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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON WORLDWIDE THREATS

Thursday, February 26, 2015

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Thursday, February 26, 2015

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Reed, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, and King.

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

3 Chairman McCain: Well, good morning. Good morning,
4 everybody.

5 We have some nominations that, when we get sufficient
6 number of frightened members who couldn't brave the snow
7 today to come in -- and we also have a -- that --

8 Glad to see the Senator from Maine here, who is used to
9 this kind of weather year-round.

10 So, anyway, so we'll -- if we get a quorum, we'll talk
11 about the nominations.

12 And also, I'd like to tell the members here that
13 Senator Reed and I have agreed on a letter to the Budget
14 Committee concerning our views as to what the Budget
15 Committee should do on Defense. And, hopefully, we'll
16 circulate that letter and get as many signatures as
17 possible. Both Senator Reed and I have reached agreement on
18 that letter, and I'd like you to look at it, and as many as
19 possible can sign it.

20 The committee meets today to receive testimony on the
21 nature and scope of the global threats faced by the United
22 States and our allies.

23 I want to welcome James Clapper, Director of National
24 Intelligence, and General Vincent Stewart, the newly
25 confirmed Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

1 Thank you for being with us today.

2 The committee recently conducted several hearings with
3 some of our most respected national security leaders to
4 explore the need for strategic thinking to address the
5 threats we face. In the course of those hearings, these
6 military and foreign policy leaders all agreed that the
7 current international environment is more complex and
8 dangerous than at any time in recent memory.

9 On the terrorism front, ISIL continues to dominate much
10 of Syria and Iraq while spreading its dark and vicious
11 ideology in its effort to become the dominant Islamic
12 extremist group in the world. At the same time, the risk of
13 attacks by foreign fighters returning from the battlefield,
14 or lone-wolf threats inspired by ISIL's successes, only
15 increases the danger to the West. And Yemen, Afghanistan,
16 Pakistan, Africa, al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups
17 continue to take advantage of ungoverned spaces to plan
18 attacks against the United States and Western interests.

19 Simply put, we are engaged in a generational fight for
20 civilization against brutal enemies, and defeating these
21 enemies require significant intelligence resources and
22 focus, given the diffuse and constantly evolving nature of
23 the threat.

24 But, as we continue the fight against Islamic
25 extremists, we must not lose sight of the other strategic

1 threats we face. As the world ponders how to respond to
2 Russia's invasion and dismemberment of Eastern Ukraine,
3 Russia's provocations are only more worrisome in light of
4 Vladimir Putin's intense focus on building up and
5 modernizing Russia's military forces and doctrine and the
6 geopolitical ambitions that these new Russian capabilities
7 are designed to further.

8 In Asia, stability and security of a vital and
9 economically significant region is threatened by North
10 Korea's continued aggression, buildup of its nuclear
11 arsenal, and development of long-range ballistic missiles.
12 The far greater challenge is China's dramatic growth and
13 modernization of its own military capabilities, which appear
14 designed to restrict the U.S. military's ability to operate
15 in the western Pacific.

16 That chart over there is very interesting, in that it
17 shows the expansion by China in areas of the South China
18 Sea. And I hope our witnesses might comment on the fact
19 that, apparently, they are filling in enough of that area to
20 perhaps employ weaponry such as anti-air and other
21 capabilities.

22 Anyway, Iran continues to exert malign influence
23 throughout the Middle East and Africa, using proxies in
24 Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, Gaza, and Bahrain, to
25 undermine U.S. strategic interests. In fact, the Iranian

1 influence and presence in Iraq have become one of the key
2 factors and, it seems, limitations in U.S. policy planning
3 in Iraq and Syria. We must also remain focused on the
4 myriad potential threats of the future and, thus, maintain
5 technological superiority against potential adversaries.
6 Today this is of most concern in the cyber and space
7 domains, where we see increasingly capable and aggressive
8 activities by nation-state adversaries in areas with few
9 established norms.

10 I'd appreciate our witnesses' thoughts on each of these
11 major issues. As policymakers, we look to the intelligence
12 committee -- community to provide timely and accurate
13 information about the nature of the threats we face, the
14 intentions of our adversaries, and the likely effect of
15 certain actions we could take. In an age of increasing
16 threats and flat defense budgets, the need for accurate
17 intelligence about the plans and intentions of global actors
18 becomes even more paramount.

19 Again, I want to thank Director Clapper and General
20 Stewart for testifying today. I look forward to your
21 assessments of the nature and scope of the myriad threats we
22 face, how the intelligence community prioritizes and
23 approaches these many threats, and which of these many
24 issues concern you the most.

25 Senator Reed.

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

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

4 Let me join you in welcoming our witnesses. As they
5 know very, very well, we currently face an alarming number
6 of complex and varied national security challenges from many
7 corners of the globe. And our witnesses' views on, and
8 assessments of, these challenges are critical to the work of
9 this committee.

10 Last week, I traveled to Pakistan, Afghanistan, and
11 Iraq, and had the opportunity to meet not only with the
12 leaders in those countries, but also with the U.S. civilians
13 and uniformed personnel who are so ably and courageously
14 serving the United States.

15 In Iraq, our military commanders stressed that, despite
16 the setbacks that extremist fighters have suffered, ISIS
17 remains capable militarily. It continues to consolidate its
18 power in the region, including through the coercion of local
19 populations. Coalition airstrikes have enabled local
20 security forces, including Kurdish peshmerga and the Iraqi
21 government's newly established militias, many of them Shi'a,
22 to begin to gain ground from ISIS. But, concerns remain
23 about when Iraq Security Forces will be ready to launch a
24 counteroffensive to take Mosul and about Iran's growing
25 influence inside Iraq. I look forward to hearing the

1 witnesses' views on Iraq and the capabilities of both the
2 military and the new government.

3 In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban remains
4 resilient, despite coming under pressure on both sides of
5 the border. The challenge for U.S. forces in Afghanistan
6 will be to keep the counterterrorism pressure on the Taliban
7 even as we build the capacity of Afghan Special Operations
8 Forces to ensure that Afghanistan does not once again become
9 a haven for al-Qaeda and other terrorists. We would be
10 interested in our witnesses' views on the Taliban threat for
11 the 2015 fighting season, the possibility of Pakistan-
12 supported reconciliation talks with the Taliban and the
13 Government of Afghanistan, and the significance of reports
14 of a growing ISIS presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

15 On Iran, the diplomatic effort to prevent Iran's
16 acquisition of nuclear weapons are ongoing, and the end of
17 March is the next point at which we will assess Iran's
18 intent with regard to its nuclear program. I hope the
19 witnesses will provide us with an update on the intelligence
20 community's thinking with regard to negotiations and our
21 assessment of Iran's activities in the region under the two
22 possible scenarios: deal or no deal.

23 In Syria, coalition airstrikes of the naval Kurdish
24 fighters to regain control of Khobani and expand outward,
25 but ISIS remains a formidable force. General Nagata will

1 begin training the moderate Syrian opposition in the coming
2 months. And, if successful, these forces could, over time,
3 assist the coalition to promote the conditions for a
4 political settlement. Just last week, at a Regional Chiefs
5 of Defense Conference, the U.S. and Turkey signed a key
6 agreement to allow training of these forces to begin in
7 Turkey once recruits are identified. I am interested in the
8 witnesses' views on the potential of this Syrian training
9 initiative and the challenges we'll face.

10 In Europe, the post-cold-war international order is
11 under threat from a Russia that seeks to intimidate the
12 Ukraine and other neighboring countries through the creation
13 or perpetuation of conflicts at increasingly aggressive
14 military activities. Your assessment of the size of
15 Russia's military buildup and President Putin's intentions
16 could be of interest to the committee.

17 We've faced a different, but no less complex, series of
18 challenge in the Asia-Pacific region. A recent cyber attack
19 on Sony by North Korea illustrates the unpredictable and
20 coercive nature of that regime and demonstrates that even a
21 relatively small and weak rogue nation taking advantage of
22 our unparalleled dependence on electronic networks can reach
23 across the ocean to cause extensive damage to a United
24 States-based economic target through cyberspace.
25 Furthermore, while Chinese cyber attacks are not as public,

1 they are just as problematic and continue to pose a security
2 challenge to the United States. We would be interested to
3 know whether we can expect more attacks of this nature and
4 what we can do to make our systems and our nations more
5 resilient in the future.

6 Finally, we have a threat close to home, and that is
7 sequestration. It is a threat that jeopardizes not only our
8 national security, but our public safety, health,
9 transportation, education, and environmental resources, as
10 well. As we receive testimony today on the current and
11 future threats to our national security, we here in Congress
12 must be mindful of the necessity to find a balanced and
13 bipartisan solution that includes a repeal of sequestration.

14 Thank you again for appearing today, and I look forward
15 to hearing your testimony.

16 Chairman McCain: Welcome the witnesses.

17 General Clapper.

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1 STATEMENT OF JAMES R. CLAPPER, DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL
2 INTELLIGENCE

3 Mr. Clapper: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and
4 members of the committee, it's a great pleasure and honor
5 for me to be here with General Vince Stewart. And he and I
6 are here today to update you on some, but certainly not all,
7 of the pressing intelligence and national security issues
8 facing our Nation.

9 I need to note up front that there were some classified
10 issues we discussed in our closed hearing on Tuesday that we
11 won't be able to discuss as fulsomely in this open televised
12 hearing.

13 In the interest of time and to allow for questions, I
14 will only cover some of the wave tops on behalf of both of
15 us. Two overall comments at the outset:

16 One, unpredictable instability is the new normal. The
17 year 2014 saw the highest rate of political instability
18 since 1992, the most deaths as a result of state-sponsored
19 mass killings since the early 1990s, and the highest number
20 of refugees and internally displaced persons, or IDPs, since
21 World War II. Roughly half of the world's currently stable
22 countries are at some risk of instability over the next 2
23 years.

24 The second overall comment is, this pervasive
25 uncertainty makes it all the harder to predict the future.

1 2014 and 2015 saw a number of events that illustrate this
2 difficulty: the North Korean attack on Sony, the most
3 serious and costly cyberattack against U.S. interests to
4 date, the ebola epidemic, and the small-scale but dramatic
5 terrorist attacks in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark,
6 France, and the United States.

7 Again this year, I'll start with cyber threats.
8 Attacks against us are increasing in frequency, scale,
9 sophistication, and severity of impact. Although we must be
10 prepared for a catastrophic large-scale strike, a so-called
11 "cyber Armageddon," the reality is that we've been living
12 with a constant and expanding barrage of cyberattacks for
13 some time. This insidious trend, I believe, will continue.
14 Cyber poses a very complex set of threats, because profit-
15 motivated criminals, ideologically motivated hackers, or
16 extremists in variously capable nation-states, like Russia,
17 China, North Korea, and Iran, are all potential adversaries,
18 who, if they choose, can do great harm. Additionally, the
19 methods of attack, the systems targeted, and the victims are
20 also expanding in diversity and intensity on a daily basis.

21 2014 saw, for the first time, destructive cyberattacks
22 carried out on U.S. soil by nation-state entities, marked
23 first by the Iranian attack against the Las Vegas Sands
24 Casino Corporation, a year ago this month, and the North
25 Korean attack against Sony in November. While the both of

1 these nations have lesser technical capabilities in
2 comparison to Russia and China, these destructive attacks
3 demonstrate that Iran and North Korea are motivated and
4 unpredictable cyber actors.

5 Russia and China continue to develop very sophisticated
6 cyber programs. While I can't go into detail here, the
7 Russian cyber threat is more severe than we had previously
8 assessed. And Chinese economic espionage against U.S.
9 companies remains a major threat, despite detailed private-
10 sector reports, scathing public indictments, and stern U.S.
11 demarches.

