control and in a positive way?

General ODIERNO. That's correct. It is—we were not able to—because of operational commitments and other things we're doing now, we can't balance ourselves to down the road. That's exactly the issue. And with sequestration we really don't come in balance until fiscal year 2020.

Mr. MCHUGH. If I may, there is also another consideration that goes beyond the base budget, Senator. As you know, at the height of funding we in the Army received \$121 billion in the fiscal year 2007 for wartime operations, OCO. Those are coming down dramatically as well. For example, in last year's agreed-upon budget there was some \$3 billion of base operations costs that the Army incurred that this Congress allowed us to pay out of OCO. So those are tens of billions of dollars that obviously when we come out of Afghanistan, while we hope we can receive 3 years for reset purposes, that money is gone, too.

Senator SESSIONS. We were told last year that you were having to take base money for OCO. Did that happen? Did you actually have to use some of your base—

Mr. MCHUGH. No. In fact, at the end of the day when OCO was approved, in fact Congress allowed us to pay for some of our base expenses out of OCO.

Senator SESSIONS. Good. I was afraid.

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, it's good until the money goes away, and then you're stuck with base operation expenses without the funding to pay for them.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for being here and thank you for your service and to your families for theirs in supporting the great work that you do. I would like to join many of my colleagues in expressing my deepest sympathies and concern for the Fort Hood community and most particularly the families of the victims in that shooting. Certainly this experience shows that no part of our country, no place, is immune from gun violence, and whether it is a small school in Sandy Hook, CT, or an urban community in New Haven or one of the great military installations in the world, Fort Hood, everybody shares in the tragedies that needless and senseless gun violence causes in this country today.

This experience I think also shows, as a number of my colleagues have observed, the importance of mental health care. Obviously, in this instance an investigation is ongoing. I'm not going to ask you to comment on that investigation or this particular individual. But one of the questions that I've been asked in these brief hours since this tragedy is whether there is sufficient screening—put aside the health care issue, which is preeminently important. Is there enough screening of individuals to know whether they are dangerous?

General, I know you've thought a lot about this issue and you've commented here. Perhaps you can make some observations on it.

General ODIERNO. Screening—first off, in fact in this case the individual was screened, was receiving counseling. So in a lot of ways the system worked. But obviously it didn't work completely, because in the end he made some decisions that obviously cost other people's lives.

We are—the amount of behavioral health and the screening that we do and how often we do it has increased significantly over the last 5 years, especially with the help of Congress to help us in giving us the ability to do that. We have increased by 150 percent our behavioral health specialists. So we have made some really good progress here.

But again, ultimately, as I said earlier, the issue—one of the issues we run into all the time is the sharing of information, trying to protect individual's rights, but also trying to ensure that we are providing them with the help necessary. We also, obviously, continue to combat the stigma of coming forward with behavior health issues. So those are the things we have to constantly and continually focus on.

We do quite significant screening today, but it doesn't mean it's right and it doesn't mean we can't improve it. We have to constantly evaluate this. This is something that we're going to have to deal with for a very long period of time, and that's the con-

sequence of 13 years war. So we're going to have to make sure that we have the systems in place to do this. We'll have to do constant, constant evaluations of this.

Mr. MCHUGH. May I add, Senator.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Please.

Mr. MCHUGH. First, I'd like to, if I may—I believe I may have misspoke earlier. I said our behavioral health encounters in the Army have increased by over 900 percent. I got enthusiastic there. It's over—

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I was going to ask you about that number.

Mr. MCHUGH. It's over 90 percent, still significant, the baseline being about 900,000, to almost double that. So we view that as a positive thing. As the Chief said, that's in no small measure due to the efforts we've made to bring on board significant increases in behavioral health specialists, provide them at a lower level so people feel more comfortable going forward.

The challenge I think we have, as we discussed earlier, is ensuring that we have the best possible tools to identify problems after those encounters and those assessments occur. We do pre-deployment, just prior to post-deployment, periodic at 30 days and at 90 days after deployment, behavioral health screening face to face, to try to make sure we see problems that may be emerging. And thereafter every soldier is screened each and every year.

Clearly, we may have missed something yesterday. We need to work very hard to understand what that might have been, and if we can learn a lesson and improve the process that's what we want to do.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I appreciate the comments that both of you have made and I have no question about your determination to improve and upgrade this system, which has bedeviled police departments and all kinds of other organizations with a similar, not the same but a similar, mission, that deal with firearms and the challenges that you do in even higher impact situations. So I don't minimize the challenges that you face.

I would respectfully suggest, since you mentioned earlier the call that you received from General Shinseki, that part of the strategy has to be to increase the compatibility of records-keeping. We have dwelled on this at length, as you know. I am sorry to once again belabor this point, but the sooner and better we can make those records systems completely interoperable and make the health care system completely seamless, the better it will be. So I just want to emphasize that point as strongly as I can.

