

**NOMINATIONS OF ADM WILLIAM E. GORTNEY,  
USN, FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE  
OF ADMIRAL AND TO BE COMMANDER,  
NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE  
COMMAND; GEN JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA,  
FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF  
GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, INTER-  
NATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE/  
COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES, AFGHANISTAN;  
AND LTG JOSEPH L. VOTEL, USA, TO BE  
GENERAL AND COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS COMMAND**

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**THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2014**

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Udall, Manchin, Gillibrand, Donnelly, Kaine, King, Inhofe, McCain, Sessions, Ayotte, Fischer, Graham, and Cruz.

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

Majority staff members present: Richard W. Fieldhouse, professional staff member; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Gerald J. Leeling, general counsel; Mariah K. McNamara, special assistant to the staff director; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: John A. Bonsell, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Steven M. Barney, minority counsel; William S. Castle, minority general counsel; and Ambrose R. Hock, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Brendan J. Sawyer and Alexandra M. Hathaway.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn A. Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Jason D. Rauch, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Christopher R. Howard, assistant to Senator Udall; Paul C. Hutton IV, assistant to Senator Manchin; Moran Banai, as-

sistant to Senator Gillibrand; Rachel H. Lipsey and David J. Park, assistants to Senator Donnelly; Sergio Aguirre and Karen E. Courington, assistants to Senator Kaine; Stephen M. Smith, assistant to Senator King; Joel E. Starr, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Christian D. Brose, assistant to Senator McCain; Lenwood A. Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Tyler Stephens, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Bradley L. Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte; Peter W. Schirtzinger, assistant to Senator Fisher; Craig R. Abele, assistant to Senator Graham; Charles W. Prosch, assistant to Senator Blunt; and Victoria Coates and Jeff Murray, assistants to Senator Cruz.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN**

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

The committee meets today to consider the nominations of Admiral William Gortney to be Commander, U.S. Northern Command and Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command; General John Campbell to be Commander, International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, and Commander, U.S. Forces, Afghanistan; and Lieutenant General Joseph Votel to be Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, SOCOM.

Welcome to all of you and to each of you, and we thank you for your many, many years of great service to our Nation, for your willingness to continue to serve in these positions of huge responsibility. We thank you and your family members. Our senior military officers are asked to undertake long hours and immense workloads, and we know, as you do, that your success in these roles would not be possible without the support of your families. And you please feel free to introduce those members who are with you today when it comes to be your turn.

All three nominees have impressive records of service and are well qualified for the positions to which they have been nominated. Admiral Gortney has been the Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, including U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command; the Director of the Joint Staff at the Pentagon; and the Commander of U.S. Naval Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet.

General Campbell has been the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army; Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army; and Commander of the 101st Airborne Division in Afghanistan.

General Votel has been Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command; Deputy Commander of the Joint IED Defeat Organization; and Chief of Staff of the Special Operations Command.

Our nominees will assume some of the most demanding positions in our military. Admiral Gortney's NORTHCOM responsibilities will include defense of the homeland and supporting civil authorities in case of natural and manmade disasters. Admiral Gortney will also be dual-hatted as the Commander of NORAD, our binational command with Canada, which has the mission of providing aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning for North America.

General Campbell will assume his position in a time of significant transition in Afghanistan. He will be tasked with implementing the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops by the end of the year, while simultaneously supporting counterterrorism operations

and sustaining the mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Security Forces as they continue to assume responsibility for their nation's security.

The current political uncertainty in Afghanistan stemming from the allegations of election fraud threatens to derail significant gains made throughout the country. The two presidential candidates in Afghanistan have stated publicly and to me personally last Sunday that a comprehensive audit of the election results is needed—they both agree on that—and that they will abide by the results of such an audit. Regardless whether the candidates can agree on the details of the audit process, it is the duty of the Afghan election commissions to move forward to identify and eliminate fraudulent ballots so that they can announce a credible election result. General Campbell, I would appreciate hearing your views on the ongoing political events and what impacts they could have on the security situation in Afghanistan.

General Votel will assume the helm of a force that has sustained an exceptionally high operational tempo for nearly 13 years of war. As we draw down our forces in Afghanistan, we will need to give particular attention to the role of special forces and their continued ability to carry out the counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan. General, I will look forward to hearing from you how you will address these challenges while also ensuring that the men and women of the special operations community are not shouldering an undue burden.

I want to thank our nominees again for being with us, for your great service to our Nation. We look forward to your confirmation.

And I will now call on Senator Inhofe.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE**

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank all three of you for the time that you gave me and the rest of us up here at the dais.

General Campbell, as the Commander, you are going to be tasked with overseeing the mission in Afghanistan. Certainly General Dunford has done a great job. It is just a serious thing that we are dealing with over there.

The recent presidential elections have been marred by allegations of widespread voter fraud. For example, in the—let us find the right one, the province here. Anyway, they went from 17,000 votes that were cast in the first election. It jumped to 170,000 in the runoff. Then, keeping in mind that Ghani's force and influence probably is greater in the rural areas, during the last election—this is unprecedented. Everyone up here has gone through elections, and we do not remember a time that you have a larger percentage of turnout in a rural area than you do in an urban area. And yet, it was 30 to 1. So you know that is wrong. So you got voter fraud.

And I am very much concerned about the perception of the people in Afghanistan if this is not cleared out. So we are going to be really pushing hard to get an audit in that case. I have talked to you about this, and I am sure you agree with that.

I am also troubled by the President's plan to draw down our forces based on arbitrary timelines instead of the best advice of military commanders and the facts on the ground. The President

tried the same policy in Iraq in 2011, and I fear—I hope we are not doomed to make the same mistake again.

General Votel, contrary to the claims of some that al Qaeda is on the run, it is clear they are now operating in more countries and control more territory than ever before. Iraq and Syria have become the largest terrorist safe haven in the world and are serving as a breeding ground for the next generation of jihadis. It is only a matter of time before the thousands of foreigners who traveled to join the fight will return back home to places like Africa, battle-hardened and ready to perform.

Admiral Gortney, as Commander of NORTHCOM, you will be accountable for one of the most solemn responsibilities of our Government. That is defending the homeland. That is what most people are concerned with, and that is what has got to be the top priority. And I am concerned and want to hear your views on the growing ballistic missile threat from North Korea and Iran and the effectiveness of our homeland missile defense system to protect us against the improving capabilities of our adversaries. North Korea continues to develop delivery systems for its nuclear weapons arsenal, and public intelligence reports still assess that Iran could have the means to deliver a nuclear weapon by 2015. In fact, our intelligence back prior to 2010 said that they would have the ability to produce a weapon and a delivery system by 2015. Well, that is on us now. So that has got to be the major concern that we all have at this time.

So I look forward to hearing from the nominees and resolving these very difficult problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Let me call first on Admiral Gortney.

**STATEMENT OF ADM WILLIAM E. GORTNEY, USN, FOR RE-APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF ADMIRAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND/COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND**

Admiral GORTNEY. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is a distinct honor and privilege to appear before you today.

I would like to thank the President for nominating me and thank Secretary Hagel and Chairman Dempsey for the trust they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to serving as the Commander, U.S. Northern Command and Commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

I also thank the Senate Armed Services Committee for their work and their support to our service members and their family.

I am joined this morning by my wife, and with your permission, I would like to introduce her. Sherry and I have known each other since high school in Orange Park, Florida, and this past Saturday we celebrated our 34th anniversary. She is active in the education and mentoring of Navy spouses who, along with our family, are the very stitches that hold the cloth of our Nation together. Her dedication to our family and sailors and marines is simply remarkable. I would not be here today without her.

Mr. Chairman, over the last few years, my good friend, General Chuck Jacoby, has led the U.S. NORTHCOM and NORAD teams with distinction. He has set the gold standard for combatant command leadership. If confirmed, I look forward to building upon his terrific efforts.

I would like to make two simple but important points before receiving your questions.

First, working hand in hand with Congress, there is no greater responsibility for a military officer than to defend the Nation that we call home. The Commander of U.S. NORTHCOM is charged with being our Nation's last line of defense and providing support to Federal, State, and local levels when the American people are in their greatest need. I view these missions as a sacred trust and that, if confirmed, I will faithfully and passionately execute them.

Second, cooperation is paramount to the mission of NORTHCOM. I have spent a significant part of my career building joint and international coalitions to solve the challenging problems that confront us all. These experiences have prepared me for engaging with our close friends and neighbors in Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas. And of course, this is a team sport, and therefore, if confirmed, I will work closely with the combatant commanders, the service chiefs, our citizen soldiers in the National Guard and Reserve, the Governors of our States, and our teammates at the Department of Homeland Security and other inter-agencies. If confirmed, I also look forward to working together with the members of this committee to identify and take action on the tasks required to defend our homeland and provide support to civil authorities.

Thank you again for this opportunity, and thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Inhofe, the members of this committee, and the highly talented members of your staff for the work you all do every day to provide our men and women in uniform the things they need to do our Nation's bidding. And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Gortney follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Admiral.  
General Campbell?

**STATEMENT OF GEN JOHN F. CAMPBELL, USA, FOR RE-APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE/COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES, AFGHANISTAN**

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir. Good morning. Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I appreciate your support and your commitment to our service members, our families, and our veterans, and I am truly honored and humbled that the President has nominated me to command the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan.

I would also like to thank Secretary of Defense Hagel and Chairman Dempsey for the trust and confidence they have given me in supporting my nomination.

I want to acknowledge General Joe Dunford for the great work he has done over the last year and a half and his personal sacrifice

for our Nation's efforts in Afghanistan. I also want to thank Joe's wife Ellen who has been a true source of inspiration and support of her husband.

I must acknowledge my wife. She could not be here today. She is recovering from knee surgery. She is actually up at Walter Reed with my daughter who had surgery yesterday. But I want to thank her for her strength and sacrifice throughout our 30 years of marriage, for being a great mom to our two children, and for her tireless advocacy for our military families. I could not be where I am today without her, and she has had an immeasurable affect on so many of our soldiers and their families.

Our Nation has been at war in Afghanistan for nearly 13 years. This conflict has defined much of my career and I am honored to be considered to lead during the next important phase.

In 2003, I deployed to Afghanistan while I commanded the 1st Brigade at 82nd Airborne Division when we only had one brigade in the country.

I returned to Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011 in command of the 101st Airborne Division in Regional Command East. In this capacity, I led 30,000 U.S. allied troopers in 14 provinces. I saw firsthand the incredible sacrifice of our soldiers and of our families. Unfortunately, I also had hundreds of heroes that paid the ultimate sacrifice under my command. These warriors and all those that have deployed to Afghanistan have had an enormous impact by bringing hope to the people of that Nation and by denying al Qaeda their favorite sanctuary. And I am absolutely committed to completing this mission.

As we transition to Resolute Support mission and draw down our forces, there will be many challenges, but I have confidence in the strength of the Afghan National Security Forces. They have held strong, despite significant during in the 2013 and the current 2014 fighting season. They have succeeded in securing the recent election, and I am confident in their ability to remain firm through the upcoming political transfer of power.

I also have faith in the strength of the coalition that has held together over this long conflict. I am committed to working closely with our NATO members. If confirmed, I will proudly lead our service men and women in Afghanistan.

I thank you again for your steadfast and generous support of supporting our men and women of the U.S. military. I look forward to working closely with this committee, and if confirmed, I anxiously await arriving in Afghanistan. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Campbell follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General.

General Votel?

**STATEMENT OF LTG JOSEPH L. VOTEL, USA, TO BE GENERAL  
AND COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

General VOTEL. Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today regarding my nomination to be the next Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command. I am honored to be included

on a panel of senior officers with whom I have had a long professional acquaintance and who I deeply respect and admire.

I am especially pleased that my wife of 34 years, Michele, is able to be here with me today. She and the other spouses present represent decades of service caring for our service members and their families. Michele has been a constant source of inspiration and support to me, and I could not have imagined making this journey without her.

I am deeply honored to be considered by the committee for this position. I firmly believe that special operations forces perform a vital function within the Department of Defense, supporting our geographic combatant commanders and providing our leadership with unique solutions to challenging problems. If confirmed for this position, I look forward to working with this committee to address the needs and requirements of our special operations forces, ensuring that they remain the very best in the world.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Votel follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General Votel.

