

Stenographic Transcript

Before the

COMMITTEE ON

ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

To Consider the Nomination of: Honorable Ashton B. Carter to be Secretary of Defense

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY

1155 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W.

SUITE 200

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

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1 HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF HON. ASHTON B. CARTER  
2 TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3  
4

5 Wednesday, February 4, 2015

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7 U.S. Senate  
8 Committee on Armed Services  
9 Washington, D.C.

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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:28 a.m.,  
12 in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John  
13 McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe,  
15 Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst,  
16 Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Graham, Cruz, Reed, Nelson,  
17 McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal,  
18 Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

19 Also Present: Senator Lieberman.

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1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN MCCAIN, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM ARIZONA

3           Chairman McCain: Good morning. The committee meets  
4 this morning to consider the nomination of Dr. Ashton B.  
5 Carter to be the Secretary of Defense, and there are  
6 standard questions that by committee rule that I would put  
7 forth to Dr. Carter at this time.

8           Dr. Carter, in order to exercise its legislative and  
9 oversight responsibilities, it is important that this  
10 committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress  
11 are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other  
12 communication of information. Have you adhered to  
13 applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of  
14 interest?

15          Mr. Carter: I have.

16          Chairman McCain: Have you assumed any duties or  
17 undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the  
18 outcome of the confirmation process?

19          Mr. Carter: No.

20          Chairman McCain: Will you ensure that your staff  
21 complies with deadlines established for requested  
22 communications, including questions for the record in  
23 hearings?

24          Mr. Carter: I will.

25          Chairman McCain: Will you cooperate in providing

1 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional  
2 requests?

3 Mr. Carter: Yes.

4 Chairman McCain: Will those witnesses be protected  
5 from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

6 Mr. Carter: They will.

7 Chairman McCain: Do you agree, if confirmed, to  
8 appear and testify upon request before this committee?

9 Mr. Carter: Yes.

10 Chairman McCain: Do you agree to provide documents,  
11 including copies of electronic forms of communications, in  
12 a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted  
13 committee or to consult with the committee regarding the  
14 basis for any good-faith delay or denial in providing such  
15 documents?

16 Mr. Carter: Yes.

17 [Pause.]

18 Chairman McCain: That concludes our routine questions  
19 that we ask of the nominees.

20 And so, before the committee proceeds to the business  
21 before us today, on behalf of all members of the committee,  
22 we would like to extend our deepest condolences to the  
23 family of the brave Jordanian pilot brutally murdered at  
24 the hands of ISIL. Together with his family, the Jordanian  
25 armed forces, and the people of Jordan, we mourn the loss

1 of a hero that has galvanized the Nation and the world.

2 I hope this heinous crime finally leads us to put in  
3 place what thus far has been lacking, a comprehensive  
4 strategy to achieve the President's stated goal to degrade  
5 and destroy ISIL. Let there be no doubt, we still do not  
6 have a viable strategy to counter ISIL. And if you are not  
7 winning in war, you are losing.

8 America has no greater ally in the fight against  
9 terrorism than Jordan, and as we made clear to King  
10 Abdullah in our meeting yesterday, this committee's  
11 immediate concern is to ensure Jordan has all the equipment  
12 and resources necessary to continue taking the fight  
13 directly to ISIL. Many of us on this committee will be  
14 sending a letter to the administration on this urgent issue  
15 of concern, and we invite all of our fellow committee  
16 members to join us on that letter.

17 I think there was a consensus on both sides yesterday  
18 after the meeting with King Abdullah that we would send a  
19 letter out this morning. That letter will be distributed  
20 to the members for your perusal and signature so we can get  
21 that letter out as soon as possible, and I thank all  
22 members of the committee for their cooperation.

23 And I would also like to add that if legislation is  
24 required in order to achieve the goals that King Abdullah  
25 articulated to us yesterday as absolutely necessary to

1 defend his nation, we will be considering that legislation  
2 as well as soon as possible, and I thank all members.

3 The Senate Armed Services Committee meets today to  
4 consider the nomination of Dr. Ashton B. Carter to be  
5 Secretary of Defense. At the outset, I would like to  
6 express my sincere gratitude to Chuck Hagel for his years  
7 of service as an infantry sergeant in Vietnam, as a United  
8 States Senator from Nebraska, and as our Nation's 24th  
9 Secretary of Defense.

10 Chuck Hagel is a patriot and honorable public servant,  
11 and during his leadership of the Pentagon, the men and  
12 women of our armed services have had a true ally who always  
13 put their interests first. This committee wishes Chuck the  
14 best in his future endeavors.

15 Dr. Carter, even in the best of times, the position  
16 for which you have been nominated is one of the most  
17 challenging in Government. So I would like to thank your  
18 wife, Stephanie, and your children, Will and Ava, for being  
19 here today and for loaning you to our Nation in service  
20 once again.

21 Dr. Carter is one of America's most respected and  
22 experienced defense professionals. He has served as  
23 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic  
24 Affairs; Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition,  
25 Technology, and Logistics; and most recently as Deputy

1 Secretary of Defense. In these positions, I have known him  
2 and members of the committee have known him to be an  
3 honest, hard-working, and committed public servant.

4 I have had the opportunity to work together with Dr.  
5 Carter on several issues of shared concern, especially  
6 trying to reform the defense acquisition system, improving  
7 financial management of the department, and rolling back  
8 sequestration. And on these and other issues facing the  
9 Nation, we all look forward to having you as our partner  
10 once more, Dr. Carter.

11 But I must candidly express concern about the task  
12 that awaits you if confirmed and the influence you would  
13 have on some of the most critical national security issues  
14 facing our Nation. Two of your predecessors, Secretary  
15 Gates and Secretary Panetta, have severely criticized White  
16 House micromanagement of the Defense Department and over  
17 centralization of foreign and defense policy.

18 According to numerous news reports, Secretary Hagel  
19 experienced similar frustrations with the insular and  
20 indecisive White House national security team over issues  
21 ranging from ISIL to Ukraine, detention policy to  
22 sequestration. Dr. Carter, I sincerely hope the President  
23 who nominated you will empower you to lead and contribute  
24 to the fullest extent of your abilities because at a time  
25 of multiplying threats to our security, America needs a

1 strong Secretary of Defense now more than ever.

2 America is confronted today with a diverse and complex  
3 range of national security challenges. Iran is on the  
4 march. In Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere across the  
5 Middle East, ISIL continues to expand its influence and  
6 control of territory, as the new Director of the Defense  
7 Intelligence Agency recently testified to Congress.

8 A revisionist Russia and a rising China each seek in  
9 their own ways presents challenges to the liberal  
10 international order as we have known it since the end of  
11 World War II, a system that cherishes the rule of law,  
12 maintains free markets and free trade, and relegates wars  
13 of aggression to their rightful place in the bloody past.

14 Amid the present upheaval and conflict, American  
15 disengagement can only produce more turmoil and increase in  
16 the chance of large-scale American interventions at greater  
17 cost in blood and treasure. That is why we need a coherent  
18 national security strategy incorporating all elements of  
19 America's national power to sustain and defend the  
20 international order that has produced and extended  
21 security, prosperity, and liberty across the globe.

22 But crafting a reality-based national security  
23 strategy is simply impossible under the mindless mechanism  
24 of sequestration. Despite the growing array of complex  
25 threats to our security, we are on track to cut \$1 trillion

1 out of America's defense budget by 2021. Readiness is  
2 falling across the services, and morale is falling right  
3 along with it.

4 Army and Marine Corps end strength is dropping  
5 dangerously low. The Air Force is the oldest and smallest  
6 it has ever seen. The Navy's fleet is shrinking to pre-  
7 World War I levels. And last week, each of our service  
8 chiefs testified before this committee that American lives  
9 are being put at risk due to sequestration.

10 Sequestration represents a failure to meet our most  
11 basic constitutional responsibility to provide for the  
12 common defense. America's military can no longer be held  
13 hostage to domestic political disputes, totally separated  
14 from the reality of the threats we face.

15 More than 3 years after the passage of the Budget  
16 Control Act, it is time to put an end to this senseless  
17 policy. Rolling back sequestration is necessary to provide  
18 our military the strategy-driven budget necessary to  
19 confront the threats we face. But it will never be enough  
20 without reforming how the department procures major weapon  
21 systems.

22 Many of our military's challenges today are the  
23 results of years of mistakes and wasted resources. For  
24 example, over here, the Army's Future Combat System was  
25 initially estimated to be a \$92 billion project to

1 modernize into a cohesive network new Army vehicles and  
2 radios. But it more than doubled its price to \$200 billion  
3 without ever getting off the ground.

4 Secretary Gates and Congress wisely canceled Future  
5 Combat Systems, but only after spending \$20 billion with  
6 nothing to show for it.

7 Between these four systems -- the next chart up there,  
8 please. Between these four systems -- Future Combat  
9 Systems, expeditionary fighting vehicle, Comanche  
10 helicopter, and the VH-71 presidential helicopter -- we  
11 spent \$40 billion with nothing to show for it. That is \$40  
12 billion of training and equipment our military doesn't have  
13 today to confront the threats we face.

14 The problem continues today. The cost of the evolved  
15 expenditure -- expendable launch vehicle has exploded from  
16 around \$100 million per launch to \$400 million per launch  
17 over the last 15 years after the Air Force allowed years of  
18 sole-source contracts while, especially over the last few  
19 months, actively keeping out any other companies from  
20 competing. Hopefully, this year, we will see the Air Force  
21 certify a new entrant, and this competition can finally  
22 bring down costs and end our reliance on Russian rocket  
23 engines.

24 Like many programs that preceded it, LCS's cost  
25 overruns followed predictably from a chronic lack of

1 planning from its very outset in three key areas:  
2 undefined requirements, unrealistic initial cost estimates,  
3 and unreliable assessments of technological and integrated  
4 risk.

5 The Gerald Ford class nuclear aircraft carrier was  
6 originally supposed to cost \$10.5 billion. It will now  
7 cost \$12.9 billion, a \$2.4 billion increase, and we have no  
8 assurance such increases will not plague the follow-on  
9 ships. This is unacceptable.

10 The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter was originally estimated  
11 to cost around \$220 billion to research and engineer and  
12 build 2,800 airplanes. Now we are going to spend more than  
13 \$330 billion, a 50 percent increase, to buy 400 fewer  
14 airplanes.

15 Even more astounding than the amount of money  
16 squandered and wasted is the fact that in each of the  
17 weapon systems cases I have mentioned, no individual has  
18 been held responsible for these massive cost overruns and  
19 egregious acquisition failures, and the result has been the  
20 slow degradation of America's defense technological  
21 advantage, which we will lose altogether if we persist with  
22 business as usual in our acquisition policies. This must  
23 change. It will be a priority for this committee and for  
24 me personally to change it.

25 Dr. Carter, I look to you as a partner in all of these

1 endeavors. If confirmed, I hope you will provide  
2 independent leadership and work closely with the Congress  
3 on the issues that matter most: crafting a coherent  
4 national security strategy to meet today's threats, rolling  
5 back sequestration, continuing to reform the defense  
6 acquisition process, modernizing our military compensation  
7 system, and many others.

8 I thank you deeply for your willingness to serve once  
9 again, and I look forward to your testimony today.

10 Senator Reed?

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

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

4 Let me join you in extending our condolences to the  
5 family of the brave Jordanian pilot and to the people of  
6 Jordan.

7 And let me welcome Dr. Carter and thank him for his  
8 willingness to once again serve the Nation.

9 I also want to welcome Stephanie and Ava and Will and  
10 thank them for their sacrifice and service to the Nation.

11 Let me also recognize my colleague and friend, Joe  
12 Lieberman. Thank you, Senator, for being here today.

13 Dr. Carter is the former Deputy Secretary of Defense  
14 and Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and  
15 Logistics. You are uniquely qualified to lead the  
16 Department of Defense at a time when, as Henry Kissinger  
17 said last week here, the United States has not faced a more  
18 diverse and complex array of crises since the end of the  
19 second world war.

20 If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, you will be  
21 advising the President, leading the Defense Department, and  
22 working with our allies on a staggering number of complex  
23 international challenges to our national interests.

24 Iran. While the Secretary of Defense is not a party  
25 to the negotiations relating to Iran's nuclear program, the

1 Secretary will undoubtedly be responsible for any number of  
2 potential contingencies relating to the consequences of  
3 different outcomes of these negotiations. In the event of  
4 a breakdown in the negotiations, the consequences could  
5 alter the face of the region for generations and  
6 generations.

7       ISIL. ISIL's depraved and violent campaign in Iraq  
8 and Syria to establish an extremist caliphate threatens to  
9 erase borders, destabilize the region, and create a  
10 breeding ground for foreign fighters willing to return to  
11 the West to carry out attacks against United States  
12 interests. The department must provide critical leadership  
13 in a coalition effort that includes Arab and Muslim states  
14 to degrade and defeat ISIL while being careful to ensure  
15 that the U.S. does not end up owning the conflict in Syria  
16 and elsewhere.

17       Afghanistan. The hard-won gains of the past decade  
18 are significant but remain fragile. With Afghan security,  
19 our forces are taking over -- the Afghan forces are taking  
20 over responsibility for combating the Taliban and securing  
21 Afghanistan.

22       However, United States forces, with our coalition  
23 partners, must transition to a more limited mission of  
24 training and assisting the Afghan forces and conducting  
25 counterterrorism operations. Yet it remains to be seen

1 whether conditions on the ground in Afghanistan will  
2 improve sufficiently by the end of 2016 to warrant the pace  
3 of further reductions under the current plan.

4 Ukraine. Russia's aggression against Ukraine  
5 challenges order and progress in Europe. In the past few  
6 days, separatists in Eastern Ukraine with substantial  
7 Russian equipment, training, and leadership have abandoned  
8 any pretext of a ceasefire and launched a broad offensive  
9 against Ukrainian forces. The United States must determine  
10 how to best support the Ukrainian forces and people in  
11 defending their country.

12 Cyber. For years now, we have devoted significant  
13 attention to the looming and complex challenge of cyber  
14 warfare. The attack on the Sony Corporation of America,  
15 however, was in important respects a watershed event that  
16 should stimulate fresh critical thinking.

17 This attack demonstrates that a relatively small and  
18 weak rogue nation can reach across the ocean to cause  
19 extensive destruction of a U.S.-based economic target and  
20 very nearly succeed in suppression of freedom of expression  
21 through cyberspace. The real and manifest advantages of  
22 the offense over the defense in cyber warfare that enabled  
23 a militarily inferior nation to strike successfully against  
24 the homeland is a new and worrisome factor for national  
25 security.

1           These issues are only a few of the external challenges  
2 facing the Defense Department, but there are also  
3 significant internal challenges that must be addressed.

4           Sequestration. Last week before this committee,  
5 General Mattis said, "No foe in the field can wreak such  
6 havoc on our security that mindless sequestration is  
7 achieving today." General Odierno informed this committee  
8 that only one third of Army brigades are ready to fight.  
9 General Welsh testified that less than 50 percent of our  
10 combat squadrons are fully combat ready.

11           Sequestration threatens not only our national  
12 security, but risks damage to our public safety, health,  
13 transportation, education, and the environment. While the  
14 department manages through these difficult fiscal  
15 realities, Congress must find a balanced and bipartisan  
16 solution and repeal sequestration.

17           Rising costs. And the chairman has alluded to this  
18 very succinctly and very directly. Even without  
19 sequestration, the Defense Department would have to tackle  
20 rising costs, including personnel costs, which consume a  
21 third of the Defense Department's budget.

22           Yesterday, this committee heard the testimony of the  
23 Military Compensation and Retirement Committee. Their  
24 recommendations are far reaching and would fundamentally  
25 change military personnel benefits. But these

1 recommendations must be carefully considered because  
2 changes must occur to ensure the department can properly  
3 train and equip its fighting men and women.

4 The other major cost driver in the Defense Department  
5 is acquisition, and while the department has implemented  
6 significant acquisition reforms -- many under your  
7 leadership -- defense acquisition still takes too long and  
8 costs too much. We can and we should do more to streamline  
9 and improve the system.

10 And finally, but most importantly, if confirmed as  
11 Secretary of Defense, you will be leading 1.3 million  
12 active duty military, 820,000 Reserve and Guard, and  
13 773,000 civilians. They are tired and overtaxed from a  
14 decade of war and years of fiscal uncertainty.

15 They are wrestling with the same issues as civilian  
16 society, issues like sexual assault and suicide. Yet they  
17 committed to protecting this Nation and remain the finest  
18 force in the world.

19 Dr. Carter, I look forward to discussing these and  
20 other issues with you and thank you for your service.

21 Chairman McCain: Thank you, Senator Reed.

22 I note the presence of our beloved friend and former  
23 colleague, a member of this committee since the Coolidge  
24 administration, and we are very happy to have him here this  
25 morning, our beloved friend Joe Lieberman.

1 Senator Lieberman?  
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1           STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, FORMER U.S.  
2 SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

3           Senator Lieberman: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and it was a  
4 great comfort to me when I arrived during the Coolidge  
5 administration to find that you had already been here  
6 several years.

7           [Laughter.]

8           Senator Lieberman: I must say I am delighted to be  
9 here, and it is really somewhat sentimental for me to be  
10 here. I appreciate very much the opportunity.

11           It is a privilege for me to appear before the Senate  
12 Armed Services Committee today to introduce Dr. Ash Carter.  
13 This is not the first time I have had this privilege. In  
14 fact, it is the third time.

15           The first was on March 26, 2009, when Ash was  
16 nominated to be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition,  
17 Technology, and Logistics. Second was on September 13,  
18 2011, when he was nominated to be Deputy Secretary of  
19 Defense.

20           So today, I suppose I could say I don't think I have  
21 ever been so pleased to be asked to repeat myself as I am  
22 honored to have been by Ash Carter to introduce him to you  
23 as President Obama's nominee to be the 25th Secretary of  
24 Defense of the United States of America.

25           Ash Carter graduated from Yale College summa cum laude

1 with a unique combination of majors, physics and medieval  
2 history. During his time as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, he  
3 temporarily resolved the question, which was on everyone's  
4 mind, I am sure, about whether he was primarily a historian  
5 or physicist. He earned a doctorate at Oxford in  
6 theoretical physics.

7 Nevertheless, to confound observers and  
8 prognosticators, he went on to become the Chair of the  
9 International and Global Affairs faculty at Harvard at the  
10 John F. Kennedy School of Government and Co-Director of the  
11 Preventive Defense Project at the Kennedy School's Belfer  
12 Center.

13 Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, it would really be hard to  
14 find someone to serve as Secretary of Defense who combines  
15 as much practical Pentagon experience with so deep a  
16 background in national security policy as Ash Carter. The  
17 fact that you have convened this morning to consider his  
18 nomination means that the talents and abilities of a  
19 brilliant and extraordinary strategic thinker and public  
20 servant and administrator can again be put to use for our  
21 Nation.

22 It also means, as you have said, that Ash Carter has  
23 again chosen, with the support of his wife and family, to  
24 answer the call to duty to serve our country. Over the  
25 past 30 years, Dr. Carter has worked directly or indirectly

1 for virtually every Secretary of Defense, no matter the  
2 political party of the Secretary. He knows the department  
3 he has been asked to lead very well and, therefore, can  
4 begin leading it on day one.

5 From 1993 to 1996, Ash served as the Assistant  
6 Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy.  
7 During that time, he worked on the landmark Nunn-Lugar Arms  
8 Control Program, and I got to know him when we traveled  
9 together with Secretary of Defense Bill Perry and Senators  
10 Nunn and Lugar to the former Soviet Union to observe them  
11 destroying nuclear submarines and dismantling missiles and  
12 missile sites as part of Nunn-Lugar.

13 I think we actually bonded personally at one dinner  
14 hosted by the high command of the Russian military in which  
15 I believe it is accurate to say that Ash and I were the  
16 only two members of the American delegation to keep up with  
17 the vodka toasts of friendship with our Russian colleagues.

18 [Laughter.]

19 Senator Lieberman: When I think back to those days  
20 and you think of what is happening in Russia today and what  
21 Russia is doing outside its borders, those memories are  
22 really quite poignant. Too much has changed for the worse.

23 But in thinking about introducing Ash today, he has  
24 done so much. It is important to note that he spearheaded  
25 some developments during that period of time, particularly

1 the removal of nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Kazakhstan,  
2 and Belarus, which, needless to say, have and continue to  
3 make our world a lot safer than it would otherwise be.

4 Speaking of travel, Ash had the good judgment, Mr.  
5 Chairman, to come with us several times to the Munich  
6 Security Conference. And I must say watching him there, I  
7 was impressed by the range and depth of his relationships  
8 with the top level of particularly military, but also  
9 foreign policy leaders of our European allies in NATO.

10 I would say, and I would guess that members of the  
11 committee would agree, that Ash Carter's most important  
12 contributions during his past Pentagon service have been in  
13 American lives saved on the battlefield. He was the  
14 driving force in providing 6,500 MRAP vehicles to our  
15 troops in Afghanistan in record time, an action that saved  
16 many lives and gave our troops the confidence that there  
17 was someone in Washington who was working for them.

18 Ash Carter's fierce dedication to our warfighters is  
19 well known and I think will be one of his greatest  
20 legacies. More broadly, the improvements he brought about  
21 in the Pentagon acquisitions process show his mastery of  
22 this complex and critical field and will make him an  
23 excellent partner for you, Mr. Chairman, in the continuing  
24 work that I know you, Senator Reed, and this committee want  
25 to do to improve defense procurement.

1 Dr. Carter's service on boards and commissions  
2 includes the Defense Science Board, the Defense Policy  
3 Board, the Secretary of State's International Security  
4 Advisory Board, and the Congressional Commission on the  
5 Strategic Posture of the United States.

6 Ash Carter has been accurately described as a man for  
7 all seasons, a man of enormous talents and experiences. It  
8 is also true that he has made choices in his life about how  
9 he has used his talents and experiences. He has chosen to  
10 go where his intellect, his values, and his patriotism have  
11 called him.

12 We are fortunate, indeed, that President Obama has  
13 nominated Dr. Carter to be our next Secretary of Defense.  
14 And if I may say so, the President is fortunate that he  
15 will have so experienced a leader at the Pentagon and so  
16 wise an adviser in the inner counsels of this  
17 administration. All of which explains why I am so truly  
18 honored to introduce Ashton Carter to this great committee  
19 at this time.

20 Thank you.

21 Chairman McCain: Thank you. Thank you very much,  
22 Senator Lieberman. We are always glad to have you here,  
23 and if you would like to take a seat on the dais, we  
24 welcome it.

25 Dr. Carter, welcome.

1 STATEMENT OF HON. ASHTON B. CARTER

2 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member  
3 Reed, all the distinguished members of this committee.  
4 Thank you all. Thank you for inviting me to appear before  
5 you as President Obama's nominee to be Secretary of  
6 Defense.