If I may ask a question, since my time is very limited, about the Army Aviation Restructuring Initiative. I understand from my National Guard units—and this concerns me as head of the subcommittee that has jurisdiction—that under the ARI Black Hawk helicopters will be transferred from the Active component to the National Guard in very substantial numbers. The National Guard has expressed concern to me that they will receive older A&L model Black Hawks instead of the new M model, which would as a result require significant and right now nonexistent financial investment to modernize that force.

Is it true that the Guard will be receiving the A&L model aircraft?

General ODIERNO. They will receive—there won't be any As.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. No As.

General ODIERNO. No As. There will be a combination of L&Ms that they receive from the Active component.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Is there a plan to provide additional, even more modern Black Hawks?

General ODIERNO. Over time, because they have a higher percentage of our UH-60s now, as we continue to modernize the fleet they will become more modernized, just like the Active component. You know, the Active component has Ls and Ms as well.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Right.

General ODIERNO. So it will be the same level of modernization. That's what we like about it, because actually it increases our modernization levels over the long run.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

I very much appreciate your testimony and thank you again for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.

We during the Wounded Warriors Act, in that Act had a lot of provisions relative to increased interoperability, and you raise a very critical question. We're going to ask for the record an update on the interoperability of these records, because it's critically important. We thought we had really taken a major step and maybe we did, hopefully, with the Wounded Warriors legislation towards that goal. So we'll ask, Secretary, if you can give us an update on that question that Senator Blumenthal raised.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks very much.

Mr. MCHUGH. For the record?

Chairman LEVIN. For the record.

Mr. MCHUGH. Yes, we can do that, DOD and VA.

Chairman LEVIN. We'll ask both the VA and the DOD to give us that. As a matter of fact, this will be a good test. We'll ask you with General Shinseki to give us a joint report.

Mr. MCHUGH. Me personally? Not DOD, the Secretary?

Chairman LEVIN. I'm talking about the Army, have the Army and the VA give us a joint report signed by both of you on this question. That'll tell us something about interoperability.

Mr. MCHUGH. You're the chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. I'm sorry. I'm corrected. It should be DOD. Can you pass along our request to the DOD, or shall we make it directly?

Mr. MCHUGH. I'd be happy to.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. We'll make it directly, too, to take you off something of a hook on that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. If I may just add, Mr. Chairman, with very sincere thanks for that suggestion, that it be done within the next month. I don't want to put time pressure on you and I know I'm a little bit out of line in amending the chairman's suggestion.

Chairman LEVIN. No, not at all, not at all.

Mr. MCHUGH. I can't speak for the Department of Defense, but obviously this is something they've been working on very diligently.

Secretary Hagel immediately picked up the challenge from Secretary Panetta. So I'm sure they'll do it as quickly as they can.

Chairman LEVIN. And we will pass that directly to the Secretary of Defense and send you a copy so you can follow what we're doing.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To both of you and the Army family, I think all of us are heart-broken with Fort Hood going through this thing twice. The whole Nation is thinking about the Army today and particularly those at Fort Hood.

But as we move forward dealing with this problem, General O, do you think the 1992 DOD regulation prohibiting personal possession of firearms on installations should be revisited? What's your view about one way to deal with attacks like this is to have installations where people are armed and can fight back? What's your view of that?

General ODIERNO. I believe that we have our military police and others that are armed, and I believe that's appropriate. I think that I believe that that allows us the level of protection necessary.

Although we carry arms quite regularly overseas when we're deployed and do it on a regular basis, I believe back in the United States it's more appropriate that we leave it to that, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. I would just ask you to keep an open mind, because in a deployed environment everyone has a weapon. It's a pretty stressful place in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I think people have been responsible in the military. I remember my last visit to Afghanistan that you could not be served chow unless you presented your weapon. I think the reason is you want everyone to have their weapon because of the insider threat; is that correct?

General ODIERNO. That's correct, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. I think our military at home is very much a target of terrorism, but also this seems to be more of an individual who had a hard time coping. But Major Hasan clearly to me was an act of terrorism. I think you can expect more of this back here at home.

I just talked to Attorney General Holder and he said home-grown terrorism—and I'm not saying this was; it apparently wasn't—is getting to be a bigger threat. We've had several soldiers killed, I think one at a recruiting—outside, in New Jersey.

I just hope you'd revisit this policy, because I think our military members are very responsible with firearms and we need to really look at having more capability, not less, to deal with insider threats.

Now, as to the size of the Army, I know we have a \$17 trillion budget deficit. Admiral Mullen said something that got a lot of attention: The biggest threat to our national security is our deficit. There's some truth to that, but I'm not so much worried about our deficit blowing up the country as I am terrorists. I don't think people in South Carolina are as safe as they could be, given sequestration.