And now I will ask the standard questions that we ask of our nominees.

First, have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

Admiral GORTNEY. I have.

General CAMPBELL. I have.

General VOTEL. I have.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views even if those views differ from the administration in power?

Admiral GORTNEY. I do.

General CAMPBELL. I do.

General VOTEL. I do.

Chairman LEVIN. Have you assumed any duties or undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

Admiral GORTNEY. No, I have not.

General CAMPBELL. No, I have not.

General VOTEL. No, I have not.

Chairman LEVIN. Will you ensure that your staff complies with deadlines established for requested communications, including questions for the record and hearings?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

General VOTEL. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

General VOTEL. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Will those witnesses be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

General VOTEL. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify upon request before this committee?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

General VOTEL. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee or to consult with the committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

General VOTEL. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. Let us have a 7-minute first round, and we can get to a second round here if necessary.

Admiral Gortney, let me start with you. We have had a lot of failures and a lot of successes in our GMD system, and so my question to you is, do you believe that it is important to follow a 'fly before you buy' approach and to conduct operationally realistic testing of the ground-based missile defense system, including the kill vehicle, to provide confidence that it will work as intended?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir, I do. I believe in the fly before you deploy.

Chairman LEVIN. And would you also agree that our highest priority investment at this time is to further improve the capability of the GMD system by improving its sensor and discrimination capabilities?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. Given the nature of the mission, it is critical that we improve that which we have to make sure the kill vehicle is as effective as possible in our ability to discriminate the threats that are coming to the homeland. After that, it is expansion of our capacity in order to do that. and I agree with Admiral Searing's third priority, which is to then look at future technologies to improve our ability.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. Admiral, I understand that the Department of Health and Human Services is now seeking substantially increased DOD support for our housing, temporary housing, needs at the southern border because of the influx of the young people particularly. I hope that there can be a positive response to the request of the Department of Health and Human Services, but of course, NORTHCOM needs to have the ability to provide that increased support before it offers it. And so do you believe that NORTHCOM has the ability to provide the increased support requested by the Department of Health and Human Services?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. It is my understanding we have the capacity to provide all the help that is required in order to do that.

Chairman LEVIN. There is a new request. Are you familiar with that that just came?

Admiral GORTNEY. Pardon me, sir?

Chairman LEVIN. There is a new request from Health and Human Services for a significant increase.

Admiral GORTNEY. I have not heard about the latest increase, but currently we are at about 2,600 and so we can go up a bit from that. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. General Campbell, you have given us your assessment of the performance of Afghan National Security Forces ongoing and during the fighting season and in securing recent elections. Can you just expand on that a bit?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. Thank you for the question.

Sir, the last time I was in Afghanistan personally was in April, but I have kept in contact with Joe Dunford, the other commanders on the ground, have talked to them about the Afghan Security Forces. Everything I have seen, read, heard, and as I talked to some commanders on the ground when I was there in April, the Afghan Security Forces have continued to progress in all their capabilities as evidenced by the recent election where actually the coalition forces provided very, very little support and the Afghans really took on the security. It brought a sense of pride to them to be able to do this, and I think they continue to progress every single day.

So far, as the new plan will show, we will move off of the tactical train, advise, and assist and move up to the corps level. And I think that shows that the campaign has been working. The difference when I left in 2011 to what I saw just this past April was very, very significant.

Chairman LEVIN. General, in your answer to the prehearing questions, you said that you support the President's decision on the size of the U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan during the next 2 years. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I was not in on the decision-making, but I support the numbers there. I think that gives us—shows that we will continue to have a presence in Afghanistan for the next couple years, and I think that is very good.

Chairman LEVIN. You also said that you support the pace of reductions outlined by the President, quote, with an understanding that we should continue to validate the assumptions and assess the conditions on the ground as the drawdown takes place. Close quote. Do I understand from that that you will recommend changes in the pace of the drawdown if you find in your best military judgment that the pace should be modified?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, what this committee expects of me and what I owe to our soldiers on the ground is my true assessment, once I get on the ground, of how the mission is going. So I will provide that input to CENTCOM and to the Chairman, yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. And if you determine in your best military judgment that the pace should be changed and that the date should be changed, you would then make that recommendation?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would provide my best military advice on the pace of the change, the pace of the drawdown. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Even if it differs from the current pace.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is what you expect me to do. Absolutely. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, after 2016, the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan is planned, at the moment, to be a normal embassy-based presence. It has also been reported that the size of the future

Office of Security Cooperation in Afghanistan could be as large as 1,000 personnel.

My question now relates to the plans for post-2016. If at any point in your military judgment circumstances change or assumptions underlying the post-2016 plan do not prove valid, will you also let those above you in the chain of command know?

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. General Votel, there is going to be a consolidation of basing locations inside of Afghanistan, and I want to get your view as to how that consolidation is going to impact the ability of assault teams, airborne ISR, to reach remote provinces like Kunar and Nuristan where al Qaeda has sought safe haven.

General VOTEL. Mr. Chairman, we have been closely following the basing plans that General Dunford and his staff have made, and I assess we have adequate locations at this time to continue to do the operations, counterterrorism and partnership operations, that we need to continue to apply the pressure against the networks that we are dealing with.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Can you give us your understanding of the progress in training the Afghan special operations Kandaks and the timeline for achieving their full operational capability?

General VOTEL. My command has been responsible for training a portion of the special operations forces, and I assess that we are moving very quickly and effectively to make them capable partners on the battlefield not only their ability to execute operations, but more importantly, the ability of their leaders to direct operations and to properly supervise the execution of those. So I think we are making very good progress there.

I have long watched the special operations Kandaks and have been hugely impressed by their ability to conduct operations and to be with their Afghan countrymen and work very, very closely with them. So I assess we are on the right path with that, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Campbell, during my opening statement, I made a comment about I could not recall which province it was, and I found it was Wardak province that Ashraf Ghani's vote count went from 17,000 in April to 170,000 in this runoff, which is absurd. We all know that that could not have happened, and certainly the Afghan people know that too. And then the turnout in the—I do not think we can find any place where the turnout is greater in the rural areas than it is in the urban areas. And, of course, this came out where the strength of Ghani is in the rural areas, and it was 3 to 1 over the urban areas. We know that is not true. And so if there are so many of these deficiencies, I am sure that the Afghan—the different ethnic groups have the same concern as I do and hopefully as you do.

I would just ask you—we have got to push real hard to get an audit, a genuine audit, one that has oversight from outside groups. And I would ask you, first of all, if you think that is a good idea. Second, what would happen if the people do not understand and appreciate this as a legitimate election? What would happen in the country in your opinion?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thanks for the question.

Sir, as you know, this is really the runoff. They had the first election in April, and this was a runoff between Abdullah and Ghani. And it is absolutely critical that the Afghan people and the rest of the world see this as a viable, transparent election process.

Senator INHOFE. Do you think they see that now as viable and transparent?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think both of the candidates have said there has been some corruption there and they are working hard to come together to find this audit. I think the difference now is the number of polling stations whether it is 2,000 or 6,000. Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Okay, that is good.

General Votel, you and I talked about AFRICOM, and we remember when the continent of Africa was divided in three different commands. It was not workable at all. We understand that. Now, the problem is with AFRICOM, they do not have their own resources. In my opening statement, I commented that a lot of the people from Africa are sucked up into this war that is going on in Afghanistan and elsewhere. They will return as hardened fighters. Does this concern you? And without the resources that you and I talked about, what are you going to do?

General VOTEL. Senator, thank you.

It certainly does concern me, as we discussed yesterday. And I think what we can do, while we continue to prioritize our precious ISR resources that are used in a variety of locations, is continue to build the relationships on the ground that will allow us to assist our partners where we can to provide information, to share information with them, to better enable them to deal with the challenges of returning fighters to their—

Senator INHOFE. Yes, I think that is right. But you mentioned ISR, and Rodriguez as I told you—as you already knew, I am sure—has said that they only have the ISR capability to meet 11 percent of the needs that they have in the continent. Do you agree with that? Have you talked to him? Do you agree with that assessment?

General VOTEL. I have, Senator. General Rodriguez and I talk frequently, and I do agree. We definitely need more ISR.

Senator INHOFE. And are you prepared to try to come and express that so that we can try to get more—

General VOTEL. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and with AFRICOM to address that.

Senator INHOFE. Okay. That's good.

Admiral Gortney, the chairman talked about the GMD program and the fact that we need to have more updates and modernization and all that, which we have been talking about in this committee for a long period of time. We actually put additional funding in there for that purpose, but it is not, in my opinion, nearly adequate. In terms of the resources that will be available there, where do you think we are now on that program? And do you think that we are making sufficient investments in the maintenance and reliability of the GMD system?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. I think MDA's priorities are absolutely correct. Necessary investments into the proper maintenance

and modernization of the existing GBI's is absolutely the number one requirement.

The second one, investment after that would be to improve again the kill vehicle itself and then improvement to the sensors that would allow us to better discriminate the threats that might be coming to the homeland.

Senator INHOFE. Well, if you go back, as I mentioned to you in my office, to 2008, our funding for the GMD has declined from \$2 billion then to about half that now. Does that concern you?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir, that does concern me. Once again, the first priority should be the necessary investments into the maintenance and modernization of the existing facilities that we have.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. I appreciate that.

General Campbell, I will get into something that is kind of controversial here. There is a big difference of opinion among just the members up here, and that is concerning the Mi-17. We have got several quotes, and frankly, I have looked into it and I kind of agree that the—let us see. It was CGAR, I think, that said the Afghans lacked the capacity in both the personnel numbers and expertise to operate and maintain the existing and planned special mission. If we were to change, what position would we be in terms of our training if we were to drop in new vehicles and discard that particular program?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if we were to change the Mi-17 as the primary lift platform for the Afghans, we would be several years, I think, behind. They would have to start a whole new training program.

Senator INHOFE. Several years behind.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. I have a real hard time thinking about something that is there now, they are trained now, and I know it is more popular to say, well, let us go into another group of vehicles and not support people that we question. But I think it is very significant that you feel that we could actually be years behind.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have talked to General Dunford on the ground there.

Senator INHOFE. He agrees with that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. The Mi-17 provides the Afghans with the capability to stretch, to get out, to get into the hinterland to go after the insurgents for the Afghans, and it also provides the coalition forces that outer ring of security, so force protection. So I know General Dunford is very concerned about the loss of the Mi-17 and what it does to the not only coalition force protection but the ability of the Afghans to get out and conduct all their missions.

Senator INHOFE. I appreciate it very much and I am hoping that all of the members of this committee have heard you loud and clear. And I appreciate your honesty. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Reed.

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

And gentlemen, thank you and your families for your distinguished service to the Nation and to the men and women you lead.

Admiral Gortney, we are constantly under cyber attack. Today's headline is that the Chinese are hacking into the Office of Personnel Management. NORTHCOM plays a critical role in defending the homeland from any type of attack. Are we doing the exercises, the war gaming on a regular basis to assure that you can respond to these threats?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. NORTHCOM's responsibility is to make sure—to assure that our systems, our defense systems, are operable to the assurance that we can do the command and control and that the facilities are protected, military facilities are able to defend themselves. And we work that closely with the services to make sure that happens.

Our second responsibility, if confirmed, at NORTHCOM is to respond to the physical responses to a cyber attack to the civilian pieces. And we exercise that throughout the year under our defense support to civil authorities on how well we can respond to that.

Senator REED. But there is a gap because a lot of the targets that would be prime on the list would not be military facilities. They would be financial institutions, public utilities, transit systems. Have you coordinated at least a planning level, not an operational level of how you might defend against these?

Admiral GORTNEY. Well, those would be, say, to the power grid, to the water, to the rail, all of that. We are responsible for responding to the physical consequences of that. And that is very similar to the defense support to civil authorities for earthquake, weather, things of that nature. Those sort of response capabilities are the same.

Senator REED. A final question. Who is responsible for the active defense of these facilities, or is anybody responsible?