12 With respect to non-nation-state entities, some
13 ideologically motivated cyber actors expressing support for
14 ISIL have demonstrated their capabilities by hacking several
15 social media accounts. The so-called "Cyber Caliphate"
16 successfully hacked CENTCOM's Twitter account and YouTube
17 page in January, and, 2 weeks ago, hacked Newsweek
18 magazine's Twitter handle.

19 The most pervasive cyber threat to the U.S. financial
20 sector is from cyber criminals. Criminals were responsible
21 for cyber intrusions in 2014 into JPMorgan, Home Depot,
22 Target, Nieman Marcus, Anthem, and other U.S. companies.
23 And, in the future, we'll probably see cyber operations that
24 change or manipulate electronic information to compromise
25 its integrity instead of simply deleting or disrupting

1 access to it. In the end, the cyber threat cannot be
2 completely eliminated. Rather, we must be vigilant in our
3 efforts to detect, manage, and defend against it.

4 Moving on to terrorism. In 2013, just over 11,500
5 terrorist attacks worldwide killed approximately 22,000
6 people. Preliminary data for the first 9 months of 2014
7 reflects nearly 13,000 attacks, which killed 31,000 people.
8 When the final accounting is done, 2014 will have been the
9 most lethal year for global terrorism in the 45 years such
10 data has been compiled. About half of all attacks, as well
11 as fatalities, in 2014 occurred in just three countries:
12 Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

13 I'm drawing this data -- ISIL conducted more attacks
14 than any other terrorist group in the first 9 months of
15 2014, and in -- credit where credit's due, I'm drawing this
16 data from the National Consortium of the Study of Terrorism
17 and Responses to Terrorism, or START, at the University of
18 Maryland.

19 The recent terrorist attacks in Europe emphasize the
20 threat posed by small numbers of extremists radicalized by
21 the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. The global media attention
22 and widespread support in extremist circles for these
23 attacks probably will inspire additional extremists to
24 conduct similar attacks.

25 And ISIL, al-Qaeda, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian

1 Peninsula, and, most recently, al-Shabaab, are calling on
2 their supporters to support lone-wolf attacks against the
3 United States and other Western countries. Of the 13
4 attacks in the West since last May, 12 were conducted by
5 individual extremists.

6 Since the conflict began, more than 20,000 Sunni
7 foreign fighters have traveled to Syria from more than 90
8 countries to fight the Assad regime. Of that number, at
9 least 13,600 have extremist ties. More than 3400 Western
10 fighters have gone to Syria and Iraq. Hundreds have
11 returned home to Europe. About 180 Americans or so have
12 been involved in various stages of travel to Syria. I
13 should point out this is those who've attempted to go,
14 didn't get there, those who got there and were killed, those
15 who got there, fought, and went to another country, and some
16 number who have come back. A relatively small number have
17 returned, and we've not identified any of them engaged in
18 attack plotting. Nevertheless, the homegrown violent
19 extremists continue to pose the most likely threat to the
20 homeland. Lone actors or insular groups who act
21 autonomously will likely gravitate to simpler plots that
22 don't require advanced skills, outside training, or
23 communication with others. A small, but persistent, number
24 of Sunni terrorist groups remain intent on striking the U.S.
25 and the West, some of whom still see commercial aviation as

1 an appealing target.

2 Moving to the Mideast, ISIL is increasing its influence
3 outside of Iraq and Syria, seeking to expand its self-
4 declared caliphate into the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa,
5 and South Asia, and planning terrorist attacks against
6 Western and Shi'a interests. ISIL's rise represents the
7 greatest shift in the Sunni violent extremist landscape
8 since al-Qaeda affiliates first began forming, and it is the
9 first to assume at least some characteristics of a nation-
10 state.

11 Spillover from the Syrian conflict is raising the
12 prospect of instability in Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi
13 Arabia. In Iraq, sectarian conflict in mixed Shi'a/Sunni
14 areas is growing, and, if not blunted, will undermine
15 progress against ISIL. While Prime Minister Abadi has begun
16 to alter the ethnosectarian tone in Iraq, resistance from
17 his Shi'a political allies and persistent distrust among
18 Iraqi leaders will limit progress toward a stable, inclusive
19 political environment.

20 ISIL's ability to conduct large-scale offensive
21 operations in Iraq has been degraded by coalition
22 airstrikes, the provision of weapons and munitions by the
23 U.S. and other allies, and stiffened defenses by the Iraqi
24 Security Forces, Kurdish peshmerga, Shi'a militants, and
25 tribal allies, not to mention the Iranians. However, ISIL

1 remains, as we've seen, a formidable and brutal threat.

2 Moving to Syria and parts of western Syria, the Syrian
3 regime made consistent gains in 2014, but it will require
4 years for it to reassert significant control of the country
5 as a whole. The regime has a clear advantage over the
6 opposition, which is plagued by disunity as well as
7 firepower, manpower, and logistical shortfalls. Right now,
8 they're incapable of militarily ousting Assad, and will
9 probably remain so in 2015.

10 Assad is confident. He thinks the war is winnable.
11 The conflict, with over 202,000 people killed -- estimated
12 to have been killed -- will continue to threaten the
13 stability of its regional neighbors and foster the rise of
14 regional sectarianism and extremism. As well, it will
15 strain the region's fragile economic balance as millions of
16 refugees continue to flee the conflict. Over 52 percent of
17 Syria's prewar population, or about 11.4 million people, has
18 been displaced.

19 Iran is exerting its influence in Syria, Iraq, and
20 Yemen. Tehran has provided robust military support to
21 Damascus and Baghdad in the form of arms, advisors, funding,
22 intelligence collection, electronic warfare, and cyber
23 support, and combat support. More broadly, Iran will face
24 many of the same decision points in 2015 as it did in 2014.
25 Foremost is whether the Supreme Leader will agree to a

1 nuclear deal. He wants sanctions relief, but, at the same
2 time, to preserve his options on nuclear capabilities.

3 In Libya, two rival governments emerged, so the country
4 has no clear legitimate political authority and is embroiled
5 in a civil war. External support to both sides by countries
6 in the region has further stoked the violence. Extremists
7 and terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIL are
8 exploiting Libya's permissive security environment. They're
9 using the country to train and to plot. ISIL's beheadings
10 of the Coptic Christians highlight the growing threat posed
11 by ISIL and affiliated groups in Libya.

12 Moving to Yemen, the evacuation of our Embassy in
13 Sana'a has, for now, reduced the effectiveness of our
14 counterterrorism efforts. After President Hadi's attempted
15 resignation and the Huthi's unilateral dissolution of the
16 government, Yemen's political future and stability are, at
17 best, uncertain, particularly with Hadi's apparent escape to
18 Aden and perhaps his reassertion of his presidential
19 authorities. Iran has provided support to the Huthis for
20 years, and there ascendency is increasing Iran's influence.

21 Let me move briefly to Russia. The crisis in Ukraine
22 is entering its second year and is achieving -- and
23 achieving a lasting solution that allows Kiev to pursue
24 Western integration will be difficult, to say the least.
25 Moscow sees itself in direct confrontation with the West

1 over Ukraine, and will be very prone to overreact to U.S.
2 actions. Putin's goals are to keep Ukraine out of NATO and
3 to ensure separatist control and autonomous entity within
4 Ukraine. He wants Moscow to retain leverage over Kiev. And
5 Crimea, in his view, is simply not negotiable.

6 Russian dominance over the former Soviet space is
7 Russia's highest foreign policy goal. Falling oil prices,
8 Ukraine-related costs, and Western sanctions have spurred
9 double-digit inflation and have tipped Russia's economy
10 towards recession. Russia will continue to possess the
11 largest, most capable foreign nuclear ballistic missile
12 force. Russia's weapons modernization plans will focus on
13 strategic warfare and ways to mitigate what they think are
14 our advantages, like prompt global strike.

15 China. China's leaders are primarily concerned with
16 domestic issues: the Communist Party's hold on power,
17 internal stability, and economic growth. Although China is
18 looking for stable ties with the United States, it's more
19 willing to accept bilateral and regional tensions in pursuit
20 of its interests, especially on maritime sovereignty issues.
21 And, as you noted, Chairman McCain, China is expanding and
22 accelerating the buildup of outposts in the South China Sea,
23 to include stationing for their ships and potential
24 airfields. More broadly, they continue an aggressive
25 military modernization program directly aimed at what they

1 consider to be our strengths. Their military training
2 program last year included exercises unprecedented in scope,
3 scale, and complexity to both test modernization progress
4 and to improve their theater warfare capabilities.
5 President Xi Jinping is pursuing an ambitious reform agenda
6 that risks both leadership tensions and domestic unrest.
7 The slowdown of the Chinese economy is reinforcing the
8 leader's neuralgia about internal stability and reinforcing
9 a harsh crackdown on internal dissent.

10 Needless to say, there are many more threats to U.S.
11 interests worldwide that we can address, many of which are
12 covered in detail in our statement for the record --
13 notably, the classified version -- such as Afghanistan,
14 North Korea, and weapons of mass destruction.

15 But, I think, with that grim litany, will -- I will
16 stop and will open to your questions.

17 [The prepared statement of Mr. Clapper follows:]

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1 STATEMENT OF LT. GEN VINCENT STEWART, DIRECTOR OF THE
2 DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

3 General Stewart: Mr. Chairman, in the interest of
4 time, we have the statement for the record and just one oral
5 statement from Director Clapper.

6 [The prepared statement of General Stewart follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

2 Director Clapper, on the issue of defensive weaponry to
3 Ukraine, do you believe that, if we give that assistance,
4 that it would escalate -- provoke Putin to escalate his
5 assistance to the, quote, "separatists" and his aggression
6 against Ukraine?

7 Mr. Clapper: Well, General Breedlove discussed this
8 recently, and he did make, I think, a very apt comment, and,
9 you know, predicting exactly what Putin will do or what his
10 behavior will be is something of an unknown. I think the
11 intelligence community view is that, if we were to provide
12 lethal assistance to Ukraine, that this would evoke a
13 negative reaction from Putin and the Russians. It could
14 potentially further remove the very thin figleaf of their
15 position that they're not -- have not been involved in
16 Ukraine, and could lead to accelerating or promoting more
17 weaponry and higher sophistication into the separatist areas
18 to support the separatists. But, I hasten to add, this is
19 an intelligence community assessment, and this is not
20 necessarily to suggest opposition to provision of lethal
21 aid.

22 Chairman McCain: Well, I'm glad you added that,
23 because my next question is, What more do you think that
24 Putin would do -- could do? Go to Kiev?

25 Mr. Clapper: Sir, we don't --

1 Chairman McCain: They certainly -- the weaponry he's
2 using now is his most sophisticated weaponry.

3 Mr. Clapper: We don't -- well, he could bring in a lot
4 more if he wanted to, and --

5 Chairman McCain: He could bring in more --

6 Mr. Clapper: -- certainly more volumes of it.

7 Chairman McCain: To do what?

8 Mr. Clapper: Well, for example, armed helicopters --

9 Chairman McCain: Yeah, to do -- to achieve what goal?

10 Mr. Clapper: Well, it is not our assessment that he is
11 bent on capturing or conquering all of Ukraine. He
12 certainly wants --

13 Chairman McCain: Absolutely.

14 Mr. Clapper: -- I believe he wants a whole -- from an
15 infrastructure standpoint -- entity, I believe, composed of
16 the two oblasts in eastern Ukraine --

17 Chairman McCain: Which he's already --

18 Mr. Clapper: -- to include, perhaps --

19 Chairman McCain: -- achieving.

20 Mr. Clapper: -- a land bridge to Crimea and perhaps a
21 port -- specifically, Mariupol. We do not believe that an
22 attack on Mariupol is imminent. Think they're in the mode
23 now of reconstituting and regrouping after the major
24 confrontation in Debaltseve.