7 I am honored by his trust and confidence and also by  
8 the prospect of serving once again the troops and the  
9 country that I love so much.

10 If confirmed, I will take the office of Secretary of  
11 Defense after one of our Nation's most honorable and  
12 conscientious public servants, Chuck Hagel. I worked for  
13 Secretary Hagel, and I have known him for decades, though  
14 not over all of the many decades he served our country.

15 Among the many traits I admire in Secretary Hagel is  
16 the tireless care with which he carried out the most solemn  
17 duty of a Secretary of Defense, which is to the relatively  
18 few brave young men and women who defend the rest of us.

19 I also thank Senator Lieberman for his warm and  
20 generous introduction -- as he noted, it is not the first  
21 time he has done so -- but especially for his service to  
22 this body and to the Nation over many years. Thank you,  
23 sir.

24 My perfect wife, Stephanie, and wonderful children,  
25 Will and Ava, are behind me, as they always are every day,

1 and I thank them.

2 The President frequently notes that America has the  
3 greatest fighting force the world has ever known. To the  
4 men and women of the Department of Defense who make it so  
5 and to this committee, which watches over them, I pledge  
6 that if I am confirmed as Secretary of Defense to keep  
7 faith with the dedication that brought them into service,  
8 to ensure that their training and equipment are as superb  
9 as they are; that the well-being, safety, and dignity of  
10 each of them and their families is fostered and respected;  
11 and that decisions about when and where they are sent into  
12 harm's way are made with the greatest reflection and care.

13 The principal reason that Stephanie and I made a U-  
14 turn in our life to accept the offer of nomination is our  
15 respect and devotion to them.

16 To chairman, members of the committee, I will be  
17 brief, if confirmed as Secretary of Defense, my  
18 responsibilities would be to protect America and its  
19 friends and allies in a turbulent and dangerous world. At  
20 the same time, I never lose sight of the fact the United  
21 States remains the strongest, most resilient, and most  
22 influential nation on earth.

23 We do, indeed, have the finest fighting force the  
24 world has ever known. We have an innovative economy that  
25 has long set the pace for the rest of the world. Our

1 country has friends and allies in every corner of the  
2 world, and our adversaries have few. This is clear  
3 testimony to the appeal of our values, our principles, and  
4 our leadership.

5 All this makes me proud and hopeful and determined to  
6 grab hold of the bright opportunities in front of us, as  
7 well as to counter the very real dangers we face. These  
8 dangers, as the chairman has noted, include continuing  
9 turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa and the  
10 malignant and savage terrorism emanating from it, an  
11 ongoing war in Afghanistan, the reversion to old-style  
12 security thinking in parts of Europe, the longstanding  
13 tensions from the past and the rapid changes in Asia, and  
14 the continuing need for the stabilizing role of the United  
15 States in that region, which is so important to the future,  
16 the continuing imperative to counter the spread or use of  
17 weapons of mass destruction, and new dangers in new domains  
18 like cyber, as noted by Senator Reed.

19 Strategy. Strategy needs to keep all these problems  
20 in perspective and to craft lasting approaches to each of  
21 them.

22 I have promised President Obama that if I am confirmed  
23 I will furnish him my most candid strategic advice. In  
24 formulating that advice, I intend to confer widely among  
25 civilian and military leaders, including on this committee,

1 experts, and foreign partners. And when the President  
2 makes a decision, I will also ensure that the Department of  
3 Defense implements it with its long-admired excellence.

4 I will also ensure that the President receives candid  
5 professional military advice. This is not only consonant  
6 with the law, as written in this very committee, but with  
7 good sense, since our military leaders possess wide and  
8 deep experience and expertise.

9 The law also prescribes the chain of command. And if  
10 I am confirmed as Secretary of Defense, I will be a  
11 stickler for the chain of command.

12 I would also like to say a word about the defense  
13 budget. Chairman, members of the committee, I very much  
14 hope that we can find a way together out of the wilderness  
15 of sequester. Sequester is risky to our defense. It  
16 introduces turbulence and uncertainty that are wasteful,  
17 and it conveys a misleadingly diminished picture of our  
18 power in the eyes of friends and foes alike.

19 I am not familiar with the details of the 2016 budget  
20 submitted just a couple days ago, and if confirmed, I will  
21 come back here for a full posture hearing to discuss them.  
22 But I strongly support the President's request for relief  
23 from sequester caps in 2016 and through the Future Year  
24 Defense Plan.

25 If confirmed, I will do my part to assist the

1 President in working with Congress to resolve the overall  
2 issues of the country's fiscal future, of which the defense  
3 budget is a part. But I cannot suggest support and  
4 stability for the defense budget without at the same time  
5 frankly noting that not every defense dollar is spent as  
6 well as it should be.

7 The taxpayer cannot comprehend it, let alone support  
8 the defense budget, when they read, as the chairman has  
9 noted, of cost overruns, lack of accounting and  
10 accountability, needless overhead, and the like. This must  
11 stop.

12 Every company, State, and city in the country has had  
13 to lean itself out in recent years, and it should be no  
14 different for the Pentagon. And in this matter I know I am  
15 echoing Chairman McCain, Senator Reed, and this committee,  
16 which has long called for and taken concrete action on  
17 reform of acquisition and other parts of the defense  
18 enterprise in the Weapon System Acquisition Reform Act of  
19 2009 and, before that, dating back to the Packard  
20 Commission and the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

21 I began my own career in defense in connection with  
22 the implementation of the Packard Commission's  
23 recommendations. The issues and solutions change over  
24 time, as technology and industry change. They extend from  
25 acquisition, which was highlighted by the chairman, in

1 programs like Future Combat Systems and the presidential  
2 helicopter, which I canceled -- I signed the cancellation  
3 orders for in 2009 -- to the Ford aircraft carrier, which  
4 Senator McCain also noted, which was not satisfactorily  
5 solved and still not, its overruns. And I agree with the  
6 chairman in that regard. We have got a lot of work to do.

7 The issues and solutions for acquisition reform change  
8 over time, as technology and industry change, as I noted.  
9 They extend from acquisition -- and this is important -- to  
10 all other parts of the defense budget -- force size,  
11 compensation, and training, as well as equipment.

12 If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, I pledge to make  
13 needed change in the Pentagon, but also to seek support  
14 from Congress because I know that in the end, Congress  
15 holds the power of the purse. I look forward to  
16 partnership with this committee in what can be a period of  
17 historic advance.

18 Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, members of the committee,  
19 thank you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come  
20 before you. If confirmed, I will seek out your thoughts,  
21 perspectives, and combat experiences to help me do the best  
22 job.

23 Thank you.

24 [The prepared statement of Mr. Carter follows:]

25

1 Chairman McCain: Thank you very much, Dr. Carter.

2 And we will have multiple rounds, but we will have  
3 short ones, 5 minutes, because that will give more  
4 opportunity for members to ask questions.

5 And in about an hour, Dr. Carter needs a short break.  
6 As we all know, he is recovering from recent surgery. So  
7 we will take a break then for as long as you need, and we  
8 will go into this afternoon so that all members are able to  
9 ask sufficiently the questions that they have.

10 And to start with, Dr. Carter, members of this  
11 committee met with King Abdullah yesterday. He made a  
12 graphic statement about needing some weapons and the  
13 difficulties he is having with those, and we will be  
14 signing a letter this morning. And as I said, it may  
15 require some legislation.

16 But are you aware of the problems that Jordanians are  
17 having with acquiring some of the weapons that they need?

18 Mr. Carter: I am not, Mr. Chairman. I learned of  
19 them this morning as well. And if I am confirmed, I  
20 definitely want to find out what they are and resolve them  
21 because we need partners on the ground to beat ISIS, and  
22 the Jordanian people have clearly reacted the way that  
23 encourages us to support them in combating what is really a  
24 savage and nasty --

25 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

1           Last week, General Mattis was before this committee.  
2           He said in Afghanistan, we need to consider if we are  
3           asking the same outcome there as we saw last summer in  
4           Iraq, should we pull out all our troops on the  
5           administration's proposed timeline, and the gains achieved  
6           at great cost against our enemy in Afghanistan are  
7           reversible.

8           General Keane said all we accomplished in Afghanistan  
9           will be at risk as it was in Iraq if the troops are pulled  
10          out not based on the conditions on the ground. How can we  
11          not learn the obvious and painful lessons from Iraq?

12          Do you have a position on the withdrawal from Iraq?  
13          Do you believe that it should be calendar based as it is  
14          now, or should we be looking at the conditions on the  
15          ground to base those decisions?

16          Mr. Carter: Excuse me. Mr. Chairman, thank you and  
17          also thank you for your consideration about the back. I  
18          appreciate that.

19          The campaign in Afghanistan has been close to my heart  
20          for all the time that I have been associated with the  
21          Department of Defense. I have been there a number of  
22          times. I think that success is possible there but, as you  
23          indicate, requires the United States to continue its  
24          campaign and finish the job.

25          I understand we have a plan. The President has a

1 plan. I support that plan. At the same time, it is a  
2 plan. And if I am confirmed and I ascertain, as the years  
3 ago by, that we need to change that plan, I will recommend  
4 those changes to the President.

5 Chairman McCain: Well, all I can say is it is not a  
6 matter of years. It is a matter of weeks, actually,  
7 because one of the major withdrawals is going to start this  
8 coming June. And so, I hope that you will assess that as  
9 quickly and as carefully as possible.

10 In his testimony to the committee this week, Dr.  
11 Kissinger said, "In the Middle East, a multiple of evils  
12 are unfolding simultaneously. Iran has exploited this  
13 turmoil to pursue positions of power within other  
14 countries." Do you agree with that?

15 Mr. Carter: Yes, I do.

16 Chairman McCain: Do you believe that we need to have  
17 a strategy to combat ISIS and the continued successes in  
18 many respects that they are achieving?

19 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

20 Chairman McCain: Do you believe we have a strategy at  
21 this time?

22 Mr. Carter: I believe I understand our strategy at  
23 this time, Mr. Chairman. I also have the intention, again  
24 if confirmed, to make it my first priority to go there, to  
25 talk to our leaders, military leaders there, to confer with

1 you --

2 Chairman McCain: What do you understand the strategy  
3 to be?

4 Mr. Carter: -- and to -- I think the strategy  
5 connects ends and means, and our ends with respect to ISIL  
6 needs to be its lasting defeat. I say "lasting" because it  
7 is important that when they get defeated, they stay  
8 defeated. And that is why it is important that we have  
9 those on the ground there who will ensure that they stay  
10 defeated once defeated.

11 It is different on the two sides of the border. It is  
12 one enemy, but it is two different contexts. Mr. Chairman,  
13 in Iraq, the force that will keep them defeated is the  
14 Iraqi security forces. That is our strategy is to  
15 strengthen them and to make them that force.

16 On the Syrian side, not to take too long about it, we  
17 are trying to build the force that will keep them defeated,  
18 and that is going to be a combination of moderate Syrian  
19 forces and regional forces.

20 Chairman McCain: Well, it sounds like -- doesn't  
21 sound like a strategy to me, but maybe we can flesh out  
22 your goals. It sounds like a series of goals to me. Do  
23 you believe we should be supplying arms, defensive arms to  
24 Ukrainians?

25 Mr. Carter: I very much incline in that direction,

1 Mr. Chairman, because I think we need to support the  
2 Ukrainians in defending themselves. The nature of those  
3 arms I can't say right now because I don't have -- I  
4 haven't conferred with our military leaders or Ukrainian  
5 leaders. But I incline in the direction of providing them  
6 with arms, including, to get to what I am sure your  
7 question is, lethal arms.

8 Chairman McCain: Thank you very much, Dr. Carter.

9 Senator Reed?

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

11 One way to evolve a strategy is to first look at the  
12 threat. So the Middle East, do you believe the most  
13 immediate threat there to U.S. interests and to the region  
14 is ISIL?

15 Mr. Carter: I hesitate to say ISIL only because in  
16 the back of my mind is Iran as well. So I think that we  
17 have two immediate substantial dangers in the Middle East.  
18 One is ISIL, and one is Iran.

19 Senator Reed: In terms of our current military  
20 operations, they are clearly directed at ISIL.

21 Mr. Carter: That is true.

22 Senator Reed: Is that the appropriate response at  
23 this moment to the threats in the region?

24 Mr. Carter: It is.

25 Senator Reed: And as you point out, there are two

1 theaters. One is Iraq, where we have more traction, and  
2 the other is Syria. So you would think in terms of  
3 responding to the threat that our actions or our vigorous  
4 support of the current Iraqi government is appropriate in  
5 responding to this ISIL threat?

6 Mr. Carter: It is appropriate. If I -- as I said,  
7 whether and how to improve it will be my first job if I am  
8 confirmed as Secretary of Defense.

9 Senator Reed: One of the issues, particularly with  
10 respect to Iraq, is that not only improvement, as you  
11 suggest in your comments, the long-term defeat of ISIL  
12 rests not just on military operations, but on political  
13 arrangements and what we have witnessed in Iraq  
14 particularly was a political arrangement that  
15 conscientiously and deliberately degraded the Sunni  
16 population, at least that is their perception, and gave  
17 rise.

18 So would you acknowledge that part of our strategy has  
19 to be constituting an Iraqi government that is perceived by  
20 its own people as being a bit fairer and inclusive?

21 Mr. Carter: Absolutely. That is what the previous  
22 government of Iraq did not do, and that was instrumental in  
23 their military collapse.

24 Senator Reed: And one of the issues that complicates  
25 -- and you pointed out in terms of around being a strategic

1 issue for the United States in the region is their relative  
2 influence in Iraq and throughout the region was enhanced  
3 over the last several years by the government in Iraq, by  
4 the Maliki government. Is that accurate?

5 Mr. Carter: That is accurate, yes.

6 Senator Reed: So we are now in a position of trying  
7 to essentially contain the regional ambitions of the  
8 Iranians and kinetically defeat the Sunni radical  
9 Islamists. Is that the strategy?

10 Mr. Carter: Yes, that sounds right.

11 Senator Reed: And you understand that, and that, to  
12 you, is a coherent strategy?

13 Mr. Carter: It is, yes.

14 Senator Reed: Now that means that, you know, you are  
15 prioritizing or the administration is prioritizing these  
16 actions you have talked about and building over time a  
17 capability in Syria. In terms of using your scarce  
18 resources in addressing the most serious threats, is that a  
19 coherent response in your mind?

20 Mr. Carter: I think it is the beginning of a  
21 strategic response. I think that, as I noted, on the  
22 Syrian side of the border, the assembling of the force that  
23 is going to keep ISIL defeated there is -- we are in an  
24 early stage of trying to build that force. We are  
25 participating in the building of that force, but I think it

1 is fair to say that we are in an earlier stage there.

2 On the Iraqi side, we have the existing Iraqi security  
3 forces.

4 Senator Reed: Let me --

5 Mr. Carter: Senator Reed?

6 Senator Reed: Please.

7 Mr. Carter: If I can just note one other thing? It  
8 may be something I missed in your line of questioning.

9 There is an issue looming over this, which is the role  
10 of Iraq in the whole region -- I mean Iran, excuse me, in  
11 the whole region, which is why I pointed that out at the  
12 beginning. That is a serious complication.

13 Senator Reed: I agree. Let me turn to the issue of  
14 Ukraine, which the chairman raised the issue of providing  
15 weapon systems to defend or allow the Ukrainians to defend  
16 themselves. But weapon systems have to be clearly  
17 differentiated from a commitment of American military  
18 personnel. Would that be a clear line of demarcation that  
19 you would draw?

20 Mr. Carter: Excuse me. I was suggesting the  
21 provision of equipment to the Ukrainian military, yes.

22 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Dr. Carter, for  
23 your service.

24 And Mr. Chairman, thank you.

25 Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker?

1 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

2 And thank you for your testimony, Dr. Carter. I look  
3 forward to supporting your confirmation and look forward to  
4 working with you.

5 At a point some 2 or 3 years ago, the Pentagon, along  
6 with the administration, made a decision to rebalance to  
7 the Asia Pacific. So I want to ask you about that.

8 Would you agree that our challenges with regard to an  
9 expansionist Russian agenda, the situation in Eastern  
10 Europe, and other areas near the former Soviet Union have  
11 become more challenging, and that also our challenges in  
12 the Middle East are more problematic now than when the  
13 decision was made to pivot to the Asia Pacific?

14 Mr. Carter: You are absolutely right. The issues in  
15 the Middle East and in Ukraine have developed since we  
16 first formulated that rebalance. That is true.

17 Senator Wicker: And to the extent that -- well, tell  
18 me this. How do you understand, as a prospective Secretary  
19 of Defense, the rebalancing to the Asia Pacific will  
20 actually work? And can we afford to move resources from  
21 Europe and the Middle East to the Asia Pacific, given the  
22 circumstances that we see today in 2015?

23 Mr. Carter: Thank you. Thank you for that question.

24 The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, as the term  
25 goes, is in my eyes a commitment to continue the pivotal

1 American military role in the Asia-Pacific theater, which  
2 has kept peace and stability there for decades now.

3 It has been that American underwritten peace and  
4 stability in a region where there are still many historical  
5 animosities and unhealed wounds of the past, it is that  
6 stability underwritten by the United States that has  
7 allowed the Japanese miracle, then the South Korean  
8 miracle, then the Southeast Asian miracle, and today the  
9 Chinese and Indian miracle. It is thanks to us that that  
10 environment has been created.

11 And in a sentence, I think the rebalance is a  
12 commitment to keep that going. Now you ask can we do that  
13 and keep our commitments in the Middle East and to Europe  
14 at the same time? And my view is that we can and must.  
15 And let me say why that is possible.

16 I think that while ISIL and events in Ukraine are  
17 terribly important in their own regard and require a lot of  
18 attention and take a lot of attention. They are on the  
19 television. They are in the headlines and so forth. The  
20 Asia Pacific is not.

21 We have to remember that half the population of the  
22 world and half of its economy is in that region, and our  
23 military presence there, the naval presence, the air  
24 presence, our allies and partnerships finding new allies,  
25 building new partnerships, conducting exercises, those

1 things can be done at the same time that we are doing what  
2 we need to do in Ukraine and that we are doing what we need  
3 to do in Iraq and Syria. So I think the world needs to  
4 know the United States can do more than one thing at once  
5 and we can keep our commitments there.

6 Senator Wicker: Is it going to be necessary to move  
7 resources from the Middle East and from concern over Europe  
8 and Russia to the Asia Pacific, to move resources? Sounds  
9 like you are proposing a continuation of longstanding,  
10 ongoing policy.

11 Mr. Carter: Well, it is a longstanding, ongoing  
12 policy. But to keep the American military predominance in  
13 the Asia Pacific requires us continually to modernize and  
14 add to what we have there. We are adding ships. We are  
15 adding electronic warfare. That is, we are improving our  
16 forces qualitatively. We are investing in them.

17 A new bomber, which is, importantly, intended for that  
18 theater, which I think is very important. So we are buying  
19 new capabilities that won't necessarily have a role in the  
20 Middle East or in NATO but are principally designed for  
21 that theater, and I think we need to keep those investments  
22 going.

23 Senator Wicker: You don't advocate a diminishment of  
24 the resources we are spending with regard to the Middle  
25 East or Russia and Europe at this point, do you?

1           Mr. Carter: No. I think we need to keep our  
2 investments going. And when it comes to day-to-day  
3 deployments -- I don't want to get into too much detail  
4 here, but I am sure you know this. When it comes to day-  
5 to-day deployments and the location of ships and so forth,  
6 we do move back and forth between the Gulf and the Pacific,  
7 and so there is some tradeoff there on a day-to-day basis.

8           But in terms of our fundamental investments in new  
9 capabilities and remaining ahead of any other military  
10 opponent, including in Asia, and in building and  
11 strengthening our alliances with Japan, with South Korea,  
12 with the Philippines, with Australia, with Thailand, and  
13 new partnerships with other countries like India, we need  
14 to keep all that going. It is an important part of the  
15 world.

16           Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir.

17           Chairman McCain: Senator Donnelly?

18           Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
19 Thank you and your family.

20           And I also want to thank Secretary Hagel for his  
21 service as Secretary of Defense and to our Nation. He took  
22 the point in Vietnam. He took the point for our Defense  
23 Department, and we are grateful for what he has done.

24           I was privileged to travel with some other Senators  
25 recently to the Middle East, and we talked to a number of

1 the nations there. And I just want to make sure that in  
2 your mind, do you believe when we look at ISIS our goal  
3 should be to eliminate them on a permanent basis?

4 Mr. Carter: Yes, I do.

5 Senator Donnelly: One of my concerns is time. And  
6 what I mean by that is when you look at the map of where  
7 they were a year ago, where they are now, they have  
8 substantially grown.

9 And so, we have windows that we are working in. And  
10 when we look at our plan, I am concerned about how when you  
11 look at the depth and the size of our plan that what it  
12 really does, they have 30,000. We are talking hundreds.  
13 It gives them time to grow even more, and you worry about a  
14 tipping point where X cross Y -- crosses Y, and they become  
15 much more difficult.

16 So what kind of time plan are you looking at to get  
17 movement on this?

18 Mr. Carter: I think it is important to strike back at  
19 ISIL as we are doing from the air, but to begin to retake  
20 territory as soon as we can build the forces on the ground,  
21 which will be local forces that are capable of sustaining  
22 defeat when we have achieved defeat in a given location.

23 So I hope that in coming months, and again, I am not  
24 in a position to have any special information about this or  
25 talk to our commanders or so forth. But it is my

1 understanding that in coming months, the Iraqi security  
2 forces, assisted by us, will begin to take back territory  
3 from ISIL.

4 And I think you are right that it is important to get  
5 that territory back soon because you don't want them to  
6 settle in, and you don't want the population to settle in  
7 to having ISIL rule them in their barbaric way.

8 Senator Donnelly: And when we talked to the king  
9 yesterday and to others in the region, what they said is we  
10 are not asking you to fight our battle, but we need you as  
11 a partner, shoulder to shoulder, to help us train, to help  
12 us plan, to help us implement. Is that what you see our  
13 ground role as?

14 Mr. Carter: Yes, I think exactly right. You are  
15 referring to the assistance we provide to the Jordanians,  
16 if I understand the question? Absolutely.

17 Senator Donnelly: Right. And to the other nations  
18 that are looking at the same thing.

19 Mr. Carter: That is right.

20 Senator Donnelly: One of the things we had testimony  
21 on yesterday was in regards to -- switching themes a little  
22 bit -- the DoD and the VA with drug formularies. We lost  
23 479 young men and women to suicide in 2013 who were in the  
24 military. We lost 132 in combat. We don't want to lose  
25 any more.

1           So part of what General Chiarelli was telling us is  
2   that with the drug formularies, it causes dramatic change  
3   for those who are coming off and going into the VA. All of  
4   a sudden, they look up, they are being forced on different  
5   drugs and stuff. As Secretary of Defense, are there things  
6   you can do to help us with that?