Admiral GORTNEY. For our civil infrastructure, to be honest, sir, Homeland Security has that responsibility. And it is my professional opinion that we are a little bit behind. We as a Nation are behind in our ability to defend that critical infrastructure.

Senator REED. Do you have a coordination with Homeland Security? Again, if they are the ones responsible, there should be at least a joint planning effort, not just in response but in deterrence or prevention.

Admiral GORTNEY. Well, Homeland Security is our closest inter-agency partner in the defense of the homeland and our responses there. But I do not know if we have a formal coordinating, and if confirmed, I will make sure I understand that, sir.

Senator REED. General Campbell, your experience on the ground in Afghanistan is going to be absolutely critical as you go forward. There are so many different aspects of the issue, but one I would like to just get your opinion upon is the role of Pakistan. They have undertaken significant offensive operations in what was formerly referred to as the tribal areas, North Waziristan. But they will play a key role in anything that happens there. Can you give me your impression now of where they are headed and how you might work with them?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir. Thank you for the question.

Sir, you are absolutely right. You cannot talk Afghanistan unless you talk about Pakistan as well. And it is critical to have that partnership not only with the coalition in Pakistan but, really more important, with the mil-to-mil between Afghanistan and Pakistan. I can only speak really from my time in 2011. I know that coordination and the cooperation continues to get better at the senior levels. At the tactical level right on the border in RC East where I was at, the colonels, the brigadier generals, they worked that daily and that continued to progress. We had Pakistani LNO's in our talks, and I would visit Pakistan once a quarter. I know that General Dunford and the senior leadership in Afghanistan today continue to work those relationships, and that will be really key not only for the border but also for all the counterterrorism reasons.

Senator REED. Thank you, sir.

General Votel, Special Operations Command has been operating flat out for more than a decade now, and as we reset our forces, our conventional forces, you are going to still operate at mach speed. Admiral McRaven, in fact, has suggested there might be a fraying on the force. What is your impression of the operational capability, just the effect of these operations on your force?

General VOTEL. Senator, thanks for the question.

I agree with Admiral McRaven's assessment. I do think that the force, as you said, has been very operationally active for a long period of time. That said, I think we continue to be very, very effective in the operations that we continue to ask to be performed. Key to this I think has been Admiral McRaven's focus on ensuring that we do address the pressure on our force and families and provide them mechanisms that allow them to continue to serve their country but also take care of the needs that are generated by years of combat of years of service overseas.

Senator REED. And one other aspect of this is that in a rough dichotomy there are covert missions and then there are traditional training missions that special operations performs. Some of those traditional training missions will you shift to conventional forces, or is that a way to sort of lessen the pressure from your forces?

General VOTEL. I think that is an option for us. And, Senator, if confirmed, I would look forward to working with the services, particularly the Army who I know is developing regionally aligned forces that would be great partners in developing our partners across the globe.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Admiral Gortney, if I could, a final question. We have a new theater of operations, the Arctic Ocean, which for anybody my age seemed inconceivable, but it is there. How well prepared are we? For example, I do not think we have a heavy icebreaker in the Navy, and I do not think we have any plans to build one.

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. The Arctic is truly a wilderness, and in order to operate there, we have to have the ability to communicate, navigate, sustain ourselves, and then have the ability to operate our ships and our aircraft up there. That is going to require some significant investments for the Department in order to do that. We need to figure out when is the time that we have to put all those capabilities in place and POM them appropriately. But we do not have an icebreaker in the Navy. Coast Guard only has one.

It requires study. It is the President's priority. It is NORTHCOM. It is a tasked mission for NORTHCOM. And so NORTHCOM and in my current job working with OPNAV—we are working very heavily to figure out those particular timelines.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator SESSIONS.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Chairman Levin.

I thank all of you for your service to the country. We are the finest military in the history of the world in my opinion. It is exceedingly well trained, very well led. I think our modern Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines leaders are more engaged with their troops, more leading from the front, more in tune to what is happening than ever before. And I think we have gone through some very tough times to maintain cohesiveness and morale in a way that would be difficult to have expected actually considering the deployments that have been imposed on our soldiers. So I am real proud of them.

I would thank Senator Levin for his comments and questions, General Campbell, to you about your duty, as we understand it in this republic, to tell the truth to the Congress and to your superiors as you see it. And history also would indicate I think that leaders on the battlefield are ignored at great peril. So you are going to have to make some recommendations in the months to come concerning reduction in force policies that are going to be challenging. And we appreciate your commitment to do that.

And I would ask the other two. Admiral Gortney, would you also answer in the affirmative as General Campbell did to Senator Levin's questions?

Admiral GORTNEY. Absolutely, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. And General Votel?

General VOTEL. Yes, Senator.

Senator SESSIONS. You know, the Mi-17—that is the Russian helicopter. We are way down the line now. Maybe it is too late to reverse that decision. The Defense Department made up its mind early, was rock solid on it, refused to listen to any other suggestions about it, and now we have had Russia invading the Crimea. So I am personally not very pleased with that decision. We talked about it, General Campbell, yesterday. But it may be too late to reverse that decision, but that is my 2 cents? worth about that issue.

General Votel, you were asked about how healthy your force is. Is it about 67,000 now in our SOF forces?

General VOTEL. Senator, that is about right and growing to about 69,000-plus.

Senator SESSIONS. And we know we are going to be drawing down varying different estimations of our total force. Is it your opinion that in a restructured force, as a result of budget decisions and other decisions, that we ought not to reduce the special operating forces below that level and we ought to stay at or about that level or more or less?

General VOTEL. Senator, as we discussed yesterday, I think the level that we are going to be at is appropriate for the task that we are being asked to perform on behalf of all the geographic and

other commanders out there that we support. So I think staying at the level that we are is the right answer.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Admiral Gortney, I understand a recent test in the Pacific of our missile defense system was a very successful test involving some complexities, and it was still effective. What can you tell us about that?

Admiral GORTNEY. I have limited detail in my capacity right now to know it. I do know that it was a successful test. It was one of the most complex tests of the total weapons system for it to work and that it did work. So that gives us better confidence in our ability to defend the homeland.

Senator SESSIONS. And that was a hit-to-kill technology.

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I think that is important. We have had some concern about our hit-to-kill technology, and it has been proven in the past but we were concerned about it. And this successful test I think is important because it represents a newer and more effective system I believe. And you and I talked about your belief that with regard to making a decision to launch, which will be your decision?

Admiral GORTNEY. That is correct, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. So if we have an incoming missile, you would be the person to make the decision to launch?

Admiral GORTNEY. The NORTHCOM commander owns the trigger. Yes, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. And how do you plan to ensure that that system works well, that quick decisions can be made 24 hours a day? You gave me an indication yesterday, but I thought it would be good to share that.

Admiral GORTNEY. Well, you test and exercise what is important, sir, and you need to test and exercise that entire weapons system, all the muscles involved in making that an effective engagement. You need to test and exercise it continuously. And a key element is the exercising of the command and control of that facility because the shot window is so narrow from the detection to when the decision has to be made. So if you do not exercise everybody in that chain of command routinely, you are not going to be able to make or have the confidence that you are going to make that decision in time.

Senator SESSIONS. I think you are exactly right. And we certainly have invested a tremendous amount in that system, and we do not need to have a glitch in the management of it that would neutralize its value.

General Campbell, this is going to be such a challenge. Thank you for your continued service. I am very pleased that you have extensive knowledge of Afghanistan, and I believe you will be in a position to be most effective. Senator McCain predicted in 2011 openly and directly that if we pulled out so rapidly in Iraq, as we ended up doing, that there would be grim consequences. His grim predictions, unfortunately, have been proven true.

So we are going to be watching and remembering the soldiers you have led and the soldiers that have been wounded and soldiers who have lost their lives in Afghanistan. And we have reached a

point where I believe that country can be successful, but it is fragile. Can you give us your best judgment of what the prospects are for establishing a decent government there that is not hostile to the United States?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you for the question.

And I think the key point is that we will have a continued presence in Afghanistan for the next couple of years, and I look forward to getting over there and making my own assessment when I get on the ground. There are two missions that General Dunford and ISAF are working now as they move to the end part of 2014 into 2015 and that is on the training, advise, and assist at a higher level, at the corps and the ministerial level, then of course, a counterterrorism mission. So I will continue to work hard on those two missions. I will give you my best military advice on where we stand on that, but I think we have some time to continue to work on some of those gaps that General Dunford and the team over there has identified that they will continue to work. There has been great progress by the Afghan Security Forces, and I look forward to getting on the ground there.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, our mission is not to get to zero troops at a certain date. Our mission is to—and what we have committed to and what we have invested in in blood and resources is a successful outcome. And I hope that we do not lose sight of that. Thank you.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to the witnesses and your families for your service.

General Campbell, I am on the Foreign Relations Committee and co-chaired a subcommittee meeting on Afghanistan a few months ago. And General Allen said—and this was kind of a surprising bit of testimony. He was one of our witnesses—that he viewed corruption as more of an existential threat to the future of Afghanistan than terrorism. Terrorism and the Taliban are certainly threats, but he viewed corruption as a more significant threat.

I kind of filed that away in the back of my head, but as I have watched what has played out in terms of presidential elections, I found it to be an interesting observation. The Taliban threatened to disrupt the elections. They made efforts to but they were not able to do it. And I give credit to the ANSF for doing a good job of protecting the physical security of the elections. But the elections have been threatened by allegations of corruption of the process by political leaders, potentially the outgoing Karzai administration.

Am I correct in my view that the ANSF did a pretty good job in protecting the physical integrity of these elections despite the Taliban's pledge to disrupt them?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. Thank you for the question. The Afghan National Security Forces protected all the polling sites, and I think just based on the number of incidents that I read about—I talked to commanders on the ground—they did an absolutely excellent job. So I think their progression from where they were and where they continue to go continues to get better. And

really, that is a great news story but it is really because the great men and women of the coalition have continued to be side by side, Shona ba Shona with them to help them through the last 13-plus years—almost 13 years of doing that. So it is not by happenstance it has happened. It is because of this great work by the men and women, and they continue to work that. So you are absolutely right, sir.

Senator Kaine. Well, I think it is important for the members of this body, this committee, to recognize that the challenges going forward in Afghanistan are not simply military challenges if the ANSF is performing at a level where they can protect the physical integrity of the elections, that the elections are still called into question because of political corruption. There are other tools that we are going to need to explore if we want to make sure that the progress that we have been a part of continues. And I wish you well in that and look forward to working with you in that capacity.

General Votel, you and I talked a bit the other day. I am also concerned, as Senator Reed, about the force and sort of the fraying of the force after the incredible amount of work that has been done over the last 13 years. I had a veterans roundtable recently in Hampton Roads where a widow, whose husband was a special forces veteran who had committed suicide in March, came and talked about the stress on him and on their family.

If you could just share a little bit more about how—you know, you are so familiar with these folks and what the challenges they are under, but how as the head of this command you intend to deal with those issues both for people who are active but then once people separate from special forces. I know that you have a continuing commitment to them.

General Votel. Thank you, Senator.

Certainly I do think the pressure that has been put on the force is not exclusive to our special operations force. It has affected all of our forces.

That said, I do think there are some things that we ask our special operators to do, manners in which they operate, the secrecy with which they operate that do not allow them the normal opportunities to talk about things afterwards. And so I think we do have to address that aspect of it when it comes to our special operations forces and families and making sure that we provide those appropriate outlets for them. As we talked about the other day, the special operations command does have the Care Coalition which is designed to take care of our members that are wounded physically or otherwise in these situations. And I think that is a great way to continue to take care of folks while they are in the service and beyond.

I think continuing to look at veterans organizations outside of the military is also a great partnership that we need to have in place. I am familiar with some organizations of retired military people and just concerned Americans out in the communities who are very willing to work with and reach out to our veterans across the country to ensure that they and their families are well taken care of.

So, if confirmed, Senator, I look forward to continuing to strengthen those relationships and ensure that our members on ac-

tive service and beyond active service continue to get the care that they require.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, General. And let us know the strategies that we can also help you in as we pursue that important goal.