25 Chairman McCain: Well, I have to tell you that I

1 disagree with you. They're already increasing activities
2 around Mariupol, and I will predict to you now he will put
3 additional pressure on Mariupol, because he wants to
4 establish the land bridge there. Just as some of us
5 predicted exactly what he's doing now.

6 And to say that we're worried about provoking him, he's
7 not going to go to Kiev. He's going to establish the land
8 bridge to Crimea, and then he's going to figure out whether
9 he should go to Moldova, or not. He's already putting
10 intense pressure on the Baltics. We all know that. We
11 don't have to have intelligence reports to get that.

12 So, this idea that somehow we will provoke Vladimir
13 Putin -- he's done everything he wanted to do, General. You
14 tell me what he didn't want to do that would have -- that he
15 would have done if we had provided these people with the
16 ability to defend themselves rather than be slaughtered by
17 the most modern equipment that the Russians have.

18 Mr. Clapper: Well, I don't think he will view it
19 happily if we provide -- if the United States provides
20 lethal support. That's --

21 Chairman McCain: Because more Russians might be killed
22 who are now in Crimea killing Ukrainians.

23 Mr. Clapper: That's right. And it will be harder for
24 him to hide that fact to the home audience.

25 Chairman McCain: What difference does it make whether

1 he hides it? There's no hiding what he's done. Everybody
2 knows what he's done.

3 Mr. Clapper: Well, everyone in Russia --

4 Chairman McCain: General Breedlove has made it -- laid
5 it out very clearly.

6 Well, I'm not in an open dispute with you. I'd --
7 we've got to move on. But, it is just incredible to believe
8 that he would be, quote, "provoked" to further action, when
9 he has achieved every goal that he sought along the way.
10 And we'll see who's right about Mariupol, Director Clapper.

11 Mr. Clapper: Sir, I'm not arguing about Mariupol. The
12 only issue there is timing. I believe they will not --
13 they'll wait --

14 Chairman McCain: He's got plenty of time.

15 Mr. Clapper: -- they'll wait til the spring before
16 they attack. That's --

17 Chairman McCain: Sure.

18 Mr. Clapper: That will be a formal undertaking for the
19 Russians and the separatists.

20 Chairman McCain: I agree with you.

21 Mr. Clapper: It's much better defended.

22 Chairman McCain: I totally agree with you. Why not
23 pull back? He's not getting any increasing in sanctions,
24 he's not getting weapons -- or the Ukrainians aren't
25 receiving defensive weapons from us. If I were him, I would

1 do exactly that, too. He's got plenty of time.

2 Yesterday, the Secretary of State said, "Our citizens,
3 our world today, is actually -- despite ISIL, despite the
4 visible killings that you see and how horrific they are,
5 we're actually living in a period of less daily threat to
6 Americans and to people in the world than normally. Less
7 deaths, less violent deaths today than through the last
8 century." And yet, just today, the Director of the FBI and
9 others have said that there are threats to 30 nations --
10 excuse me -- 30 States in this Nation. What is your view of
11 the threat to the United States of America, Director
12 Clapper?

13 Mr. Clapper: Well, first, sir, I will say, as I've
14 said every year -- this'll be the fifth year that -- in my
15 50-plus years in the intelligence business, I don't know of
16 a time that has been more beset by challenges and crises
17 around the world. I worry a lot about the safety and
18 security of this country, for a lot of reasons, not the
19 least of which, which Senator Reed alluded to, is the
20 impacts that sequestration is having on the intelligence
21 community. We didn't get a pass. So, the same rules that
22 apply to, say, the Department of Defense apply to us, as
23 well. So, the combination of the challenges that we have
24 around the world and the declining resource base that we
25 have to monitor them is of concern to me.

1 Chairman McCain: So, could I just --

2 Mr. Clapper: Director Comey was referring to the fact
3 that he now has some form of investigation -- and, of
4 course, the FBI has a tiered system for intensity of
5 investigation -- and they now have some form of
6 investigation on homegrown violent extremists, not
7 necessarily direct sympathizers or supporters of ISIL, but
8 in all 50 of our States.

9 Chairman McCain: Thank you, Director. And I could
10 just ask, again, because you made reference to it, if we
11 don't -- if we stick to sequestration, as it is planned, it
12 will impair our ability for you to do your job and defend
13 this Nation. Is that a correct statement?

14 Mr. Clapper: Yes, sir. And I've said that in the
15 past. A little harder for intelligence to make that case as
16 concretely as, say, the Navy and how many ships it builds,
17 or the Air Force and how many aircraft it's able to fly. In
18 our case, the impacts -- I hate to use the word, but I will
19 -- are more insidious, in that predicting when we have a
20 lesser capability will eventuate in a failure is hard to
21 quantify. But, just based on my best professional judgment
22 from having served in this business for a long time, I'm
23 very concerned about it. And if we revert to sequestration
24 in 2016, the damage to the intelligence community will be
25 quite profound.

1 Chairman McCain: I thank you very much, Director.

2 Thank you, General.

3 Jack?

4 Senator Reed: General, thank you. And, both generals,
5 thank you.

6 The Chairman has covered very well some of the issues
7 arising out of the Russian activities in Ukraine and Crimea.
8 Is your assessment that Putin is carrying out a strategic
9 plan, or is some of this opportunistic? He's just seizing
10 the moment? Or it's a combination of both?

11 Mr. Clapper: I'm sorry, sir, I didn't --

12 Senator Reed: Or is it a combination of both.

13 Mr. Clapper: Both --

14 Senator Reed: He has a strategy --

15 Mr. Clapper: -- a strategic plan and --

16 Senator Reed: -- and opportunistic --

17 Mr. Clapper: Well, yes. I think it became a strategic
18 plan when Yanukovych upped and left very suddenly last --
19 almost a year ago, 22nd of February. And then I think he
20 saw an opportunity, particularly with the seizure of Crimea,
21 which I think has always been in his craw. And, given
22 Putin's approach and the way he looks at greater Russia and
23 what a disaster the breakup of the Soviet Union was, and his
24 -- as I said in my statement, that his highest foreign
25 policy objective is controlling the former Soviet space.

1 So, I think, on the heels of the seizure of Crimea and the
2 establishment of some sort of an arrangement in eastern
3 Ukraine, and what I believe will be more of a softer
4 approach, maybe not direct military action, but, as the
5 Chairman alluded to, Transnistria and Moldova, and certainly
6 there'll be pressure brought to bear in the Baltics,
7 particularly where there are high levels of Russian
8 minorities. A little different situation with the Baltics,
9 since they are NATO members, which, of course, Moldova,
10 Ukraine, et cetera, are not.

11 Senator Reed: We have conducted recently some very
12 small military demonstrations in the Baltics. Company of
13 the 173rd Airborne went in. I think just a day or two ago
14 there was a parade of U.S. military vehicles. What's the
15 reaction to the Russians to those?

16 Mr. Clapper: Well, they, I think, watch that. I mean,
17 that's -- it's an -- it's symbolically important. There's a
18 messaging there. And I think it is -- and they're sensitive
19 to that. They're mindful of the fact that the Baltic
20 nations are NATO members. And I do think they distinguish
21 that.

22 Senator Reed: We have elaborate sanctions in place.
23 You've indicated in your comments that they have not had, in
24 my interpretation, an appreciable effect yet on his
25 strategy. They might be affecting the economy, but they

1 haven't affected his strategy.

2 Mr. Clapper: That's exactly right, Senator Reed. So
3 far, that has not changed his approach. And, of course,
4 what's had the greater impact, frankly, on the economy has
5 been the --

6 Senator Reed: Oil.

7 Mr. Clapper: -- precipitous drop in oil prices.

8 Senator Reed: Do you have any sort of indication that
9 this is -- as this situation deteriorates further, there
10 will be an impact on his strategy?

11 Mr. Clapper: There could. And there -- and, of
12 course, what we see is, they're very sensitive to
13 opposition, you know, demonstrations in the street. They're
14 very, very sensitive about a color revolution occurring in
15 Russia, itself. And, of course, that's another reason why
16 Putin reacted to the situation in Ukraine, because he
17 believes we instigated that as another color revolution in
18 Ukraine right on his doorstep, and that, in turn, posed a --
19 in his mind, an existential threat to -- in Russia.

20 Senator Reed: Just changing gears, the Iranians have a
21 explicit presence in Iraq today, and we have forces there,
22 too. And in the next several days or weeks, there's two
23 possible triggering events. One would be much more
24 aggressive action against the Assad regime in Syria or the
25 resolution of the negotiations with the Iranians on their

1 nuclear program. Do you have any views with respect to what
2 might happen to -- within Iraq with respect to their Iranian
3 forces, which are now sort of not cooperating with us, but
4 --

5 Mr. Clapper: Is your question, sir, Is there a
6 connection between the nuclear negotiations and agreement --

7 Senator Reed: Will there be a reaction in Iraq to
8 either the activities that we undertake, or proceed to
9 undertake, in Syria or the conclusion of the negotiations?

10 Mr. Clapper: I really don't think that the
11 negotiations, one way or the other, will have much bearing
12 on what they do in Iraq or anyplace they are trying to exert
13 their influence, meaning Syria or now Yemen. As best we can
14 tell, the Iranians have kind of segmented the nuclear
15 negotiations and potential nuclear agreement from their
16 regional aspirations.

17 Senator Reed: Thank you, General.

18 Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe.

19 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 I have three questions -- two short ones; the other one
21 may require going on the record.

22 Director Clapper, I know what your answer is, after
23 hearing your opening statement, but, when you said, "Looking
24 back over my now more than half century of intelligence,
25 I've not experienced a time when we've been beset by more

1 crisis and threats around the globe." And you still stand
2 by that. And -- correct?

3 Mr. Clapper: Yes, sir. And if I'm hear next year,
4 I'll probably say it again.

5 Senator Inhofe: Yeah. Well, I appreciate that.
6 You've been straightforward and honest about these things.

7 General Stewart, you stated, and this -- that we face a
8 more diverse and complex problem than we have experienced in
9 our lifetimes. Still stand by that?

10 General Stewart: Absolutely, Senator.

11 Senator Inhofe: Yes. Well, now, there's an
12 assumption, when we're out in the public, out talking to
13 real people and away from Washington, that we, who are on
14 this committee, know a lot of answers that we don't know.
15 And one of them that should be a very easy answer -- and I
16 want to get something from you guys that I can stand on --
17 when we talk about the power, in terms of the strength and
18 number of bodies in this -- in ISIL or ISIS -- in September
19 of '14, we talked about that it's been an additional some-
20 20,000 since this all started. I think we all agree on
21 that. But, they said it was somewhere between 20- and 31,5-
22 fighters that were in Iraq and Syria. Now we know, since
23 that time, it's gone beyond that. Then, in August, they
24 talked about from 80- to 100,000. Then, in November, one of
25 the Kurdish leaders stated that the -- ISIL's military had

1 increased to 200,000 fighters. Can you kind of give us an
2 idea -- and, number one, why it's so difficult to do, and,
3 number two, something that we can use and quote you two as
4 the sources?