You have said very eloquently, General O, that—"I began my career in a hollow Army; I do not want to end my career in a hollow

Army.” If sequestration is allowed to continue beginning in 2016, will we have ended that career in a hollow Army?

General ODIERNO. From today through 2020 or so, until we get rebalanced based on taking the end strength to a level, our ability to sustain a level of readiness and modernization I believe begins to hollow the Army out.

Senator GRAHAM. So the answer would be yes. Thank you for your honesty. I think every Service Chief has told us that, and I hope we will act responsibly.

Now, within reason, knowing that money is always an object, would you agree that our military is being positioned based on budget concerns more than threat concerns, given sequestration?

General ODIERNO. It’s clear to me we’ve developed the defense strategic guidance, which was before sequestration. And sequestration does not allow us to meet that defense strategic guidance. So we’re driving down structure based on budget.

Senator GRAHAM. Right. The world’s just not safer. That’s not why we’re cutting the budget. We just decided for some reason to cut the budget in spite of the growing risk.

Within reason, what would be the appropriate size of the Army? And if you can’t give me an answer today, think about it. Given all the threats that are reasonable that we’re facing, and see if we can build a budget to support the Army based on the threats to the Nation. Do you have any ballpark figure?

General ODIERNO. I do. I’m on record, and I’ll repeat what I’ve said in the past. I believe in order to meet—I testified last year and the year before that in order to, at moderate risk, which I think is reasonable—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, let’s say—

General ODIERNO.—a force of 490, 350, and 202 in the Reserve component is appropriate for that.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, let’s say that we didn’t want to accept—we wanted to accept some risk, but less than moderate. What would you do?

General ODIERNO. Then I would say—I believe the floor is 450,000, 335,000 in the Guard, and—

Senator GRAHAM. No, I want to go the other way. I want to have a budget that gives us minimum risk.

General ODIERNO. I see.

Senator GRAHAM. Call me old-fashioned, but I think that’s the number one job of the Federal Government.

General ODIERNO. I have not—I have not thought my way through that. But for many years most of us believed that the right size of the Army is somewhere around 500 to 520,000.

Senator GRAHAM. That would be the optimum Army given what we face as a Nation?

General ODIERNO. Right.

Senator GRAHAM. Could you tell me the difference in terms of cost, not today but over time—you don’t have to do it today—between high risk, moderate risk, and the optimum Army?

General ODIERNO. We can lay that out for you.

Senator GRAHAM. What I want the committee to look at is, in terms of our budget deficit, how much—if we went to the high risk, could we remotely balance the budget? I think the amount of

money involved is going to be within our power to gather if we could replace sequestration.

Now, about the A-10. The A-10s being retired because you've got to make hard choices budgetwise, is that correct?

General ODIERNO. That's what I believe. That's why I believe the Air Force is doing it.

Senator GRAHAM. The F-35 comes on line, if everything goes perfectly, in 2021, I believe; is that correct?

General ODIERNO. Around that time.

Senator GRAHAM. So for \$3.5 billion we could keep the A-10 in the inventory for a few more years and wouldn't have a gap. Does that make sense?

General ODIERNO. I would just say it would allow us to keep the A-10 for that amount of money. That additional money would allow the Air Force to make a decision to keep the A-10, but that would be, obviously, up to them.

Senator GRAHAM. Do both of you still believe that military commanders should bear the responsibility for dealing with sexual harassment problems in the military?

General ODIERNO. Absolutely, Senator.

Mr. MCHUGH. Absolutely.

Senator GRAHAM. John, do you think we're on the right track of getting a handle on this problem?

Mr. MCHUGH. I think as we look at the kinds of indicators that we normally use to track these reports particularly have grown significantly. We view that as positive. As an internal to that, a good number of those reports are for years where something happened before the soldier, usually a female but not always, the soldier even joined the military. That shows us they have increasing confidence.

We obviously have a long ways to go. None of us are ready to declare victory. But we are doing—the Chief and I focus on this every day. We had a meeting just last week, a rally in the Pentagon to kick off Sexual Awareness Month, the month of April. In everything we do and say, including our published priorities, sexual assault and harassment is my number one priority, and I know that everyone in the Army believes that and is working on it.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

My time is up, but in 10 seconds, General O, could you tell us what happens if we get Afghanistan wrong? If it falls apart, what's going to come our way?

General ODIERNO. Well, as I said, I mentioned earlier, ungoverned territory or instability will allow those to exploit that, elements such as al Qaeda and others, which would then allow portions of Afghanistan and any other area that's ungoverned and not properly secure to threaten the United States. And that remains a concern.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the witnesses for this important testimony today.