One more comment for you. I just want to offer my congratulations really. Senator King and I traveled through the Middle East in February, and in many of the Nations where we were, we heard over and over again about the value of the U.S. Special Forces in training special forces in other nations. I imagine in the context of the defense budget, the training that our special forces do with other nations? special forces has just got to be a drop in the bucket. But the value of those investments is very significant. We certainly heard a tribute to that during our travels. So I know that that is an important part of your mission as well.

General Votel. Thank you, Senator. And I really attribute that to our people. They are our most precious and important resource, and when we allow them to get out and do their jobs, they always amaze us and do fantastic things.

Senator Kaine. Thank you.

Admiral Gortney, in your testimony, your oral testimony today and your written testimony as well, you talked about the mission of NORTHCOM in terms of protecting the homeland. And it is obviously becoming clear, just reading the headlines every day, that one of the larger—one of the most important borders in the world for the protection of the American homeland is the border not between the United States and Mexico but the border between Mexico and the Central American neighbors whose children are fleeing violence and gangs and trying to come to the United States. Talk a little bit about the U.S.-Mexico military relationship and how that relationship can potentially deal with some of those border issues on Mexico's southern border.

Admiral Gortney. Yes, sir. In my current capacity, I am the naval component to General Jacoby, and so we work very closely with the Mexican navy. I just had Admiral Soberon in the headquarters just a couple days ago. And I would say that the mil-to-mil relationship both with the navy and the army is much better. It is strong and it is a growing relationship thanks to the leading edges of both Admiral Winnefeld and the great work that General Jacoby has had. And it is important that it is day to day. It is the small—it is the same confidence that you just mentioned with the special forces that will pay us long-term dividends moving at the pace that they are able to go at, doing the things that they find important. I feel that we are in a very good direction and a positive trend.

Senator Kaine. Do they view that border on their south as significantly a challenge as we do?

Admiral Gortney. With my discussions with their leadership, they see their border to the south as the bigger issue. That is where their threat is coming from causing the disruption in their society. So they are very focused to the south. And that means that the relationship between NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM has to be very strong to ensure there is no seam there that can be used against us, that we work together with all of the Nations there to counter those shared threats.

Senator Kaine. Great. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Levin. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Chambliss.

Senator Chambliss. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

And gentlemen, thank you for your continued great service, and to your families, thanks for sharing your husbands with us. We know this is a family obligation. So we appreciate very much your allowing us to have their leadership.

General Campbell, I will tell you exactly what I told Lloyd Austin as he was preparing to go into Iraq to make sure that we closed it down the right way. In my opinion, that was the most dangerous command of all the commands in Iraq because, as you pull out, our troops become less in number and the situation becomes more dangerous. Obviously, I think you are going to have that same situation, but I think also you are the right person to meet that challenge. So we will look forward to your continued leadership in that role.

Something took place over there recently that gives me a little bit of concern, and that is the release of about a dozen individuals from the prison at Parwan. Ten of those dozen were Pakistanis. Now, I understand all of these dozen were returned to their home countries. Can you tell us anything about the release of those detainees, why it was decided to release individuals that we know are hard core combatant enemies of the United States?

General Campbell. Sir, I do not have the exact details on which individuals were released. I know that there are third country nationals in Afghanistan that over time we have to return back out of Afghanistan. But I do not have details on those exact 10. But I know that we have been working with all different countries, with the State Department, and with the country of Afghanistan to make sure that when we do release individuals, that there are mitigating effects to make sure they cannot impact the fight again.

Senator Chambliss. I believe they have got 38 non-Afghans still at that prison at Parwan, all of which are pretty hard core enemy combatants. Have you been briefed on any plans to release the remaining 38?

General Campbell. Sir, I know the number 38. I know that there is a figure within that 38 that are really determined to be very hard core. I do not know the plan on how we will release them, but if confirmed, sir, I will make sure that I am tied into that process. But that is more than just a military piece. That is a whole-of-government operation that will take place. But, sir, I do not have the details on that at this time.

Senator Chambliss. As you prepare to go to Afghanistan to assume this command, you are obviously going in at a time when we are going to have a new president. The political winds are shifting somewhat. Can you give us your analysis of the political situation now as we prepare to conclude this election and have a new president sworn in?

General Campbell. Sir, I can tell you that I think both of the candidates, whoever eventually becomes the president, have both indicated that they want to continue to have a long-term relationship with the coalition and with the United States in particular. So

that is very encouraging. And they understand the importance of how important Afghanistan is in that part of the world and the impact of showing that they do have a democratic process, political transfer of power, the first time in that country, to make sure that is very transparent.

So I think everything I see, sir, is good news and that we are on a good road, but we have to get through this kind of 50-meter target and get through the election and identify the president and show not only the people of Afghanistan but the people of the world that Afghanistan has gotten through this piece and they want to be part of the international community here for a stable, secure, and a kind of democratic Afghanistan as we go forward. So, sir, I am looking forward to getting over there, and I think we are on a positive path right now.

Senator CHAMBLISS. One reason I feel good about your being up to the challenge is your statement earlier, and I know this has been your commitment to assess the situation on the ground and to monitor that as we move along towards the end of 2016 and that you are going to give your recommendation, which I think will be a real recommendation and honest reflection of your opinion as to what we should do with respect to the drawdown. So thank you for that commitment.

General Votel, you and I, obviously, have had an opportunity to work very closely together in your current capacity, and I thank you for your leadership. You have just done an outstanding job, and I know you are going to continue to do that.

In your new position here with respect to the Special Operations Command, I am concerned about ISR and the lack thereof as we move forward. It is such an integral part of your command now. And having heard from General Rodriguez recently that only 11 percent of his ISR requirements are being met with AFRICOM and he is having to depend on other combatant commanders, I know that you are going to be facing the same situation.

We have just gone through the budget of the Department of Defense recently, and one of the requests of the Air Force was to reduce the Joint STARS fleet by 40 percent. Do you think that was a wise decision?

General VOTEL. Senator, thank you for the question.

I am not sure I know the details of what went into that decision. But to your point, I do think there is a vital need to look at our ISR posture and ensure that we have the resources, all of the resources starting with our most low-density, high-demand systems, all the way down to systems that support our troops on the ground. So I do think there is a need to constantly look at this, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and the geographic combatant commanders to address that, particularly as it affects our special operations forces.

Senator CHAMBLISS. To you and General Campbell, what portion of the 9,800 post-2014 troops that have been announced by the President will be made up of special forces operating in the CT world in Afghanistan? And also, tell us our goal with respect to CT operations aimed at al Qaeda and al Qaeda affiliates in Afghanistan between now and the end of 2016 and how you think we are going to get there.

General VOTEL. Senator, I will start here on that. Of the 9,800, approximately 2,000 of those are special operations forces. Of those 2,000, about half of that, just around 980 or so, are anticipated to be forces that would be directly supporting the CT effort. The current planning that we have done with General Dunford's staff and with Admiral McRaven's staff and with the other elements forward in Afghanistan I think has allowed us to ensure that we have the right capabilities within that mix to continue to do the operations that we need to do for General Dunford and in the future for General Campbell as we continue to do that. That will involve continuing to do unilateral operations to keep heavy pressure on al Qaeda networks and other networks that are supporting them and importantly will allow us to maintain the relationships with our Afghan partners that we have worked for many years and which we are seeing now come to full fruition in their ability to get out and conduct operations not only tactically but actually lead and direct operations of their own forces.

Senator CHAMBLISS. General Campbell, anything you want to add?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I concur with everything that General Votel said there. Those are the numbers that I am tracking at this point in time and will be able to make recommendations as we move forward if we have to adjust those numbers if the mission changes.

On the counterterrorism side, sir, I would only add that as we move forward and take a look at past 2014, it is really about Pakistan and their capacity, Afghanistan and their capacity, and then our Government and really what we want to get done. So I look forward to working with General Votel and all the special operating forces. We do know, as we go forward, that train, advise, and assist with the counterterrorism mission is a really, really important mission there as well. So I look forward to working General Votel.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Chambliss.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Good morning, gentlemen. It is good to see you here. Thank you for your willingness to serve the country in these three important commands that await you.

Admiral Gortney, I wanted to turn to you initially and thank you for taking the time to visit with me earlier this week. We talked about NORTHCOM and how instrumental it has been in facilitating planning, training, and coordination between the DOD and other agencies, whether Federal or local or State, in responding to natural disasters. And as you know, we have had a number of those natural disasters in Colorado here over the last few years. We have had floods and wildfires. And the losses we suffered surely would have been greater if not for the work done before, during, and after those disasters by NORTHCOM, the National Guard, active duty units, and as I alluded to, the Forest Service and many other officials.

I would like to ask you for your views on these efforts, and I would like your assurance that you will continue to make them a top priority of the command once you are confirmed.

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. I have found in my career that soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, Active and Reserve and from the Guard, find no greater enjoyment than to help the American people in their time of need and to support the civil authorities. I think the work that the National Guard and the active have done before your fires and then during the execution and then in preparations for anything that might come in the future is outstanding, and I will continue to support that effort.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that assurance. I know we have really upgraded the communication that we have seen, and yet there is more we can do and I know we are up to the task.

Let me turn to NORTHCOM more broadly and its mission. What do you consider to be the greatest threat to the United States?

Admiral GORTNEY. The threat to the United States in my current capacity and then, if confirmed, at NORTHCOM—I think the greatest threat that we have is the cyber threat to our critical infrastructure, to our power grid, to our banking system. That I see as the greatest threat. And the job of NORTHCOM is to handle the physical consequences of that particular threat.

Senator UDALL. As per your conversation with Senator Reed, I think we cannot right now do enough when it comes to cybersecurity.

Let me turn to General Votel. As you are aware, Congress has expressed concern recently with what is seen by many as the lack of sufficient justification for budget requests in recent years, especially in light of the significant budget increases for SOF over the past decade. What are your views with respect to the congressional language requiring SOCOM to provide more detail and meaningful information in its budget justification?

General VOTEL. Senator, I absolutely agree that we should be able to defend our requests, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee to ensure that they understand what the SOF forces require and why we need it.

Senator UDALL. So you would, as a starting point, believe that the Congress in providing its oversight role ought to have the same level of visibility into SOCOM's funding as is provided by the services more generally?

General VOTEL. I absolutely believe that they should.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that assurance.

Gentlemen, let us turn to sequestration, if we could. It looms. Many on this committee are very—I think all of us are very concerned about it. And it goes back into effect in 2016. Could you give us your perspectives on the effect of sequestration if it were to take effect again?

Admiral GORTNEY. Sir, I will take that first. In my current capacity as Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, the effect of sequestration was on readiness. The means that it goes about targets the readiness, the operations and maintenance accounts that are out there. And so it impacts today's readiness, and any impact on today's readiness impacts tomorrow's readiness. The forces that we are going to fight with tomorrow—most of them we already own. So when it comes to sequestration, that is our primary concern. If confirmed at NORTHCOM, it is the readiness of those forces to be able to defend the homeland and then respond defense

support for civil authorities where we have the ready forces to do that. Will they be at the proper readiness levels? And we work through the components in order to ensure to be able to make those decisions to know those readiness status.

Senator UDALL. General Campbell?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, thank you for the question.

In my current job as the Vice Chief, I follow the sequestration piece of the budget every single day, sir. And if we continue on the path and sequestration happens in 2016, as it is right now, it will have a great, great impact on all the services, but I think especially on the Army. As you know, we have to balance force structure, end strength modernization, and then the readiness. And in the near term, we are sacrificing modernization and we are trying to put what we can into the readiness and the short-term readiness. For the Army, our biggest platform is our people, and we cannot come down fast enough to bring out people in our Army to meet the numbers in the sequestration bill as we have.

I do not think we have done a particularly good job of articulating to the American people the impact of sequestration. 2013 and the impact on readiness—General Odierno briefed one time we only had two brigade combat teams ready that he felt comfortable with deploying if asked at that particular time. We have since worked very hard on the short-term readiness and put any additional monies we have into that short-term readiness but, again, at the expense of our modernization accounts as move forward.