5 Mr. Clapper: It's -- from my vantage, it's unfortunate
6 these numbers get out. For one, we don't have what I would
7 call Census Bureau door-to-door survey accuracy or fidelity
8 over these numbers. They're very hard to come by. We have
9 to derive them inferentially from a number of different
10 sources. Ergo, even when we do come out with numbers,
11 they're -- you'll have a wide range. So, the current
12 estimate is -- that we're standing on, here, is somewhere in
13 the range between 20- and 32,000 fighters. Now, the
14 difficulty here is assessing who's a core fighter who does
15 this full-time, who may be a facilitator or supporter and do
16 it part time, and all that sort of thing.

17 I will say that the -- this is one effect of the
18 airstrikes, has been substantial attrition. They lost at
19 least 3,000 fighters in Khobani. For whatever reason, they
20 wanted to do that. And, as well, what that's driving them
21 to -- now we're seeing evidence of conscription. So, the
22 estimate that we're going with --

23 Senator Inhofe: But, that's --

24 Mr. Clapper: -- right now, but this is very dynamic,
25 is 20- to 32,000.

1 Senator Inhofe: Yeah. We're -- gosh, I -- well,
2 anyway.

3 It may take a while to get into this, but I am -- I'm
4 very much -- I was over in the Ukraine when they had their
5 elections. And that's when they had the elections, and it
6 was Yatsenyuk as much as Poroshenko. They were just elated.
7 Both of them from different political parties, but the
8 political parties are very pro-Western, and they were
9 rejoicing in the fact that, for the first time in 96 years,
10 the Communists don't have one seat in Parliament. To me, I
11 thought, when that happened, there's not going to be any
12 problem with us going in with weapons. And obviously, the
13 Democrats and Republicans up here agreed with that. We have
14 language in our last defense authorization bill that we had
15 \$75 million, where we were encouraging the President to use,
16 through the European Reassurance Initiative, for weapons
17 going in to be of assist to our best friend in that area.

18 Now, I can't figure out why we don't do it. Let me
19 just ask the two of you. Would you recommend it?

20 Mr. Clapper: Sir, I think I have to answer two ways,
21 here. One, institutionally, this is a policy issue. And --

22 Senator Inhofe: Yeah, now --

23 Mr. Clapper: -- the intelligence community doesn't --

24 Senator Inhofe: -- let me make sure. I'm not talking
25 about sending troops, I'm talking about sending lethal

1 weapons.

2 Mr. Clapper: I understand. I understand --

3 Senator Inhofe: All right.

4 Mr. Clapper: -- what you're asking, and that's what
5 I'm answering, I think. So, from an intelligence community
6 perspective, that is a policy issue. We're down in the
7 engine room, shoveling intelligence coal, and the people up
8 on the bridge, to use a Navy metaphor, drive the ship and
9 rearrange the deck chairs.

10 I have a personal view. And it is only that --

11 Senator Inhofe: All right.

12 Mr. Clapper: -- that I would favor it. But, that's a
13 personal perspective, and --

14 Senator Inhofe: That's what --

15 Mr. Clapper: -- it does not --

16 Senator Inhofe: And I appreciate your --

17 Mr. Clapper: -- represent an official company policy
18 of the intelligence community.

19 Senator Inhofe: I appreciate that very much.

20 And General Stewart?

21 General Stewart: Sir, I'm trying to stay out of the
22 personal --

23 Senator Inhofe: I know you're trying to stay out, but
24 --

25 General Stewart: So --

1 Senator Inhofe: -- it's time that we -- we've got to
2 get this done.

3 General Stewart: -- we stand by the assessment, that
4 lethal aid couldn't be delivered quickly enough or change
5 the military balance of power on the ground.

6 Senator Inhofe: So, you're for lethal, right?

7 General Stewart: It would not change the military
8 balance of power, and it couldn't get there quickly enough
9 to make a difference, and that Russia will up that --

10 Senator Inhofe: As a military guy, do you buy this
11 argument that we might be provoking negative reaction from
12 Putin? You know, I listen to -- I see what our -- what the
13 President is doing on -- every once in a while. And they
14 talk about, "Well, we don't want to make the terrorists mad
15 at us, they might hurt us." And, you know -- so, what's
16 your opinion about this statement on provoking a negative
17 reaction from Putin?

18 General Stewart: I think as important as Moscow placed
19 on Ukraine to keep it in their near abroad, to keep it out
20 of the EU, to keep it out of NATO, I think they will up the
21 ante if we do any lethal aid or take any actions to bolster
22 the Ukrainians. Whether that provokes the President or not,
23 it's hard for me to say. The realities are, they see this
24 as central to their foreign policy, they see it as critical
25 that they keep Ukraine out of NATO, to keep it out of the

1 Western sphere of influence --

2 Senator Inhofe: Yeah, and --

3 General Stewart: -- and exert influence. And they'll
4 react accordingly, I suspect.

5 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, General.

6 Chairman McCain: Well, I'm sure that Hitler felt the
7 same way, General Stewart, about the Sudetenland, about
8 German-speaking people. I'm sure he felt exactly the same
9 way that Vladimir Putin does. And, for you to say that we
10 can't get lethal weapons there quickly enough, that defies
11 logic, General. I know how we can transport weapons. We
12 can put 'em on aircraft and fly 'em over there.

13 General Stewart: But, you --

14 Chairman McCain: How do you justify a statement like
15 that?

16 General Stewart: Senator, I believe the answer was,
17 "We couldn't deliver lethal aid sufficiently -- quickly
18 enough to change the military balance of power on the
19 ground." And I think I stand --

20 Chairman McCain: Quickly enough? What does that mean?
21 I -- it's --

22 General Stewart: Russia and the separatists have
23 significant interior lines that they can resupply a lot
24 faster with a lot heavier weapons than we could deliver in
25 -- so, it would be a race to see who could arm. And I

1 think, with their interior lines, they would have a
2 significant advantage on the ground.

3 Chairman McCain: I'm sure that the Russians had a
4 significant advantage when they invaded Afghanistan. I'm
5 sure that, throughout history, when we've helped people who
6 have been invaded and oppressed, and when we haven't, what
7 is -- the consequences have been. Very disappointing,
8 General.

9 Senator Shaheen.

10 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 And thank you both for your testimony.

12 I want to go back to the Middle East and to what's
13 happening in Syria. To what extent is Assad's continued --
14 I don't want to say "control over Syria," because I
15 appreciate that he doesn't have control over the entire
16 country -- but, to what extent is his position there an
17 obstacle to our fight against ISIL? And is there -- what's
18 the thinking about how to change that dynamic?

19 Mr. Clapper: Well, I -- that -- the last part of your
20 question is a tough one. I -- he maintains the control
21 because of his control of the economic levers, to the extent
22 that they have them. His focus is on the -- what I would
23 call the "Western spine," say from Aleppo to Damascus.
24 That's where most of the population is, and the major
25 commercial entities, to include the ports. So, he has

1 surrounded by people who are committed to preserving that,
2 because they benefit from it. They are the minority. The
3 Alawites are, you know, only 10 percent. So, for them, this
4 is an existential struggle. And, of course, the irony is
5 that we actually are in common in -- both Assad and his
6 regime are opposed to and fighting ISIL, as we are. And so,
7 it's a very, you know, complex array of factors there.

8 Senator Shaheen: And to what extent have -- has that
9 affected other Arab countries in the Middle East and their
10 willingness to engage with us?

11 Mr. Clapper: Well, there's been, you know, I think,
12 somewhat of a change. It's gradual. But, the fact that
13 many of these countries aren't participating in the
14 coalition that General John Allen has been organizing. I do
15 think the brutal savagery of the ISIL, and the beheadings
16 and then the emulation of the Jordanian pilot, have had a
17 galvanizing effect on opinion in the Mideast region. So, I
18 think there is more of a willingness to cooperate. There
19 certainly is, from the standpoint of intelligence sharing
20 and our partnering with our counterparts in that part of the
21 world.

22 Senator Shaheen: And are you optimistic that Turkey
23 will become more engaged than they have been?

24 Mr. Clapper: No, I'm not. I think Turkey has other
25 priorities and other interests. They are more focused on

1 what they consider to be the threat: the KGK, the Kurdish
2 resistance, if you will, in Turkey. Public opinion polls
3 show, in Turkey, they don't see ISIL as a primary threat.
4 They're more focused internally on their economy and this
5 sort of thing. And, of course, the consequence of that is a
6 permissive environment, in terms of -- because of their
7 laws, and the ability of people to travel through Turkey en
8 route to Syria. So, somewhere in the neighborhood of 60
9 percent of those foreign fighters find their way to Syria
10 through Turkey.

11 Senator Shaheen: And to move to Iraq, to what extent
12 is Iran's presence in Iraq an obstacle to Abadi's ability to
13 make the kinds of overtures and engage the Sunnis in the way
14 that he needs to in --

15 Mr. Clapper: Well, he -- he's in a very --

16 Senator Shaheen: -- order to keep the country unified?

17 Mr. Clapper: -- very difficult position, having to
18 balance these competing constituencies. And clearly the
19 Iranians have influence. They're there. They're helping,
20 as well, in the fight against ISIL. He's got issues with
21 his own Shi'a power base, since they're competitors to him.
22 There's still great reluctance to fully include the Sunnis,
23 which must happen. There are two laws in their Council of
24 Representatives that are extremely important to Sunnis: de-
25 Ba'athification and --

1 Senator Shaheen: Right.

2 Mr. Clapper: -- anti-terrorism laws. So, he's in a
3 very, very difficult position.

4 Senator Shaheen: What I'm trying to ask you to respond
5 to, and I haven't been as articulate as I should, I guess,
6 is, To what extent does -- is Iran weighing their efforts to
7 under -- to take on ISIL versus the Sunni's role in Iraq? I
8 mean, are they balancing that? Are they just --

9 Mr. Clapper: Well, the fundamental interest of the
10 Iranians, of course, is to preserve a Shi'a or Shi'a-
11 friendly government in Baghdad. So, that is kind of their
12 underlying policy objective. And, of course, ISIL poses a
13 threat to the Iranians, as well. And so, they have an
14 interest there in sustaining their aggressive combat, if you
15 will, and assistance in opposing ISIL.

16 Senator Shaheen: My time is up. Thank you both.

17 Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst.

18 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing before us today. I
20 do appreciate your service.

21 I'd like to go into the discussion with Iran a little
22 bit more. Their Iranian military is arguably one of the
23 most deployed forces in the Middle East from -- in probably
24 more than a generation. But, they have been into areas,
25 such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Yemen. So, Iran is

1 effectively reinforcing and increasing its sphere of
2 influence in the region. And it is also defending its
3 allies in ways which afford Iran the ability to decisively
4 engage its adversaries and immediately alter any battlefield
5 momentum. So, we have seen a progression of expert
6 witnesses in front of this very panel, and many of my
7 colleagues and these witnesses have stated that they do
8 believe the President is failing in this area of setting a
9 national strategy. And his failure to construct a
10 comprehensive strategy against Iran has led to Iran's
11 expanded influence in the Middle East.

12 So, I would like to hear your assessment, Director
13 Clapper, on, of course, the tools that Iran has in its
14 pocket, and whether we are effectively engaging Iran, what
15 we need to do to gain a national security strategy. I'd
16 like to see all the pieces put together, please.

17 Mr. Clapper: Well, I can -- Senator, I can comment on
18 the intelligence aspects of this. National security
19 strategy, again, is not my compartment.

20 But, the way that Iran is exerting its influence, I
21 think, most prominently in the region is through the --
22 their organization called the Iranian Republican Guard
23 Corps, Quds Force, which is a combination of intelligence
24 and special ops, has extensive commercial enterprise
25 businesses, and this sort of thing. And so, they use that

1 as their instrumentality, as they are now in Iraq, for
2 extending their influence, as one of their proxies. And, of
3 course, another one of their proxies is the Hezbollah, which
4 they have had a long client-subordinate relationship with.
5 And so, they use those as sort of the physical manifestation
6 of their spreading their influence in the region. And,
7 certainly from an intelligence perspective, we -- you know,
8 we try hard to keep tabs on those entities as we can from
9 intelligence.