I'm going to ask a question about the long-term stress on the Army of 13 years of war. We see these shooting incidents, two at Fort Hood, one at the Navy Yard, one in Virginia recently at Naval Station Norfolk. They pose some mental health challenges. They

pose base security challenges. When we hear the testimony about sexual assault in the military, when we hear testimony about military suicides—General Amos was here a couple weeks ago talking about instances where Marines acted in disrespectful manners that he's having to deal with.

I view all these issues as kind of connected to potentially—they're sort of organizational stress issues. We've not had a war that's been 13 years of continuous warfare before. Talk to me about long-term stress of 13 years of war and the effect that you see in the Army and what we need to be doing to deal with that, please?

General ODIERNO. Thank you, Senator. Obviously, in the Army we've had 2.4 million deployments. Some are multiple deployments, but 2.4 million soldiers have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 13 years. 500,000 of those have deployed multiple times. So what that means is there is stress on the force, stress on families. There's stress on individuals. It's the first time we've done this with an All-Volunteer Force and we have to understand this.

This is one of the things—so what are we seeing? We're seeing increased alcoholism. We're seeing—we had an initial increase in divorce rates. That settled down. We're seeing an increase in those who have behavioral health issues that we have to help them with. That's the cost of this.

One of the things I don't talk a lot about when we talk about risk, though, is as we make it smaller, in the future if we have to deploy these forces it's going to put a significant risk on them because of the pure numbers. That's one of my worries, and that's one of the risk calculations I make, is what's the impact this reduction has on a smaller force and what will be the impact on our leaders and our soldiers.

You know, we don't talk a lot about the impact this has on our leaders. Our leaders are the ones who have multiple, multiple, multiple deployments and have the stress of leading, and they've handled it incredibly well. But they also have stress on them as well as we move forward. And we have to consider all of this in the future. We have to have programs in place to deal with it. We have to make sure we understand this as we continue to develop the Army, and we have to consider that as we adjudicate risk for the future force.

Senator KAINE. So in this time of really unprecedented, in the sense that we don't have a historical precedent of a 13-year war, unprecedented stress, we ought to be doing what we can to make it easier. But wouldn't you say sequestration, budget uncertainty, that's a pretty significant additional stressor on top of a stress that is already an unprecedented one.

General ODIERNO. I agree, Senator.

Senator KAINE. I just have to say, I don't know exactly the context under which Admiral Mullen made the statement that our debt was our largest national security threat. I just have got to say I could not disagree more. I've done an awful lot of budgets as a mayor and a governor. I understand surpluses, I understand deficits, I understand debt, I understand ratios of debt to GDP that are acceptable. We're a little on the high side by a couple of percentage points. It's completely within our control to deal with it.

The national security challenges we have, they're the most—debt that we can control doesn't match up to an Iranian nuclear threat. Debt that we can control doesn't match up to a Korean nuclear, North Korean nuclear threat. Debt that we can control doesn't match up to the proliferation and mutation of al Qaeda affiliates all over the world.

I think we need to get out of our head that debt is our biggest national security challenge and sort of read the newspaper every morning.

It is my hope, Mr. Chairman, that working on the budget, working through the NDAA, that we'll be able to do in 2016 and forward what we did in 2014 and 2015. The President's budget only asks for partial sequester relief. The request—if we do what has been requested, everything that's been requested, we will have lifted half of the burden of sequester, actually slightly less than half of the burden of soldier, from the military. They will have absorbed more than half. I'm not sure I would have made such a reasonable request.

You're trying to meet us halfway. You're asking for us to give you half relief, essentially. It's my hope that we'll do that in 2016 and out.

One question only, and that is—I've been asking this in all the posture hearings—talk to us about, 1 year in, the integration of women fully into all MOSs, the work that's being done in the Army and how you're approaching that, and give us a 1-year status report? Thank you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Senator. First of all, to this point, it's going very, very well. The Army has through the Department of Defense noticed Congress of our intent right now to open up some 33,000 positions across the Army. It really does take a very broad-based perspective, broad-based approach to various jobs that women are interested in doing.

Even in our more challenging MOSs, the Sapper course, our combat engineers, they're attending the schools. They're doing extraordinarily well. In fact, over the last 3 years women have graduated at the same rate as men, a pretty remarkable statement as to the capabilities of these soldiers, both male and female.

Perhaps most important of all, we're going through a very methodical evaluation of our physical standards. People are in some quarters suggesting we're doing this to lower standards to help women into the ranks. That's simply not true. What we're trying to do, and we'd be doing it even if we were an all-male military, is trying to match required physical skills with those kinds of actions that you're expected to carry out in your particular job. We want every soldier to be postured for success and to have the physical as well as the mental capabilities to do the job that they're assigned to.