One—and it was in the paper today, sir—talked about an impact of sequestration, and that was on the drawdown of the forces and particularly of our captains and then of our majors here shortly, but recently we had announced 1,100 majors that we have to take out of the force from year groups 2006, 2007, and 2008. And some of these are men and women that are currently serving in Afghanistan that could be company commanders in Afghanistan that we are asking that they have to leave the force. So that is hard-hitting. We are going to see that continue. And the those numbers and the impact of just those captains and what it means to those families has to bring your Army down from 570 down to 490. We have not even started talking about 490 down to 450 and then potentially down to 420 if sequestration stays in effect.

So sequestration will be disastrous I believe for your Army. We will not be able to do the Defense Strategic Guidance if sequestration continues to go on after 2016, sir.

Senator UDALL. General Votel?

General VOTEL. Thank you, Senator.

First of all, I agree with the comments of my colleagues up here with regard to readiness and the impact on our ability to support the broader plans and requirements that we have.

I would add two specific things from a SOF standpoint. First of all, effects to the general purpose force do affect SOF forces because one of the key lessons we have learned over the last 12 or 13 years has been that SOF forces are hugely dependent on our general purpose forces for a variety of activities that they conduct that allow us to do the things that we need. So if confirmed, that would be something I would really want to look at.

The second piece would be the impact on our people. We certainly have generated a great amount of experience and leadership over the last 10 to 12 years. So as we had to reduce forces, I would be very concerned about making sure that we do that very, very carefully and do not lose the experience that we have developed over the last 10 to 12 years.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, gentlemen, for that very sobering analysis of sequestration if it were to be put in place again. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. I want to thank the witnesses.

And just to follow up, General Campbell, as you and I discussed, we now have captains in the United States Army who are serving in Afghanistan in combat and danger that are now being notified that they are being involuntarily separated from the United States Army. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is correct.

Senator MCCAIN. And that has to hurt morale. Would you agree?

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Admiral Gortney, your area of responsibility ends at the Mexican-Guatemalan border. Right?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir, it does.

Senator MCCAIN. Okay. But is it your information that neither the Government of Mexico nor the Government of Guatemala and the Government of Mexico at either the Guatemala border or the U.S. border are doing anything to stem the flow of illegal immigrants into this country?

Admiral GORTNEY. I do not have any specifics as to that, but in my dealings with their navy, I know they are very concerned about that.

Senator MCCAIN. They are concerned. Are they doing anything to stem the flow that you know of or not expediting?

Admiral GORTNEY. Well, if confirmed, I will get you that answer, sir, if confirmed.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I think you should know a little more about it before you come before this committee.

General Votel, we are hearing—and I would like to have that answer quickly.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator MCCAIN. General Votel—because the facts are stubborn things, Admiral Gortney, and that is that they are expediting these people across the Guatemalan border and the U.S.-Mexican border. I mean, a glance at the evening news can tell you that.

General Votel, we are hearing from inside Syria and from outside Syria that the equipment that ISIS was able to get a hold of due to their lightning-like success in Iraq is now flowing into Syria. In fact, we have even seen on the Internet pictures of the MRAP's that are now inside Syria fighting on behalf of ISIS. Do you have any information about that?

General VOTEL. Senator, I have seen—at a classified level, I have seen some of that reporting that would indicate that it is moving

across what were the former borders there between Iraq and Syria back into Syria.

Senator MCCAIN. And you would agree if, indeed, MRAP's are there, that is really a very effective tool if fallen into the hands of ISIS people who know how to operate. And they are not that difficult to operate. Would you agree?

General VOTEL. I would agree with that, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. So now we find our Free Syrian Army fighting on two fronts, Bashar Assad and his barrel bombs and now ISIS with equipment that they captured in Iraq now flowing into Syria, which has had, I can assure you—and I do not know what your information is—has had a devastating effect on the morale of the Free Syrian Army. Do you have any information about that?

General VOTEL. Senator, I do not have any specific information about that effect.

Senator MCCAIN. But maybe experience shows that it could have that effect.

General VOTEL. I do think experience would indicate that, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you.

General Campbell, do you know any senior military leader who personally recommended the policy of a complete withdrawal by January of 2017?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have not talked to any senior leaders that have recommended a complete withdrawal by 2017.

Senator MCCAIN. I am sure that Senator Graham, who just spent his active duty over in Afghanistan, will pursue this further. But is a serious concern not about not only capabilities that the Afghans cannot acquire in the next couple years such as air evacuation, certain logistics capabilities, but one of our big concerns should be the total disappearance of CT capabilities? Is that a concern?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it would absolutely be a concern. We have a couple years to continue to work on the gaps and seams that the Afghan army and their government has. Aviation, ISR, and logistics, as you said, are certainly three of the top that we have to continue to work the Afghan army. The CT piece, as we talked earlier, very, very important not only for Pakistan and Afghanistan, but for our Nation.

Senator MCCAIN. In our meetings last week with both candidates for president, both of them expressed, one, a desire for a BSA, but two, a very deep concern about a date certain withdrawal as opposed to conditions-based. Both Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani said that they were concerned about the ability—even signing the BSA, with their ability to control particularly parts of Afghanistan that you are very familiar with, Helmund and others. Do you think that that concern on their part is legitimate?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I believe whoever becomes president would have great concern on what support that any of the coalition forces would continue to provide for them. I have not discussed with them any sort of timeline, but as I mentioned earlier, I think my job and what my senior leadership and what the committee would expect of me is to provide continuous updates based on our

mission and our resources and then my best military advice on where we go from that.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, one would hope that the President of the United States would look at the nightmare in Iraq today and the ability that we could have had to provide some stability there and perhaps reevaluate his decision not for American combat troops but for the much needed capabilities of support and counterterrorism that we can provide, which they simply do not have.

And I guess my other question to you, do you remain deeply concerned about the role that Pakistan plays in all of this with the Haqqani Network and ISI and the whole support capabilities for the Taliban/al Qaeda that remain there?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. As I said earlier, Afghanistan and Pakistan—you cannot separate the two. I am concerned about the sanctuary in Pakistan. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Afghan military and the Pakistan military to continue to ensure that we can reduce that, but that we have the great mil-to-mil cooperation between the Afghans and the Pakistanis.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have to note in passing, General Votel, you used a phrase that sort of startled me. I think it was realistic, but I think it is something that we should take note of. You referred to the former border between Syria and Iraq. And unfortunately, I think that is a factual assessment.

General Campbell, this committee made a decision in its markup of the National Defense Act a month or so ago that essentially eliminated the Mi-17 support both in terms of purchases of the remaining group of helicopters and also spare parts. We got a letter 2 weeks ago from General Dunford that characterized this. The loss of the Mi-17 capability would have a catastrophic effect on the military campaign. He said effective ANSF counterterrorism operations are dependent upon the Mi-17 and, most chilling, he said any loss of ANSF operational reach would, therefore, degrade our force protection. Those are our people that he is talking about.

Would agree with his assessment that this would be a catastrophic blow to the ability of the ANSF to do their job in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would agree with General Dunford's assessment on the Mi-17 and the impact it would have on both the Afghan military and their ability to carry out their mission and the impact on our own force protection.

Senator KING. And I think it is important that this is not only—the provision adopted by this committee not only would prohibit the buying of the remaining group, but immediately cut off spare parts which would, in effect, over a fairly short period of time, ground the entire fleet. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is correct. I think the estimate I have seen is anywhere between 6 months to 12 months.

Senator KING. They would be grounded.

General CAMPBELL. They would become combat- ineffective.

Senator KING. Thank you, General. I appreciate that.

Admiral Gortney, you are going to be in charge of NORTHCOM as we have been discussing. I am concerned about the Arctic. You mentioned in answer to your prior questions that we really do not have the infrastructure that we need up there. Do you know off-hand how many icebreakers the Russians have in operation in the Arctic?

Admiral GORTNEY. I think it is somewhere between five and seven, sir.

Senator KING. And we have one 45-year-old Coast Guard icebreaker. Is that correct?

Admiral GORTNEY. That is correct.

Senator KING. The Navy has no icebreaker capacity in the Arctic.

Admiral GORTNEY. That is correct.

Senator KING. A brief question. I believe you indicated in your prior submission that you felt it would be important for our country to accede to the Law of the Sea Treaty. Could you affirm my understanding of your position?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. It has been a longstanding position of the Department of Defense that joining that commission would be a good idea to give us the same—on the same footing with the other signatories and not relying on the longstanding traditions law of the sea.

Senator KING. And does this particularly not take on some level of urgency given the opening of the Arctic to commerce, exploitation, energy, and all of the other potential areas of conflict?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir, but particularly in the Arctic because it would put us on the same footing as the other signatories of the Arctic Council.

Senator KING. General Campbell, there have been a number of questions about Afghanistan and our time frame there. As I understand it, there was intelligence that indicated ISIS was building up its strength and had designs on moving into Iraq. What we did not know was how weak the Iraqi army would be. I would suggest—and I hope you agree—that one of your missions is to continually assess the readiness and effectiveness of the ANSF because it was not ISIS so much as the collapse of the Iraqi army that led to the debacle currently unfolding in Iraq. Would you agree?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would agree. Today it is an assessment. They do have an assessment process in place to continually evaluate the Afghan Security Forces. That will get a little bit tougher. As our forces draw down, they will not have that day-to-day contact with them. But I agree with you there, sir.

Senator KING. Well, I would like to associate myself with Senator McCain's comments and questions. It strikes me that rather than an arbitrary date for leaving Afghanistan, it should be based upon conditions on the field. Would you agree with that?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think any military commander would want the flexibility to provide an operational assessment. If that is conditions on the ground, then I would agree with that, sir. But I owe this committee and I owe my leadership my best military advice based on the mission at hand and the resources I have at that time. I do have some time to make that assessment, and in that time, I also have time to continue to take a look at the Afghan

forces and the missions that we have and the resources tied to that to continue to upgrade their capability.

Senator KING. I am not going to ask you to assess the political situation in Afghanistan. I think that is unfolding before our eyes and is difficult for anyone to assess. But one question. Do you have any assessment of the ethnic makeup of the ANSF in terms of broad support in the populace? One of the problems we are seeing, of course, in Iraq is the exclusion of the Sunnis and the Kurds from both the government and most of the defense forces. Is potentially the same mistake being made in Afghanistan or not? I do not know the answer. I am interested in your view.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I can get you the composition of the ANSF. I do not that here. My gut tells me it follows probably the pattern of the country itself. So the great majority of the ANSF would be probably 40–45 percent Pashtun, but I can get those for you.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

General CAMPBELL. I know that is a grave concern to General Dunford and the leadership there to make sure that the ANSF continues to be, for lack of a better word, apolitical and that they continue to have the best interests of the country at hand. And I know so far, from what I have seen and talked to the leadership there on the ground, that is exactly what they are seeing. So the leadership is keyed with the ANSF and I know they have made great strides with the Afghan leadership there on that.

Senator KING. I think that is a very important ball to keep our eye on because if the government that is left in place is not broadly representative of the country, if we have learned anything in the last month, it is that that is a crucial element in the stability of the country that we leave behind.

General CAMPBELL. Absolutely, sir.

Senator KING. General Votel, very quickly. How do we take sufficient advantage of the capabilities that the special operations forces have without exhausting them? I see your force as particularly important in the future. General Dempsey in a briefing the other day used the term "tailored response" to situations. I think he was talking about you when he used that term.

General VOTEL. Yes, Senator. As you and Senator Kaine saw when you visited some of our locations, we are able to be very effective with a very light touch. So I think what we always have to do is look at the situation that we are putting our SOF forces in and ensure that we provide the right capability without overdoing it and putting undue pressure on our forces.

I think part of that is also working with our other Department of Defense forces and, where we can, leveraging their capabilities as well to ensure that we take advantage of all of the capabilities.

Senator KING. What appears to be a future of unconventional non-state actor forces—your men and women are going to be the point of the spear, General Votel. And I commend you for taking this command and look forward to working with you on it.

General VOTEL. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator King.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all of you for your willingness to serve and for your leadership and for your distinguished service and for all of the sacrifices that you and your families have made for the country and will continue to make. Thank you.

I wanted to ask General Campbell. I know that you served in Afghanistan, had at least two or three tours there, in Iraq as well. And as we look at our situation that is happening in Iraq right now with ISIS and obviously the huge security challenges that we have there that are very threatening not only to us but to the entire region, what can we learn from having the withdrawal that we had in 2011 toward what has happened in Iraq as we look forward to our continued engagement in Afghanistan?