10 Senator Ernst: And is there a way, Director, that we
11 can more effectively engage our neighbors in the Middle East
12 to push back on Iran's influence?

13 Mr. Clapper: Well, we -- from an intelligence
14 perspective, which is all I can speak to, we do engage with
15 our intelligence counterparts in all of these countries,
16 those who are willing to engage with us, particularly the
17 Sunni countries, who also -- who do harbor great
18 reservations about Iranians -- Iranian objectives.

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much.

20 I'll yield back my time.

21 Chairman McCain: Senator Donnelly.

22 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 And thank you both for being here.

24 In regards to Iraq, what do you think are the biggest
25 challenges that the Iraqi forces face right now in pushing

1 ISIS back from Mosul and Tikrit?

2 Mr. Clapper: Well, a first thing, I think -- and
3 General Stewart can speak to this as well, since he's --

4 Senator Donnelly: Right.

5 Mr. Clapper: -- served there -- but, obviously, the
6 Iraqi Security Forces, particularly the army, need to
7 reconstitute, after the precipitate losses in northern Iraq
8 last June, where about four-and-a-half divisions or so of
9 Iraqi forces just kind of melted away. So, that is -- first
10 order of business, I think, is to reconstitute them, which
11 includes training and, hopefully, instantiation of a will to
12 fight. They have challenges, clearly, with command and
13 control, with leadership, with logistics. So, they've got a
14 whole range of issues there that need to be attended to
15 before they'd be in a position to, certainly unilaterally,
16 retake a -- you know, a place like --

17 Senator Donnelly: General, how long do you think
18 that'll take, to try to get them back up to speed?

19 General Stewart: So, if I could put it in context,
20 last fall they had about 185,000 in the Iraqi Security
21 Force, about three divisions -- the 6th, the 9th, and the
22 7th Division. All three of those divisions are engaged
23 today, so they're not getting that continuous training.
24 They're engaged in operations. They're building three
25 additional divisions. Those three divisions, you're talking

1 about building from the ground up. So, to build from the
2 ground up individual soldiers --

3 Senator Donnelly: When are they ready?

4 General Stewart: We're talking probably 6 to 9 months,
5 at a best estimate.

6 Senator Donnelly: Director Clapper, here at home, when
7 I look at what's going on with ISIS and see the threats that
8 occur here, and the threat levels that we had last year --
9 if you had to put it in perspective -- this time last year,
10 this time now -- and it's an inexact art, percentagewise --
11 significantly increased threats now than we were having last
12 year at this same time, about the same?

13 Mr. Clapper: It's probably about the same, sir.

14 Senator Donnelly: Okay. And in regards to ISIS -- so,
15 our push is to get 'em out of Iraq, then to remove them from
16 Syria -- when we get to that point where ISIS is gone, does
17 that threat level come down, here at home?

18 Mr. Clapper: It would -- I -- yeah, absolutely it
19 would, I think, but -- at least that would reduce the threat
20 some. But, again, as -- if the caliphate is extended to
21 other locations, which is what ISIL is trying to do --
22 Libya, Egypt, et cetera -- then we'll have that to contend
23 with. So, yes, there would be some reduction of threat
24 because -- if ISIL were defeated in both Iraq and Syria, at
25 least you are -- have done away with a substantial safe

1 haven, which would serve to reduce the threat some.

2 Senator Donnelly: When you look over to Libya, is that
3 the next place, or one of the key places, they look now as,
4 "Here's open space that's failed. Here's a place where we
5 can try to grow"?

6 Mr. Clapper: It is probably the most troublesome, from
7 that standpoint, just because of the conditions in Libya --
8 you know, two competing governments fighting with each
9 other. There are, in addition to ISIL, probably six or
10 eight other terrorist groups that have gathered in Libya.
11 So, it's a magnet because of -- essentially, it's
12 ungoverned.

13 Senator Donnelly: And when you look at a place that's
14 ungoverned, you know, not too far from the Mediterranean,
15 right there, what do you see -- like you said, you don't set
16 all the strategy; you review all the intelligence -- but,
17 what do you see as the best steps we can take in that region
18 right now -- and, General Stewart, you, too -- in Libya, to
19 try to change the course of what's going on?

20 Mr. Clapper: Well, from an intelligence perspective
21 we, I think, clearly need to step up our game from an ISR
22 perspective, where we can operate. I think there's a lot of
23 merit to partnering with the French, who have sort of staked
24 out their claim in the Sahel region of North Africa. So, we
25 have worked with the French, particularly from an

1 intelligence perspective, to share with them. They have
2 history and heritage there, access, and have committed to
3 deploying troops in that area -- boots on the ground, which
4 we can supplement. So, those are things, from an
5 intelligence perspective, that we -- so, as we get a better
6 handle on just what is going on in that part of the world.

7 Senator Donnelly: And I see my time is up, but I just
8 want to ask one very quick question that you can just --

9 How are we doing on cooperation, interagency, here at
10 home? Better than ever before?

11 Mr. Clapper: Well, that's, frankly, the reason my job
12 was created, after 9/11, is -- promote integration here in
13 this country. I'd like to think it's better. I was around
14 for a long time before 9/11, so I -- it is better, but it's
15 -- there was always improvement. We're not as mature in the
16 -- on the domestic side, in coordinating with State, local,
17 tribal, et cetera, but I think we've made a lot of progress
18 there, and we'll continue. And it's something I push very
19 hard.

20 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Director Clapper, what do you assess is Assad's likely
24 response to the introduction of our U.S.-trained Syrians to
25 move in against ISIL in Syria? And do you assess that Assad

1 will attack them?

2 Mr. Clapper: Well, if the -- as long as Assad is --
3 believes somehow that this -- once it gets up sufficient
4 center of mass, you know, enough force -- as long as he felt
5 as though this were something to be used only against ISIL,
6 he'd probably be okay with it. But, I think he'd have a
7 hard time determining whether it's a threat to ISIL or a
8 threat to him. So, I could see a circumstance where,
9 depending on what information he's getting -- and we wonder
10 about that sometimes -- that he could easily consider that
11 force as a threat to him.

12 Senator Fischer: Do you believe that you're receiving
13 good intelligence from that -- from Syria, from that area,
14 in regards to this?

15 Mr. Clapper: No, we have a lot of gaps for --
16 intelligence gaps in Syria, principally because we're not
17 there. So, no, I'm not satisfied with that. We're working
18 at it, obviously, to come up with more intelligence from
19 Syria. But, that's a tough problem for us.

20 Senator Fischer: Have you received any intelligence
21 that would, I guess, give you comfort, in that the moderates
22 that would be trained by us would, in fact, be fighting ISIL
23 and not Assad?

24 Mr. Clapper: I think a more fulsome response to that
25 would be best in a classified environment. But, I guess the

1 short answer would be yes.

2 Senator Fischer: Okay. And how do you -- how would
3 you assess Russia and Iran will be looking at these trained
4 forces?

5 Mr. Clapper: Well, probably wouldn't like it. I
6 think, at this point, you know, Russia looks at Syria as a
7 client, as an ally, someone that they provide support to.
8 So, again, it would be almost the same perception problem
9 with the Russians as it would be with Assad. If -- they
10 could probably rationalize, if it's focused on ISIL, but if
11 it be -- it's perceived as a threat to the regime, then I
12 think that they would react negatively to it.

13 Senator Fischer: And if they would perceive it as a
14 threat, what type of force would they employ, then? You
15 said they'd react negatively.

16 Mr. Clapper: The Russians?

17 Senator Fischer: Yes.

18 Mr. Clapper: I'd -- well, I -- this is really
19 speculative, hypothetical. I don't think they would
20 necessarily deploy combat forces to Syria. They would
21 probably step up military equipment support, which they've
22 been doing, intelligence support, if, in fact, they, too,
23 perceive that what we were doing was a direct threat to
24 Assad.

25 Senator Fischer: Okay. And if I could shift gears,

1 here, I'd like to ask you something about cybersecurity. As
2 you know, the Senate is looking at a bill to authorize
3 greater information sharing. There are some concerns out
4 there about the entities that the -- that we might be
5 sharing that information with. I'd like to ask you, How do
6 we balance that? How do we balance the risks between really
7 valuable information sharing and the need not to provide
8 information either to private individuals, hackers that are
9 out there, or to a foreign government that may be able to
10 pick up information that we give our colleagues, in trying
11 to work with this, that they could then, in turn, use
12 against us?

13 Mr. Clapper: Well, that's exactly the issue. In fact,
14 that's a general dilemma that we have across the board,
15 whether it's cyber or any other dimension. You know, the --
16 sharing versus security. And that's the same issue here.
17 There is no silver-bullet answer here.

18 I do think there, though, needs to be some form of
19 legislation that would protect, from a liability standpoint,
20 commercial concerns so that they would more freely -- they'd
21 be in a position to share with the government. This is not
22 something government can do all by itself. There has to be
23 -- given the pervasiveness of cyber in our society, we must
24 have the partnering of the civilian sector, which means
25 promoting sharing, both ways.

1 But, you're right, there's always this concern, there's
2 always a tradeoff between security and sharing.

3 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

4 Chairman McCain: Senator King.

5 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 To follow up on that, I believe that it's critically
7 important that we move legislation that provides for that
8 sharing so that we have more vigorous defense. And, indeed,
9 the Intelligence Committee reported out a bill last summer.
10 I understand that that bill has been somewhat renegotiated,
11 reworked, and it will be moving forward reasonably soon. I
12 hope that that's one of the Congress's highest priorities.
13 I don't know how many warnings we have to have.

14 Turning to ISIS, what are the chances that it will wear
15 out its welcome within the areas where it is now trying to
16 govern, because of the weight of its brutal and harsh
17 ideology? And I guess the followup question is, Do we have
18 any intelligence about what's going on inside Mosul, inside
19 Raqqa, in terms of the citizens and how they feel about the
20 -- this new regime?

21 Mr. Clapper: Senator King, to answer the question, I
22 think that is a very important point, and we are seeing
23 anecdotal evidence of resentment, and even resistance, in
24 those areas that are controlled by ISIL, because of their
25 brutal approach to enforcing Sharia.

1 I think the challenge -- and we're already seeing
2 indications of this -- that ISIL has -- as I mentioned in my
3 oral statement, assuming some of the accouterments are some
4 of the characteristics of a nation-state, and now they've
5 having challenges with governance -- they do not have enough
6 financial wherewithal to provide the services -- municipal
7 services that are required to run a city of a million
8 people. So, we're --

9 Senator King: You mean they're running --

10 Mr. Clapper: -- electricity --

11 Senator King: You mean they're running a deficit?
12 Maybe we could ship them the sequester in a sealed railroad
13 car.

14 [Laughter.]

15 Mr. Clapper: That'd be good.

16 We're seeing signs of electrical -- electricity
17 outages, shortages of food and commodities. The airstrikes
18 against their -- the refining capability has forced them to
19 go to a lot of individual mom-and-pop refining stills. So,
20 they're going to have trouble generating the revenue that
21 would be needed to actually run the areas they have
22 captured. And that -- and we're seeing anecdotal evidence
23 of the strains and the stresses that's putting particularly
24 on the city of Mosul and its citizens.

25 Senator King: Does that suggest that perhaps a

1 containment strategy instead of a reinvasion strategy --
2 General Stewart, you've testified recently about the
3 proportion of troops it takes to root somebody out of an
4 urban setting. Could you articulate that for us?