7           Mr. Carter: I think there definitely are and must be.  
8   I think the relationship between the Department of Defense  
9   and the Department of Veterans Affairs has to be a  
10   relationship like this because it is one soldier. They  
11   cross the boundary from one to the other when they move and  
12   become a veteran, but it is one soldier.

13           And so, I am familiar, or that is I remember from  
14   years back when I was in the department, of this question  
15   of the different formularies. People call -- DoD calls a  
16   drug one thing, and VA calls it another thing, and they  
17   have one set of dosages, and the other --

18           Senator Donnelly: And our troops --

19           Mr. Carter. We have got to get these together. It is  
20   one patient. It is one soldier.

21           Senator Donnelly: They get lost in the shuffle.

22           Mr. Carter: Exactly.

23           Senator Donnelly: And it is at a most critical time  
24   to them personally, and so your absolute commitment to  
25   that, and I know it is, is going to be critical.

1           I wanted to ask you one other thing, as I am starting  
2 to get a little short on time. And that is your expertise  
3 in the nuclear area, and I was wondering if you are  
4 familiar with a report issued by Madelyn Creedon and Rear  
5 Admiral Fanta? They did a department-wide nuclear  
6 enterprise review. It is classified, but it is very  
7 sobering.

8           And I just want to make sure that -- I didn't know if  
9 you had seen it yet. If you have, will you take ownership  
10 of the issue and ensure its findings are addressed?

11           Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

12           I have not had access to that particular report. But  
13 with respect to the nuclear enterprise, I have a long  
14 history in that regard and am a strong believer in a safe,  
15 secure, and reliable nuclear arsenal for the United States.  
16 And that encompasses both the nuclear weapons themselves  
17 and the delivery systems of the Department of Defense and  
18 the command and control systems for it.

19           So I can well understand if they are calling attention  
20 to the enduring need to make that a priority. That is  
21 another thing that is not in the newspapers every day.  
22 Thank God, nuclear weapons being used aren't in the  
23 newspapers every day. But it is a bedrock of our security,  
24 and we can never forget that.

25           And so, continuing quality and excellence in the

1 nuclear enterprise is very important. I am committed to  
2 that.

3 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

4 Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

5 Senator Ayotte: I want to thank the chairman.

6 I want to thank you, Dr. Carter, for all your service  
7 to the Nation and your willingness to serve again.

8 I would like to ask you about according to the  
9 Director of National Intelligence, we know that at least  
10 107 terrorists who were formerly detained at Guantanamo and  
11 then released have been confirmed of reengaging in  
12 terrorism. And in fact, an additional 77 are also  
13 suspected of that. In fact, we know that public reports  
14 tell us that at least two Guantanamo detainees have also  
15 joined ISIS.

16 And so, what I would like to ask you, number one,  
17 there were reports that Secretary Hagel said that he was  
18 under pressure to increase the pace of transfers of  
19 Guantanamo detainees by the administration. And as you  
20 know, the statute says that you, as the incoming Secretary  
21 of Defense, will have to make the determination, and only  
22 if you determine that the actions -- there is a whole set  
23 of factors. But in particular, you have to determine that  
24 actions that have been or are planned to be taken will  
25 substantially mitigate the risk of such an individual

1 engaging or reengaging in any terrorist or other hostile  
2 activity that threatens the United States or United States  
3 persons or our interests or I would assume our allies as  
4 well.

5 And so, I would ask you, Secretary Carter -- soon to  
6 be Secretary Carter, thank you. But I would ask you to  
7 tell us and to make a commitment to this committee that you  
8 will not succumb to any pressure by this administration to  
9 increase the pace of transfers from Guantanamo. Will you  
10 commit to that?

11 Mr. Carter: Absolutely, Senator.

12 Senator Ayotte: And I would also ask you to commit to  
13 this committee that you will take with the utmost  
14 seriousness because we had General Mattis before the  
15 committee the other day, and he expressed deep concern over  
16 the notion that one of our men and women in uniform could  
17 confront a terrorist that we had previously captured and  
18 the implications to them, that you will commit to this  
19 committee and to all of us that you will not allow the  
20 release of someone that you think could reengage in  
21 terrorism so that our men and women in uniform will be  
22 confronted with them again.

23 Mr. Carter: I do, Senator. I understand my  
24 responsibilities under that statute, and I will -- as in  
25 everything else I do, I will play it absolutely straight.

1           Senator Ayotte: We appreciate that. That is very  
2 important because we have seen an accelerated release of  
3 detainees. And as you know, there have been public reports  
4 about one of the Taliban Five reengaging in terrorist  
5 activity. So this is something that I think is of utmost  
6 importance.

7           The last thing that one of our men and women in  
8 uniform should confront is a terrorist that we had  
9 previously captured, and I know you agree with me on that.

10          Mr. Carter: Yes.

11          Senator Ayotte: I wanted to follow up on the aid to  
12 Ukraine, and I really appreciate the comments that you made  
13 that you are inclined to support lethal aid to Ukraine.  
14 And when we met in my office, you had told me that you were  
15 actually there and involved in the signing of the Budapest  
16 memorandum --

17          Mr. Carter: I was.

18          Senator Ayotte: -- in 1994. Is that right?

19          Mr. Carter: That is right.

20          Senator Ayotte: And so, as you look at what is  
21 happening in Ukraine and having been there for the signing  
22 of that memorandum, what are the implications given that  
23 the Ukrainians gave up their nuclear weapons in return for  
24 the assurances not only from the United States of America,  
25 but Russia, who has clearly violated blatantly the Budapest

1 memorandum, if we don't support Ukraine, given that we do  
2 not want more nuclear proliferation around the world? I  
3 would assume that it would send the wrong message if you  
4 give up your nuclear weapons and we don't provide you at  
5 least defensive weapons, why would any country give up  
6 their nuclear weapons again?

7       Could you tell me what you think about the violation  
8 of that memorandum and the significance of it?

9       Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

10       It is a clear violation. I was there. I remember  
11 when that agreement was signed in Budapest in 1994. As I  
12 think Senator Lieberman said, I ran the Nunn-Lugar program  
13 during that period, and I was in Ukraine the day the last  
14 nuclear weapon rode across the border from Ukraine into  
15 Russia.

16       And that agreement provided for Russia to respect the  
17 territorial integrity of Ukraine, which it has obviously  
18 not done, and that was part of the climate and context in  
19 which the Ukrainians agreed to give up nuclear weapons in  
20 the first place. And so, and by the way, the United States  
21 took on a commitment in the very same agreement to respect,  
22 but also assure, as the phrase goes, the ability of Ukraine  
23 to find its own way as an independent country.

24       That is at stake today, and that is why I think I  
25 think that we need to provide support to the Ukrainian

1 government as they try to maintain a position -- find their  
2 own way in Europe.

3 Senator Ayotte: Thank you. My time is up, but I also  
4 think it is very important that we also get NATO --  
5 buttress our NATO support for the Baltics as well in all of  
6 this.

7 Thank you.

8 Chairman McCain: Senator Gillibrand?

9 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Welcome, Dr. Carter.

11 As we met prior to this testimony, we covered a few  
12 issues, and I am going to submit questions for the record  
13 since we won't be able to cover all of them. But they  
14 include military sexual assault, issues concerning combat  
15 integration, military compensation, cyber, Iran, and Syria.  
16 So I will send those so you can answer them in due course.

17 [The information referred to follows:]

18 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Gillibrand: But specifically, let us focus a  
2 little bit on the military sexual assault issue, which you  
3 know I am very passionate about trying to solve this  
4 scourge. One of the concerns I have is that last year we  
5 had 20,000 cases of sexual assault and unwanted sexual  
6 contact within the military, and I would like your view as  
7 to whether you believe that level of sexual assault today  
8 is still the good order and discipline we would want from  
9 our services?

10           Mr. Carter: No, Senator. It is not. And you used  
11 the word "passion." I have the same passion you do. This  
12 problem of sexual assault is something that is -- it  
13 persists in our military. It is widespread in our society,  
14 but it is particularly offensive in the military community  
15 because the military ethos is one of honor and trust. You  
16 have to trust the person who is, so to speak, in the  
17 foxhole next to you. These are violations of honor and  
18 trust.

19           Also in military life, we put people in positions, we  
20 put them in situations of austere deployment, of a  
21 situation where the hierarchy of military life is a  
22 necessity in battle, and these also provide opportunities,  
23 this context, military context for predators. So it is  
24 more offensive in military life even than in civilian life,  
25 and we have got to root it out.

1           And I know that many members of this committee, but  
2   you especially, Senator, have led in that regard, and I am  
3   grateful for the thoughts and, frankly, for keeping the  
4   heat on. If I am confirmed, I will feel that heat, and I  
5   will understand it and be with it.

6           Senator Gillibrand: The one statistic I was  
7   particularly concerned about, the most recent report is  
8   that of all those who were willing to report the assault  
9   openly were retaliated against. Sixty-two percent of those  
10   who reported these crimes were retaliated against,  
11   experienced some form of retaliation.

12           So I am highly concerned that the military is still  
13   failing in living up to their zero tolerance policy. Do  
14   you agree?

15           Mr. Carter: I do agree that retaliation is a  
16   dimension of the problem that, to me at least, is becoming  
17   increasingly apparent. This is a problem, if I may say,  
18   and you know this because you have worked so hard on it,  
19   but that the more we dig into it, the more dimensions of it  
20   we come to understand.

21           And I think the idea that victims are retaliated  
22   against not only by the hierarchy above them, but by their  
23   peers is something that is unacceptable that we have to  
24   combat also. And the survey that you referred to indicated  
25   that that is widespread, and we need to get at that.

1           Senator Gillibrand: I understand from your testimony  
2 that you place a premium on the chain of command, and I  
3 fully understand that for combat situations the chain of  
4 command is not only essential, but necessary in every  
5 respect. I would like you to, though, consider all options  
6 for how you can reform the military justice system, to  
7 actually professionalize it, make it more effective.

8           And when our allies have reformed their military  
9 justice system to guarantee more civil liberties and to  
10 professionalize it and to take out biases, they have not  
11 seen diminution in the ability to train troops, to instill  
12 good order and discipline within the troops, and to do  
13 their jobs.

14           I would ask you that you would keep an open mind to  
15 look at all possible solutions for improving our criminal  
16 justice system within the military.

17           Mr. Carter: I will.

18           Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

19           Another concern that I have is in terms of the issue  
20 of how we can create opportunities for women in combat.  
21 One of the issues that I have looked at is how are each of  
22 the services being able to open those positions, opening  
23 all positions to women in combat. Because, as you know, in  
24 order to become promoted within the military, oftentimes  
25 combat missions are required and having certain roles that

1 require combat is required for promotion.

2 Are you committed to allowing women to serve in all  
3 positions and to gender neutral standards for each of the  
4 services?

5 Mr. Carter: I am certainly committed to gender  
6 neutral standards. What I do know is this, that the  
7 services are examining whether there are any positions in  
8 the military that should not be open to women.

9 I strongly incline toward opening them all to women,  
10 but I am also respectful of the circumstances and of  
11 professional military judgment in this regard. I have not  
12 been involved in those studies. If I am confirmed, I would  
13 want to confer with our own leaders in the Department of  
14 Defense, with you and others who have thought carefully  
15 about that problem, and try to come to a view.

16 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst?

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Dr. Carter, for being here  
20 today.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Also, Senator Lieberman, thank you for joining us  
23 today.

24 As we sat down in my office the other day, one thing  
25 that, hopefully, was very clear to you was my passion for

1 the National Guard and the Army Reserves and all Reserve  
2 members, actually. And so, we have spent a considerable  
3 amount of time talking in this forum about sequestration  
4 and the effects on our services, not just our active duty  
5 forces, but also those that serve as wonderful "weekend  
6 warriors."

7 So I would love for you to please address the panel  
8 and just talk to us and explain to us those impacts that  
9 you have seen regarding sequestration and how it has  
10 impacted those Reserve and National Guard forces, please.

11 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator. And by the way,  
12 thank you for your own service. I appreciate it.

13 And I begin by saying we owe a great debt of gratitude  
14 to the Guard and Reserve for what they have done over the  
15 last 12, 13 years. We couldn't have done -- I know this  
16 from the time I was in the Department of Defense previously  
17 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were at their peak.  
18 We couldn't have sustained the tempo of combat in those two  
19 locations without the contributions of the Reserve  
20 component of our military.

21 So if there was ever a time when their value was made  
22 clear, it has been in the last 10 to 12 years. And they  
23 are impacted, as every other part of the Defense Department  
24 is, by sequester. That is the terrible thing about  
25 sequester. It hits everybody, and it hits them hard, and

1 it hits them soon, which means that we don't have time to  
2 adjust.

3 So I think the Guard and Reserve component have borne  
4 the impact of sequester as all the rest of the departments  
5 have, sad to say.

6 Senator Ernst: And thank you for that. I appreciate  
7 that.

8 If confirmed, we do have a number of rising threats  
9 that we see all -- all around the world and specifically in  
10 the Middle East right now. So considering those threats,  
11 with many new possible deployments coming up, then, if  
12 confirmed, how do we ensure that our Guard and Reserve  
13 units then maintain their ability to reinforce our active  
14 duty component as effectively as they have in the past  
15 dozen years? How do we ensure that they are being  
16 supported?

17 Mr. Carter: Thank you for that, and that is the key  
18 issue, as you well know.

19 And I think that the Reserve component forces need to  
20 be as prepared to go into action, if they are called to go  
21 into action, as any active duty element. You never want to  
22 send anybody into harm's way on behalf of the United States  
23 who hasn't had the training and isn't fully prepared and  
24 isn't adequately equipped to do the job.

25 So I think it is important that the Guard and Reserve

1 are at a state of readiness that is commensurate with the  
2 need we have for them. And one other thing I will add is  
3 that they also, not incidentally at all, very importantly,  
4 play a role in responding to disasters in our own country.  
5 That is another important and, by the way, also amply  
6 demonstrated in recent years attribute of having them.

7 So both for defensive or to civil authorities and for  
8 deployment in a national security emergency, they need to  
9 be fully ready when we need them.

10 Senator Ernst: Thank you much, Dr. Carter.

11 And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman McCain: Senator Manchin?

13 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 And Dr. Carter, thank you so much for, first of all,  
15 all the service you have given. Having such an esteemed  
16 Senator introducing you, that shows your intelligence  
17 there. And next of all, willing to serve at this most  
18 difficult time. I appreciate all of that because I know  
19 how difficult it is.

20 Let me go -- you know, we had an unusual day  
21 yesterday, and we got to speak to King Abdullah. And  
22 without revealing too much about it, I am sure that you  
23 have been briefed on that. But the bottom line was this.  
24 We are all concerned, I think, and our chairman has taken  
25 the lead on this, how we are going to accelerate what we do

1 and what we think in this committee of quick we can get  
2 necessary military equipment to the people willing to  
3 fight, and the Jordanians are willing to fight.

4 And about the red tape, I just couldn't believe what I  
5 heard yesterday, all the red tape that they have to go  
6 through to get something on the front lines to help them  
7 defend themselves. I didn't hear so much they need our  
8 combat troops. They need our expertise and our people in  
9 the right places to make sure we are efficient.

10 They just need the weapons to do the job. Do you have  
11 thoughts on that or how you can help us on that and break  
12 through this gridlock?

13 Mr. Carter: I do. And I don't know what you heard,  
14 but I could well believe what you heard because I have a  
15 long experience of frustration with getting equipment to  
16 the warfighter -- our warfighters, never mind partner  
17 warfighters -- on time. And this is an element that is  
18 important when we talk about acquisition reform. The cost  
19 control is very important, but also getting things done.

20 When I was working on the wars in Afghanistan and  
21 Iraq, it was, even for Americans, assistance to our own  
22 forces way too much red tape stood in the way. And you had  
23 to constantly try to cut through that.

24 And I guess in the context of the Jordanian  
25 circumstance, which I am not familiar with. I am not -- I

1 am sure you know more about it on the committee than I  
2 would as a nominee, but I do read the newspapers, and I  
3 understand the need. And I can well believe that it is  
4 slower than King Abdullah finds acceptable and that you and  
5 I would find acceptable.

6 And I guess all I can say is if I am confirmed as  
7 Secretary of Defense, this is one I am pretty familiar  
8 with, and I would work to get those things out there the  
9 way we did MRAPs.

10 Senator Manchin: It seems like the greatest challenge  
11 is coming out of the State Department, and we are going to  
12 help them work on that, I think. And the chairman is  
13 committed to that, and the ranking member and all of us are  
14 on the same page. This is not a partisan thing. This is  
15 basically an American thing we want to get done.

16 If I can go to that, basically, in the auditing, I am  
17 very concerned about the cost of our military and if it is  
18 being spent efficiently. There is not a person in West  
19 Virginia, not a person in the country that won't sacrifice  
20 for a person in uniform. Not one.

21 They will give up something. They will pay more  
22 taxes. They will do whatever you ask them. But we have  
23 got to make sure we are spending it wisely, and I think  
24 that our chairman has been very diligent on this for many,  
25 many years. And I am concerned.

1 I am also concerned, we don't touch on this, is the  
2 size of the staff. If you look at the size of the staff  
3 and how they double and quadruple, and every time we get a  
4 new change, the staff, and we don't talk about that. We  
5 just talk about our readiness and having people on -- be  
6 able to perform. But no one is checking the staff sizes,  
7 and I am told from people on top, they don't need these  
8 sizes. But no one can get rid of them.

9 Put them back where they are needed. And also using  
10 our Guard and Reserves, but the staff size, that is  
11 something you will have oversight on?

12 Mr. Carter: It absolutely will. And I agree with  
13 you. We need acquisition reform, but we need to reform  
14 lots of other things, too. Overhead, headquarters staffs,  
15 lots of parts of the department, for just the reason you  
16 say.

17 Senator Manchin: And let me tell you why the audit is  
18 so important and why I am so committed to having an audit  
19 of the Defense Department. I think we can help you help  
20 yourself of the institution.

21 And the reason I say that is there is a lot of things  
22 that you are doing that sometimes you don't ask for, you  
23 don't want. There is equipment being sent your way. There  
24 is things being produced in different parts of the country  
25 just because of who we are, and we want to make sure that

1 our people are getting the jobs.

2 I agree to that, but I can tell you if there is  
3 something we are building in West Virginia you don't need,  
4 I will be the first to go and tell them we are going to  
5 find something else to do. Because we are not going to  
6 force you to buy something you don't need or don't want.  
7 And I think we have all got to bite the bullet there, but  
8 we have got to look at this, and we won't know unless we  
9 have an audit.

10 And I would hope that you are committed to helping us  
11 get that audit and a complete transparency of what is going  
12 on. And also the contractors. I cannot -- I have been  
13 here 4 years. Cannot get an accurate count of how many  
14 contractors that we have and what branches.

15 Mr. Carter: Thank you.

16 I am -- I am committed on the audit front. I  
17 understand what you are saying about contractors and agree  
18 with that as well, and I appreciate what you say about us  
19 working together to make sure that we buy what we need and  
20 that we buy it well.

21 Senator Manchin: Thank you, sir.

22 Chairman McCain: We will have Senator Sullivan, and  
23 then we will take a break after that. How long do you need  
24 for --

25 Mr. Carter. Ten, 15 minutes.

1 Chairman McCain: Fifteen minutes, and then after  
2 that, the next questioners would be Senator Heinrich and  
3 then Senator Fischer, and then Senator Shaheen would be in  
4 line for the next questioners after a 15-minute break. The  
5 committee will stand in recess for 15 minutes after --  
6 after Senator Sullivan is finished with his questions.

7 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 And Dr. Carter, I want to thank you for your service  
9 and particularly, and you point out, your family, your wife  
10 and kids. I know how much they go through in these  
11 hearings. Sometimes it is tougher on them than it is on  
12 the nominee. So I want to thank them as well.

13 So I wanted to start with just a little history and  
14 geography. 1935, General Billy Mitchell, often referred to  
15 as the father of the Air Force, was testifying in front of  
16 Congress. He said that, "I believe that in the future,  
17 whoever holds blank -- this place -- will hold the world.  
18 It is the most important strategic place in the world. It  
19 is the most central place in the world for aircraft, and  
20 that is true either of Europe, Asia, or North America."

21 Do you know what place General Mitchell was referring  
22 to in his testimony in 1935?

23 Mr. Carter: I think, Senator, it was Alaska.

24 Senator Sullivan: Correct. It was Alaska.

25 [Laughter.]

1 Senator Sullivan: Do you agree with General Mitchell?

2 Mr. Carter: I do. I would point out that one proof  
3 of what he said, I suppose, is that your State is home to  
4 one of our principal missile defense batteries, and the  
5 reason for that is that it is kind of on the way to and  
6 from a lot of bad places.

7 Senator Sullivan: I look forward to hosting you in  
8 Alaska soon to show you why General Mitchell was correct.  
9 But I want to get actually to, if confirmed --

10 Chairman McCain: Excuse me. Senator Reed says maybe  
11 that is why he was court-martialed.

12 [Laughter.]

13 Senator Sullivan: I think he may have had a drinking  
14 problem, but I am not sure. His strategic assessment was  
15 still very correct.

16 A tough part of your job is as a member of the  
17 President's Cabinet, you also -- critically important part  
18 of the job, if confirmed, is leveling with this committee.  
19 You are showing your kind of straightforward approach,  
20 which I think is great, but also with the American people.  
21 And I think we all recognize there are challenges, but in  
22 some ways, you know, when the President is talking to the  
23 American people, his views seem to differ.

24 Let me give you a few examples. In his State of the  
25 Union, he painted a what I would consider a benign, almost

1 delusional view of the world environment, with quotes like  
2 "The shadow of crisis is past." "We are stopping ISIL's  
3 advance." "We are opposing Russian aggression." "We have  
4 halted the progress of Iran's nuclear program." These are  
5 all quotes from the President to the American people.

6 Do you agree with his assessment in these areas?

7 Mr. Carter: I think that if I am confirmed as  
8 Secretary of Defense, I am going to be confronting some of  
9 the most challenging problems that we have had in our  
10 national security in a very long time. My intention and my  
11 obligation will be to help our President and help our  
12 country confront those problems and provide the advice to  
13 the President that will help him deal with what is a --  
14 though we have many efforts and many successes because we  
15 are in the indispensable nation in this world, we have many  
16 challenges.

17 And I think my role for him, if confirmed, is to help  
18 him work through these challenges.

19 Senator Sullivan: But again, just in terms of  
20 straightforward approach, you have been watching the  
21 international environment. Do you agree with what the  
22 President was saying and telling the American people?

23 I think it is critical that he level, that you level,  
24 the administration levels with the American people on our  
25 challenges. I will give you another example. He is

1 talking about ending combat operations in Afghanistan, and  
2 yet we are going to maintain a robust CT presence, which I  
3 think is important.

4 But a robust CT presence is not ending combat  
5 operations. Do you agree with what the President was  
6 saying in his State of the Union on some of these specific  
7 quotes that I mentioned?