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am, for the question.

Two times in Afghanistan. This will be the third. And about a 19-month tour in Iraq. And I think all of the veterans of Iraq would tell you, as they watch this unfold, it is very disheartening to see that.

I am committed in Afghanistan to ensuring that the two missions, the train, advise, assist and also the CT, that we continue to do everything we can with the coalition to continue to improve the Afghan capability there so they can stand on their own. And I will continue to provide my assessments as we go forward.

We ought to take a look at Iraq and look at the lessons learned from there. I think your military, all of our services—on anything we do we critique ourselves. We look very hard at after-action reviews. We always go back and look at the lessons learned. And I think this is no different. We will take a hard look at this and see what we can learn from this and apply that to Afghanistan. So, if confirmed, I am committed to doing that, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. I appreciate it.

And I wanted to ask you about—I know you have received a number of questions, taking over the command in Afghanistan, about the CT mission. Can you put in perspective what the CT mission means to your average American in terms of the protection of this country, what we have done in Afghanistan and why it is such an important mission?

General CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. I think if you just want to boil it down to very simplistic—and I probably told you this when you were there in 2010, maybe 2011—is that we have not had another 9/11 attack on the homeland. And we have not had that since 2011 when we talked as well. And we should not take that for granted, and that is not by happenstance, and that is because you have great men and women from all the services out there every single day working hard. And the CT piece of that on a daily basis continues to strike after these networks that want to do harm to our country. So I believe the CT piece, if you want to just boil it down to simplistic terms, is it protects the homeland.

Senator AYOTTE. Thanks, General.

So I guess I would ask this question of both you and General Votel. Thinking about the President on May 27th had made the announcement that by the end of 2016 that the presence we will have in Afghanistan will be at the embassy in Kabul, which will be a security component. Basically just a normal embassy presence is

how he described it. And in fact, it has been further described by the administration that the number of personnel that will be present as of January 1st, 2017 at the embassy for security there and cooperative efforts will be 1,000 people.

So my question to both of you is as I hear General Votel talk to us about the numbers on the CT mission in Afghanistan that we have now, that we will plan to have there in 2015—and you also discussed the importance of it, including unilateral operations, CT operations—how do we do that based on a Kabul operation only? And how do we do that with 1,000 people and which part of that 1,000 people will fulfill this important mission to protect the homeland? And so I guess the real question is—we just heard your testimony about how important this is to protect our country and to have the CT mission—what happens after January 2017?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, thank you for the question. I will start and let General Votel provide his comments.

I do not know the number at the end of 2016. I understand and acknowledge what you said and where the President—the numbers he said. Again, I have not looked at the composition. I know for the next 2 years, we will continue to improve the capability of the Afghan forces. We will continue to work with Pakistan. That is going to be a relationship there that will help on the CT piece. We will grow some capability there. But as I said earlier, I will need some time to get on the ground to give you an assessment of where we will be, but I think we have to put in light of that there will be some time to improve the capability that is already there. That may or may not help us reduce the numbers. But I could not talk in terms of the exact numbers at the end of 2016 that would be required just for the CT mission. I can come back to you as I make that assessment.

Senator AYOTTE. So, General Votel, how does the CT mission—just having it be Kabul-based with the numbers I just talked to you about—obviously, there is a lot you have to do at an embassy. So we do not even know if any of those individuals would be designated for CT.

General VOTEL. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

First off, as General Campbell said, I think what we have to continue to do is look at the conditions as time progresses here and continue to provide our very best military judgment and advice on the way forward with that.

I do think we have some models of where we conduct operations in other areas where we do use an embassy-based approach fairly effectively to continue to apply pressure against our networks.

I think maintaining relationships to the degree that we can with our Afghan partners in this particular situation here is hugely important to continue to support our CT objectives. And I do think we have to look at a broader regional approach as well. There are the Central Asian states. There is certainly Pakistan and there are other people in the region who we have to continue to have relationships with and continue to work with to address our broader CT objectives.

Senator AYOTTE. So, General Votel, in your view do you think that we will be able to accomplish all that we need to accomplish now, knowing what you know on the conditions in Afghanistan,

with solely a Kabul-based approach where 1,000 people are at the embassy and who knows what that number within would be designated to CT?

General VOTEL. Senator, I do not think I can answer that question accurately for you right now. I think it really depends upon the situation as it evolves. And that is why I think we have to look at the conditions, we have to provide our best advice on what it is that we need to sustain, what we need to have in an embassy-based approach in order to continue to protect the homeland and accomplish our objectives.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, I appreciate both of your testimony. And what you both said makes a lot of sense is that how we could possibly make the announcement from the administration of exactly how many people are going to be at that embassy and where they are going to be, given the importance of the CT mission to protecting our country, helping us avoid another attack on our country, when we do not even know what the conditions will be at the time is—it is really hard to come up with a word for it. But it is certainly not a military-based decision based on the announcement of our President. And I am glad to hear both of you say that you are going to have to hear what the conditions are on the ground.

I hope that our President will heed the conditions on the ground so that we can continue to perform this important mission of protecting our country and ensuring that we have this intelligence that has helped us prevent future attacks after 9/11 against this country.

So thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Donnelly.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank all of you and your families for their sacrifice.

General Votel, Admiral McRaven stated that suicide rates among special operations forces are hitting record highs. And he put in place The Preservation of the Force and Family Program to try to help with that. And what I want to find out is do you plan on continuing that? Do you see it as a success? Do you see anything that is more effective or other avenues that can help with this?

General VOTEL. Well, first of all, Senator, thanks for the question.

And I absolutely do continue to apply the same level of effort onto this and as more as I can onto this particular problem of suicide with our SOF service members and our service members in general. I do think we have to continue to look at every potential resource that can help us to, one, understand the problem and then identify ways that we can deal with this for our service members. So, you know, the numbers are alarming, and I think we have to—I think it is our number one focus with respect to preserving the force.

Senator DONNELLY. One of the things I would also ask you to do to take a look at is the things you learn from this program, if you see any of it that you say this has been really successful or this might be something that is transferable, if you would continue to

share that with all of the other commands, it would be very, very helpful I think.

General VOTEL. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator DONNELLY. General Campbell, to follow up on Senator Levin's point, it is obviously of a critical nature that you continue to give us your unvarnished opinion as you see, going forward, where there might be glitches, where there might be problems, what the actual numbers need to be. And you know, if the plan is not coming together, let us know. You know, General Dunford has been great in saying here is where we are on all of our metrics, here is where the problems are, here is where they are not. And I am sure we can continue to count on you for that.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely.

Senator DONNELLY. And following up on that, one of the things if you could—and I know you will—keep an eye on and let us know is—one of the distressing things that happened in Iraq is so many of the real generals who were trained by you and many others were replaced by folks who, through connections or friendship or whatever, wound up in those posts. And I think that caused significant damage to the Iraqi army. We want to make sure the same thing does not happen in Afghanistan, and if you could continue to let us know, as you look at the force, getting better, getting worse, the leadership, those kind of things. I know you will keep an eye on it and it would be helpful to us because it will also tell us if something is starting to go sideways there.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. And I know that General Dunford and the rest of the team there have put into place some programs to really look hard at the professionalism of the Afghan officers. They have their own academy. They now have a non-commissioned officer course that they send folks through. So they look at that very hard. They understand that one of the main things with any military in the world is the trust and the trust between the military and the people, trust between the military and their leadership. And so I know they continue to work that, and I am absolutely committed to continue to work that hard, sir.

Senator DONNELLY. One of the things we have seen recently is—and it is somewhat unique in recent times—the Pakistan army has just pushed into Miranshah, has moved people out of there. The nature of whether they have gone elsewhere or were captured, you know, is still up for discussion. But it seems that there is a real interest on the Pak side to do something in those areas.

Do you see this as a window we have not had for a while to try to create some form of security in that region of Afghanistan and Pakistan?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, absolutely. Anytime that we can do—or anytime that Pakistan will continue to work their own operations inside their borders there, coordinate those also on the Afghan side, I think it is a win. We tried to do that in 2010 and 2011 on a much smaller level. And so I do think this is a great opportunity for the mil- to-mil engagement between the Afghans and the Pakistanis. They got to continue to work that. And so, sir, I am committed to helping where I can on that.

Senator DONNELLY. In a way, this is the furthest I have seen them push in a very long time, and I am hopeful that that can

make—you know, in terms of 'easy' being a general term—your life a little bit easier in those regions that if they clean up some of the mess on their side, there may be less leaking over to your side.

General CAMPBELL. Sure, absolutely. And as you know, the Pakistan army has suffered great casualties themselves in this war on terror here for the last—

Senator DONNELLY. They have.

General CAMPBELL. Yes, sir.

Senator DONNELLY. In the SOFA agreement, I am sure you will continue to tell them—you know, we talk about how many troops will remain, but if we do not have a SOFA agreement, it completely changes the whole discussion. And so I trust that one of your primary efforts over there will be to continue to tell whoever will be their leader how critical this is and that basically everything else, all the other efforts kind of line up with this.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I believe both candidates have expressed their desire to sign the BSA and the SOFA agreement to make sure that they have continued coalition presence in Afghanistan. They know the consequences if they do not do that. So hopefully that will get done before I get there, sir, but if not, I will continue to work that hard.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you.

Admiral Gortney, one of the concerns I have when I see what is going on with ISIS and ISIL and al Nusra Front in that whole region is that there are also Americans fighting with them over there, Americans who have passports. And my fear is if they take a look back to our country and they can be people who can be extraordinary weapons against us. I am wondering your efforts in coordinating with Homeland Security, with FBI, with everybody else to try to keep an eye on what is going. Even though it is not here in NORTHCOM, it directly affects our homeland.

Admiral GORTNEY. Sir, we all share your concern on that one. The defense of the homeland starts at the away game and understanding the—working with our combatant commanders and the inter-agencies in the away game so that we stop it there before it comes to the homeland, inside the homeland, Homeland Security, and we are going to have to deal with the consequences if we fail in that regard.

Senator DONNELLY. And one last question that I have time for is this. We have seen a huge influx of heroin into my home State, into other States, much of it coming up across the border. We have seen drugs coming in through the Straits of Florida and other areas. We have had testimony that there is not near enough equipment, men, women, personnel, things needed to try to stop that.

Would you give us, in a perfect world, your best plan as to how to make a change in this area or how to beef up our efforts in this area?

Admiral GORTNEY. It requires a whole-of-government approach that includes all of the inter-agencies, as well as very, very close cooperation between Pacific Command, Northern Command, and Southern Command in order to work to close any of those seams that are out there between the geographic commanders and seams between the commanders and the interagency process, interagency

partners in order to do this particular—to stem this flow. And it has got to go to the far reaches. You are not just going to be able to stop it at our borders. You have to go to the root cause of the problem and try and stem it from there, sir.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you very much. And I hope you keep an eye—and I know you will—on that effort as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Donnelly.

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I would like to thank you gentlemen and your families, the service personnel that you represent for truly dedicating your lives to serving the people of this country and keeping us safe. Thank you very much.

General Votel, in your written comments, you speak about the greatest threat that ISIL is to the governments of Syria and Iraq and then it threatens to destabilize the entire Levant region and their connections are growing throughout north Africa and Europe and also Southeast Asia. If this situation on the ground in Iraq does not improve significantly, when do they become a threat to the United States? Are we there already?

General VOTEL. Senator, thank you for that question.

I think they threaten some of our regional interests. They certainly threaten some of our key partners in the region and in Europe right now. And I do think as they continue grow strength, that they will ultimately present a threat to the homeland. As we have talked about a little bit earlier, the threat of foreign fighters that have gone to Syria and now into Iraq I think poses a very significant problem not only for us but also for our partners that we rely on. So I think that it is posing a threat to us right now.

Senator FISCHER. The Admiral spoke about the away game. Do we have the eyes on the ground in order to make the assessment on what is happening in Iraq and how we are going to address it? I know we are looking at all the options that are out there. Are we starting to narrow those down? Are we reaching the time of a tipping point already when it may be too late even to take advantage of some of those options that are there?