That is a very methodical process, led by our Training and Doctrine Command. All of us would wish it would go further, but to do it right it needs to work its way out.

We have a full report due on this at the end of the year to the Secretary of Defense, who will in turn relay that report to all of you. But from the Army perspective, including our SOF units, our 160th Aviation, it's going very well.

Senator Kaine. Great. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Levin. Thank you very much, Senator Kaine.

Senator King has graciously yielded to Senator Hagan.

Senator Hagan. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Levin and Senator King.

I too want to express my deep concern, my heartfelt prayers and condolences, to what's taking place at Fort Hood now, and particularly to all the families and all the servicemembers, men and women, and families on that base. All of North Carolina is wishing those same thoughts and prayers.

I did want to make one statement on the 440th Airlift Wing. I am deeply concerned with an Air Force proposal that would remove all of the C-130s stationed at Pope Army Airfield at Fort Bragg, which would leave no aircraft at the home of the Airborne. The airborne mission's probably the best example of the importance of joint operations and it's critical to ensure input from all stakeholders before significant decisions are made.

Secretary McHugh and General Odierno, I want you to know that I'm committed to ensuring the readiness of the 82nd Airborne, which is the heart of our global response force and our Special Operations Forces and our other units at Fort Bragg. We can chat about that later.

But my first question I wanted to ask about maintaining our technological superiority. In your written testimony, you stated that if sequestration persisted in 2016 and beyond it would not be until fiscal year 2020 to 2023 that the Army would begin reinvesting in the modernization programs to upgrade aging fleets.

I chair the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and to me that is a real concern. Recently I held a classified briefing with Defense Secretary Kendall on military technology superiority.

Secretary McHugh and General Odierno, first thanks again for your service to our country. Thank you. To the extent that you can speak about this in an open session, what risk will the Army be assuming if you're forced to really degrade much of your modernization programs due to this long-term sequestration that we've all been talking about this morning?

Mr. McHugh. Well, thank you for reading the submitted document and for focusing on a very, very important passage. This is an area that we deeply concern ourselves about. It is one of the things, the very hard things, we had to do to ensure as best we can that, for the threats that arise today, we're as prepared as possible to send soldiers out into harm's way to meet them.

It is not the kind of cut that we would prefer to take, for the simple reason that, as you noted, Senator, the threats and the capabilities of our potential adversaries in the future are evolving very rapidly as well. Heretofore very, very basic terrorist organizations are developing key capabilities. One of the great advantages that the U.S. Army has enjoyed, particularly over the last 13 years, was the best equipment, the most modern equipment. That didn't just happen. We just don't go buy it at a box store. It has to be developed. And our S&T accounts have been severely hit and under sequestration would be a mere percentage of what we view as the rational investment level.

It will have a significant impact on our S&T national base that I know you're concerned about, but also clearly on the availability of the most modern equipment in that future battlefield, not when it arises, but where it arises.

Senator HAGAN. I'm also concerned about the talent that we need to have to be sure that we have the top talent. If we put this off years down the road, we're going to lose what I think would be an institutional capability that's not going to sit around and twiddle their thumbs.

Mr. MCHUGH. Exactly. We speak a lot about the industrial base, as we should, and we talk about highly skilled workers. It is absolutely the same kind of challenge in our research and development S&T fields. These are obviously very highly trained, very highly educated, and in our case thankfully very high skilled individuals, that will go find other things to do if we are unable to sustain them and give them work they find interesting and challenging and work that obviously will greatly benefit men and women in uniform.

Senator HAGAN. It really is a problem, because if you wait years down the road the catch-up will be way too long to be competitive—

Mr. MCHUGH. You may be too late.

Senator HAGAN.—on the front end.

I know that we just had one question on the new roles for women in the military. I understand that during the last year the Army opened approximately 6,000 positions in 26 different brigade combat teams, select aviation specialties, and special operations aviation, and then approximately 3600 field artillery positions. I also understand the Army anticipates opening an additional 33,000 previously closed positions during fiscal year 2014.

Can you expand on that? I know those are huge numbers and that's a big transition. Then, with these openings, how many combat-related positions are still closed to women, and how is the transition going?

General ODIERNO. Senator, thank you for the question. We are continuing to open up positions. As you just said, on 17 January through the Secretary of Defense we informed Congress we opened up 33,000. Those are really occupations already open to women, but they are serving at different levels. For example, they're now able to serve in infantry battalions and armor battalions, and that's where all those positions are opening.

Senator HAGAN. And now they're getting credit for that.

General ODIERNO. Right, that's right. Yes, exactly.

So what we're doing now, the next step is we're now looking at—we're doing our physical demands study in TRADOC to move towards opening all positions to women. There's a couple things we have done. We now have our first female soldiers that's completed training on our Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and they are now serving as platoon leaders in these jobs. That's a new opening.