8 Mr. Carter: I certainly agree with the President's  
9 overall thrust and --

10 Senator Sullivan: That we have a benign world  
11 environment right now?

12 Mr. Carter: Well, I would say the world is --  
13 continues to pose serious challenges to international order  
14 and that the United States is indispensable to the solution  
15 of those challenges is what I would say.

16 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask one final question. In  
17 the hearings the last 3 weeks that the chairman has had,  
18 which have been, I think, a great education for all of us,  
19 again, for the American people. I think there was  
20 consensus that we certainly need to work on all instruments  
21 of American power to integrate those as part of a national  
22 strategy to address what I think are significant challenges  
23 that the President has not laid out.

24 One of these instruments that we didn't have 10 years  
25 ago, but there was common agreement on is energy and being

1 once again the world's energy superpower in terms of  
2 producing oil and gas and renewables. Last week, the  
3 President took over 20 million acres of some of the most  
4 prospective lands in America for oil and gas development  
5 off the table.

6 Do you agree that having energy and using that to help  
7 our national security is important? And would you agree  
8 that taking such huge areas of land off the table,  
9 billions, potentially billions of barrels of oil, trillions  
10 of cubic feet of natural gas, do you think that helps or  
11 undermines America's national security?

12 Mr. Carter: Well, I certainly think energy security  
13 is an important part of national security, and I am  
14 incredibly encouraged by what -- the progress that the  
15 United States has made in developing new resources, both  
16 oil and gas in recent years. I think it is showing up in  
17 terms of our economy, and also it is showing up  
18 geopolitically.

19 With respect to the particular issue you raise,  
20 Senator, I am simply not knowledgeable about it and can't  
21 give you a knowledgeable answer.

22 Senator Sullivan: Okay. I think those kind of  
23 actions undermine our national security significantly.

24 Mr. Carter: I understand.

25 Chairman McCain: The committee will stand in recess

1 for 15 minutes and then reconvene. And the next  
2 questioners will be Senator Heinrich and Senator Fischer  
3 and Senator Shaheen.

4 [Whereupon, at 10:57 a.m., the committee recessed, to  
5 reconvene at 11:19 a.m., the same day.]

6 Chairman McCain: The committee will reconvene, and we  
7 will recognize Senator Heinrich.

8 Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Chairman.

9 And welcome back, Dr. Carter. It has certainly been a  
10 pleasure to work with you, and I just want to say it is  
11 kind of -- it is really refreshing to work with someone in  
12 this potential position who has both your technical  
13 background and your ability to work with people across the  
14 services and with Congress. You seem to balance those  
15 things remarkably well, speaking as an engineer who  
16 struggles with that myself sometimes.

17 So if I remember right, I believe you served as staff  
18 director for the Congressional Commission on the Strategic  
19 Posture of the U.S. that released its report back in 2009,  
20 when I was sitting on the House Armed Services Committee.  
21 And I think that report made some very important strategic  
22 recommendations.

23 In particular, I thought the idea that Los Alamos,  
24 Livermore, Sandia, should be designated as national  
25 security rather than nuclear weapons laboratories was a

1 very important recognition of how the threat environment  
2 that we face in the world today has changed.

3 In addition, one of the things the commission  
4 recommended was that the President issue an executive order  
5 formally assigning the Secretaries of Defense and Energy,  
6 State, Homeland Security, and the DNI joint responsibility  
7 for the health of these laboratories, and you and I  
8 discussed this a little bit when we met in my office  
9 recently.

10 I wanted to ask you, based on a recommendation from  
11 the Strategic Posture Commission, what sort of joint  
12 responsibility do you believe that the Department of  
13 Defense should have for our national labs?

14 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

15 I recall our conversation, and you are right. Excuse  
16 me. I was executive director of the so-called Perry  
17 Schlesinger Commission, which did make the recommendation  
18 you named -- you pointed to.

19 The National Laboratories, the so-called National  
20 Laboratories of the Department of Energy actually are  
21 national laboratories. I know this because when I worked  
22 in the Department of Defense as acquisition executive, we  
23 used them a lot. We asked them to do things because of  
24 their technical excellence.

25 So those laboratories that were founded to serve the

1 nuclear arsenal of the United States and continue to do so  
2 now do lots of other things for national security -- for  
3 the Department of Defense, for the intelligence community,  
4 for the law enforcement community, the homeland security  
5 community. I think they call it "work for others."

6 Senator Heinrich: Exactly.

7 Mr. Carter: Which means other than the Department of  
8 Energy. But it is important, and it was certainly valuable  
9 to the Department of Defense when I was there to be able to  
10 get that kind of technical excellence.

11 Senator Heinrich: I think one of the challenges has  
12 been that originally work for others didn't really exist at  
13 the National Labs. They were solely nuclear enterprises.  
14 And as that has become a larger and larger percentage of  
15 what they do, it has been more challenging to sort of feed  
16 the underlying foundational aspects of the lab, the  
17 overhead and other things.

18 So what I would hope is that if you are confirmed, and  
19 I certainly hope that you are, that I can count being able  
20 to work with you to figure out if there is not a way we can  
21 formalize that responsibility for the health of DoD and the  
22 other agencies I mentioned, as well as for the long-term  
23 health of those national security laboratories?

24 Mr. Carter: I understand. And if I am confirmed, I  
25 look forward to working with you on exactly that. I

1 understand.

2           Senator Heinrich: I want to move back to Ukraine for  
3 a minute, and we heard earlier about the issue of providing  
4 additional defensive military equipment to the Ukrainians.  
5 But we have also heard a lot of testimony in recent weeks  
6 emphasizing the importance of deterring additional Russian  
7 aggression in the Baltics -- in Estonia, Latvia, and  
8 Lithuania -- particularly by continuing to position more  
9 NATO troops and equipment in those places.

10           And I just wanted to get your sense for are we doing  
11 enough in that region to deter additional Russian  
12 aggression in the Baltics?

13           Mr. Carter: Thank you.

14           And I think it is very important that we do deter  
15 Russian aggression in the Baltics. The Baltic states are  
16 part of NATO, after all. It is a pretty big deal.

17           And, but to answer your specific question, are we  
18 doing enough? I am familiar with what we are doing. I  
19 have not been in a position to discuss it with our  
20 commanders there or any of the European leaders and so  
21 forth. That is something that I would, if I were  
22 confirmed, be a very early priority to see whether we are,  
23 in fact, doing enough.

24           I know we are doing things. We are rotating forces in  
25 there to serve as a warning and a tripwire that NATO really

1 is there, and I certainly support doing that. But  
2 everything we are doing I am probably not aware of, and  
3 what more we can do I have not investigated, but I promise  
4 if I am confirmed, I would. It is very important.

5 Senator Heinrich: Thank you very much, Dr. Carter.

6 Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton?

7 Senator Cotton: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Dr. Carter, thank you for being here today. Thank you  
9 for your service to our country.

10 Yesterday, we saw the Islamic State burn alive the  
11 pilot of one of our key allies. In recent months, they  
12 have buried women and children alive. They have crucified  
13 Christians. They have beheaded Americans and citizens of  
14 our allies.

15 The leaders of the Islamic State, the ones who direct  
16 and in some cases commit these atrocities, have critical  
17 knowledge that we need to stop them. They know where  
18 hostages are being held. They have information that would  
19 allow us to go after the Islamic State's financial support.  
20 They know where other senior leaders are. In short, they  
21 have a lot of intelligence value.

22 If American forces were to capture one of these  
23 leaders, say, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, or one of his senior  
24 lieutenants, would you recommend that the President send  
25 him to Guantanamo Bay so he could be fully interrogated for

1 intelligence value?

2 Mr. Carter: I would certainly recommend that he be  
3 interrogated for his full intelligence value. It would be  
4 a legal determination about where he ended up and so forth.  
5 But I think it is important that we get that intelligence  
6 value if we do capture people like al-Baghdadi.

7 Senator Cotton: Would you recommend that he stay in  
8 American custody or that he be transferred to the custody  
9 of an ally?

10 Mr. Carter: As I sit here right now, I don't know  
11 enough to answer that question. That would be a legal  
12 determination about his ultimate disposition. But I think  
13 the key from a Secretary of Defense's point of view,  
14 prospective Secretary of Defense's point of view would be  
15 let us get that intelligence.

16 Senator Cotton: And would you want to see him  
17 transferred into the United States mainland, given his  
18 Miranda rights or otherwise put in an Article III Federal  
19 court?

20 Mr. Carter: Again, I don't know enough to know how  
21 that -- what the ultimate disposition would be appropriate.  
22 But I do know that it would be important to interrogate  
23 that individual. So whatever the ultimate disposition or  
24 legal process was, it should make provision for  
25 interrogation.

1 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

2 I want to move to the recommendations of the National  
3 Defense Panel for the overall military budget. The  
4 National Defense Panel, as you know, is a bipartisan and  
5 congressionally mandated panel that reviewed the 2014 QDR.

6 That panel stated, "Congress and the President should  
7 repeal the Budget Control Act immediately and return as  
8 soon as possible to at least the funding baseline proposed  
9 in Bob Gates' FY 2012 defense budget." The panel went on  
10 to note that while even that amount would likely be  
11 inadequate, it represents "the minimum required to reverse  
12 course and set the military on a more stable footing."

13 Do you concur with the National Defense Panel's  
14 recommendation that Bob Gates' FY 2012 recommendation for  
15 the coming fiscal year is the minimum funding baseline  
16 needed for the Department of Defense?

17 Mr. Carter: The 2012 baseline, just to make sure I  
18 understand correctly, is the -- would have removed \$500  
19 billion from the defense plan at that time. A sequester  
20 would have removed twice that.

21 And so, I don't know what the National Defense Panel  
22 said, but I would say that the -- if what they were saying  
23 was that the sequester level was unacceptable and that the  
24 level that Secretary Gates recommended was the one that  
25 they supported, I actually supported that, too, and

1 continue to think that sequester is a bad idea.

2 And I am familiar with the results of the National  
3 Defense Panel and its membership, which is very  
4 distinguished.

5 Senator Cotton: So, to be exact, Secretary Gates' FY  
6 2012 budget said in FY 2016, the budget should be \$610  
7 billion. At sequester levels, it would be just under \$500  
8 billion. I believe the President recommended approximately  
9 \$535 billion. So this would be another \$70 billion plus  
10 that the defense panel recommends for the coming year.

11 Mr. Carter: I see what you are saying. Yes. That is  
12 absolutely right, and I think the Defense Department budget  
13 has been under pressure now for the last 3 or 4 years in a  
14 way that I experienced the effects of firsthand, and they  
15 are damaging. And that is one of the reasons why I want to  
16 get back on track to getting enough money for defense by  
17 getting rid of sequester.

18 Senator Cotton: So while \$535 billion or some  
19 congressional number in that neighborhood might be better  
20 than \$500 billion, you think \$610 billion, as recommended  
21 by that panel, is the minimum necessary to put our military  
22 back on the right course?

23 Mr. Carter: I wouldn't say it is the minimum  
24 necessary to get us back on the right course. We are  
25 obviously not going to get that amount of funding. But I

1 can tell you that we can make good use of, I believe --  
2 that is, the Department of Defense can make good use of the  
3 funding the President has requested.

4 And I will say one other thing. If I am Secretary of  
5 Defense, I would like to see more spending on defense. I  
6 am very open about that. I want to get sequester, and I  
7 would like to see us spend more on defense.

8 I think that we are having -- and this may have been  
9 what the NDP was getting at, we are having to accept risk  
10 in the execution of our strategy as a result of our funding  
11 problems which I would rather see us not accept.

12 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

13 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

14 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 And thank you, Dr. Carter, for your past service to  
16 this country and for your willingness to continue to serve.

17 I want to talk a little bit about the proliferation of  
18 nuclear weapons. I remember being at the Kennedy School  
19 when you gave a very compelling presentation that showed  
20 retiring or dismantling some of the weapons through the  
21 Nunn-Lugar program. And I continue to believe that this is  
22 one of the most serious dangers we face, both in the United  
23 States and in the world, particularly with terrorists like  
24 the Islamic State who seem to be willing to do anything to  
25 achieve their ends.

1           And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how  
2 to balance the need to address nuclear weapons and material  
3 that is still out there with the effort of DoD to modernize  
4 our weapon systems and where you see the priorities are and  
5 what we need to do to address that?

6           Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

7           I think we need to do both and can do more in the way  
8 of securing fissile materials and the other wherewithal of  
9 nuclear weapons and also biological weapons and other  
10 weapons of mass destruction around the world. And I also  
11 believe that the United States needs a safe, secure, and  
12 reliable nuclear deterrent.

13           Because as much as we would like to see nuclear  
14 weapons and other weapons of mass destruction rid from the  
15 earth, that doesn't look like it is something that is going  
16 to happen soon. And it is important that the American  
17 deterrent that we provide to our own country but also to  
18 friends and allies who rely upon them is safe, secure, and  
19 reliable. So I think we need to do both and can do both.

20           Senator Shaheen: You wrote an article last year for  
21 Foreign Affairs, entitled "Running the Pentagon Right: How  
22 to Get the Troops What They Need," and you talked about two  
23 lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan. First, that the  
24 Pentagon was not prepared to fight a nontraditional enemy  
25 and, second, that the length of those wars was

1 underestimated, and there was little incentive to pursue  
2 acquisitions tailored to the specific fights.

3 Can you talk about how, as Secretary of Defense, you  
4 would avoid repeating those mistakes of the past two wars?

5 Mr. Carter: Well, yes, thank you, and this is  
6 something that I have a lot of passion about, which is why  
7 I wrote that. The experience that I had all too often in  
8 trying to support Iraq and Afghanistan as the acquisition  
9 executive was that when the troops said they needed  
10 something, the response of the bureaucracy was -- tended to  
11 be, "Oh, we have one of those. We are making one of those.  
12 We have one in progress. It will be finished in 10 years."

13 And I mean, incredibly, that is, in essence, the  
14 response that would come back from the bureaucracy. We all  
15 recognize immediately that that is nonsensical because they  
16 needed that equipment, counter-IED equipment, vehicles.  
17 They needed it now, not 10 and 15 years from now.

18 And our acquisition system got in the habit, and I  
19 think the chairman was referring to this earlier because it  
20 is a driver of cost, but also this problem, got in the  
21 habit during the Cold War of doing things very slowly.  
22 Soviet Union, we were always -- we always had plenty of  
23 time. There was the Soviet Union. It was the Cold War.  
24 It would go on for a long time.

25 And we would have programs that extended over 10 and

1 15 years. You can't do that when you are in the middle of  
2 a war, and people are dying and success depends upon your  
3 acting more quickly. So I obviously feel passionately  
4 about that. I think anybody who observed that bureaucratic  
5 tendency would have the same attitude I did, and we have  
6 got to turn faster as a military.

7 It is one thing when you are in war, when you are in  
8 competition with other countries that are using the global  
9 technology base to advance their own military. If we are  
10 going to continue to be the best military in the world, we  
11 can't have -- make steps in 15-year increments. We have to  
12 turn faster than that. So I think that is the larger  
13 meaning, and the meaning going forward, the lesson, to use  
14 your word, of that experience.

15 Senator Shaheen: Well, and my time is almost over.  
16 But you and others here today have talked about the  
17 importance of procurement reform. I assume that that will  
18 be a top priority when you go back to the department, as it  
19 has been in the past?

20 Mr. Carter: It would. If I am confirmed, absolutely.

21 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much.

22 Mr. Carter: Thank you.

23 Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe?

24 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Dr. Carter, I apologize for not having been here, and

1 I don't want to ask something that has been asked over and  
2 over again. We have a conflicting meeting that is taking  
3 place right now.

4 Everyone who has appeared before this committee has  
5 talked about the mismatch that is out there, unprecedented  
6 mismatch, and I am talking about all the Chiefs. I am  
7 talking about the old-timers. You know, as you know, we  
8 had George Shultz, Kissinger, Albright. All of them  
9 searched their memories and could not find a time in our  
10 history when we had the level of threats that we are faced  
11 with today and the limited resources we have.

12 And that is the mismatch that they are talking about  
13 with the things all over the world I mean that are taking  
14 place right now. Do you agree with that?

15 Let me restate that. In the years that you have had  
16 such a variety of experience, do you ever remember a time  
17 like this?

18 Mr. Carter: I think we are in a time where the number  
19 and severity of the risks is not something I have seen  
20 before in my life.

21 Senator Inhofe: Yes. How do you -- even the  
22 President, after what happened yesterday, I am sure, is not  
23 talking about junior varsity anymore. We know that we have  
24 a really serious problem with ISIS, with ISIL. We have  
25 been talking about the fact that they are building a

1 militia, and we now have seen the brutality and what they  
2 are capable of.

3       And I just wonder sometimes if we -- I would like to  
4 have a stronger response from the President when the  
5 disaster took place yesterday. But do you -- I fail to see  
6 a strategy in terms of dealing with ISIS, with that force  
7 that is over there. Do you see a strategy, and where will  
8 you be on this?

9       Mr. Carter: Thank you.

10       I can describe what I believe to be the strategy, and  
11 just to revert to what you said at the beginning, we used  
12 to -- when I started my career in defense, it was a simpler  
13 world. There was one big problem, which was the Cold War  
14 --

15       Senator Inhofe: Those were the good old days.

16       Mr. Carter: -- and nuclear disaster. To get to your  
17 point, I assume that this is what your other witnesses were  
18 saying, it is a much more complicated world, much more many  
19 faceted and many more problems and issues for the United  
20 States to take on. At the same time, I believe we are up  
21 to it and that we are capable of surmounting all these  
22 problems.

23       With respect to the strategy for ISIS, I would  
24 describe it in the following way. Strategy is about  
25 connecting ends and means, and the end here is the defeat

1 of ISIS and the sustained or lasting defeat of ISIS. And  
2 to achieve that lasting defeat of ISIS, we are trying to  
3 rebuild the morale and power of the Iraqi military and the  
4 confidence of its government in a multi-sectarian approach  
5 so that we don't revisit the Maliki experience, which led  
6 to the disintegration of the Iraqi security forces.

7 So on that side of the border, the lasting defeat will  
8 be made lasting by an Iraqi security forces and associated  
9 forces in Iraq that are rebuilt.

10 One enemy, two locations. To get to the other  
11 location, Syria, I believe the approach there similarly  
12 needs to be to inflict a lasting defeat. And in order to  
13 do that, we need a partner, and we are trying to build that  
14 partner in terms of a moderate Syrian force and local  
15 forces from the region that can, with our air power and  
16 other kinds of assistance, inflict defeat on ISIS and then  
17 make it a lasting defeat.

18 So that is how I would characterize what I see. I am  
19 obviously not in the counsels of Government, but that is  
20 what I infer.

21 Senator Inhofe: Yes, and I appreciate that very much.  
22 And Dr. Carter, when you were in my office, we talked about  
23 having just returned from Ukraine and also Lithuania. When  
24 I first walked in, Senator Heinrich was talking about  
25 Lithuania, Estonia, and that area. Their concern was that

1 all of our attention seemed to be in that part of the  
2 world, concentrated on Ukraine.

3 Well, it is true. We have never had -- I happened to  
4 be there when they had their election. For the first time  
5 in 96 years, they don't have a Communist in their  
6 parliament in Ukraine. So we have that problem at the same  
7 time as the others you are addressing, and what do you  
8 think about our European strength as it is right now?

9 Are we going to -- are we adequate? Are we becoming  
10 inadequate?

11 Mr. Carter: I think that our strength in Europe is  
12 our alliance with NATO and the political solidarity that  
13 that represents, which is very important when it comes to  
14 the Baltic states, and also the response to -- in Ukraine,  
15 which, while not a NATO nation, is certainly a European  
16 nation, and European unity is an important part of that.  
17 So one of our strengths is that.

18 Another strength, of course, is our military strength.  
19 And there I understand that we are adding forces,  
20 rotational forces to the Baltic states as a presence there,  
21 as a deterrent to any Russian kind of adventurism on the  
22 part of Russia in those states. I certainly support that,  
23 and if I am confirmed, I would want to look into what more  
24 we can do to do that.

25 I would also say I wish the European states -- and

1 many Secretary of Defenses have said this over the years --  
2 were investing more in their own defense.

3 Senator Inhofe: And lastly, I am out of time, but for  
4 the record, if you would submit this for the record to me.  
5 In the event we are able to get the perpetrator of the  
6 horrible crime that took place, would you examine the  
7 expeditionary legal complex that we have as a place to do  
8 our interrogation?

9 I heard your response to the first question, but will  
10 you at least consider that?

11 Mr. Carter: Sure. I will learn more and respond.

12 [The information referred to follows:]

13 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman McCain: Senator Hirono?

2 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 And thank you, Dr. Carter.

4 And thank Senator Lieberman for your continuing  
5 presence at this hearing.

6 Dr. Carter, I appreciate your acknowledging at this  
7 hearing the importance of and the seriousness of sexual  
8 assault in the military, and in response to questions that  
9 have been submitted to you, you have said that you would  
10 take a personal role in addressing the prevention and  
11 dealing with this scourge in a much better way. So I will  
12 have a continuing interest in seeing how you do in that  
13 regard.

14 I also agree with you that the security of our country  
15 is very much dependent, I would say, on maintaining the  
16 stability in the Asia-Pacific area. So, of course, we need  
17 to continue our commitment to the rebalance and at the same  
18 time be able to deal with the instability in other parts of  
19 the world.

20 Now President Obama recently visited India and  
21 announced a series of bilateral agreements with Prime  
22 Minister Modi. Can you talk briefly about the future of  
23 the U.S.-India relationship in the context of our rebalance  
24 commitment?

25 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

1           The rebalance is a rebalance not only within Asia -- I  
2 mean to Asia, to the Asia-Pacific area, but within it. Our  
3 historic focus has been East Asia, and I think that your  
4 question points to the importance to pay greater attention  
5 to South Asia as well.

6           India is, in my view, destined to be a strategic  
7 partner of the United States. It is a large democracy,  
8 shares a lot of our political values and values of  
9 pluralism. And so, I am -- I think that destiny will bring  
10 us together. But I am for hastening that.

11           And in the military-to-military area and the defense  
12 cooperation and technology cooperation areas, I think there  
13 is a great deal that we can do with India. And if I am  
14 confirmed, I would take a strong interest in doing that.

15           Senator Hirono: Thank you.

16           Do you view U.S. energy security as a vital component  
17 to our overall national security and clearly on the  
18 military side? So what role, if any, do you believe that  
19 the Department of Defense has in supporting efforts to  
20 increase U.S. energy security?

21           Mr. Carter: I think energy security is an important  
22 part of national security, and the Defense Department does  
23 play a role, not a central role, but a role in energy  
24 security. I think every dollar we spend of the defense  
25 budget we need to be able to justify on defense grounds,

1 and we make some investments in energy technology because  
2 they pay off for the defense budget and for the soldier.