General VOTEL. Senator, first off, I do not think it is too late to do anything right now. As you may be aware, we are just completing the assessment phase here in Iraq, and so we have been working with our Iraqi security force partners there both up in Kurdistan and down in the Baghdad area and the places that we can get to to ensure that we understand what the situation on the ground is, what their capabilities are, and then what options we might have to assist them, to address this threat here in the future.

Senator FISCHER. I heard a comment made recently that perhaps we should take the Machiavellian approach and let the militias and the terrorists fight each other, just stand back and let our enemies fight each other. Are there not risks to that? Did we not do that in Syria?

General VOTEL. In general, I think there are risks to allowing things just to try to resolve themselves particularly when there are interests that could affect our country.

Senator FISCHER. Would you think that would be an option the United States should look at with regard to Iraq?

General VOTEL. I think we should look at all options that might be available to us, Senator, and how we can address this particular problem.

Senator FISCHER. Would that be your option, would you say, at this point?

General VOTEL. Senator, I think as we kind of complete the assessments here right now, I would certainly want to have discussions with General Austin as part of his assessment on this to ensure that we have had an opportunity to look at everything before reaching any conclusion.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

You know that the President has requested \$5 billion for the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund. What top priorities would you like to see this fund accomplish?

General VOTEL. I think the Counter terrorism Fund can certainly help us with some of our partnership activities, and I think it could also help us with gaining the additional resources that we might need to enable our partners such as ISR, which I think would be very helpful in really enabling our partners in a variety of different ways.

Senator FISCHER. And how do you see our special operations forces evolving, given the demand? Senator King touched on that and touched on the pressures that you are looking at. And you had mentioned to Senator Ayotte about the size of the force that you would look at in different countries, including Afghanistan. Do you see the special ops evolving—well, I guess I will just ask you. How do we see them evolving?

General VOTEL. Well, I think, first of all, the level of strength that we are going to be at is adequate, I think allows us to meet the requirements that we have out there right now. I think it is important that we continue to focus on some of the work that has excellently been done by Admiral McRaven in his role, and that is continuing to strengthen our relationship with other SOF and military partners out there so that we do have trusted, dependable relationships and partners out there that we can work with and we can depend upon to accomplish the broader CT efforts. I do think it is important that we continue to have SOF forces forward deployed in locations where they can assess, they can understand, and they can, most importantly, work with our international partners who share our interests.

Senator FISCHER. I would ask you, General Votel and also General Campbell, if we are going to be conducting CT operations outside of Afghanistan, how effective is that going to be?

General VOTEL. Senator, just to clarify, conducting operations into Afghanistan from locations outside of Afghanistan?

Senator FISCHER. Yes or throughout the region as well if you would lose all your forces within the country.

General VOTEL. I think that would be very challenging. That would be a very challenging approach for us to continue to effectively do that. Certainly there are things that we can certainly look at, and we would have to look at all the conditions with that, but

I think it would be challenging to try to address problems in one country from other regions, from other countries.

Senator FISCHER. Would that be a priority of yours to explain to the administration the importance of keeping your forces there?

General VOTEL. Senator, I think it is one of my primary responsibilities, to always advise on how we best use our precious SOF forces in a manner that gives us the most effect.

Senator FISCHER. And, General Campbell, your thoughts on that as well.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I would agree with General Votel. As I said earlier, I have not taken a look at what that end result would be in 2016 on the numbers, but as I said earlier, if you are talking about Afghanistan, it involves the relationship and capability of Pakistan, the capability of Afghanistan, and really what our Government is trying to do in the CT arena there. So I look forward, if confirmed, to working with General Votel to provide those assessments as we move forward and the resources that would be required to continue to accomplish that mission.

Senator FISCHER. I appreciate both of you, your comments to Senator McCain and also Senator Ayotte on expressing your desire to have that flexibility and also to be able to make decisions based on what is happening on the ground. So thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Fischer.

Senator McCaskill.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

First for Admiral Gortney. Are smugglers moving through Mexico right now with just impunity?

Admiral GORTNEY. I am sorry, ma'am?

Senator MCCASKILL. Are the smugglers moving these children through Mexico with impunity right now?

Admiral GORTNEY. I would say the effect of the Mexican Government and their armed forces are not as effective as they could be. Whether or not they are trying to interdict them—not trying to interdict them, I do not have any specifics on that, but I seriously doubt it. They are just not being effective.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, I think it is important, once you are confirmed, that you get a handle on this because it appears to me—all the information is these are cartel-based smugglers. It is the same enemy that we have been funding Mexico to fight for as long as I have been in the U.S. Senate. At a certain point in time, the American people deserve some metrics on how successful the money that we have been pouring into Mexico has actually been in enabling the Mexican military to do the basics of—you know, I mean, it is obvious that buses and trains are moving loaded with thousands of children for miles through Mexico. I mean, clearly somebody has decided in Mexico they do not give a damn.

Admiral GORTNEY. Well, I would say that the cartels do control areas of Mexico that gives them the freedom of movement to do what you are saying. Yes, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. And the border?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes.

Senator MCCASKILL. They have the freedom on the border?

Well, I think that is certainly a priority. If we look at our national security, if we have got a neighbor to the south that has decided this is acceptable, you know, it means that there is a whole lot of other things they think is acceptable that frankly threaten our National security. So I hope you would make that a priority.

For General Campbell and for General Votel, you know, I look macro at our COIN strategy and the pillars of our COIN strategy. And if you look in Iraq, there was a belief that the pillars—if we did the political piece, we did the security piece, and we did the economic piece, it would be successful. Well, the political piece did not turn out so well, and the economic piece is an abject failure because we spent literally hundreds of billions of dollars building infrastructure and facilities that are in crumbles now, that are inoperable.

So is there any movement among your level of leadership in the military to take another look at the COIN strategy in light of—and by the way, I predict we are going to have the same problem in Afghanistan. I have just been highlighting that ridiculous power plant that we spent \$300 million on. We have got the highway. It is almost as if we are so good as a military and we are so focused on our mission, that we just get blinders on and say we can impose this, we can build these highways, we can build these power lines, we can build these power plants, we can build these health facilities, we can build these schools, we can impact while we are there the functioning capability of a government or of a military. But it appears to me that we have put a band aid on a cancer and that it really is not something that is being successful.

Is it time to take another look at the COIN strategy?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, I will take a shot at that. What I would tell you is I think that your military continues to take a look at all of its doctrine, all of its tactics, techniques, and procedures to continue to adapt to that to make sure that we are flexible. They are always looking forward to see what that next fight would be. You know, we always have to remain cognizant that there are lessons learned to continue to grow.

I think on the COIN piece, though, as you mentioned, this really is not just a military piece of it. It is a whole-of-government approach. And so the military could look at one piece, but we got to bring in the entire interagency to continue to learn those lessons and then apply those resources to make sure that we can continue to sustain that. And so as we work whatever country that we are working in to build capacity in the country, it is a whole-of-government piece, not just the military piece. And then whatever country that is, the people of that country have to want that, and they have to put forth effort as well. And I think in the end, as evidenced here I think in Iraq, is leadership makes a difference, and we have to work with that very hard.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, you know, and that is one of the things that happened both in Iraq and Afghanistan is the blurring of the lines between the interagency. You know, the SERP funds morphed into the infrastructure in Iraq, and then of course it moved into major league infrastructure in Afghanistan where you—I know the power plant was USAID. But some of the highway building—I mean, we took that over. The military did. We were

doing those things. And now we have got some of those projects that are going to be outside the wire. We are not even going to be able oversee those projects. There is a percentage of the projects that you are going to inherit, General Campbell, that we cannot have any oversight over because we are not going to be able to get the oversight as to where they are with the drawdown that we are embracing.

So I watched and analyzed the mistakes in Iraq, and I think many of them are going to come to pass again in Afghanistan. And then I am wondering if we are going to do the exact same thing again.

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, if confirmed and go into Afghanistan, I will absolutely take a hard look at that. I spent many months in Iraq as well. I do not want to see what is happening in Iraq today happen in Afghanistan in the future, and I will work hard at that.

Senator MCCASKILL. And they are less equipped than Iraq was in terms of, you know, this is not a country that ever even had a highway department. I mean, Iraq was much further along in terms of having some kind of central ability to impact government than even Afghanistan.

So I admire all of you so much. I am so proud of our military and what you are capable of. I stand in awe of your leadership capacity. But I think you are being given an impossible task in Afghanistan in light of what the reality is in that country in terms of the American taxpayers ever realizing the investment we hoped that we would realize from the things we have built in Afghanistan, the money we spent on building things for them.

General VOTEL?

General VOTEL. Senator, I would only add I think that is an inherent responsibility for all of us as military commanders to always intellectually challenge ourselves about our operating concepts and the way we think about the missions that we are giving. And I do think we have to look at our lessons learned, and that has to inform our way forward.

At my current level of leadership here at the Joint Special Operations Command, I do know that SOCOM is looking very carefully at all of these concepts, counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, and a variety of other things that we think will be important operational concepts for us in the future. And so, if confirmed, I look forward to working within my community and within the general purpose forces and with this committee to make sure that those concepts are well vetted and well understood.

Senator MCCASKILL. Yes. I really hope that it is a gut-check moment at the War College about COIN and what has worked and what has not and why the failures have occurred.

The one thing you guys are bad at is saying we cannot do this. You are given something to do and you just figure out some way to do it. And I am proud of that, but it works against you in terms of acknowledging that maybe there are some things we are trying to do that under the circumstances just does not make sense for us to try.

So thank you both. Thank you all three for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCaskill.

Senator GRAHAM.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, thank you, all three of you, for the service to our country and your families.

Are you familiar with the National Justice Center at Parwan, General Campbell?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have been to Parwan and I know of the National Justice Center. That came about after I left in 2011 I believe.

Senator GRAHAM. I would urge you to go visit. It is probably the crown jewel of criminal justice in that part of the world, and it is a very modern facility, well run. And the hope is that in the future, when an insurgent is captured, they will not be put in a provincial jail if they are really a threat to Afghanistan. They will go to the justice center in Parwan where they will be secured and they will have well-trained judges dispose of their cases. So I would urge you to take a visit. I think it is very important in defeating the insurgency.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I will do that, absolutely.

Senator GRAHAM. And to defeat the insurgency, they have to believe they are going to get killed or captured. Is that fair to say?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, they have to understand that there is going to be some sort of repercussions.

Senator GRAHAM. And if they get captured, they are likely to go to jail. Without that, it is going to be pretty hard to defeat these guys. Do you agree with that?

General CAMPBELL. I do, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Let us look at Afghanistan as a line of defense for America. Does that make sense to you?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it makes sense that in the past there has been sanctuary there that has created the conditions to allow organizations to attack our homeland. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you agree with that, General Votel?

General VOTEL. I do agree with that, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. The forces that attacked our country on September 11—they had safe haven in Afghanistan—the leadership. Is that correct?

General VOTEL. That is correct.

General CAMPBELL. That is correct.

Senator GRAHAM. We have had at least one attack generated by the Pakistan Taliban that failed in New York. The bomb did not go off at Times Square, but apparently the Pakistani Taliban want to reach America. Is that still accurate, do you think?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I believe there are many organizations that want to do harm to the homeland, and I do believe that every single day the great military and the other services are impacting other attempts that nobody here even knows about.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. And many of those organizations reside in the Afghan-Pakistan border regions. Is that correct?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I would concur with that assessment.

Senator GRAHAM. General Votel, is al Qaeda decimated, non-operational in Pakistan and Afghanistan?

General VOTEL. I am not sure I can say they are completely non-operational. I think we have certainly applied a significant amount of pressure on them in Afghanistan in the area which we are responsible for, and I think we have limited their ability to do things that they would desire to do or to use that as a safe haven. That said, I think we have to continue to apply that pressure.

Senator GRAHAM. If we completely left on the CT front by 2017, January 2017, is it possible they could regenerate?

General VOTEL. I think it is possible, Senator, that they could regenerate if the conditions were not in place for the Afghans to be able to continue to provide that pressure themselves.