We are doing our physical demands study that is looking at the rest of our artillery, armor, and infantry positions. That will help us as we go forward and report out in the end of 2015 to opening all of these positions, as we've been requested to by the legislation.

We're also conducting a significant integration study on how we would properly integrate them as we move forward. So what you'll

see in the next year or so is the results starting to come out of these studies that we're doing. We just finished a fairly comprehensive test out at Fort Stewart in the Third Infantry Division, testing infantry skills and other things as we develop the standards. We had both women and men conducting those experiments.

So I believe we have a comprehensive effort to gather the data which will enable us to make the right decisions moving forward. We anticipate that we will begin to open up more and more and more positions to women as we move forward.

Senator HAGAN. One question that arises when you're saying you're conducting these standards. Are the men already trained and the women are not? How are you looking at the actual training program?

General ODIERNO. Yes. It's a physical demands test, so it has nothing to do with training. It has to do with physical abilities. So in other words, it doesn't count—we're not accounting for can you do something quicker, faster. It really is about testing your physical abilities to do it. So level of capability does not play into it.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator King.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator KING.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to begin by making a modest suggestion. One of the advantages of being the last person in the line is that one gets to listen to all the other questions and comments. I've been coming to these hearings now for a year, almost a year and a half, and the word that's been used more often than any other single word is "sequester."

It occurred to me as I was listening to the questions on both sides of the aisle that are deeply concerned about the impact on sequester on the Army and on the Department of Defense, perhaps the Armed Services Committee could lead a discussion to find—to lead a bipartisan project to find a solution to our sequester and budget problem. It's a bipartisan group, well respected group, and I think most importantly we have, I think, a more intimate acquaintance with the real effects of sequester than perhaps any other committee. We have three members of the Budget Committee on this committee.

I commend to you the idea of convening us as a group to talk about the solution to sequester, because one of the frustrating things to me is that around here we often bemoan problems like sequester, but they don't seem to be—they don't seem to get resolved. We now have a little breathing space because of the bipartisan budget agreement. But I'm just afraid if we just keep talking about it we're not going to get anything done.

So I make that suggestion to you.

Chairman LEVIN. I very much welcome that suggestion, as somebody who has spent a huge amount of my time recently, the last couple years, struggling with this issue and suggesting an alternative which so far has not achieved real mass in terms of support because it involves at least in part revenues to address the problem. So I'm very, very sympathetic to what you're saying and I will

talk to the ranking member, Senator Inhofe, about how we might see if there's enough interest on his side.

I've already talked to one of our colleagues, a Republican colleague on his side—I won't identify him because he should identify himself—who raised a very, very similar suggestion just this morning to what you have, that we as a committee and we as individual Senators are in a position, because we've seen the impacts and we see the looming impacts, by the way—we've seen the 2015 impacts, but also the fiscal year 2016 impacts, where this sequester comes back in its full bloom, in its full lack of glory.

So we are in a position, as Senator King mentions, that perhaps, except for the Budget Committee, no other committee, no other single committee, can see, because we have about half of the sequester falls on the military. No other committee is in that position. The rest of it, the non-defense discretionary, is divided up among the committees.

So I'm very much—I welcome the suggestion and I will talk to Senator Inhofe and see what he thinks, so that we might be able, either formally or informally, to get our committee members together and start noodling this very, very important issue.

Thank you.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Odierno, to go from the broadest to one of the more narrow issues, as you know, the budget proposes a series of changes involving military pay raise, the base allowance, commissary subsidies, TRICARE. The pressure here is going to be to wait. There's this national—there's a commission on compensation that's supposed to report about a year from now, and I know that everybody's going to say let's put off this discussion until that commission reports.

What's the down side of waiting?

General ODIERNO. Well, it's our budget figures in 2015 and beyond. 2015 is really, it's the savings that we garner from those proposals immediately. It probably impacts 2015 more, because by the time 2016 and 2017 we supposedly would have some output from them. So we'd have to figure out how we make up for the reductions that we booked based on our recommendations for the changes in compensation if we had to wait.

I don't have the exact number of what it is in 2015. So I'd have to tell you what that specific impact is based on the number. I know the number grows as it gets to the out years and it becomes more significant.

Senator KING. We had a personnel hearing and the number that we were given was \$2.1 billion for year one and almost \$30 billion over 5 years. So I think that needs to be borne in mind, that every year that we put off those decisions we have to find that money somewhere else.

General ODIERNO. That's exactly right. The Army's portion of that is around 40 percent, because it's based on the number of personnel that you have.

Senator KING. General Odierno, by my count you've been a part of two previous military drawdowns, first in the seventies following Vietnam and in the nineties after the Cold War. What lessons do

you take from those experiences at different phases of your career that could be applied to the current circumstance?