3 We make investments in batteries, for example, solar  
4 cells, things that are -- insulation, buildings, making  
5 them more energy efficient so we can save money. So, in  
6 some ways, the Department of Defense, like other large  
7 institutions in the country, is investing in energy  
8 efficiency in the future. I think that is an important  
9 thing to do.

10 Senator Hirono: DoD is the largest user of energy in  
11 the Federal Government.

12 Regarding acquisitions, with your experience in the  
13 defense acquisition process, including the time in which  
14 you led the Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics  
15 Directorate at the Pentagon, as you review our DoD  
16 acquisition program with its various cost overruns, delays,  
17 et cetera, which others have noted, including the chairman,  
18 what would be your first priority to improve the  
19 acquisition process?

20 For example, would you look at the kind of contracts  
21 that we enter into? Training, requirements, process --  
22 what would be your first priority to improve in that area?

23 Mr. Carter: All of those are important. To take the  
24 point you made about contract structure, contracts are a  
25 way of providing incentives to industry, to control costs

1 and meet schedule. That is an important part of  
2 negotiating a strategy.

3 To get to your other suggestion, in order to negotiate  
4 those contracts well, we need people on the Government side  
5 who are capable, who understand acquisition and who  
6 understand industry. I am in favor of introducing,  
7 reintroducing to the acquisition system the role of the  
8 customer, which is the chiefs of the military services. I  
9 think that has been a proposal made by others with which I  
10 associate myself.

11 So there is no one silver bullet. There are many  
12 things that we need to do to improve acquisition.

13 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

14 Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer?

15 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 And thank you, Dr. Carter, for your service and your  
17 willingness to continue that service to our country.

18 I appreciated our frank conversation that we had in my  
19 office the other day and look forward to many more in the  
20 future. In that conversation and today also, you talk  
21 about the deterrence, our nuclear deterrence in this  
22 country as being the bedrock of our defense. I appreciate  
23 your views on that, and I agree with your views.

24 We also talked about modernization and the importance  
25 of modernization and how as a country we need to step

1 forward and really see that through if we are going to  
2 continue to enjoy the security that we have as a country.  
3 So thank you for your comments on that.

4 In 2013, you led the Strategic Choices and Management  
5 Review, and in that review, one of the decisions was to  
6 reduce major headquarters' budgets by 20 percent by 2019.  
7 That plan was required in our NDAA in FY 2014. But the GAO  
8 has issued several reports that really cast doubt on if  
9 that is going to take place and even if we have an accurate  
10 picture on what the full resources currently are that are  
11 devoted to that headquarters staff.

12 So a couple questions here. Will you, if confirmed,  
13 maintain the goal of that 20 percent reduction in  
14 headquarters budget and staff? And how are you going to  
15 accomplish it if we don't have any idea of what those  
16 numbers are?

17 Mr. Carter: I certainly think it is important to  
18 diminish headquarters staff and other forms of overhead. I  
19 think the 20 percent goal was a sound one.

20 I do not know where it stands in terms of  
21 implementation now. But if I am confirmed, I will get back  
22 to that and try to meet that goal because we just got to  
23 get rid of the overhead here so that we can spend the  
24 dollars we have on the warfighter, which is what it is all  
25 about.

1           Senator Fischer: Have you seen the GAO report  
2           questioning if those numbers are even out there, if they  
3           are even available? And if you believe that, how are you  
4           going to get the numbers?

5           Mr. Carter: I have not seen that GAO report, but I,  
6           if I am confirmed, will find out where the department  
7           stands in terms of implementing that goal and, if they are  
8           off track, try to get them back on track because I think it  
9           is a good goal.

10          Senator Fischer: Do you think now is the time that we  
11          should look at elevating cyber to its own command, or even  
12          with the commission that we had yesterday, there is a  
13          recommendation in that commission for a joint readiness  
14          command. When we look at overhead and administrative  
15          costs, what would be your initial response to those that  
16          are promoting ideas for additional commands?

17          Mr. Carter: Well, I mean, I am all for paying much  
18          more attention to cyber and think we need to do that. But  
19          the creation of new commands and new headquarters in this  
20          budgetary environment is something I think we need to look  
21          at very closely and very cautiously.

22          Senator Fischer: As you know, our chairman, Senator  
23          McCain, is interested, as we all are, in gaining more  
24          knowledge about the information sharing with regards to our  
25          cybersecurity threats. That is one area that I believe has

1 broad support. We know there is support not just from  
2 members of this committee and members of Congress, but also  
3 the President has discussed the need for information  
4 sharing on those cybersecurity threats.

5 I agree that information sharing and better defense is  
6 a first step. But do you think that we can achieve  
7 relative cybersecurity simply by improving those defenses,  
8 or do we need to perhaps go on the offense and impose more  
9 I guess you would say visible costs with regards to our  
10 actions on cybersecurity?

11 Mr. Carter: I think both are important. We need to  
12 improve our defenses, but we also need to improve our  
13 abilities to respond. And those responses can be in  
14 cyberspace or in other ways, but certainly they should  
15 include the option to respond in cyberspace.

16 Senator Fischer: And the option to respond, would you  
17 say that would include demonstrating that we have the  
18 capability to do so? Is that part of our deterrence when  
19 it comes to protecting our country, our agencies, and  
20 private businesses when it comes to cyber attacks?

21 Mr. Carter: I agree with you. I think deterrence  
22 requires that a potential aggressor know that you have the  
23 capability to respond, and they obviously can't know all  
24 the details of that or they may be able to counter your  
25 response. But they certainly should know that you can

1 respond.

2 Senator Fischer: And would respond, if necessary?

3 Mr. Carter: And would respond, absolutely.

4 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Dr. Carter.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman McCain: Senator McCaskill?

7 Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

8 So many questions, so little time. I want to  
9 associate myself with the remarks of the chairman about the  
10 weapon systems. You are in a special position because you  
11 have been in the weeds, so to speak, on all of this in your  
12 previous position, and we worked together on wartime  
13 contracting reforms, which now are in the statutes. And I  
14 know that you will be aggressive about making sure that all  
15 of those provisions are adhered to.

16 I also want to address a question to you for the  
17 record on the murky line of responsibility on the building  
18 of infrastructure during contingencies in theater while we  
19 are fighting. I think what we have learned in Iraq and  
20 Afghanistan through the special inspector general's reports  
21 is that this line of passing back and forth responsibility  
22 for building roads, building highways, building grids,  
23 building health centers, building water systems, building  
24 power plants between AID and Defense has made it very  
25 difficult for us to really hold everyone accountable that

1 needs to be accountable for dramatic failures.

2 And on that note, I wanted to specifically talk about  
3 special inspector general's reports. Last week, I learned  
4 that for the first time in 6 years, the special inspector  
5 general's reports as to the way we are accomplishing our  
6 mission in Afghanistan for training and equipping the  
7 Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan police was going  
8 to be classified by General Campbell. This had never been  
9 done before.

10 Those reports are essential to robust oversight. I  
11 kicked up dust last week about it, and on Monday, it was  
12 announced that General Campbell was evidently reversing his  
13 decision in some regard. I want to ask your commitment to  
14 make sure that throughout the chain of command, there is an  
15 understanding that the decision to classify is a very, very  
16 precarious decision because if you don't do it when it  
17 needs to be done, it is a problem. But if you  
18 overclassify, it removes the ability of us and the  
19 taxpayers to hold the military accountable.

20 And I wanted to bring that up to you and ask you for  
21 your commitment in that regard.

22 Mr. Carter: I give that commitment.

23 Senator McCaskill: I also wanted to briefly talk  
24 about sexual assault in the military. The report that came  
25 out in December, while it still shows work to be done, I

1 think it is important that on the record we talk about the  
2 success that we have had.

3 Reporting is up. We have gone from 1 in 10 victims  
4 coming forward to 1 in 4 in a matter of a few years.  
5 Incidence is down. Importantly, restricted reporting is  
6 up.

7 And maybe the most important information in that  
8 report that hasn't gotten a lot of cover is that in  
9 anonymous surveys and focus groups with victims, more than  
10 two-thirds of the victims said they had complete confidence  
11 in their commanders and how they are handling these crimes  
12 and that they feel that their privacy is being respected  
13 and that they are being supported. That is huge, and I  
14 wanted to point that out because I do think we are making  
15 progress.

16 But on retaliation, that same report, as Senator  
17 Gillibrand pointed out, we still have a 62 percent rate of  
18 retaliation. If you look at the report, you realize it is  
19 not retaliation by the convening authority, by the command  
20 that is making the decision as to whether or not to go to  
21 general court martial. Rather, it is peer and low-level  
22 command that is causing the problem.

23 In our reforms, we made retaliation a crime. We  
24 expect to get a report on how many instances that crime  
25 has, in fact, been pursued within the military justice

1 system. The reforms, obviously, just went into place a  
2 relatively short time ago.

3 What do you plan on doing in connection with this  
4 retaliation problem and with this new crime within the  
5 military justice system to pursue it?

6 Mr. Carter: Thank you, and thank you for everything  
7 you have done. I have, from the outside looking in,  
8 observed and admired the ideas and the energy and the  
9 commitment you have shown to getting rid of this scourge of  
10 sexual assault, and so, first of all, thank you for that.

11 With respect to retaliation, that is one of the  
12 dimensions that I think the report you cite uncovered as  
13 very prevalent. I think the 62 percent of victims were  
14 reporting experiencing retaliation. And as you say, not so  
15 much -- although not to the exclusion of, but not so much  
16 from the chain of command as from peers and subordinates.

17 And you are right. This is a crime, and its  
18 prevalence suggests that we are not doing everything we can  
19 -- that we need to do to root out that crime.

20 So if I am confirmed, you can count that I am  
21 attentive to this issue of retaliation and determined to do  
22 something about it, and I will look forward to working with  
23 you if I am confirmed.

24 Senator McCaskill: Thank you very much, Dr. Carter.  
25 I look forward to working with you.

1 Chairman McCain: Senator Lee?

2 Senator Lee: Thank you very much, Dr. Carter.

3 It is a pleasure to have you here. I appreciate your  
4 willingness to be considered for this position.  
5 Appreciated the visit we had in my office the other day,  
6 and you have certainly proven yourself as someone who knows  
7 a lot about the Department of Defense, having served at its  
8 highest levels as Deputy Secretary in the past.

9 I want to talk about a few things. First, let us talk  
10 about the F-35 for a minute. The F-35 is an amazing  
11 system, with units at Hill Air Force Base that are set to  
12 be hosting the F-35 starting this fall. It is a program,  
13 however, that has been marred by some delays and some cost  
14 overruns, as you know.

15 As the Department of Defense looks at acquiring other  
16 new weapon systems and equipment to make sure that we  
17 maintain our technological advantage over our adversaries,  
18 I think it is important not only to work time and cost  
19 efficiencies in acquisition into the equation for such  
20 programs, but also to integrate that with logistics and  
21 maintenance processes that are absolutely essential to make  
22 sure that we get our money's worth.

23 And of course, with a program like the F-35, the  
24 biggest single expenses through the lifecycle isn't just  
25 acquiring it. It is also maintaining it and making sure

1 that we get our money's worth out of it.

2           Given that the Department of Defense has been  
3 reforming the acquisitions process in various ways for  
4 decades, what would you do differently not only to improve  
5 that process, but to make sure that acquisitions and  
6 development and logistics are all aligned in a way that  
7 increases the lifecycle and increases the efficiency and  
8 utility of these various weapon systems?

9           Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

10           It is exactly as you say. The lion's share of the  
11 cost of any weapon system is not in buying it, but in  
12 having it. Which is why, to get to the F-35 example that  
13 you cite, the longstanding battle to control cost in the  
14 Joint Strike Fighter program, which I have been part of but  
15 is still ongoing and has to go on as long as that program  
16 is in existence -- it is not perfect yet, it is a long way  
17 from that -- has to extend into the sustainment phase of  
18 the aircraft.

19           We have worked on cost control in development. We  
20 have worked on cost control in the production of the  
21 aircraft, and we need to work on cost control in  
22 sustainment as well, exactly as you say.

23           Senator Lee: Thank you. Thank you, and I appreciate  
24 your thought on that especially because your experience  
25 gives you a real strong ability to appreciate the nuances

1 involved there.

2 General John Kelly, the commander of SOUTHCOM, called  
3 last year's border crisis an existential threat to the  
4 United States. Do you think that our inability to  
5 adequately enforce security at our borders does present a  
6 security threat to the United States, including a security  
7 threat that could involve the possibility of terrorists  
8 entering into our country without our knowledge?

9 Mr. Carter: I think control of our borders is an  
10 important part of national security, yes.

11 Senator Lee: And so, that is something that you would  
12 continue to watch out for, if confirmed at this position?

13 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

14 Senator Lee: It was reported on February 2nd, just a  
15 few days ago, that Iran successfully placed another  
16 satellite into orbit using a two-stage rocket. Do you  
17 think that continued development of Iranian ballistic  
18 missile technology presents a threat to the United States,  
19 and if so, what do you think we ought to do about it?

20 Mr. Carter: I do. I think it is a threat not only to  
21 the United States, but friends and allies in the region,  
22 and it is just one of the things that Iran is doing that is  
23 dangerous.

24 With respect to ballistic missiles that could threaten  
25 the United States, I think that is one of the reasons why

1 we need to keep our missile defenses, and especially our  
2 ICBM defenses, current, capable, and large enough in size  
3 to deal with both a prospective Iranian threat and the also  
4 very real North Korean ICBM threat.

5 Senator Lee: Thank you.

6 As has been noted in several capacities that you have  
7 had within the Department of Defense, including most  
8 recently as the Deputy Secretary, you have had to confront  
9 the issue of sequestration. Now many of us, including  
10 myself, did not want sequestration to hit. I voted against  
11 the Budget Control Act in part because I didn't think that  
12 we ought to be putting this burden disproportionately on  
13 the Department of Defense as we were.

14 None of us wanted the super committee to not come up  
15 with a solution even after that happened, and many of us  
16 hoped that it wouldn't come to that. And of course, it  
17 did.

18 But one of the lessons that I think we learned from 2  
19 years ago is that while it is good to hope for the best, we  
20 also have to prepare for the worst. What can you do to  
21 make sure that we are not caught flatfooted and that we are  
22 ready for anything that we have to confront on that issue?

23 Mr. Carter: Well, we need to continue to adapt our  
24 plans to the resources we are given. My own view is that  
25 we have made adaptations over the last few years to our

1 strategy to accommodate the budget squeeze that are getting  
2 to the limits of what it is safe to do, and that is why I  
3 really want to see an end to sequester.

4 And we need to do more to spend the defense dollar  
5 better, and I am all for that as well. But it is also  
6 basically it is the truth that we are getting to the point  
7 where we have bent the strategy, as the phrase goes, and I  
8 don't think it is safe to keep bending it.

9 Senator Lee: Thank you. I see my time has expired.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman McCain: Senator Kaine, but before Senator  
12 Kaine, I would like to announce that we will break after  
13 Senator Kaine and then Senator Graham. And there is a vote  
14 at 2:30 p.m. So we will reconvene at 2:45 p.m. for the  
15 benefit of the few remaining Senators and any second round  
16 that any member wants. And we appreciate your patience,  
17 Dr. Carter.

18 Senator Kaine?

19 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank  
20 you, Dr. Carter, for your strong testimony today.

21 The chair and the ranking member in their opening  
22 comments put the issues on the table, and I want to just  
23 focus on two of them, the elimination of ISIL and  
24 Afghanistan. Senator Donnelly asked if the elimination of  
25 ISIL should be the goal. We all had the experience, as

1 Foreign Relations and SASC members yesterday, of visiting  
2 with King Abdullah at a very emotional and difficult time.

3 But I was struck by something he said to us. He said,  
4 look, we need you desperately. However, this is a fight  
5 that is the region's fight. If we are not willing to stand  
6 up against extremism in the region, there is no amount of  
7 outside forces, as powerful as they can be, who will be  
8 able to beat this fight. And he really took ownership of  
9 it in a way that I thought was pretty courageous.

10 Do you think it is possible for the United States  
11 military to eliminate ISIL on our own or even with other  
12 Western nations if the region doesn't go all in to combat  
13 the homegrown jihadism that is exemplified in its most  
14 brutal form by ISIL?

15 Mr. Carter: We have to have regional partners because  
16 we have to make sure that the defeat inflicted upon ISIL is  
17 a lasting defeat, and for that, there needs to be  
18 conditions created where ISIL is now occupying territory  
19 that don't make it a breeding ground for victory for that  
20 kind of, what is the right word, malignant and vicious kind  
21 of terrorism.

22 So the United States involvement is, I believe,  
23 essential. It is necessary, but it is not sufficient to  
24 have lasting victory.

25 Senator Kaine: I would share your view, necessary,

1 essential, not sufficient. It is still my hope that the  
2 White House will send to us a draft authorization for use  
3 of military force. I think after the President's comments  
4 in the State of the Union, that seems more likely. I don't  
5 think this is a war that can be waged in perpetuity,  
6 without Congress weighing in and putting our thumbprint on  
7 the mission and saying that if we are going to ask people  
8 to risk their lives in the mission, Congress is going to  
9 debate and vote and authorize it.

10 But if we have that debate about the American role, I  
11 mean, one of the things that I think is notable if, in  
12 fact, the region has to go all in against the ISIL threat,  
13 so far 80 percent of the airstrikes that have been carried  
14 out against ISIL have been U.S. flown.

15 Jordan has been rock solid in doing a lot of  
16 airstrikes. But the other nations in the region that seem  
17 to be directly threatened by ISIL, much more directly even  
18 than we are threatened by ISIL, I think have really not,  
19 other than being associated with the coalition, I don't  
20 think they have really stepped forward in showing -- and  
21 been willing to show that they are going all in against  
22 this threat, which should be an existential one. And I  
23 think that is going to be the subject of some significant  
24 debate if we get into a discussion on authorization.

25 Now second, Dr. Carter, on Afghanistan, I completely

1 agree with Senator McCain, the chairman's point in his  
2 opening. I really hope we have a conditions-based strategy  
3 and not a calendar-based strategy.

4 Now I think it is okay to have a plan, and you  
5 indicated a plan is a plan. You can adjust the plan based  
6 on the current reality.

7 Senator King and I were in Afghanistan in October and  
8 talked with General Campbell, and it seemed like after  
9 those discussions, the White House did adjust the plan once  
10 already. There were some ideas about the way U.S. forces  
11 would be used in calendar year 2015 that after hearing from  
12 General Campbell and others, I think the White House  
13 adjusted the authorities granted to U.S. troops during this  
14 calendar year, and I think that was a conditions-based  
15 decision, which was good.

16 But I worry for the same reason that you do. We have,  
17 at the expense of blood and treasure, achieved a lot in  
18 Afghanistan. I mean, the nation's life expectancy has gone  
19 from 44 to 61 in 10 years.

20 And you know, my back of the envelope math, I always  
21 say 30 million people living on an average 17 years longer.  
22 That is 510 million years of human life. That seems like a  
23 pretty good ROI to me, for as painful as it has been, for  
24 as expensive as it has been. So why would we want to go  
25 backward?

1 I think in Afghanistan that what we heard when we were  
2 there was also a little bit of the Iraq worry. Wow, they  
3 have taken their eye off the ball before because of things  
4 in Iraq and pulled resources away and that this is the  
5 perception in Afghanistan. Maybe this is getting ready to  
6 happen again, as significant a threat as ISIL is and that  
7 we need to be at it.

8 In Afghanistan, they are a little bit nervous that the  
9 ISIL threat will pull our attention away and that we could  
10 lose these gains. And so, I hope in your capacity in this  
11 new role, as you dig into the plan, as you dig into the  
12 daily conditions, that we will make the right decision  
13 about how to keep the progress that we have gained in  
14 Afghanistan and that we won't let a day on the calendar be  
15 the determinant of our policy.

16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Chairman McCain: Do you want to respond to that,  
18 Doctor?

19 Mr. Carter: Two thousand one hundred and six  
20 Americans, service members have lost their lives in  
21 Afghanistan. Afghanistan was the place from which the 9/11  
22 attacks emanated, and so I think finishing the job there is  
23 very important.

24 I have been part of that war in my previous time in  
25 the department. It was what I woke up to every morning,

1 and so I am very committed to success there. And we have  
2 adjusted what we have been doing continuously as we went  
3 along.

4 So I don't have anything to add to what you said,  
5 except to remind that the Afghan security forces are what  
6 we increasingly have trained to provide security on Afghan  
7 territory. They are going to need support after 2016.

8 In the President's budget, about which I will appear  
9 before you in a few weeks, I understand that there is, if  
10 my memory serves, \$3.8 billion requested for the Afghan  
11 security forces that carries through the end of 2016. And  
12 then a question will arise, are we going to stick with  
13 them, the Afghan security forces?

14 So it is not just about troops, American troops. It  
15 is about the overall commitment so that the Afghan security  
16 forces can keep the peace there after 2016.

17 Chairman McCain: Senator Graham?

18 Senator Graham: Thank you.

19 The idea of Joe Lieberman introducing you is a risky  
20 proposition, but we will see how that turns out.

21 Bottom line, do you agree with the following  
22 statement. The only reason 3,000 Americans died on 9/11 is  
23 that the radical Islamists who attacked us could not find a  
24 way to kill more of us?

25 Mr. Carter: That is probably true.

1 Senator Graham: If they could, they would?

2 Mr. Carter: That is my guess.

3 Senator Graham: Yes, I don't think it is a guess. I  
4 think it is a fact. Do you think ISIL represents a threat  
5 to our homeland?

6 Mr. Carter: I do. I do, and --

7 Senator Graham: Well, they say they want to attack  
8 us. There is no reason to believe they are kidding, right?

9 Mr. Carter: I agree.

10 Senator Graham: The head of ISIL was in Camp Bucca,  
11 and he said, "I will see you in New York," when he was  
12 released.

13 Mr. Carter: Right.

14 Senator Graham: So everything they have said they  
15 would do, they have done. And one of the things they want  
16 to do is hit us. So I couldn't agree more with Senator  
17 Kaine about a regional buy-in. If you don't get that, the  
18 structural problems really don't change.

19 But it is just not about the region. The reason I am  
20 worried about ISIL is because I think they want to hit us.  
21 They have got the best platform I have seen since 9/11 in  
22 Syria and Iraq to attack the United States. They hold a  
23 large territory. They are rich. They have a lot of crazy  
24 people under their control, and they mean it when they say  
25 they want to hit us, and I want to make sure they don't.

1 Do you think al-Nusra wants to hit us?

2 Mr. Carter: I do.

3 Senator Graham: They recruited a guy from Florida who  
4 was a suicide bomber I think in Syria. He came back to  
5 come to Florida before he actually became a suicide bomber.  
6 They are trying to hit us, too.

7 Do you think AQAP wants to hit us?

8 Mr. Carter: Very definitely.

9 Senator Graham: Very definitely. They are the people  
10 that hit us in Paris.

11 Do you think the Iranians have to believe that a  
12 military option is on the table during these nuclear  
13 negotiations?