5 General Stewart: If I recall, we talked about the
6 ratio of offensive forces to --

7 Senator King: Correct.

8 General Stewart: -- take a urban environment,
9 something in an order of 10 to 1, offense versus a defense.
10 That requires a very skilled, determined force to take that
11 kind of action.

12 There is something to be said about ISIL wearing out
13 its welcome. It's precisely what turned al-Qaeda in Iraq
14 before -- the brutality, the inability to govern -- that
15 convinced the tribes that there may be a better option.

16 Senator King: And ISIS is much more brutal than -- and
17 difficult than al-Qaeda, as I understand.

18 General Stewart: The question is, Where is the tipping
19 point? And it's very hard to determine where that tipping
20 point where, where the Sunnis in Anbar will go, "This is
21 enough. There's a different option, and we ought to counter
22 ISIS." So, I think there will be a tipping point at some
23 point. We just don't know where that will be.

24 Senator King: But, a -- as you just testified, a 10-
25 to-1 ratio of offense to defense going into a city like

1 Mosul means you're going to have a large, well-trained
2 force. And it's just a question of whether that's going to
3 be necessary, rather than let it fall of its own weight.
4 And I guess that's a question of timing.

5 General Stewart: It's a question of timing, yes, sir.

6 Senator King: Quick question on cyber. It concerns me
7 that all of our discussions about cyber are essentially
8 defensive. We're talking about legislation to share
9 information, we're talking about greater rebutting of these
10 kinds of intrusions. Should we think, Mr. Director, about
11 developing an offensive capability to provide a deterrent?

12 It concerns me that now a -- particularly a state actor can
13 act essentially without fear of consequences. Whereas, the
14 theory of deterrence in our nuclear field stood the test of
15 time for 75 years. Should we think about a deterrent
16 capacity so that people know that if they attack us in any
17 kind of critical way, they're going to suffer in return?

18 Mr. Clapper: Yes, we -- I agree with you, Senator
19 King. We -- and we do -- you know, we do have offensive
20 capabilities that I can't go into here. I think the issue,
21 though, is, What is the policy? What is it that would
22 achieve cyber deterrence? And that is an issue that, at the
23 policy level, we're still, frankly, wrestling with.

24 Senator King: But, it is one that -- I'm delighted to
25 hear that it is being wrestled with, and I think I heard you

1 say that this is something that we need to consider. And,
2 of course, to go back to Dr. Strangelove, if you have a
3 deterrent and don't tell people about it, it's not a
4 deterrent.

5 Mr. Clapper: Well, that's true.

6 Senator King: Thank you.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte.

9 Senator Ayotte: I want to thank the Chairman, thank
10 both of you for what you do to protect the country.

11 And I wanted to ask about Iran. And I know that in,
12 your written testimony, you have said -- and you previously
13 testified, Director Clapper, before this committee, that
14 Iran was on track, by this year, in terms of its ICBM
15 program. So, since the negotiations have been ongoing on
16 the nuclear program, has Iran continued to develop its ICBM
17 program? And can you tell me what the status and the goal
18 of that program would be from Iran?

19 Mr. Clapper: The Iranians have continued on their
20 space launch vehicle program, and recently put into orbit a
21 satellite. And obviously, that -- any work they do on
22 missile -- missiles could conceivably go towards work on an
23 intercontinental ballistic missile. And it's going to be
24 hard to determine whether a given missile is launched for
25 the purposes of a space launch vehicle, a satellite they

1 want to put into space. Because if they do that, they also
2 acquire proficiency, expertise, and experience in what could
3 be a -- an ICBM. And so, it's a hard question to answer,
4 because it has a lot to do with intent. But, there's no
5 question they have the technical competence.

6 Senator Ayotte: Do you think they have good intent, in
7 terms of what they're doing with their missile program?

8 Mr. Clapper: Well, it's -- no. I mean, I think the
9 huge medium-range ballistic missile force they have today
10 that's operational is -- you know, I think poses a threat to
11 the region now. So --

12 Senator Ayotte: And if they --

13 Mr. Clapper: -- no, it's not.

14 Senator Ayotte: And if they were to get ICBM
15 capability, that obviously poses a threat, in terms of our
16 country, and the East Coast in particular.

17 Mr. Clapper: Well, it could. I mean, it, again,
18 depends on what they actually do. If they actually are able
19 to -- you know, it's theoretically possible they could
20 attempt to launch one this year. So, this is something we
21 just have to watch. But, again, the challenge for us is
22 going to be, you know, determining just what their intent
23 is.

24 Senator Ayotte: Could you help me understand also, as
25 we think about Iran's activities, what types of other

1 activities they're engaging in to establish regional
2 hegemony?

3 Mr. Clapper: Well, they are certainly trying to, where
4 they can, reach out diplomatically. The organization that
5 we watch a lot is the IRGC Quds Force that I mentioned
6 previously, their intelligence activities throughout the
7 region. But, they will look to establish their influence by
8 whatever mechanism they can.

9 Senator Ayotte: So, as I understand it, obviously they
10 continue to support Assad, they have continued to support
11 groups in the region, including Hezbollah. What other
12 activities -- are they still -- would you still characterize
13 them as one of the largest state sponsors of terrorism in
14 the world?

15 Mr. Clapper: They are still classified that way, yes.

16 Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

17 I would like to follow up on an issue that is hitting
18 us at home, but I think has international implications, and
19 that is of the international drug trafficking that's
20 occurring. And, in particular, my home State of New
21 Hampshire, we've had a devastating number of people who are
22 dying from heroin overdoses. And so, I would certainly like
23 to hear your opinion, General Stewart, about what is
24 happening, in terms of drug trafficking -- in particular,
25 heroin -- and how is -- are the networks that are being used

1 for drug trafficking, are they also being used to fuel
2 terrorism?

3 So, General Stewart, if you could share that with me.
4 And I'd be curious, Does Southern Command and Northern
5 Command -- what do they need, in terms of fighting heroin
6 and also the drug trafficking that can be used to fuel
7 terrorism, as well?

8 General Stewart: I'll have to look at the numbers
9 again, but I don't think drug trafficking is on the increase
10 from our -- through our southern borders. I think Pakistan
11 and Afghanistan heroin production continues about at the
12 norm that we've seen over the last several years. We've
13 seen no indications that the drug trafficking routes are
14 being used for terrorist activities or hostile actions. And
15 I spoke recently to the folks down in Southern Command, and
16 I don't recall any request for additional capability to help
17 them with the problem in the south.

18 Mr. Clapper: If I can add, Senator.

19 Senator Ayotte: Yes.

20 Mr. Clapper: I well recall, I think it was last year,
21 when General Kelly, Commander of SOUTHCOM, testified with
22 then-General Jacoby, who was the NORTHCOM Commander -- they
23 testified together. And one of the challenges with drug
24 trafficking is not so much a lack of intelligence -- we
25 have a lot of intelligence on it -- is the lack of resource,

1 particularly in the case of the ability to interdict, by the
2 Coast Guard and others. And that, since General Kelly's
3 testimony, has been -- is being addressed. I've spoken --
4 discussed that with the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and
5 we are putting more of his capability, deploying more ships
6 and planes, in the southern hemisphere.

7 But, I think I would take, you know, a little mild
8 disagreement, here, with Vince, that I think this is a -- it
9 is a problem, the -- throughout this region, not only across
10 the border, but through Puerto Rico is another vulnerability
11 we have. And so -- and we have pretty good intelligence on
12 this.

13 I think the challenge has been -- and again,
14 sequestration has had impacts -- is on the ability to react
15 and interdict.

16 Senator Ayotte: I thank both of you. And I also
17 noticed that, in your testimony, Director Clapper, you noted
18 the incredible surge of heroin-related deaths since 2007.
19 So, thank you. It's a horrible problem.

20 Senator Reed [presiding]: Senator Kaine.

21 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22 And thank you both for your testimony, both earlier in
23 the week and today. Mindful that this is a -- not a
24 classified hearing, a few questions.

25 My perception of the level of American and allied

1 intelligence about the extent of the Iranian nuclear program
2 is that, before November 2013 and the beginning of the JPOA,
3 the level of intelligence was good. Certainly there were
4 gaps and challenges, but at least, if I go by public
5 reports, the level of intelligence at -- that all have,
6 together, enabled some actions that have slowed the Iranian
7 program.

8 One of the reasons I supported the JPOA is my
9 assumption that our intel sources haven't gone away, but the
10 inspections that were allowed -- required under the JPOA,
11 together with existing intel sources, would even give us a
12 better level of intel, which would (a) help us determine if
13 we needed, God forbid, to take military action to stop the
14 program, and (b) enable us to better target any military
15 action if, God forbid, we should need to take it. Am I
16 looking at this the right way?

17 Mr. Clapper: Yes, sir, I think you are. I will tell
18 you that the, you know, huge -- that the important aspect of
19 any sort of agreement we might reach with the Iranians would
20 be a very invasive and thorough surveillance and inspection
21 capability on the part of IAEA. I think that would be
22 requisite to any kind of an agreement.

23 I -- you know, we have, I think, a reasonably capable
24 intelligence capability, but I wouldn't want to rely on it,
25 only, for verification that, in fact, the terms of the

1 agreement were being lived up to.

2 Senator Kaine: And, Director Clapper, I agree with the
3 last point you made, is -- I would look at any final deal,
4 if one is reached, in analyzing its content and determining
5 whether I support it or not. The degree of inspections, to
6 me, is the key factor, because that, combined with existing
7 intel, is our guarantee of an ability to (a) know if there's
8 going to be a problem, and (b) take appropriate action --
9 target an appropriate action to eliminate the problem.

10 You indicated, Director Clapper, in earlier testimony,
11 that your intel suggests that Iran is looking at the nuclear
12 negotiation as sort of separate from this whole question of
13 Iranian bellicosity and adventurism in the region, that
14 these are sort of separate items. My sense is, there is at
15 least one connection between the two. And this also bears
16 on my analysis of any deal, if reached. And that is this.
17 Any deal, if reached, would involve sanctions relief --
18 i.e., dollars to Iran. And they use dollars to carry out
19 adventurism. I think -- you know, just from what I've
20 heard, some of the sanctions relief already may have enabled
21 them to invest more heavily in running Syria as a puppet
22 state or invest more heavily in the Quds Force or other
23 agents that are destabilizing governments outside of their
24 own borders. And so, to at least that extent, as we look at
25 any deal, if there is such a deal, there could be a

1 connection between a deal and Iranian bellicosity outside
2 their borders.

3 Mr. Clapper: Perhaps, sir. And, in a classified
4 environment, I can go into this a little bit more. But, the
5 sanctions have had impacts on -- financial impacts on the
6 Iranians, and it -- that, in turn, has impacted funding for
7 the military and for even the Quds Force. So, I --

8 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

9 Mr. Clapper: -- perhaps best left to a classified
10 environment for --

11 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

12 Mr. Clapper: -- more details.

13 Senator Kaine: We have had two meetings of the Senate
14 Foreign Relations Committee, in the last 3 weeks, where
15 we've heard from leaders from the region who are engaged in
16 the fight against ISIL. King Abdullah was with us about 3
17 weeks ago, and he told us, in a coffee at the Foreign
18 Relations Committee, that American ground troops as part of
19 this battle of ISIL would not be a good idea, in his view.
20 Yesterday, we had a coffee with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh
21 Tamim, who also said American ground troops is a bad idea
22 because it would convert the perception of the battle
23 against ISIL to U.S. or West against ISIL rather than, "We
24 are engaging in a battle to clean up our own regional
25 extremists. And we want the -- we want America's help on

1 that." But, they both offered us advice that American
2 ground troops would be problematic, because it would enable,
3 from a propaganda standpoint, this being positioned as
4 American or Western occupation, and that America is the
5 point of the sphere -- the spear against that terrorist
6 threat. I'd just report that to you, and I would be curious
7 to either of your's -- your reactions to those comments from
8 trusted allies.