General ODIERNO. In the seventies I was probably too young to understand what was going on and really have a grasp. But what I remember from the seventies, as I talked about, was the hollowness of the Army that I came into, the lack of training, the lack of resources, the lack of ability for us to properly train our units to meet the missions that they had at the time. That was very clear to me.

We saw that change in the eighties as investment increased inside the Army. It made a significant difference on morale. It made a significant difference on our abilities and our confidence. You could even argue that at some point along the way the American people had lost confidence in their military, which was rebuilt in the eighties and nineties.

In the nineties, what I learned in the nineties is we took our personnel out so quickly it left significant holes in the force, that took us 10 to 15 years to recover from in terms of properly allocating and properly managing the downsizing. That was not done—that was forced on it because of the amount of people we had to take down.

But the difference between those years and now was the sheer capacity. Back then we had almost a million-man Active Army in the nineties, which was brought down initially to 750, and then 550. So what happens is now that we're getting so small, each cut is significant, has significantly more impact on the ability, because we are really getting small enough now where it really means something, where in the past you could argue maybe it didn't.

To me that's the biggest difference as we look forward to this. We have to make sure we're not hollow and we have to make sure we maintain the capacity so we have the ability to respond and deter.

Senator KING. A couple of brief observations and questions. Senator Kaine and I and Senator Levin and I were both in the Middle East at different times over the last six months or so. One of the things we noticed was the very high value of our training and exchange programs with officers in other countries. I think that program, it's a relatively low cost, high return, because—I don't want to overstate it, but the respect and admiration and positive feelings of those officers for the United States after they had come here and had training here was palpable.

I think I'd like you to comment on the value you see of those programs.

General ODIERNO. Two things. One, it goes two ways. First is the value of us sending our officers to foreign countries to train and the influence that they have, the influence they have as they interact, frankly, it helps them tremendously when they get to hear different viewpoints and how people view us, frankly. That helps us as we look at developing strategies and capabilities in the future.

The second piece is when they send them here and what they gain by interacting with us on a daily basis. We are expanding that program in the Army. We have expanded the number of officers that come to our War College. We're expanding the number that we are sending to other countries. We've been very cognizant in

that decision. For me, that's critical for us, especially as we operate in this very complex interrelated world that we have today.

Senator KING. That's a pretty low-cost program.

General ODIERNO. It's very low, it is. You get a lot for the money that you spend on it.

Senator KING. Just a final comment, again based on these trips and one that I took just a week ago that was on a naval vessel. You have amazing people. When I got back from the trip with Chairman Levin, my wife said: What was your overall impression? We were in some pretty interesting areas, lots of experiences, lots of inputs. But my overall impression was the quality of people we have working for us, particularly the young people, who are working under difficult circumstances, who are—many of them haven't had raises in a long time. They have to deal with the threats of furloughs.

And I had exactly the same experience 2 weeks ago on this naval vessel. It was the enlisted men, the chiefs, and the officers of course. But the young people that we have working for us who are patriotic and idealistic are fantastic. I often feel that we don't—we don't pay them as much respect as I think they deserve for what they're doing.

General ODIERNO. I'll just make one quick comment, Senator. That's why I still love to wear this uniform. It's because of them and what I see every day and the sacrifices they make and how dedicated they are. I try to tell everyone that there are times when people are worried about this generation. I'm not worried about this generation. We've got great young men and women out there that dedicate themselves to a lot of different things, and that's what inspires me every day to continue to serve, sir.

Senator KING. I have to tell you that the experience that inspired me was to interview—was going through the process of the young people applying for the military academies back in Maine and seeing the quality of people that want to serve our country. It's reassuring for sure.

Gentlemen, thank you very much and thank you for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator King.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary McHugh, General Odierno, I know you've had a very long morning and so I just have a brief question. But before I ask that, I just wanted to express my condolences to both of you, to everyone in the Army, over the tragedy at Fort Hood. I know that we all share in mourning the victims and offering condolences to their families.

I wanted to ask both of you about a hearing that I held yesterday in the Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee, where Assistant Secretary Hammack—we were discussing the whole issue of BRAC. She commented—and I'm going to paraphrase, but we have the quote if you would like to see it. But she—to paraphrase what she said, it's that if the Army, I assume DOD, can't get the authorization for BRAC in 2017, that you would go ahead—you might go ahead and list some bases for closure in your budget request because of the concerns about the ability to continue to run those bases in the way that they should be run.

While I appreciate the budget constraints that Defense has at this time because of sequestration and certainly think we should do everything possible to roll back those automatic cuts, I found it troubling that the military would go forward without working in conjunction with Congress. So I wonder if you could respond to that?