14 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

15 Senator Graham: And if they don't, we are making a  
16 huge mistake, right?

17 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

18 Senator Graham: Do you think the Russians are being  
19 provocative at a time when the world is already in chaos?

20 Mr. Carter: Yes.

21 Senator Graham: Do you think that a cyber Pearl  
22 Harbor is a potential threat we face?

23 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

24 Senator Graham: And we are not ready for it?

25 Mr. Carter: I agree with that also.

1           Senator Graham: Do you think China is intimidating  
2 their neighbors?

3           Mr. Carter: Certainly trying to.

4           Senator Graham: Can you tell me in light of all of  
5 this, why in the hell would the Congress be devastating the  
6 military budget? Can you explain that to me because I  
7 can't explain it to myself?

8           Mr. Carter: No, I can't. No, I can't. As I am a  
9 longstanding, I am against sequester.

10          Senator Graham: Yes. And I left out a bunch of  
11 threats because I just have 5 minutes. Canada is in good  
12 shape, by the way. So we appreciate Canada being a good  
13 neighbor.

14          In 2017, the plan on the table now is to have 1,000  
15 troops left in Afghanistan, Kabul based. Do you agree with  
16 me, given the conditions that exist in the region, the  
17 likelihood of a reemergence of al-Qaeda and other terrorist  
18 groups along the Pakistan-Afghan border, we would be wise  
19 to have troops outside of Kabul?

20          Mr. Carter: That is not the plan now, Senator.

21          Senator Graham: Can you please tell me why I am  
22 wrong? It is the plan to go down to 1,000 by 2017. They  
23 increased the number of troops in 2015, but it is the plan.  
24 And if you are going to be Secretary of Defense, you need  
25 to understand the plan. The plan is to go to 1,000.

1 I think that is beyond unwise. That will destroy our  
2 ability to see, hear, and listen to what I think is a  
3 reemerging threat along the Afghan-Pakistan border. So if  
4 I am wrong about the plan, please correct me. This is  
5 something you can go home and check out for yourself.

6 Mr. Carter: No, I think you are correct -- I think  
7 you are correct about the plan.

8 Senator Graham: Yes, that plan needs to change.

9 Mr. Carter: That is the understanding I have of the  
10 plan.

11 Senator Graham: If it doesn't, we are incredibly  
12 stupid as a nation. I want to withdraw from Afghanistan  
13 responsibly. I want lines of defenses over there so they  
14 don't come here. Doesn't that make sense?

15 Mr. Carter: It does make sense.

16 Senator Graham: I am glad Afghans are living longer.  
17 I am glad that Afghan girls are going to school. I am  
18 proud of what we have accomplished. But I am worried about  
19 Americans living longer. And the reason I want to continue  
20 to invest in Afghanistan, the reason I want to deal with  
21 ISIL and al-Nusra and all the other groups is because they  
22 are trying to hit us.

23 Do you agree that the only way you can deter radical  
24 Islam -- you can't deter it, you have to prevent the attack  
25 before it occurs?

1           Mr. Carter:  Sir, I can't give a simple answer to  
2  that.

3           Senator Graham:  Well, they don't mind dying.

4           Mr. Carter:  You need to prevent -- well, I think that  
5  a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy begins foremost  
6  with defenses but has other dimensions as well in terms of  
7  removing the conditions that create safe havens and some of  
8  the ability for recruiting of terrorists.  So it is a  
9  complex -- it is a complex issue.

10          Senator Graham:  Well --

11          Mr. Carter:  But protecting ourselves needs to come  
12  first.

13          Senator Graham:  And I will close with this.  To me,  
14  it is not complex.  The only way you can keep them from  
15  coming back here to America is to stay over there, disrupt  
16  their operations.  Keep them on the run.  Do not let them  
17  gather strength.  Make them poor, on the run, and less  
18  entrenched.

19          I will end with this thought.  Syria.  How in the  
20  world are we going to dislodge ISIL from Syria without a  
21  ground component?  And I agree with Senator Kaine that that  
22  ground component has to be regionally based.

23          We just come back from the region.  People want to go  
24  in.  Saudi Arabia said you could have our army.  The Emir  
25  of Qatar said we will pay for the war, but you got to deal

1 with Assad.

2 How can we train up a Free Syrian Army or send any  
3 other force into Syria if we don't first deal with the  
4 Assad air threat? How in the world could you train  
5 somebody to go fight ISIL, and then one day they turn on  
6 Assad and not expect him to kill them before they get the  
7 capacity to come after him one day? How does this work  
8 without dealing with Assad?

9 Mr. Carter: Senator, let me say something about that.  
10 It is a very important question. The situation in Syria  
11 is, as you indicate, more than a problem of ISIS. It is a  
12 problem of the Assad regime as well. And the forces that  
13 we are supporting there have, first and foremost, the job,  
14 as we have discussed here this morning, of defeating ISIL.

15 But I believe that they also need to be creating the  
16 conditions for the removal of Assad. That is a much more  
17 complex task. I understand that. I am not trying to  
18 oversimplify it. But I think that has got to be at the end  
19 of the road, and if that is what you are pointing to, I  
20 completely agree with you.

21 Chairman McCain: Well, could I just say you really  
22 didn't respond, in all due respect, Dr. Carter, to sending  
23 young Syrians in, training them in Saudi Arabia and sending  
24 them in to Syria to be barrel bombed by Bashar Assad. The  
25 morality of that alone, much less the unworkability of it,

1 is in contradiction to everything the United States ever  
2 stood for or fought for.

3 I hope you will rethink your answer to Senator  
4 Graham's question. This idiocy of cooperating with the  
5 Iranians and also taking "ISIL first," of which Bashar  
6 Assad is the father, is nonsense and, as I say, immoral.

7 The committee will return at 2:45 p.m., since there is  
8 a vote at 2:30 p.m. And members who seek a second round or  
9 those members who have not had the opportunity to ask  
10 questions will be allowed to at that time. And so, we will  
11 stand in recess until 2:45 p.m.

12 Thank you.

13 [Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the committee recessed, to  
14 reconvene at 2:47 p.m., the same day.]

15 Chairman McCain: Thank you, Dr. Carter, for your  
16 patience. And as usual, with the efficiency of this well-  
17 oiled machine, we have a vote now starting now. So we will  
18 be going back and forth.

19 And Senator King is here, and so I would like to  
20 recognize him at this time.

21 Senator King?

22 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Dr. Carter, I am going to revisit a little bit of the  
24 ground that we covered this morning. But I want to make a  
25 suggestion. I would urge that you, upon your assumption of

1 this position, undertake an all-agency review of the policy  
2 with regard to the leaving of Afghanistan and talk to  
3 General Campbell, the military people, the intelligence  
4 people, the State Department. Because like many of the  
5 members here, I am gravely concerned that we will miss an  
6 opportunity to preserve what we have gained in Afghanistan.

7 I was going to say we are in danger of fumbling the  
8 ball on the 5-yard line. I think a better example might be  
9 we are in danger of throwing a pass when you have Lynch in  
10 the backfield on the 1-yard line. But we have gained a  
11 lot, and to lose it in the end because of an accelerated  
12 departure schedule that doesn't really fit the requirements  
13 on the ground I think would be tragic.

14 We have a partner that wants to work with us now. We  
15 have the security forces that are standing up and taking  
16 casualties, but they are going to need some additional  
17 support, particularly in the authorities under our air  
18 system. And I would urge you to be -- to have such a  
19 review and to really be very strong with the White House.

20 You mentioned that you will be candid. I hope you  
21 will be candid to the point of being annoying. And what is  
22 the worst thing they can do? Appoint you to be Secretary  
23 of Defense. So, please, I think this is of some urgency.

24 Number two, in answer to a question, you mentioned  
25 that you were inclined to support additional arms to

1 Ukraine. And I share that position.

2 On the other hand, we don't live in a static world,  
3 and the danger is we supply arms, Putin sees those arms and  
4 matches them and raises us, to some extent. And I  
5 wondered, with your history of studying geopolitical  
6 issues, strategy, and the like, if you could elaborate a  
7 little bit on that challenge?

8 If we could arm the Ukrainians and give them some  
9 strategic advantage, I think that would be great. The  
10 problem is we can't rely on the Russians not responding in  
11 some way, and then you are in an escalation situation.  
12 Your thoughts, please?

13 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

14 And I like and remembered, and I think I have used  
15 subsequently, your expression "fumbling the ball on the 5-  
16 yard line." I was superseded by the Super Bowl metaphor, I  
17 understand. But this is a war that we have carried all  
18 those yards, and so I will --

19 Senator King: With some very substantial progress.

20 Mr. Carter: Yes. Well, very substantial progress.  
21 We now have a partner in Ashraf Ghani that is very  
22 positive. So I promise you I will keep working at it, keep  
23 an open mind, and tell it like I see it, yes, in  
24 Afghanistan.

25 With respect to Ukraine, you raise an excellent

1 question, and I think it is true that in strategy and  
2 working on these international problems, you always have to  
3 ask yourself not the next step, but what is the step after  
4 that? So what happens after?

5         And to your question, two observations, Senator. One  
6 is that I think that much as I incline in the direction I  
7 indicated this morning, the economic and political pressure  
8 on Russia has to remain the main center of gravity of our  
9 effort at pushing back, and the Europeans are critical to  
10 that. So European solidarity and NATO solidarity are  
11 critical in this regard, as they are to all of European  
12 security and to dealing with the problem of Putin.

13         The other thought that comes to mind is that this is,  
14 as I consider what kinds of assistance we may give to the  
15 Ukrainian military, one does need to think two and even  
16 three steps ahead in this matter. So your point is very  
17 well taken, and I thank you.

18         Senator King: I would suggest an article in  
19 yesterday's Financial Times. It talks about just this  
20 issue that I think you would find interesting and  
21 informative. And I am not expressing a conclusion, but I  
22 just think we have to think hard about, as you say, one,  
23 two, and three and four steps down the chess game.

24         A final point, and I am close to out of time. I want  
25 to reiterate, I think Senator Shaheen mentioned, the

1 chairman very articulately and forcefully expressed the  
2 problem with procurement and money. I am also focused on  
3 the problem with procurement and time.

4 Senator Inhofe had a chart recently from DARPA that  
5 showed in 1975 it took about the same time to bring a new  
6 automobile, a new commercial aircraft, and a military  
7 aircraft from concept to operation, about 6 years -- 5 1/2,  
8 6 years. Today, those lines have wildly diverged, and the  
9 automobile is down to 2 years. Commercial aircraft is up  
10 to about 7, but a military aircraft is up to 23 years.

11 And that just won't do in terms of, you know, we are  
12 going to be building obsolete technology. And so, I would  
13 urge you, as you focus quite rightfully on cost, to also  
14 look at how do we bring these products to market, if you  
15 will, or to operability in a shorter time? A, so we can  
16 meet the needs of the exigencies of the moment, but also so  
17 that we are not getting obsolete technology just because of  
18 the lapse of time.

19 And I know you are aware of this. I just urge you to  
20 focus on that as well as the cost.

21 Mr. Carter: I will do so, and I completely agree with  
22 you.

23 Senator King: Thank you.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Mr. Carter: Thank you.

1 Chairman McCain: Thank you, Senator King.

2 Dr. Carter, every member of this committee signed a  
3 letter to Secretary Hagel and Secretary Kerry concerning  
4 this issue that has been raised with you about the  
5 Jordanians and the needs that they have. Believe me, every  
6 member that met with King Abdullah was deeply moved by the  
7 requirements that he has and his inability to do so.

8 And I guess, finally, on the issue of Ukraine, what  
9 does it take? Do they have to send in more hundreds of  
10 tanks that the Ukrainians have no weapons to defend  
11 themselves? There is 4,000 dead now. How many more do you  
12 think before we at least do them what seems to be common  
13 decency, giving them the ability to defend themselves?

14 Certainly, Vladimir Putin has gone literally all in,  
15 and there is some lessons of history, sir, that of  
16 dictators and bullies who have troubles domestically have a  
17 history of striking out and being more aggressive in order  
18 to divert attention. This is reminiscent of the 1930s to  
19 me, and Neville Chamberlain might be proud.

20 Senator Tillis?

21 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 And thank you, Dr. Carter.

23 First, I think it is very clear with the questions  
24 that are being asked today, this hearing really isn't about  
25 Ash Carter. I think there is a lot of confidence in your

1 ability, and I think there are few public servants as  
2 qualified as you for the nomination. And I think you and  
3 your family should be very proud.

4 You know, I appreciate the time that you and I spent  
5 in my office. I think that we have already got several  
6 points of agreement, whether it is acquisition reform,  
7 training, modernization of business practices in the  
8 Pentagon. I look forward to working with you on that and  
9 making progress.

10 I also think that, you know, defense is an area where  
11 you even see in the questions where there seems to be a  
12 consistent message from most of the members up here about  
13 our concerns with the safety and security of America and  
14 the need for us to work together on a bipartisan basis.  
15 Because if we don't, we fail the thousands of young men and  
16 women who volunteer to defend our freedom.

17 Before I get to a question, I do want to probably echo  
18 in slightly different terms what Senator Sullivan said this  
19 morning. There seems to be a disconnect between the  
20 reality of the threat that we face right now and the way  
21 the President portrays it in many instances, most recently  
22 with the State of the Union.

23 We have Ukraine is ablaze. I think ISIS and al-Qaeda  
24 are about as strong as ever. You have Chinese generals  
25 talking about maybe wanting to settle some millennial

1 scores with their neighbors in the Pacific Rim.

2 We have a situation where I think Israel feels  
3 abandoned, and I think the prime minister being called a  
4 coward by somebody in the White House is unacceptable. We  
5 are at a very dangerous time right now, I think. And I  
6 believe that you said it very well when you said the number  
7 and the severity of the threats that we are facing is  
8 probably as great as our lifetimes, as any time in our  
9 lifetimes.

10 And I believe that you may go into your position maybe  
11 in a way to where you can work with people in the White  
12 House and the National Security Council to get them to work  
13 with you, to help us address, I think, these safety and  
14 security problems across the world.

15 My first question for you also goes back really to the  
16 State of the Union, where the President seems to continue  
17 to refuse to call the enemy what they are. How can we  
18 fight an enemy with an administration that refuses to name  
19 them? A President who refuses to recognize that there is a  
20 huge difference between the Muslim religion and the Islamic  
21 terrorists that we are facing today?

22 Do you agree with that strategy, or can you  
23 rationalize for me why the President seems to continue that  
24 position?

25 Mr. Carter: Senator, I agree with you that there is a

1 difference between the Muslim religion and the kind of  
2 extremism that leads to terrorism that is the threat and  
3 the enemy that we are countering. If I understand the  
4 reference you are making, it is to the President's  
5 statements of a few days ago, which I interpreted as saying  
6 the same thing. Namely, it is important for Americans to  
7 make a distinction and show that they know how to make a  
8 distinction between the religion of Islam on the one hand  
9 and extremists and terrorists on the other.

10 I don't think, in my judgment, that is to minimize  
11 what is one of the motivating ideologies of the enemies we  
12 face, which they will say is tied to their Islamic  
13 religion. But I don't think that we serve ourselves well  
14 as Americans by conflating this kind of barbaric extremism  
15 with an entire religion.

16 Senator Tillis: I have another question. It really  
17 has to do with you in relation to your predecessors.

18 How do you feel you can break through the barriers  
19 that Gates and Panetta seemed to be very frustrated -- you  
20 and I talked briefly about the book Secretary Gates wrote.  
21 But they both seemed to have a great deal of frustration in  
22 their time in the position you will be confirmed with the  
23 White House national security team and the Pentagon. And  
24 they left, they seem to have left in part in frustration  
25 with that.

1 I think Senator Gates in his book maybe even called it  
2 "amateur hour at the National Security Council." How are  
3 you going to be different in relating to the Pentagon and  
4 the President's national security team?

5 Mr. Carter: Well, I intend to be what I have always  
6 been in all the decades I worked in the Department of  
7 Defense, which is I will be entirely straight and upfront  
8 with the President and make my advice as cogent and as  
9 useful to him in making his decisions as I possibly can.

10 That is what I can do. That is what I have pledged to  
11 do. That is what I will do.

12 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 Senator Reed [Presiding]: Thank you.

15 Senator Rounds?

16 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17 Dr. Carter, I appreciated the opportunity to visit  
18 with you last week, and one of the items that we discussed  
19 was the need for the long-range strike bomber. And in that  
20 regard, we discussed the fact that it would probably be,  
21 what, 10 years from now before, under the best  
22 circumstances, it may be operational. Fair estimate of  
23 time?

24 Mr. Carter: Yes, although I am -- in answering your  
25 question, I am mindful of what Senator King said just a few

1 moments ago. I would rather say "as soon as possible."

2 Senator Rounds: I understand. In the meantime, we  
3 have challenges that have to be responded to with other  
4 existing platforms. One of which, for conventional  
5 purposes, is the B-1B bomber. I think right now we  
6 probably have 62 or 63 in our fleet that are operational  
7 sometimes.

8 I am concerned about readiness right now, the mission  
9 capabilities of those platforms because those are literally  
10 on the front lines as we speak. Because of their  
11 capabilities or multiple types of weapons to be delivered  
12 out of that same platform, they are being utilized, and  
13 they are being worn out.

14 I think mission capability is somewhere under 50  
15 percent, and I don't have the exact number, but in terms of  
16 those platforms. I would like you to talk just a little  
17 bit, and I really would like to give you the opportunity to  
18 talk about what sequestration has done in terms of mission  
19 capability, the need that we have for that platform to get  
20 us to the next generation of strike bombers, what your  
21 thoughts are on getting back to where we need it, and what  
22 the appropriate number of operational aircraft should be?

23 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

24 And you are right. I don't know the specific numbers  
25 on the B-1 at the moment. But in general, sequester has

1 hit readiness very hard.

2 In the Air Force, I know, for example, in the summer  
3 of 2013, I remember very vividly the Nellis training range,  
4 Air Force's premier training range, closed in the summer.  
5 First time in my entire professional life I had ever -- I  
6 had ever seen that.

7 So the first victim of sequester has been readiness,  
8 and so I can well believe it has affected the B-1, which is  
9 an essential part of our arsenal, as you indicate.

10 Senator Rounds: In your role, and I believe that you  
11 will be confirmed, what I am looking for is a commitment  
12 that these men and women that are literally tasked with  
13 keeping these aircraft operational, that they have got your  
14 full support to get the numbers back up to where they ought  
15 to be. And that there is going to be -- literally right  
16 now they are taking out of the bone pile to literally  
17 harvest parts off to keep those aircraft flying today.

18 But there has got to be a better way to do it. And  
19 then if we are going to continue to do for the next perhaps  
20 10 years, that you have an understanding and a clear  
21 commitment that you are going to help them get the parts  
22 necessary to keep these aircraft flying.

23 Mr. Carter: I have the same understanding you do of  
24 the problem, the same commitment you do, and the only thing  
25 I would say is it is going to take more than my commitment.

1 It is going to take money also and ultimately relief from  
2 sequester to deal with these kind of things. But I see the  
3 picture the same way you do.

4 Senator Rounds: But you are prepared to step in and  
5 to assist in making sure that those resources are  
6 available?

7 Mr. Carter: I am.

8 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

9 Mr. Carter: Thank you.

10 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

11 Senator Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

12 We have concluded all the members present with the  
13 first round, and I will defer any comments I have until the  
14 chairman has a chance. But, Senator Wicker, you are  
15 recognized.

16 Senator Wicker: Thank you.

17 How are you feeling, Dr. Carter?

18 Mr. Carter: Thank you for asking. I am fine.  
19 Appreciate it, sir.

20 Senator Wicker: You are doing well, and we appreciate  
21 your willingness to serve.

22 According to NATO guidelines, we ask our NATO allies  
23 to devote at least 2 percent of their GDP to defense. This  
24 has been a stunning failure, actually. Only four countries  
25 spend that much -- spent that much in 2013 -- Estonia, the

1 United States, the United Kingdom, and Greece.

2 Do you have any ideas about how we can do better in  
3 this regard?

4 Mr. Carter: Secretaries of Defense that I have served  
5 for almost as long as I can remember have pleaded with the  
6 Europeans to spend more on their own defense, our NATO  
7 allies. And with very few exceptions, those pleas have not  
8 been fully heeded.

9 One doesn't wish adversity on anyone, but one would  
10 hope that when they look at Russia, when they look at  
11 Charlie Hebdo incidents and so forth, that the European  
12 public will come to share the view that they need to be  
13 part of their own defense and continue to play the role  
14 that Europe has always played, of being a partner with the  
15 United States in keeping peace and order around the world.

16 So I regret that they are not spending as much as they  
17 used to. And I hope -- and again, I don't wish adversity  
18 upon anyone, but I hope that what they see around them  
19 reminds everyone you don't get this stuff for free.  
20 Security doesn't come for free. You got to pay for it.

21 Senator Wicker: One would hope. I hope you will,  
22 going forward, help us think of perhaps carrots and sticks  
23 and incentives to have our allies shoulder their part of  
24 the burden.

25 You know, I was talking, we had a great discussion

1 with General Scowcroft the other day. And I asked about  
2 what we would do about a Russian invasion or incursion into  
3 the Baltics. You know, we were a treaty -- we are a treaty  
4 ally of Ukraine. We were unable to do anything. We were  
5 unable to do anything when the Russians moved into Georgia.

6 But with a NATO ally, it really is different. And  
7 General Scowcroft mentioned tripwires, stationing troops in  
8 the Baltic countries, both from the United States and from  
9 our NATO allies. What do you think of that concept? Is it  
10 something you have given any thought to, Dr. Carter?

11 Mr. Carter: I have, and it is one I support. And I  
12 believe it is the intention -- again, I don't know this. I  
13 am not in these deliberations. I think it is the intention  
14 behind the rotational introduction of U.S. and other NATO  
15 forces into the Baltic countries, to reinforce deterrence  
16 and to reinforce the principle that this is NATO and that  
17 Article 5 of the NATO treaty says an attack on one is an  
18 attack upon all.

19 Senator Wicker: Absolutely.

20 Mr. Carter: And we need -- that is a very important  
21 principle, and we need to stand behind that and show that  
22 we are going to stand behind it. And I think that is the  
23 meaning of the tripwire concept that General Scowcroft was  
24 thinking of.

25 Senator Wicker: Well, if we don't stand behind our

1 word on that article, then our word really does mean  
2 nothing.

3 Let me ask you this in conclusion. How was Cap  
4 Weinberger to work for?

5 Mr. Carter: I enjoyed working for him. I was not at  
6 a very senior level, but what I did for him was advise him  
7 on space, missile defense, nuclear command and control, and  
8 the early days in those days of what are called the  
9 continuity of government efforts, which still continue.  
10 And we were just beginning to put them together at that  
11 time. But --

12 Senator Wicker: What do you think he would say about  
13 our defense posture at this point?

14 Mr. Carter: Secretary Weinberger was an enormous  
15 backer of defense spending and of the defense budget, and  
16 he was tireless in explaining the need for an adequate  
17 defense. And in that respect, he was a lot of fun to work  
18 for.