9 Mr. Clapper: Well, the -- I have had similar
10 discussions with the King, and he is a staunch proponent, an
11 articulate one, for, you know, "the people in the region
12 have to take this on and have to lead," and that, you know,
13 U.S. -- anytime we show up someplace, then, you know, we're
14 a -- we're, by definition, occupiers. He -- you know, he
15 recognizes, as do many others, that, at some point, there
16 will be a need for boots on the ground, but hopefully
17 others, not the U.S., because that engenders its own
18 challenges and issues.

19 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 Senator Reed: Senator Sessions.

22 Senator Sessions: Thank you, Senator Reed.

23 And just to follow up on Senator Kaine's comment, I
24 think we need to reestablish where we are, or confirm where
25 we are, not -- Director Clapper, is it still our policy that

1 no options are off the table and that Iran should not have a
2 nuclear weapon?

3 Mr. Clapper: That's my understanding, yes, sir.

4 Senator Sessions: That's your understanding. Do you
5 have any doubt about it?

6 Mr. Clapper: I take what the administration said for
7 its word, that all options are not -- no options are off the
8 table.

9 Senator Sessions: Well, I think that's true. We had a
10 very important hearing yesterday on nuclear forces and
11 strategic forces. And one of the things I came away with
12 was greater concerns than I had before about the
13 proliferation impacts, the instability in the region that
14 could occur from a nuclear-armed Iran. And I just think
15 that we've got to be careful about that. And I do remember
16 that the CIA reported, in, what, early 2000s, that Iran
17 wasn't intent on building a nuclear weapon. That was wrong,
18 was it not?

19 Mr. Clapper: Well, up until 2003, they were. Right
20 now, they -- and, of course, the -- we believe the Supreme
21 Leader would be the ultimate decisionmaker, here. And, as
22 far as we know, he's not made a decision to go for a nuclear
23 weapon. I do think that they certainly want to preserve
24 options across the capabilities it would take to field one,
25 but right now they don't have one, and have not made that

1 decision.

2 Senator Sessions: Well, we've been --

3 Mr. Clapper: But, I agree with you, it would be very
4 -- it would be very profound and very destabilizing if they
5 were to achieve a nuclear weapon.

6 Senator Sessions: Is -- I mean, it really makes us
7 face some really tough choices. Our -- I don't -- but, I
8 don't think there's any doubt they were -- they would never
9 -- they never relinquished the intention to build a weapon.
10 The CIA report was in error. And they are closer today.
11 And every month that goes by, it seems they get closer.

12 General Stewart, I had the honor to be briefed by you
13 in 2006 or '07 in the al-Anbar region in Iraq. And you gave
14 us a remarkable briefing about how you had -- the marines
15 had worked with the tribal leaders, and they began The
16 Awakening that allowed them to remove al-Qaeda from that
17 region after great, great commitment by the marines and
18 other forces.

19 This is what I would like to see. I am not for any
20 major, massive American troop leadership in Iraq, but I do
21 think -- and I want you to give us your best judgment -- but
22 isn't it true that even a few embedded forces with the
23 Iraqis with the ability to communicate to aircraft and
24 bringing in smart bombs and to assist them, that that does
25 encourage them, and that the Iranian forces fight better

1 under those circumstances than if they don't have the
2 confidence that a -- even a small American presence with
3 them brings?

4 General Stewart: Senator, let me answer the question
5 this way. Senator Kaine raised a great point of what we've
6 heard. The best propaganda victory that we could give ISIL
7 is to make this a fight between the West and Islam -- and
8 ISIL. But, being able to provide ISR, precision fires, some
9 command and control will certainly help those forces --
10 Iraqi forces -- to be much more effective on the ground than
11 left to their own devices.

12 Senator Sessions: And -- all right, I agree with that.
13 But, I'm just asking you, from your experience with them,
14 isn't it true that there is more confidence, even if there
15 are just one or two Special Forces there with them -- not
16 out in the -- leading the fight --

17 General Stewart: Right.

18 Senator Sessions: -- but with the forces that are
19 advancing?

20 General Stewart: There is a great sense of comfort
21 when U.S. forces are with our partners to provide precision,
22 to provide command and control, to help bolster leadership.
23 There is some advantage, yes, sir.

24 Senator Sessions: With regard to the momentum that we
25 have there, aren't there -- I mean, we have a large Iraqi

1 army. And --

2 Is my time up? My time's up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

3 Maybe we'll --

4 Chairman McCain [presiding]: If you want to finish
5 your question --

6 Senator Sessions: How -- are they -- can't some of
7 those divisions, some of those units, be utilized now to
8 blunt the momentum that they have -- that ISIS has achieved,
9 and maybe take the bloom off their rose and give some
10 confidence again, in the Iraqi forces, that they can retake
11 the territory, and the sooner is better than later?

12 General Stewart: Yes, Senator. In fact, they have
13 blunted the ISIL advance. And, best as we can guess, ISIL
14 has lost territory over the last couple of months. So, it's
15 not just the Iraqi Security Forces. You have the Kurdish
16 forces that are involved. And they are making a difference.
17 I wouldn't categorize the difference as significant, but
18 they are, in fact, causing ISIL to lose territory at this
19 point.

20 Senator Sessions: We've been training them for a
21 decade. Not as if they need another -- I don't know. I'm
22 -- a little odd that we need another 6 to 9 months of
23 training, when I thought we were training the Iraqi armies
24 for nearly a decade.

25 General Stewart: When we talk about the 6 to 9 months

1 additional training, it is to deal with an urban fight,
2 which is very, very different, very complex, requires a
3 great deal of skill, a great deal of precision to be
4 successful.

5 Senator Sessions: Thank you, General, in your
6 leadership and your commitment to fight this --

7 Chairman McCain: Also has to do with the collapse of
8 the Iraqi army.

9 Senator Manchin.

10 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 And thanks, both of you, again for being here. And
12 just a couple of questions I have.

13 Following up on the Iran nuclear capabilities that they
14 may have, since we know that they haven't dismantled -- they
15 might have downgraded some of their enriched uranium -- are
16 we just prolonging the inevitable? I mean, they're going to
17 be able to get up to enrichment and to armament speed pretty
18 quickly, if they desired, unless there's an absolute
19 dismantlement of their --

20 Mr. Clapper: Well --

21 Senator Manchin: -- capabilities. Director Clapper?

22 Mr. Clapper: -- that's obviously the concern, and
23 that's why the importance of intrusive and comprehensive
24 surveillance and inspection is so critical, to make sure
25 they don't, particularly, enrich to highly enriched uranium.

1 Senator Manchin: But, we're not doing away with any of
2 their centrifuges. They're not downgrading some of the
3 things that they can, or taking away their capabilities. I
4 don't think our agreement's --

5 Mr. Clapper: Well, that's --

6 Senator Manchin: -- going to achieve that.

7 Mr. Clapper: -- that's to be determined. That's a --
8 you know, the -- and I don't want to talk too much about
9 this --

10 Senator Manchin: Sure.

11 Mr. Clapper: -- because of the delicate state of play
12 with the negotiations, themselves. But, that's all in play
13 as part of the negotiations.

14 Senator Manchin: Well, I have a concern.

15 If I could switch gears over to China and -- basically,
16 our partners in Asia-Pacific area, especially Taiwan.
17 They're growing uneasy about China's access area denial
18 strategy which seeks to limit American power in that region.
19 Can you please update us on China's effort to deny American
20 access to the Asia-Pacific region, sir?

21 Mr. Clapper: Well, the Chinese -- and I can't go into
22 a great deal of detail here, but the Chinese are embarked on
23 extremely impressive military modernization program across
24 the board. And their modernization program is deliberately
25 designed to counteract or thwart what they feel are our

1 strengths; meaning carrier aviation, our bases, C4ISR, and
2 our abilities in space. And they are doing specific things
3 in each one of those realms to deny us, first, potentially,
4 surveillance, command and control, as well as what they view
5 is our primary weapons -- our primary strengths. I can
6 certainly go into -- in more detail if you're -- if you'd
7 like, in a classified setting.

8 Senator Manchin: Okay. I'm just -- I guess you're not
9 able to speak about their developing capabilities within the
10 last 10 years or what they're accelerating. I'm
11 understanding they're accelerating very fastly. You said
12 they're impressive.

13 Mr. Clapper: They are. And they also are getting more
14 and more into the realm of indigenously designing and
15 producing things, rather than relying on others, notably the
16 Russians.

17 Senator Manchin: Okay. Let me see, I had one more
18 here for you.

19 We talked about, I think, in a closed setting -- you
20 might be able to talk about it in generality here -- as far
21 as ISIS, their ability, as far as financial ability, to
22 attract the dollars they do, be able to operate the way they
23 can. And are we having any success in shutting down that
24 money flow?

25 Mr. Clapper: Well, they -- again, I'll have to speak

1 in generalities, here -- they acquired a lot of funding
2 initially, some of which was derived from overrunning Iraqi
3 banks.

4 Senator Manchin: Sure.

5 Mr. Clapper: That's going to dry up. And, of course,
6 the airstrikes against the oil has made that -- forced them
7 to go to sort of mom-and-pop stills. And, as a consequence
8 of the brutality, the donations that they've received are
9 tapering off. So, I think, again, this says something about
10 an attrition --

11 Senator Manchin: I --

12 Mr. Clapper: -- approach which I think, over time --
13 and the other thing, of course, that's draining resources is
14 the demands that they have for governance, particularly in
15 large --

16 Senator Manchin: Yeah.

17 Mr. Clapper: -- cities like Mosul.

18 Senator Manchin: Just a -- just very quickly. But,
19 the rapid rise, as far as in their -- when we first heard
20 about ISIS, it was 3-, 5,000, then it just seemed to
21 leapfrog to 10-, 15-, 20-, and 30-. Were they paying their
22 soldiers, or attracting because of better pay than --

23 Mr. Clapper: The reason they --

24 Senator Manchin: -- al-Qaeda and Taliban?

25 Mr. Clapper: The reason they -- there was sort of

1 mushrooming growth there, and the initial phases when they
2 did their attacks in northern Iraq --

3 Senator Manchin: Sure.

4 Mr. Clapper: -- was because the -- this is largely a
5 Sunni region. They were very receptive, frankly, to joining
6 up with ISIL, which I think many viewed as a better
7 protector of themselves and their communities and their
8 families than were the Iraqi government. So, that's what
9 occasioned the joining up.

10 Senator Manchin: Do you have any --

11 Mr. Clapper: Now, we're -- we're now seeing anecdotal
12 evidence of their having -- and paid, you know, money --

13 Senator Manchin: Were they paying better than --

14 Mr. Clapper: They are --

15 Senator Manchin: -- everybody else?

16 Mr. Clapper: -- also having to reduce the amount of
17 money they're paying some of their fighters.

18 Senator Manchin: So, that should reduce -- that could
19 reduce some of their strength, right? If they don't pay
20 them as well as somebody else?

21 Mr. Clapper: That and the -- and what we're also
22 seeing -- again, anecdotal evidence of -- they've been
23 driven to conscription. In other words, forcing people to
24 join the ranks to --

25 Senator Manchin: Gotcha.

1 Mr. Clapper: -- sustain their fighter force,
2 particularly as they've taken some pretty heavy losses --
3 notably, in Khobani.

4 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan.

6 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, gentlemen, for your
7 wonderful service to our country.