Senator GRAHAM. Let us just lay out the plan for the American people. By the end of the year—January 2015, how many troops are we going to have in Afghanistan? General Campbell?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, by the end of 2014, it is 9,800. The current plan by the end of 2015—the proposal right now is half of that, probably 5,500.

Senator GRAHAM. What percentage of counterterrorism forces exist today? How many counterterrorism forces, special forces do we have in Afghanistan today?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, General Votel gave the number of about 900 earlier today.

General VOTEL. Yes. I think the total number of special operations forces of the 9,800 is approximately 2,000, Senator. Of that—

Senator GRAHAM. I am talking about today.

General VOTEL. Today we are roughly 3,000-plus that are focused on the counterterrorism.

Senator GRAHAM. Does that include the enablers?

General VOTEL. It includes some of our enablers, but of course we are very reliant on general purpose forces.

Senator GRAHAM. Can you get back with me on that? Because we were told 7,000 yesterday.

General VOTEL. I think 7,000 is the total SOF effort that is present in country. That includes the efforts we do to train and advise and then a subset of that—

Senator GRAHAM. So 7,000 SOF-type forces, including enablers. January 2015, you are down, I was told yesterday, 1,800. You say 2,000. Is that about right?

General VOTEL. Approximately, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Let us fast forward to January 2017. How many do we expect to have given the current plan?

General VOTEL. I do not know that we have the answer to that question yet.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, let us just look at what we could have. Under the current construct, January 2017, we are down to a security cooperation force. Is that true, General Campbell?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, that is the current plan. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. How many security cooperation forces did we leave behind in Iraq?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I believe the rough number is probably in the neighborhood of 200–250.

Senator GRAHAM. Let us say it is 1,000 in Afghanistan. What will their chief mission be?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, the chief mission, if it follows the example of the Iraq piece, was really an FMC piece, foreign military sales.

Senator GRAHAM. How many counter terrorism forces were involved in the security cooperation team in Iraq?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I do not have that number.

Senator GRAHAM. How about zero?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I know it was a very low number and zero may be it in fact, but I do not have that number, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. This is the plan. The question is do we change the plan. Who fills in the delta between where we are at today and where we are going in 2017? Rate on a scale of A to F the ability of the Pakistani army and the Afghan army to cooperate together to provide counterterrorism capabilities to protect our homeland.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I have not looked at it in those terms, but my gut would tell me that it is not very good. It would be on the low end of the scale.

Senator GRAHAM. I have been told a D by some very prominent people.

General Votel, does that make sense to you?

General VOTEL. I agree with General Campbell's comments.

Senator GRAHAM. So if we cannot rely on the Afghans and the Pakistani elements to defend America from a regenerated al Qaeda type force and if being outside the country is not advisable, it seems to me that the line of defense that America enjoys today is going to vanish if something does not change. Is that a fair statement, General Campbell?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, following your analogy, it would be a fair statement.

Senator GRAHAM. The question for the committee is do we want it to vanish and the consequences to the Nation of it vanishing.

Finally, General Campbell, if the election process is not resolved within the constitutional process and somebody does not accept being Robert E. Lee and somebody accepting being Grant, what is the likelihood of Afghanistan holding together?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, if they cannot get through this election process to show the Afghan people and the rest of the world that they have done this political transfer of power peacefully, then right now the coalition forces will not continue to stay there after 2014. And I think it greatly increases the risk for Afghanistan to fracture.

Senator GRAHAM. I could not agree with you more.

And one final question as to the ethnic makeup of the Afghan Security Forces. About 45 percent are Pashtun, but most of them are from the east, very few from the southern region around Kandahar. What percentage of the senior military leadership in the Afghan Security Forces are Tajik? Is it disproportionately large?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I do not have the exact percentage. I would think that it is probably low, but I do not have that number, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. I think it is actually high. And what I fear is if there is a failure of the two sides to reconcile the election process, the army will fracture along sectarian lines. Do you agree with that as being a concern?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, it would be a concern. I think right now that the ANSF has been holding strong, and they have become, for lack of a better term, apolitical, a tribal.

Senator GRAHAM. Would that be in jeopardy if you do not get an election resolved quickly and fairly?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I think if the election does not get resolved, then what will probably happen is that—again, my opinion only—they will revert to what they have done for years and years and go back to the tribal affiliation.

Senator GRAHAM. That is my fear too.

Thank you very much for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here.

General Campbell, how would you describe the level of terrorist threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan right now whether from the Taliban, from the Haqqani Network, or others?

General CAMPBELL. The level directed against the United States, sir, or the level directed inside of Afghanistan?

Senator CRUZ. Both.

General CAMPBELL. Sir, I could not put a percentage or, you know, high-, medium-, low-threat level. What I would tell you is because of the great work of the men and women in the special operations forces, the general purpose forces, interagency, the threat to the homeland, because we keep the pressure on the networks there, continues to be mitigated. As I said earlier, we have not had another September 11-type attack, but that is not because people have not been trying to do that. But to give you a percentage on how it is inside there, I have not been on the ground since April. I would have to get on the ground to give you a better assessment myself.

Senator CRUZ. So if I understand your testimony correctly, it is that the threat to the homeland has been mitigated because of the pressure that we are putting on them currently. If that is right, that raises an obvious question, which is we have been advised that in 2016 the troop level will be reduced to 1,000 troops and in 2017 reduced to nothing. If that plan is carried out, what will be our capability to engage in counterterrorism operations and to keep that pressure you described on them to prevent terrorists from carrying out a serious threat on the Homeland?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, as General Votel mentioned earlier, we would have to take a look at other methods to do that, whether it is from outside of the country, other technologies. I think as he stated and as I stated earlier, for the next 2 years we will continue to work hard at building the capacity of the Afghan forces to have a better CT-type force. I know we are doing that now. We will continue to work on that. It also will depend upon what Pakistan does and how they continue to evolve over the next 2 years. But if we go to zero, as you stated, and we do have a threat at that point in time still, then we will have to come up with a different strategy to be able to keep that threat at—and mitigate that threat.

Senator CRUZ. So in your personal judgment, are you concerned about our ability to execute effective counterterrorism with a troop presence at zero?

General CAMPBELL. Sir, today again I am not the commander on the ground. I am very comfortable with where we are today based on everything I know and the great capacity of our special operating forces and the men and women on the ground. And if confirmed and I get on the ground, CT continues to be one of the missions that we have, then I will make sure that this committee and my leadership understands the resources I believe that are required to carry out that mission.

Senator CRUZ. Let me ask a couple of questions of Admiral Gortney. I want to start out on missile defense. Since June 12th, 386 rockets have been fired at Israel, and the threat facing both the United States and our allies is quite real. In last year's Defense Authorization Act, the Senate required the Department of Defense to study missile defense threats from the south such as the Gulf of Mexico. Can you discuss the potential threats that may face the homeland from the south and what NORTHCOM has or needs in order to deal with this threat?

Admiral GORTNEY. If confirmed, I am going to have to learn more about that particular mission, about the threats. I am not aware of the study of a ballistic missile threat from the south, but I have been focusing most against the North Korean and the Iranian threat. So I will have to get back to you on that.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator CRUZ. Well, thank you. I look forward to continuing that discussion.

Let us shift then to a different aspect which is border security. NORTHCOM helped secure the borders after 9/11. in your judgment, what additional role could NORTHCOM play given the crisis that we are facing on the border right now?

Admiral GORTNEY. NORTHCOM is currently providing support to Borders and Customs who are doing the very best that they possibly can, and we are in support to them. And we are currently providing them construction support, surveillance support, linguistic support, transportation support, and surveillance. We can continue to give as much as the Secretary asks of us in order to beef that up, but that is the limit of our authorities at this time.

Senator CRUZ. Given that over 50,000 unaccompanied children have illegally entered the country this year, do you think it is clear that international terrorist organizations are fully aware of our vulnerabilities along the border?

Admiral GORTNEY. I would have to assume they are, sir. There are seams. We were raised to find your seams and you will find your enemy. And whether there is the smuggling of children, whether it is smuggling of any kind, whether it is drugs, whether it is money, whether it is weapons, those seams can be exploited by terrorists as well. And that is why it is important for us to look into those seams with our interagency partners that gives us the surveillance and the ability to detect it, should it be occurring.

Senator CRUZ. And would you agree that the coyotes and the cartels that are smuggling in all of these little boys and little girls—that these are hardened, violent criminal organizations—

Admiral GORTNEY. Absolutely. Yes, sir, and operating in territories that they control that gives them the freedom of movement to do what they want to do, to move whatever they want to do. And they will move whatever they want for money.

Senator CRUZ. In your judgment, could the equipment returning from the CENTCOM theater of operations be potentially utilized by NORTHCOM and integrated on the U.S.-Mexico border, specifically the tracking and ISR systems?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir, if those authorities are expanded to us, I would forward up a request to use as much of the capability that we feel is necessary in order to do it. The Department of Defense is providing to law enforcement agency a great deal of surplus equipment that is coming back from Iraq, that has come back from Iraq and will come back from Afghanistan.

Senator CRUZ. The magnitude of the threat on the border, the southwest border in particular, continues to grow. In 2011, Border Patrol apprehended over 300,000 people unlawfully crossing the southwest border. Nearly 50,000 of them were from countries other than Mexico. Of those, 255 were aliens from special interest countries. Between 2006 and 2011, nearly 2,000 aliens from special interest countries were apprehended along the southwest border.

Given those numbers, would you agree that establishing control of our border with Mexico has serious implications for national security?

Admiral GORTNEY. Yes, sir. Given the seams that are there that we talked about previously, we want to be able to close up all of those seams for the illegal movement of anything, be it terrorists or be it immigrants. But I think from the numbers that you described, you described the magnitude, that it came from the border south of Mexico. And that is why it is important working with SOUTHCOM and our partner nations down there to work on the conditions, the long-term conditions, to prevent the flow of their people north into our borders, through all the other borders and into our borders. That is a long-term commitment that our Nation has to make, and if confirmed, working very closely with SOUTHCOM, we are there to do everything we can.

Senator CRUZ. Absolutely. Thank you, Admiral. Thank you, Generals.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Cruz.

Senator MCCASKILL. I have one brief question.

Chairman LEVIN. Sure. Senator McCaskill?

Senator MCCASKILL. I did not get a chance on my first round. I wanted to talk to you about the MOU, General Campbell, about detainees. We went into the one MOU in March 2012 with the Afghan Government, and then in an effort to reduce tensions, we signed another MOU in March 2013. It established the Afghan Review Board. That process has resulted in the release of hundreds of detainees that we can directly track to attacks on our forces. And I believe and I believe our Government shares my belief that this is a flagrant disregard of the principles outlined in the MOU.

Do you have any ideas as to how we can in the BSA—or maybe it is envisioned in the BSA—that we can stop this release of these detainees who have attacked our military?

General CAMPBELL. Ma'am, thank you for the question.

I have not looked at it in those terms. Certainly if confirmed, I will work with the interagency and the authorities that would be required to ensure that we can put some controls on that. You know, I think every military person on the ground there is concerned with the recidivism rate of detainees that are released and that come back into the fight. I think that is something that we have to continue to work with the Afghan Government on. Right now, based on the authorities, it is their call. We can continue to show them why this particular individual and what they have done and provide them the evidence that we have of their wrongdoing. But in the end right now, that is ultimately their sovereign country and their decision to release. We can continue to advise and I will continue to do that if confirmed, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. I know we are in limbo now on the BSA because we are in limbo about who is going to lead the country and when we are going to know who is going to lead the country and whether or not Karzai's influence is going to continue to be significant.

But I would think it would have a dramatic impact on the morale if we are capturing those who have killed our most precious resource in this country and then they open the doors a day later and let them out. And I just want to be on record that I know I share with the members of this committee that we want to do anything we can to help make sure that that situation does not become the norm.

General CAMPBELL. Thank you, ma'am.

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCaskill.

We thank you for your testimony, for your service. I hope we can get to, as we say, mark up your nominations very promptly and hopefully can get you through the confirmation process in the Senate very promptly. We will do our very best. You have great support on this committee, deservedly so. You have got great support from your families, which make it possible for you to serve as you do. We thank you. We thank them.

And we will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:52 a.m., the committee adjourned.]