19 Senator Wicker: Yes, he wouldn't be overly delighted  
20 with sequestration and with the current funding level and  
21 proposed funding level going forward?

22 Mr. Carter: Not at all.

23 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much. Good luck to  
24 you, sir.

25 Mr. Carter: Thank you. Thank you, sir.

1 Senator Reed: Senator King?

2 Senator King: I went before the vote. I am all --

3 Senator Reed: This is the second round, Senator, if  
4 you have additional questions.

5 Senator King: Oh, I am sorry. I was -- I was  
6 surprised to get called upon so soon.

7 Let me go back to the question that we ended with  
8 about the timing of weapon systems. You were one of the  
9 fathers of the MRAP program, were you not? And it seems to  
10 me that could be a model for what we are talking about.

11 Could you share lessons learned in that project that  
12 might be applicable to other procurement projects?

13 Mr. Carter: Yes, I think you put your finger on it,  
14 which when you pointed to the critical variable in a  
15 program being its duration. That is important for two  
16 reasons, and you indicated this already, Senator, but just  
17 to reiterate. Time is money. So a 15-year program is  
18 going to cost more than a 10-year program, the way we do  
19 things. So cost control, it is essential.

20 But the MRAP example points to something even more  
21 important, which is technology changes very quickly. Our  
22 enemies change very quickly today, and you don't have to be  
23 in a war, which the MRAP example occasions, to understand  
24 that we need to be able to turn the corner, add new  
25 technology to systems, field new systems more quickly than

1 our opponents are doing the same.

2 If we have a 15-year timetable and we are competing  
3 with any modern economy around the world, the same thing is  
4 going to happen to you if you are a commercial company that  
5 has a 15-year product cycle. You are going to lose.

6 So I think it is very important not just for cost  
7 control, but in order to remain the best military in the  
8 world that we turn the technological corner more quickly.  
9 And the MRAP example and the war's example gave me at least  
10 a lot of ideas about how we can do that even in peacetime.

11 Senator King: Well, I think part of it is instilling  
12 a sense of urgency and all the way up and down the line. I  
13 mean, the accomplishments of this country during World War  
14 II under extreme duress in terms of production were  
15 astonishing where I live near Bath, Maine.

16 I can't remember the exact figure, but I think they  
17 turned out a destroyer during World War II something like  
18 once every 17 days, which is unbelievable. Granted, it was  
19 a much simpler machine than now, but -- and the story  
20 of the bombers in World War II is also quite extraordinary.

21 So I think there has to be a sense of urgency. We are  
22 if not directly at war, we are certainly close to war  
23 footing on a number of fronts, and that should inform. As  
24 you pointed out, this isn't the Cold War, where you can do  
25 things with a 5-, 10-, or 15-year lead time. This -- and

1 our asymmetric advantage is technology.

2 And if we are unable to deploy that technology on a  
3 timely basis, we are basically losing that advantage. So  
4 I, again, very strongly urge you to follow on that. And by  
5 the way, Frank Kendall, who is in your office, I think is a  
6 star, and I think he -- I hope you are going to keep him --

7 Mr. Carter: I can't resist seconding that emotion.  
8 Frank was my Principal Deputy when I was Under Secretary,  
9 and we are very lucky to have an acquisition executive like  
10 Frank.

11 Senator King: Well, my philosophy of leadership,  
12 which applies to this case, is hire good people and take  
13 credit for what they do. And Frank falls into that  
14 category.

15 Second question. How do we get more value out of our  
16 allies in terms of support for the work that we are doing?  
17 I understand that in many countries of Europe, defense as a  
18 share of GDP is actually going down, which it is here, too.  
19 But it is going to 2 and less than 2 percent.

20 Is that part of your mission is to encourage our  
21 allies to be more -- to contribute more to this what is  
22 really the common defense?

23 Mr. Carter: I think they need to spend more on their  
24 own defense because their own defense is also our defense.  
25 That is what being an ally is about. And so, I would like

1 to see them carry their full weight of being an ally, and  
2 as I indicated earlier, I don't see how any American can be  
3 satisfied with the general level of defense spending among  
4 our European allies. I think it should be higher.

5 Senator King: Finally, and I realize my time is  
6 running short, but it seems to me that one of the great  
7 strategic challenges of this moment is to enlist Muslim  
8 countries and Arab countries in the fight against ISIL.  
9 They have to realize, and I think the events of yesterday  
10 may be a galvanizing factor, but they have to realize that  
11 this has to be their fight.

12 If it is our fight, that is what ISIL wants. They  
13 want this to be the West against Islam. But the fact that  
14 they did this horrendous murder yesterday of one of their  
15 brothers, of a Sunni Muslim, I hope will be a wakeup call  
16 to the Muslim world that they have got to deal with these  
17 guys most directly. Not simply by holding our coat, but by  
18 contributing and being involved on the ground, in the air.

19 This has to be their fight ultimately. It is not one  
20 that we can carry on by ourselves.

21 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

22 Chairman McCain [Presiding]: Senator Cruz?

23 Senator Cruz: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Dr. Carter, thank you for joining us. I enjoyed  
25 having the opportunity to visit with you in my office.

1 Mr. Carter: Thank you. Likewise.

2 Senator Cruz: And I appreciate your many years of  
3 service to our Nation.

4 Mr. Carter: Thank you.

5 Senator Cruz: And your willingness to serve in this  
6 incredibly important role at a time of great challenges,  
7 great threats, and also at a time, unfortunately, when the  
8 Defense Department faces significant challenges internally.

9 I have for some time been critical of the Obama  
10 administration's foreign policy, that it has lacked a  
11 steady mooring and a focus on the very real national  
12 security threats facing the country. I would like to take  
13 the opportunity to briefly discuss a few of those threats  
14 with you and get your thoughts on them, and I want to start  
15 with the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons  
16 capability.

17 In your judgment, what would be the national security  
18 implications to the United States if Iran were to acquire  
19 nuclear weapons?

20 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

21 In a phrase, "exceptionally grave," and that for two  
22 reasons. First of all, they might use them. But second,  
23 their having them is likely to stimulate yet others to get  
24 them. So for both those reasons, very grave.

25 Senator Cruz: Let us perhaps expand on each of them.

1 What is it about the regime and Iran that poses a  
2 significant threat of their actually using nuclear weapons  
3 if they had them?

4 Mr. Carter: Well, if you take at face value what they  
5 say, they have the ambition to wipe off the map other  
6 states in the region, namely Israel. They have a long  
7 history of behaving in a disruptive way, of supporting  
8 terrorism, of trying to undermine other governments of  
9 operating around the world.

10 So I think they give abundant evidence that they are  
11 not the kind of people you want to have having nuclear  
12 weapons.

13 Senator Cruz: And would you agree as well that with  
14 radical religious extremism, ordinary notions of deterrence  
15 and cost-benefit analysis don't always apply?

16 Mr. Carter: I am concerned that that is the case with  
17 people who are extremists of that kind, yes.

18 Senator Cruz: Now, Dr. Carter, you also talked about  
19 the threat of nuclear proliferation and in particular the  
20 threat that other Middle East countries in response to Iran  
21 acquiring nuclear weapons capability would then feel the  
22 need themselves to acquire the same. You know, what does  
23 it tell us -- for some decades it has been a matter of  
24 pretty widespread public knowledge that the nation of  
25 Israel has nuclear weapons capability.

1           And yet throughout that time, Israel's Arab neighbors  
2     have expressed no burning desire to acquire their own  
3     nuclear weapons, apparently because they don't perceive any  
4     meaningful threat that Israel would use those weapons in an  
5     offensive manner. And yet the Arab neighbors of Iran are  
6     reacting qualitatively different to the prospect of  
7     Khamenei and the mullahs acquiring nuclear weapons.

8           They are saying, almost without exception, if Iran  
9     acquires those weapons, they would immediately need to get  
10    their own. What does that say about the judgment of Saudi  
11    Arabia and other countries in the region about the  
12    magnitude of the threat posed by Iran?

13          Mr. Carter: I think it tends to read for us what we  
14    were just saying, namely the prospect of Iran having a  
15    nuclear weapon is a pretty fearful matter, and you don't  
16    have to be just an American or an Israeli to get that idea.

17          Senator Cruz: So would you then agree that the  
18    consequences of getting these negotiations wrong that are  
19    ongoing or the consequences of these negotiations  
20    facilitating and allowing Iran to acquire nuclear weapons  
21    capability would be severe, both from the perspective of  
22    the Middle East and our allies, but also from the  
23    perspective of our own national security?

24          Mr. Carter: Yes, the negotiations have precisely the  
25    opposite objective.

1           Senator Cruz: Let me ask you also briefly about ISIS.  
2 How would you characterize our objective right now with  
3 regards to ISIS?

4           Mr. Carter: To inflict a lasting defeat upon ISIS. I  
5 only add the word "lasting" to reinforce the idea that once  
6 they are beaten, they need to stay beaten, which means you  
7 need to create the conditions in, in this case Iraq and  
8 Syria, so that they stay defeated.

9           Senator Cruz: Okay. And a final question. In your  
10 professional judgment, what would be required militarily to  
11 destroy or, as you put it, inflict a lasting defeat on  
12 ISIS?

13          Mr. Carter: Militarily, it would be the dismantlement  
14 of their forces and their networks. And to get to the  
15 point about lastingly, to -- there is a political  
16 ingredient of this, which I need to add, which is to have  
17 them replaced in Iraq and in Syria with a government that  
18 the people want to be part of, and so they don't have to be  
19 governed by maniacs and terrorists.

20          Senator Cruz: Thank you, Dr. Carter. My time has  
21 expired.

22          Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

23          Chairman McCain: Senator Blumenthal?

24          Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

25          Thank you for your longstanding and extraordinarily

1 valuable service to our Nation.

2 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

3 Senator Blumenthal: I am prepared to overlook your  
4 deserting the Kennedy School at Harvard to go to Stanford,  
5 and I hope you will let us know if your back requires you  
6 to stand up or take a break.

7 Mr. Carter: No, I am fine. Thank you for your  
8 consideration.

9 Senator Blumenthal: I will take it out of my time.

10 I want to begin with a couple of brief questions, and  
11 I hope I won't retrace the ground that you have already  
12 covered. From the conversations we have had, I assume that  
13 you will continue to back the current support, full support  
14 for two submarines a year in the construction of our  
15 Virginia class submarines, and the ongoing R&D and other  
16 programs necessary for the Ohio class?

17 Mr. Carter: I will. Because undersea superiority is  
18 one of our key advantages, and we need to pursue it.

19 Senator Blumenthal: And it is one of those areas  
20 where, in a sense, we need to be on a war footing because  
21 we need to be prepared and ready, and the surveillance and  
22 intelligence functions, as well as the deterrent  
23 capabilities, are essential to our national defense. Am I  
24 correct?

25 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

1           Senator Blumenthal: Let me move to another area that  
2 is very close to my heart, and I again want to thank our  
3 chairman, Senator McCain, who joined with me in  
4 cosponsoring a measure, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention  
5 Act. Suicide remains a difficult and daunting, horrific  
6 problem not only among our veterans -- 22 every day commit  
7 suicide -- but also in our active military.

8           And you and I have talked about this problem. I  
9 believe you are very much attuned to it, and I am hopeful  
10 that you will continue the military's commitment and the  
11 Department of Defense commitment to providing the mental  
12 healthcare that is necessary to help our warriors deal with  
13 these invisible wounds and demons that come back from the  
14 battlefield with them.

15           Mr. Carter: I am attuned to it, and they are our --  
16 they are our people, and we need to care about them and  
17 care for them. And those who are having these kind of  
18 thoughts need help.

19           Senator Blumenthal: On the issue of our veterans who  
20 have suffered from post traumatic stress, as again you and  
21 I have discussed, your predecessor, Secretary Hagel, worked  
22 with me, responded to my urging him to establish a new  
23 policy guidance on September 3, 2014, that finally directed  
24 proper consideration of post traumatic stress by the Boards  
25 for Correction of Military Records when considering upgrade

1 requests.

2 Post traumatic stress was unknown in the Vietnam and  
3 Korean eras, not unknown because it didn't exist, but  
4 unknown because it wasn't diagnosed. And so, this new  
5 policy gives proper recognition to a medical condition that  
6 simply was never diagnosed at the time but may have caused  
7 less than honorable discharges.

8 And I hope that, if confirmed, you will ensure full  
9 and forceful implementation of this policy and continue  
10 outreach, because it is so vitally necessary, outreach to  
11 anyone who may be eligible to apply under the new  
12 guidelines.

13 Mr. Carter: I will. We have learned a lot about  
14 that, sadly, in recent years and understand now a lot  
15 better that it truly is a malady that we can and need to  
16 address.

17 So, yes, and thank you for taking an interest in it,  
18 as you have done about the welfare of the troops in so many  
19 other ways. In the course of the war, I was always very  
20 grateful for your attention to the well-being of the  
21 troops.

22 Thank you.

23 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much. I should  
24 probably stop there, but I do have a couple more questions.  
25 I really appreciate your kinds words.

1           On the interoperability of the Department of Defense  
2           and the Veterans Administration, I am the ranking member on  
3           the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Senate, and I think  
4           there has been an ongoing concern, you are aware of it, of  
5           the issues relating to the integrated electronic health  
6           records, integrated disability evaluation system, treating  
7           military sexual trauma, other shared efforts that really  
8           involve a gap between these two great departments, each  
9           with a vital mission.

10           And I am hoping that you will continue the effort that  
11           your predecessor, I think, believed was very important to  
12           close that gap and make sure that there really is the kind  
13           of connection, the vibrant, vital connection that is  
14           important to our troops and then to our veterans.

15           Mr. Carter: I recognized that gap, and there is only  
16           one soldier. There are two Cabinet departments. One  
17           soldier shouldn't have to worry about two Cabinet  
18           departments.

19           Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

20           Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

21           Chairman McCain: Thank you. I would mention to my  
22           colleagues we are now into the second round of questioning.  
23           In deference to Dr. Carter's health, I would request that  
24           we be as succinct as possible, but I want everyone to have  
25           a chance to continue questioning, if you are all right,

1 Doctor?

2 Mr. Carter: I am, sir. Absolutely.

3 Chairman McCain: So I will forego.

4 Senator Reed?

5 Senator Reed: I will just pass.

6 Chairman McCain: All right. Then next is Senator  
7 Cotton.

8 Senator Cotton: I would like to discuss the transfer  
9 of five Taliban commanders at Guantanamo Bay for Private  
10 Bowe Bergdahl. Knowing what we now know about the  
11 attempted recidivism of one of those Taliban members, as  
12 well as the ongoing investigation into Bowe Bergdahl's  
13 conduct in Afghanistan, do you think that it was a correct  
14 decision to go forward with that transfer?

15 Mr. Carter: First of all, I don't know the  
16 circumstances. I have read the newspaper reports, but I  
17 don't have any other information about these -- these  
18 individuals.

19 The -- what I do know is this. I wasn't in Government  
20 at the time the decision was made, but I have read the  
21 letters from all the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Senator Levin  
22 on this matter, all of whom express support for the  
23 decision. And I don't want to speak for any of them, but  
24 just speaking for myself, it really boiled down to one  
25 thing, which you very much from your own distinguished

1 service understand.

2 But just to say it, it is that we have for decades and  
3 decades and decades gone back decades and decades and  
4 decades in time to battlefields to bring home our fallen.  
5 And so, it is a sacred duty to bring back our fallen.

6 That was the motivation that the chiefs cited as  
7 motivating their support for the Bergdahl decision. It  
8 obviously was a difficult decision to make because of the  
9 five people that you now cite. But they supported the  
10 decision, and based on what I know about the circumstances  
11 as they were known at the time, I would have supported the  
12 decision as well.

13 Senator Cotton: Well, I opposed it then, and I would  
14 oppose it now. And we didn't leave Bowe Bergdahl behind.  
15 The thousands of soldiers who went after him trying to find  
16 him who faced enemy fire trying to locate him were not  
17 leaving him behind.

18 You are right that they tell every soldier, sailor,  
19 airman, and Marine that they won't leave us behind. But  
20 that doesn't mean they will trade five stone-cold Taliban  
21 killers for us.

22 When this transfer happened, Congress was not notified  
23 as required by the law. Can you assure us that in the  
24 future, Congress will always receive advance notification,  
25 as required by law, for future releases of Guantanamo

1 prisoners?

2 Mr. Carter: I can assure you we will always abide by  
3 the law. Absolutely, sir.

4 Senator Cotton: There have been media reports, most  
5 recently from Secretary Hagel himself, that he received  
6 White House pressure to sign off on the certification that  
7 Guantanamo detainees could be released. There have been  
8 reports that Leon Panetta even declined to release these  
9 five specific Taliban members at Guantanamo Bay.

10 Can you talk to us about how you might resist such  
11 pressure if you receive it from the White House when it  
12 comes to Guantanamo Bay releases?

13 Mr. Carter: I sure can. I am going to call it  
14 straight. I have an obligation under the law with respect  
15 to the risk associated with transfers of detainees, and I  
16 intend to discharge that responsibility in a very straight-  
17 up way.

18 Senator Cotton: Shifting to Bowe Bergdahl, my  
19 understanding is the investigation is still ongoing into  
20 his conduct in Afghanistan. Is that your understanding?

21 Mr. Carter: That is my understanding from the  
22 newspapers, but I don't have any inside information.

23 Senator Cotton: If confirmed, can you assure us that  
24 that investigation will proceed without unlawful command  
25 influence at any level?

1 Mr. Carter: Absolutely.

2 Senator Cotton: I would like to shift briefly to  
3 Russia and Ukraine and implications for the Baltic states.  
4 Right now, there is fighting going on in Ukraine, much of  
5 it is over the Minsk line, where the so-called -- or the  
6 so-called Minsk line where the forces were supposed to be  
7 separated since September.

8 One technique that Russia used in Ukraine, then they  
9 used in Eastern -- or in Crimea, then they used in Eastern  
10 Ukraine is the so-called "little green men." By most  
11 reports, these are Russian special operations forces, who  
12 are operating in advance in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

13 If Russia has uniformed soldiers operating on foreign  
14 territory without insignia, would that be a violation of  
15 the Geneva Conventions?

16 Mr. Carter: What it is, I just don't know the  
17 international legal answer to what you are -- to the  
18 question you are posing, Senator. But what I do know is  
19 that is what they have been doing, and I don't know. I  
20 think the little green men are part of the big lie, the big  
21 Putin lie, where he is clearly violating the sovereignty of  
22 a neighboring country and then pretending it isn't him and  
23 pretending it isn't Russia.

24 And as far as I understand, it very clearly is Russia.  
25 So it seems to me that is very important. I don't know the

1 legal part of it, but the common sense answer is he has  
2 violated Ukrainian sovereignty.

3 Senator Cotton: I believe there is a strong case that  
4 it would violate the Geneva Conventions to have soldiers  
5 operating without insignia. And since you said earlier  
6 that you would support putting NATO forces in Estonia,  
7 Lithuania, and Latvia, I would say I support that as well,  
8 especially recon forces who might be on the lookout for  
9 little green men.

10 Thank you.

11 Mr. Carter: Thank you.

12 Chairman McCain: Senator Heinrich?

13 Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Chairman.

14 Dr. Carter, you have spoken quite effectively about  
15 the need to address runaway costs, needless overhead, waste  
16 at the DoD. I want to touch on the fiscal impact of  
17 operating the Guantanamo detention facility.

18 Maintaining the prison at Guantanamo is costing  
19 American taxpayers almost \$5 billion since it opened in  
20 2002, an average of \$493 million every year for the last 5  
21 years. And in fact, in 2014, we spent more than \$3 million  
22 per Guantanamo detainee.

23 That compares to about \$78,000 per prisoner a year  
24 that we use to house hardened criminals in the Florence,  
25 Colorado, supermax prison. Do you intend to review the

1 cost effectiveness of continuing to operate the facility at  
2 Guantanamo versus placing high-risk detainees that need to  
3 continue to be detained in a more fiscally responsible  
4 setting?

5 Mr. Carter: Senator, I understand the cost numbers  
6 that you are citing. They broadly correspond to what I  
7 understand. I think the issue that Guantanamo will  
8 ultimately boil down to is what do you do with the people  
9 at Guantanamo that cannot be -- they need to be  
10 incarcerated. Where are they going to be -- if not Gitmo,  
11 where are they going to be incarcerated? That is a  
12 fundamental question that is a very difficult one.

13 It is partly a legal one and partly a practical one,  
14 and I don't know everything I would need to know about  
15 that. But I hope that as time goes on and engaging with  
16 members of this committee, many of whom know much more  
17 about this subject than I do, that we can discuss what  
18 might be done with these people because what is plain as  
19 day is that they need to be incarcerated, as you indicated,  
20 in a supermax-type place.

21 Senator Heinrich: Yes, I appreciate that, and I look  
22 forward to working with you on that.

23 As someone who helped draft the Nunn-Lugar  
24 legislation, which I think was one of the high water marks  
25 for legislation in the last decades, how do you view

1 working -- what is the right approach to preserving that  
2 nonproliferation infrastructure in the current environment?

3 Mr. Carter: The Nunn-Lugar program, since those days,  
4 has moved on to other very important missions. It is less  
5 focused on the -- on Russia and the states of the former  
6 Soviet Union than it once was. It is now focused on  
7 globally.

8 It has picked up a big focus on biological weapons,  
9 which are also very fearsome weapons, as well as nuclear  
10 weapons. So it still has a role to play in keeping us  
11 safe.

12 It is one of those ways that the Defense Department  
13 can act in its long-term interest to head off threats that  
14 were they to occur and materialize would be much more  
15 dangerous and much more costly to have to counter than if  
16 we can stop them from developing in the first place.

17 Senator Heinrich: I appreciate that.

18 Back in 1995, we had our Nation's first nuclear  
19 posture review. At that time, there was some talk about  
20 potentially transitioning to a monad where land-based  
21 missiles and bombers might not be utilized.

22 We have moved away from that, obviously, in recent  
23 years to the more traditional triad. What are your  
24 thoughts on the nuclear triad today, given today's global  
25 security environment? Is that something you intend to

1 continue to look at? Do you think it is meeting the  
2 deterrent requirements that we have, and just generally,  
3 what are your thoughts on it?

4 Mr. Carter: I think it is meeting our deterrent  
5 requirements. I think those deterrent requirements are  
6 going to be with us as far into the future as I can see,  
7 and that is why having a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear  
8 arsenal and all the parts of that that are necessitated is  
9 a foundational responsibility of the Department of Defense.

10 It is not in the newspapers every day. It is not, you  
11 know, as apparent, I suppose, to many citizens. But it is  
12 foundational to our security.

13 Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Dr. Carter.