8 General Stewart, you may have noticed the Chairman has
9 a particularly soft spot in his heart for marines. He's
10 probably treated you in that regard. So --

11 General Stewart: I'm pretty delighted about that, too,
12 Senator.

13 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. Well, I'll make sure he keeps
14 treating you with kid gloves, I'm sure.

15 I want to thank you gentlemen for what you're doing,
16 because I think that your service, particularly providing
17 real, accurate threat assessments to not only the Congress,
18 but to the American people, the administration, is
19 absolutely, fundamentally critical if we're going to get a
20 hold of these -- many of the challenges that we face right
21 now as a country. And you probably noticed that this
22 committee has had several hearings over the last several
23 weeks about these assessments with some luminaries,
24 Democrat, Republican, former Secretaries of State, former
25 four-star generals, about what they see as some of the

1 challenges and strategies that we need. I think there was
2 consensus that we're living in a very challenging
3 environment. Henry Kissinger mentioned it was one of the
4 most challenging that he's ever seen in his career, which
5 says a lot.

6 What I want to touch on a little bit is what I see as a
7 rather disturbing disconnect between some of the testimony
8 that comes from gentlemen like yourself from this whole
9 series of hearings that we had and the disconnect between
10 that and senior administration officials. Let me give you a
11 few examples.

12 The President, himself, in the State of the Union,
13 talked about the crisis of 9/11 and everything has passed.
14 Went through a whole list of things that made it sound like
15 we're living in a very benign world environment.

16 The Secretary of State yesterday talked about, quote,
17 "actually living in a period of less daily threats to
18 American and people in the world normally," unquote. That
19 was his quote.

20 The recent National Security Strategy document from the
21 White House lists, I believe, climate change if -- as one of
22 the top, if not the top, national security threat, relative
23 to, say, Iran gaining nuclear weapons, or ISIS.

24 Do you agree with these assessments from the senior
25 leadership of the administration, that we're living in a

1 less daily threatening -- that Iran gaining nuclear weapons
2 is less of a threat than climate change? I really need -- I
3 think it's critical that we level with the American people
4 what exactly are the threats that we face as a country right
5 now. And I don't think we're getting it from the
6 administration.

7 Mr. Clapper: Well, I think our function, in the
8 intelligence community, is to portray, as accurately as we
9 can, what we see as the threats. We probably always occupy
10 the half of the glass that's empty, and policymakers, and
11 oftentimes military commanders, will occupy the half of the
12 glass that's full. Probably the real truth is at the water
13 line.

14 I think our instinct, frankly, is to perhaps -- I've
15 been criticized for this -- worst-case the situation.
16 Having been on the receiving end of virtually every post-
17 event critique investigating intelligence failures since
18 9/11, I think we are much more conservative and much more
19 cautious than others might be about the nature of the world
20 out there. But, I think we have a certain institutional
21 responsibility, which we try to discharge. If others don't
22 see it that way or others don't agree, that's certainly
23 their prerogative.

24 Senator Sullivan: So, do you agree with those
25 assessments that --

1 Mr. Clapper: I'm not in the mode of -- we don't do
2 policy, and I'm not critiquing those who do make it.

3 Senator Sullivan: Okay. I don't think that's policy
4 that they've been putting out. I think it's -- they're
5 giving threat assessments to the American people that are
6 inaccurate. But, let me --

7 Mr. Clapper: Well, climate change --

8 Senator Sullivan: I'll move on --

9 Mr. Clapper: I mean, climate change, for example, I
10 think will have -- does have national security implications.
11 It -- if you watch what's going on in the Arctic now, and
12 the impacts on climate change, in terms of water
13 availability and this sort of thing, does have national
14 security implications. I probably wouldn't rank it up there
15 as problem or threat number one, but it is a serious
16 concern.

17 Senator Sullivan: Let me just ask General Stewart.
18 The -- you know, the -- Senator Manchin was talking about
19 the increasing recruitment of ISIL. What role do you see
20 that they are perceived as continuing to win, as continuing
21 to be victorious, as continuing to be kind of a team that's
22 gaining ground, not being defeated? I think -- in your
23 experience, I'm sure that if a recruit thinks he's going to
24 go join a team and get killed, he probably is not going to
25 be interested in joining that team, but if they seem to be

1 perceived as kind of gaining ground -- North Africa now,
2 Syria, Iraq -- do you think that that helps in their
3 recruitment efforts?

4 General Stewart: A very capable propaganda media
5 operation that emphasizes their success and their victories,
6 however small, and that is a basis for attracting those who
7 would move to that ideology. So, their success on the
8 battlefield, or perceived success, or the way they're
9 presented, certainly helps them in gaining recruits for the
10 fight.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Chairman McCain: Senator Gillibrand.

14 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Thank you both for being here today.

16 The execution of Coptic Christians in Libya by
17 terrorists affiliated with ISIL raises a question about
18 ISIL's ability to coordinate with other groups. What's your
19 assessment of the links between ISIL in Syria and Iraq and
20 the groups that have acted in its name outside of those two
21 countries?

22 Mr. Clapper: If you're referring to ISIL's other
23 chapters or provinces, so-called, if that's what you -- if
24 that's what you're referring to?

25 Senator Gillibrand: Yes.

1 Mr. Clapper: And what's the connection there?

2 Senator Gillibrand: So, what's your assessment of
3 their ability to coordinate, to communicate, to engage in
4 terrorist acts outside of Syria and Iraq?

5 Mr. Clapper: If you -- do you mean the homeland or
6 elsewhere in the world?

7 Senator Gillibrand: Your choice, but both would be
8 good.

9 Mr. Clapper: Well, I think what they've tried --
10 they're trying to do, of course, is to create the -- both
11 the substance and, maybe more importantly, the image of this
12 global-scale caliphate by establishing chapters or
13 franchises, if you will, in places like Libya, Egypt, Yemen,
14 and South Asia. The extent to which, though, they -- this
15 is some monolithic organization, where ISIL in al-Rikah or
16 Abu Du'a or Baghdadi is calling the shots in, say,
17 Afghanistan/Pakistan, I don't see a lot of evidence of this.
18 I think this is more about pledging allegiance to the
19 brutality and the savagery of the -- of ISIL. But, the
20 first and foremost issues for these local chapters is local.

21 I think, aspirationally, there is a threat that ISIL
22 poses, potentially, to the homeland, and those they might
23 harbor in their area, particularly in Iraq and Syria, who
24 would do us harm.

25 Senator Gillibrand: I agree with that assessment. And

1 we just had a recent case out of Brooklyn, where we had
2 threats being made.

3 You mentioned Yemen. Could you just briefly --

4 Mr. Clapper: If I --

5 Senator Gillibrand: Go ahead.

6 Mr. Clapper: If I might comment on that, ma'am, this
7 is what I was referring to in my oral statement about --
8 and this is a real challenge for all of us in -- whether
9 homeland security or intelligence -- is the appeal, the
10 rhetorical or spiritual appeal that, because of the
11 effective -- very highly effective media capabilities that
12 ISIL has demonstrated, and how that -- they are able to
13 appeal to people, who then can act on their own at a time --
14 in a time and place and circumstance of their choosing. And
15 that is a very worrisome challenge, particularly in this
16 country. So, not so much them commanding/controlling plots
17 as much as --

18 Senator Gillibrand: Inspiring --

19 Mr. Clapper: -- inspiring them.

20 Senator Gillibrand: -- plots, right.

21 So, do you have recommendations for us about ways to
22 stem that tide? Do you believe that our allies and other
23 countries are doing their fair share? Particularly, I am
24 concerned about the flow of foreign fighters, some of them
25 from the U.S., from Europe into -- in and out of Syria. For

1 example, what should Turkey be doing to help us more?

2 Mr. Clapper: Well, as we discussed before, Turkey has
3 its own focus, which doesn't necessarily comport with ours,
4 in terms of focusing on ISIL or al-Qaeda. They have very
5 permissive laws. It would be good if they could -- if we
6 could -- if they would change them to have more stringent
7 controls over who transits through their country.

8 I do -- I would volunteer that I think, because of the
9 effectiveness of the media campaign or the propaganda
10 campaign that ISIL mounts, that we, the U.S., and we, the
11 West, we who oppose ISIL need to be, I think, much more
12 aggressive in mounting the counternarrative.

13 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman McCain: I want to thank the witnesses.

15 Just before we conclude, could I just, again, take a
16 look at that chart over there -- General, I know you've seen
17 it -- as to the expansion of the Chinese by filling in areas
18 in the South China Sea. That's a rather dramatic change, it
19 seems to me. And obviously, they'd be filling in -- that
20 in, in order to place installations there. Is -- could you
21 talk a little bit about that before we conclude?

22 Mr. Clapper: Well, the Chinese, of course, have had
23 their exorbitant claims, the so-called "Nine-Dash line,"
24 throughout the South China Sea, been very aggressive about
25 pursuing that. The -- and, of course, this runs afoul of

1 counterclaims that many of the other countries also have in
2 the same area. And they, too, are very concerned about it.
3 In fact, I think, in a sense, that's -- that may be a good
4 thing, because, in the end, their strength is going to be as
5 -- if an act -- they can act collectively.

6 So, what the Chinese are doing, here, of course -- in
7 one case, you know, building airfield -- an airdrome so that
8 they can launch aircraft in and out to do patrols and
9 surveillance and further exert what they consider is their
10 sovereignty over the South China Sea. And it has been
11 impressive, in the last year, year and a half since they've
12 been doing this, as they pursued drilling, which has caused
13 conflict with the Vietnamese and others. And so, this is a
14 worrisome trend of the Chinese because of the tensions it's
15 going to create in the South China Sea.

16 Chairman McCain: So, you've --

17 Mr. Clapper: But, they've been very aggressive about
18 it.

19 Chairman McCain: So, you've got, not only the
20 capability to build an airfield, but, obviously, weapon
21 systems. Could also be --

22 Mr. Clapper: Well, they could, exactly.

23 Chairman McCain: Yeah.

24 Mr. Clapper: Of course, they're still in the
25 construction phase, so what they actually deploy to

1 something like this, or whether they permanently -- they
2 make it big enough so they could permanently station forces,
3 that'll be interesting to see what they do.

4 Chairman McCain: Well, obviously our attention is on
5 other parts of the world, but this is really quite a major
6 step on their part. And I thank you for helping us out on
7 that.

8 Jack, do you --

9 Senator Reed: I'd -- if I may, with just one question,
10 in reaction to Senator Gillibrand's questioning.

11 We all understand, there's a huge, sort of, public
12 campaign that ISIL is undertaking to attract recruits, to
13 dramatize what they're doing. And you may not be able to
14 comment in this setting. But, are we taking steps to
15 interdict that communication so that they're not able to put
16 things up and attract recruits and communicate?

17 Mr. Clapper: Well, the problem there is, their
18 ubiquitous use of the media. And so, the challenge is, How
19 do you take down the Internet? Because that's more and more
20 what they're doing. In the day when al-Qaeda or ISIL put
21 these things out, it was kind of channelized, and we kind of
22 watched it, and could do that. They've gotten wise to that,
23 and now they make it very difficult, because of the
24 universal forums and the way they get things out so
25 ubiquitously. Very hard to control it. Ergo, what we must

1 do, I believe, is counter the messages.

2 Senator Reed: Thank you.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman McCain: General, I know you've had a -- are
5 going to have and are having a very busy couple of days, and
6 I know you understand that we have our responsibilities to
7 try to inform members in the Senate so that we can shape
8 legislation to help you do your job more effectively and
9 efficiently.

10 And we thank both of you for being here.

11 This hearing is adjourned.

12 [Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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