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Senator. I obviously didn't get a chance to review personally Secretary Hammack's comments, but let me tell you the Army's view. Having gone through three base closure rounds as a member of Congress, I understand how difficult they are. I also understand that the way in which we need to pursue that and the way in which we realize the most savings is working with Congress, particularly through a base closure process that is endorsed in law.

You have, this Congress has, provided us certain flexibilities to, short of a BRAC, make decisions on excess facility and excess structure shedding, and we'll certainly look at the authorities that you have provided, the Congress has provided us in law. But in terms of an actual base closure round, certainly in my view, my position, that will only occur should this Congress give us the authority to do that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I very much appreciate that response, and I know we're awaiting some information about the European infrastructure and what can be done there. So I look forward to receiving that. But I very much appreciate your answer. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Shaheen. Thank you for raising that subject. I had not heard of that comment until you just reported it.

I would just tell you, Mr. Secretary, that if our Army or any of the other services proposes something in the budget which is not compliant with the BRAC process, in other words front-running the BRAC process, it will be doubly difficult for the military, maybe triply difficult, to get a BRAC process going.

I supported the last BRAC process, by the way. I know how difficult it is to get a BRAC process. But it will set any possibility of such a process back many, many years if there's an effort to obviate the law, and I think that's basically what you just told Senator Shaheen and I very much welcome that assurance as well.

You have mentioned—I only have one additional quick question of you, General Odierno. You mentioned individual rights a number of times when it comes to the mental health counseling question. It's a sensitivity which we all would appreciate. But what do you mean by that? Is this the inability of a counselor, for instance, to talk to a commander about what a mental health counselor had heard from a soldier? Or is it something different?

General ODIERNO. It's partly that, but it's also, for example, if a soldier has mental health counseling at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and he moves to Fort Carson, CO, sometimes we have difficulty moving that information with them because of patient—HIPPA, frankly. So that's the concern.

We are trying to develop systems that enable us to do some of that, but it is difficult.

Chairman LEVIN. Isn't that a matter of mental health records being interoperable? In other words, can't we shift mental health like medical records?

General ODIERNO. But the issue is the medical records would be available to the physicians. I'm talking about commander's knowledge. So in other words, it's about the company commander at Fort Bragg knew this, but the company commander at Fort Carson does not know that this soldier had previous problems.

Mr. MCHUGH. We had a flavor of that with Major Nidal Hasan, in that the receiving commander was not aware of some of the disciplinary issues that he had, some of the academic issues that he had, that over time added to his challenges.

So part of the problem is HIPPA and who has access to what kind of medical records, behavioral health records. Part of it is our own regulatory process, and that it's the age-old culture of the military, not just the Army, that you're given a new start with every permanent change of station. We've made a lot of progress in making the relevant information aware and available to receiving commanders, but we still have some challenges on what we're allowed to do legally.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Let us know if there's anything we should be doing in that area legislatively.

Apparently we do not have any additional questions, I believe. We thank you very, very much.

Mr. MCHUGH. Senator, could I—

Chairman LEVIN. I'm sorry?

Mr. MCHUGH. I said my respects to Senator Chambliss. The Chief opened with his comments; I want to close. We will miss you deeply. I will miss you personally. You have been an amazing and inspiring leader. The people of your great State have been blessed and we have equally been blessed and the men and women of the Army have always appreciated and respected your leadership and your contributions. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Secretary McHugh. Thank you, General Odierno. Thank you both for your very personal accolades for me. It means a great deal to me to receive them from people of your quality and your character and your caliber and your leadership. We will treasure those comments from both of you.

I'm sorry. General?

General ODIERNO. I just want to clarify something, Senator, if I could.

Chairman LEVIN. Sure, just as long as it wasn't the accolade for me. [Laughter.]

General ODIERNO. No, it was not the accolade, no. I double that, sir.

It has to do with, I was asked several questions about risk and other things. I want to be very clear, as I was in the written statement, that I have defined risk very clearly. At 450, I've defined risk as significant in executing the defense strategic guidance; and at 420 I have said we cannot implement the defense strategic guidance. I want to make sure that's on the record because by the questions I was asked that might not have been as clear. But I'm not backing away from my written statement. I just wanted to clarify that for the record.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much.

Now, there's two or three things we've asked. One is, we'll ask the Secretary of Defense and the Veterans Affairs Secretary, and that's General Shinseki, about interoperability of medical records. Staff, please, if you can try to get a joint letter from myself and Senator Inhofe on that, it would be appreciated.

In terms of the restructuring of the Army aviation, you're going to get us the budget, the basis of your \$12 billion Future Years Defense Program savings for that, so we can understand it.

I think with that we will stand adjourned, with our thanks.

[Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the committee adjourned.]