14 Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

15 Senator Ayotte: I want to thank the chair.

16 I want to thank you, Dr. Carter, for being in such a  
17 lengthy hearing and answering so many of our questions. We  
18 really appreciate it.

19 I wanted to follow up on Russia, and specifically in  
20 your advance policy questions, you had stated that Russian  
21 deployment of weapon systems that violate the INF treaty  
22 would pose an increased threat to the United States and our  
23 allies in Europe and Asia. And you have also written that  
24 Russia should return to compliance with the INF treaty in a  
25 verifiable manner.

1           I think one of the problem we are facing as we look at  
2 the challenges we face, Russia is developing a new mobile  
3 nuclear ground-launched cruise missile, which is in direct  
4 violation of that 1987 treaty, which was likely in  
5 development even during the New START negotiations, which  
6 makes it harder to -- not only all the behavior we have  
7 seen in Ukraine, but this makes it harder for us to have  
8 these types of conversations with Russia and be able to  
9 trust anything that they say.

10           What steps should we be taking in response to Russia's  
11 INF violation?

12           Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

13           And my answer is not based on any inside information  
14 or intelligence information, just to be clear, but it is, I  
15 am told, quite clear that Russia has violated the INF  
16 treaty. And to the question what are we going to do about  
17 it? You know, I think you have to remind Russia that this  
18 was a two-way street.

19           That we signed a treaty that said you are not going to  
20 do this, and we are not going to do it either. And if you  
21 don't want to have that treaty, why then you are absolved  
22 from your restrictions under that treaty, well, we are,  
23 too. And what might we do, therefore, to -- in a military  
24 sense to respond to this development if it continues on the  
25 part of Russia?

1           And I think that there are defensive steps that we can  
2 take. There are deterrent steps that we can take, and  
3 there are counterforce steps that we can take. And so, we  
4 have military options, too, if they really want to get into  
5 this kind of game. Obviously, the judgment behind the INF  
6 treaty was that we both be better off if we didn't do this.  
7 That is why we agreed.

8           But these are always two-way streets, and I think they  
9 need to be reminded it is a two-way street.

10          Senator Ayotte: Thank you. I appreciate that very  
11 much, Dr. Carter.

12          I wanted to follow up on two areas. First, on the  
13 Guantanamo Bay discussion, one of the things that I think  
14 is important for people to understand is that we are not at  
15 the moment talking about transfers. We are talking about  
16 releases, and I think that is an important distinction.  
17 And something, obviously, as Secretary of Defense, you  
18 should be looking at, as we talked about earlier, making  
19 sure that people can't be in a position to reengage.

20          But one country in particular I want to ask you about,  
21 and that is Yemen. Last year, I had an amendment that  
22 passed on a bipartisan basis that would have prohibited  
23 transfers to Yemen. The situation has gotten markedly  
24 worse since that amendment passed in this committee. It  
25 did not get in the final bill.

1 I have got 10 pages of incidents in Yemen, and  
2 obviously, the recent issues with the Houthis, the takeover  
3 of the government, as well as suicide attacks, et cetera.  
4 Would you -- do you think it is advisable or would you  
5 recommend transferring any of these detainees to Yemen?

6 Mr. Carter: That doesn't sound very sensible in the  
7 environment in which we are facing ourselves, no.

8 Senator Ayotte: Well, I appreciate that. Thank you.

9 I also wanted to follow up, in our office discussion,  
10 we had talked about the A-10. And one thing I had asked of  
11 you that I hope you will do when you are confirmed, and  
12 that is, you know, I have opposed the Air Force's decision  
13 to retire the A-10, particularly from what I have heard  
14 from our men and women on the ground and the important --  
15 the fact that it is the best close-air support platform for  
16 our men and women in uniform.

17 But I have also -- we have heard from the association  
18 that represents 3,300 serving, separated, and retired  
19 JTACs. That is the Tactical Air Control Party Association,  
20 and what they have said about the A-10, "We believe that F-  
21 15, 16s, and B-1s cannot replicate the CAS capabilities of  
22 the A-10. And we know from combat experience that the  
23 elimination of the A-10 before a viable replacement  
24 achieves full operational capability will cost American  
25 lives."

1           So I asked you in my office, and I would like you to  
2 confirm again that you are willing to sit down with some of  
3 our members of this association who, as you know, are the  
4 ones on the ground calling in the strikes and working with  
5 our men and women in uniform. And they work with all of  
6 our platforms.

7           Mr. Carter: I remember very clearly. I have the  
8 letter that you gave me from them, and absolutely, I will.

9           Senator Ayotte: Thank you. This is really important.

10          And I have one other follow-up request that you had  
11 graciously agreed to in the office as well, and I think  
12 that Senator King from Maine will appreciate this as well,  
13 and that is that you agreed to come to New Hampshire. And  
14 we, of course, at that point will obviously love to show  
15 Dr. Carter the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

16          Senator King: In Maine, you mean? The one in Maine?

17          [Laughter.]

18          Senator Ayotte: Where so many of the wonderful  
19 workers are from New Hampshire.

20          Senator King: Thank you.

21          Senator Ayotte: So --

22          Mr. Carter: If confirmed, I would look forward to  
23 that.

24          Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Dr. Carter.

25          Mr. Carter: Thank you.

1 Chairman McCain: It is not necessary, Doctor.

2 [Laughter.]

3 Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst?

4 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Again, thank you, Dr. Carter, for being here today.

6 As a military, we have moved a very long ways away  
7 from using the old compass and map. Many of our systems  
8 now are very heavily networked. We rely very much on  
9 technology for our weapon systems, for our command and  
10 control systems, and that is really our primary tools for  
11 achieving dominance over our adversaries on the  
12 battlefield.

13 But what we are seeing now is cybersecurity threat,  
14 cyber attacks that are looming out there. And a number of  
15 countries out there, including Russia, China, North Korea,  
16 probably many others, have very sophisticated means of  
17 attacking networks. And how do you see that impacting our  
18 acquisition strategy as we move forward, and how do we best  
19 protect our equipment, protect our personnel moving  
20 forward?

21 Mr. Carter: I think you said it exactly the way I see  
22 it. You understand, but perhaps others around the country  
23 don't understand that not only is our civilian  
24 infrastructure susceptible to cyber attack, but we have to  
25 be concerned about our military infrastructure because

1 exactly as you say, there is no point in having planes and  
2 ships and armored vehicles in today's world if the network  
3 is itself vulnerable.

4 And I think, and I hope I can work together, if I am  
5 confirmed, with this committee on improving our cyber  
6 defenses, many aspects of cyber. But one is the defense of  
7 our own networks in the Department of Defense. That is not  
8 where it should be in terms of making them immune to attack  
9 by a potential enemy that would impair our own forces  
10 engaged with that enemy.

11 So that, I agree with you entirely.

12 Senator Ernst: Yes, thank you. We rely on networking  
13 so very much, from the simple ordering of a part for a  
14 Humvee to targeting, you know, enemy on the battlefield.  
15 So it goes from every level, from your squad level all the  
16 way up through the ranks.

17 Do you have an opinion on this? Just your opinion  
18 because it is more than just the military and the  
19 Department of Defense and our network security. We could  
20 look at attacks to our financial institutions, to our  
21 utilities as being a security risk for the United States  
22 also.

23 Do you have an opinion on where the Federal Government  
24 should be in regards to protecting our national security  
25 interests versus the privacy of individuals out there that

1 might be using the network?

2 Mr. Carter: I do. I have some understanding of that  
3 issue, and I would say that the Federal Government does  
4 have a role in protecting the country from cyber attack in  
5 the same way that it has a role in protecting the country  
6 from other kinds of attack. And I think it can do a lot  
7 more to exercise that responsibility without causing  
8 concerns over invasions of people's privacy and so forth.

9 So, for example, the Government can share information  
10 and knowledge it has collected about threats to private  
11 networks with those private parties, provided the proper  
12 legal safeguards are provided, which have less to do with  
13 privacy than they do with things like antitrust and other  
14 aspects that are important.

15 I think that the Government can sponsor and conduct  
16 R&D that improves the tradecraft in network defense for the  
17 good of the country. So I think there is a lot we can do,  
18 and we are not anywhere near where we should be as a  
19 country.

20 I think if we were as unprotected in some other domain  
21 that was more familiar to ordinary people, they would be  
22 clamoring for us to do more. I think if people fully  
23 understand what you understand about how vulnerable we are  
24 in cyberspace, they would want us to do more, not in any  
25 way that compromised anybody's privacy, but they would want

1 us to be doing a lot more than I believe we are doing now.

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I appreciate that. I  
3 think this will continue to be a vexing problem for us  
4 moving forward. It is a situation we are dealing with in  
5 many of our separate committees. But I do appreciate your  
6 opinion very much.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

9 Senator Sullivan: Dr. Carter, I wanted to go back to  
10 the issue of Iran for a moment. Under the chairman's  
11 leadership, we have had some tremendous witnesses over the  
12 last 3 weeks testifying on strategic challenges and how to  
13 think through them.

14 Dr. Kissinger's testimony in particular was very  
15 powerful, and he said, as we kind of struggle with these,  
16 "we" collectively in the legislative branch, executive  
17 branch, these strategic issues and challenges, that we need  
18 to ask ourselves questions. And the first one, and I think  
19 in his view the most important one, was what do we seek to  
20 prevent, no matter how it happens and, if necessary, alone?

21 I will repeat that. What do we seek to prevent, no  
22 matter how we prevent it, and, if necessary, alone? In  
23 your view, would preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear  
24 weapon fall into that first category that Dr. Kissinger  
25 laid out?

1 Mr. Carter: Yes. Yes.

2 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Thank you.

3 Second, I want to get back to the issue we were  
4 talking about a little bit earlier, you know, this issue of  
5 kind of being straight up with not only Congress and the  
6 American people on our challenges. I think you have been  
7 doing that today in your testimony.

8 Again, I have some doubts that that is happening at  
9 the highest levels. You know, the President's mention in  
10 his State of the Union referring to 9/11 and then saying  
11 "The crisis has passed." I don't think most Americans  
12 would agree with that.

13 But the discussion today about ISIS and you were  
14 talking about lasting defeat, it really is actually Islamic  
15 extremism and the threat it poses to the United States and  
16 our citizens. What, in your view, is the timeline?  
17 Because I think this is an issue that really hasn't been  
18 discussed.

19 Some people think that we are going to declare victory  
20 next year, 2 years? There have been others who have been  
21 saying, no, this is much more like the Cold War. Former  
22 CENTCOM commander General John Abizaid talked about "the  
23 long war."

24 Where do you see this kind of defeat playing out? And  
25 if it is going to take a long time, maybe a generation,

1 shouldn't we be preparing the American people for that, as  
2 opposed to saying, oh, we are going to defeat ISIS within a  
3 year?

4 Mr. Carter: I certainly hope that we defeat ISIS  
5 quickly, but that won't be a lasting defeat necessarily,  
6 unless we have a political dimension to that defeat as well  
7 as a military defeat. And that won't be the end of  
8 terrorism, Islamist extremism's terrorism.

9 Our experience has been this is a movement that  
10 changes and morphs and moves around the world. One would  
11 like to hope that at some point its inherent  
12 unattractiveness would cause it to burn out, but we can't  
13 be confident of that. And --

14 Senator Sullivan: So how do you think we should be  
15 thinking about it --

16 Mr. Carter: I think -- I think --

17 Senator Sullivan: -- from a time standpoint?

18 Mr. Carter: I think we need to be thinking about  
19 terrorism, more generally, as an enduring part of our  
20 national security mission. I believe that Secretaries of  
21 Defense, many in the future, even if Islamist extremism,  
22 which I certainly hope burns itself out at some point, will  
23 always be facing the problem of the few against the many.

24 There are aberrant people out there, and technology in  
25 today's world gives smaller and smaller groups of people

1 and even individuals destructive power that they would  
2 never have had in previous eras. And it is going to be the  
3 job of our security authorities -- defense, law  
4 enforcement, homeland security, and everything -- to  
5 protect our people against these people, whatever their  
6 thinking.

7 And they may not be thinking in the ISIS way. They  
8 may have something else on their mind. Or nothing at all  
9 on their minds. But I do think it is going to be a  
10 continuing part of the human condition and of defending our  
11 people.

12 Senator Sullivan: So I want to just ask one final  
13 question. You know, I think one thing that is going to be  
14 very important is to continue a very strong focus on  
15 training. Severe, hard training for our troops.

16 As you know, in periods of drawdown or changes, as a  
17 country, historically, we haven't always done this well.  
18 We talked about this. When you are an infantry officer in  
19 the Marine Corps, you are strongly encouraged to read this  
20 book called "This Kind of War." I encourage you or your  
21 staff to take a look at it. It is called "a study in  
22 unpreparedness," and it shows what happens when you have  
23 troops that are not trained.

24 And if confirmed, will you -- you are obviously going  
25 to have a myriad of responsibilities, pressures on you. I

1 would like to get a commitment that you will keep as  
2 certainly one of your top, if not top priorities this issue  
3 of training -- hard, severe training. Because as you know,  
4 the best way to ultimately take care of the troops is to  
5 make sure that they are ready to fight, destroy the enemy,  
6 and come home safely.

7 Can we get that commitment from you?

8 Mr. Carter: You absolutely have it. And I just would  
9 say your authoritativeness on that exact subject is very  
10 much appreciated and respected.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

12 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

13 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 And Dr. Carter, I know we are trying to get you out.  
15 So I will be very brief, and but I did want to come back to  
16 an issue that you and I had a chance to talk about briefly  
17 when you came in to see me, about the importance of our  
18 public shipyards and the good work that they do. Senator  
19 King, I know Senator Ayotte, and I are all very proud of  
20 the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and that you were issued an  
21 invitation to visit, which I would second.

22 We would love to have you come up. And while you are  
23 at it, you can come to Pease and see the home of the new  
24 KC-46 air refueling tanker, which we are also very proud  
25 of.

1           But one of the challenges of sequestration is the  
2    impact on not just our men and women serving in uniform,  
3    but also on our civilian workforce.  And so, can you talk  
4    about the threats that is posed by the uncertainty,  
5    especially for the engineers, the scientists, the  
6    mathematicians that we are going to need to continue to  
7    fill those civilian jobs to keep our shipyards at their  
8    highest level of efficiency and production and all of our  
9    depots as well?

10           Mr. Carter:  Yes.  Thank you.

11           And I do want to take the opportunity to express my  
12    gratitude for what our civilian members of our Department  
13    of Defense do.  A lot of people have the image of the  
14    civilian as a bureaucrat sitting behind a desk somewhere,  
15    and that is an issue we also need to get at because there  
16    is that, too, and that is costly in headquarters and  
17    overhead and so forth.

18           But most of DoD civilians are not sitting behind a  
19    desk.  They are actually doing maintenance work and repair  
20    work that actually needs to get done.  So they are not a  
21    waste.  They are there doing something essential.

22           And I think that they -- sometimes we talk about them  
23    as though we don't appreciate them, and I think we do need  
24    to appreciate them.  And even as we cut down, as I believe  
25    we need to do, the overall number of civilians in the

1 Department of Defense, I think you do that by getting rid  
2 of the overhead and the unnecessary layers and offices and  
3 so forth.

4 But I don't think anybody ought to be talking about  
5 somebody who fixes and maintains an essential piece of  
6 equipment. And we ought to be giving our thanks to those  
7 folks for what they are doing for the country.

8 Senator Shaheen: And are you concerned about the  
9 impact that sequestration might have on our ability to  
10 continue to maintain those civilian workers who have the  
11 backgrounds that we need to continue to do those jobs?

12 Mr. Carter: Yes. Because one of the things that  
13 sequester does because it hits fast and hard is cause  
14 managers in defense to take away dollars from exactly that  
15 kind of work, and it gets back to the readiness issue.

16 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis?

19 Senator Tillis: Dr. Carter, sorry I had to step out.  
20 I had another committee meeting. So if this question has  
21 been asked, I apologize.

22 In your response to some of the written questions  
23 submitted to you, there was a concern expressed over the  
24 size of our naval fleet and how it has reduced in numbers.  
25 And in your response, you commented that you can't just

1 look at the absolute number of ships to determine what our  
2 capabilities are.

3 So my question for you is what can you share with us  
4 that should make us feel okay with some reduction in the  
5 fleet, if you believe that that is okay as a long-term  
6 position? And then, secondly, what do you think the long-  
7 term plan should be for our naval readiness?

8 Mr. Carter: Well, thank you, Senator.

9 It is true that, as you say, that you have to look at  
10 quality and not just quantity. I mean, that said, I think  
11 the Navy's shipbuilding plan calls for it to increase the  
12 number of ships, not to decrease the number of ships. And  
13 I certainly think that is important.

14 And our Navy is -- we are the only -- we are the  
15 paramount navy of the world, and that is one of the things  
16 that makes us a global power. It is what allows us to be  
17 present when things break somewhere. Whether it be a  
18 conflict or a natural disaster, you see the Americans show  
19 up first in either case. Why do they do that? Well, one  
20 of the ways they do that is through the Navy.

21 So I have a strong interest in maintaining not just  
22 the quality, but the quantity as well. Obviously, this  
23 gets back to the budget and how many dollars we have.  
24 Another reason why we need to have enough dollars.

25 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

1 I have another question and final question. It  
2 relates to a report I am expecting the Secretary of the Air  
3 Force to submit to Congress, saying that they are going to  
4 be pulling out the Air Force assets from Pope field. And  
5 you and I touched on this briefly when we met.

6 And I think the result of that is going to be the Army  
7 requiring planes to be flown in to support training  
8 exercises there. And I am more worried about Pope field,  
9 going forward. It looks like the current course and speed,  
10 it could wither away, and I think it is an important  
11 strategic asset.

12 So rather than ask you to take a position on this  
13 decision, I would like to get your commitment once you are  
14 confirmed to meet with me and others who have a concern  
15 with this not as a North Carolina issue, but as a perhaps  
16 not a good strategic decision. And walk through this and  
17 see if either I can be convinced that it is the right  
18 decision or you can be convinced it may be something we  
19 have to rethink. And I would appreciate your commitment to  
20 doing that.

21 Mr. Carter: Absolutely, you have that.

22 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24 Chairman McCain: I am told that Senator Lee is on his  
25 way. Is his staffer here?

1 [Pause.]

2 Chairman McCain: From the airport?

3 Senator Tillis: Pope field.

4 [Laughter.]

5 Chairman McCain: I just don't think we can hold up  
6 the witness. Can I just say we intend to receive as many  
7 written questions as necessary by the end of business  
8 today. So you can review them and have your answers  
9 returned so that we can get your confirmation to the floor  
10 early next week.

11 If not, as you know, the week after that, we are in a  
12 recess. So we will try and get it accomplished.

13 I heard a door close. Yes, go ahead, Jack.

14 Senator Reed: I just simply want to thank Dr. Carter  
15 for his service to the Nation, for his testimony today, and  
16 thank the chairman for an extremely thoughtful hearing and  
17 a very productive hearing.

18 Thank you.

19 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Senator.

20 Chairman McCain: Well, I just can't hold the witness  
21 any longer. Oh --

22 [Pause.]

23 Senator Tillis: Senator McCain, I think he is running  
24 around the ante room to this entrance here. I would expect  
25 him to pop through in about 10 seconds.

1 Chairman McCain: Senator Lee, welcome.

2 Senator Lee: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

3 You have been very patient today and answered a lot of  
4 questions, and I just wanted to talk to you briefly about  
5 religious freedom within the military. I think the ability  
6 to believe according to one's own belief system and to  
7 express those views appropriately is of utmost importance  
8 to the morale of all of our service men and women and to  
9 their families.

10 I think it is also something of a pillar of our  
11 society, something that we have always expected would be  
12 tolerated is a diversity of religious viewpoint and  
13 religious expression. Certainly one's religious freedom  
14 should never be curtailed merely because one decides to  
15 serve one's country in the military.

16 I was concerned late last year to hear about a  
17 situation in the Army in which a chaplain in the course of  
18 some suicide prevention training was reprimanded for  
19 sharing his faith, talking about how his faith played a  
20 really important role in his personal recovery from  
21 depression.

22 My understanding is that he was reprimanded despite  
23 the fact that the Army itself, of course, recognizes the  
24 importance of spiritual wellness and the importance that  
25 faith can play in a person's life in dealing with mental

1 health issues of all kinds and an Army that has affirmed  
2 the important role that chaplains tend to play in our armed  
3 services.

4 Congress, of course, has acted several times in recent  
5 years to prioritize protection of religious freedom and  
6 religious expression within the armed services, respecting  
7 the necessity, of course, of maintaining good order and  
8 discipline and making sure that those things aren't ever  
9 compromised.

10 What is your view on religious freedom and freedom of  
11 religious expression within the military? And what will  
12 you do, if you are confirmed as Secretary, to make sure  
13 that those rights are respected and that the obligations  
14 imposed by Congress on the military are honored?

15 Mr. Carter: Well, I do think it is important, and I  
16 don't think there is any inherent conflict between  
17 religious freedom and religious expression and good order  
18 and discipline. We can have both.

19 I don't know anything about the particular case you  
20 adduced, but that this idea of having both and that they  
21 are not in inherent conflict with one another I think is  
22 extremely important and one that if I am confirmed in this  
23 job, I would want to see to it that no one thought that  
24 there was an inherent conflict between those two.

25 Senator Lee: Thank you. I appreciate that, and I

1 know those who serve us certainly appreciate that as well.

2 I appreciated what I heard you say earlier. I think  
3 it was in connection with a question asked by Senator Ernst  
4 regarding the valuable contributions of our National Guard  
5 and our Reserve units in combat. I hope that as services  
6 continue to reassess their force mixture that those  
7 sentiments that you expressed very, very well will continue  
8 to be at the forefront of your mind and that you will be  
9 conscious of those things.

10 And you know, as I look at the Guard units in my home  
11 State of Utah, those Guard units have served us very well,  
12 and a lot of them -- a lot of our service members who serve  
13 in our Guard units have been deployed many, many times just  
14 over the last few years. They have served exceptionally  
15 well, and I hope you will continue to recognize them, their  
16 contributions, and to utilize them appropriately.

17 I assume you don't --

18 Mr. Carter: I will. You just said it very, very  
19 well. They have really come through for us.

20 Senator Lee: Thank you very much.

21 Mr. Carter: Thank you, sir.

22 Senator Lee: And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see my  
23 time is rapidly expiring.

24 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

25 Doctor, as I mentioned, we will try to ask our members

1 to get in any written questions they have for you by noon  
2 tomorrow so that you will have time to return those either  
3 before the weekend or just after.

4 [The information referred to follows:]

5 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman McCain: And we will see, talk to the  
2 Majority Leader to see if we can't get your nomination to  
3 the floor so that you can get to work.

4 We thank you for your patience today and thank you for  
5 your appearance and thank you for your willingness to  
6 continue to serve this Nation.

7 Mr. Carter: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman McCain: The hearing is adjourned.

9 [Whereupon, at 4:09 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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